

Minutes - Abington Quarterly Meeting - 10/1/23 – At Unami & on Zoom

Kelly Green - Norristown, opened the meeting at approximately 9am. Tom Peterson - Unami, welcomed us to Unami and thanked those present for attending. Then we took a brief moment for silent reflection.

1. First, we **approved** Minutes of the prior Business Meeting, of 8/6/23.

2. We minuted our thanks to Paige Menton - Plymouth, for her five years of service as recording clerk. The new recording clerk is Dan Turner - Abington.

3. John Munro, clerk of Unami Meeting's "Carbon Forest Project" made a presentation. The Project's purpose is carbon sequestration by obtaining commitments to dedicate land as natural forest -- this will help reduce carbon in the atmosphere. Thus far, letters of support have come from 3 sources. They have made a number of presentations to interested parties and groups, and will submit applications for grants. It was noted that there has been no response by any of our Monthly Meetings nor the Abington Quarter since John presented this work at AQM's meeting in 2020. Through our Representative meeting, this Project, supported by Unami Monthly Meeting, is bringing a report to bring us up to speed. The report is attached by reference (documents attached by reference will be found filed with these Minutes).

4. The AQM Youth Support Committee gave their report, presented by Stephanie Rushie – Horsham, & Joe Schatz - Plymouth, co-clerks of JFC/MSFC. The theme this year was “Bringing God into our lives.” Joe & Stephanie gave the report using pictures shown on the Zoom screen courtesy of our tech host, Robert Reiff - Unami. The pictures highlighted the camp activities, accompanied by descriptions. These youth conferences are for kids growing up in our meetings from families of members or attenders. This is their second year at “Camp Innabah”, in Spring City. The camp has a big campus, with French Creek running through it. There is a pool, gymnasium, and cabins with summer camp style sleeping accommodations. The kids are there for five overnights & six days; no electronics. All sorts of wildlife were seen on the property.

Counselors and teachers had to work harder this year, as the ratio of staff to attendees wasn't ideal. They are planning for more staff next year. Karen Shanowski - Norristown, was the religion teacher this summer and convened the meetings for worship. Each kid kept a journal as an exercise to document their experiences. Karen told us: “the big idea is you are loved, and can create a safe space for

yourself.” There was a SPICES class for the younger kids, taught by older campers. Sports and Games were a popular feature. Team building, getting to know each other, and working together were important aspects of various activities. This year the middle school kids visited “Cradles to Crayons” a program for underprivileged kids, and did maintenance work there to help out. They had a talent show on the last night with funny skits from all the different sub-groups. Justin Solonyinka from Abington MM, who is an accomplished musician, and his daughter Lily, a camper, led the musical portions of the show. Joe advised us about a major cost element: a compromise on rates was negotiated with Camp Innabah: their new higher rate will obtain for up to 30 campers, while the old rate remains in place for all additional campers. The video presentation will be available on the AQM website for registered members.

5. The newly nominated AQ Incorporated Trustee appointments were approved: **David Nepley - Byberry MM**, **Joe Ukanalis - Upper Dublin MM**, and **Daniel Hazelton - Unami MM**. The AQM Trustees will welcome them, with the expectation they will be approved at the next trustees meeting.

6 & 7. Russ Bishop - Gwynedd, gave the Incorporated Trustees' Annual Report. He noted that because of Covid the trustees have not met in person for 3 years and they need to bring the newly appointed trustees up to date with Trustee work. They will have a retreat to meet in person and look at their investment policy statement and bring it up to date. Russ is stepping down as acting president, but will continue to serve as vice-president. Karen Russell will serve as acting president pending selection of a new president.

8. Tom Armstrong - Plymouth, presented the AQM Treasurer's Report. Bob Reiff and Linda White - Plymouth, did the accounting and prepared the financial report. Tom noted that all the meetings of the quarter have generously contributed. He told us that our larger meetings have stepped up their contributions and consequentially we have been able to give more to the Philadelphia Yearly meeting. Our meetings are now using the HUBB website program. He went through major items on the financial report, explaining how the funds are spent. Net change in assets was positive in amount approximately \$7K. Joe Schatz spoke up to say the JFC/MSFC program is grateful for financial assistance from the quarter. This report attached to these Minutes by reference

Robert Reiff gave the Trustees treasurer's report. An annual audit was performed by Bee Bergvall; The auditors were happy with what they found. The

Incorporated Trustees report and the Draft Audit report are attached to these Minutes by reference. In the Trustees report it was noted that the Spruance Fund has diminished to the point where we are spending more money in support of members at Foulkeways than we are receiving from the fund's endowment. Bob explained that \$200K was taken out of endowment principal to fund Spruance Fund assistance grants. This withdrawal from endowment is possible as the monies were accumulated market value appreciation from prior years. Home & Care has requested that AQM members consider donating to the fund. Rebecca encouraged monthly meetings to share the concern that this fund is designated to help members at Foulkeways who need the help that traditionally comes from this fund.

