

*Seasoned Business Items* lists are similar to “consent agendas” of the business world. The list of items is published in advance with an expectation of approval without discussion at an upcoming business session. These are items that the clerk believes need a decision or need to be recorded in our minutes but do not require any consideration during the business session. Anyone may seek clarification from a contact person in advance, if one is designated by an item on the list. Anyone may request that the clerk remove any item from the Seasoned Business Items list. This can happen up until the time when we are ready to approve the list. The clerk will first ask if any items need to be removed from the list. The clerk will then ask for approval of the entire list. No explanation is needed when asking for an item to be removed from the list just before approval. When asking for an item to be removed from the list in advance, it would help the clerk to know why. Items removed from the Seasoned Business Items list are added to the regular agenda.

1. **Trustees Handbook Entry Change** *There have been changes to our Yearly Meeting by-laws. The Trustees' page in the Yearly Meeting Handbook does not reflect these changes. Below, the Trustees seek to modify the content of their page in the Handbook to reflect the current by-laws. Important substantive changes are the increase in the number of trustees and the shortening of their terms of service. Questions can be directed to Peter Close or any other NYYM trustee.*

## **Purposes & Objectives**

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends conducts its business affairs pursuant to the guidance set forth in *Faith and Practice*, the Book of Discipline of New York Yearly Meeting. It is incorporated under Section 15 of the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York for the purpose of administering property, both real and personal, belonging to the Yearly Meeting or subject to its direction and disposition. All members of the constituent Monthly Meetings of the Yearly Meeting are members of the corporation. Any business meeting of the Yearly Meeting constitutes a meeting of the corporation.

## **Functions & Activities**

The by-laws of the Yearly Meeting assign to a Board of Trustees all business matters relating to property transactions, including management of the trust funds of the Yearly Meeting. The by-laws (see *Faith and Practice*), prescribe the duties of Trustees and general regulations for the conduct of their business. These include approval of a Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Recording Clerk, and Financial Clerk, and the appointment from within their number of an Investment Committee. In addition, the Clerk of the Trustees serves as President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees serves as Vice President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Trustees serves as Secretary of the Corporation. The Clerk of the Corporation and the Treasurer of the Corporation serve as *ex officio* members of the Board of Trustees.

## **Organization & Method of Appointment**

The Board of Trustees is composed of five (minimum) to ten (maximum) trustees. Terms are four years long with staggered termination dates so one to two

Trustees are appointed each year and there is overlapping continuity. Trustees may serve two successive terms for a total of eight years. The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee brings forth Board nominations which are approved by the Yearly Meeting. Vacancies are filled at any meeting of Spring, Summer, or Fall sessions. Clerks are approved as previously described. Trustees name one representative to the General Services Coordinating Committee. Trustees also name one representative to the Audit Committee who may not be the Financial Clerk of Trustees.

### **Meeting Times & Places**

The Trustees meet and report to the Yearly Meeting body during Summer Sessions and they frequently hold one or more additional meetings during the year, according to need. They report the status of funds under their care and the disbursements of income to the several beneficiaries of the trust funds. They also make reports to Fall and Spring Sessions of the Yearly Meeting as needed.

### **Finances**

Custodial fees, bookkeeping, and other expenses, except costs of securities transactions, are paid out of the income from the pooled trust funds. For purposes of transparency and accountability, the by-laws, trust fund descriptions, minutes of trustees' meetings and trust fund financial reports are available to all members of the Yearly Meeting.

2. **Minute on Gun Violence** *The co-clerks of Witness Coordinating have asked that this item be removed for further seasoning*

3. **PSWG Report** *Liaison Committee report on the Priorities Support Working Group and its request to be laid down. For questions, inquire of Clerk Jeffrey Aaron.*

#### Fall Sessions 2019

- At Fall Sessions 2010, the Priorities Working Group was established under the care of Liaison Committee.
- At Summer Sessions 2014, Friends approved a statement of leadings and priorities for five years.
- At Spring Sessions 2015, the PWG was laid down at the request of the WG.
- At Summer Sessions 2015, the Leadings and Priorities Working Group was established under the care of Liaison. It later revised its charge and was renamed the Priorities Support WG.
- Fall Sessions 2019, PSWG has requested of Liaison that it be laid down.

The original charge of the WG anticipated wide representation totaling eighteen Friends from numerous committees and coordinating committees, as well as each region. That representation was never achieved to any reasonable extent. Recent meetings were attended by five or six Friends. Without the representation mandated in setting up the group, it has been difficult to discern progress. The WG applauds the transparency around financial reporting that has happened since the Priorities were approved. However, in general, they have not felt that the yearly meeting has specifically focused on living into the other priorities. Times have changed and other concerns, priorities and leadings have arisen. Given the time that has passed since the Priorities were approved and the WG's frustration with lack of perceived progress, the WG felt it was time to be laid down.

