

WITNESS COORDINATING COMMITTEE
January 28, 2017

Minutes

Friends present: Mary Eagleson (Clerk), Frederick Dettmer (Recording Clerk), Helen Garay Toppins, Ruth Bryan, Emily Boardman, Jeffrey Aaron, Judy Meikle, Jens Braun, Joseph Olejak, Pierre Douyon, Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer, Robin Mallison Alpern, Sarah Faith Dickinson, Arlene Reduto, Jeff Hitchcock, Tom Rothschild, Buffy Curtis, Jill McLellan.

Friends joined in worship and shared “good feelings.”

1. **Financial Reports:** The Clerk distributed financial reports for the period ending December 31, 2016 and advises that electronic copy will be made available for committee clerks in advance of Spring Sessions.
2. **Finance Subcommittee Appointments:** The Finance Subcommittee currently consists of Helen Garay Toppins, Frederick Dettmer, Sue Weisfeld and Mary Eagleson. The Subcommittee reviews the administrative and Sharing Fund budget requests from the constituent committees and working groups of Witness Coordinating Committee and applications for Witness Activities Funds, and makes recommendations for the discernment of the entire WCC. No term of service for appointees to the Subcommittee has been formally adopted by WCC. **Friends approve having members of the Subcommittee appointed by WCC for renewable 1-year terms, commencing at the conclusion of Summer Sessions.**
3. **Nominations:** WCC currently does not have anyone serving as Assistant Clerk. The Clerk notes that she would particularly appreciate having an Assistant Clerk to share responsibilities, such as communicating with meetings and preparing reports. As well, the Clerk’s term will end after Summer Sessions in 2018, so appointing an Assistant Clerk who could become the next Clerk should be accomplished in the near future in order to afford him/her time to become conversant with the Clerk’s responsibilities. **Emily Boardman, who currently is on the Nominating Committee, agreed to continue. Arlene Reduto agreed to serve. Friends approve. Their term will end at the conclusion of 2017 Summer Sessions.**
4. **At-Large Members of WCC:** The Clerk requested suggestions for Friends to serve as at-large members of WCC, and also asked those present to seek candidates in their monthly meetings. She noted the value of having members of WCC from as many of the regional meetings as possible.
5. **Allocating WCC’s Share of the 2016 Operating Budget:** NYYM allocated \$3000 for WCC expenses for 2016, none of which has been spent. The deadline

for dispersing the funds is almost upon us. **Friends approve contributing the funds in equal shares (\$300 each) to the following organizations:**

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund
 Friends Committee on National Legislation
 Friends Peace Teams
 New Jersey Council of Churches
 New York Council of Churches
 Quaker Earthcare Witness
 William Penn House
 National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund
 National Religious Campaign Against Torture
 Water Protectors Legal Collective

6. **Sharing Fund Allocations:** Contributions to the Sharing Fund in 2016 totaled approximately \$21,000, which is less than the prior year (\$27,000+), but the decline may be the result of the fact that 2016 was a presidential election year. **Friends approve a 2017 Sharing Fund goal of \$55,000, which consists of approximately \$20,000 from the Sharing Fund Endowment and fundraising of \$35,000, with a commitment to greater fundraising efforts by the members of WCC and its constituent committees and to re-examine the goal in July or November.**

Friends considered adding a Sharing Fund line for 2017 to support the witness against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. World Ministries Committee has committed to contribute \$10,000 from the funds under its care to support the witness, and Indian Affairs Committee is willing to accept responsibility for dispersing funds allocated from the Sharing Fund, if WCC decides to make such an allocation. **Friends approve allocating 11.3% of Sharing Fund income in 2017 to the witness at Standing Rock, and gratefully accept IAC's offer to administer the funds.**

Friends approve the following Sharing Fund allocations for 2017:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>2017 Request</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Anticipated 2017 Distribution</u>
AVP	\$ 4,000	6.1	\$ 3,355
Barrington-Dunbar	16,000	24.3	13,365
Black Concerns	4,500	6.8	3,740
EAQWER	850	1.3	715
Earthcare	4,760	7.2	3,960
Indian Affairs	6,800	10.3	5,665
Prisons	6,750	10.2	5,610
Right Sharing	3,000	4.5	2,475
Witness Activities	4,800	7.4	4,070

World Ministries	3,000	4.5	2,475
Witness to the World	4,000	6.1	3,355
Standing Rock	7,500	11.3	6,215
Total:	\$65,960	100	\$55,000

Friends direct the Clerk to urge the clerks of the committees under the care of WCC to encourage all members of their committees to contribute to the Sharing Fund, regardless of how large or small the donation.

Friends are reminded that Jens Braun is coordinating skits to be performed during the Fund Fair at Summer Sessions to promote contributions to the Sharing Fund and are urged to convey ideas and interest to him.

The Clerk asked if there is interest in forming and serving on a fundraising sub-committee. A Friend suggested that an alternative might be to have a fundraising coordinator. No action was taken.

