

Development Committee Report to Fall Sessions, 2014

Twelve months ago, Matt Scanlon, clerk of Financial Services, reported to Fall Sessions that we had roughly eighteen months to explore whether we could increase revenues, or face substantially altering the way we structure our efforts as a yearly meeting. An increase in Covenant Donations has certainly been a part of that exploration, and Matt will be reporting on that aspect of our financial picture in his report today. The other part of the question of whether or not we can increase revenues has fallen to the Development Committee.

We are a relatively new committee, only being approved as a committee in summer of 2012. While we have filed Advance Reports, we have not yet reported to a yearly meeting session about our work. We are still in the process of building a development program in New York Yearly Meeting to help ensure that the needs and leadings of Friends in this yearly meeting will be better supported. But based only on the limited experience of the past two and a half years, we would answer Matt's question, "Yes, we can."

In 2012, our predecessor, the Development Working Group, just barely getting up and running, raised \$15,044. In 2013, we raised \$22,960. This year, we will raise at least \$33,394. (We hope to add to that number here at Fall Sessions, making our goal in the Operating Budget of \$34,000.) That is a 50% increase each year over the previous one. We have committed to raising \$40,000 for the 2015 Operating Budget.

We have been building this program from scratch, each year adding a new program or capacity. We have had to build slowly, as we are a small group. The first year, we put together an annual appeal. The next year, we did an annual appeal and looked to how we should prioritize the other options before us. This year, we added automatic donation services, and had ice cream socials and our first house party fund raiser. We have offered to host monthly meeting automatic donation pages on our service. We also received our first multi-year gift, a gift of \$40,000 over the next five years.

We are incredibly grateful for this gift, and equally grateful for the \$5 gift from an incarcerated Friend, and just as grateful for all the \$5 per month contributions we are receiving. Together, they are adding up to healthy, proactive support for the work being done by us as a yearly meeting. Thank you, each and every one of you.

In the coming year, we anticipate doing more house parties, pursuing other multi-year gifts, and increasing participation in our automated giving program, in addition to our annual appeal. As time allows, we hope to begin the work of inviting Friends into opportunities for planned giving to the Yearly Meeting.

We have heard some concerns that funds raised through development might overwhelm or undermine the core of what sustains this yearly meeting, our Covenant Donations. While we understand and respect those concerns, and welcome conversations about them, we do not see those risks as being substantive. In New England Yearly Meeting, each year for the past many that they have solicited contributions from

individuals, both individual giving and giving by monthly meetings have gone up. Giving begets giving.

In our proposed 2015 Operating Budget, Covenant Donations make up 81% of our income, the proposed appeal, 7%. At what point should we become concerned that money raised through development might undermine the more important contributions through Covenant Donations? That is a worthwhile question for us to consider, and we should do so. But we do not see ourselves nearing that level just yet, and are optimistic about the positive effect a coordinated development effort can have, not just in supporting crucial work done at a yearly meeting level, but also in better connecting individuals and meetings with that work.

Up until this point, we have asked the body for approval on a year by year basis to do an appeal for the coming year. We now will be reporting to General Services Coordinating Committee the idea of doing appeals on an ongoing basis, as we discern they are needed. We hope that this recommendation will then be on Sunday's agenda.

Respectfully Submitted,

The New York Yearly Meeting Development Committee

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