

GUIDE for CLERKS

for

**New York Yearly Meeting
committees and their clerks**

**Carry it with you and use it!
Keep it by your phone or computer,
and use it to prepare for meetings.**

**Selections from the NYYM Handbook,
and other sources**

About the *NYYM Handbook*

- It is available online at nyym.org, under Publications.
- Since one section or another may be updated every year or so, it's important to know which version you have.
- The Part 2 section, which makes up the "**NYYM Clerk and Committee Guidelines**" in this Guide, was printed from the website in June, 2013. It has its own numbering in this excerpt (21 pages), which starts as page 78 in the current version of the full *Handbook*.
- In the nyym.org website, you may visit or print from the entire *Handbook*, or the Clerk and Committee Guidelines. For the Guidelines, look under "Committee" heading. It will be at top of the list at the left of the screen.

CHECKLIST FOR NYYM COMMITTEE MEMBERS & CLERKS

By the end of Summer Sessions: Each committee needs to **reorganize**: appoint a clerk, a recording clerk, perhaps a financial clerk (depending upon the committee), and a representative to the coordinating committee of your section. Some committees are asked to appoint representatives to other committees as well. The YM office will send a form asking for this information. **Meeting times and places** for the coming year should be established. Each member needs to be aware of the **purpose and function** of the committee (consult the committee's Handbook page online). The clerk and continuing committee members need to make new members aware of the **concerns** that are being dealt with or that will need attention in the coming year. Committees are also reminded that the Coordinating Committee clerks are available to be called on for advice and assistance. If a committee is not meeting during Summer Sessions, the reorganization steps have to be taken earlier or soon after.

Budget Saturday is usually in September or October (watch for announcement). This is a time for Friends to discern where our limited funds should be allocated for the coming year to best meet the needs and priorities that have been established for the yearly meeting. It would be good to have a member of your committee attend, especially if you receive substantial funds from the YM operating budget.

Fall Sessions happen in early November. This is a good time to schedule a committee meeting. It is also a time to meet with other Friends who share a commitment to the effective functioning of the yearly meeting. At Fall Sessions a current **Yearbook** containing minutes from the past year, Advance Reports, financial information, and Friends under appointment for the current year with their contact information is provided for each committee member and several copies for each monthly meeting.

Nominating Committee work begins early in the calendar year. Committee clerks will receive a letter asking about who will be continuing in the new year beginning after Summer Sessions, and requesting suggestions for Friends who might be asked to serve. This work continues through Summer Sessions. If you would like to be released from YM service, send a note to your committee clerk, YM clerk, Nominating Committee clerk and the YM office.

Coordinating Weekend usually occurs in January at Powell House. For the past couple of years, the "weekend" begins on Friday evening, and concludes on Saturday before dinner. Committees may schedule a meeting on Friday afternoon or Sunday afternoon.

Spring Sessions are scheduled the first weekend of April, unless that is Easter weekend. If so, Spring Sessions happen the following weekend. The opportunities are similar to Fall Sessions.

Advance Reports are due in May. Committee clerks receive the due date from the YM Office in plenty of time. Committees are also asked to respond to the **Accountability Queries** once a year. The coordinating committee clerk will send a reminder.

Summer Sessions week is another good time for your committee to meet. The coordinating committee clerk will ask for your **budget projections** for the next calendar year prior to Summer Sessions so that these requests can be considered by the coordinating committee, and preliminary budget information for the section can be given to Financial Services Committee. You will know who will be serving on your committee in the coming year.

NYYM Clerk and Committee Guidelines

Dear Friends:

Contained within this *Handbook* are the descriptions of the New York Yearly Meeting, its sections and the committees under the care of each section. This section includes advices to clerks of Yearly Meeting committees and coordinating committees. Last but not least, you will find guidelines and a schedule of events for typical committee work.

While we do not intend that there be any rigid pattern of committee organization to which all committees are required to adhere, nevertheless, experience has suggested certain guidelines.

There is a great deal of information here. We hope you will read with care and find it useful.

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INTRODUCTION: New York Yearly Meeting's Spirit Led Committee Structure

Central to our faith is the belief that God's Spirit is alive and present to lead us directly as individuals and communities. At the same time, we understand that we need structure—monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings, and committees—to help discern and carry out an effective plan of action in the world. The Yearly Meeting committees described in this handbook were created in response to an individual leading or a specific practical need. Some were created in response to our Faith & Practice. At the time that they were formed, each committee charge and description was written with care and discernment. We used our best understanding of the work before us to set the number of committee members and meetings. As we all strive to ensure that our faith is well reflected and renewed through our work, we are also aware that over time, structures can take on a life of their own and become bureaucratic, stifling the very Spirit they are meant to serve because of a misguided attachment to a line item or long-lost purpose.

As you consider your service on a yearly meeting committee, we urge you to ask yourself and your committee whether your work continues to be Spirit led, demonstrating spiritual life and energy.

We also remind Friends that a Yearly Meeting is not meant to be a large structure, duplicating ministry that should be occurring at the monthly and regional level. We ask each new committee member to take a hard look at our Yearly Meeting's committee structure to see what parts are essential to the ongoing care and oversight of the Spirit and what parts are best exercised through ministry at the local level, released individuals or temporary working groups that come and go as the Spirit leads.

Above all our Yearly Meeting structure must serve as a faithful servant to our local meetings and leadings.

We are blessed by your presence and search for Truth as you consider a committee appointment.

1. GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1-A] So, You've Been Asked to Serve on a Committee!

Before accepting nomination to any committee or agreeing to clerk, read carefully the guidelines below, along with the appropriate *Handbook* descriptions of the committee and its coordinating committee. You might also consider asking for a Clearness Committee from your Monthly Meeting.

In general, prior to nomination, feel free to attend committee meetings and talk with committee members. You might also read the committee's annual reports in several *Yearbooks*, including the most current, and the *Faith & Practice* section that pertains to the spiritual basis of your committee. It is best to have the fullest possible knowledge of a committee before agreeing to serve in any capacity.

