

Bellingham Friends Meeting
November 12, 2016
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Draft Minutes

Present: Jean Brechan, Virginia Herrick, Dorrie Jordan, Nan Macy, Dusty Andersen, Susan Richardson, Allan Richardson, Jim Gordon, Mark Hersh, Dave Hopkinson, Larry Thompson, Joanne Cowan, Allen Stockbridge, Don Goldstein, John Hatten (Clerk), Judy Hopkinson (recording), Sharon Trent.

2016.11.01 Interfaith Coalition Report. Sharon Trent passed out information on / and or discussed a variety of programs ongoing or being developed.

2016.11.01.1 Proposed that Meeting collect books for the Children's Book Drive

Discussion: Friends expressed support. Another friend asked whether Village Books was involved. Lisa F liked the idea of the book drive and offered to deliver the books since she lives in the area where the books would be.

The Meeting was in agreement that we will conduct a book drive.

The Clerk suggested that we create a committee to handle the details. Lisa F and Sharon T will gather additional information and develop details for a book drive. A Friend suggested that details be posted in the E-News.

2016.11.01.2 Proposed that the Meeting sponsor a family for Christmas or provide supplementary funds or gifts.

Discussion: A Friend expressed concern that providing for an entire family is a stretch for a group of our size. Another Friend agreed and liked the idea of providing supplementary support only.

The meeting decided not to sponsor a family, but to encourage individual Friends to contribute as they are led.

2016.11.02 Nominating Committee (presented by Susan Richrdson)

Presented a draft job description for meeting house scout (attached) for seasoning:

Discussion: A Friend asked: What will trigger the Meeting sending information to the scout? This Friend also asked for clarity regarding determination of which properties are of sufficient interest to bring to the meeting. Susan R suggested that results of the most recent deliberations regarding requirements for a meeting house be appended to the job description. A Friend suggested that the former Meeting House Scouts be involved. Susan R shared that they were involved in this process. The Clerk pointed out that our usual process is to accept a document for seasoning with the understanding that changes and clarifications may be presented during the seasoning.

The draft job description for Meeting House Scout was accepted for seasoning.
2016.11.03 Children's Program Committee (Report Attached - presented by Virginia Herrick)

The Children's Program Committee will conduct an activity (craft project) during worship on Dec 18 for our holiday gathering and OWC will conduct an intergenerational program during second hour. There will be no Children's Program on Christmas Day.

There is a new opportunity for adults to "hang out" with the children without planning a children's program. Friends are encouraged to contact Virginia Herrick if they are interested.

Creative activities are planned for the coming year including a "Living our Testimonies". Friends are encouraged to review the report.

Friends expressed their appreciation for the spiritual depth and organizational skills that the clerk of Children's Program Committee is bringing to our Children. Many Friends expressed agreement. One mother of a young Friend, also expressed appreciation for the direction of the children's program, but had some concern that describing experiences with testimonies might encourage bragging about spiritual accomplishments. Another Friend shared that expressing experiences with testimonies among Quakers is usually done in the spirit of describing struggles with a particular testimony rather than accomplishments. Another friend shared that hearing about the way that others manage to adhere to testimonies in difficult circumstances can be an inspiration. Friends agreed that the way the sharing of experiences with the testimonies is modeled by adults is critical. Care will be taken to see that adults walk the talk during the exercise.

Another Friend expressed appreciation for the Children's Committee work and also expressed some concern that the "Living Our Testimonies" may be a bit challenging to maintain.

A Friend expressed appreciation and support for the willingness of one of our child care provider (Anna R) to participate in program planning. This Friend (Dave H) agreed to act as a support person for Anna and to "Hang out" with the children when she is teaching.

One Friend responded that since it was mentioned in passing that we need more toys for the Children's Program and suggested that our Meeting might better devote our resources to our own Meeting rather than send only to Interfaith.

