

## FRIENDS MEETING OF SAN ANTONIO

### Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

February 19, 2017

“[Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business] help[s] us to recognize and come to terms with those parts of human nature that make it so difficult to give over our own wills. It is hard to give over cherished points of view that may be ego-centered or may simply not accord with where we are being corporately led at the moment. We seldom have to choose between good and evil. When we do, for most folks the choice is clear. It listening for God between good and good that is so difficult for us.” Patricia Loring, *Listening Spiritually: Corporate Spiritual Practice Among Friends*.

Attending: Douglas Balfour, Bill Sweet, Pat Sweet, Ruth Lofgren, Joni Mize, James Mize, James Goslin, Gretchen Haynes, Michelle DiGiacomo, Stephen Shearer, Peggy Dial, Juan Vela, Mimi Moore, Ken Southwood, Janet Southwood, Val Liveoak, Carol Balliet, Bill Wilkinson, Alice Partain, Margarita McAuliffe

1. Minutes from January Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. **Approved.**

2. Treasurer’s Report – Bill Wilkinson

The Treasurer had no report to give because he is currently transitioning finance record keeping from GnuBooks to Quickbooks. The transition should be complete and reports available for the March Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

**Report accepted.**

3. Finance Committee – Bill Wilkinson reporting

#### **FMSA Finance Committee Meeting**

Friday, **February 3**, 2017, 9:30-11am at  
Roy Maas Youth Alternatives, 3103 West Ave, SAT

In attendance – Pat Sweet, Bill Wilkinson, Carol Redfield

We discussed money amounts for various categories of our budget including Peace and Social Concerns recommendations for contributions from FMSA, the amount we give to SCYM, the sinking fund, savings, and the operating budget.

Currently, the operating budget just maintains our current situation. We also have scheduled \$200/month to go into the sinking fund, but it is not keeping up with the need.

We do have a large amount of monies available to us that have been thought of as funding the next phase of our site. We need a site plan to know if we want to continue to keep these funds aside and for what specific uses. There have been many suggestions of things to consider such as the third phase of the original plan, a caretaker apartment, a Quaker school, to creating an intentional Quaker community (possibly purchasing La Fiesta apartments, for example).

Rather than take funds out of any savings, we discussed the idea of tithing a percentage of our operating budget amount (about \$29K), as is often suggested for individuals and groups.

We recommend that we

- Designate \$20,000 from savings to the sinking fund to replenish it.
- Put \$500 per month toward the sinking fund (which is for unforeseen and/or large maintenance expenses), rather than the \$200 per month we now do.
- Contribute 10% of our operating budget to SCYM.
- Contribute 10% of our operating budget to the contributions FMSA gives to other organizations (to be distributed as recommended by P&SC and approved by the Meeting).
- Develop a site plan or at least put a time frame on when one will be developed or worked on.

Recommendations from the report were discussed, including site planning for the future. The Nominating Committee will look into filling the currently open positions on the Site Planning Committee. A concern was raised that some of the monies set for future site planning be used for social action in and out of the Meeting so that more people may know FMSA.

**MINUTE 2017.02.01:** The Meeting **approves** the recommendation of the Finance Committee to move \$20,000 from the Frost Savings account to the Frost Checking account to be designated for the Sinking Fund.

**Report accepted.**

4. Religious Education Committee – Alice Partain reporting

### **Religious Education Committee Meeting February Report**

Attending: Mary Alice Partain, Kristal Melvin, Carol Redfield

1. Current Status

Kristal and Mary Alice agreed that the current schedule of volunteers in the Children's Room seems to be working well although we would of course like to see more children.

## 2. Mom's Best Friend

The group discussed the Mom's Best Friend service in light of the concern raised in January Business Meeting about the cost of the service (\$3,200.00 for 2017). The group agreed that the service has been very good and the Sunday workers have been great with the children. It was decided that dependent on the current contract with the service, the Committee would like to move to using a Mom's Best Friend worker twice a month; the first and third Sundays of the month. This would leave volunteers to cover the other days of the month if needed, but would assure a paid worker for Potluck Sundays and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sundays. We want to balance current needs of the program and the Meeting with preparedness for future growth.

## 3. Quaker Fair

The group discussed again putting a flyer together for the children's area at the Quaker Fair to try to raise awareness of the RE program among visitors. We also will look into putting an ad in the "Our Kids" publication and "The Current".

## 4. Raising our Profile

We had lots of discussion about ways to bring in more families and children. One possibility is a summer camp, a great opportunity to invite families not acquainted with the Meeting. Volunteers are currently few and time commitments large for such a venture so we are still searching for a way forward.

