**Baltimore Yearly Meeting**

**Interim Meeting**

**June 8, 2024, Goose Creek Friends Meeting**

**I2024-19**. ***Opening*.** Friends gathered into worship at 12:25 pm. Clerk Tom Webb introduced the land acknowledgement honoring the indigenous peoples who once lived on the land Baltimore Yearly Meeting now uses.

Carolyn Unger welcomed us to Goose Creek and read the meeting’s land acknowledgement. She spoke of the history of the meeting, which has been here since the seventeenth century.

Tom Webb introduced Deborah Haines, recording clerk, and the Friends providing technical support today. He explained the technology we will be using. He spoke of how we are gathered in worship today to discern how we are led by the Spirit. He read the anti-racism queries that frame our decision making. He reviewed the agenda.

**I2024-20. *Nominating Committee***. Debbi Sudduth, Goose Creek, presented the report. She reported the following resignations:

Mac Broussard, Roanoke meeting, from Indigenous Affairs Committee.

Keith Robinson, Williamsburg, from Manual of Procedures Committee.

Karen Hansen-Kuhn, Alexandria, from the Stewardship and Finance Committee.

She brought forward the nomination of Katie Caughlan, Sandy Spring, to serve on the Board of Friends House Retirement Community. She asked for approval with a single reading so that the Friends House Board can approve and appoint the new member at a called meeting in June or July. Friends APPROVED this nomination with a single reading.

**I2024-21. *Search Committee***. Meg Meyer, Stony Run, presented the following nominations:

Steph Bean, Adelphi, to continue for two more years as Clerk of the Yearly Meeting

Tom Webb, Young Adult Friends, to serve a two-year term as Clerk of Interim Meeting

Barbarie Hill, Charlottesville, to serve a two-year term as Recording Clerk of Yearly Meeting

Deborah Haines, Alexandria, to continue for two more years as Recording Clerk of Interim Meeting

Becka Haines Rosenberg, Alexandria, to continue for two more years on Supervisory Committee

Joan Liversidge, Sandy Spring, to continue for two more years on Supervisory Committee

Friends APPROVED Barbarie Hill, Charlottesville, as Recording Clerk of the Yearly Meeting with a single reading. The rest of these nominations will be brought to annual session for a second reading.

Meg noted that there are several vacancies on Nominating Committee, and asked Friends to bring forward the names of anyone they think might be willing to serve.

**I2024-22. *Naming Committee***. Gloria Victor-Dorr, Sandy Spring, brought forward the name of Josh Riley, Hopewell Centre, to serve a three-year term on Search Committee. She noted that three more members are needed. She asked Friends to consider if they would be willing to serve on the Naming Committee, since she is at this point the only member.

**I2024-23. *Treasurer’s Report***. Jim Riley, Hopewell Centre, presented the report. He noted that our first quarter was strong, due in part to fundraising to support the move of Camp Opequon to Rolling Ridge. He reviewed the balance sheet (attached). Our total assets now stand at $6.1 million.

He reviewed the Statement of Activities (attached) for the first three months of the year. Fundraising has kept pace with last year, and expenses are within budget. He noted that the audit should be completed soon. The full report is attached.

**I2024-24. *Stewardship & Finance Committee***. Linda Pardoe presented the current draft of the proposed Budget for 2025. Total expenses are tentatively projected at $3.2 million, with a deficit of about $9,000. These numbers will change as more information is incorporated. She noted that committees have increased their budgets in recent years, in large part to support our anti-racism work. She encouraged Friends who have questions to get in touch with her. The budget will be brought to annual session for approval. The full report is attached.

Sarah Gillooly, General Secretary, shared a graph showing the growth of the BYM budget year over year, and a series of pie charts breaking out various categories of income and expenditures. About half of our expenses go to support our camping program. Another third support year-round staff. About 60% of our income comes from the camping program. Apportionment accounts for 16% of income, and individual contributions for 13%. They noted that in 2019, we spent only about 9% of our budget on anti-racism concerns; this year we will spent 18%.

**I2024-25. *Reproductive Justice Working Group***. Eluned Schweitzer, Bethesda, presented the report. She noted that the people who raised concerns about the minute brought to interim meeting in March were concerned more with language than substance. The working group has met with them and incorporated their suggestions. She read the minute:

**BYM Reproductive Justice Working Group**

**Minute on Reproductive Justice**

**Approved by Working Group May 8, 2024**

Friends believe that God, or the Inner Light, dwells within each of us, and that by centering into stillness, we can individually and collectively listen to that inner voice and become clear about next steps to take. We support each person’s right to seek and follow this inner voice and hold such leadings with loving concern for the individual.

