

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Interim Meeting
11 Twelfth Month 2021
Meeting in person in Virtual Space via Zoom (Hybrid format)

Minutes

I2021-45 *Opening*. The meeting began with a period of open worship. Interim Meeting Clerk Meg Meyer reminded us that in worship we seek to go beyond our own mind, our own individual thoughts, to reach for a collective understanding. She shared the query. “Do we humbly set aside our own preconception of proper action, seeking instead Divine guidance as to the right course.” She reminded Friends that information about items of business was circulated in advance, and that there was a session last weekend for those who wanted to ask questions. Our hope is that the session today will be an opportunity for worship and discernment.

I2021-46 *Stewardship & Finance Committee*. Terence McCormally, clerk, explained that we are being asked to amend the 2022 budget to reflect changes in the camping program, and several one-time expenditures. He presented the following report from Stewardship and Finance Committees explaining that all of these proposals are financially feasible. Our task is not to decide what we can afford, but to discern what we are led to do. The advance report is attached

I2021-47 *STRIDE*. Sarah Gillooly, General Secretary, presented a proposal to add \$7675 to the STRIDE budget in 2022. STRIDE uses its funds to recruit and support campers from poor urban communities. Grant applications submitted by STRIDE were repurposed during the pandemic crisis in 2020, and the wounds left by that decision have not been fully healed. This addition to the STRIDE budget does not redress that wrong, but it is what love requires of us at this time. Eden Fuller, co-clerk of STRIDE’s Baltimore chapter, explained that this is a one-time addition to STRIDE funding, in the amount of the grant applications that were repurposed. Friends APPROVED this request.

I2021-48 *350th Anniversary Committee*. Harry Scott, co-clerk, explained that the committee has been active since 2019, but has never had a budget. Funds will be needed for outreach materials and events, to bring in speakers, and to engage our meetings and our members in reflecting on our past and our future. The intent is to review what we have done well, what we have done badly, and what we are called to do now. It is to consider both our roots, and what we are growing toward in Spirit.

Friends raised the question of whether it is appropriate to recognize an anniversary year, and whether these funds could more appropriately be used for reparations. Friends spoke of their deep love for Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Friends spoke of the importance of pausing to take stock of where we are, what we have accomplished, and what we are

called to do. Friends spoke of how celebration can give us hope, and expressed a longing for worship time to reflect on our history and what it teaches us. A Friend spoke of the anniversary as an opportunity to rebuild our community and deepen our connections, in a time of stress and grief, so that we can come together to do the important work we are called to. Friends suggested using the words 'commemoration' or 'retrospective'. Friends asked if we can somehow celebrate with simplicity and open hearts, avoiding ostentation, not celebrating the European church, but making sure everyone has access and feels welcome.

We were reminded that "The present is where the past and future meet and interrogate each other," a time of profound possibility. We were reminded that as we seek to diversify who we are, we need to be willing to pay people for the work they do, not just rely on those who can afford to volunteer. We also need to spend money on publicity, so that those who have not heard about BYM will know that we are here. We were asked to consider whether we expect the commemoration and the speakers we will hear from to change us and bring us to a better spiritual place, or just to affirm what we already think we know. We were asked to consider how the anniversary project could be re-imagined so that People of Color would feel included in it. Friends APPROVED setting this funding request aside for further seasoning.

I2021-49 *Supervisory Committee*. Adrian Bishop presented two recommendations on behalf of Supervisory Committee.

1. Supervisory Committee recommends that we immediately restore the pay that was withheld from our staff in 2020. The total amount for six current and former staff would be \$ 20,700. Sarah Gillooly thanked Victor Thuronyi for working out how this could be accomplished given the extreme complexity of various reporting requirements. Friends APPROVED a full restoration of furlough pay.
2. Supervisory Committee further recommends that the half-time office assistant position included in the 2022 budget be increased to full-time. This would be for one-year only, since we do not know what the financial condition of the Yearly Meeting will be in 2023. Some Friends expressed concern about the temporary nature of this proposed increase. Sarah Gillooly explained that having a full-time staff person for the next twelve months would be extremely helpful, even if we need to reduce the position to half-time in 2023. Friends APPROVED this recommendation.

I2021-50 *Race Equity Audit*. David Etheridge, clerk of the Working Group on Racism, presented a statement on the intent of the Race Equity Audit. (insert). Clinton Pettus challenged us to think bigger. The race equity audit might feel good, but by itself it would not be transformational. We need to find something truly innovative and exciting to commit to in this anniversary year, so that we will be celebrating the future, not the past. This is something the 350th Anniversary Committee, the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee and the Working Group on Racism could work on together.

Friends APPROVED setting this recommendation aside for further seasoning. The Race Equity Audit proposal is attached.