On raising our profile in media produced by the Meeting, the Committee would like to know the current status of adding new pictures of families and children to the website and Facebook page and adding the "Kid's Corner" section to the monthly Newsletter, which have each been discussed in the past. We want to help overcome any roadblocks that are keeping these from happening.

## 5. Name

The group discussed the name Religious Education Committee and found it does not accurately describe our task. Young Friends Education Committee was decided to be a better fit for current responsibilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alice Partain

Recommendations regarding the current childcare service were discussed. The committee was asked to discuss any decision about the service with the families who are currently, regularly attending First Day School and so taking advantage of the service.

**MINUTE 2017.02.02:** The meeting authorizes the Religious Education Committee to make decisions regarding the frequency of the current contract childcare service, Mom's Best Friend.

**Report accepted.**

5. Ministry & Oversight Committee Report – Doug Balfour reporting

**M&O Report Feb., 2017**

- 1) We are continuing to minister to those we know of who are in need according to their requests,
- 2) We are in the process of working with an applicant for membership,
- 3) We have sponsored Gary Whiting to present forums this month and next generally on topics regarding the spiritual life of the meeting.
- 4) There have been 2 sessions of the Spiritual Deepening study group using materials from Friends General Conference, led by Gretchen Haynes.
- 5) We are deep into an inquiry regarding a request for use of our space. M&O thinks we need a little more seasoning to reach unity on this request before bringing it to meeting for business.

**Report accepted.**

6. State of the Meeting Report – read by Doug Balfour.

**Final reading of the State of the Meeting Report. Approved.**

Final draft of State of the Meeting Report can be found in the appendix.

7. Peace & Social Concerns – Val Liveoak reporting

**P&SC Report Feb. 2017**

P&SC did not meet last month. Several members have asked about FMSA being able to host refugees or provide Sanctuary. Our current facilities do not allow for the presence of overnight guests, but we hope to have a forum soon on providing support for refugees and undocumented people.

Some work continues and was reported:

"IWC is looking in new directions to continue to support the work of RAICES and also to broaden our own efforts to welcome the stranger.

RAICES is now managing Casa RAICES directly and with utmost efficiency and care, training volunteers, sorting clothing and making bus station and airport deliveries. Since IWC no longer attends to these activities on a daily basis, we can spread our wings, too! We will continue to assemble backpacks, direct volunteers to RAICES, house long-term volunteers and assist in other ways, but we will also reach out to other immigration and refugee organizations to support the work they do, and we will help you keep your faith community informed of opportunities to volunteer with hands-on assistance working with local and regional refugee- and immigrant-focused organizations, including RAICES, or to advocate on their behalf at every level of government." -Mary Grace Ketner, point person coordinator, *The Proposed Mission, Vision and Goals for 2017 were discussed at the regular monthly meeting on Feb 9th.*

David Bristol reported on his trip to accompany Water Protectors at Standing Rock:

Feb 2017 report on Standing Rock:

As you probably know, President Trump signed an executive action to tell the Army Corp of Engineers to speed up their review of the Dakota Access Pipeline access. On February 7<sup>th</sup> the Army Corp of Engineers announced that it would forego the environmental impact statement that it had agreed to implement in December 2016. On February 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 the Army Corp of Engineers granted an easement for DAPL to cross under Lake Oahe (the Missouri River). Currently the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council and the Earth Justice lawyers are reviewing the next legal step to prevent DAPL from moving forward on what seemed like a rushed and possibly illegal granting of this easement to DAPL.

We are now seeking information on the next steps for the protest movement. We know that the camps in the flood plain have yet to be closed. We do not know if the Tribal Council has granted a permit for a camp on higher ground. We know that many young people who we came to admire are remaining at Standing Rock. We urge you to read <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/magazine/the-youth-group-that-launched-a-movement-at-standing-rock.html>. This is an excellent review and tells of the life-struggle that many of the youthful protesters have lived through and live with. As the article talks about, the protest to protect water and sacred land has given many of these young people a purpose and sense of community that they have not experienced before. Suicide among Native American youth is the highest in the US. I had the uneasy sense that many of the young people at Standing Rock were willing to give their lives to be part of something that had meaning to them. We geared donations to assist the Native American youth in their present and future lives.

Depending on protest activity and a prayerful insight as to how we might help youth, we hope to return to Standing Rock this summer.

