

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
SPRING SESSIONS
APRIL 1-3, 2021

Saturday Morning, April 2, 2022

Online via Zoom

Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Clerk
Gloria Thompson (Manhattan), Assistant Clerk
Lu Harper (Rochester), Recording Clerk
Robin Mallison Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2022-04-01. Gathering

Friends remained gathered in deep worship.

2022-04-02. Land Acknowledgement

Julie Finch (15th Street) and Brendan Glynn (Brooklyn) read a [land acknowledgment](#).

2022-04-03. Roll Call

Roll call was read by Robin Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk, including the names of at-large yearly meeting members, regions, monthly meetings, and worship groups. When Friends heard the name of their monthly meeting, Friends with video access were invited to turn on their microphone and camera, which moved their window to the top of the "gallery view" in Zoom.

2022-04-04. Clerk's Welcome

Elaine Learned (Conscience Bay) gave the clerk's welcome and introduced the clerks table. Elaine said that her heart has been heavy and she has been looking forward to being together with us. Then she went to last night's session, and her heart lifted. She felt joyful, connected, encouraged, and uplifted. We are a community as long as we remember that we can stretch in all directions to reach one another, grounded in love, agreeing and disagreeing, with strong arms to hold one another, open hearts to listen to spirit and deep faith that we are one.

2022-04-05. Interim Actions

General Secretary Steve Mohlke (Ithaca), reported on interim actions taken by the clerk and general secretary on behalf of the yearly meeting since we last gathered at Fall Sessions. They signed on to the [NY Renews Faith Letter](#) to the NY Governor and Legislature in support of a proposal for fifteen billion dollars for climate, jobs, and justice in this year's budget, funding a just and equitable transition to a renewable energy economy. They also sent letters to New York & Connecticut governors [Hochul](#) and [Lamont](#) in support of compassionate release of incarcerated people due to the COVID pandemic, and access to medical treatment and vaccinations for all incarcerated people. A Friend suggested that we might also write to the governor of New Jersey (on whose actions these letters were modeled) to say "you done good." The clerk asked the clerks of Witness Coordinating Committee to follow up on that suggestion.

2022-04-06. Announcement of Annual Meeting of Corporation

Roseanne Press, Clerk of Trustees, announced the Annual Meeting of the Corporation in July 2022. Our bylaws require an announcement with 60 days notice.

She noted, in the spirit of transparency, that all the trustees have executed conflict of interest forms, that accountability reports from committees who receive funds from trustees are coming in, and that the trustees are at work.

2022-04-07. Postponing Discernment on Antiracist Faith Community Statement

The reading clerk read the [Clerk's Note](#), announcing that the draft statement on becoming an antiracist faith community will not be brought to Summer Sessions 2022, to give monthly meetings more time to discern and respond. A Friend requested that this change be reflected on the yearly meeting web page.

2022-04-08. Minutes approved

Lu Harper (Rochester), Recording Clerk, read the minutes this far. A Friend reflected on assumptions made in the minute reflecting on Friends differing access to the technology used in the roll call. Friends approved the minutes to this point.

2022-04-09. Update on antiracism activities and training

General Secretary Steve Mohlke (Ithaca) read a report from the clerk, the general secretary, and the director of the Friends Center for Racial Justice (FCRJ) [on antiracism activities and training since Summer Sessions](#). The report covered efforts to have 100 Friends attend antiracism analysis training; Friends' actions throughout the yearly meeting responding to and reflecting on racism; facilitation of sessions about racism and anti-racism at last summer's sessions; and support from yearly meeting committees and individuals to fund analysis training opportunities. More than sixty people have attended analysis training to date and three additional training sessions are currently being offered. The report stated: "Despite best intentions, if an organization uses its existing processes and structures to create change in its processes and structures—that is, if we do it as we always have done it—the risk of ending up with the same structure is very high. We know this is a structure that regularly silences non-white voices without recognizing what it is doing. If we want to assure accountability to Friends of color and create a genuine, new way to be together in love and equality, we must learn some new skills and acquire new tools. Love and good intentions are necessary, but they are not sufficient." The report urged "everyone to withhold judgment for a while, sit with discomfort, and explore what comes back to us from the trainings. Engage with the words and concepts, help hold a sacred space to consider what they might mean when seen from different angles, and trust that we, as a yearly meeting, will find a way forward." The report continued, "We can't know where we will end up. If we can enter the process as seekers with the mission to build a community truly open to all, we can trust Spirit to guide us to use our new tools and our familiar ones with wisdom and love."

The clerk invited Friends to take time in worship to sit with the report, listening for questions or ministry to arise.