As part of your considerations regarding serving, keep in mind the stipulated term of

membership and the description of the committee and its responsibilities. Consider seriously any other obligations you may have for that period. In particular, serving on more than one coordinating committee—for instance as an at-large member for one and as representative to another—guarantees that you will be unable to meet your obligations to both. Serving on two or more committees, will almost always result in the inability to meet some committee obligations.

Finally, at-large committee members of coordinating committees may have special responsibilities according to the arrangement of the coordinating committee. If you are being nominated as an at-large member, be sure to speak with the coordinating committee clerk to clarify your role.

1-B] Your Nomination & Yearly Meeting Approval

Once you agree to be nominated, try to attend the Yearly Meeting session when your nomination to the committee will be considered. Assuming your nomination is approved, this is the time to begin attending committee meetings. Once approved, you will receive a notification card from the NYYM Nominating Committee and your information will be included in the next *Yearbook*, which lists committee members and their street addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Please be sure your committee clerk and the Yearly Meeting office have the correct information.

1-C] Now That You Are a Committee Member

Your committee clerk will send you a packet of committee minutes and other pertinent information. Please read thru this information carefully so that you are aware of the work the committee has already done and the work now before you. The clerk will also inform you of the committee meeting times and send you the committee's annual calendar of events so you can anticipate the work and rhythm of the year. It is your responsibility to attend and participate in the activities and decision-making of the committee in a prepared manner. If you are unable to attend, send regrets to your clerk and be sure to read the minutes of the meeting you missed.

1-D] Being a Good Committee Member

What, beyond attendance at meetings, makes a good committee member? Here are some of the characteristics:

- A personal interest, or even better, a leading to support the work of the committee;
- A clear understanding of the role of the committee as expressed in its charge by the Yearly Meeting and described in this *Handbook*;
- A willingness to serve as a conduit of dialogue and information between the Yearly Meeting and your Regional/Quarterly Meeting and your Monthly Meeting;
- An ability to see the place and role of the committee in the overall work of the Yearly Meeting.
- A readiness to take on responsibilities within the committee, and share in the work.

Committees exist to carry out the will of the Yearly Meeting as led. In so serving the committee members find spiritual fulfillment.

1-E] Committee Officers

Typically, each committee has three officers: a clerk, assistant clerk and a recording clerk. In addition, committees must name a representative to their section's coordinating committee (who may or may not be the clerk). A few have a financial secretary and other appointees for whom experience has shown a need. Some have representatives to other committees, for example, Sessions Committee.

1-F] Selection of Officers & Other Appointees

Committees should appoint an internal nominating committee in the spring that will report during Summer Sessions with recommendations for officers, representative to the coordinating committee, and as many other appointees as necessary. Whenever possible, an incoming clerk should be identified a year before the present clerk steps aside from that role. Ideally, this person serves as an assistant clerk and walks with the clerk throughout that time period.

Committees usually meet during Summer Sessions to organize the new year, welcome in new members just approved by Yearly Meeting, and approve officers and representatives. The Yearly Meeting office will provide the committee clerk with a form indicating appointments to be made by that committee and asking for names and contact information for the appointees. This information will be included in the *Yearbook*.

Committees which represent separately incorporated bodies such as Oakwood Friends School or Powell House may decide on officers for the next year at a designated annual meeting.

1-G] Representation at Section Coordinating Committee Meetings

Since the coordinating committees must make broad decisions that affect the whole section, it is essential that each committee be represented at all coordinating committee (CC) meetings. Once you have been named to the position of representative (rep) by your committee, the coordinating committee clerk (or designee) will send you a packet of CC minutes and pertinent information, along with a schedule of CC meetings. Again, please read through this information carefully so that you are aware of the work the CC has already done and the work now before it. Reps should find an alternate if they are unable to attend a particular CC meeting. The designated rep should follow up with the alternate after the meeting and before the next meeting of the committee.

1-H] Committee-Related Expenses

Most committees have funds for expenses, but membership on a Yearly Meeting committee will probably require some financial outlay for travel, telephone, and the like. No one should decline nomination to a committee s/he feels called to serve on because of financial concerns. See more on finances below in Section 5.

1-I] Renominations

Friends may be renominated for a second term on a committee but not for a third term without at

least one year intervening. Such a practice allows for both continuity and the opportunity for new members to contribute to the work of the committee.

1-J] Resignations & Requests for Release

If you find yourself unable to continue as a contributing member of the committee, requesting release means another Friend who can be more active may be named. Letters of resignation go to the clerk of the Yearly Meeting, in care of the Yearly Meeting office, with a copy to the clerk of the committee and to the clerk of the Nominating Committee.

1-K] Co-opting Members for Committees

Any committee may co-opt a member at any time. The co-opted person need not be a Friend. Co-opted people serve for one year and are generally chosen because they have a particular skill or area of expertise needed by the committee. An example would be Powell House co-opting an architect during a remodeling project; another would be the Sharing Fund co-opting an experienced fund raiser. As co-opted members, they may not serve as clerk or financial clerk; neither should they participate in executive meetings of the committee or make financial decisions.

2. YEARLY MEETING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO COMMITTEES:

2-A] Use of Space in the Yearly Meeting Office

Clerks wishing to use the office at 15 Rutherford Place for evening or weekend committee meetings should consult Yearly Meeting Office Use.

2-B] Staff Services

Staff services may be available for specific section projects. Committee clerks should contact the General Secretary with any requests.

2-C] Yearbook

The *Yearbook* is published in the fall of each year. It contains the minutes of the previous year's sessions, lists of committee members and their addresses, and names, addresses and officers of all Monthly and Regional meetings as well as of the Yearly Meeting.

