

**New York Yearly Meeting  
Spring Sessions  
April 11-12, 2015**

Oakwood Friends School, Poughkeepsie, New York  
Saturday, April 11, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk  
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk  
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk  
Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Reading Clerk

2015-04-01. The meeting opened with silent worship. The Clerk spoke of Spring, the season of transition, the season of Easter and rebirth. We have much work to do, but much work has already been done. What arises comes from beyond expectation. We really have and have always had only one agenda: to discern what God would have us do.

2015-04-02. The Clerk introduced the members of the clerks' table and reviewed the agenda, reminding Friends to review the Consent Agenda, which will be considered tomorrow.

2015-04-03. Friends stood as their region was called. All regions were represented.

2015-04-04. Karen Snare welcomed us on behalf of the Nine Partners Quarter Host Committee and thanked Oakwood Friends School for support. Over 130 Friends have registered.

2015-04-05. Peter Baily, head of Oakwood Friends School, described renovations under way at the school, including several energy-saving projects. Oakwood serves as a small village to 155 students and many staff. Peter is finishing his 15-year tenure at Oakwood and continuing his work promoting education in Maryland. A new permanent head of Oakwood is expected for July 2016.

2015-04-06. The Clerk welcomed Shan Cretin, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, who presented to Friends on "Fostering Leadership for Social Change" on the previous night.

2015-04-07. The Clerk reported one interim item approved by the Clerk and General Secretary and not reported previously:

2014-12-11 The Clerk and the General Secretary issued a statement entitled "Black Lives Matter," which was widely distributed and is available on the NYYM website under the heading Social Witness.

2015-04-08. Minutes were approved to this point.

2015-04-09. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay) of the Priorities Working Group presented a revised proposal for two minutes addressing first the implementation of the Statement of Leading

and Priorities that was adopted last summer (Minutes 2014-07-28 through 2014-07-32), and second, the assessing of that implementation. An initial version of the two minutes was presented to Friends at Fall Sessions with a request for consideration and comments. Elaine explained the process of revision, showing how elements of the minutes were simplified, clarified, and refocused based on suggestions from monthly meetings and individual Friends.

2015-04-10. Fred Dettmar (Purchase) read the proposed Implementation Minutes, which describe the situations and processes in which the Leadings and Priorities will guide decision-making in NYYM, particularly concerning financial actions. Friends spoke in response, asking for additional clarification on how the new process will work with budgeting and requests for funding. Priorities Working Group members emphasized that these minutes aim for coordination, not control. The process is expected to evolve as the Financial Services Committee undertakes that coordination over the coming years.

The first set of minutes was approved as follows, with one Friend standing aside:

### **Financial Implementation Minutes**

1. All in service to the Yearly Meeting will be guided by the Leadings and Priorities in planning and undertaking their functions and activities. Financial Services Committee will use the Leadings and Priorities in proposing budgets and in discerning priorities among requests for funds. In making all budget requests, committees and other groups and Friends in service to the Yearly Meeting, through their Coordinating Committees if possible, will provide information as requested by Financial Services Committee explaining how the proposed expenditure(s) further the Leadings and Priorities.
2. The Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting Trustees and the clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee's Finance Sub-committee (or whoever oversees the Sharing Fund and the Sharing Fund Endowment) will be members ex officio of Financial Services Committee. Financial Services Committee also will seek to include regional and monthly meeting treasurers in its discernment.
3. Financial Services Committee will address revisions to its description in the Yearly Meeting's Handbook made necessary by these minutes, if any.
4. All committees, groups or persons undertaking fundraising or spending within the Yearly Meeting, to the extent consistent with the directions and limits of any gifts or trust instruments, will coordinate their fundraising and spending planning and actions with Financial Services Committee, so as to jointly further the implementation of the Leadings and Priorities.

2015-04-11. Elaine Learnard introduced the proposed Minute Establishing a Priorities Assessment Committee (PAC), which defines the structure, goals, and duties of a new committee under the care of Ministry Coordinating Committee. The PAC is intended to maintain and deepen connections between Yearly Meeting organizational structure and the monthly meetings. PAC will help achieve the accountability and transparency needed to assure that all our Yearly

Meeting resource allocations decisions—whether they be about budgets, staff, volunteer activity or other “treasure”—will be rooted in the priorities of the monthly meetings.

