

Bellingham Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Minutes for 8/9/20
Approved Sept. 13, 2020

Attending: Jean Brechan, Janine Bruton, Dorothy de Fremery, Mimi Freshley, Don Goldstein, Wendy Goldstein, Lorina Hall, John Hatten, Virginia Herrick (recording), Dorrie Jordan, Mary Ann Percy (clerking), Susan Richardson, Allen Stockbridge.

1. Opening worship 11:33 a.m.
2. Clerk's statement on clerking

Good morning, Friends; thank you for joining us today.

a. Clerk had not yet heard from anyone in our community for this month's "moment of Light," and wondered if something is now arising for anyone here present that Friends would like to share? Please send Clerk an email during the coming month and let her know of any moments of light--a special kindness, insight, or beauty—you've experienced in our community! Thank you, Friends!

b. Clerk asks again 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, and 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. Clerk asks Friends to please take care to allow silence after each person speaks, preserving the "worship" in our Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business. Thank you, Friends.

c. Clerk is greatly appreciating how preparing a Clerk's Statement each month affords the opportunity to read anew and in some cases review favorite Quaker tracts. For today, the Clerk has chosen these words from Pendle Hill Pamphlet #453 "A Practical Mysticism, How Quaker Process Opens Us to the Promptings of the Divine," by Elizabeth Meyer. On p. 4, she writes: *"The most effective way to learn Quaker process is to attend business meetings--lots of them--paying careful attention to the Spirit. What draws the group closer to the Divine as it attends to business? What draws it away? Reading about Quaker process is no substitute for experiencing it."*

Referring to the subsequent "12 Friendly practices" she describes in the pamphlet, she then writes:

“Faithfully upholding these Friendly practices, as a worshiping body, centers us in the Divine Presence in our midst as we conduct business.”

Clerk invited Friends to note those things which draw our body closer to the Divine, the still point, and to seek to live into them more fully.

3. Review of agenda (No substantive changes)
4. Review minutes:
 - Review of last month's minutes from MFWFB 7/12/20 (Approved with copyedits)
 - Review of minutes of Called MFWFB 8/2/20 (Approved with clarification and copyedits)
5. Member concerns
 - A. Letter of Introduction for J. Lee (This was introduced at July MfWfB as a member concern.)

19 Seventh Month, 2020

Dear Montana Friends,

Bellingham Friends Meeting sends greetings and warmly commends to your care our dear Friend J. Lee Cook.

J. Lee has been an active attender at Bellingham Friends Meeting (BFM) for two years, and is in the process of becoming a member of our fellowship until such time as he finds a Meeting to which he feels led to transfer his membership. J. Lee will be sorely missed; he has been an inspiration and a joy to Bellingham Friends, serving on our Social and Environmental Concerns committee, as a key holder and a faithful part of the setup team, and on the ad hoc Safe Quaker Community Committee.

J. Lee was recently instrumental in initiating a BFM Racial Justice Working Group to enable Bellingham Friends to take action in response to this long-overdue movement for racial justice in our country. J. Lee served as moderator for the first event the working group developed, an online forum with panelists on July 1. We will miss his eloquent ministry, his passion for justice, and his unfailing kindness and honesty.

J. Lee plans to live in Polson. We will be holding him in the Light for this new adventure. Please make him welcome.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Percy

Clerk, Bellingham Friends Meeting

Discussion: ~A Friend expressed appreciation for eloquently, faithfully and carefully written documents on behalf of our Meeting, including this one.

~A Friend strongly encourages that the letter be given to J. Lee, and that it be sent to the clerks and co-clerks of Montana Gathering of Friends.

~Friend volunteers to find out who those are and Mary Hansen will follow up with Don and make sure it is sent to them.

a. A Friend suggested that Friends check in with J. Lee before carrying out this suggestion. Mary H. agreed to do so.

6. Items for worship and action

A. Worship & Ministry

1. Mimi F. reporting

Worship and Ministry Report August 9, 2020

Advice:

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

Isaac Pennington, 1667

Britain Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice* 10.1

a. Second Hour Schedule:

August 16: Worship Sharing on August Advice, facilitated by Don G. and Jean B.

August 23: AFSC Presentation by Susan Cozzens and Carolyn Wildflower

August 30: Kindness, facilitated by Janine Bruton

September 6: Extended check-ins and brown bag lunch

September 13: MfWfB

b. The committee reviewed the Guidelines for Participation by people accused, charged, or convicted of sex offenses. Recommendations will be shared with the Safe Quaker Community Committee.

c. We discussed ways of reaching out to Friends who attended worship regularly prior to the Meeting needing to move to worship using Zoom. This will continue to be discussed and we will coordinate efforts with Pastoral Care if needed.

d. Next meeting: August 24 at 9:00 AM

Discussion:

~Friend wondered whether Aug. 30 program would be worship sharing or some other format. Janine (who will be facilitating) will reflect on that and let us know when she is clear.

