

**Bellingham Friends Meeting**  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business  
Minutes for 5/3/2020  
Approved June 14, 2020

Attending: Mary Ann Percy, clerking; Virginia Herrick, recording; John Hatten; Susan Richardson; Don Goldstein; Wendy Goldstein; Jean Brechan; Joanne Cowan; Larry Thompson; Allen Stockbridge; Janine Bruton; Lynne Lohr; Mary Hansen.

1. Opening worship began at 12 p.m.
2. Clerk's statement on clerking: Good afternoon, Friends. I am at once humbled and grateful for your confidence in offering me this opportunity to serve you, our Bellingham Friends community, which I have grown to so love and cherish in my six and a half years of being here with you.

I am aware of the large shoes John has left behind, which I hope I may someday grow to fill--serving a Monthly Meeting as clerk is an awesome responsibility. I ask in advance for your forbearance and forgiveness--I know I shall serve imperfectly, mess up at times, as we all do, not be faithful to nor live up to the Light, and thereby cause offence. It is my intention at those times to acknowledge my mistakes, make amends, and endeavor to better mind the Light--practices Friends have been encouraged to use for centuries. I welcome your suggestions. I am mindful too that I come into this role during a time of on-going challenge for many individuals in and for our meeting community as a whole, and I ask that you hold me, our assistant clerk Janine, our recording clerk Virginia, our committees, and our entire community in the light.

I'm moved to continue the practice John established of offering a "Clerk's Report" at the beginning of MFWFB each month, and I'd like to include in it, "a moment (or two!) of Light"--a special kindness, insight or beauty in our community during the previous month. It's a practice I learned from Elizabeth Boardman, a long-time and beloved clerk of San Francisco MM. I encourage you to share with me—an email or a text—such experiences that you observe among members of our community. And in this way we'll be seeking the Light in one another! This month I would like to appreciate the kindness of Laura Howrey, J. Lee Cook, and Rachel Van Boven, for their willingness to assist some of the more vulnerable members of our community with shopping and errands. Abundant thanks to you, Friends!

The 1972 edition of Faith and Practice from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting offers this about our Meetings for Worship on the Occasion of Business:

*Meetings for the transaction of business are conducted in the same expectant waiting for the guidance of the Spirit as is the meeting for worship. Periods of worship, especially at the beginning and end, lift hearts and minds out of self-centered desires into an openness to seek the common good under the leadership of the Spirit...*

I ask that Friends follow our practice of listening fully, with open heart and mind to each Friend's vocal ministry. Please raise your hand or if you're not on video, to say "Clerk please" in order to speak, only after the Friend speaking has finished, please wait to be recognized before speaking, and remember to avoid repeating what another Friend has already offered. Unfortunately, with the Zoom program, it doesn't work for us to stand to deliver ministry, so we

will need to discern even more carefully if what we feel compelled to share is from the Spirit. Please take care to allow silence before and after each person speaks, preserving the “worship” in our Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business. Thank you, Friends.

3. Review of last month’s minutes. Minutes were approved with changes.

4. Member concerns. None.

5. Review of agenda. Approved.

6. Items for worship and action

a) FCNL Priorities for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

PDF form filled out by Allen Stockbridge and Don Lotze, based on a second-hour program on this subject. Thirteen people had participated in the session.

Our top priorities were:

1. Campaign Finance Reform and Equitable Access for all to participate in an open and transparent political process.
2. Sustainable solutions to climate change, including reducing fossil fuel use, increasing renewable energy, using regenerative agriculture, strengthening environmental protections, promoting international cooperation, and protecting vulnerable populations.
3. Economic justice and equity; meet basic needs including access to affordable healthcare, housing and education for all.
4. Reduce armed conflicts, military spending and environmental impacts of military operations.
5. Operate criminal justice and immigration systems that promote and respect the rights, safety and dignity of all people.
6. Witness and advocate on Native American concerns. Honor our treaties and their connection with the land and the environment, spiritually and physically.
7. Pursue policies and regulations that reduce systemic racism in government institutions, education and business.