2-D] Coordinating Committee

Each NYYM committee is under the care of one of the four coordinating committees. The coordinating committee clerks and at-large members are available to advise, support and counsel the committees under their care—receiving regular committee reports, drawing connections

between the work of various committees, collating budget requests, seasoning and helping prioritize reports to the Yearly Meeting body. In addition, coordinating committees as a whole have the responsibility and authority to support and hold accountable their constituent committees in honoring their designated functions. The clerk of the coordinating committee shall ensure that there is an annual review by each committee for the purpose of evaluating the work done on these responsibilities. Some coordinating committees assign a specific at-large member to each committee under their care. Be sure to work with this assigned liaison person.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE CLERK

3-A] If You Have Been Asked to Serve As Clerk

As mentioned earlier, committees generally gather their nominations for officers in the spring and consider the slate at Summer Sessions for approval. If you are asked to serve as a committee clerk, reread section 1-A, above, and be sure to weigh carefully any obligations you already carry. Most important, remember that the duties, organization, and usual meeting times and places of each committee are described in this *Handbook*.

3-B] Upon Being Approved As Clerk: First Things First

If you accept the nomination and it is approved by your committee, then the out-going clerk will have a collection of materials for you at Summer Sessions, which should include committee minutes covering at least the past three years, reports, budgets, expenditures, notes from interest or study groups, etc. While it will be time consuming, it is important to read through these materials as soon as possible.

Along with the materials you receive from the previous clerk, be sure to gather the contact information for all your committee members, including any new members approved at Summer Sessions, before you leave Summer Sessions. Send this information along with your new slate of officers to the NYYM office as soon as possible, as you will need this information in order to honor your responsibilities as clerk — starting off with sending the required information packet to any new committee members. The packet should include the NYYM *Handbook* description for the committee, minutes of the past two years, and any important committee documents, including a clear and concise history of the committee, so they can see the movement of the committee and so that decisions do not need to be revisited. (Many of these items can be easily gathered together from the materials you now have.)

The previous clerk should also hand on to you a more detailed calendar of committee events, covering the timely requests for items for the agenda and for budgets, etc. Keep in mind that clerks should regularly inform the Yearly Meeting office of the dates and times their committee will meet.

In early autumn, the Yearly Meeting clerk is responsible for facilitating a day-long session for all coordinating and committee clerks to provide an opportunity for Friends to share information and guidance, and to prepare for the work of the year ahead. All new and returning clerks should

be prepared to attend the All Clerks Workshop.

3-C] The Spirit of the Committee Meeting

Clerks help to foster a religious fellowship within the committee. Meetings begin with a time of worship and sharing, and continue in that spirit of worship. Encourage your committee members to read “Setting the Table” or other similar documents to prepare for their work together. (Find the full text of “Setting the Table” in Appendix A or at NYYM.org.)

Committees should meet regularly and as often as their responsibilities require. You may want to consider an annual committee retreat and additional meeting times outside of Yearly Meeting sessions. In these ways, your committee will be able to consider its business responsibly, and members, through regular opportunities for work and worship together, can come to "know one another in that which is eternal."

3-D] Committee Work & Membership

All action of Yearly Meeting committees should be the result of a corporate seeking of unity in the manner of Friends, under guidance of the Spirit. In some cases, committees may find it useful and desirable to delegate specific parts of their responsibilities to subcommittees and task groups that may be able to act effectively and quickly in the areas assigned to them.

Committee membership should be large and broad enough to reflect the Yearly Meeting as a whole. However, even when a committee is small, its work should reflect the thought and leadings of several Friends and should not be the work solely of its clerk.

As committees meet to consider the work before them, they may find the following helpful:

3-E] Criteria to Be Applied in Considering an Action, New Project, or a Recorded Minute

1. Does this item have its basis in the spirit and teaching of Friends? Is it something we are led to do by the Spirit and that we are committed to?
2. Is this something that needs to be done by a New York Yearly Meeting committee rather than by a Monthly Meeting or Regional Meeting? Does it fall within the committee's functions as defined by the Yearly Meeting? Is there any other Yearly Meeting committee that would more appropriately carry out the work? Could it be better done by another Quaker body?
3. To what extent does the item have the possibility of receiving support and participation from Monthly Meetings of New York Yearly Meeting and of Friends outside the committee?
4. Is this something that will help and educate others?
5. Is this something that is realistic, given the available resources? Are people available who are willing to carry out the concern?
6. Is there a clear plan for accomplishment? A suggested begin date and end date?

If there are hesitations on any of these questions, do not push to accomplish the task but wait for clearness to become apparent. If the committee cannot reach clearness after a reasonable time of seasoning, its coordinating committee may be consulted.

3-F] Proposing Minutes for Yearly Meeting Consideration

There are two avenues by which proposed minutes are seasoned and brought before the Yearly Meeting body for consideration and possible approval and action.

(On occasion, the Yearly Meeting has experienced a third way—the rising of a minute from the floor. This happens when the Spirit is moving powerfully and the ground has been prepared during Meeting for Business, but this is a rare occurrence, organic in nature, and therefore not addressed here.)

3-F] 1. Minutes from YM Committees

Often, a Yearly Meeting committee may have a concern it wishes to bring to the Yearly Meeting body in the form of a proposed minute. The following queries can help clarify a committee's process on such a minute.

- a. Has the subject of the minute been seasoned? Has it had prayerful consideration? Has it generated discussion and enthusiasm? Have Friends who may disagree had an opportunity to consider the minute and its implications? In some cases, it may be reasonable to season a minute through a Monthly Meeting, and its Regional Meeting.
- b. Does the minute support an individual or group leading? Will the proposed action support and move forward the work of others in new ways? How does it relate to previous Yearly Meeting activities? Have alternate methods for accomplishing the work been explored?
- c. In bringing the minute forward, what action do you expect the Yearly Meeting to take? Do you want the Yearly Meeting to thresh through the issue? Are you asking for corporate witness? The YM clerk's signature? Is the minute time-sensitive? Your request and expectations of the Yearly Meeting must be clearly stated.
- d. If action is being asked of the Yearly Meeting, what resources will be needed? What follow-up activities or responsibilities are anticipated? Are there Friends who have already indicated a willingness to take on some of these responsibilities?

