

**Bellingham Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**  
**9 February 2020**

Present: Jessica Bee, Lily Bee, Jean Brechan, Janine Bruton, Joanne Cowan, Laurie Glenn, Don Goldstein, Wendy Goldstein, Lorina Hall, Mary Hansen, John Hatten (clerking), Virginia Herrick, Dorrie Jordan, Rolland Lee, Lynne Lohr, Kristen McLewin, Edana Christine Meyer, Celia Obrecht, Mary Ann Percy (recording), Susan Richardson, Terry Scott, Allen Stockbridge, Larry Thompson,

1. **Opening Worship** at 11:50 am

2. Clerk's statement on clerking – From Arthur Larrabee and Jacqueline Stillwell:  
“The clerk plays a large role in maintaining the worshipful character of the meeting. Leadership from the clerk *encourages the corporate discipline that makes it easier for the meeting to sense and respond to the Spirit.*”

3. Review of agenda A Friend asked if we could move Member Concerns to the top of the agenda since she feels they get lost when they're at the end of the program and the concern was relevant to the meeting itself.

4. Review of last month's minutes--Minutes were approved; one Friend thought someone's name was misspelled. She will check her copy of the minutes and it will be corrected as needed.

4. Member concerns--Janine requests pagination for reports and other documents so that they are easier to reference during discussion. Most reports are only one page. Don currently re-formats the minutes so that they fit on fewer pages. He will endeavor to remember to enter page numbers. Anyone submitting reports longer than one page is encouraged to add page numbers to the footer of the document.

5. Items for worship and action (times estimated)

- A. Keyholder: Concerns about the Snow Policy as published in the e-news. W&M and the lead keyholder (who also happens to serve on W&M) will review the policy and make recommendations for modification. A Friend observes that the snow policy has existed for some time with the decision to cancel MFW always having been made by the key holder for that day. That policy was also made at a time when more Friends lived closer to Meeting.
  
- B. Meetinghouse: Majestic decision (10 minutes)

i. A Friend shared the PROPOSED PLAN FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MOVE TO THE MAJESTIC--there were three areas of discrepancy between our community and the landlord: hours of use, storage and use of closets, as well as the timing of the rent increases.

ii. Our liaison with the landlord shared new information from his conversation with the landlord on 2/7. His proposed rent schedule is as generous as he'd like to offer at this time. We could request a lease term since there is none now specified. (it is a rental agreement rather than a lease), though there is a 6 month notice clause (for either party to terminate the agreement. If so, would we like it to coincide with the calendar year? A Friend suggests that it would be helpful to have a face to face meeting with the landlord rather than negotiating via email.

The negotiation is made more complicated by the fact that there is another potential tenant, unknown to us, also involved, impacting the financial and other aspects of this process.

A Friend spoke to her desire to retain our current 10am MFW time. Another Friend articulated the importance of a minimum three-year lease, mentioning the hassle of moving.

A Friend asked how much flexibility are we feeling in terms of MFW starting time, rent (increase) schedule. It would be helpful for the negotiators to have this information.

A Friend spoke to the amount of time MFWFB takes --it can fill the allotted amount of time, and there may be times some business items may need to be laid over.

The Clerk expressed the sense of the Meeting as Friends are willing to have the negotiators continue to explore and pursue the possibilities.

A Friend suggests the ad hoc committee create and circulate a survey so that Friends can articulate their preferences and ability to financially support Bellingham Friends .

A member of MHC asks that Friends speak to how they feel about the landlord's "as generous as he'd like to be offer" on the rent schedule at this time, so that they may respond to him with how our community views our ability to meet that schedule. A Friend suggests the ad hoc committee gather information from Bellingham Friends in the coming month as to Friends' ability to increase their contributions as needed to match the landlord's offer.

A Friend wonders if our "trying to massage this too much" is unproductive. The Friend who is negotiating w/ the landlord believes the landlord would be willing and able to accommodate a slight reduction in the rent figures in his proposal.

The Clerk asks how the Spirit is leading us at this time.

A Friend points out that our Temporarily Restricted Meetinghouse Fund is available to meet financial shortfall and suggests that the rent schedule is not our major issue. A Friend asks that we all examine our own potential pledge schedule to support our Meeting community.

Negotiations will continue with the Landlord and we will hear the updated status next month.

ii. The rest of the report from Meetinghouse Committee will be reviewed next month.

C. Nominating:

i. Consideration of nominations

- Allan Richardson received final approval as Meetinghouse Scout and member of MH Committee
- Friends agreed to season Rolland Lee's nomination to Children's Program through 2022. Aurora Fox has resigned, so Rolland would be finishing out her term and then serving a full term in addition.

ii. Sponsored attender to FGC Gathering-- Shall we sponsor more than one per year? It has often been difficult in previous years, to find even one potential attender to sponsor

iii. Change job description to make it possible to have the option of sponsoring two Friends?

