

Concord Quarterly Meeting at Birmingham July 23, 2023 Minutes of Combined Business Meeting and Planning Committee

Opening Worship - The clerk asked the meeting to approve Rich Ailes as the temporary recording clerk - Meeting approved

Welcome to Newcomers – The clerk asked if there were anyone new to the Meeting for Business who would like to introduce themselves. As no newcomers were present the meeting proceeded.

Monthly Meeting Count was taken - Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington. All Meetings were represented

Approval of Agenda The agenda as presented was approved.

Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2023, at West Chester was requested. These minutes were approved

The Hickman Report (attached) - Meeting accepted with gratitude the report from the The Hickman presented by Martha Boston who is on the Board of Directors. It was mentioned that the older Hickman residence eventually needs a complete rehab requiring the moving of current residents to other quarters temporarily. One Friend praised the Hickman for the care given to her father. One Friend needs to talk to someone about some issues regarding a particular interview experience. Marty Boston offered to reach out to this Friend.

Joys and Challenges Report from Concord Meeting (attached) Elizabeth Varley - Meeting accepted with gratitude the report from Concord Meeting presented by member Elizabeth Varley. Elizabeth noted that the Spicebush Montessori school is currently using the former women's meeting room inside the Meetinghouse.

Nominating Committee report was presented by Rich Ailes - Nominating Committee brings forward the name of Melinda Wenner Bradley of West Chester Meeting as the new assistant clerk for Concord Quarter. Term begins July 23, 2023. Melinda will rise to clerkship of the Quarter on July 1, 2024, for two years, and the current clerk, Debbie Murray-Sheppard will then rotate back to assistant clerk for one year. **Meeting approved the appointment with gratitude.**

The current members of the Quarter Nominating Committee are Julie Senko (Birmingham), Lisa Vosburg (West Chester), Peter Lane (Westtown) and clerk Rich Ailes (Middletown) – Rich reminded us of the current need for a Recording Clerk and also by next July 1, a new Treasurer.

Climate Action Working Group (CAWG): Acceptance of Epistle for Annual Sessions - Meeting approved accepting the CAWG epistle presented at the last Quarterly Meeting in April after the following meetings approved; Birmingham, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, and Wilmington. The clerk will send this approval to the EcoJustice Working Group and the General Secretary of PYM

Proposal that the Climate Action Working Group be laid down: Paula Kline, the clerk of CAWG, proposed laying down the working group after a successful series of Climate action events since its inception, as there does not appear to be someone to fill a leadership role. Friends are deeply appreciative of the work of the working group. Peter Lane may be able to step forward to help in this role. **It was proposed that the Friends gathered should return to their Monthly Meetings to ask if someone is led to step forward to provide leadership and revisit the issue at the next Quarterly Meeting in October. Meeting approved.** A minute of appreciation for Paula Kline's work with this committee was proposed and **Meeting approved enthusiastically.**

Treasurer's Reports (attached) - Meeting approved accepting the year-end treasurer's report provided by Charles Spadoni, the Quarterly Meeting treasurer. A question was asked regarding reduced expenses for the coordinator position. The budget will remain the same and if there is a surplus at the end of the fiscal year a decision will be made at that time as to what to do with the surplus.

A concern was raised regarding membership with the suggestion that money be spent to try and increase membership. A concern was also raised regarding consolidating some smaller Meetings because of the expense and energy involved. Some damage may be done to our whole Quaker community if we have too many tiny Meetings. Friends entered into a rather deep discussion on this concern with the recognition that the concern should be held and considered seriously. A proposal was suggested for a called meeting in early October that invites leadership members, including the clerks, of each meeting to discuss this concern. This meeting will be scheduled by the CQM clerk. **This proposal was approved.**

Melinda Wenner Bradley noted two relevant thread gatherings at PYM coming up; one on outreach and membership development in October, and one in January with a focus on Property issues.

Outreach & Communications Thread Gathering - Saturday, October 21, 1:00 - 5:00 pm @ Downingtown Meeting
A gathering for the Outreach & Communications Thread, with a focus on membership development. Meetings are encouraged to send a "team" of 2-3 folks to this gathering and set a date for follow-up discussion as a meeting!

Governance & Stewardship Thread Gathering - Saturday, January 27, 2024 @ Arch Street Meeting House
A gathering for the Governance & Stewardship Thread, with a focus on property and burial ground concerns.

Coordinator Update A discussion ensued regarding the coordinator position. Debbie Murray-Sheppard said one person is considering the position. Three other people have considered but have declined.

Reflections on last joint Quarterly Meeting – There was great attendance (over 80) and Christie Duncan-Tessmer's program on welcoming new people, using the strategies of Ikea, was well received. One successful strategy for Zoom participants was allowing open access for Zoom attendees instead of having people admitted by the host.

Planning for Quarterly Meeting at Westtown, October 22, 2023 - Peter Lane explained that Program plans have not been made, however the Meeting is under the weight of this and will respond soon. Their session usually has music at 10:10 AM with Worship from 10:30 to 11:30. Rich Ailes noted that he needs information regarding program and schedule by September 15 so that the publicity can go out in a timely manner.