2016.11.04 M&C (Presented by Susan Richardson)

2016.11.04.1 M &C puts forth Joanne Cowan for a three year term on nominating committee. The nomination was accepted for seasoning

2016.11.04.2 M&C puts forth Don Goldstein to fill the remaining 2years of Susan Richardson's term. This nominated was accepted for seasoning

2016.11.04.3 The Meeting gave final approval for “**Bellingham Friends Meeting Guidelines for Communication within Committees and Between Committees and our Monthly Meeting**” (with the assumption that grammatical errors will be corrected)

2016.11.04.4 Susan R suggested that M&C forward this document to the Yearly Meeting for consideration for inclusion in this or the next Faith and Practice. The meeting agreed.

2016.11.04.5 Friends discussed ways in which this document will be shared. While it will be on the website, that is not accessible to everyone and is somewhat obscure. **A Friend suggested that new committee members and new committee Clerks be sent copies of both the committee job description and this document. The Meeting agreed, and Don G will see that this responsibility is written in to the job description of the Nominating Committee.**

2016.11.04.6 Susan R asked about the value of having the Query of the Month printed on the board and also on little slips of paper. **Friends felt that having the Query on the board, read aloud, and published WEEKLY in the ENews, but felt that there was no need to have it written on small sheets of paper**

2016.11.04.6 Since few Friends appear to be coming to meeting on Dec 25th, there may not be sufficient Friends to cover all the tasks. In that case we might want to organize a meeting in someone’s home. Only one person at the Meeting was coming for worship on Dec 25.

ENews request for notification that anyone who wants to come to meeting contact M&C. A Friend reminded us that some Friends are not able to access the ENews and will need to be contacted separately.

A Friend suggested that we place an announcement on the Website for Friends who may be visiting and looking for a Quaker Meeting.

2016.11.05 Outreach and Welcoming Committee (Report Attached)

Discussion: A Friend asked whether OWC felt it was warranted to staff a table at Western even every other year given the amount of energy and the lack of response. Another Friend expressed similar concerns. One Friend shared that it often takes many contacts and opportunities before someone actually acts on an idea. A Friend raised the question of alternative ways to make ourselves visible to the student community. There may be a way other than participating in a large “Mall- type” gathering. She also raised the idea of reaching out to other student communities. The Clerk suggested that OWC could consider these suggestions. Another Friend suggested that the Martin Luther King Day event at WCC would be a great idea. Allen S suggested that we contact the group now. A Friend shared that Barbara Rothcar would be the contact for that and **Allen S agreed to help Don G contact her** to explore participation next year.

2016.11.06 Announcements:

Pendle Hill Pamphlets - one was received and available and was shared.
Nan M shared that Pendle Hill is looking for people to write pamphlets.

2016.11.07 Member Concern - Don G. (See Attached)

Discussion: Mark H shared that there are no written qualifications for kitchen and no clarity regarding the need for meetings. A Friend shared that there are guidelines, but no formal training. A Friend shared that she signed up to be helper until she felt comfortable taking on the lead role in the kitchen. A Friend asked Mark whether it was helpful to have a "committee" as opposed to simply names on a sign up sheet. He responded that it was irrelevant. The sign up sheet is sufficient.

The proposal that the names used be changed to fit the realities was discussed. A Friend suggested that the current "helper" is a defacto "apprenticeship" allowing ongoing training at any time.

Another Friend suggested that since meeting seems to agree and Mark H agrees, then Nominating committee can make the changes in the titles of needed positions (Kitchen coordinator, key people, etc). Nominating Committee will work together with Mark to develop a proposal for alterations in nomenclature.

2016.11.08 The Clerk noted that Friends were raising hands to speak before the previous Friend had finished, and this was not Quaker process. He reminded Friends that Quakers can simply stand quietly if a speaker is going on too long or not speaking in a Quakerly manner. A Friend expressed appreciation for the Clerk's even-handed handling of requests to speak

2016.11.09 Member Concern: The sign regarding guidance for ministry in silent worship is unreadable. The Clerk shared that they are working on it.