Accounting for Donations:

Total Donated on behalf of FMSEA: \$974.45

Cash expended:

Cheryl Angel Native American Spokesperson and longtime water protector*:	\$ 60.00
Eagle Eye: Oceti Sakawan Camp for cleanup and closing the camp:	\$ 80.00
Received donations food and storage bins	\$274.45
FCNL for American native youth to March Lobby week 2017 in Washington DC.*	\$150.00
Wind Dancer@ borderlands ranch to support Cheryl Angel’s work w/youth and S.R.*	<u>\$410.00</u>
	Total \$974.45

\*All donations were given on behalf of Quakers. We were happy to find that with many Native Americans, the word Quaker resonated well.

Thank all of you; you support all of us on this ol’ earth and, hopefully, deserving youth who must now lead the battle to save precious water and sacred earth.

Peace, Lee and David

Referencing in the report that “our current facilities do not allow for the presence of overnight guests” it was brought to the attention of the Meeting that the bathroom in the Children’s Room was plumbed for a shower and a unit would just need to be purchased and installed to have a full bathroom available.

**Report accepted.**

8. Follow-up on SB 6 issue – Val Liveoak reporting

Co-clerks Val Liveoak and Gretchen Haynes have crafted a letter opposing Senate Bill 6 currently before the Texas Legislature on behalf of the Meeting. The letter, on Meeting letterhead, will be available next week for Friends to include along with their own letters to representatives. Friends were also encouraged to phone representative as this form of communication had been effective in reaching lawmakers during previous actions.

9. Property Committee – James Goslin reporting

**Property Committee Report, February 2017**

The Property Committee, with mostly new members, continues familiarizing itself with the property and ongoing arrangements, such as the landscaping service. The new members especially are grateful for the continuing assistance of the former members in maintaining continuity.

Three workdays were combined with discussions on organizing the committee. Several relatively minor tasks were done: such as weeding, particularly in the courtyard; cleaning the signs on the street corner and parking lot entrance; reattaching the crossmember on the arbor; cleaning and organizing storage closets; cleaning gutters of leaves and detritus; and installing coat hooks in the restrooms. All four members met with the landscaping service, I Vega, and clarified what services they offer and what we expect of them. At this time we are well satisfied with their service.

A few verbal suggestions or comments received by the committee are being actively considered.

A major problem was found on January 29: the wood soffits on both sides of the Meeting hours are rotten. The magnitude of the problem will depend on the extent of damage. If it is just the exposed boards, it will be substantial but relatively minor repair compared to if there is presently hidden rot in structural elements. The committee is gathering information and will bring a proposal to Meeting for Business for decision.

Faithfully submitted,

James Goslin, James Mize, Stephen Shearer, William Sweet

Suggestion was made, in reference to earlier discussion during Peace & Social Concerns Committee, that the Committee explore the possibilities of installing a shower unit in the Children's Room bathroom and bring recommendations to the Meeting.

**Report accepted.**

Other Concerns:

#### **10. Meeting Handbook Revisions – Bill Sweet**

Revisions have been made to the Handbook in response to Friends input. The copy editor will now send out the revised version to the same group of Friends who helped with the earlier version to get thorough feedback in the hopes that this may be the final version.

## 11. Spring Fair – Gretchen Haynes reporting

Good news, the key slots have been filled and serious planning can begin. We seek to add two features: 1) Hot Meals, 3 or 4 families will prepare the same recipe at home and bring it on the day to sell. Fair-goers can have lunch right here. 2) Talent tent, Friends can bring their art, photos, crafts to sell on the same basis as vendors, 15% of their gross to Meeting. And extend the closing to 2 p.m. Including an animal adoption was suggested and met with enthusiasm. The title was questioned - we need something more welcoming to the general public. All suggestions to Gretchen.

**MINUTE 2017.02.03:** The meeting approved the addition of a Hot Food booth, a Talent Tent featuring work done by Friends, and extending the hours of the Fair to 10am – 2pm. **Approved.**

The addition of an adoption event on the day of the Fair with a local animal rescue organization was discussed and will be explored.

There being no further business to come before Meeting, it closed with silent worship at 1:18pm to reconvene March 19, 2017.

Val Liveoak, Co-Clerk

Alice Partain, Recording Clerk

## Appendix

Friends Meeting of San Antonio  
State of the Meeting Report, 2016  
*Approved Feb., 2017*

This has been a difficult year, though not unremittingly. On the one hand, we continue to have trouble staffing our committees, have had several break-ins and acts of vandalism at our Meetinghouse, and have experienced some interpersonal tensions that we have not figured out how to resolve. On the other hand, Friends have stepped forward to help, we have new attenders who have quickly become valued members of our community, and our Meetings for Worship seem to many to be deeper at year's end than they were at its beginning. We cherish our experienced Friends, celebrate our newcomers, and strive to follow the testimony to spread love to all.