Additional comments: Climate destruction, immigration cruelty, unregulated capitalism, ineffective gun policy, racism and military spending are all intertwined.

We approve of FCNL’s system for collecting input from Friends Meetings nationwide.

Discussion:

~A Friend suggested adding some wording relating to reduction of human population under “2. Sustainable solutions to climate change.”

~Friends were concerned about how words like “population control” or “population management” might be interpreted as endorsement of authoritarian government control of reproductive rights or even eugenics.

~A Friend said the problem is not population, but consumption and capitalism.

~A Friend noted having heard from demographers that the most impactful thing anyone can do to reduce their carbon footprint is to have one less child.

~A Friend noted that one of the most effective ways to reduce population growth is to educate women.

~The Friend who spoke earlier about consumption and capitalism being more problematic than population said they would gladly include language regarding education of women.

~Allen S. suggested some wording relating to the human population, including education of women.

~Another Friend suggested that we trust Allen S. and others working on this to wordsmith our concern that human population growth is devastating the planet, and that FCNL should address the issue. The report must be returned to FCNL before our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

~Friends approved this suggestion.

~A Friend raised a concern, under the same item (2), that there was no mention of the carbon footprint of animal agriculture. Friends agreed that while we do not have unity on nonconsumption of meat, we do have unity around using regenerative agriculture.

ACTION: Report on FCNL priorities was approved with the addition of language regarding how devastating human population growth is to the planet.

#### b) Pastoral Care Committee Report

1. During this crisis and time when we have been staying home, Pastoral Care Committee has endeavored to reach out to members of our community. Our community has done an admirable job of reaching out to one another. It has been heartening to see the level of love and support of those who have stepped forth to help with practical needs as well as give social and emotional support to one another, in the Meeting community and the larger community.
2. Pastoral Care Committee held a joint meeting with Worship and Ministry Committee to labor about Inclusiveness, reconciliation and healing within our Meeting. We decided to do an outreach to individuals to get ideas about what Friends think would be most helpful in this process. Pastoral Care has this responsibility.
3. Pastoral Care continues in its role of providing care to members and attenders, including helping with practical issues, clearness and even marriage if anyone wants to get married. We really need a party or something. (Just trying for levity. We of course would take such a request seriously!)

~Regarding item 2, the committee clerk explained that Friends responses to the outreach questions would be confidential. The responses will be collected and Pastoral Care will summarize and report back to Meeting.

#### c) Meetinghouse committee report

1. (Discussion, possible decisions)The Majestic. The situation regarding the intergenerational high school was still in a holding pattern at the time of our April 17 meeting. The rental agreement is still unsigned. Allen Stockbridge remains the contact person for BFM with Alborz.

Does the Meeting have any new clarity about moving forward with the rental agreement, or shall we hold off for another month?

a. Friends had proposed at last month's MfWfB a couple changes:

1. If there are occasions where BFM is not able to use the Majestic because of other scheduled events, could we have the option of lower rent that month, rather than credit for access to the building on a different day? Do Friends have unity with this? Should we ask Alborz about this now, or wait?

2. That we ask to pay less than 50% rent if we move our belongings in before we can actually begin meeting there. If so, should Meetinghouse Committee propose an alternative amount? Guidance welcome.

2. (Information) Committee structure. Meetinghouse Committee members who are continuing on (John Hatten, Meetinghouse Liaison, Allan Richardson, Scout, and Larry Thompson, member at-large. The committee agreed to meet quarterly, with the next meeting to be scheduled for June, with additional meetings being scheduled on an as-needed basis. Allen Stockbridge will continue to be a scout, but is not on the committee. Allan R., Larry, and John agreed to rotate clerking responsibilities, with John acting as clerk for the June meeting.