Liaison Committee has agreed to do so.

Liaison reminds Friends that our Yearly Meeting's commitment to the approved list of Priorities ended in July 2019, five years after approval. Liaison will be meeting to discern if there is more that should be done, but we expect that at minimum we will likely have a more complete report at Spring Sessions 2020.

Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk, Liaison Committee

**4. Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee report** For questions, see Caroline Lane or Elaine Learnard, co-clerks

Report on the Meetings for Discernment 2019

Meetings for Discernment were held twice in 2019, at Poughkeepsie Meeting on February 23rd and at Silver Bay during Yearly Meeting Sessions on July 23rd.

There were two notable changes in these meetings from others in recent years. The first is that more young adult Friends than usual attended these meetings. The second is that the query for the summer meeting addressed a matter that is currently under consideration for action by the Yearly Meeting. And these two changes are connected.

Our February meeting was held on a Saturday and the organizers of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series arranged to hold one of their workshops at Poughkeepsie Meeting the following day. This made it easy and inviting for young adults coming to the workshop to come for Discernment as well, enriching the worship and fellowship on Saturday.

The summer meeting centered on the query “what does membership mean to you?” This is directly related to the proposal now under consideration by the Yearly Meeting to create an additional pathway to membership. We have not previously attempted to labor over a specific issue through the Meetings for Discernment process, but the Steering Committee agreed that it was appropriate to do so at this point in our development. And, while the proposed new pathway would not solely apply to younger Friends, the suggestion originated with concerned young adults for whom membership through a monthly meeting is not readily achieved. Knowing that we may each have a different portion of the Light, our discernment together was deep and open. Some reported that they understood the feelings and needs of others when before they had not been able to and some reported feeling heard when before they felt excluded. Though the Yearly Meeting is yet to come to unity on some questions of membership, the Meeting for Discernment was an opportunity, well-used, to listen, to speak, and to open to one another. We hope to continue exploring how these Meetings can have spirit-led practical uses for the Yearly Meeting.

Beyond the timing and topics of the Meetings, this year the Steering Committee made a greater effort to reach out, for clerks, to Friends who had not been called on before to clerk a session and whose gifts could become more widely known and appreciated by their clerking such a session. We learned (again) how this kind of recognition lifts up the individuals and the Meeting as a whole. We will continue to hold this as one of our objectives in seeking Friends to clerk Meeting for Discernment sessions.

Finally, we note that a minute approved in 2014 (2014-07-24) reads in part that “...Friends approve the extension of Meetings for Discernment for an additional six years, at the end of which Friends will consider how and whether Meetings for Discernment are serving Spirit’s purpose for New York Yearly Meeting... .” As the Steering Committee considers this over the coming months, we welcome any insights or concerns Friends may wish to share with us, and we anticipate bringing a recommendation on the future of the Meetings for Discernment to the Yearly Meeting body no later than Summer Sessions 2020.

Respectfully presented,

Caroline Lane

Elaine Learnard

For the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

5. **NYYM Trustees Bylaws 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation** For questions, see Roseann Press, Trustees clerk

See separate PDF in the [Advance Documents online](#)

## 6. Nominations

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA FALL SESSIONS 2019

#### APPOINTMENTS

Jennifer Morgan-Davie		Powell House Committee	2022
Bryant Henning		Powell House Committee	2022
Tom Goodridge	Morningside	Youth Committee	2022
Jens Braun	Old Chatham	Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	2021
Gloria Thompson	Manhattan	Barrington Dunbar Fund	2022
Gabrielle Savory Bailey	Chatham Summit	Friends United Meeting	2020
Barbra Bleecker	Montclair	Ministry & Pastoral Care	2022

#### RELEASE FROM SERVICE

Matthew Baney-Giampoa	Montclair	State of Society
Linda Chidsey	Housatonic	AFSC
Marissa Badgley	Poughkeepsie	FUM Triennial Delegate
Marissa Badgley	Poughkeepsie	Personnel

7. **WCC: Ribbon Project** For questions, see Nancy Britton, Rebekah Rice, Leo Quirk  
[three pdfs]

8. WCC divestment letter For questions, see Leo Quirk Friends,

Below is a letter from the Eco-investing group which they will be proposing to WCC for approval at Fall Sessions. Pending the approval of WCC, the item will remain on the Seasoned Business Items list. If there are edits from WCC, the item will come to the floor of sessions. The group is also considering investments by NYYM, with a potential minute to come at another time, but the current letter is to Friends Fiduciary.  
Leo Quirk, co-clerk, WCC

#### **Eco-investing MINUTE:**

**New York Yearly Meeting urges Friends Fiduciary Corporation to completely divest all holdings from companies involved in fossil fuel development and production as defined by the Carbon Underground 200 *Fossil Free Index*.**