Once a committee has written and approved a minute, and written a cover letter regarding the committee's intent for the minute, a copy must be given to the appropriate coordinating committee clerk, for the consideration of that body. If approved by the coordinating committee, the minute will be sent to the Yearly Meeting clerk and, at the YM clerk's discretion, will then be included on the business session's agenda.

Please be sure to follow carefully and respond in a timely manner to any requests made of your committee regarding the minute's presentation.

3-F] 2. Minutes from a Monthly and Quarterly/Regional Meeting

In order to bring a minute to the body of the Yearly Meeting, a Monthly Meeting first brings its minute to the Quarterly / Regional Meeting for seasoning and approval. Once the minute has been endorsed by the Region, it may then be forwarded to the Yearly Meeting clerk. On occasion, a Monthly Meeting or Region brings such an endorsed minute to an appropriate Yearly Meeting committee or coordinating committee for further seasoning and clarification of the next action. Yearly Meeting practice does not require that this be done, however if this is the case, the minute should be given the same thoughtful consideration as committee minutes and, if approved, forwarded to the Yearly Meeting clerk.

At the discretion of the Yearly Meeting clerk, the minute will then be included on the business session's agenda. Again, please be sure to respond in a timely manner to any requests regarding the minute.

3-G] Committee Reports to the Yearly Meeting

Beyond any minutes a committee may want to bring before the Yearly Meeting, you, as committee clerk, may feel there is committee work which is timely and spirit-led, and which needs to be reported to the wider body. In this case, you or your committee's CC representative should contact the coordinating committee clerk to request time on the next business session agenda. Per the YM clerk's discretion, your committee may be asked to report. If you receive such a request, please be sure to submit a written report to the CC and YM clerk as soon as possible. Subsequently, follow carefully and respond in a timely manner to any requests made of your committee regarding the report.

3-H] Committee Records and Expenditures

1. The clerk (or designee such as recording clerk) sees that committee minutes, records, and resource materials, including a copy of this *Handbook*, are maintained in a form that can be transmitted to succeeding officers. The clerk or designee sends copies of all minutes to committee members, to the Yearly Meeting office and to the coordinating committee clerk, except when clearly inappropriate. (An example of an inappropriate minute would be one where confidentiality is of concern, i.e. Personnel Committee or Ministry and Counsel.)
2. The clerk (or designee such as the financial secretary) authorizes expenditures of funds allocated to the committee. Reimbursement forms are available from the Yearly Meeting office or web site. The Yearly Meeting treasurer and the clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee advise committees on bookkeeping procedures. (See specific guidelines on committee financing and travel expense, pages 15–19, and the Finances section of committee descriptions.)
3. The clerk (or designee such as the financial secretary) must submit a budget request to the appropriate coordinating committee following the timeline detailed by the CC clerk and Financial Services Committee.
4. Read carefully Section 5. FINANCES below.

3-I] Representing the Committee

The clerk is:

1. expected to attend the All Clerks Workshop in the fall, as arranged by the clerk of the Yearly Meeting;
2. encouraged to attend Budget Saturday (typically in September);
3. invited to attend the Sessions Committee planning weekend and/or communicate with the Sessions Committee;
4. expected to attend the January weekend meeting of all coordinating committee members of all sections, along with the committee's named CC representative;
5. to designate a representative to attend those meetings s/he cannot attend.

3-J] Committee Communications

Forethought and judgment are also important in another area. Communications from a committee may be mistakenly interpreted as coming from all Friends or reflecting the position of the Yearly Meeting. Therefore, whenever such misinterpretation of communications might be possible, a committee should seek the advice of its coordinating committee. For instance, any clerk must be clear that communications are approved by the whole committee before signing as clerk, and then should be clear that the communication is coming from the committee only, not the Yearly Meeting. The communications may then be sent to New York Yearly Meeting only, for its consideration.

Please note that in a 1973 decision approved by the Yearly Meeting, all correspondence from New York Yearly Meeting going outside the Yearly Meeting is sent with the approval of the NYYM clerk. "Committees of the Yearly Meeting are intended to be instruments of the Yearly Meeting and not independent operation entities. Their principal functions are to help implement approved action of the Yearly Meeting and to propose for Yearly Meeting consideration areas where action seems indicated.") [Note: Verify minute number and date.]

3-K] Yearly Meeting Spring or Fall Sessions

Clerks are asked well in advance if they wish to have a committee meeting at the time of Spring or Fall Business Sessions. Respond in a timely manner with your requests for display and meeting space (including the number of people expected to attend), etc, at those sessions.

3-L] Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions

In March, each clerk is asked by the Yearly Meeting office to respond to certain questions or requests for the Summer Sessions. It is important to respond in a timely manner to requests for space and any special considerations at these sessions.

1. Committee meetings at Summer Sessions: the number of meetings needed, the preferred time and the expected number of attenders.

2. Interest and/or study groups at Summer Sessions: number, topic, and responsible person.
3. Annual Report of the committee: contact NYYM to confirm due date for *Advance Reports*. (Typically due in mid-April.)

3-M] Preparing the Annual Review and Advance Report Using the Accountability Queries

Committee clerks shall initiate an annual review using the following committee accountability queries and submit the report to their coordinating committee. This review can also be the basis for the required *Advance Report*. As part of the review, clerks should consider whether the size of the committee is suitable to its good functioning. If a committee needs more or fewer committee members, this should be addressed with the coordinating committee clerk.

1. Can nominees be found to fill each class of service?
2. Is there an active clerk? Does s/he feel led to further the committee's work?
3. Is the purpose and charge of the committee being fulfilled? Where is the life of the Spirit taking the committee?
4. Does the committee's representative to the coordinating committee attend those meetings regularly to take part in the CC's work and keep the CC apprised of the committee's work?
5. Is the committee's budget created and presented to its coordinating committee in a timely way?
6. Is the committee's prior year's budget substantially spent on the activities listed in that budget?
7. Is a committee's proposed work accomplished and reported in a timely way?
8. Does the work of this committee directly serve or impact the life of the Monthly Meetings?
9. What has not been asked, but should be known?

