

SESSIONS COMMITTEE – POWELL HOUSE
March 16-18, 2018

Present: Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk; Jeffrey Aaron, Lucinda Antrim, Cheshire Frager, Linda Houser, Sunfire Kazmayer, Doug Way, Deb Wood

Regrets: Martha Gurvich, Lu Harper, Sylke Jackson, Steve Mohlke, Dawn Pozzi, Helen Garay Toppins

Visitors: Faith Brzostoski, Kate Lawson

201803-01: Friends settled into centering worship. Clerk Melanie-Claire Mallison invited Friends to reflect on a query suggested by Steve Mohlke: ***Why are we gathering this community together?***

201803-02: Melanie-Claire reminded Friends that we had checked in last evening. She noted regrets.

201803-03: Deb Wood reported for the Internal Nominating Committee. The following friends had agreed to serve on the Arrangements Subcommittee for the following jobs:

- 12 Step Program: Roseann Press
- Displays Coordinator: Karen Snare
- Evaluation Coordinator: Melanie-Claire Mallison
- Food Coordinator: Martha Gurvich
- Golf Cart Coordinator: Angel Ramos
- Interest Group Coordinator: Martha Gurvich, Helen Toppins
- Letter to Absent Friends Coordinator: Kate Lawson
- Microphone Runner Coordinator: Anne Marie Scheidt
- Newcomer/Welcome Table Coordinator: Kate Lawson
- Office Assistant: Ty Griese
- Tagless Tag Sale Coordinators: Elise Bacon, Megan Byrtus
- The Camping Liaison was not named.

Friends approved the nominees.

201803-04: The tenure of officers of the committee generally runs from the end of one Summer Sessions to the end of the next Summer Sessions. Friends approved having the slate begin now and continue until July 31st, 2019. The following officers were approved:

- Clerk: Melanie-Claire Mallison;
- Assistant Clerk: Cheshire Frager;
- Recording Clerk: Deb Wood;
- Summer Sessions Liaison: Martha Gurvich;
- Spring Fall Sessions Coordinator & Liaison: Melanie-Claire Mallison

It was noted that Linda Houser will be rotating off of Sessions at the end of Summer Sessions, so another representative to General Services will be needed after July 31, 2018.

201803-05: Members of other sub-committees were approved as follows:

Finance Subcommittee: Helen Garay Toppins, Melanie-Claire Mallison, Doug Way
Internal Nominating Subcommittee: Cheshire Frager, Martha Gurvich, Deb Wood
Manual & Handbook Subcommittee: Melanie-Claire Mallison, Deb Wood
Pay as Led Subcommittee: Melanie-Claire Mallison, Steve Mohlke, Doug Way
Summer Program Subcommittee: Cheshire Frager, Clerk; Sunfire Kazmayer

201803-06: Melanie-Claire read the attached notes from the meeting on November 12. With the addition of Sunfire's name as attending, the notes were approved.

201803-07: Doug reported on progress of implementing Pay as Led for 2019 Summer Sessions. In the past, Silver Bay has handled all of the registrations. Doug has been working on a program [Sales Force] for the YM Office to organize the YM data base identifying entry categories to help streamline the registration process. It will also combine all existing data bases. Friends approved recommending to General Services that Sales Force become the sole NYYM data base. Doug Way and Linda Houser will bring this recommendation to General Services Coordinating Committee at Spring Sessions.

201803-08: Melanie-Claire introduced a request that a full color brochure for Pay as Led / 2019 Summer Sessions brochure be produced for availability at Fall Sessions 2018. The brochure would be four pages. Those brochures not distributed at Fall Sessions would be mailed to entire NYYM mailing list and to Monthly Meetings. The estimated cost, including printing and distribution, would be \$3,000. This will receive further consideration later in the meeting.

201803-09: Jeffrey Aaron said that Liaison established a working group to review the practices of the Circle of Care and Concern. This group has created a policy and procedure for dealing with inappropriate behavior at YM Sessions, especially Summer Sessions. Copies of the first draft of the document were made available last evening for Friends to consider. Friends asked questions and made suggestions. A new group, the Community Agreements Response Team (CART), will be formed to deal with conflicts and inappropriate behavior at Summer Sessions. Jeffrey and others working on the document will make revisions to the draft for further consideration by Liaison.

Friends approved the concept of creating this team, including the stipulation that Sessions Committee would be responsible for naming Friends to serve on the CART.

The committee took a break for lunch and afternoon committee meetings. We reconvened after dinner.