A Friend raised a concern about the added expense of sponsoring two attenders and how much more quickly the fund would be depleted were that to be the case.

The request is that when there are two Friends who would be appropriate as sponsored attenders, we would send both of them.

A Friend points out that the fund has been growing over the years with monies being transferred to it from our Friends Fiduciary account. [Is this right? I heard that the fund has been growing, but not that money was being transferred.] This is accurate according to my understanding of what the treasurer shared. My memory is a) sometimes faulty and b) in this case tells me that a few years back Meeting decided to transfer the increase in money from Friends Fiduciary (if any) into the Pysanky Gathering Fund and the Meetinghouse fund, proportionately with their respective sizes. Prior to that, the Gathering Fund grew from the investment of the fund itself, not any of the Meeting's other \$\$. - Va.

The Clerk articulates his sense that we as a Meeting want to support Friends attending FGC Gathering. We want to make it possible to attend for those who wish to go and can't afford it. We also do not want to deplete the fund. Depleting the fund is not an issue because from the fund and the fund has actually increased in value over the years.

A Friend pointed out that additional scholarship funds are available from FGC. Another Friend spoke to the shame and challenge of asking for multiple scholarships. Another Friend suggested the Nominating Committee could assist Friends in accessing additional scholarship funds.

A Friend expressed unease with making extra expenditures from our Quaker Activity Fund (If the sponsored attenders receive only \$1000 each) given our consideration of a potentially large rent increase.

The Clerk expressed his sense that Friends are delighted to have many Friends from Bellingham attend FGC Gathering; most are willing to sponsor two attenders. There are funds available from our Meeting and beyond to

support two Friends as sponsored attenders. Most Friends do not want to have to say “yes” to one Friend as sponsored attender and “no” to another during MFWFB next month.

A Friend spoke of her challenges with this discussion, and requested that two names be brought forward only if we commit to funding \$1500 for the attendance of each of them. A Friend said that underlying the discussion was unacknowledged privilege and a lack of understanding of the pain that would result if two names were brought forward with only one being able to go. The Friend requested that two names only be brought forward if we can commit to funding up to \$1,500 for each person.

A Friend spoke about the matter as an integrity issue given that the initial expectation set by the donor was for one person attending. The Friend can also understand that there may be exceptions to this practice on occasion, including this year.

Can we take ownership of sending two people to FGC this year and trust that we can do this in a financial way that works for the Meeting?

Friends agree to approve Nominating Committee bringing forward two names as sponsored attenders for FGC Gathering 2020 and we commit to funding up to \$1,500 for the attendance of each of them. Friends did not approve the committee’s request to change the job description, however.

#### D. Safe Quaker Community: Guidelines for accused/charged/convicted sex offenders

Given the hour and the number of Friends remaining present, a member of SQC Committee proposes accepting these documents (Guidelines for Participation by a person accused, charged, or convicted of a sexual offense, and Incident Report form) for seasoning. Another Friend suggested scheduling a Threshing Session on them. Friends agreed to do so on 2/23/20, moving the Report from those who attended fall clerking workshop to 3/1/20 after the Potluck, contingent upon the availability of those Friends.

#### E. Children’s Program: Policies for Child Abuse Prevention, Youth Supervisor Guidelines, and Volunteer Children’s Program facilitator guidelines.

Friends approve the Policies as presented, having been accepted for seasoning last month. The other two documents (Youth Supervisor Guidelines and volunteer Children’s Program facilitator guidelines\*) are documents internal to Children’s

Program Committee and do not need approval from Friends but were included for our information and greater transparency.

F. Worship & Ministry:

i. State of the Society:

A Friend raised a concern with calling the report “State of the Meeting” rather than “State of Society,” as it has traditionally been called. Friends agreed to change the title to “State of Society.”

Friends spoke to the inclusion or not of the Land Acknowledgement. Friends agreed that it was important to include the Land Acknowledgement irrespective of whether it increases the length of the document to more than two pages.

A few minor edits were made to the State of Society Report and it was accepted for seasoning with deep gratitude to Rachel Van Boven for her facilitation of the discussion and writing this Report. Any edits Friends would like can be sent to Worship and Ministry; further revision will be made at MFWFB next month.

ii. Friends gave final approval of Aurora Fox to Nominating Committee.

7. Announcement from SEC: BFM will have a table at the YWCA for the Bellingham Climate Action Plan Forum February 26, 7-830PM

8. Meeting closed with worship at 3pm