2015-04-12. Fred Dettmer read the proposed minute. Friends spoke in response, emphasizing the importance of the entire body of the Yearly Meeting and expressing concern about creating yet another committee. We decided to lay over this concern for our Sunday Meeting for Worship with a concern for Business.

2015-04-13. The remaining minutes of this session were approved.

2015-04-14. After announcements, we closed with quiet worship.

NYYM Minutes for Spring Sessions  
Oakwood School, Poughkeepsie, New York  
Sunday, April 12, 2015, 10:00 a.m.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock (Rahway & Plainfield), Clerk  
Lucinda Antrim (Scarsdale), Assistant Clerk  
Andrew Mead von Salis (Brooklyn), Recording Clerk  
Karen Snare (Bulls Head - Oswego), Reading Clerk

2015-04-15. Following morning worship and a last-minute change of meeting room, we convened at approximately 10:15 a.m., and the Clerk greeted us. Taking stock of our substantial remaining agenda, we were relieved of our main Priorities Working Group business, which it had been agreed overnight to re-examine for presentation again at our Summer Sessions 2015 under the care of the Liaison Committee.

2015-04-16. The Consent Agenda was addressed. In accordance with our consent agenda practice, the Yearly Meeting had been asked to release the following Friends under committee or other appointment from their service through July of the specified year, and these releases were approved:

Nurture Coordinating Committee, at-large	(2015) Julia Giordano (Bulls Head - Oswego)
Representative to Rural and Migrant Ministry	(2015) Jane Simkin (Poplar Ridge)

2015-04-17. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), on behalf of the Priorities Working Group, citing its appreciation for the opportunity to do their work, requested that the Working Group be laid down. Friends approved.

2015-04-18. Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), clerk of the Witness Coordinating Committee, introduced Pamela Wood (Morningside). She presented a seasoned and updated proposal, previously recommended by the Witness Coordinating Committee, that the Yearly Meeting issue a public statement on solitary confinement. It affirms Friends' belief in personal transformation and nonviolence, and against psychological torture. It proposes a Minute for our adoption, calling for a halt to the use of solitary confinement in prisons. The pending legislation, New York State bill (A.4401 / S.2659), is titled "Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act ."

Some Friends stated a preference that our public statements and minutes express clearly the spiritual witness and the experience of the Society of Friends, such as are referred to in the proposal read by Mary Eagleson. Friends approved the proposal, including the Minute as follows:

The New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends calls on Governor Cuomo to support the reform of the practice of solitary confinement in the state correctional facilities and local jails of New York, as developed in the Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, Bill #A4401/S2659. With the enactment of the changes in the use of solitary confinement proposed in the Act, New York would become a leader in the effort to stop human rights abuses in

the United States.

Friends also directed its Clerk and General Secretary to draft a cover letter to be issued to the Governor and members of the Legislature with the foregoing Minute, so as to convey to all that witness and that experience.

2015-04-19. Mary Eagleson next introduced a concern for nuclear weapons non-proliferation. Only recently had our president's policy called for substantial bolstering of the United States' nuclear arsenal. The Witness Coordinating Committee now offered us an opportunity to commit ourselves to personal, local and regional non-proliferation actions, as well as to state publicly our commitment to peace, by joining in the endorsement of an imminent event called "Peace & Planet: Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just, and Sustainable World" in New York City on April 24 - 26, 2015. Friends approved.

2015-04-20. Mary Eagleson then introduced Robin Mallison Alpern (Scarsdale), who brought us an invitation to join the 2016 White Privilege Conference host team. This annual inter-denominational and secular conference of roughly 2,000 participants is to empower transformation of individuals and structures from roles in white privilege to building racial equity. The Reading Clerk read the invitation from the Friends General Conference to join the host team. Robin, a member of the European American Quakers Working to End Racism, delivered a statement of the work and seasoning done to date by several named groups and committees of our Yearly Meeting, and explained the role and responsibilities of a host team member. These include pledging a sum between \$2,000 and \$5,000 to the Conference, in return for which we would receive free registrations to attend the conference in proportion to our donation. The Black Concerns Committee and multiple elements in our Witness Coordinating Committee have pledged a total of \$3,000, the sum Witness Coordinating had recommended, from existing budget lines.

Friends considered whether to co-host the Conference and to contribute the proposed \$3,000. Friends approved.

2015-04-21. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), as clerk of the General Services Coordinating Committee, brought us several reports. First, he read a Treasurer's Report from Susan Bingham, our Treasurer, and he commended to our attention the copies of the financial statements that were made available to us. Their numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar. Our balance of moneys on hand gained \$11,393 over the budget and calendar year 2014. To the end of February 2015, our net change from year-end was a loss of \$6,517, as is typical of our first-quarter operations. The report is received.