3-N] Laying Down a Committee

If the responses to the accountability queries raise questions regarding the function of a committee, guidance should be sought from the coordinating committee. Together, actions may be discerned to strengthen the work of the committee. As a final resort, the clerks should not be reluctant to recommend that the committee be laid down.

Laying down a committee, clears the ground for a new seed to be planted as individuals feel called to this task and go through our traditional discernment process testing their leading at the monthly and regional level, allowing others to be drawn to the task. Much of our best work in recent years has occurred through Spirit led working groups such as Worship and Action, and CCM&C's Spiritual Nurturance.

3-O] Preparing Committee Papers and Minutes for Archiving

As the committee's clerk, you have the greatest responsibility for the continuing care of the committee's minutes, reports, and important papers. Even if your committee has a recording clerk, it is up to you to work with this person to make sure the following items are taken care of:

1. all new committee members receive the packet of information outlined in section 3B;
2. all important papers, minutes and reports must be collected in an organized fashion and passed along to the new clerk at the start of the term. These materials should include the more detailed calendar for the clerk so that s/he may plan in a timely fashion the sending out of requests for items for the agenda and for budgets, etc;
3. on an annual basis, the minutes and important documents of the committee should be printed on acid-free paper and sent to the Yearly Meeting office.

3-P] Typical Committee Calendar

New terms and clerkships begin at the end of Summer Sessions in July.

August: Send information packets to new members, and committee membership information to the Yearly Meeting office.

September: Attend Budget Saturday, and All Clerks Workshop.

October: Prepare for Fall Sessions by collecting agenda items, reserving committee meeting space and encouraging all committee members, including yourself, to attend and register by the deadline.

November: Attend Fall Sessions. Request Interest and Study Groups for consideration at the spring committee meeting. Consider holding a committee retreat.

December: Distribute minutes from Fall Sessions.

February: Register for Coordinating Committee Weekend in March. Discuss any committee work which needs to be reported.

March: Follow-up with CC rep on March weekend if you were unable to attend. Prepare for Spring Sessions by collecting agenda items, reserving committee meeting space and encouraging all committee members, including yourself, to attend and register by the deadline.

April: Attend Spring Sessions. Begin review of accountability queries in preparation for *Advance Reports*. Nominate Naming Committee for internal nominations. Prepare budget request for coming year.

May: Distribute minutes from Spring Sessions.

June: Prepare for Summer Sessions by collecting agenda items, reserving committee meeting space and encouraging all committee members, including yourself, to attend and register by the deadline.

July: Attend Summer Sessions. If this marks the end of your clerkship, be sure to bring with you all your minutes, reports and committee materials from your tenure as clerk to pass on to the new clerk.

4. SECTION CLERKS

4-A] Additional Responsibilities for Coordinating Committee Clerks

Along with the responsibilities listed above and those in each section's coordinating committee (CC) description in the *Handbook*, CC clerks:

1. are *de facto* members of Liaison Committee and Sessions Committee;
2. must submit proposed committee minutes, reports, etc., to the Yearly Meeting clerk well in advance of the next business session. Proposed minutes and reports included on the agenda (at the YM clerk's discretion) should be distributed in advance of the business session by such means as InfoShare and Spark, and made available to attendees prior to the business session when the matter will be considered;
2. must make sure that each committee in the section has answered the accountability queries, meeting with each committee clerk to evaluate whether or not there is demonstrated spiritual life.

4-B] Proposed Minutes from YM Committees or Monthly Meetings

In general, two kinds of minutes will come to a coordinating committee in preparation for consideration by the Yearly Meeting. The first and most typical minutes are presented by a committee under the care of the CC. The second and less typical kind of minute is presented to the coordinating committee by a Monthly Meeting or Regional Meeting. In all cases, minutes brought before the CC should be considered along the lines of Section 3-F. Most especially, Monthly Meeting minutes must be endorsed by the appropriate Quarterly or Regional Meeting before coming to the CC. Time constraints may sometimes complicate this proper process, in which case, the CC must carefully consider whether it is suitable for the Monthly Meeting's minute to move forward without Regional consideration.

If a minute brought before the CC is approved by the CC, it is the CC clerk's responsibility to make the Yearly Meeting clerk aware of the minute and request that it be included in the next YM business session agenda. Again, this inclusion is at the discretion of the YM clerk.

4-C] Section Budget

CC clerks must gather budget requests from all the committees and bodies under their care, and submit them in a timely manner to the Financial Services Committee. CC clerks should then attend Budget Saturday (typically in September) to speak to their section's work and respond to questions regarding their budget lines.

4-D] Annual Review of All Committees under the CC's Care

Coordinating committee clerks shall ensure that there is an annual review of all the committees under their care, working with the committee clerks and using the committee accountability queries found in section 3-L. This review can also be the basis for the committee's required

Advance Report.

These queries focus on evaluating each committee's work over the past year. The responses may indicate that a committee is lively and answering needs of the Monthly, Regional and Yearly Meetings. Responses may point to the need for the coordinating committee to help the committee better facilitate the work of the Spirit in the committee.

The responses may acknowledge the lack of life of the Spirit in the committee, which would point to the need to lay it down. After laboring with such a committee over its answers to the accountability queries, the coordinating committee is empowered to recommend the laying down of the committee, forwarding this request to the Yearly Meeting for discernment. If this committee's work is truly needed, it will find new form as the Spirit leads.

Finally, the coordinating committee itself is required to answer the accountability queries and submit an *Advance Report*. The CC clerk should honor the same spirit-led evaluation of the coordinating committee that is asked of the committees under its care.

5. FINANCES

5-A] Committee Financing

Under the present operating budget, most Yearly Meeting committees have a specific expense line within their section. If a new line is needed, a committee must seek the permission and approval of its coordinating committee. While the coordinating committee is ultimately responsible for all the expense lines within its section and for the financial reporting of same, the work begins within the committees.