2016.11.10 Member Concern - Dusty A shared the results of her research on the costs for other potential rental spaces that the meeting might use:

- Cruise Terminal, 9A-4P Sundays, 1 room available, no storage; \$400 / month for Cruise Terminal (for our meeting time)
- Bellingham Senior Center—not able to use coffee board or kitchen; \$450/ day - could have two rooms - one for children (for 5 hours)
- Bloedel Donovan Park—They may not want only one consistent renter on a weekly basis. Also they have 40 chairs available, allow use of kitchen and implements; no storage space - \$180/day
- Port of Bellingham—only one room available; no storage space available - \$400 / 1 day

Dusty also has a call in to the Majestic - but has yet to receive a response.

2016.11.10.1 The Meeting minutes its appreciation to Dusty Andersen for her initiative in conducting this research and reporting to meeting.

2016.11.11 The Clerk reminded the Meeting that we should, in some respect, all be acting as clerk - monitoring ourselves and discerning whether a particular item is better handled in MfWfB or in a committee. If something really needs to be discerned by the entire Meeting, then it come to MfWfB. Otherwise it is helpful to bring committee reports.

Discussion: A Friend suggested that we all stand up every 20 min and move to a different chair.

2016.11.12 Finance Committee (Reports attached) Allan R expressed a desire to consider Finance earlier in the agenda.

2016.11.12.1 Proposed Budget

Discussion:

One item not in budget is an allowance for ad hoc committee for planning Quarterly meeting. The request was for \$30 for that committee. The meeting decided to add a line item under other committees to read "Ad Hoc committees - \$50)

Children's Committee requested a higher allowance for Children's Committee Supplies. **A suggestion was made to increase it to \$500. Friends agreed.**

Friends asked questions about funds for Metamorphosis, the library, and unanticipated expenses. These questions were answered to Friends satisfaction. Another Friend asked what it costs / Friend. These questions were answered to Friends satisfaction.

2016.11.12.2 Friends accepted the budget (as adjusted) for seasoning

Further discussion occurred regarding notifications to Friends when we are running behind.

2016.11.13 Review of the Minutes

Minutes were approved with revisions.

2016.11.14 A question was raised regarding the sign up sheets for newcomers. At the last meeting this item was tabled. Since the new role envisioned for a quarterly version of Metamorphosis is likely to be absorbed into the E-News, a decision was made to take out the line item for Metamorphosis.

The meeting ended with silent worship at approximately 3 pm.

Ministry & Counsel Report 11-13-16
Bellingham Friends Meeting

1. *We would like to nominate Joanne Cowan for nominating committee for a three -year term and Don Goldstein to fill the remaining two years of Susan Richardson's term.
2. Spiritual journeys - next spiritual journey slated for January 15 or 29.
3. *Ministry and Counsel would like to recommend to MfWfB to approve for seasoning The Committee 4. Communication/Discernment/Decision-making document.
4. November query: from NPYM Faith and Practice (p.43): "How do we use our diversity for the spiritual growth of our Meeting? Are we prepared to let go of our individual desires and let the Holy Spirit lead us to unity? Do we act in a spirit of love and humility?"
*Ministry and Counsel would like input to evaluate whether printing and writing the query has been valuable and whether the practice should be continued.
5. *We ask for input about whether Friends would like to have a regular Meeting Dec 25 and on Jan 1. If so, will we have enough volunteers to fill needed positions.
6. Second Hours dates and topics—
 - Nov 13 - MforB
 - Nov 20 - Quaker Ways Discernment (Dusty)
 - Nov 26 -
 - Dec 4 - Potluck
 - Dec 11 - MforB
 - Dec 18 - Intergenerational Holiday sharing, sponsored by OWCCext M&C meeting is Monday, December 5.

