

Note: Proposed revisions to *Faith & Practice* may originate in a monthly or regional meeting or a Yearly Meeting body. When the proposed revision has been seasoned by the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* and approved by Ministry Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* may bring the proposed revision to any Yearly Meeting session for a first reading. After being brought forward the first time, the proposed revision is brought for a second reading and final approval to a subsequent Yearly Meeting session.

Part Two—PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

1. Organization and Business Procedure

G. The Yearly Meeting (section with proposed changes, as follows:)

MEMBERSHIP. The yearly meeting comprises the entire membership of constituent monthly meetings, all of whom share in its deliberations. Members of other yearly meetings are welcome to attend yearly meeting sessions.

FUNCTION. The yearly meeting exists principally to worship together. It is a meeting for the transaction of business and can engage in any activity or foster any work that the membership considers appropriate. This may include provision of funds and supervision for common projects. By pooling efforts and resources, the yearly meeting can consider wider and more varied concerns.

The yearly meeting meets to conduct business in the spirit of worship three times each year: at Fall, Spring, and Summer Sessions. It approves the yearly meeting's annual operating budget. It receives memorials of deceased Friends.

Among its other functions, the yearly meeting issues to the monthly meetings queries, advices, and reports of its proceedings, and it maintains contact with other yearly meetings and Friends' organizations. It alone has authority to establish or change the Book of Discipline, or to issue statements of faith.

The yearly meeting should inspire and support its constituent meetings, broaden their awareness of other Friends' concerns, and help them develop their own concerns. Much of the work is carried forward by yearly meeting committees. The yearly meeting receives reports from them and from its constituent meetings. It reviews the State of the Meeting reports and considers communications addressed to it. It provides for the due consideration of epistles and of minutes of Friends from other yearly meetings.

It provides for participation in the work and financial support of Friends' groups including the Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

ORGANIZATION. The yearly meeting follows the general principles of organization and uses the same general business procedures as do monthly meetings, but it is more elaborate in structure due to the multiplicity and variety of functions that it performs. The New York Yearly Meeting is incorporated under Section 15 of the New York State Religious Corporation Law for the purpose of holding title to and administering property

of the meeting and deeds of trust committed to its care. As such, any business meeting of the yearly meeting constitutes a meeting of the corporation, and all members of the yearly meeting are likewise members of the corporation.

The yearly meeting appoints a clerk to preside at its sessions, and carry out associated administrative functions. It also appoints an assistant clerk and such recording and reading clerks as may be needed to assist the clerk in the conduct of the meetings. It appoints a treasurer, assistant treasurer, and such administrative secretaries as it may decide to engage for designated functions.

The activities of the yearly meeting are carried on by four specialized sections-the Ministry Coordinating Committee, General Services, Nurture, and Witness – having the following functions:

- To develop and coordinate services and programs, implementing them directly or through committees, task groups, staff, or volunteers;
- To explore new ways of service and respond to concerns of individual Friends and monthly and regional meetings;
- To recommend for yearly meeting action any major change of activity within their general areas of responsibility;
- To help plan yearly meeting programs.

The Ministry Coordinating Committee exercises general care of the ministry and spiritual life of the yearly meeting and receives and considers concerns of members or meetings regarding their spiritual needs.

The Section on Nurture is responsible for the advancement of the principles of Friends and for educational functions and personal services to members of the yearly meeting. Some of the interests have become the responsibilities of separate corporate entities, such as Powell House, and the Oakwood Friends School.

The Section on Witness makes visible both the traditional testimonies and the newer concerns of Friends in ways that extend beyond the Religious Society of Friends. Its work attempts to express beliefs in action.

The Section on General Services provides the main administrative, financial, and reporting services of the yearly meeting, including the operation of the yearly meeting office.

(More detailed information on the section is to be found in the current edition of the yearly meeting Handbook.)

Each section has a coordinating committee, composed of representatives chosen by its constituent committees and groups, as well as members-at-large appointed by the yearly meeting.

The Ministry Coordinating Committee, includes in addition, a representative appointed by each quarterly or regional meeting (two from Farmington-Scipio) for a three-year term, according to established rotation.

The coordinating committees are enabling bodies. They consider the activities within

their respective sections in relationship to each other, assist in their coordination, and help allocate the resources of people, time and money. They prepare the section budgets, are responsible for their overall administration, and participate in preparation of the total yearly meeting budget.

The yearly meeting may establish or lay down committees according to the need for the conduct of particular functions of the meeting. Regular standing committees include, among others, Advancement, Financial Services, and Sessions. The yearly meeting also appoints representatives to various Friends' groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends United Meeting, Friends General Conference, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and the governing boards of various other institutions or agencies.

When the yearly meeting establishes a committee, it must also determine and approve a statement of its purpose and functions and provide adequate funding. All appointments are to be made for a specified term. A current record of all committees and their membership is published annually in the Yearbook of the yearly meeting.

Four committees of the General Services Section fulfill specific administrative functions:

SESSIONS COMMITTEE: The Sessions Committee is responsible for selecting and arranging a suitable place for the sessions of the yearly meeting and for the preparation of schedules and programs. It advises committees on presentation of reports to the yearly meeting and serves as an advisory committee to the clerks during the sessions. It is responsible for publicity, hospitality, and financial arrangements for these meetings. The composition of the Sessions Committee appears in the yearly meeting Handbook.

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE. (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting if any.)

AUDIT COMMITTEE. (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting if any.)

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting, if any.)

YEARLY MEETING NOMINATING COMMITTEE. (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meetings if any.)

OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. The Yearly Meeting maintains an office staffed by a variety of professionals who implement or administer ministerial functions identified by the Yearly Meeting.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

The use of modern communication systems in the conduct of Friends' business has great benefits and has also created challenges for Quaker business Process. The use of technologies such as telephone and video conferencing and electronic mail have made it possible to reduce the need for travel, and thereby have expanded participation by distant Friends. Our business can be responsive to the fast pace of developments in the modern world. Young Friends, who have grown up with these technologies, expect to use them as they integrate into the life of the Society.

Use of these technologies, however, which may replace or augment face-to-face meetings, requires discipline so that corporate worship, spiritual discernment, and the presence of the Spirit in our committee meetings and larger assemblies is retained. Each committee or meeting that uses these technologies should establish agreements and protocols to ensure that their use of communication will ensure inclusivity and full participation, protect privacy and confidentiality, and maintain collegiality.

Committees seeking to conduct business by ways other than physical meetings should do so only upon the unanimous consent of their members. Committees should use email to schedule meetings or distribute documents. They are advised not to use it to share ministry, respond to proposals, or engage in substantive discussions. These activities are best suited to synchronous communication such as physical meetings or telephone or video conferencing.