Stewardship and Finance Annual Report for the period of September 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Each year the Committee seeks to present a balanced budget and an apportionment plan for the coming year at Annual Sessions. We also typically present a first look at the next year’s budget at June Interim Meeting. However, we did not do so this year. At the time of this writing, the draft 2026 budget was in deficit and needed more time to season before sharing the numbers at Annual Sessions.

For the 2024 budget year, BYM operating revenue was about $170,000 less than operating expenses, largely due to a shortfall in camp revenue – BYM received $240,000 less in camp fees than was budgeted for in 2024. To prevent this from happening again in 2025 and 2026, the Committee has been working with staff and the Camp Program Committee to ensure that camp fee income is accurately estimated and that costs are in balance with revenue. The General Secretary, staff and the camping committees have also worked together to cut expenses in both the BYM Camp budget and the BYM Administrative budget.

In January, 2025, the Stewardship and Finance Committee brought a revised 2025 budget to a special called BYM Interim Meeting. The January 2025 revisions (to the 2025 budget that was approved in August, 2024) reduced budgeted camp revenue and cut expenses in many areas, lowering the overall deficit to about $50,000. The Committee also made several recommendations, which were accepted by Interim Meeting:

1. We asked committees to consider reducing their budgets by half.
2. We asked meetings to consider making a special contribution to BYM above their apportionment. We are very grateful that several meetings responded and so far, have donated an additional $20,000 to BYM Camps.
3. We asked BYM to temporarily suspend all contributions to outside organizations. The budget situation has since improved and in 2025, we will donate a total of $25,000 to the 3 major Quaker organizations (FGC, FUM, FWCC.)
4. We asked camp staff to evaluate ways to reduce expenses, depending on camp enrollment (number of campers per sliding scale tier) and the results of other efforts to reduce the deficit.

At the June 21, 2025 Interim Meeting, the Stewardship and Finance Committee presented some additional changes to the 2025 budget, including:

* lower budgeted camp revenue to reflect the actual amount received
* lower personnel costs (due to the delay in filling the Youth Program Manager till this July and due to re-working the bonus system for camp staff.)

We have learned from reviewing financial data summarized by the General Secretary:

1. Camps must be at least 90% full to meet current camp revenue budgets.
2. Camp was less than 90% full in 2024 and is less than 90% full for 2025. Camps have not been 90% full since 2022.
3. We are not adequately budgeting for camp capital needs.
4. Most of our competitor camps generate about 6% of their annual income from property rentals. BYM Camps earn 2% or less of income from property rentals.
5. Economic instability and decreasing numbers of camping age children in the US are contributing to lower camp enrollment at BYM and nationwide.
6. Camp staffing costs have increased. BYM has added 2.5 Full-Time staff for camp since 2022, and seasonal staffing costs have risen as both the role of the camp counselor and young adult summer employment have changed dramatically over the last decade.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee supports the efforts of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Camp Governance and underscores the need to take a serious look at the long-term financial viability of the camping program and its appropriate governance.

The Committee heard at the April, 2025 Budget and Apportionment Meeting that some BYM members want to more regularly receive financial updates from us. We are currently evaluating how best to do this, including sharing information via the BYM Weekly Announcements and encouraging more participation from local meeting treasurers (who are currently listed in the Manual of Procedure as corresponding members of our committee.)

BYM has spent about 7% of its operating budget on anti-racism work since 2022. We expect this to continue in 2026. BYM’s anti-racism efforts include funding the STRIDE program and STRIDE scholarships, committee work (Working Group on Racism, Reparations Action Working Group, Indigenous Affairs Committee, Growing Diverse Leadership), staff training and Annual Session honorariums.

The Committee has set up a working group (composed of the Stewardship and Finance Committee clerks, the Treasurers and a representative from the Camp Program Committee) to develop a financial handbook to assemble all BYM financial policies in one place. We understand that there are limitations on the availability of BYM staff to support this effort and that the volunteer nature of the committee itself will have to be taken into account. We hope to be able to present a draft of that handbook to Annual Sessions in 2026.

The Committee encourages Treasurers from BYM local meetings to join our committee meetings, which are held by Zoom. This year, we have had two such folks participate in a few of our committee meetings.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee has no expenses and no separate line item in the budget. However, we do rely heavily on the work of the General Secretary and the Finance Manager. We have been having monthly meetings on the first Sunday of the month, but we recognize this is a burden to our staff to have to work on the weekend, so we plan to change our meeting time and frequency to make better use of staff resources.

The current Manual of Procedure describes our committee as having 14 members plus the ex-officio membership of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. We think it necessary to have a broad membership to represent the diversity of meetings in BYM both financially and geographically. However, to decrease the burden on the BYM Nominating Committee, we recommend decreasing the number of members to 9 or 10.