The decision to have, or not have, children is an intimate, personal one, to be held lovingly in the presence of the Inner light. Baltimore Yearly Meeting supports each person’s right to choose, following the leadings of the Inner Light as they apply to their particular life situation.

Through our process of discernment, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends opposes laws that restrict access to contraception and abortion. We support the right of all persons to make decisions involving their own reproductive health. We believe in supporting those who make reproductive healthcare decisions that we might have made differently due to our own spiritual leadings, health and family circumstances. We respect those who hold religious views different from ours, and whose practice of religion differs from our own, as well as those who choose not to practice any religion and we oppose efforts to impose religious views on others.

We recognize that decisions regarding reproductive health are personal and may be difficult due to the person’s life circumstances. These include decisions to prevent pregnancy, to become pregnant, to abort a pregnancy, or carry a pregnancy to term. We oppose those who spread false medical information regarding abortion and contraception.

We are aware that, in the United States, persons who are in the global majority are adversely affected more than others when laws are enacted that restrict access to contraception and abortion, and that they have higher rates of complications and death from pregnancy and delivery. We are conscious also of the appalling history of interference in these rights against people of color and other minorities . Our Testimony of Equality, and our leading to become an antiracist body urges us to address and heal these inequities.

We seek and advocate for a just society that allows access for all to the full range of reproductive healthcare, and for a society in which children are protected from abuse and oppression, and have adequate food, housing, healthcare and education.

Friends APPROVED the minute, with gratitude.

**I2024-26. *Presiding Clerk’s Report***. Steph Bean, Adelphi, presented their report. They noted that annual session is fast approaching. They spoke of how we need to prepare in heart and mind for our coming together, which is a core part of our faith practice. We gather to discern where we are called, and to support each other, so that we can bring our witness to the world. Steph encouraged committees to submit their advance reports and agenda requests by the end of June, and to submit supporting documents by July 12.

**I2024-27. *Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy***. Linda Pardoe, Patapsco, presented a revised statement of the policy on behalf of the Stewardship and Finance Committee. She noted that the paragraph asking Friends to report their expenses even if they are not requesting reimbursement has been deleted.

**Policy on BYM Representative Travel (Last update – May 5, 2024)**

The BYM Nominating Committee nominates persons to serve as BYM representatives to a number of organizations. BYM policy is to pay as funds allow for travel costs of BYM representatives for these purposes:

* To serve on Friends General Conference’s governing body, the FGC Central Committee
* To participate as a BYM representative at meetings of Friend United Meeting (FUM)
* To participate as a BYM representative at meetings of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)
* To serve as nominated representatives to other outside organizations

There is a line item in the Operating Budget for Representative Travel. This line item is funded every year based on expected travel costs for the year. The Nominating Committee will advise the Stewardship & Finance Committee when a year’s total travel costs for all representatives are expected to exceed $5,000, such as in a year where BYM representatives will participate in an overseas meeting.

When BYM representatives plan travel for the above purposes:

* Representatives should submit their travel budgets as soon as possible to the General Secretary. This will allow for adequate planning and budgeting for the travel fund.
* Funds will be given based on several factors, including cost of travel, applicant’s financial need, type of gathering and access to non-BYM funding.
* Pilot this approach and re-evaluate the policy in 2 years. It is not certain how much travel will cost each year and travel costs will vary year-to-year.

Payment of travel costs should not be an obstacle for service. The goal is to cover the full cost of representative travel as the budget allows. Here are the policies for reimbursement from the Yearly Meeting:

* Representative Travel expenses include registration, lodging, transportation, and food. Representatives are invited to seek modest arrangements. Conferences often offer housing options or suggestions that could serve as a guide for reasonable costs.
* Friends are also encouraged to ask for support from their local meetings and other sources.
* The policy will be implemented by the General Secretary.

A question was raised as to how this policy relates to the Intervisitation Working Group. It was explained that committees and working groups submit their own budget requests, which are not affected by this policy. The policy also does not either explicitly include or exclude travel expenses incurred by Friends who are not nominated as representatives to outside organizations, but are traveling under concern with a minute from the Yearly Meeting.

Friends APPROVED the Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy.

