

Witness Coordinating Committee Minutes for January 25, 2014

Present: Mary Eagleson, *clerk*; Helen Garay Toppins, *treasurer, also Black Concerns Committee and Prisons Committee*; Robert Kazmayer, *member at large*; Robin Mallison Alpern, *recording clerk, European American Quakers Working to End Racism Working Group*; Margaret Lew, *visitor, 15th St Meeting*; Naomi Paz Greenberg, *Latin American Resource Person*, by phone

Regrets: Patricia Chernoff, Fred Doneit, Suzanne Blackburn, Karen Reixach, Diane Keefe, Shirley Way, Jane Simkin, Andy von Salis, Fredric Dettmer

01-2014-1. We reviewed a **draft document on Sharing Fund finances** prepared by Helen Garay Toppins and Sue Weisfeld. Friends approved the recommendation to continue allotting committees a percentage from the Sharing Fund, rather than a dollar amount. We approved creation of a financial subcommittee composed of the WCC clerk, WCC financial clerk, and one or two other WCC members. Helen and Sue will use comments from today's meeting to revise the financial information sheet, including addition of a set of guidelines for the financial subcommittee. They will request feedback on this document by email, so they can bring a final draft for our consideration at Spring Sessions.

01-2014-2. All committees receive their **proportional share of contributions** plus endowment interest up to 100% of the Sharing Fund goal for that year. Excess income beyond the goal is reported to the WCC who will determine how to use that money. Our financial subcommittee can assist in discerning uses for this excess.

01-2014-3. Our **operating budget for 2014** for donations is \$1600, which we will allocate as follows:

\$150 each to
National Religious Campaign against Torture
Quaker Earthcare Witness,
NY Council of Churches,
NJ Council of Churches

\$250 each to
National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund,
AFSC New York office (Healing and Transformative Justice program)
and FCNL

This leaves a balance of \$250 to allocate later in the year.

We agree that the \$700 allocated for committee administrative/travel expenses will remain in a common pool to be used as needed by any committee.

Mary will ask Liaison Committee to consider whether operating funds could be used to help reimburse childcare costs, to support Friends with young children to participate in committee work.

01-2014-4. Sharing Fund contributions: From the 2013 funds, we will contribute \$500 each to the following:
William Penn House

Rural and Migrant Ministries
BQEF

Sharing Fund allocations may be made as dollar amounts or as percentages, depending on discernment by WCC. In general, small requests for dollar amounts will be left as dollar amounts and will be handled by the financial clerk. [Helen will set up another line in the statements for these amounts and for contributions to outside organizations to be sure the payments are properly made and tracked.]

We broke for lunch, and resumed with the following Friends present:

Mary Eagleson; Helen Garay Toppins; Robert Kazmayer; Robin Mallison Alpern; Naomi Paz Greenberg by phone; Jeff Hitchcock, *NYYM clerk*, Christopher Sammond, *NYYM General Secretary*.

01-2014-5. We approved the following **distribution from the Sharing Fund to our constituent committees:**

AVP 10%
Barrington Dunbar 24%
Black Concerns 10%
Indian Affairs 18%
Prisons 12%
RSWR 7%
Witness Activities 12 %
World Ministries 7%

In addition, we approved the following dollar-amount distributions:

Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, \$100
Friends Peace Teams, \$500
Peace and Justice Working Group, \$100
Earthcare Working Group, \$600.

01-2014-6. We approved a **Sharing Fund goal** of \$55,000 for 2014.

01-2014-7. Jeff Hitchcock summarized the report given yesterday by the **Priorities Working Group**. The PWG has heard two needs particularly relevant to WCC: That NYYM give public voice to the concerns of Friends (e.g through press releases), and that NYYM help connect Friends who are geographically distant, yet who share a concern or leading.

01-2014-8. Friends shared thoughts on our **vision for WCC**. We listed a number of concerns about our present CC structure and function, and asked how we could better support Friends witness. Prime areas of concern and *life* in our Yearly Meeting include the interrelated issues of racism, prison ministry, support for Quakers returning home from prison, and mass incarceration; environmental concerns; the Alternatives to Violence Project; and concern for the spiritual condition of Friends caught up in the system of empire, including racism, fracking and war tax resistance. All the above concerns might be summarized by the question, How can we function a moral people in an evil system?

One Friend proposed WCC could offer support to individual committees which may be struggling to keep up with their work load, or have other challenges.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Mallison Alpern