



**The Minutes of the Business Meeting Session of Western Quarterly Meeting
held on 27 April 2014 at New Garden Monthly Meeting**

Business Meeting was held at New Garden Monthly Meeting after Friends from Hockessin, Newark, London Grove, Kennett, New Garden, West Grove, Mill Creek and Centre Meetings met to constitute the second session of Western Quarterly Meeting in 2014.

14-13 We convened to conduct our business in a spirit of worship and began with a time for reporting on the life in our meeting communities. Friends from Kennett Meeting look forward to their in-house retreat, a new market day, and visioning new directions for their Meeting. Friends from Hockessin Meeting have completed their strategic plan, and they celebrate their re-vitalized adult first day class, which had been halted for a time due to renovations. The renovations are now complete. Centre Meeting approved a minute from Camden and Newark Meetings on eliminating the death penalty. Centre Meeting Friends also appreciated being able to host their website on a page of Western Quarterly Meeting's website. London Grove Monthly Meeting is celebrating their 300th Anniversary through 2014. Each month brings a new event highlighting a different aspect of Quaker Faith & Practice.

14-14 Friends received a brief presentation from our Coordinator, Zachary Dutton of Wilmington Monthly Meeting, on behalf of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Long Range Planning Group. Zachary reviewed some of the salient elements of the proposed Five Year Strategic Plan that has been sent to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for feedback and further seasoning. The plan will be brought before us for approval at July 2014 Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions. Clerks of Monthly Meetings may submit feedback from their Meetings via an online form: <http://www.pym.org/long-range-planning-group/home/works-in-progress/questions-and-responses/>. Friends were invited to offer feedback to what they had heard from Zachary and the following comments were made; they will be forwarded to the Long Range Planning Group.

- The proposed plan looks like a move in the right direction.
- The proposed changes to Yearly Meeting structure seem more sustainable.
- The concrete, finer details of some of the newer ideas in the plan are unclear.
- Our Quarterly Meeting and our Yearly Meeting seem closely aligned with the direction expressed in the presentation.
- A request was made for the plan to be forwarded to Clerks of Monthly Meetings.
- The plan is distributive, which targets the expressed aim of making our Yearly Meeting less Philadelphia-centric.
- It seems as if the proposed plan echoes Former U.S. President Kennedy's famous inaugural phrasing framed in reverse: what can we do for our monthly meetings and not what can our monthly meetings do for us. This has been a concern levied at our Yearly Meeting for years, and it took a financial crisis for Yearly Meeting leaders to begin listening.
- If Continuing Sessions continues to be held in Philadelphia, then it will continue to be difficult for representatives from far-away Monthly Meetings to attend.

14-15 Friends considered for approval the proposed organizational changes to our Quarterly Meeting's leadership and committee structure. We had considered this same proposal at our January 2014 meeting (minute # 14-9) but decided to hold off on approving it to wait for further feedback from our constituent Monthly Meetings. We received written feedback from half of our Monthly Meetings and reviewed this first. The feedback came from Kendal, Kennett, Newark, West Grove and Fallowfield Monthly Meetings. A Friend from London Grove Monthly Meeting also reported that London Grove reached approval for the new structure. She expressed that London Grove also wished to convey a concern related to the supervision of staff. There may be a conflict of interest if staff people serve on the Support Committee, which is tasked with supervising staff. Friends also wondered whether representatives from Monthly Meetings to the Support Committee would have term limits, who would set the term limits, and whether there is a need to articulate clearly the expectations for these representatives. There was a further concern that some Monthly Meetings, especially smaller ones, would not be able to appoint even one person and may, for example, need their representation to be shared by two people who alternate attendance. There was general agreement that Monthly Meetings should be allowed to address their own capacity to appoint representatives with flexibility. Friends acknowledged that there are many details of the proposed structure that have yet to receive clarification: the supervision of our staff, the terms and expectations of representatives to the Support Committee, the capacity of smaller Monthly Meetings to participate, etc. The lack of details for the new structure was also the prevailing concern expressed in the said written feedback we received from our Monthly Meetings.

Half of our Monthly Meetings did not respond to this proposal with any feedback, and several Monthly Meetings were not represented at this business meeting session. We remain deeply concerned with the continued low level of participation from some of our Monthly Meetings.

Friends approved the new structure provided that details in the implementation of the new structure be clarified immediately; that this be the first item on the Support Committee's agenda.

14-16 The Clerk, Pamela Leland of London Grove Meeting, proposed that the Quarterly Meeting hire Brandywine Accounting, LLC to aid us in the management of our finances. If approved, we would hire this firm while eliminating our bookkeeper position. This action would add approximately \$8000.00 to our budget, which would be reduced to approximately \$7000.00 in further years after initial set-up costs. The proposal comes with the endorsement of Ariana Langford of Newark Meeting, Dick Logan of Hockessin Meeting, Richard Bernard of Hockessin Meeting, and Shelley Hastings of Newark Meeting who are, respectively, the Quarterly Meeting Treasurer, Clerk of the Budget and Finance Committee, Clerk of the Committee and Leadership Reevaluation Advisory Group, and Clerk of the Nominating and Organization Committee. These Friends worked with our Clerk in response to our request to investigate the hiring of an accounting firm, see minutes from 11.13.13 # 13-26. Brandywine Accounting, LLC was a qualified choice and the lower bid of two finalists. **Friends approved the hiring of Brandywine Accounting, LLC to aid us in the management of our finances.**

14-17 Friends approved the minutes of our 19 January 2014 Meeting.

14-18 Friends approved the minute of appreciation to Gail Pietrzyk with some changes.

***14-19 Friends approved releasing our Clerk and Coordinator to complete a minute of appreciation to New Garden Monthly Meeting for hosting Quarterly Meeting on 27 April 2014.**

14-20 Friends received and accepted a report from the Friends Meetinghouses of Historic Interest Committee. The Clerk of this committee, Mary Sproat of New Garden Monthly Meeting, gave the report.

14-21 Friends received and accepted a report from the Budget and Finance Committee. We approved also to minute appreciation for our Clerk of the Budget and Finance Committee, Dick Logan of Hockessin Meeting. He worked diligently to research our archives in answering the request to our Budget and Finance Committee to investigate the William Jackson Education Fund. See the minutes of 11.13.13, # 13-24. His conclusion is that any changes to the way the fund is used will need to be approved by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for Sufferings or a successor organization. Friends also discussed the fact that the Fiscal Year 2014 and 2015 budgets are likely to operate at a deficit due to increased costs with hiring an accounting firm and paying for health care for our Coordinator. We may need to ask our constituent Monthly Meetings to adjust the distribution in covenant payments between Yearly Meeting and Quarterly Meeting to further support Quarterly Meeting operational costs. We lastly reviewed the fact that Western Quarterly Meeting is second in overall financial contributions to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

14-22 We received and accepted a report from our Treasurer. We approved also to minute appreciation for our Treasurer, Ariana Langford of Newark Meeting. She has served us with patience and commitment to keep our finances in good working order.

14-23 We received and accepted a report from the Board of the Friends Home at Kennett. Renna Van Oot of London Grove Monthly Meeting gave the report. Renna serves as the Executive Director of the Friends Home.

14-24 We received and accepted a report from our Coordinator, Zachary Dutton of Wilmington Monthly Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pamela Leland, Clerk
Zachary Dutton, Coordinator