



June 30, 2015

To: All Meeting Clerks and Meeting Treasurers

From: Pamela Leland, Clerk (Out-going) – pjleland@verizon.net

Cc: Shelley Hastings, Co-Clerk (In-coming) – clerk@westernquarterquakers.org
Ariana Langford, Co-Clerk (In-coming) – clerk@westernquarterquakers.org
Sarah Kastriner, Coordinator – coordinator@westernquarterquakers.org

Re: Process of Discernment Regarding the Unified Budgeting Process

Greetings, Friends.

On this final day of service as clerk to Western Quarter, I wanted to let you know of recent decisions made by the Quarter Support Committee at its meeting on June 14, 2015.

These decisions will impact each Meeting in the Quarter.

As you are each aware, in the last year, the Quarter has been in a process of discernment around our Unified Budgeting Process. After multiple conversations as a Quarter and input from various Meetings, we reached the following conclusions/decisions:

- As Friends have been reminded in other communications, the original intention of the Unified Budgeting Process was one of shared responsibility to and for one another as a community of Meetings in our financial relationship with PYM.

As we have considered this issue in the past year, there has been widespread recognition that, as a Quarter, from the earliest days of the Unified Budgeting Process, we have not fulfilled this intention. *[Indeed, our failure in this intention was part of the invitation to reconsider our commitment to the Unified Budgeting Process.]*

In considering this failure, we have also recognized that there is no collective willingness to attempt to live this intention going forward. One Meeting did report that it both intends (and has the financial capacity) to give “more than its share” (if one considers Meeting size as a correlation to financial capacity). However, the more frequent Meeting response is one of internal financial challenges with no capacity to increase giving on behalf of other Meetings in the Quarter who face similar challenges.

- Within the Quarter there is the view that the Unified Budgeting Process is simply a process of receiving funds from our Meetings and forwarding those dollars to PYM as a Quarter. We are not in unity about changing this process and so it will continue for the time being.

To be noted, however, is that there are those who (strongly) advocate that this is an unnecessary burden to the work of the Quarter Treasurer.

- Funds received from Western Quarter are currently allocated by PYM between the Covenant and the Annual Fund. PYM asks our Treasurer to identify how the funds we send are to be split. This decision by our Treasurer is informed by past practice and individual Meeting input (if available).

As Friends have considered this situation, we were in agreement that the allocation between Covenant and Annual Fund is a Meeting decision. As such, going forward, Monthly Meetings should designate what portion of their contribution to PYM is directed to the Covenant and what portion is directed to the Annual Fund.

- Finally, there is the matter of PYM's solicitation of WQM Friends for contributions to PYM's Annual Fund. When established, the Unified Budgeting Process prohibited PYM from soliciting WQ Friends for the Annual Fund. The rationale was that our Quarter's financial contribution to PYM included the Annual Fund.

Despite this constraint, at some point both London Grove and Kendal Meetings invited PYM to include their members in the Annual Fund appeals. In the last year, Hockessin and Kennett Meetings have issued the same invitation.

Newark Meeting recently re-affirmed its decision to *not* allow PYM to solicit its members. Likewise, Marlborough Meeting's position is known.

As such, in concluding this discernment process around the Unified Budgeting Process, we ask our remaining Meetings – Centre, Fallowfield, Mill Creek, New Garden, and West Grove – to discuss this issue of the Annual Fund solicitation of its members, either affirm or alter its decision, and inform the In-coming Co-Clerks, Shelley Hastings and Ariana Langford.¹

Despite our efforts to engage in a Quarter-wide dialogue about the Unified Budgeting Process over the last year, I am aware that there are Friends who remain unfamiliar with these issues and/or continue to be confused about this process and how we, as a Quarter, interface financially with PYM.

I and other Friends continue to be available to attend Monthly Meetings for Business or other Called Sessions to discuss these matters with Meeting members in more detail. You can reach any of us at the email addresses above.

It is our collective opinion that a better (and accurate) understanding of these issues is critical to the future financial health of our Monthly Meetings, our Quarter and our Yearly Meeting.

Thank you, in advance, for your attention to this matter and for your service to your Monthly Meeting.

¹ Friends are reminded that any individual can choose to "opt in" or "opt out" of Annual Fund solicitations regardless of his or her own Meeting's position. You simply contact Jennie Sheeks at PYM to declare your preference.