3. (Information) Job description altered slightly, in accordance with what was already discussed at April MfWfB (quarterly meetings and reports to MfWfB), but no substantive changes. The old job description for Meetinghouse scouts, which predated the committee, has been laid down, as the job of Meetinghouse scouts is now in the Meetinghouse Committee job description.

#### Item 1: Discussion

~Allen S., as the lead negotiator with the Majestic, pointed out that the draft rental agreement has been altered a couple of times already, and we may need to make additional changes once we have more information, so it's premature to ask Alborz to make changes.

~After considerable discussion of the two suggestions from last month's MfWfB (no one spoke against them), Friends agreed that because much remains uncertain (regarding whether the Intergenerational High School will be signing a master lease), that we can wait and make decisions about these two items once things are clearer.

~Allen S.'s impression is that the soonest we'd be subleasing from the school would be September 2021.

~A Friend noted that a condition for us finding unity about this move was the surety that we would be able to stay at least three years. (2-1/2 years in the rental agreement, with six months notice required for termination after the initial 2-1/2 years.)

~Allen S.: We have an agreement in principle with the school re: sublease, but there are many uncertainties.

**DECISION:** Meetinghouse Committee will not move forward with rental agreement without coming back to MfWfB.

Concern from Treasurer:

~We are still paying Explorations full rent. Automatically comes out of our account on the first of each month.

DECISION: Meetinghouse Liaison will take up the question of how long we can continue to store things there, and for how much, and come back to us after their next meeting.

Question from a Friend:

~Any news regarding Verona St. property? (A lot for sale on Verona Street, near Boys & Girls Club.)

~Allen S. contacted Boys & Girls Club a couple of times, re: possibility of renting parking; the executive director has gotten back to him (since last Meetinghouse Committee), asking about our timeline. Allen responded, and is awaiting reply.

#### d) Safe Quaker Community report

1. (Information) The committee met this past month, and is working on reaching unity regarding some of the concerns raised at the threshing session in February. We will be re-drafting the guidelines regarding the participation of anyone accused, charged, or convicted of a sex offense, and hope to bring them back to MfWfB as soon as next month.

2. (Information) We also have been in contact with Olympia Monthly Meeting, as they, too, have been wrestling with this issue. They have developed a set of policies very similar to what the SQCC has proposed, but also including a flow chart to indicate the order in which things should happen and which committees or individuals are responsible. They also have created a standing committee on "Safety and Welcoming."

3. (Information) The committee's next meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. May 14.

#### e) Worship & Ministry Report

1. Advice for May - from NPYM Faith and Practice, pg 98

"Fear - and the sense of vulnerability it often brings - can separate us from each other and from God. It can cloud our judgement and diminish our abilities to discern, learn, and grow. As each of us grows in the Spirit, we are called to let go of our fears: of making mistakes; of not being approved of; of needs going unmet; of conflict, illness, loneliness and diminishment.

"Living in the Spirit within a supportive, faithful fellowship gives us courage and guidance to let our lives speak, even when we are afraid, and helps us turn towards each other and toward the Light. When fear threatens our resolve, God's love comforts and strengthens us. When we trust our Inner Guide, we can walk through our fears and come out in love."

2. Second Hour schedule

May 3 - MfWfB

May 10 - (Mothers Day) Potluck/bring your lunch and socialize

May 17 - Worship Sharing on May's Advice

May 24 - Memorial Day weekend – open

May 31 - Quaker Speak?

3. Final approval following seasoning of nomination of Don Goldstein to Nominating Committee

4. Census for NPYM—As had been done the last several years, Don Goldstein has prepared a

preliminary list, which then goes to W&M for approval. In the long-ago past, this was based on membership, but for many years now the Yearly Meeting lets each meeting determine whom we count for assessment purposes to support the yearly meeting and now includes active attenders as well. The criterion that we have been using for several years now is to count those “expected at Meeting once a month or more often, and/or active as an officer or committee member.” We are assessed \$60 per year per person counted.