For committees, this year was a particularly difficult one. During the first half of the year, Ministry and Oversight lost key personnel to illness and to distant work and family responsibilities, attending mainly to needs of members and attenders, membership applications and monthly queries and Forums. It revived during the second half, but is again short-staffed for the new year as those work and family responsibilities have returned. Peace and Social Concerns was reduced to two active members, both of whom travel, so most meetings took



place by phone and email. A resignation reduced the Property Committee to two members and by year's end, problems with vandalism made their task overwhelming added to the care they had taken over the grounds during the year. Religious Education and Outreach remained clerkless, though individuals took over specific tasks and kept us functioning. The Nominating Committee strove to fill these gaps. As one member noted, however, we have a demographic problem: too few members and attenders at a stage of life when they have time and energy to devote to Meeting's collective well-being. We have depended for too long on a small circle of Friends. We need to broaden this circle so that we do not overburden anyone.

Vandalism and break-ins have been a continuing problem, though they seem to come in waves. This fall, Property Committee asked for assistance finding solutions, and several have been explored. We have repaired doors, installed better locks, and painted over graffiti. We have reached out to local homeless people, and are now considering installing more prominent signs indicating that we are a religious organization. We have not, however, had the time to consider all of the suggested solutions in the depth they deserve.

We have also had to deal with interpersonal tensions, including some differences over procedures. We sometimes forget that each of us is given a piece of wisdom, which is why we are called to listen to all voices before moving forward. Some of us need to be more ready to discuss these differences and have at times been short with each other, causing hurt, to the concern of others. This fall, several such instances led our Clerk of four years to step back from Meeting. After some discernment, two experienced Friends agreed to take up a joint Clerkship for the rest of the year and for the year to come. We need to learn how to better cope lovingly with conflict and disillusionment.

Fortunately, we have also had happier times. We hold regular potlucks at which we get a chance to know each other as people and build our community. We had a very successful Fair in the spring, which raised money to aid immigrant families fleeing Central American violence. This also built community. We have taken to celebrating Friends' significant birthdays (those ending in '0' and '5'); this included a celebration of Ruth Lofgren's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at an after-meeting potluck. It proved a wonderful time for people to enjoy each other's company. Individuals continue to step forward to nourish our collective spiritual life. Members have taken positions in Yearly Meeting and a Friend who moved here two years ago brings us a new contact with Friends General Conference.

As was true last year, Friends have opened their homes for Quaker study groups, and one couple has sponsored monthly mid-week Meeting for Worship in theirs. Silent retreats held in Spring and Fall, nurtured the depth of Meeting. A Friend continues to faithfully produce an ~8 page monthly newsletter. Friends have stepped forward to develop a small, but regular children's program using materials from FGC. We have maintained our twice-a-month Forums, either discussing social and spiritual issues among ourselves or inviting members of the wider

community to speak with us about their work for social betterment. Many of these have involved topics that address the issues raised above – from a spiritual perspective and not just from a practical one. We have seen a growth in our support for RAICES and the Interfaith Welcome Committee in their work with refugee families. This has become a very meaningful part of several Friends’ lives and a significant Quaker contribution to this work.

As noted above, we have been pleased to welcome new attenders to Meeting, and we already feel their positive contribution. We mourn the passing of Janet Wenholtz, a member who moved to Mexico a year ago to be near family. We are sad to have to say farewell to Fabian Juarez, who has moved back to Albuquerque to take a new job and be closer to his family. He continues to be a member of our Meeting as he explores spiritual homes there.

As we did last year, we held a special forum to begin preparing this report. At it, we posted large sheets of paper in the Meetinghouse and asked Friends to write on them their sense of Meeting’s strengths and challenges, and also any adjectives that they thought described aspects of our life together. The ‘strengths’ poster included comments like “diverse views”, “deep worship”, “our mature Friends”, “happy to be among a group of seekers”, “people step up”, “welcoming community”, and some positive comments about our first First-Day children’s program, which has several attenders. Our ‘challenges’ included “making our Quaker voice known in the community”, “developing and maintaining a children’s program”, “dealing with problems between/among us”, “[lack of] spirit-led business process”, “fear to be honest”, and “[lack of] open sharing of needs and weaknesses”. The adjectives ranged from “welcoming”, “peaceful”, “nurturing”, and “mutually supporting” to “tight-lipped”, “burdened”, and “prideful”.

This range of responses captures our situation, albeit inarticulately. We are still seeking how to proceed and how we can build on our strengths while addressing our challenges. We are trying mightily to manifest the loving spiritual community that we are capable of being. We continue to celebrate our spiritual life together.