A Friend asked whether in-person trainings would be available, perhaps through FCRJ or Powell House. Angela Hopkins noted that Roots of Justice does offer an in-person hands-on training, but it is not yet available due to the pandemic. It is hoped that in-person trainings will become possible in the future.

Friends then offered prolonged ministry, from diverse viewpoints and experiences.

2022-04-10. Minutes approved

Lu Harper (Rochester), Recording Clerk, read the remaining minutes. Friends approved the minutes.

2022-04-11. Closing

The meeting closed in worship.

Saturday Afternoon, April 2, 2022

Online via Zoom

*Gloria Thompson (Manhattan), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Laura Higgins (Wilton), Recording Clerk*

2022-04-12. Gathering

Friends remained gathered in deep worship.

2022-04-13. Introductions

Clerk introduced the Clerks Table and Tech Staff.

2022-04-14. Visitors

Clerk offered an opportunity for visitors to introduce themselves.

2022-04-15. Memorial Minute postponed

Wilma McCampbell's memorial minute will not be read at Spring Sessions but will be presented at Summer Sessions.

2022-04-16. Treasurer's Report for 2021

2021 Year End [Treasurer's Report](#) [Click link to view the 2021-12 Treasurer's Report, annotated for presentation at Spring Sessions]

December 31, 2021 Treasurer's report

Laura Cisar presented the year-end report and highlighted annotations made on the report for better understanding. New York Yearly Meeting ended 2021 with a surplus of \$63,835.22.

Note 1A shows Income and Disbursements. Contributions from Meetings totaled \$438,125, which is slightly higher than budgeted. Grant income was also higher than expected with the ARCH program receiving a \$10,000 grant from a private foundation.

- Note 1B shows “All Other” income includes a Contributions to the ARCH and CYYA funds being transferred to the operating reserve at the end of the year based on income and expenses.
- Note 3 shows Year End fund balances were \$450,144.16, \$64,316.36, and \$170,390.83 for the Operating Reserve, the Sharing Fund, and the Designated Use Funds, respectively.
- Note 4. shows distributions from the New York Yearly Meeting Invested Funds to the Operations Reserve, Witness Funds, Designated Use funds, and Other Organizations totaled \$251,466.60.

As of December 31, 2021, the balance of the New York Yearly Meeting Invested Funds was \$8,320,025.

The Year-end report also shows that in January of 2021, the PPP loan of \$80,400 was paid back. New York Yearly Meeting paid about \$600 in interest.

2022-04-17. Preliminary Treasurer’s Report for March 2022

Preliminary March 31, 2022 Treasurer's report was also presented by Laura Cisar.

- Note 1B shows that as of March 31, 2022, we estimated a deficit of approximately \$53,000.
- Note 1A reflects Contributions from the Monthly Meetings are \$37,397, which is 8.7% of budget. This is about half of the total received from Monthly Meetings at the end of March 2021. Note, the income from the 2022 ARCH grant has been transferred to the operating reserve.
- Note 2 Fund balances are \$397,226.72, \$57,023.93, and \$80,975.44 for the Operating Reserve, the Sharing Fund, and the Designated Use Funds, respectively.
- Note 3. At this time the assets of the Lindley Murray Trust are still held by New York Yearly Meeting, but have been separated out. The initial planned distributions from the Lindley Murray Trust for 2022 total \$35,561.32 based on the trust fund value in 2021. On page 7 of the Treasurer’s Report, which includes the table of New York Yearly Meeting Invested Funds and Properties, the Lindley Murray Trust is reported separately from the other funds.

One particular item of note is the YTD expenses for the Prisons Committee of \$10,525. This includes an expense of approximately \$6500 for the Green Haven petition to the Supreme Court. Past expenses for this lawsuit of \$2500 included for the initial submission in 2020. Future expenses will include approximately \$2500 for the reply brief and roughly \$3000 in other reimbursements.

2022-04-18. Report from Lindley Murray

Report and presentation from the Lindley Murray Committee

Carol Warner reported for the committee. In the summer of 2021, a working group updated the Lindley Murray application, including creating an online application. The YM created a folder structure that allows better organization and easier access of documents. In the spirit of transparency, and in keeping with the practices expected of all committees that receive funding

through the Trustees, the Lindley Murray Committee provides the New York Yearly Meeting Trustees with an Accountability Report that lists disbursements and other pertinent information.