Committees are asked to propose their own budgets with appropriate backup information regarding their projected expenditure(s) and send these materials to the coordinating committee. Once all the constituent committee requests are submitted and approved, the coordinating committee approves its total budget request, sending it on to the Financial Services Committee. Subsequently, during Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions, Financial Services frames a draft expense budget for the entire Yearly Meeting which is then sent to Monthly, Regional and Quarterly Meetings in August for seasoning. At Budget Saturday, a day-long meeting hosted by Financial Services which all members of New York Yearly Meeting are welcome to attend, a final proposed expense budget with expected income, including covenant donations, is approved and then printed in the next issue of *Spark*. This proposed budget is brought to Fall Sessions of the Yearly Meeting for consideration and discernment.

Expenses are managed through a voucher system (see section 5D). Properly prepared and documented vouchers are processed by the Yearly Meeting office before being sent on to the bookkeeping firm which does the accounting, prepares the checks, and mails them to the treasurer of the Yearly Meeting. The treasurer then signs the checks and the YM staff distributes them. This generally means a two to four week lag time before the requester receives a check. The process can proceed in a timely fashion if proper documentation and approval accompany the voucher when it is first sent.

Reports regarding individual committee spending are sent every other month to coordinating committee clerks, who then send them on to committee clerks. Questions may be addressed to the Yearly Meeting office.

5-B] Budget

In preparation for a spring meeting of the committee, the clerk or designated person organizes a proposed budget for the next calendar year using the budget request form. *Budget request forms* will be sent to committee clerks early in each fiscal year, for use during the following year. They will be sent out by the clerk of Financial Services with a letter covering the budget-planning timetable and guidelines for committee clerks. The committee discerns together to approve a proposed budget. *A budget is a plan, a statement of intention.* But it is not to be taken lightly, nor exceeded. It is sent, with a short written explanation, to the coordinating committee for consideration, according to the timetable.

The coordinating committee considers all the committee requests and any other items in the section. The coordinating committee looks at the overall preliminary budget and may adjust the numbers to allow changes in priorities of the section. The section's preliminary budget is sent to Financial Services Committee so that an overall preliminary budget can be reported at the appropriate business session.

After budget approval at Fall Sessions (Sharing Fund goals are reported in July), the committee, with coordinating committee approval, may adjust the individual items so that the approved line items equal the anticipated expenditures.

5-C] Spending

All expenses, especially travel expenses, must be approved in advance by the appropriate committee person—either the committee's clerk or financial secretary. Because Yearly Meeting funds are limited, Friends are encouraged to seek financial support from their Monthly and Regional Meetings, and take the opportunity to report back to same on their committee's work.

Individual committees may reallocate expenses within their approved budgets, but may not exceed their budget line. A committee may not exceed its budget line unless it has brought the matter to the attention of the coordinating committee responsible for its care. In such a case, the coordinating committee may be able to find another committee within its section which agrees to under-spend its budget line, transferring the funds to the first committee. Therefore, committees may agree to under-spend budget lines if monies are needed to pay for unforeseen expenses in another account. The account actually charged should reflect the nature of the expense rather than the identity of the requestor or the beneficiary. A written request for the adjustment between accounts should be provided to both the Administrative Secretary and the Treasurer.

5-D] Reimbursement

Referring to our Handbook: Friends are reminded that no one should be prevented from doing the work of the Yearly Meeting because of financial limitations. However, NYYM's funds need to be used frugally and equitably. It is important to be mindful that every dollar spent for

committee work has to be raised from individuals, contributions from Monthly and Regional Meetings and the Yearly Meeting.

Friends who are able to pay their own travel expenses, wholly or in part, are expected to do so. Keep in mind that documenting un-reimbursed expenses serves the purpose of deducting them on income tax returns if deductions are itemized.

Reimbursable expenses include the cost of travel at the most reasonable fare. Friends are urged to seek approval for travel reimbursement prior to making travel arrangements, since funds are limited. When traveling by air, Friends are asked to contact the Yearly Meeting office for the contact information of a Friends travel agent who will ensure that the lowest possible fare is obtained and who will bill the Yearly Meeting directly, not the individual. Changes in travel arrangements, if necessary, are more easily facilitated by following this procedure. The cost of reasonable meals and lodging (including Powell House) may also be reimbursed, as may copying, mailing, and telephone expenses.

Please note that all vouchers for any purpose must be accompanied by receipts for expenses claimed. In some cases, committee minutes have been written authorizing payment of funds and these must also be included with the voucher. Finally, the voucher must be approved by the clerk of the committee. Note that the person approving the voucher must not be the person receiving the money or a member of the person's family or household. In that situation the approver must be the appropriate Friend as outlined in #4 below.

If essential documentation or approval does not accompany the voucher, there will be a delay in payment until the necessary process is complete.

1. A voucher system has been set up to assure that all payments are properly charged.
2. Vouchers for payment of expenses and instructions for their use are available from the Yearly Meeting office or web site.
3. For any payment, the committee member should fill out completely a copy of the section-specific voucher. Attach original receipts and/or other substantiating information and any appropriate minute. Also see "Guidelines for Travel Expense Support." [Note: Verify page #.]
4. Committee members then send this packet to the committee clerk. The committee clerk approves the reimbursement, makes a copy of all materials for their own records and sends the originals on to the Yearly Meeting office. (Vouchers must be approved by the person with the spending authority for a particular account. If your committee has a Financial Secretary, find out if the voucher goes to that person or the committee clerk.) Individuals may not approve their own expenditures, or those of a relative or significant other. Thus the clerk of a committee must submit their vouchers with substantiating information to the coordinating committee clerk. Coordinating committee clerks must have their vouchers signed and approved by the General Secretary or another coordinating committee clerk.
5. Once approved, the voucher and accompanying materials are mailed to the Yearly Meeting office. PLEASE NOTE: bills will not be paid without a completed voucher, substantiating materials and the approval of the appropriate clerk.
6. The bookkeeping service prepares checks bimonthly. All correctly processed vouchers

received in the Yearly Meeting office by the last business day of the month will be processed and a check mailed by the 15th day of the following month. Those received by the 15th day of the month will be processed and a check mailed by the last business day of the month.