Bellingham Friends Meeting
2017 Proposed budget
November 9, 2016

	2017	2016 Variance	
Income			
Contributions by Check	\$15,963.00	-\$15,963.00	
Contributions by Cash	\$400.00	-\$400.00	
Contributions In Kind	\$427.00	-\$427.00	
Total Income	\$16,790.00	-\$16,790.00	
Expenses			
Finance Committee			
State Filing Fee	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
Equipment	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Liability Insurance	\$575.00	\$575.00	\$0.00
Rent	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00	\$0.00
Supplies, Postage, Copying	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$0.00
Quarterly Meeting Assessment	\$90.00	\$80.00	\$10.00
Yearly Meeting Assessment	\$2,760.00	\$2,400.00	\$360.00
Total Finance Committee	<u>\$10,715.00</u>	<u>\$10,345.00</u>	<u>\$370.00</u>
Children's Program			
First Day Support	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$500.00
Supplies and Materials	\$350.00	\$500.00	-\$150.00
Total Children's Program	<u>\$2,350.00</u>	<u>\$2,000.00</u>	<u>\$350.00</u>
Communications			
Advertising	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$0.00
Directory	\$60.00	\$80.00	-\$20.00
Newsletter	\$0.00	\$80.00	-\$80.00
P.O. Box	\$86.00	\$80.00	\$6.00
Website/Other	\$50.00	\$30.00	\$20.00
Total Communications	<u>\$266.00</u>	<u>\$340.00</u>	<u>-\$74.00</u>
Ministry and Counsel			
Gifts	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Pamphlets and Subscriptions	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
Retreats and Special Events	\$600.00	\$500.00	\$100.00
Total Ministry and Counsel	<u>\$775.00</u>	<u>\$675.00</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
Other Committees			
Hospitality	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$0.00
Library	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$0.00
Social and Environmental Concerns	\$50.00	\$140.00	-\$90.00
Outreach and Welcoming	\$250.00	\$200.00	\$50.00
	<u>\$900.00</u>	<u>\$940.00</u>	<u>-\$40.00</u>
Outreach and Support			

AFSC	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$0.00
FCWPP	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$0.00
FCNL	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$0.00
FGC	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
Interfaith Coalition	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
FWCC	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
Right Sharing of World Resources	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
Whatcom Peace and Justice	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
WA Coalition to Abolish Death Penalty	\$75.00	75	\$0.00
W. Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Bellingham Human Rights Festival	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
Total Outreach and Welcoming	\$2,490.00	\$2,490.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$17,496.00	\$16,790.00	\$706.00

Children's Program Committee Report, November 2016

1. **December planning.** Children's Program Committee talked over the Dec. 18 holiday program, and agreed to discuss an idea Aurora has with Wendy, who is in charge.

a. **December 25th Christmas day Program and Childcare?** Mark had asked at Meeting prior if any people were planning to come for Christmas or New Year's as both fall on a Sunday. No one spoke up at Meeting in that regard. **We decided not to offer** childcare on Christmas Day, unless we get a request from a family between now and then. We will encourage Friends to bring children into worship if they would like, and that anyone attending Dec. 25 can be open to leadings of the spirit that day.

2. Our amended **job description** was approved. It will be submitted to Nominating Committee. The only substantive change is that the old job description gave responsibility for background checks to Ministry and Counsel. After checking in with other Meetings at Annual Session in July about what they do, and discussion with M&C this fall, we decided it would be simpler and more efficient for Children's Program Committee to take responsibility for this. The main change is that this will be there is one item of confidentiality that will be on Children's Program Committee's agenda occasionally, and non-committee members will not be able to participate in that part of our meetings.
3. Quarterly **childcare schedule** (remainder):

Nov. 20: Virginia Herrick

Nov. 27: Lisa Farino

Dec. 4: Virginia Herrick

Dec. 11: Rachel Van Boven

Dec. 18: Aurora Fox

Dec. 25: No Children's Program

Next Quarter: We already have a couple signups for the next quarter: Kristen McLewin on Jan. 22 and Rachel VanBoven on Feb. 12. Friends who'd like to join the rotation are welcome to contact Virginia with a preferred date. Otherwise, the schedule for Jan-Feb.-Mar.

NEW OPTION FOR VOLUNTEERS: Anna Row would like to begin planning program for some Sundays when she is working. In those cases, she will need a volunteer adult to be a "second pair of hands," possibly to do a story-reading with younger kids while

she works with older ones, or just to help out. If you don't want to plan program, but would like to help out with kids, please let Anna or Virginia know, and we'll put you on the list for this opportunity!