I2021-51 *Camping Program Budget Revision*. Anna Best, co-clerk of Camping Program Committee described their proposal to increase staff pay, create one full-time camp director position, and increase the food budget at the camps. There is an urgent need to pay our camp staff more, in order to reduce stress, prevent staff shortages, ensure quality, improve retention, and for the sake of simple justice. The Committee recognizes that camp directors actually work year-round, recruiting campers, hiring counselors, and preparing program. The committee proposes increasing one director to full time this year, if one is willing, as a first step toward making all the camp director positions year-round. She explained that a new sliding scale for camp fees has been developed that should cover the cost of increased salaries. Sarah Gillooly noted that the proposed changes would reduce the administrative burden on office staff. In addition, a year-round director would be able to focus on recruitment, which would help us fill the camps each year.

Elaine Brigham spoke from her heart about her own experience of the camps where she worked for 36 years. She spoke, in a spirit of Truth, of how the camps have exploited staff in the past, underpaying them, expecting more of them than is humanly possible, providing poor working conditions, and failing to address systemic racism. She spoke of how she was fired in 2017 after serving as a camp director for eighteen years, because of the waves she raised trying to promote diversity and protect her staff. She thanked the Yearly Meeting for finally giving her the opportunity to speak out after years of forced silence. She observed that there are camp staff and campers that are due reparations by BYM. Friends entered into a time of deep worship. Clerk Meg Meyer noted that Stewardship and Finance has approved the proposed budget increase for the camping program, and that Supervisory Committee has approved increasing one camp director position to full time. Friends APPROVED the proposed changes to the camping program budget for 2022.

Out of worship, a Friend spoke of how this is the beginning of a conversation, which needs to involve Supervisory Committee as well as the Camping Program Committee and the staff. Several Friends who served on Supervisory Committee in 2017 apologized for failing to intervene to protect Elaine Brigham and Dyresha Harris. One spoke of how Supervisory Committee wants to be supportive of staff, but does not always know what is happening. Our eyes have been opened today to things we did not know. Friends spoke of how we need to remember what we have heard and find ways not to hide the truth. We need to change our culture, and may need new structures to adequately protect our staff. We need worship opportunities that are focused on race and on things we have tried to hide from. Brian Massey expressed his deep gratitude to the Yearly Meeting for taking this step to affirm the value of our extraordinary camp staff.

I2021-52 *Closing.* Friends expressed appreciation for how the recording clerk captured the spirit of this meeting. The meeting closed with a period of worship, to meet again on March 19, or as called by the Clerk of Interim Meeting.

Meg Boyd Meyer, (Stony Run), Clerk

Deborah Haines Rosenberg (Alexandria), Recording Clerk

Attachment 12021-46 Stewardship & Finance Report:

Minute on Financial Feasibility of Proposed Revisions to BYM Budget for the Camping Program and Use of Reserves to Fund "One Time" Expenses

At annual session in 2021, Friends approved a budget for the Yearly Meetings for 2022.

Now Friends are being asked to amend the budget to reflect proposals for the camping program, and to approve some additional one-time expenses in 2021 and 2022 to be funded out of reserves. Details will be presented for each proposal; this document reflects on the combined effects of the recommendations.

The Camp Program Committee recommends increasing the number of camp staff and the pay rate of some camp staff, and to fund that by an increase in camp fees. The fee increase is calculated to also cover the costs of year-round camp employees who had previously been covered under the Administration budget. The proposal includes a program for camp scholarships to assure continued access to camp for disadvantaged families. The proposed changes leave BYM with a balanced budget.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee has reviewed the proposed changes and agree that the projections are conservative and the plan fiscally prudent.

The Yearly Meeting's financial situation was found to be precarious in 2019 due to a mismatch between authorized expenditures and reliable income; this became a crisis in 2020 with the loss of camp revenue due to the COVID induced camp closure. Because the discipline and hard work of our staff and the generosity of Friends have improved the Yearly Meeting's financial situation, we are now in a position to consider some one-time expenditures.

For some years the trustees have recommended that the Yearly Meeting maintain financial reserves of 25% of our annual budget. This reserve amount (which is calculated at the end of the year) is intended to serve as a buffer against changes in cash flow, and to provide resilience in the event of a financial downturn. We were first able to achieve this level of reserves in 2020, and the projection now is that we will exceed the 25% level of reserves in 2021. Working with the various committees, the General Secretary has recommended the expenditures presented to Interim meeting. Although the precise level of reserves cannot be calculated until the end of the years, the Trustees have confirmed that the amount under consideration can be funded from reserves without undue financial risk.

Three of the proposals (to fund the 350th anniversary observance; to conduct a racial equity audit; and to restore staff salaries foregone during the pandemic furlough) are true one-time expenses.

Two of the proposals, (an increase in administrative support, and to restore STRIDE funding that was reallocated in 2020) partially restore some of the cuts necessary to meet the budget amendments of 2020. Whether these expenditures should also be incorporated on an ongoing basis into the 2023 budget will require further discernment, but both have significant benefits even if only a one-time expense funded from reserves in 2023.