The Treasurer and Financial Services Committee clerk proposed to carry over \$11,000 of the operating surplus from 2014 to our 2015 budgeted income, the plan that had been noted in the 2015 budget proposal that we approved at Fall Sessions 2014. Friends approved.

2015-04-22. John Cooley introduced two personnel items. The General Services Coordinating Committee had examined for some time a proposed position of Children and Youth Secretary, a field secretary position to be funded from existing available sources within the Yearly Meeting and from an anticipated multi-year grant from the Shoemaker Fund. Our Young Adult Field Secretary and our new Children and Youth Secretary would coordinate with New England

Yearly Meeting's existing Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator and a young adult field secretary to be newly established, so as to share their respective experience and mentoring for the mutual benefit of each Yearly Meeting's staff members.

Friends received the oral report.

2015-04-23. Barbara Menzel (New Brunswick), clerk of the Personnel Committee, reported that the Committee has taken stock of the first four years of the work of our Young Adult Field Secretary, Gabrielle Savory-Bailey (Chatham-Summit). Barbara told us, at Gabi's request, that Gabi was now commencing a medical leave, but she had drafted the substance of a thorough report to the Shoemaker Fund of her work over the past four years. Barbara summarized several of the report's highlights for us, including increased participation and new depth in the growth of our young adults and their community. Personal connections and care change lives, and we need awareness of opportunities for that. Our Young Adult community is often centered at the local level, which we need to appreciate. A new concern has arisen for the need to nurture our children and teens -- our future young adults -- to ensure continued growth. The Personnel Committee has recognized Gabi's remarkable gifts.

The oral report was received, with one Friend recorded as standing aside. Friends moved into a period of worship rich with personal perspectives and heartfelt appreciation for Gabi and her difficult yet faithful and successful work, which has served all of us.

2015-04-24. John Cooley reported on our Audit. A new auditor, O'Conner-Davies, had been retained, and an agreement for additional work (preparation of the consolidated financial statements necessitated by our current financial structure) to be done by our bookkeeping firm had just been finalized. The oral report was received.

2015-04-25. Irma Guthrie (Perry City), clerk of the Ministry Coordinating Committee, introduced Mia Kissel Hewitt (Chatham-Summit), clerk of the Advancement Committee. She reported that the Committee had received three requests for assistance with meetinghouse repair totaling approximately \$7,200. The Lockport-Brinkerhoff Funds have only about \$1,300 available. The Advancement Committee recommends approving \$1,200 to Quaker Street Meeting for some of the required painting and water system work at Quaker Street meetinghouse. The requests from Albany Meeting and Poplar Ridge Meeting for roof repair assistance are reported to us as unmet to date. The Committee invited all individuals, monthly meetings and regional meetings to assist such meetings in need.

Friends received the oral report and considered and approved the recommended funding.

2015-04-26. Irma Guthrie introduced a first reading of two proposed sections of our book of discipline, *Faith and Practice*. Lucy Harper (Rochester) and Anne Pomeroy (New Paltz), of the ad hoc Task Group on Recording Gifts in Ministry, report that the proposed language was approved by the Ministry Coordinating Committee at Fall Sessions 2014. They alternately gave us several examples of the experiences shared and the work done in the group in moving from differences to a clarity and unity on the text presented. These touched on, among other things, the authority of monthly meetings, the accountability of the Yearly Meeting and its committees, and the inclusiveness of our community. Anne read the proposed change in the Spiritual Care of Members section, which adds a clause concerning nurturing gifts in ministry. Lu read the section now re-named from "Recording of Gifts in Ministry" to "Care of Ministries and

Recording of Gifts in Ministry," which reflects multiple changes in language and three new paragraphs, all as had been distributed electronically in preparation for this first reading.

The first reading of the proposed sections was heard.

2015-04-27. The Clerk called on Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), assistant clerk of the Sessions Committee. She reported orally, thanking our host Meeting, Committee and School. A total of 148 participants, including 6 youth, attended this weekend. She looked forward to our Summer and Fall Sessions. The report was received.

2015-04-28. The minutes of this session were read, corrected and approved in stages during the course of the meeting.

2015-04-29. The Yearly Meeting then adjourned, to meet again for Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, New York, on July 19-25, 2015.