9. Ann Hill - Gwynedd, presented Gwynedd's Ad Hoc Safety Committee's update on monthly meeting emergency preparedness. She said police trooper Butler came to Gwynedd and gave a presentation and showed a film about how threats to schools and churches or meetings may occur. Gwynedd's Safety Committee is developing safety and preparedness guidelines. They intend to train a least four members how to do "CPR." Gwynedd is now considering getting a defibrillator (the cost: between \$1500 to 2k). Also please refer to the Property Safety report, attached to these Minutes by reference.

10. Two website policies relating to Hubb Church's terms and conditions were presented for approval by the AQ Communications Committee (AQCC):

- Privacy Policy- reviewed by counsel and recommended by AQCC
- Copyright Policy - reviewed by counsel and recommended by AQCC.

We **approved these two policies**. Bob Reiff noted that the relevant website Terms and Conditions have been adjusted to comply with United States law, and will be posted on the AQ website. Upon request AQCC will have HUBB update these terms and conditions on monthly meeting websites so that they will also be in compliance. To do this, Bob said he will need information about meeting demographics from monthly meetings. These approved policies are attached to these Minutes by reference.

11. Mary Ellen Mc Nish - Byberry, gave us an update on Byberry's Shoemaker Fund grant. She addressed the topic of decline in membership at Byberry and across PYM, explaining that the Shoemaker Fund provided the grant that funded Susan Vorwerk's work to reverse this, and she did a great job. Mary Ellen also said the Covid pandemic was a real crisis for Byberry, prompting it to

adopt joint Zoom meetings for worship with Upper Dublin. The latest Shoemaker grant has enabled Byberry to hire Hanna Wallace as their outreach coordinator. When AQ appoints a communications and outreach coordinator, \$20K from this grant will go to AQ to fund the new coordinator. As part of their outreach program, Byberry is planning an “open house” on October 28, and all AQ members are invited. It will commemorate Byberry’s 340th anniversary and new upgrades to its meetinghouse. Byberry is also inviting AQ Friends to an event on November 12, 2023, planned in collaboration with other groups, to honor those interred in the Byberry Township African American Burial Ground—which was under the Meeting’s stewardship until 1980.

12. Bob Reiff, representing the AQM finance committee, told us it needs additional members. Bob introduced Marguerite Hayes who has just joined the committee. She said she is not a financial expert, but understands that expertise is not essential and she is looking forward to do what she can. Kelly encouraged anyone who feels called to volunteer for this work. The AQM Finance committee job description is attached to these Minutes by reference.

13. Barbara Zucker - Richland made a brief presentation about their workshop series featuring the “Four Doors to Meeting for Worship” Pendle Hill pamphlet. She invited friends from other meetings to attend sessions of the workshop on October 7th & 14th at Richland meeting. Melinda Weather-Bradley will lead this presentation. Visit Richland’s website to register. Richland has another regular practice they call “Quaker Shorts.” It occurs once each month during the last fifteen minutes of MFW. Its purpose is to share the workings of Faith & Practice with new attenders, and give them some idea of how the Meeting functions.

Richland Meeting has a request relating to its East Stroudsburg Cemetery. Maintaining the cemetery is Richland’s responsibility, but they are hoping that the Quarter will help finance the maintenance work. Kelly told us he went up there and inspected the cemetery. Howard from E. Stroudsburg asked him to take the concern to Yearly Meeting. When he inquired there, he learned that PYM’s policy is that it’s the Quarter’s responsibility to help out Monthly Meetings. Subsequently Kelly asked Melissa Rycroft, PYM’s clerk, about it. She indicated there would be a meeting in February where property issues such as this can be explored. Jack Shick - Richland explained that Richland originally was a preparative meeting under Gwynedd. In 1744 it became a monthly meeting. Shortly thereafter friends in upper Bucks County established a preparative meeting. In the 1750’s East

Stroudsburg, which had briefly been under the care of Richland, became a monthly meeting and requested to leave this preparative meeting under the care of Richland. The preparative meeting eventually folded with the result that Richland ending up with its cemetery (about 50 miles away from Richland). Tom Peterson, ex- clerk of Richland, then explained how funds earmarked for the cemetery were appropriated by a bank, which through a series of mergers and now is Wells Fargo; he feels the bank should rise to the obligation acquired through these mergers and support maintenance of the cemetery. In addition to all this, Lehigh Valley used to have some members with affiliations leading them to be interested in the care of this cemetery, too.

At this point it was 11am, time for Unami's meeting for worship, and Kelly **adjourned** the Quarterly Meeting. These minutes and all referenced reports are available on the AQM Website.

Dan Turner recording for the meeting