7. If the payment is a donation to another organization, attach a transmittal letter or the check will be sent to the clerk to forward.
8. For checks written for purposes other than expense reimbursement, i.e., for scholarships, the Social Security number of the individual is required by the IRS.
9. Periodic financial reports are prepared by the bookkeeping service and will be sent regularly to coordinating committee clerks, who should carefully match these reports with records of approved vouchers to ensure agreement with Yearly Meeting records. CC clerks then send the reports on to the committee clerks for further verification of correctness.

Please note once more—if the necessary documentation or approval does not accompany the voucher, there will be a delay in payment until the proper process is complete.

5-E] Funding from Outside Sources

What follows is a policy statement approved by Representative Meeting in 1980, on Requests by Yearly Meeting Committees for Funding from Sources Outside the Yearly Meeting. It is applicable to all Yearly Meeting committees except for those that are separately incorporated, such as Oakwood Friends School, Powell House, and The McCutchen, which are encouraged to develop their own guidelines for seeking outside funding. [Note: Verify minute number and date.]

Friends are committed to expressing faith in action. We show our commitment by putting our own time, our own energy, and our own money into activities that demonstrate our beliefs. New York Yearly Meeting funds its concerns in part through the Yearly Meeting Operating Budget and trust funds of the Yearly Meeting, and the rest from the Sharing Fund. When an emergency exists, or a significant opportunity for a contribution to human welfare appears that is beyond our financial resources at the time, outside funding may be considered.

Because of the danger that seeking outside funding may become an end in itself and the possibility that projects funded by such grants may become primarily interested in their own survival, it is important that there be clear guidelines for the grant applications. The following considerations should precede requests for outside funding:

- a. A clear definition of the project should be developed by the originating group, showing the aims, the amount of money needed (according to budget categories, not just total), the time for the project's completion, and the disposition of the project once the portion to be funded is completed.
- b. Friends should be clear on the nature of the organization from which funds are being requested.
- c. Grants should be requested in the name of New York Yearly Meeting. They should be administered in such a way as to maintain the project's Quaker origin, character, and

identity and to be thought of as New York Yearly Meeting projects.

- d. For any staff to be added as a result of project expansion due to outside funding, the Personnel Committee of the General Services Section shall review and must approve the proposed job descriptions, supervisions, salary, etc, for consistency with the Yearly Meeting personnel policies.
- e. It is suggested that in any one year, total grant requests from any section not exceed the total section budget for that year.
- f. Certain projects supported by Yearly Meeting funds may be encouraged to seek independent status or other affiliation, in order that they may continue to grow and that the way may be open for Yearly Meeting committees to venture forth into other areas of endeavor. Such modifications should be made by the originating group in consultation with the section coordinating committee and the Financial Services Committee.
- g. The proposal developed in accordance with the guidelines above shall be considered by the appropriate section coordinating committee. It shall be considered first on its merits, then for its relationship to other funding interests of committees in the section and for the appropriateness of seeking outside funding. If the coordinating committee approves, the proposal will be considered in its financial aspects by the Financial Services Committee in relation to grant applications from other sections and to the Yearly Meeting financial status. Clearance by Financial Services Committee is needed for any grant request that exceeds \$5,000.
- h. All money from grants will be held by the Yearly Meeting treasurer in a Grants Budget. The treasurer will have the responsibility for proper administration of these funds. An audit will be required after the project's completion.
- i. Responsibility for oversight of the funded project rests with the committee that originated it, and its general oversight with the section coordinating committee.

6. YEARLY MEETING EVENTS/DEADLINES CALENDAR

August	1	List of new committee officers to Yearly Meeting office or hand deliver to the New York Yearly Meeting desk at Silver Bay
	1	Meeting and committee information to office for <i>Yearbook</i>
	1	Committee packets should be sent to new committee members as soon as possible
	1	September Spark deadline
September		Preliminary budget discussions by Financial Services, Budget Saturday
		All Clerks Workshop, under the care of the YM clerk

October	1	November <i>Spark</i> deadline
		Sessions Committee meets to review recent Summer Sessions, approve a draft program plan, approve Week at a Glance for Summer Session, and consider speakers for the following year
		Register for Fall Sessions
		Committees request meeting and display space for Fall Sessions from host Quarter/Region
November	Fall Sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinating Committees meet 2. Nominating Committee assigns committee members responsibilities to find Friends willing to serve
December	1	January <i>Spark</i> deadline
January		Session Committee meets
February	1	March <i>Spark</i> deadline
March		Coordinating Committee Weekend at Powell House
		Interest / Study Group Proposals due for Summer Sessions
		Committees request meeting space for Spring Business Session from host
April	1	May <i>Spark</i> deadline (Summer Sessions program, registration, etc.)
	1	Committees send annual financial report to Financial Services and Yearly Meeting office
Spring Sessions	(not Easter weekend)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committees appoint internal nominating committee to find next year's committee officers 2. Committees approve annual reports for <i>Advance Reports (Yearbook)</i> 3. Committees approve budget requests for the next calendar year
May	1	Committees' annual reports to Yearly Meeting office for inclusion in <i>Advance Reports</i> . A copy of the reports should also go to the appropriate coordinating committee clerks.
		Nominating Committee Weekend at Powell House to review recommendations for appointments to offices and committees

June	1	Committee meeting time requests for Summer Sessions due at Yearly Meeting office for printed program
July	10	Audiovisual requests for Summer Sessions due
	10	Requests for display space for Summer Sessions due
	16	Guests of committees and authorization for payment of expenses due at Yearly Meeting
Summer Sessions	Usu. Last week of July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worship and corporate discernment 2. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, committee meetings, interest and study groups 3. Meeting for Discernment 4. Section meetings -- time for questions on effort and priorities of section and committees in the section 5. Coordinating committees review and approve preliminary budgets for next calendar year and send them to Financial Services 6. Committees approve committee officers and give lists of officers and appointees to staff BEFORE leaving Silver Bay 7. Appointments begin at end of last business session

Clerking Checklist

All of the items listed below may not apply in every situation,
and you may not agree with every suggestion.