5. Living Our Testimonies. In the New Year we hope to launch a project which will be an “umbrella” for any and all Children's Programs. It is called “Living Our Testimonies.” The idea is for kids to learn about Quaker testimonies at Meeting, think about them and apply them to their lives, tell stories about their experiences at Meeting, and receive recognition from the Meeting when they have acquired a degree of understanding and experience with each one. We are creating notebooks in which kids can record which testimonies they've learned about, store projects that fit under each testimony, and document ways they've experienced them. Any adult who's teaching Children's Program will be able to initial their notebooks, recognizing that they've completed a lesson, done a project, or told a story about a testimony. When they've completed a certain number of these, they will be given a certificate by the Meeting acknowledging their understanding and experience. When three children have certificates for the same testimony, Children's Program will have a special celebration, which might mean renting or going to a movie, doing an “extracurricular” activity like going to a museum or the swimming pool, or having cake or other special food. The kids can help with the planning of their celebrations.

6. Children's Program budget. As Friends have no doubt noticed, we have more children participating regularly in Meeting. Sebastian, Julian, Lily, Transcendance and Winter; Anthony Farino; Ann and Dometrius Crosetti; and Letitia and Alyssa Moriya. Also, we've been in touch with the Styles, and although they had a conflict all summer and now are experiencing car trouble that has kept them from attending, we hope we will soon be seeing Sage, Nala, Veda, and Serene on a regular basis again. And perhaps as Akiva gets older, Tim and Stephanie will be able to bring him more regularly, as well. In addition, Anna Row wants to try to get Ezra and Eva to come to Meeting with her sometimes.

As attendance grows in the Children's Program, it is more likely that we will have at least one child each Sunday, which adds to our childcare expenses. On Sundays when no children attend, our childcare workers are paid \$25 for showing up and waiting a half hour to 40 minutes for children to arrive, getting out supplies, and then putting them away again. If any children come, the average cost of childcare is about \$26-\$30, because they arrive at 9:45, and stay until notified by parents that they will not be needed for second hour, which is often close to 11:45. If they stay through second hour, that adds another 1 or 1.5 hours, so about \$45. MfWfB, the cost is closer to \$60. We can only estimate, knowing how many Sundays there are in a year, and how many

children will attend, but a conservative estimate is about \$2,000, and that is assuming that with one thing and another, there will be a couple of Sundays which we don't have any paid childcare, and use adult volunteers instead.

A larger number of children also means we need more money for snacks and arts and crafts and other supplies. We also have a dearth of toys and games for toddlers and young children and would like to purchase a few new ones.

This year, we hope to finish the year without going over budget, but we may not be able to. We did not want to ask for additional money in this year's budget.

However, it is clear from the fact that our expenses have exceeded our budget this year, that we need additional funds in the coming year. I wanted to give some idea of our goals and expectations before the budget comes up, but will be glad to give additional information during budget discussion.

Interfaith Report

Meeting for Worship for Business November 12, 2016

Programs

Family Promise provides temporary and transitional housing to families who are newly homeless and have the potential to become independent again with some short-term help. Churches offer their space and volunteers from their own congregation as well as volunteers from other groups for sleeping. During the day another site offers support such as computers, internet access, homework supervision, laundry facilities, showers, cooking facilities and transportation for children to stay in their own schools. This program is in its infancy here, but it has been successful in over 200 communities nationwide, including Skagit County. *They need volunteers to work on host recruiting, fundraising, communications and transportation. After the program is set up they'll need on-call help, maintenance, people with trucks to help move families, do office support work, etc.*

Family Housing Program offers homes to intact families. *Volunteers are needed to repair, restock and refresh units for new families.*

Winter Coat Drive is familiar to us. Anyone can go to the coat drive to get coats, mittens, hats, gloves and scarves. *Remember to set aside items for next October.*

Project Warm Up knitters and crocheters make hats, scarves and blankets, which are distributed through local social service agencies. *They can always use items. Washable yarns may be donated for needle workers who don't have yarn.*

Project Homeless Connect *needs camping supplies, sleeping bags, personal hygiene kits and tarps.*