**I2024-28. *Development Committee***. Barb Platt, Sandy Spring, presented the report. She noted that contributions have been strong this year, but we have a long way to go. She asked Friends to consider becoming monthly donors. She introduced Nikki Holland, our new Development Manager. Nikki Holland explained that she will be arriving in the DC area in two weeks, and looks forward to meeting us in person.

Barb introduced Arthur Boyd, Stony Run, who spoke about the special campaign for Opequon Quaker Camp. He is excited about the progress of the campaign, and the energy evident during the work days where Friends have gathered to help prepare the site. He noted that we have reached 60% of the total goal for the campaign. The Development Committee is pleased to report that the campaign has not hurt unrestricted contributions, which are 25% ahead of last year. The full report is attached.

**I2024-29. *Manual of Procedure Committee***. Gloria Victor Dorr, Sandy Spring, presented the report. She reviewed the changes to the Manual of Procedure proposed by the committee, which are laid out in detail in a document circulated in advance of this meeting. She noted that these changes are needed to reflect current practice. The most substantive one involves a description of the Yearly Meeting’s representation on the board of the Rolling Ridge Conservancy.

Tom Webb announced that the clerks will resolve a question raised by the Manual of Procedure Committee about the seasonal names we apply to the March and June sessions of Interim Meeting.

Friends APPROVED the proposed changes as a first reading. They will come to annual session for a second reading.

**I2024-30. *End of Life Working Group***. Patti Nesbitt, Sandy Spring, spoke of her leading to travel to other yearly meetings carrying her concern for how we care for those facing the end of life. Barb Platt, Sandy Spring, read the minute prepared by Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. (insert)

Friends APPROVED endorsing this minute on behalf of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, with deep appreciation for Patti Nesbitt’s ministry.

**I2024-31. *Indigenous Affairs Committee***. Dellie James, Stony Run, reported. The Indigenous Affairs Committee is asking that BYM contribute $10,000 to the Pawnee Nation for their language restoration program or whatever they judge to be their greatest need, as partial reparation for the Yearly Meeting’s involvement in Indian Schools that helped to suppress Pawnee language and culture in the nineteenth century. She read the letter prepared by the IAC.

**Formal request from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Indigenous Affairs Committee**

**to the brought to the June 2024 Interim Meeting**

The Baltimore Indigenous Affairs Committee (IAC) respectfully requests that the Baltimore Yearly Meeting provide $10,000 in 2024 to the Pawnee Nation. The funds are intended as the beginning of reparations to the Pawnee for Quaker, and specifically BYM, complicity in the intended assimilation of the Pawnee into the Eurocentric lifeways. This occurred more than a century ago, and though Friendly practices used to teach Native students were conducted with good intention, the practices harmed Native cultural cohesion.

We would like the BYM funds to be used to support the Pawnee language restoration program, however reparations should be used as the beneficiary decides to use them. The BYM money could come from undesignated, unrestricted reserve funds for 2024 or from any other funds, as determined by BYM administrators (clerks, employees, etc.).

This proposal has been approved by the IAC and is supported in principle by the BYM Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG). The RWAG supports the longer proposal shared with them earlier this Spring, though has not specifically approved the phrasing on this request.

In response to a question, Dellie explained that the Committee expects to ask for another contribution of $10,000 in the 2025 budget. Marcy Seitel noted that the Reparations Action Working Group supports this proposal.

Tom Webb reminded us that Stewardship and Finance Committee has reviewed this proposal, and determined that the Yearly Meeting can afford to make the proposed payment at this time.

It was suggested that this concern be shared with all of our meetings, so that more Friends can become informed and involved. Sue Marcus spoke of her personal commitment to meet with the Pawnee to begin the work of reparations. Sarah Gillooly proposed that we do an evening Zoom session where Friends can hear about the history of our relationship with the Pawnee and the reasons for this form of reparations.

Friends approved asking IAC to prepare a video explaining this concern, to be circulated among monthly meetings prior to annual session. We approved asking the IAC to draft a letter of apology, to go with the payment when it is approved.

Friends agreed that we need to take steps to involve our monthly meetings before approving the requested payment of $10,000, but we feel under the weight of this concern. We approved forwarding it to annual session as a matter that requires serious attention.

The meeting closed with a period of open worship at 4:05 pm.

1. Announcements
2. Written Reports Not Included on the Agenda
[Working Group on Racism](https://www.bym-rsf.org/file_download/dd760176-5e6a-47d3-8124-47034aa1b523)
Reparations Action Working Group
General Secretary's Report