The Lindley Murray Trust Fund, one of the largest (valued at \$1.2 million as of June 2021) and most complex funds, has recently come under an in-depth review. As a charitable trust, Lindley Murray is governed by Section 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code, and is subject to many of the same rules as a private foundation, including the need to distribute at least 5% of its value per year. So as to reflect the value for each full calendar year, the amount of awards cannot be calculated until the January of the following calendar year. In addition, the procedure for awarding grants to individuals on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis must be approved in advance by the IRS. Trustees and counsel are exploring whether the procedures for grants to individuals are financially and administratively viable for this practice to be continued.

The recent Grant Cycle awarded \$54,891. A total of 23 grants were awarded for the 2021 disbursement cycle, including six for individual educational scholarships and one grant was awarded to an individual. Oakwood Friends and Westbury Friends - both Friends Schools - received grants:

New York Yearly Meeting Trustees continue to work closely with outside counsel to have Friends Fiduciary Corporation appointed trustee of the Lindley Murray Trust and on other legal issues.

During discussions, Friends expressed grave concern with the original wording of the will awarding the Lindley Murray funds and the hope that, although the terms cannot be changed, it is made clear that NYYM does not subscribe to the belittling and disrespectful descriptions of the beneficiaries contained in the original language of the bequest.

2022-04-19. Minutes approved

The minutes to this point were approved.

2022-04-20. Summer Sessions updates

Clerk of Sessions Committee Dawn Pozzi confirmed Friends will be meeting together at Silver Bay for Summer Sessions. Sessions Committee wants Friends to know that we are planning to be at Silver Bay in July. We also are committed to offering ways for Friends who join remotely to be genuinely part of Summer Sessions. At least Meeting for Worship, Meetings for Business, and the Plenary will be blended in-person and on ZOOM. No Junior Yearly Meeting remote sessions are planned. Children have missed the magic of meeting together for three years and that is a really long time in their lives. We are working on our contingency plans. If something technological happens that disrupts the remote access, we will suspend business for 10 minutes. The tech team will be prepared with alternatives. If the problem hasn't been resolved within 10 minutes, the Clerk will decide how to move forward. If necessary for completion of business, we can reconvene online for a called meeting at an announced time after Sessions concludes.

Silver Bay Covid-19 policies follow all of New York State's rules. A New York Yearly Meeting committee to determine appropriate protocols is coming together. But, since July is so far off, safety policies are still under advisement for everyone. Dawn said the goal is to keep everyone as safe as possible. Some Friends are concerned that high-risk immuno-suppressed Friends or Friends at high risk for infection may not be fully protected. Another Friend shared the analogy of our not meeting on the second floor if there were no elevators.

Many Friends are not easy with blended Meetings for Worship or Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business. To a question about keeping worship sharing blended, Dawn noted the Sessions Committee is not responsible for organizing worship sharing. Another group at this meeting (Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions/MCC) heard the concern. Perhaps worship sharing groups can either be on Zoom or in person. The Meeting for Discernment scheduled for Summer Sessions is going to be blended.

Dawn noted that we are blessed to be given this opportunity to spend a week together, immersed in Quaker practice and living out our faith together. She said she plans to carve out lots of time to just sit and enjoy your company and watch our children and youth playing on the fields.

2022-04-21. Nominating Committee report

[Report](#) from the Nominating Committee presented by Jill McLellan (Buffalo)

This time of year is the big push. Jill encouraged everyone to contact Nominating Committee at nominating@nyym.org if you are interested in serving New York Yearly Meeting.

Nominations

Recording Clerk

Melanie-Claire Mallison Ithaca Class of 2022

Committee for Black Concerns

Helen Garay Toppins Morningside Class of 2024

The body approved the nominations.

Releases/Resignations

Sessions Committee

Ann Pettigrew Nunes ('18) Wilton Class of 2023

American Friends Service Corporation

Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer* ('21) Easton Class of 2024

**Approved in error—New York Yearly Meeting has two representatives now, not three. Two Friends are already serving.*

2022-04-22. AFSC Announcement

Announcement regarding American Friends Service Corporation:

Hans-Jurgen Lehmann and Lisa Gasstrom, New York Yearly Meeting's appointed Representatives to the American Friends Service Corporation Corporation, would like Friends to know that important matters including the restructuring of American Friends Service Corporation will be coming up at the annual American Friends Service Corporation Corporation meeting 4/9-4/10. These matters have prompted some corporation members to ask whether the American Friends Service Corporation may thereby lose its vital connections with its communities. Interested Friends can be in touch with either Lisa or Hans with concerns or questions. Lisa and Hans intend to arrange a ZOOM conversation including all New York Yearly Meeting Friends who are involved with or interested in American Friends Service Corporation following the Corporation meeting for all those interested.

2022-04-23. Minutes approved

The body approved the minutes.