~Friend thanks the committee for this month's advice. Shared that another friend had the same quote on her refrigerator.

~Friend asked that we have more time between speakers.

~Friend asked that the entirety of Isaac Penington's quote be the subject of the second hour. Clerk put the entirety of the quote in the chat box.

~E-news editor agreed to post the entire quote.

B. Pastoral Care--including letter of application for BFM membership by J. Lee Cook and Job Description

1. Mary H. reporting

Pastoral Care Committee Report to MfWfB August 9, 2020

1. Actions:

- Membership of J Lee Cook for seasoning. (Letter read aloud, John Hatten, Daniel K. and Mary met with J. Lee for clearness, and agreed to recommend him for membership.)
- Job description for seasoning.

2. Information:

- Listening to individual Bellingham Friends on issues of inclusion and safety: We have determined queries, who will be contacted (all Friends who have been present at any point during the period of time that this has been a concern) and that it is to be focused on listening. Our final step is a training on active listening. This will happen later in August and then we will start to contact Friends.

Letter from J. Lee Cook:

July 14, 2020

Blessings Friends,

In this time of worldwide pandemic, racial violence, and sexual abuse, I am very happy to apply for membership in Bellingham Friends Meeting.

The past several years I have been welcomed into the the faith family of BFM. The fellowship that is shared with me and so many others is heartwarming. And I'm very grateful for the many blessings it has brought me.

My heart seeks the Truth of life. The eternal Light of God exists in BFM, through the important community work which BFM has initiated the past several years.

“By these acts you shall know me.” A loose quote of an important sentiment, which demonstrates the will of the many members of BFM, who daily work to ensure that Bellingham is a much better community for all.

Whether it’s quiet worship or helping a committee, I have found remarkable connections to everyone I have worked with. Strong beliefs backed by even stronger actions have enabled our congregation to serve those who are without homes, food, or clothing.

We have been there for people who don't ordinarily have a voice in the larger community. Working with “environmental activists,” has forged great relationships that will bear fruit as Bellingham and Whatcom County continue planning for a future that is less reliant on fossil fuels.

Working with coalitions of groups to bring awareness of racism and ways to combat it head on, have been exhilarating and well-received by the community.

I find that being on the various committees for BFM, has helped me to define why I want to be a genuine “Quaker.” The reason is: “I want to be part of a spiritual organization which welcomes all. Or most all people. A Christian religion for those who seek Truth, Light, Compassion and values that are shared and lived.”

Plus, it’s fun to be in a body politic that has the strength and enthusiasm to work on behalf of those who can’t.

My life is richer and much more faith-driven since I have become an attender with BFM. I proudly let people know when they ask: “What church do you belong to?” I say with a big smile, “I’m a Quaker!” It gives me such a grand feeling in my heart to express that to those who ask.

Working on various issues has given me an appreciation for the extent which encompasses the wide and varying interests of members.

I think what I write isn’t nearly as eloquent as the following;

“Test for membership should not be doctrinal agreement, nor adherence to certain testimonies, but evidence of sincere seeking and striving for truth. Together with an understanding of the lines along with Friends who are seeking that Truth.”

~Friends World Conference
Faith & Practice 1952

Thank you very much for your belief in me as a potential Quaker....officially?

Peace,

J. Lee Cook

Draft Job Description:

Pastoral Care Committee

Purpose: To care for the Meeting community's members, including outward aspects of building fellowship, so that all feel acceptance, loving care, and the opportunity for service. The committee meets regularly to carry out this work in a spirit of dedication and love.

Responsibilities:

1. Responding to individual or family concerns, including organizing meal trains, transportation, and other support in times of need. Convening and facilitating support groups and care committees as needed.
2. Staying in touch with people in our Meeting community in a spirit of loving concern and affectionate interest.
3. Following established Meeting guidelines for confidentiality and when necessary explaining these to those seeking confidentiality. Clarifying that confidentiality is a mutual agreement of trust.
4. Facilitating and setting up clearness committees, including for marriage, and membership. Working with Worship and Ministry to assist with memorial services. Encourage regular and active attenders to become members.
5. Working with Outreach and Welcoming coordinator and keyholder to assure accessibility and to ensure that all feel welcome.
6. Supporting and encouraging community members to deepen fellowship through social activities, and work with Worship and Ministry to develop second hour programs to deepen and expand fellowship.
7. Provide a resource to Meeting Community to access services within the larger community.