201803-10: Peter Phillips <fpeterphillips@gmail.com> had invited Oliver Waterhouse, a Friend from Britain Yearly Meeting, to attend the 2018 Summer Sessions. Below is the letter from Peter Phillips to Liaison Committee. The clerk of Sessions recommended offering Oliver one of our complimentary stays at Silver Bay to help assist in his travel expenses. While this means ~\$960 less raised for the Equalization Fund, the EQ currently has a positive balance of over \$3500 from 2017 because we raised so much! Friends approved offering one of the complimentary stays at Silver Bay to Oliver Waterhouse.

Dear Liaison Committee:

I write to advise of the current state of the proposal that Oliver Waterhouse of Britain Yearly Meeting visit our Summer Sessions in 2018, and to ask that you consider taking final action to make the visit possible.

(To remind you, I first met Oliver in connection with NYYM's and BYM's parallel work on conflict in monthly meetings. He is responsible for a wide array of efforts to enhance monthly meetings in Britain. His current responsibilities are set forth at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/support-for-meetings>. We have maintained a F/friendship over about five years, and I make it a point to have lunch once or twice a year as both our interests and our perceptions of our Yearly Meeting's challenges have evolved over time.)

Oliver has confirmed that he is available and very interested in coming to Sessions in the capacity of a visitor and resource. Sessions Committee has indicated that it might arrange a lunch and perhaps a very few words at our opening session, but his role would be to meet with various committees (such as Conflict Transformation, Alternative Paths to Membership, and Faith & Practice) to exchange experiences and observations on how many issues with which NYYM is wrestling are similar to those he is charged with assisting in Britain. He would not be a Plenary Speaker.

Oliver has received approval for his visit from Britain Yearly Meeting, which has given him the week on sojourn and also offered to assume half the cost of his round-trip air fare. Sessions Committee is open to, but has not committed to, assisting his housing but, in any event, Oliver reports this is not a critical consideration. What we need is the willingness to assume the other half of his travel cost.

Current fares from London to NYC in July 2018 are around \$800, so we would be looking for around \$400 to match BYM's contribution and make this happen. I would undertake to meet Oliver and provide his transport to and from Silver Bay.

Can the Coordinating Committee Clerks and other leadership please consult and determine whether NYYM is in a position to match BYM's offer of half Oliver's air fare?

Peter Phillips
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201803-11: Deb read a document to be distributed to newcomers on Sunday afternoon at the Newcomers/Welcome Table. Friends made some suggestions for changes. Friends approved having this available. The text is attached.

201803-12: Although Dawn was unable to attend this meeting, she had sent a message to the clerk saying that JYM would be instituting a program for 3 to 5 year olds during Summer Sessions at Silver Bay. Dawn asked Melanie-Claire to reserve See Memorial for Saturday and Sunday for use by JYM. Friends accepted the report.

201803-13: Melanie-Claire and Deb had met to make some changes to the Sessions Internal Manual. The main change was to see if Youth Committee would like to have a rep from Sessions. The revised manual will be sent to the Committee.

The Spring and Fall Sessions Manual will need considerable changes. We now have a Spring and Fall Sessions Coordinator and Liaison who will be taking on many of the responsibilities of the Host Task Group. The plan is to bring a revised Manual to Summer Sessions for consideration and approval by Sessions Committee.

201803-14: Cheshire suggested the following theme for Summer Sessions from Summer Program Subcommittee: ***Abbondanza: What is our abundance? How do we share it?*** This will also be the theme of our plenary speaker, Jacqueline Stillwell. She is general secretary of Right Sharing of World Resources. Friends approved.

The Summer Program Committee recommended signing a three-year contract with Silver Bay, through 2021. Friends approved.

The search for an alternate location for Summer Sessions over the past decades has not found any suitable venue that would be less costly while offering similar services and spaces. Friends approved laying down the search for an alternative location. Sunfire and Melanie-Claire will write a report about the search to be part of the Sessions Advance Report. It will also be published on the NYYM website.

David Herendeen, former clerk of Worship at YM Sessions, recommended that Sessions take responsibility for planning Opening Worship on Sunday of Summer Sessions. This would also need to be approved by Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC). The clerk of Sessions will bring this suggestion to the clerk of MCC. Sessions approved taking on this responsibility if MCC agrees. [MCM notes, Lu Harper, interim clerk of MCC, approved.]

Friends were reminded that Rest and Renewal time at Summer Sessions should only offer activities where attendance is not expected. Summer Program Subcommittee will work on codifying this policy.