Sunday afternoon, April 3, 2022

Online via Zoom

*Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Clerk
Gloria Thompson (Manhattan), Assistant Clerk
Laura Higgins (Wilton), Recording Clerk*

2022-04-24. Gathering

Friends remained gathered in deep worship.

2022-04-25. Introductions

The Clerk introduced the Clerks Table and the technical support staff.

2022-04-26. Visitors

Autumne Kirkpatrick, Francis O'Hara (Storrs), Mary Grimes (15th St) introduced themselves as visitors.

2022-04-27. Minute to Redirect Funding to Climate Change**Proposed Minute for [Redirecting Nuclear Funding to Climate Change](#)**

Diane Keefe (Wilton) read the minute that was approved at Wilton Quaker Meeting in January 2022. Subsequently, the minute was approved by Witness Coordinating Committee, and the Climate Working Group considered and edited it. The minute was developed before the war in Ukraine began and reflects dollar amounts from that time. The minute requests the Biden

Administration reduce the military budget by at least 10% with the projected \$78 billion in savings to be redirected to addressing climate change.

Friends offered comments and concerns about wording within the minute itself. Friends approved having the minute amended by the Climate Working Group, the Witness Coordinating Committee, the Clerk and the General Secretary and for the revised text to be forwarded to the Administration in Washington.

2022-04-28. Proposed Minute on Mindful Eating

A proposed minute from Friends in Unity with Nature, named [Mindful Eating and Compassion for Animals](#), was presented by Janet Soderberg (Fifteenth Street).

The proposed minute is intended to ask us to live our peace testimony by condemning cruelty to animals, re-evaluating our personal food choices, supporting efforts to help animals, and expressing our support for a more sustainable food system that does not harm our Earth. Further, it asks that the minute be distributed to regional and monthly meetings for consideration and action and that the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*, in consultation with the Friends in Unity with Nature committee of Fifteenth Street Meeting, consider developing related queries and advices. This minute came to Spring Sessions having been written by the Fifteenth Street committee Friends in Unity with Nature, and was approved by Fifteenth Street Meeting, New York Quarterly Meeting and Witness Coordinating Committee.

Friends gave ministry that the minute covered too many topics, was not clear on the specific farming practices of concern, and was unclear on what people were being asked to do. Some Friends were uneasy that people with more limited financial resources might be excluded from practicing what is intended. The meaning of the term “mindful eating” was questioned. Friends who had been active in developing the minute noted that, having taken things out of the minute in response to criticism that it contained too many topics, perhaps they had taken out too much.

The Clerk observed that Friends were not in unity on the minute at this time. The Friends in Unity with Nature committee was encouraged to work on the intent and the text, in consultation with the Witness Coordinating Committee and others sharing this concern, to bring a new minute to the body in another session. Additionally, a suggestion was offered that this topic might be appropriate for extended consideration in a future issue of *Spark*.

2022-04-29. Minutes approved

The minutes were approved to this point, with the understanding that revisions to the previous minute would be made and shared with the representatives from the Friends in Unity with Nature Committee. [The text of minute 28 reflects the subsequent consultation with the FUN Committee of Fifteenth Street Meeting.]

2022-04-30. Green Haven case

Fred Dettmer gave us an update on Green Haven Prison Meeting v DOCCS, for which he had just received notice that the district court had filed a [decision](#) on defendants’ long-standing

motion to dismiss and for summary judgment, granting the motion in its entirety. He explained the possibilities going forward and the work to submit a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari that would request that the Supreme Court hear the case. [Subsequent to Spring Sessions but before these minutes were published, we learned that on May 2nd, the Supreme Court denied petitions for certiorari in about 45 cases, including Green Haven Prison Meeting v. DOCCS.]

2022-04-31. Faith and Practice revisions

First Readings of proposed revisions to *Faith and Practice* were presented by Ann-Marie Scheidt. Ann-Marie Scheidt should receive all ministry, comments, and questions at faith-and-practice@nyym.org.

For reference, these documents were part of the Spring Sessions supporting documents on the Spring Sessions 2022 web page and are now available online at: [Revision to the Balby Epistle; Revisions to References to Elders and Overseers](#). The proposed changes will also be sent to monthly meetings for their input.

2022-04-32. Sessions Committee report

Dawn Pozzi, Clerk of Sessions Committee, gave the Sessions Committee report. One hundred forty-three Friends registered, including five who identified as young adults. Summer Sessions is being held, at Silver Bay and remotely, from Sunday, July 24 through Saturday, July 30.

2022-04-33. Minutes approved

Friends approved the minutes.

2022-04-34. Closing

The meeting closed in worship.