

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS --- APRIL 21, 2019

Thirteen Friends were gathered when Clerk Guy Marsden opened the meeting with a period of silent worship. Minutes of the February Meeting for Business were approved.

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL Transfer of Barb Gibson's membership from Moorestown, N.J. Meeting was approved. She was warmly welcomed. The Clerk noted that an effort was being made both at local meeting level and with New England Yearly Meeting to move beyond simple binary (male/female) categories when referring to members. More inclusive terms are sought to respect the diversity among members.

A draft text for the State of Society Report was discussed. After a few minor corrections were made appreciation was expressed to those who developed the draft. A concern was raised that, while many worthy activities were recorded, the report lacked a full sense of the deeper spiritual aspects and personal experience of Midcoast Meeting. One comment suggested that the report needed "more heart." After further exchanges it was suggested that the post-meeting session on the following Sunday be focused on how to enrich the text with greater spiritual depth.

Sue Rockwood informed the meeting that Erin, the young woman who has served as child-care person during meeting, expects to take up her duties in the Fall but as a High School senior she may have to terminate her service. Her faithful participation through the year deserves recognition, perhaps with a gift certificate from the bookstore. The meeting should be prepared to identify her successor when need arises.

Attention turned to whether Midcoast Meeting should endorse the stand taken by New England Yearly Meeting in objecting to a personnel policy of Friends United Meeting that blocked the hiring LBGTQ persons for positions in Africa. Some funds were withheld as a result of this witness. Granting the complexity of working in an African social context, the meeting was unified in finding FUM's policy inconsistent with Quaker values and traditions. A MINUTE was approved to be sent in support of NEYM's stance:

MINUTE REGARDING NEYM WITHHOLDING FUNDS TO FUM ON THE ISSUE OF DISCRIMINATION

At Midcoast Meeting of Friends we believe that the central premise of Quakerism is that the Light shines in every person. We fully support equality in all forms. It distresses us that FUM has a policy of discriminating against LBGTQ persons and do not wish to support an organization that discriminates in any form. While acknowledging that in Africa the socio-cultural history is quite different, we nonetheless hold to our core values of equality as espoused by George Fox. We ask whether Listening Sessions might form the beginning of a reconciliation of this issue and hope to see change. Therefore we choose to support withholding funds from FUM as a symbolic gesture.

PASTORAL CARE and EMERGENCY FUND Lengthy discussion followed on how to respond to the needs of members especially in unexpected crises as well as the budget impacts of restoring a line item for an Emergency Fund to provide assistance in such cases.

Several persons spoke to the belief that the meeting should be seen as a community in which members had a loving commitment to take care of each other. In the recent past there was an Emergency Fund in the budget administered in confidence by a group of 3 including the clerk of Pastoral Care. In one year the full amount available was given out in the first week. This example

highlights the challenge in dispersing funds thoughtfully over a full year when unexpected claims can arise at any point in that year.

The Emergency Fund was omitted from the budget when resources diminished and cuts had to be made. The overall budget situation has improved but caution was expressed that keeping an allocation of \$1,000 to \$2,000 each year cannot be sustained without drawing on reserves. It is certain that in any year once funds set aside for emergencies are expended, there will be no replenishment. It was noted that personal crises have arisen for which targeted fund-raising was carried out in response. Sue Rockwood described combined efforts of eight local churches to meet special needs such as the Committee to Prevent Homelessness which provides the service of a social worker to identify resources for those at risk.

While no final decision was reached, there was broad acceptance of the goal to have some funds made available for emergency claims under caring and responsible administration. Guidelines should be reviewed for such a fund. Ministry and Counsel might have a role in setting these guidelines. This issue will be revisited when the budget for the next fiscal year is presented at the next Meeting for Business.

MEETING HOUSE and GROUNDS Nancy Holmes has worked extensively on the garden areas around the Meeting House. Some trees may be planted to replace invasive plants. Funds may be needed to construct an inner door in the basement to reduce heat loss. Exhibition of art-work by meeting members in the lobby was seen as a success. A proposal to enable the lending out of such art will be explored by a group led by Daniel Hall.

MIDCOAST OUTREACH AND PEACE COMMITTEE A full day workshop on “Confronting White Racism” will be held at Midcoast on May 25th. Volunteers are needed to help with this event, especially with the lunch. Please speak with Sue or Daniel. The Diaper Drive will begin in May. A local pastor will hold his weekly pastoral hour at the Meeting House for at least a month. Although the Meeting for Worship on Wednesday morning was laid down, enough people have been turning up on Wednesdays that the meetings will be renewed starting at 10 a.m.

BUDGET Bruce Rockwood presented a draft Budget of 2019-2020. Returns on current year pledges are \$12,879 for the meeting budget and another \$2,828 for MOPC. Bruce then went through the details of the proposed budget. Accounting will now be done by meeting members using Quick Books. When asked about an audit, Bruce explained that an audit was regularly performed every third year. The next one is due in the 2020-2021 budget year.

James Matlack --- Recording Clerk