CAST (Coffee and Sandwiches Together) offers basic soup and sandwich meals as well as personal care items Mondays through Thursdays. *Volunteers are needed to shop for, prepare (at the kitchen in St. John's Lutheran Church) and serve meals at the Opportunity Council Parking Lot. Donations of food cards, staple food items, personal hygiene items, new socks and underwear are appreciated.*

Kids Need Books! Gives new and gently used books to low-income families. These are distributed in conjunction with pop-up Food Banks at Alderwood and Cordata Elementary schools. *They are requesting donations of books ranging from pre-school to young adult novels. We could have a book drive as a Meeting or donate individually.*

Gifts for the Holidays is primarily a program matching a congregation to a family's wish list. Bellingham Friends have participated sparsely in the past. Last year we donated gift cards to be used to supplement a family's gifts. *We could adopt a family*

SEC met on October 5th. Four people attended, and a fifth may join us next time. We continue to rotate the position of clerk and are finding this a good arrangement.

Informational items:

Concern of the Month -

- Jobs with Justice designated for local funds will be the October Concern of the month. -
- **Friends donated \$100 to Maple Alley Inn last month.**

Quaker Earthcare Witness will dedicate next issue to Standing Rock

SEC is monitoring progress on the Bellingham Family Promise initiative

Lorina Hall is exploring potential for building closer ties between Friends and Whatcom Peace and Justice - with the full support of SEC

Next meeting: Nov 9th 5 pm - Judy's, Nan Macy Clerking

**Report from Outreach and Welcoming Committee to Bellingham Friends Meeting MfWfB,
November 13, 2016**

Bellingham Friends Meeting was represented at the Western Washington University Student Information Fair on September 19 and 20 as planned. We also had a table at the International Day of Peace event on September 21st, organized by the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center. In response to a question raised during MfWfB last month, we again discussed the questions of future participation in these annual outreach activities, and reaffirmed our sense that the ratio of effort to results for the Student Information Fair only justifies participation every other year. However, we believe that participation in the International Day of Peace event annually is justified by the opportunity it presents to network and demonstrate solidarity with other community organizations that share our Meeting's commitment to peace, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

As reported last month, the OWC has volunteered to coordinate the Intergenerational Holiday Sharing second hour on December 18th, with Wendy Goldstein acting as M.C. for individual or small-group sharing of stories, poetry, music, and other offerings. I will facilitate an intergenerational activity which will encourage us to share our experiences and feelings about gifts, those received and/or those which we hope to give to others. One or more specific queries for this sharing will be provided in advance when the time is closer.

Next Sunday, November 20th, OWC member Dusty Andersen will inaugurate our series of second hours called "Quaker Ways" by facilitating a discussion of "Discernment of the Sense of the Meeting". We hope that most of you will participate, and especially those to whom the concept may seem unfamiliar.

Our next committee meeting will be on Saturday morning, December 3rd, beginning at 10:30 am at the Goldstein residence. All interested Friends are welcome, but please let me know in advance if you are coming.

--Don Goldstein, Clerk of Outreach and Welcoming Committee, 11/9/16
Other OWC members are Dusty Andersen, Wendy Goldstein, and Kathy Long

Meetinghouse Scout of Bellingham Friends Meeting.

Purpose: The Meetinghouse can be the physical center of our spiritual community. The Meetinghouse Scout position is needed for as long as the Meeting is without a permanent home and whenever changes within the Meeting suggest that a new home would benefit the [spiritual life, leadings,]health and wellbeing of the Meeting. The Meetinghouse Scout(s) are charged with finding space for the Meeting whether rented, leased, leased to own, built, bought or donated.

Description: The Meeting is responsible for providing the Meetinghouse Scout(s) with oversight and guidance for what to be looking for. Some examples of criteria include, general location, minimum requirements for capacity, accessibility, restrooms, parking, lighting, children's space indoors and out, and storage space, accessibility to natural areas, maximum monthly cost to the Meeting, and whether use by others in our community should be considered including renting out space. Criteria may change as members and attenders change, and the Meeting is responsible for communicating changes to the Scout(s).