The discernment of the Stewardship and Finance Committee is that our financial status is such that all of these proposals are financially feasible.

Approved

Stewardship and Finance Committee, Baltimore Yearly Meeting

6th day, 12th Month, 2021

Terence McCormally Co Clerk

Linda Pardoe Co Clerk

Baltimore Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

Attachment 12021-50: Race Equity Audit Proposal

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS **Project: BYM Race Equity Audit**

Proposals accepted on a rolling basis until: [DATE]

Project overview: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (BYM) seeks a consulting firm or individual(s), based anywhere within the U.S., to engage in a comprehensive, organization-wide audit, which will help the organization move closer to our commitment to being an anti-racist faith community and will culminate in a report with recommendations. Both BYM paid staff and volunteers will actively support in the audit.

Organizational and Project Background:

[Baltimore Yearly Meeting](#) is a regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. In other words, we are the regional office for Quakers in VA, MD, DC, eastern WV, and southern PA. As a Yearly Meeting, BYM provides a forum for Friends in our region to interact, work together on common projects, and worship and grow our spiritual practices together.

About 49 Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, and Worship Groups (“local Meetings”) comprise BYM. Our local Meetings are urban, rural, and suburban, and they range in size from over 700 to fewer than 20 members and attenders. All together, we are about 6,465 Friends. Local Meetings are autonomous. The Yearly Meeting has no central authority over local Meetings, and Yearly Meeting decisions are made by a Spirit-led process of seeking unity. We currently employ 7 full-time staff and our office is located in Sandy Spring, MD. BYM operates four [summer camps](#) that employ 120 seasonal staff and serve 500-600 campers each year - about 60% of whom received financial aid in 2021. Our annual budget, as reported in our 2019 Form 990, is \$2,056,000.

Recent efforts to move ourselves closer to being an actively anti-racist faith community have included:

- Revision of our Vision Statement to include a statement recognizing the experiences of marginalization and oppression within our community and setting our vision of being a community of liberation, equity, and diversity (2016)
- Declaring our intent to be an Anti-Racist Faith Community (2019)
- Formation of “Change Groups” at 14 local meetings to advance anti-racism work
- Formation and continuation of various committees working to uproot white supremacy and advance anti-racism including:

- Working Group on Racism
- Growing Diverse Leadership Committee
- Strengthening Transformative Relationships in Diverse Environments (STRIDE) Committee
- Reparations Action Working Group
- Focus group of BYM Black and Indigenous American Friends in 2018

Consulting Services to Be Performed: In consultation with a wide arrange of Committees and stakeholders, BYM has identified the following areas of interest to illustrate the potential scope of work:

- Focus groups/stakeholder conversations with key groups of Friends - including Friends of color and African Friends
- Race equity policy review of Yearly Meeting office policies and practices as outlined in the Employee Handbook, Camp Staff Handbook, Manual of Procedure, and budgets with recommendations for improvements based on identified best practices
- Recommendations for or delivery of training or learning materials for moving towards our goal of being an antiracist faith community at the Yearly Meeting and Local Meeting level

Requested Deliverables:

- An audit of programs, policies, structures, practices, and culture resulting in qualitative and quantitative data regarding the current structure, work, and workplace of BYM
- A comprehensive written report and at least one community-wide presentation of the audit detailing its process, key themes, analysis of the gaps and disconnects between the current and future/desired state of the organization, and opportunities to build upon. The report should include recommendations for embedding new, inclusive policies and practices into the organization's culture and possible suggestions for achievable short-term and long-term action steps

Desired Deliverable:

BYM hopes to complete the survey work below. However, we recognize it may be beyond the scope of some firms or our existing budget.

- Create a survey to collect the community's experiences and perceptions of how we are doing in our work to create a diverse, inclusive, welcoming, and just community
- Qualitative data collection, to be administered to as many members of the BYM community as possible (min. 500, max. 3,000) and reported on:
 - at the aggregate level, with crosstabs by age and race
 - disaggregated by individual Monthly Meeting (i.e. congregation), without crosstabs (apx. 41 Monthly Meetings)

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience working with flat organizations and/or non-profit affiliate organizations
- Evening and/or weekend Zoom availability

Budget: Not to exceed \$50,000

Proposal Submissions: Please submit your proposal by email to admin@bym-rsf.org, no later than [DATE]. Final selection will take place by March 12, 2022 with work to begin thereafter.

Proposals should include:

1. Background: Name, title, contact information, and general overview of company/firm.
2. Experience: Tell us about pertinent prior experience, specialized expertise, and resources that you can bring in providing these services. Resumes or CV for key staff should be included.
3. Approach: Briefly explain how you would work with us to develop and execute the equity audit, including an estimated timeline. Work samples are welcome.
4. Budget & Availability: Include estimated budget or overall rate for this work and any limitations on your availability.
5. References: Past clients that BYM may reach out to as references, with contact info.