Afternoon Session

7. **Brooklyn Friends School Event:** Tom Rothschild described an event offering students the opportunity to learn about Friends' witness work that will be taking place at Brooklyn Friends School and Brooklyn Meeting. He invited Friends to contact him if they are interested in participating.

8. **Witness Activities Grants: Friends approve the following grants:**

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Chatham-Summit	AVP camp	\$ 2,400
Ithaca	Travel to El Salvador for AVP and Friends Peace Teams work	1,000
Ithaca	Work with local organizations on re-entry from prison, including 4 presentations from returned citizens & contribution to apt. rent for returnees	440
Mohawk Valley	Van rental for 11/16 trip to Standing Rock	516
Old Chatham	Film series	100
Purchase Quarter	Making recruitment video for prison worship group outside volunteers	700

Rochester	Support of the Gandhi Institute	250
Wilton	Witness to end solitary confinement	<u>990</u>
Total:		\$ 6,396

A request from Brooklyn Meeting for a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to support a wifi installation for the Oceti Sakowin School at the Standing Rock reservation was referred to Indian Affairs. Collins Meeting has indicated that it will be making a request for a grant in the amount of \$600, but no written application has been received yet. And Ithaca Meeting has indicated that it may request a grant in the amount of \$900 for presentations on Indians and visits from Indian elders, but confirmation from their Peace and Service Committee has not been received to date.

9. **World Ministries Committee Report:** Arlene Reduto reported on the work of World Ministries Committee. The Committee has developed an application template to improve its internal grant-making process in order to better assure that the Committee is fully informed in making grants, applicants receive consistent information and provide all necessary information, and funds are used appropriately. The template is available on the YM website. The Committee has increased its number of meetings from twice a year to 4 times a year so as to be better able to respond to grant requests in a timely manner.
10. **Summer Sessions Workshops Proposal:** Robert (Sunfire) Kazmayer reported on his efforts to have workshops/seminars/interest groups included in the schedule for the 2017 Summer Sessions. He requests that anyone with proposals for possible topics contact him.
11. **Witness at Standing Rock:** Buffy Curtis reported on developments in the witness against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. She expressed appreciation for the rapid response to a request for a letter of delegation provided by the Yearly Meeting. At its peak, there were approximately 15,000 people in the camps at Standing Rock. Currently those still there are being asked by the organizers to vacate the camps because of possible spring flooding. Those arrested were charged with felony incitement to riot, which can result in a prison sentence of 20 years. Friends are encouraged to contribute to the Water Protector Legal Collective (fundrazr.com/campaign/11B5z8). Further information can be obtained at StandingRock.net. The Army Corps of Engineers will be conducting an environmental impact assessment. Friends are encouraged to submit comments by the deadline of February 20, 2017 and/or to call the Army Corps of Engineers at 202-761-8700 to express their opposition to the pipeline's current planned route at and around Standing Rock. Buffy advises that she and Liseli Haines would welcome opportunities to lead discussions at monthly meetings regarding this leading.

12. **Racial Justice Network:** Helen Garay Toppins reported on racial justice work since the White Privilege Conference. A Racial Justice Network is being set up by the Anti-Racism Task Group under the care of Black Concerns Committee in response to inquiries from Friends who attended the Conference about actions that they could take. It will be launched during Black History Month. She distributed a letter describing the Racial Justice Network, which is attached. Friends are encouraged to purchase for their meetings and to read the book “*Deep Denial: The Persistence of White Supremacy in United States History and Life*” by David Billings.

13. **State of Society Report:** Friends considered the queries for this year’s State of Society Report and shared their reflections on the condition of Witness Coordinating Committee in anticipation of the Clerk’s preparation of a report for the Committee to be submitted to the State of the Society Committee. Friends noted the increased involvement of Friends in WCC’s work. The Committee is engaged in meaningful work that makes it worthwhile to attend its meetings. The question remains how do we translate the Committee’s attention to financial matters into active ministry in our meetings and conveying the vitality of our faith and attracting people to our worship. The current political conditions will attract people to the Society of Friends; we need to find ways to embrace and support them. Friends need to discern where they will make their stand and how to do it. There is a real connection between the work of Friends at the Yearly Meeting level and in the monthly meetings; we need to find ways to connect and share our work with the monthly meetings. Witness work is often contrasted to the focus on inward spiritual grounding when they really are intertwined. We do not merely stand in protest, but seek to live life under the guidance of the spirit, which directs us to our witness. Friends appreciate our witness work, but the focus of the Yearly Meeting is with ministry and nurture except in times of crisis. We are entering a time of crisis that will make the work of WCC committees central to the life and concerns of the YM. We need to find ways for our work to connect with all of the monthly meetings and attract the involvement of meetings that are not active.

14. **The minutes were approved.**

Mary Eagleson
Clerk

Frederick Dettmer
Recording Clerk