Membership:

1. Friends on this committee should have tact, dedication, and discretion. The committee is ideally representative of the varied makeup of the Meeting, and its members are persons of experience, sympathy, and good judgment.
2. The clerk or co-clerk of Meeting will serve ex officio on this committee if possible. The committee will ideally have four to five members.
3. This committee and Worship and Ministry will hold a joint meeting twice a year, or more frequently as need arises.
4. Two-year terms will be staggered as is practical.

Discussion: Re: J. Lee's letter. A Friend questioned and another suggested an explanation about the qualification of welcoming "most all people," is that our fellowship is open to all those willing and able to pursue living by Friends' testimonies. Another Friend shared some historical context for this from *Faith and Practice*.

Re: Listening Project:

~A Friend: Is everyone going to be included in the Listening Project? Will it include Friends other than those who feel unsafe in our community?

Mary: Everyone will be included except those who haven't been attending in a long time, or who are very new to the community and unaware of the issues.

Actions: J. Lee's membership is accepted for seasoning.

P.C. job description is accepted for seasoning. Edits are welcomed in the coming month.

C. Social and Environmental Concerns Dorothy de Fremery reporting

August, 2020 Social and Environmental Concerns Committee

Daniel Kirkpatrick and Dorothy de Fremery are now only active members of SEC, and they are not currently meeting over zoom, but by occasional phone conversation.

Both Daniel and I have been focusing on the RJWG (Racial Justice Working Group) and that has taken precedence. As this method of communication is preferred at this point, and both members are putting considerable time into RJWG, we are comfortable working with only two people on the committee.

RJWG put together a panel on Racial Justice that was created in the month following the death of George Floyd. Is it available to be seen on the BFM website. There was a steep learning curve, but much was learned and there is current discussion regarding a second panel in either late September or early October.

SEC is hoping to revive Concern of the Month. Not knowing initially how long we would be unable to meet in person, we had listed in the e-news several options where donations would be much appreciated. As we continue to be restricted on in-person meetings, and can no longer 'pass the hat' at Meeting, we have the following proposal to replace that.

Action items:

Part 1)

We are proposing to create an option on the BFM website where someone could click and make their donation online into a specified account for the Concern of the Month. The clerk of SEC could access that account and send the donation to that concern. We would also describe, as we have done when we met in person, a little about that month's concern. This would be included in the enews as well as on the website.

Part 2)

To make a more meaningful donation, we would also ask that up until we are able to be together in person, that Meeting contribute as needed to bring the total of the donations up to \$100.

Discussion: Clerk wonders if there are questions or concerns, especially regarding the option of a link on the BFM website for donations to concerns of the month.

~A Friend commends SEC for supporting the wonderful work of RJWG (Racial Justice Working Group). Friend questions the wisdom of setting up a different system. At beginning of the pandemic, we did a food drive through the treasurer, and got a huge response. It's a system that works. Since we don't have a button to donate to Meeting, it would be odd to have a button to donate to Concern of the Month. We don't know how long we're going to be in limbo. Also, we make regular donations to organizations in our budget, and SEC is responsible for selecting those, I'm reluctant to set an entirely new system in motion.

~Dorothy: Glad to rescind the proposal if there is another system that's working for concerns of the month. She had no knowledge of donations being made to concerns of the month, or how that was going through the treasurer.

~Clerk: Would SEC like to have a report from Treasurer about how much has been donated to various organizations?

~Dorothy: Yes, in the past, SEC collected and dispersed funds, and kept a record of what was given by BFM to various organizations. This would be nice to know, via Treasurer.

~Recording clerk clarified that food drive was a special situation; not clear that donations to other possible concerns of the month have gone through the Treasurer thus far.

~FCNL Rep: The whole issue of donations, as it's been raised in this report, speaks directly to one of my concerns as rep. to FCNL for BFM. Appreciates the effort to clarify our rules of operation, re: finances and donations. Solicitations come to her re: FCNL, and it presents a challenge how to respond. How should this work?

~Friend: I would suggest that we hold over this discussion so that we can bring Finance Committee and the treasurer into it. When there was a cause (Food Bank) that stood out strongly, there was a positive response to it. Would like to have input from Treasurer about the best way to deal with Concern of the Month in the time of pandemic.

