Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Called Interim Meeting

January 25, 2025

**I2025-01 Opening**. Clerk Tom Webb read the Baltimore Yearly Meeting land acknowledgement, honoring the many past and present native peoples who have cared for the land BYM now uses. He reviewed today’s agenda, noting that an item submitted by Trustees has been added. He introduced Deborah Haines (Alexandria), Recording Clerk, and Sarah Gillooly, General Secretary, who will be providing tech support today. He invited Friends who feel led to serve as prayerful presences during today’s session to add that identifier to their names as shown on screen.

Tom Webb explained the expectations for our meeting today. We meet in the present of Spirit, to speak to the business before us as led, with concern for the welfare of the whole body. He read the anti-racism queries that will guide our work today.

**I2025-02 Stewardship and Finance Committee Report on the Revised 2025 Budget**. Linda Pardoe (Patapsco) and Catherine Nnoka (Friends Meeting of Washington), Co-Clerks, presented the report.

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Clerk Tom Webb opened the floor for questions and comments. General Secretary Sarah Gillooly explained that the projected deficit has been reduced from about $190.000 to about $50,000 since Fall Interim Meeting, as a result of cuts to the Camping Program, Camp Property Management, Youth Programs, and office expenses. The proposal to defer contributions to outside organizations would reduce it by another $27,000. The proposal to reduce committee budgets by up to half, excluding the $10,000 in reparations to the Pawnee Nation, could reduce it by another $15,000

A member of the Camping Program Committee explained that the camping program income budget assumes about 85% enrollment. The highest priority of the Committee this year is to recruit enough campers to fill all sessions, thus increasing income beyond the budgeted amount. It was suggested that we could also appeal to the families of campers for a special contribution to reduce the budget gap.

We noted that many federal employees in our region will be facing job loss and economic hardships in the coming year, which may affect both camp enrollment and BYM fundraising. Sarah Gillooly noted that the plan to review camp enrollment data in March and April was put in place in part to assess how this development is affecting enrollment.

We reviewed the committee budget sheet for 2025. We recognize that it is not the work of this body to suggest changes in committee budgets. It will be up to the committees themselves to discern what expenses might be reduced or deferred. We observed that the vast majority of committee expenses are for anti-racist work, which is a high priority for the Yearly Meeting. We will not pressure committees to cut back in ways that would damage this witness.

We heard that plans are not yet finalized for how meetings will be asked to make

a contribution beyond their regular assessment.

We were reminded that the proposal we are considering today is an interim step in a long process. We are grateful for the hard work of the many individuals who have sought to find solutions to the challenge we are facing. Sarah Gillooly expressed special appreciation to Brian Massey, Camping Program Manager, and to the two clerks of the Camping Program Committee, both of whom are just beginning their service in that role.

Although the projected budget deficit causes us discomfort, we feel deep abiding trust and love for the Friends who have worked so hard to find ways of addressing the problem, and trust in their ability to take whatever steps are necessary to resolve it. With this understanding, Friends APPROVED the budget proposal as presented.

**I2025-03 Request from Trustees**. Clerk Tom Webb explained that the final item on our agenda was added only last night.

Victor Thuronyi (Adelphi), Co-Clerk of Trustees, noted that the recommendation he is presenting requires a rapid response. A recent executive order would expose those attending religious services to legal harassment. New England Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting – along with two BYM Monthly Meetings, Adelphi and Richmond - are working with a non-profit legal organization to challenge this executive action as it applies to houses of worship, and Baltimore Yearly Meeting is being asked to sign on as well.

There would be no financial cost involved in joining the suit. Sarah Gillooly, as General Secretary, would work with Trustees on behalf of BYM in this matter. A question was raised as to whether it would be more appropriate for the Trustees to act on behalf of BYM. Trustees will look into whether there is a usual practice in this regard, and act accordingly.

Friends noted that this action would support our anti-racist declaration, and is fully consistent with Friends’ testimonies.

We recognize the urgency and spiritual weight of this decision. We would normally seek guidance from our monthly meetings before making a decision of this kind, but under the present circumstances it seems rightly ordered that we should act today. We noted that it may be helpful to develop guidelines to facilitate nimble decision-making in emergency situations in the future.

Friends APPROVED authorizing our General Secretary or our Trustees, whichever seems more appropriate, to sign on to this lawsuit on behalf of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

**I2025-04 Closing**. During an extended period of silent worship, Friends expressed their appreciation for the service of the Clerk and Recording Clerk, and spoke of the deep love and trust they experience as part of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting community.

The meeting closed at 12:45 pm. The next Interim Meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2025, and will be held somewhere in the DC area.