**The investment committee of Friends Fiduciary Corporation should divest all funds from the Carbon 200 with good speed and redirect its investments into green technologies and solutions in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This requires investing with asset managers who have expertise in climate responsive investing in all seven sectors of solutions promoted by Project Drawdown.**

**Because global climate disruption is happening even faster than predicted, and because its impacts are being felt most deeply by people in less developed countries, Friends testimonies call us to act swiftly. The moral imperative to protect our planet is central to our witness as Quakers. We can no longer stay invested in the technologies that are on course to end life as we know it on Earth.**

#### **Supplementary Material:**

**Carbon Underground 200 Fossil Free Index** is a divestment guideline used by many religious and institutional investors. It includes the top 100 coal companies and the top 100 oil and gas companies. Friends Fiduciary Corporation's Quaker Growth and Income Fund has stocks in at least 5 of these corporations. <<https://fossilfreefunds.org/carbon-underground-200>>

**The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030."**  
<[www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals)>

GOAL 1: No Poverty  
GOAL 2: Zero Hunger  
GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being  
GOAL 4: Quality Education  
GOAL 5: Gender Equality



GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation  
GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy  
GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth  
GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure  
GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality  
GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities  
GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production  
GOAL 13: Climate Action  
GOAL 14: Life Below Water  
GOAL 15: Life on Land  
GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions  
GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

**Project Drawdown** is a science and engineering-based global collaboration which promotes 80+ currently feasible ways to slow and then reverse global warming by reducing the levels of heat-trapping gases in our atmosphere. However we can only gradually stabilize our climate again if sufficient changes are made in all seven sectors (listed from most to least important): Women & Girls; Transport; Materials; Land Use; food; Electricity; and Buildings & Cities.  
<[www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org)>

**Letter sent by NYYM to New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli**, asking him to divest NYS's COmmon Retirement Fund from fossil fuels. From page 35 of NYYM 2018-2019 yearbook: We are writing in support of the NY State Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign to urge you to divest New York's Common Retirement Fund of the top 200 oil, gas, and coal companies. You have the authority to do this unilaterally, and we encourage you to do so. In addition, we support the NY Fossil Fuel Divestment Act (S.4596 (Krueger)/A.3712 (Ortiz)), which seeks to require divestment as a matter of law. Our support arises from these beliefs:

**It is immoral to profit from activities that are destroying the planet.** It is settled science that burning fossil fuels pumps greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which retain heat and accelerate global warming. Global warming, in turn, is making severe weather events more common and more powerful. Warmer oceans add energy to storms and result in higher winds; warmer air holds more moisture and results in greater precipitation (51 inches from Hurricane Harvey!), and higher sea levels result in greater storm surges and flooding. The US has just experienced a flurry of such storms in Houston, South Florida, and Puerto Rico. In Asia, it has been much worse, with 1,200 deaths attributed to climate change enhanced weather in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. We should not be making money from an industry that is causing planetary destruction and profound human suffering. So far, portfolios valued at \$5.6 trillion in the aggregate have committed to fossil fuel divestment.

**Divestment is an act of leadership.** When the New York Common Retirement Fund divests of its fossil fuel holdings, it will raise public consciousness about the severity of climate change, and it will inspire other institutions to divest. It will also be a message to the rest of the country and the rest of the world that although our national leadership has pulled out of the Paris Accord and abdicated responsibility for fighting climate change, Americans can still make a difference on the State and local level, and New York stands ready to work with the rest of the world community to do so.

**The fossil fuel industry is poised to suffer huge financial losses.** Virtually every country in the world has committed to replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. This is going to result in a massive increase in laws and policies designed to reduce the use of fossil fuels. It is inevitable in this environment that the value of fossil fuel investments will decline. Indeed, a study released in February, 2016 showed that the NY pension fund would have been \$5 billion dollars better off if it had divested when first asked to do so three years earlier. This was before Exxon wrote off 19% of its reserves in the spring of 2016, which is only the tip of the iceberg. As demand for fossil fuels falls, the vast reserves of oil, gas, and coal comprising large portions of the

industry's balance sheets will have to be written off as unusable "stranded assets." In addition, increasing numbers of lawsuits seek to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for the damage they have caused and the lies they have told to investors and the public. NY's own Attorney General is considering legal action against Exxon. And our Governor has set goals for reducing the use of fossil fuels in NY. It makes no sense for us to be pursuing a public policy designed to challenge and shrink the fossil fuel industry while at the same time investing in that industry. Investors in the coal industry have already lost a fortune. Prudent investors would be wise to get out of oil and gas before the same thing happens, and we owe it to our retirees to be prudent.

Thank you for your serious and faithful deliberations on this crucial matter. Yours faithfully,  
Lucinda Antrim, Clerk, and Steven Mohlke, General Secretary.