Because of the importance of their mission, and because of the challenges of finding a Meetinghouse that sufficiently meets our needs, if, in the opinion of a Meetinghouse Scout, a location is found that might be an interesting option for the Meeting to consider even though it doesn't meet minimum criteria, the Scout is welcome to suggest to the Meeting that possibility.

Responsibilities:

1. Keep a lookout for available purchase or rental opportunities that would meet the needs of the Meeting.
2. Elicit and welcome input from members, attenders and others in our community about Meetinghouse possibilities.

Bellingham Friends Meeting

Guidelines for Communication within Committees and Between Committees and our Monthly Meeting

Seasoning, March 2015-June 2016

Revised September 2016 for consideration at October Meeting for Business

Bellingham Friends Meeting⁽¹⁾ recognizes that our monthly Meeting for Business⁽²⁾ is central to the spiritual connectedness and functioning of our worshiping community. “The Quaker method for reaching decisions involves searching for the right corporate decisions and [discerning] the at the 'sense of the Meeting' or unity.”⁽³⁾ (*North Pacific Yearly Meeting - Faith and Practice*) “The commitment to search for unity depends upon mutual trust, implies a willingness to labor and to submit to the leadings of the Spirit, and grows as members become better acquainted with one another... Friends seek divine guidance, are patient with each other, and are concerned for the good of the meeting as a whole. Friends allow adequate time for deliberate and prayerful consideration of the matter at hand. Friends attend meetings for business open to the leadings of the Spirit.”

Friends wait upon the Spirit to move forward; without unity, Friends may choose to hold over an issue, refer it to a committee for a recommendation, or have a second hour or threshing session, worship sharing, or clearness process as they wait for clarity to emerge.⁽⁴⁾

Memberships, nominations, annual budgets, and other weighty decisions are generally held over for a month of seasoning before being approved. While the prayerful and Spirit-led participation of attenders is welcome, Meeting members are responsible for the decisions of the Meeting.

Crucial to the proper functioning of our Meeting is the connection between our monthly Meeting for Business and our committees, which help carry out our collective leadings. Committees also use the Friendly discernment process, above, to carry out the work of the Spirit, as charged by the Meeting. Standing committees have written job descriptions which are

approved by the Meeting, and generally make regular reports to Meeting for Worship for Business. Sometimes a leading emerges from within a committee and the Meeting is asked to consider approving their proposal. Other times committees are unable to reach unity and bring questions and requests for guidance to the Monthly Meeting. In either case, any participant in Meeting for Worship for Business is welcome to raise a question, keeping in mind the Quaker practice of only speaking once to an issue, minding the Light, and assuring that the question is inspired by a concern for the best interest of the Meeting as a whole. Unless specifically charged by the Meeting to take right action on its behalf, neither committees nor individual Friends speak or act for the whole Meeting without bringing their concern to the business meeting for discernment. Financial donations and endorsements of organizations and individuals are approved and minuted at Meeting for Worship for Business.

Committees are created by the Meeting to do the work of the Meeting, but they are not empowered to substitute their own decisions for those of the Meeting as a whole, except in limited ways as noted above. Whether a committee is standing or ad hoc, committees make recommendations and provide due diligence in seasoning concerns and proposals. Their faithful discernment may bring the Meeting a clear, thought-out proposal, saving time and avoiding bogging down the Meeting for Worship for Business. However, the Monthly Meeting is the fundamental unit of the Religious Society of Friends, and all significant decisions are made in accordance with Friends' time-honored practice of finding the sense of the Meeting. Friends appointed to committees are given latitude to discern the inner workings of their committee, but significant changes in committee job descriptions, the formation of standing subcommittees, or other substantial changes to or actions by committees should come to the Monthly Meeting for approval. If any member of a committee feels that an action or decision is "substantial," it should be in the committee's report to the monthly business meeting.