Dorothy: While we are working on that, will announce a Concern of the Month in the e-newsletter, with donations going through the Treasurer, unless otherwise announced. Will contact the Treasurer to ascertain that this is OK.

ACTION: Dorothy, as clerk of SEC, will check with the treasurer and bring forward another proposal next month at MfWfB, and at that time we can adopt a process for concerns of the month moving forward.

Discussion: Size of committee. Laurie is back in town, and Jean has seen her and is going to give her the link to worship. Laurie has trouble with Zoom. Friends are encouraged to reach out to her; she has not resigned from SEC, but has been out of touch during COVID shutdown.

Clerk: Please be in communication with Nominating Committee about your needs as a committee.

B. FCNL Report

Lorina H. reporting

Report from FCNL to Bellingham Friends Meeting, August 2020

FCNL's Prevention of Violent Conflict Work

Shukria Dellawar is FCNL's Legislative Associate for the Prevention of Violent Conflict and the Coordinator of the Prevention and Protection Working Group (PPWG), which is a coalition of human rights, religious, humanitarian, anti-genocide, and peace organizations) has become a must-go meeting under Dellawar's leadership. At a recent meeting, Department of Justice, Treasury, and three other

major federal departments attended. People participate because PPWG is tapping into their passion for quality work in international relations.

Dellewar has built relationships so that people now ask her to be a resource, seek her out to make the agenda, offer to present, and call her to help with stalled legislation. She has contacts who help issues move forward. Many people who work in the agencies still care deeply about International work, however fraught it becomes. For more information from the FCNL website:

<https://www.fcnl.org/about/policy/issues/peacebuilding/prevention-and-protection>

Lorina: reported that she has this detailed letter about the work of one person in FCNL, but doesn't have clarity about how to be in communication with FCNL re: lobbying efforts for the Meeting.

Discussion: Clerk put the FCNL address in the chat box. Many thanks to Lorina for bringing us information regarding the work of FCNL. Friends discussed different ways of being engaged with the work of FCNL, including financial contributions collectively or individually, inviting someone from FCNL to make a presentation to BFM, and using the FCNL website both to become informed about pending legislation, and to easily write letters to our members of Congress.

Clerk: Good second-hour program topic: How do we decide who to donate to? Maybe W&M can talk with Lorina and come up with a second-hour program on this topic?

Mimi, as co-clerk of W&M, will talk to Lorina about reaching out to FCNL to have someone from that organization give a second-hour talk.

C. Meetinghouse Committee John Hatten reporting

Bellingham Friends Meeting Meetinghouse Committee Report for Meeting for Worship for Business, August 9, 2020

Update relating to the Majestic:

The same owners also own the Dharma Hall next door to the Majestic. The Buddhist group will not be renewing their lease on the building. This could be an excellent location for Friends Meeting. Allen Stockbridge will talk to the owners, but the rent may be beyond our means.

Verona Street property:

Allen and Allan had a long telephone conference with Kim Weil of the City of Bellingham regarding the property. As a result there are several things that we are working on:

1. We will be getting an estimate on the cost of a critical areas/wetlands survey.

2. Allen will continue discussions with the Boys and Girls Club about a parking agreement.
3. We will get a rough ballpark estimate of the cost of building construction from a local designer-builder.
4. Allen is in contact with the seller regarding a sales contract while we are exploring the various issues related to the property. This will come before business meeting, if it is ready.

Majestic/Dharma Hall Discussion: The Majestic is on hold, but the Dharma Hall may be coming available, and Allen is going to be in touch with the owner to find out what's possible.

Allen, speaking as Meetinghouse scout/contact with The Majestic: I've been in irregular contact with Alborz, the manager, who is part of the family who owns the Majestic. We're on hold about signing the rental agreement, since we don't have a start date. Alborz says the Dharma Hall rental was not being renewed. Will investigate to see the building and grounds, what the rent is, and whether it would meet our needs. There is turmoil in the family, so it may take a while. Dharma hall lease runs out this month.

Meetinghouse committee's process is for scouts to go look at any potential property first and make sure it's feasible. If we rent the Dharma Hall, we might have it 24-7, so it may be too expensive. Or it may not be big enough for our needs. Or perhaps we could rent just Sunday mornings. Once these questions are answered, the committee may invite Friends to go look.

Verona Street Property Discussion: Slide show of the property. Allen, speaking as Meetinghouse Scout: Need to buy the parking lot or rent it, we can't take the risk of losing parking in 25 years. We need to somehow secure parking, in order to get permission from the city to build there. We'd have to file documents with the city, get a wetlands assessment, etc. These are expenditures that are not refundable. My recommendation is to approach the owner of the property and put it under contract with a long timeline before we are committed. It would require earnest money, but that is 100 percent refundable. Would recommend that we move on that as soon as possible. The property is no longer listed, but the owner would sell.