Let your clerking be guided by the Light you're given!

- What do you bring to the meeting spiritually and physically?
- Make sure you have your support in place (an anchor committee, a clerking buddy, a spiritual nurture group—anywhere you are free to talk candidly about issues and concerns, and particularly about your spiritual journey through clerking). Remember that the clerks table (presiding clerk/co-clerk/assistant clerk/recording clerk) is a team, and can be a source for prayer support and testing both before and during the meeting, and for processing afterward.
- Check in with (sub)committees—what is rising up? are items seasoned?
- Set the agenda—How is our time together best used? What can be done ahead of time to open up time? (send reports ahead of time, use consent agenda) Meeting is not the time for doing the work, it's the time for reporting / considering / seasoning it. Consider order of items: putting easy items first can help the group gain confidence before approaching a more complicated topic, OR take on difficult issues first while the group has the most energy and focus, and end with straightforward matters so the meeting closes with a sense of its harmony, OR both.
- Consider communicating agenda and reports with participants ahead of time.
- Bring clerk's bag:
 - *Faith & Practice, Handbook*, previous minutes, cough drops, tissues, tampons, pens
- Ask Friends to hold the meeting in prayer.
- Getting started:
 - Opening worship
 - Reading
 - Importance of checking in – builds community
 - Establish ground rules and expectations for behavior – ideal to have them written so latecomers can join in, and so Friends can remind selves/others
 - Welcome newcomers
 - Housekeeping
 - Are there Friends who need to leave early/at a particular time?
- Frame items (background, helpful information, how this piece fits into our story—though not too much).
- Restate request for action (what is the body being asked to consider/approve?).
- Ask for clarifying questions first. Allow time for Friends to hold the issue in worship.

- Listen to what is being said and not being said, what's behind the words.
- Worship.
- Name sense of meeting.
- Worship.
- Craft minute (recording clerk alone or with clerk).
- Read back minutes periodically.
- Centering worship and readings as needed throughout.
- Make/invite announcements.
- Closing worship
- Follow up with those who have agreed to do the work.

Suggested Conference Call Guidelines

As Friends our preferred practice is to worship and work together in person. Sometimes that isn't practical, and increasingly Friends feel concerned about the environmental impact of traveling to meet, and about using resources of time, energy, and money to do so. Many committees find that interspersing in-person meetings with conference calls strikes a good balance. Following are some suggested guidelines for meeting by phone.

Clerking

Send out a reminder about the call with phone number and access code a week before, then again the day before. Putting the date and time of the call in the subject line is helpful. Include an agenda.

Friends are invited into worship fifteen minutes—or more!—before the call is scheduled to start.

Have a plan for how to contact expected Friends who don't show up and may need a reminder call that the conference is starting.

When most Friends are present, ask that the group settle into worship. Let them know that as others join the call, you will welcome them and let them know who is present, while worship continues.

After opening worship, checking in helps the group come together. Some suggested questions:

- What's your present condition? What's on your heart and mind?
- A highlight of your day?
- Something you're looking forward to?
- An experience of joy in the last week?

When asking Friends a general question, ask them to respond in an orderly way.

Keep in mind who is on the call, and ask anyone who hasn't spoken if they want to say anything.

Set a specific end-time for the call, and stick to it!

All participants

Sometimes the recording at the conference call instructs the caller to announce him/herself. Ignore the voice—you don't want to interrupt discussion that may be going on. Simply get on the call and... listen. Introduce yourself when invited to do so, or when there's a reasonable space to do so.

Being on a conference call should elicit the same level of participation as being together in person. Be present on the call. Check your email later. Try to find a quiet place to be on the call. Behave the way you would in an in-person meeting. Do you surf the internet, watch TV, groom the dog, or read a magazine when we are together? We all know that the more present and worshipful we are during our time together, the more good fruit will come from the work.

If there is a lot of background noise where you are, please mute your phone if possible when you're not speaking. Try to be in a different room than the barking dog. Be mindful that what might seem like small sounds to you (shuffling papers, tapping pencil) can sound excruciatingly loud on the other end of the phone. Using a speaker phone often causes feedback and poor sound quality, so avoid it if possible.

Preface any input with your name, unless you're certain everyone in the group recognizes everyone's voice.

Remember that we lose the visual cues we count on reading and being read when we meet in person. When asked a question, answer it loud and answer it proud!

Access:

Freeconferencecall.com offers a simple system where you get a unique phone number and access code, and does not require any set-up other than letting the participants know the dial-in information and time of the call.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUERIES

These queries were developed by the Transition Working Group and approved by New York Yearly Meeting in its Summer Sessions 2005 (minute #34). The minute reads in part:

The Transition Working Group recognizes that coordinating committees have the responsibility and authority to support and hold accountable their constituent committees in their designated functions. The clerk of the coordinating committee shall initiate an annual review by each committee using the following queries as guidelines. [An earlier draft of the queries followed.]

If the Coordinating Clerks review these queries in the spring and request that the clerks of the committees in their section respond to them all as soon as possible, all will then have time to address any concerns before Summer Sessions.

1. Can nominees be found to fill each class of service?
2. Is there an active clerk? Does s/he feel led to further the committee's work?
3. Is the purpose and charge of the committee being fulfilled? Where is the life of the Spirit taking the committee?
4. Does the committee clerk attend the coordinating committee meetings regularly to take part in its work and keep the coordinating committee apprised of the committee's work?
5. Is the committee's budget created and presented to the coordinating committee and the YM Finance Committee in a timely way?
6. Is the committee's prior year's budget substantially spent on the activities listed in that budget?
7. Is a committee's proposed work accomplished and reported in a timely way?
8. Does the work of this committee directly serve or impact the life of the Monthly Meetings?
9. What has not been asked, but should be known?