To welcome Friends old and new to join in our discernment practices, and to enhance the smooth functioning of our committees and our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business, we offer the following guidelines for communication within committees and between committees and the Monthly Meeting:

1. From *NPYM - Faith and Practice*: "It is important that every meeting for discernment by a meeting, committee, or other decision-making body begin with a period of worship rather than with 'a few moments of silence,' so that the spirit of worship will pervade the transaction of business." Committees are reminded to "mind the Light" as they go about the work of the Meeting. Committees are encouraged to minute their meetings and give regular reports to the Meeting.
2. Be kind, joyful, patient and loving with one another in all decision-making. Humor, trust and compassion are essential.
3. If a Friend has a concern, they are encouraged to bring it to the relevant committee by approaching the committee clerk and asking to be placed on the agenda of the next committee meeting. Or they may bring the concern directly to Meeting for Worship for Business if the issue is not appropriate to any single standing or ad hoc committee or if the concern cannot be addressed in a timely manner by the relevant committee.
4. Members bringing a concern directly to Meeting for Business are encouraged to contact the clerk of Meeting in advance and give a brief description of their concern.
5. Committee meetings are open to all Meeting attenders wishing to contribute to the work of the committee. If there is business of a confidential nature to be discussed by the committee, guests may need to leave while those matters are discussed.
6. Friends wishing to attend any committee meeting are encouraged to contact the clerk of the committee and let the clerk know if they have anything to be added to the agenda, and also to contact the host. Clerks are encouraged to arrange the agenda considerately

to accommodate the guest's agenda item (i.e., during the portion of the meeting mutually convenient to committee and guest.)

7. Friends may ask a committee to consider their concern, even if they are not able to attend the committee meeting themselves. They may submit the concern in writing.

a. The Friend who brought the concern to the committee can expect to be informed of the committee's discernment and any recommendations.

b. If the committee decides to lay down the concern, the Friend can expect to be informed, so if they wish can take their concern to a different committee or Meeting for Business.

8. If committees have a matter of an urgent nature to bring to Meeting for Business, they are encouraged to try to address it in a timely fashion so that they can come to the regularly scheduled Meeting for Business. If that is not possible, urgent issues that come up unexpectedly can require that a Called Meeting for Business be held as soon as possible. Such called meetings are often clerked by either the clerk of Meeting or the clerk of Ministry and Counsel.

⁽¹⁾ We are part of a denomination historically known as the Religious Society of Friends of Truth. The formal name of our Meeting is Bellingham Friends Meeting. Bellingham Friends Meeting is part of North Pacific Yearly Meeting and Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting.

⁽²⁾ The monthly decision-making meetings of Bellingham Friends Meeting are usually referred to as "Meeting for Worship for Business" or "Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business." However, in the interests of clarity and brevity, they are sometimes referred to in this document as "Meeting for Business" or as "business meeting." These terms are interchangeable.

⁽³⁾ The original wording from Faith and Practice was, "The Quaker method for reaching decisions involves searching for the right corporate decisions and *arriving at* the 'sense of the Meeting' or unity." "Discernment" may better describe how Quakers come to unity.

(4) For additional guidance on Friends' practices for handling controversial or intransigent issues, please refer to the *NPYM Faith and Practice* section of Chapter 5 - The Monthly Meeting: "Friends Method of Reaching Decisions," with special attention to sections on "*Sense of the Meeting*," "*Unity*," "*Threshing Sessions*," and "*Serious Differences of Opinion*."

3. Report to Meeting quarterly, or more often as appropriate, the current state of the search including any suggestions that may have come from members or attenders with an explanation of why a site is or isn't recommended.

4. If a potential location generates sufficient interest Scouts are encouraged to discuss the merits of the site with other scouts.

If a report to Meeting of a potential new Meetinghouse location generates sufficient interest to warrant further investigation, an ad hoc Meetinghouse committee will be formed that includes at least one Meetinghouse Scout and at least two other people. Because Quakers often have a discernment process that is slower than many real estate transactions, members and attenders are reminded that abundant patience may be needed. Following a report back to Meeting by the Ad Hoc Meetinghouse Committee that a potential Meetinghouse may have been found, Friends will be asked to visit the location and the Meeting will start a discernment process to decide if the proposed situation is right for the Meeting.