

Haddonfield Monthly Meeting
Called Meeting for Worship for Business
7/1/12

JULY MINUTES

The Called Meeting for Worship for Business began with a period of silent worship.

22 Friends were in attendance.

The Clerk reported that a group welcomed Elena Lahr-Vivaz to the Meeting.

Last Sunday Ned Mears and his fiancé Jenny Hua requested that they be married in the Haddonfield Meeting House on August 25 under the care of their home meeting, Dover-Randolph in North Jersey. The Dover-Randolph Monthly Meeting established a Clearness for Marriage Committee, which found them clear for marriage. Jenny is a member of the Cambodian community, and there will be a marriage ceremony with her family after the Quaker meeting for marriage service. Friends approved the August 25 meeting for marriage at our Meeting. An oversight committee consisting of Bill Patterson and Alan Conard was appointed.

The original purpose of this called meeting is to consider the draft minutes regarding the PYM financial crisis presented at the June Meeting for Business. If and when approved, the minute will be sent to key people such as PYM's General Secretary, Clerk, Alternate and Recording Clerks, Clerks of all standing Committees, Financial Committees and Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. Linda Lotz and Priscilla Adams read the draft minute aloud. The purpose of the minute is to express our deep concerns and widen the discussion prior to the Annual Sessions at the end of July. It seeks to affirm the many who have been personally affected or involved in efforts to address the crisis and calls on PYM's leadership to develop a more consultative process in moving the business of the Yearly Meeting forward. It also references the Friends and Worker Justice group adopted by our own Peace and Social Concerns committee.

Friends' history related to worker justice may not be as well-known as our history related to other issues, but there have been Quaker employers who have adapted Friends' testimonies of equality, peace and sustainability to their places of employment. Today there are Friends groups in England and the US who seek to raise issues of fairness and respect in the workplace.

One Friend raised the question of AFSC's decision not to organize in this geographic area because of the active yearly meeting here. AFSC agreed not to have programs in this area, although various AFSC groups have worked with local groups on specific issues.

One Friend mentioned that PYM has been talking about the financial crisis for six years. Given the small PYM staff, one suggestion to improve communication among meetings is for all monthly meeting committees organized for the same purpose, such as

Religious Education or Worship and Ministry, gather annually to share their thoughts and plans.

A question was raised as to the suggestions in the draft minute that the process should have been more consultative. One Friend indicated that some people who did speak felt that they were not listened to. Others felt that not enough time was allowed at PYM meetings to consider the problems in a seasoned way. It was suggested that monthly meetings should have had special meetings to consider the issues.

One Friend mentioned that all members of PYM are welcome to attend the monthly Interim Meetings.

Friends requested that the word "hope" be removed from the last sentence, so that the final clause reads "We ... want Yearly Meeting leaders to find new ways" Friends approved the minute, as amended, and the suggestion that the minute also be sent to PYM's Long Range Planning Committee. A copy of the approved Minute is attached hereto.

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business concluded with a period of worship.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Kane Williams, Recording Clerk.

Minute regarding the PYM financial crisis

As we review information related to PYM's ongoing financial crisis and staff layoffs:

We feel deep appreciation for those staff members who have served through PYM -- by bringing issues of concern, networking us to other Friendly resources, supporting staff and volunteer projects, and helping us to build and strengthen our local Quaker communities -- and *deep regrets* that their positions can no longer be funded. In their time of need, they deserve our support, just as they have supported us in our times of need.

We feel deep compassion and concern for those staff members who will be left behind, not only in their loss of close colleagues but the work load they will carry in the coming year.

We feel tremendous gratitude for the many people who have worked so hard to address the very serious financial crisis which PYM is now facing.

We especially honor those who have had the courage to raise a diversity of concerns to help us understand the long-term impact of the financial crisis and layoffs, even when their concerns may be difficult, may not be considered timely, or may even not be fully understood.

We are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the financial crisis and feel unequipped to provide any substantive recommendations regarding the current budget. Our own members are struggling with unemployment, under-employment, and the need to work several years beyond the time of retirement in order to rebuild family resources. Our meeting is also struggling to remain fiscally responsible.

We do wish to share the following observations:

- We encourage everyone to listen carefully to the Spirit, to speak up when an issue needs to be raised, and to respect those who bring difficult or unwelcome questions and concerns. Diverse voices should be welcomed so our decision-making can be grounded in the full range of experiences and wisdom available within our community.
- The need to focus on finances has overshadowed the work and vision of PYM. The proposed layoffs will deeply impact PYM's ability to provide leadership on issues that affect our lives every day including: peace, justice, equality, and sustainability. The revised staff structure has little capacity to support Friends within the PYM area to work together above the level of their monthly meetings in addressing the larger issues facing our society. It is especially important to

understand the impact of the layoffs in light of PYM's long-standing agreement with the AFSC that the Service Committee would not engage in local organizing in this area, with the second largest concentration of Friends in the US, in deference to PYM leadership.

- The layoffs have deeply affected PYM's capacity for programs, outreach, and visibility in the broader community. These cuts directly threaten PYM's ability to raise funds over the next few years, at least until the recommendations of the Long Range Planning Group are adopted.
- We are concerned about what PYM will become, especially next year. Under the new staff structure, the remaining PYM staff will become more isolated. Elimination of the Quarter and other outreach and program staff will also isolate those Friends living at some distance from Philadelphia or who are not involved in PYM committees and related activities.
- As Quakers, we believe everyone should be treated with respect, as we seek that of God in everyone. We need to be especially tender with staff at this time of crisis. As PYM moves forward, we recommend that PYM's personnel policies and procedures be reviewed and, where needed, revised to better reflect our concern for staff, the impact of the continuing Great Recession, and the many changes which have taken place in our nation's globalized economy.

We encourage you to work with the "Friends and Worker Justice" network which is a part of Haddonfield Monthly Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee, as you review the policies and procedures.

In summary, we can see that PYM is in a period of deep crisis, needing a vision of the future, as well as leadership, staff resources, and funding in the present. We want to be more included in threshing and discernment and decision-making, and ask that Yearly Meeting leaders will find new ways of engaging Friends at the Meeting and Quarterly level in the business of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

On behalf of Haddonfield Meeting

Signed,

Judy Owens
Clerk

July 1, 2012

