

**Bucks Quarterly Meeting
Of the Religious Society of Friends
Minutes of Quarterly Meeting
November 20, 2016
Held at Lehigh Valley Meetinghouse**

Clerk: Boris Simkovich (Makefield)

Recording Clerk: David Rose (Lehigh Valley)

Friends gathered at the appointed hour of 1: 00 p.m. and settled into a period of worship.

Welcome given by Clerk. Thanks given to Lehigh Valley MM for hosting this Meeting.

Agenda reviewed and approved.

Roll Call of Meeting: Bristol: 0, Buckingham: 1, Doylestown: 1, Fallsington: 4, Lehigh Valley: 16, Makefield: 2, Middletown: 1, Newtown: 4, Plumstead: 1, Quakertown: 1, Solebury: 1, Southampton: 0, Wrightstown: 1, Yardley: 0

Minutes for August 21, 2016 read and approved as presented.

Stories of Vitality and Growth. The Clerk spoke briefly of the effect of the recent election on many Friends and that the program on the work of FCNL this morning was the first time that there was the opportunity for us as a Quarter to address the concerns the many Friends have. A question that he felt would be in the background of any discussion today was how we as Quarter can support each other.

- **Doylestown** this past weekend had the first opportunity to use the newly installed Voice Amplification system. This allowed a 91 year-old member who is hard of hearing to participate.
- **Fallsington:** Tom Wells announced that the Citizens Climate Lobby has a film “Chasing Ice” about the melting of the glaciers. A shortened version was shown at the meetinghouse and Tom has a copy that he is hoping to share with other meetings to have a showing.
- **Newtown MM** children raised \$1800 at a simple supper for Shelter Box.
- **Lehigh Valley MM:** John Marquette, a member was able to give the invocation at the Pennsylvania State Senate on October 16th.
- **Solebury MM:** Three students went to FCNL in Washington and were able to arrange a meeting with New Jersey legislators and address with them the issue of sentencing reform.
- **Quakertown** has a new Clerk. Meeting Minder is a position just created to insure that there will always be someone present to open the meeting on first day.
- **Fallsington MM**, as reported last Quarterly Meeting, is having one publicized event per month. Jonathan Sprout gave a children’s concert this month about American Heroes. Jonathan Snipes recommended him to any meeting wishing to do the same.
- **Buckingham** has a Facebook page. Considering paying for advertising with the support of PYM Outreach. This would allow links to Facebook page to be shared within a certain area.

Coordinator’s Report given by Holly Olson (Middletown MM). (Complete written report available.) Inreach portion included notice of new Filemaker database and the intent to limit mailing of Quakerphernalia to those who request it and that everyone else will receive it via e-mail. New Year’s Day Skating Party this year could not occur on New Year’s Day this year due to rink not being available. Reduced participation has led to the recommendation that the event be “laid down”. After some discussion which included regrets that an event which some present had grown up with, the Clerk closed the discussion with the comment anyone within the Quarter could pick up this event, even if it was just to gather Friends at an ice skating rink without the need to reserve the entire rink. A program on racial justice, called “Say the Wrong Thing:

Racial Justice and Authentic Community Using Strategies of the H.E.A.R.T.” will be held on January 14th at the Buckingham meetinghouse. Other reports given on Quaker 800’s, attendance at PYM Continuing Sessions, Peace Fair, attendance at various Community Days, and the Bucks County Interfaith Coalition for Refugee Resettlement work with a new Syrian refugee family. A Lehigh Friend noted that some of their members are involved with helping a Syrian refugee family in Allentown through a local interfaith organization.

Audit of Quarter Finances report read by Betsy Bayardi (Wrightstown MM). (Complete written report available). Records were found to be in good order

Treasurer’s Report explained by Besty Bayardi (Complete written reports available). She explained that the report’s cash flow snapshot which indicated a negative balance at the end of the first quarter was due to the scheduling of expenses and deposits. She assured that this issue will be resolved by the end of the second quarter.

Minute of Support for the Bucks Quarter Meeting Committee on Outreach presented. Outreach is requesting assistance from the PYM Membership Development Fund for testimony banners and tent. Approved.

Break at 2:15 p.m.

Newtown MM Annual Report given by Rich Richardson Clerk. (Complete written report available). The meeting has reorganized its Worship and Ministry Committee, reducing the number on the committee while involving more of the entire meeting in the work. The meeting also consolidated a number of positions into a new Communications Committee. Ongoing work of various committees and outreach events was highlighted. Recorded 320 members.

Bucks Quarter Peace Fair report given by Tim Cunningham (Buckingham MM). (Complete written report available) Tim reported that the Peace Fair this year was better in almost every measurable way, especially the participation of Friends in helping out. Laying down the Grange Fair booth may have helped. One noticeable absence was any new Young Friends from Bucks Quarter. A description of the committee is being written and will be included in the next Quarter Handbook.

Plumstead MM Annual Report given by Sarai Nieves, Clerk. (Complete written report available) Meeting is involved with collecting items for Synergy project and also for Mercer Street Friends. Sarai spoke about the outreach by Robert Wood of Synergy Project to children who are living in the woods or who are “couch nomads”. The Meeting has created a diversity statement that was read and received support from those present.

Policy Regarding Public Statements by Quarter Representative. Topic introduced by Clerk. Three meetings, Doylestown, Middletown, and Makefield, have considered the issue and responded with statements. These responses were read. It was noted that statements expressing a position need to be connected to an action that is being taken. A Friend opined that a concern that was shared by all the meetings in the Quarter would also rise to a concern for the Yearly Meeting which has a much stronger identity as a religious group than Bucks Quarter. Another Friend noted that at a time when many groups within the United States are fearful any statement of support is helpful. Clerk closed the discussion with the observation that while this was a good discussion that there was not enough unanimity at present to create any policy.

Camp Onas Annual report given by Maike Haehle (Makefield MM). (Full report available). She began by reading a letter from a camper’s parent which described the transformative experience that Camp Onas was for their child. Camper Statistics were reviewed. In 2016 total enrollment was 588 with 75 Quaker campers. 42 children were awarded financial aid to attend. Camp has a high retention rate with 85% of campers returning the following year.

Closing Comments from Clerk Boris Simkovich who just presided over his last meeting as Clerk. He spoke of the inspiration he received from his participation in the various gatherings he attended as Clerk and also of some things that he has not been able to achieve during his term that he

would still like to see, especially creating more of a sense of community for young Friends. Finds the strength of the Quarter is that while there is much that is going on in the Quarter we are not trying to tell each other what to do.

Meeting closed at 3:25 p.m.

Notes from Discussion on Public Statements:

A seasoned member of the Oversight Committee said that it had been established that the Clerk in consultation with other such as the oversight committee and make statements. Interim Meeting did give Christy Duncan Tessmer specific authority to speak for Friends in Ferguson. Question combines the issue of proactive statements and responses to inquiries. What would be news if all meetings were participating in a specific response? Difficult to find an issue that all meetings in the Quarter would share a concern that would not rise to the level of PYM. Each of the meetings raising the issue will create a louder voice. The coming year will likely bring a lot of issues that we may have an opinion on and whether we want to respond to every issue should be a question. A friend of color asked that a strong statement of support could not be more necessary. There is a very limited identity of Bucks Quarter outside of this group and therefore statements from the Quarter would have limited impact. The Oversight Committee, in consultation with the Clerk, can make statements. Statements need to be connected to action is an insight brought back from Quaker Life. Clerk closed the discussion with the observation that while this was a good discussion that there was not enough unanimity to create any policy