Putting it under contract will benefit us. But we would only move forward from that if we have plenty of time to make sure we can use the property. Parking and opening up Verona for access (deliveries, etc.) would have to pay the city to do a preliminary application (several hundred dollars.) Putting up earnest money and

getting it under contract would keep the owner from deciding not to sell, raising the price, or selling to someone else.

Property was taken off the market because it was not selling, but owner would still sell, at last report.

Clerk clarified that the decision before us is whether we want to put earnest money down for the property at Verona? How much earnest money, and how much would the offer be made for?

~Allen: Recommends \$90,000 as an offering price, and that offer is contingent on getting approval from the city.

~Friend said it seems like a risk-free investment in our future.

~Friend asked about the disposition of last offer on this property?

~Allen clarified that there are no other offers presently, that we know of. The listing price was \$150,000. Would write the offer with a timeline "not to exceed two years" and it would be dependent on the city granting a conditional use permit. If the offer is accepted, we would do the wetland study, and we could offer to give it to them if we don't buy the property. So that would be an expense we would not get back. Another contingency would be that we establish that we can pay for this project.

~Allen suggested that he approach the seller on behalf of Meeting with the offer of \$90,000, while we are seasoning. If we season for a month and decide not to go forward, we can just withdraw the offer. He would need a check for \$10,000 from BFM Treasurer to offer to the seller. That check would go to the title company, and they would hold the money in escrow. Also, the seller might make a counteroffer, which he would bring to Sept. MfWfB.

~A Friend expressed feeling clear to move forward with Allen's recommendation, pointing out that the Friends present today are the same Friends who consistently attend MfWfB. Friend feels in unity with the momentum of the Meetinghouse committee to make this offer. This committee has done a great deal of work and seasoned this proposal.

~Two Friends were initially concerned that making such an offer would be premature, particularly with Finance Committee clerk and Treasurer not present.

~Allen posted feasibility language in the chat. He clarified that we have 100 percent discretion at this point, and can withdraw the offer at any time. After Friends discussed that Larry T. is clerk of Finance Committee and also on Meetinghouse Committee, and discussed that that nothing will be final until after September MfWfB, those Friends with concerns were comfortable moving forward.

~A Friend applauds the work of the Meetinghouse Committee.

ACTION: Friends agreed to accept for seasoning the proposal to begin investigating the possibility of purchasing the Verona Street property, and authorized Allen to make an offer and move forward with negotiating a purchase and sale agreement, contingent on our being able to obtain a conditional use permit and make a determination of financial feasibility. Next month, we can give final approval, or rescind the offer. Any changes to the offer would require returning to MfWfB for approval. Friends approved writing a check for \$10,000 and approved Mary Ann signing this purchase and sale agreement with the conditions as they have been presented here. Any counteroffers with a change of terms will come back to MfWfB.

D. Racial Justice Working Group
1. Report by Joanne C.

RJWG Report for MfWfB

August 9, 2020

The Racial Justice Working Group (including Joanne Cowan, Dorothy de Fremery, Mary Hansen, John Hatten, Virginia Herrick, Steve Hutchens, Daniel Kirkpatrick, and Allen Stockbridge) has met via Zoom three times since our last report to Meeting.

We have agreed to hold another online forum in late September or early October, after the city and county governments have completed their online “listening” meetings, and the Whatcom Peace and Justice Center’s International Day of Peace Celebration is held online on Sept. 20.

We have agreed to focus the next forum on recognizing and eliminating racism in education. We are reaching out to contacts in the community, hoping to work with people of color who are tackling this issue.

We also will be developing a plan to engage in action/advocacy. We are considering several possible projects, including supporting Indigenous efforts to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Washington State; looking for opportunities to support Latinx and Lummi people in establishing a “safe space” for them, and/or a center to assist people of color with employment, housing, etc. ; getting involved with the Systemic Racism Mapping Project; and creating videos about anti-racism focusing on school-age children.

Internal organization: Daniel Kirkpatrick is keeping the agenda and facilitating meetings; Joanne makes reports to MfWfB; Virginia and Dorothy take minutes; Virginia stores them; Mary schedules the Zoom meetings.

Our next meeting will be Friday, August 14, 3:00 via Zoom. Anyone interested in attending a meeting, please contact Daniel and Mary.

Discussion: None

Action: None

7. Closing worship was at 2:45 p.m.