5. We welcome Mimi Freshley who is joining W+M as a co-clerk along with Dorrie Jordan. We wish to minute our appreciation of John Hatten’s significant contributions as clerk, as member of W&M, and for all his technical help setting up Zoom meetings.

6. We recently met jointly with Pastoral Care to focus on the continuing hurt feelings/distress felt by various members/attenders and how to go about reconciliation. Pastoral Care has been tasked with querying individuals as to what they need from the Meeting to start healing (listening project). Since this also bears on the job description for W&M, we will work closely with PCC in developing guidelines and objectives before setting this up.

7. Next W+M meeting set for May 28th at 9:30 AM on Zoom

8. Items tabled until next meeting: review of job description, further discussion of eldering and reconciliation, planning meeting for 2021 Spring Quarterly Meeting.

ACTION: Don’s nomination approved.

#### f) Nominating Committee Report

1. (Action) One nominee from this committee is seasoning from last month’s MfWfB: Larry Thompson as the at-large member of Meetinghouse Committee. We ask final approval for this nomination.

2. (Request and information) Job descriptions. Job descriptions are reviewed and updated as needed every five years, by whoever is holding those roles for the Meeting (or when a new role or committee is created). If they require minor wording changes (or none), please just let committee clerk Virginia H. know, and she will update the file as needed. If there are substantive changes to the job description, please notify the clerk of Meeting that you’ll be bringing that to MfWfB for the Meeting’s approval. So far, job descriptions have been updated for several roles and committees. Thank you, Friends! Keep them coming!

3. (information) Our next meeting will be at 5 p.m. May 21, on Zoom.

ACTION: Larry T’s nomination approved.

7. Closing worship was at 1:15PM

**Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – May 17, 2020**

**Attending:** Jean Brechan, Janine Bruton, Joanne Cowan, Mimi Freshley, Don Goldstein, Wendy Goldstein, Mary Hansen, John Hatten, Virginia Herrick (recording), Steve Hutchens, Dorrie Jordan, Mary Ann Percy (clerking)

**Meeting began at 11:50 a.m. after a brief period of worship**

**1. Social and Environmental Concerns.** (Clerk of Meeting reading from an email previously distributed requesting that we discuss this concern, in lieu of a report by the Committee or individual bringing the request.) Would we like to cosponsor an online educational event about creating a public electric service?

There will be an online forum on the possibility of establishing a publicly-owned electrical system for Bellingham on Wednesday May 27 at 7 p.m. The forum is being put on by a group Daniel Kirkpatrick is part of, the Climate Reality Project Bellingham Chapter. (Climate Reality Project is a national group related to Al Gore's work on the climate crisis.)

Bellingham Friends Meeting in February of this year co-sponsored another event offered by this group, and this is a followup. There is no cost to co-sponsor. Daniel Kirkpatrick, a member of SEC, will represent us in terms of volunteer labor.

Several Friends spoke in support of cosponsoring this informational meeting, and one Friend spoke in favor of having a public electrical system, rather than the private for-profit company that now provides electricity here.

One Friend spoke of a concern that the process used today is faulty, because there is no one present at our called Meeting for Worship for Business from the committee bringing it forward, to either make a presentation regarding the proposal, or to answer questions.

Clerk asked W&M take up the generic concern regarding the necessity that an individual or committee asking for a called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business be present at said Meeting. Co-clerks of Worship and Ministry agreed to take up the issue, and to call upon the Friend who raised the concern if they have any questions.

**ACTION: The Meeting was in unity with the proposal to co-sponsor the event.**

**Meeting closed with worship at 12 p.m.**

**Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – May 17, 2020  
~Minutes approved June 14, 2020~**

**Attending:** Jean Brechan, Janine Bruton, Joanne Cowan, Mimi Freshley, Don Goldstein, Wendy Goldstein, Mary Hansen, John Hatten, Virginia Herrick (recording), Steve Hutchens, Dorrie Jordan, Mary Ann Percy (clerking)

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