Friends approved authorizing \$3000 for a Pay as Led brochure for 2019 Summer Sessions as discussed earlier in the meeting. This will be ready to be distributed at Fall Sessions 2018.

The Summer Program Subcommittee had considered celebrating a Jubilee Year 2020 for NYYM's 325th anniversary. They concluded that more discernment of the implications would be needed before making a decision. Summer Program Subcommittee will do research and discernment, and bring a preliminary report to Sessions Committee at the 2018 Summer Sessions.

Some Friends had sensed that the Summer Program Subcommittee had difficulty functioning when Sessions did not have an Assistant Clerk, because that person serves as clerk of Summer Program Subcommittee. Sessions now has an Assistant Clerk. Internal Nominating was reminded that they are charged with finding Sessions officers as well as coordinators for other tasks.

Currently, the 12 Step Program is listed as under the care of Nurture Coordinating Committee. Friends approved having the 12 Step Program under the care of Sessions as part of the Arrangements Sub-Committee.

201803-15: Friends approved that the clerk and assistant clerk writing the responses to the Accountability Queries, and distributing them to the committee for the meeting at Spring Sessions. The clerk will draft the Advance Report in time to be approved by the YM deadline.

201803-16: Melanie-Claire said that currently Friends who wish to request financial assistance to attend YM Sessions need to request support from their monthly meeting. Some Friends feel reluctant to ask for funds; some do not have a monthly meeting. Doug Way read proposed text for the May Spark that somewhat changes this policy. The following text was approved:

CHANGES TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ATTENDING SUMMER SESSIONS

As in past years, financial assistance is available for the 2018 Summer Sessions via the NYYM Equalization Fund (EQ). Starting this year, however, we are simplifying the process for requesting assistance by eliminating the requirement for an applicant to first make a request to their monthly meeting. We are doing this to encourage individuals connected to NYYM to attend Summer Sessions. If you are requesting funds we do expect that your registration form will indicate your NYYM connection (monthly meeting member or attender, Powell House attender, etc.)

As in the past, the amount of assistance is limited, and all requests are carefully reviewed. EQ assistance typically provides adults and children with up-to one-third of the cost of room and board at Hepbron Hall. It may, however, provide more, depending on your individual or family needs and the funds available. If you have a physical condition that limits your mobility and your access to the lower-priced housing units, please give us that information on your registration form.

If you need funds beyond what the EQ can provide, you are encouraged to ask your monthly, quarterly or other regional meetings and/or your NYYM committee since many have funds available for this purpose. If you receive funds from these sources,

we ask that you indicate the amounts and sources on your registration form. (Note that JYM volunteers cannot also ask for Equalization Funds because of the level of support they already receive from JYM. However, JYM family members are welcome to request EQ assistance.)

A REQUEST TO ASSIST THOSE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE!

For those Friends who are not in need of financial assistance we ask that you consider adding or increasing your donation to the EQ fund. We hope that we will receive more requests and will therefore need more funds. You may specify your donation on the registration form and any amount will be recognized as a tax-deductible donation to NYYM.

201803-17: Linda Houser noted that the name of Silver Bay is now Silver Bay YMCA. She read the attached policy for complimentary stays at Summer Sessions 2018. Friends approved. The clerk will forward this to General Services and the NYYM Treasurers.

201803-19: Friends approved the attached Equalization Fund update. It documents how the EQ funds are distributed. It was noted that because we will be using Pay as Led in 2019, these policies may be in force only for 2018.

201803-20: Melanie-Claire reported that locations for 2019 Spring and Fall Sessions have been secured. The 2019 Spring Sessions will be held at Oakwood Friends School under the care of Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting. Northeast Regional Meeting will host the 2019 Fall Sessions at Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer. Typically, when NERM hosts, the youth program is housed at Powell House. The SFSC&L will be sure to check on this for 2019. Fall Sessions 2018 will be held at Holiday Inn in downtown Rochester, hosted by Farmington Scipio Region. The Host Task Group has been formed, and plans are moving ahead. The report was accepted.

201803-21: The clerk said that Rebecca McKenzie had proposed that Summer Sessions 2018 have a film maker on the job to make a welcome video. Sunfire indicated his willingness to do the filming. Friends approved beginning this process. More details will be available as they are developed.

201803-22: The minutes were approved. The meeting closed with silent reflection.

Melanie-Claire Mallison, Clerk
Deb Wood, Recording Clerk