A concern was raised about splitting out the program from Meeting for Business as we have been doing for the past two Quarterly Meetings. There were those attending who wanted to return to the traditional format as well as those interested in continuing the new format. It was proposed that we try one more time with this format to see if more people attend both the program and the business session. **Meeting approved doing the new format one more time with the program piece on the October 22nd at Westtown and the business meeting on October 29th at 1 PM at Westtown.**

Newsletter Articles suggested for the October newsletter: Westtown Meeting experience with a get together at the lake with a West Chester's Bethel AME Church. Article on the need for CAWG leadership. Support for Paula Kline's project in Mexico. Consolidating smaller Meetings and the rationale for that. Report back on Annual Sessions. Montessori School at Concord Meeting

Future CQM Family Events - Debbie Murray-Sheppard noted the following events probably need the assistance of a coordinator: Harvest event in October and the Parents Morning Off in late November. The Square Dance that occurs in February should happen as the event is easily organized by volunteers.

Reading of Minutes for Approval - Rich Ailes (acting Recording Clerk) Meeting approved the action items with some corrections

Second Count of Meetings in Attendance - Rich Ailes (acting Recording Clerk) All meetings accounted for except for Concord Meeting at the close of Meeting for Business.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Ailes (Acting Recording Clerk)

Attached Reports -----

The Hickman Friends Senior Community of West Chester - Annual Report to Concord Quarterly Meeting - July, 2023

The Hickman Friends Senior Community of West Chester is pleased to bring this report to the Quarter particularly this year as we have officially lifted all Covid related restrictions and have been awarded a "trifecta" of recognition in the year 2022. In September, our Executive Director received the Administrator of the Year award from our State advocate PALA (Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association). This prestigious award is in appreciation of an enduring commitment to seniors and the AL/PCH industry in Pennsylvania. In October, The Hickman was also recognized as "The Best Personal Care Home of Chester County" as nominated by the readers of The Daily Local News. Lastly, one of our Hickman caregivers was chosen as the Apprentice of the Year from our National advocacy group Argentum for her commitment to lifelong learning. These are huge successes for a small Quaker inspired community emerging from one of the hardest periods in our documented history.

The last three years have demonstrated how a constantly shifting environment can dramatically alter decision making and operations in a niche environment such as ours. Understanding that we are especially vulnerable as a single site non-profit community we have challenged ourselves to be creative and think creatively in terms of inflation, staffing and the overall demographic change in our population. We understand that these will be perennial issues and we must continue to think strategically to address immediate and future conditions.

Despite challenges, I am happy to report that The Hickman has recognized an operational surplus for the first time in the last 5 years. Operational restructuring along with strong financial oversight and a realistic forecast have yielded positive net assets after interest and depreciation.

Leading to this stabilization, we internally focused on opportunities that were presented through our local community and advocacy groups. One alliance was with Argentum who with the Pa. Department of Labor structured an apprenticeship for frontline workers in healthcare. Through this initiative, we have enrolled both incumbent and new workers into a career ladder program enhancing their skill set through tiered learning and incremental pay increases. This process not only enhances education which translates to quality of services but provides for greater job satisfaction and succession planning internally.

We continue partnerships with West Chester University, Widener University, Harcum College, and Fortis School of Nursing in providing a clinical site and service-learning opportunities for local students. Our community bond is strengthened by these partnerships and our residents benefit from additional 1:1 time which provides purposeful outcomes for both participants. In 2022 we calculated over 2500 hours of student service.

Additionally, our kitchen has begun providing nutritious meals to homebound seniors in our area. This collaboration with Meals on Wheels Chester County is providing a modest income stream but on a large scale expanded our outreach and gives the ability to highlight our outstanding culinary team.

Lastly, with understanding of the challenges that present in the current economic climate, we are proud to report that our annual increase passed on to our residents came in at 6%. Social Security gave its largest cost of living increase to date which was 8.7%. We were able to keep our impact low amidst the struggles of the market. With this in mind, we are analyzing future trends as the "Boomers" enter our target demographic and are expected to have far less in terms of savings and retirement planning than the Greatest Generation.

Thoughtful strategic conversations will continue between Board and Leadership to understand the best path forward for The Hickman to ensure viability for many years to come.

We approach this next period of change with optimism and intention, fully understanding that our industry is rapidly changing and highly competitive but remains in great demand. Given this knowledge, we recognize the investment of time necessary to develop a larger group of supporters and donors to assist us to position for the future.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of J. Dean O'Bannion of Willistown Meeting. Dean was recently honored by the Board with the Commitment to Caring Award which is an acknowledgment of his leadership and advocacy for The Hickman over the last 23 years of service. Dean recently retired and has relocated to South Carolina. We are grateful he has agreed to continue to serve on our Finance Committee. One positive outcome of the Covid pandemic is we have had to learn how to successfully conduct business via videotelephony software.

In sharing this report to the Quarter, we would like to acknowledge those individuals and Meetings who continue to support our efforts through financial contributions. Additionally, our work is strengthened through the staunch support of the following Concord Quarter Friends on our 2022 Board of Directors: Betsy Stratton from Middletown Meeting; Marty Boston from Birmingham Meeting; Evelyn Brownlee and Chenda Davison from Wilmington Meeting; Dean O'Bannion (retired) and Diana Hodgson from Willistown Meeting; These Concord Quarter Friends are joined by Matt Krasney of Falsington Meeting, and Hank Schellenger of Valley Meeting. We would welcome the participation of other Friends who are interested in our mission and future and are able to deeply engage in the work of governance at a time of significance in our future.

In closing, the next year will continue to bring about change, and another year of welcoming new residents into our service. We are grateful and appreciative of the support and encouragement from Concord Quarter Friends.

Submitted by Martha Boston, Member of the Board of Directors, on behalf of Betsy Stratton Chair, Board of Directors

The Joys and Challenges of Concord Monthly Meeting, July 2023 - Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Varley, Recording Clerk

Most of you have heard us say that Concord has a very small active membership. That has not changed. There are hopes that in the coming year we may have some new attenders, with perhaps a potential member or two through our alliance with Spicebush Montessori School.

Our major challenge of 2023 is financial. Concord Township is installing sewers and although the expense of connecting is high (\$32,000), it is less that we would have to pay for a connection at a future time. The Township will also be adding water lines to Thornton Road, and we expect to avail ourselves of public water within the next year. That cost is currently unknown.

Our longtime caretakers retired, and we joyously welcome our new caretakers, Leah Walker and David Eubanks. However, this ties in directly to the other part of our financial challenge. The caretaker's house was given to Concord in 1850 by the Newlins. Of course, modernizations have taken place since 1850, but nothing of significance has been done since the 1960s as far as we can tell. Further, the house has a dirt floor in the basement and moisture has wicked up the walls since was built. 150+ years of dampness has turned the support beams into a crumbling mess. The trusses in the attic are not in much better condition. The house needs upgraded electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems. This list is just the start of what must happen for the Meeting to get a certificate of occupancy. We are exploring various means of financing these two major and necessary building projects.

A renovation of the electrical system on the Meeting House was completed this year, with help from the Meeting House Trust of PYM. It brings us joy every time we come in the Meeting House.

It has been a joy seeing interest in Chichester Meeting since the renovation to the Meeting House several years ago. It is an even bigger challenge to see how we can continue to care for the Meeting House, caretaker's house and the 7 acres of woodland. We have

made the difficult decision to sell the property. We do hope that Chichester Township will be able to acquire it and maintain it as an historic site. Those conversations have begun but will take several years to complete.

Our unalloyed joy is Spicebush Montessori School for three- to six-year-olds. The school proprietors have done a wonderful job transforming the old nursery school room into an inviting space for children. They have a dedication to, and understanding of, Montessori education and it is a joy to watch them blend Quaker curriculum with Montessori, topped with very liberal helpings of nature studies. The enrollment is small but growing.

**CONCORD QUARTERLY MEETING TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2023
Un-reviewed Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023
(Except As May Be Noted Below, Reported On A Cash Basis)**

NOTES

- By June 30, 2023, the Treasurer had received all of the constituent month[y meetings' covenant payments that were due by that date, but a covenant check in the amount of \$1,790.50, which has been taken account in the Quarter's June 30, 2023, financial statements, was not deposited until July 3, 2023.
- In October 2022, \$11,679 in the Tuition Operating Fund was distributed to three Quaker Schools (Westtown, West Chester Friends and Wilmington Friends) in the form of grants for the benefit of 17 students. Each grant was for \$687.
- To avoid capital losses and to earn interest, the December 2022 FFC TEF distribution was invested in a certificate of deposit that matured on June 21, 2023.
- The amount in the Reserve Fund (a combination of the "Reserve Fund" and the "Coordinator Payroll Fund") has been invested in part in a money market fund and in part in a certificate of deposit that matures on June 21, 2024.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME STATEMENT

**Revenues and Expenses for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 Versus the Budgeted Revenues and Expenses for That Period
(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)**

BALANCE SHEET

**June 30, 2023 Balance Sheet Versus the Prior Year's June 30 Balance Sheet
(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)**

- There are no liabilities; however, \$13,163 has been reserved to make tuition assistance payments.

*Checking Account 2 (used by the former Coordinator to pay Quarter expenses) was closed on March 23, 2023.

**These FFC accounts have been closed.

***Between March 10, 2022, and May 10, 2023, the Treasurer deposited \$10,705 from multiple contributors, mostly members of the Quarter, to be held in trust and to be used exclusively to pay the living expenses of a destitute asylum seeker during the period he was ineligible to work. As of June 30, 2023, the Quarter held no such funds in trust.

**** Individual constituent monthly meeting June 30, 2023, Growth & Income Fund market value balances are available upon request.

Respectfully submitted, Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer July 23, 2023