NCFF Business Session - DRAFT

18 November 2023

10:00 am – 1:30 pm

Friends gathered for the Fall business meeting at Somerton Meeting in Suffolk, VA in the building next to the meetinghouse, where Friends have worshipped continually since 1672.

Welcome and Centering Worship

Clerk Richard Wilcox welcomed 26 people from 7 meetings in our Fellowship to Somerton. His opening message centered on Luke 10:25-37, the familiar Good Samaritan passage, and how it relates to us. He lifted up the conflict between Israel and Hamas as an example of sharp divisions and cruelty among peoples. Friends were invited to reflect on what our greatest needs are, where mercy is needed and what service we are called to provide.

Memorials Received

Richard asked Recording Clerk Kate Seel to read the names of Friends who had passed away since our last Fall meeting. (See <https://www.ncfriends.org/monthly-meeting-memorials-2/>) He encouraged remembrance of how these individuals showed mercy and witnessed with their lives.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4 March 2023 (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-minutes-of-3-march-2023/>) were **approved.** The minutes of 9 September 2023 (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-minutes-of-9-september-2023/>) were also **approved.**

State of the Meeting Reports

Only New Garden (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/state-of-the-meeting-report-from-new-garden-friends-meeting-2022-23/> ) and Somerton Meetings (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/state-of-the-meeting-report-from-somerton-meeting-2023/>) submitted State of the Meeting reports. Richard indicated that Meetings could offer these if led, but they were not required. He said the reports serve one of two purposes: informing the entire fellowship of activities and challenges in member Meetings, thus better connecting us all, or providing an opportunity for a Meeting’s own reflections.

Meeting Roll Call

Representatives were present from the following Meetings: Bethel, Deep River, First Friends, Jamestown, New Garden, Somerton and Spring. Richard welcomed a visitor, Lyn Winslow, from Up River Meeting (which does not belong to any larger Friends organization).

Askings Report

Meetings will have provided their askings close to 100% by year’s end. Given that Statesville Meeting only has 3 members, they are unable to send theirs. The current membership numbers (sent via the Honor System) will be used to calculate askings amounts for 2024. (See <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-askings-report-for-18-november-2023-business-meeting/> for the report shared and **approved.)**

Financial Reports

The Income & Expense Report was **approved.** The grand total of NCFF funds at this time is $126,351.49. (See <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-income-expenses-report-for-18-november-2023-business-meeting/>) There was considerable discussion about how to spend the funds. Specific ideas for support were shared: FUM (especially to assist with travel); Young Adult activities; Quaker Leadership Scholars Program and more outreach. The Finance Committee did not want to make decisions about distributions. They would like the membership to make requests and the committee to assign resulting disbursements to the various line items. Friends felt it was important to communicate to both Meetings and organizations that NCFF supports that these monies are available and requests can be made. **It was approved to:** 1) give the Finance Committee discretion to spend up to $5000 for an emergency situation; 2) give the Finance Committee discretion to spend up to $5000 each on organizations to which we contribute; 3) encourage the Outreach Working Group to find more recommendations for spending from the Missions line (or other appropriate one); and 4) communicate to Meetings that requests for funds can be made to the Finance Committee. Request proposals should be submitted by Meetings rather than by individuals.

Richard noted that the Finance Committee had recommended keeping the askings at the same level for 2024 – that is $40/member and an optional $10/member for the Quaker Lake endowment. This was **approved.** It was determined that – for the present – running a deficit and using undesignated funds to cover costs was acceptable. However, Judith Cranford (NCYM, Inc. administrator) would like to zero out deficits.

Outreach Working Group Report

The Outreach Working Group Report was **approved** with enthusiasm. (See <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-outreach-working-group-report-for-18-november-2023-business-meeting/>) Richard commented that the group had followed Jesus’ admonition to “Go and do likewise.”

Anti-Racism Working Group Minute

David Smith presented the Anti-Racism Working Group Minute (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncff-minute-on-anti-racism-18-november-2023/>), which was **approved** with a slight edit to indicate that American Quakers (to whom this minute is directed) are predominantly White, but worldwide that is not the case. The minute will be attributed to the Fellowship. Friends were encouraged to take it to their own Meetings for discernment and approval. There was some discussion about what “being racist” really means, and Richard suggested that the Working Group might spread the word and do some education with travel ministry.

Faith & Practice Committee Report

Bill Davis sent a report regarding progress on this project. The committee has completed their discernment process with local Meetings, and has now turned to the task of drafting and editing a document based upon the input received. Substantial progress has been made, but the committee is not yet able to give a projected time when text may be released for review and feedback.

Guilford College Quaker Archives Report

A report from Gwen Gosney Erickson, Quaker Archivist and Special Collections Librarian was received. (See <https://www.ncfriends.org/guilford-archives-report-for-2022-2023/>) Last year NCFF contributed $1500 to the Archives, and it was **approved** to donate $1500 again. A question arose as to their annual budget, and Richard agreed to obtain that. Gwen had expressed to Richard that the Archives would appreciate NCFF records for deposit. Kate Seel agreed to submit appropriate records.

NCFF Directory

An NCFF directory of some description is needed, especially by the Clerk, who often is tasked with contacting leaders in member Meetings for information. Kate Seel has been gathering contact information for Friends since the September Annual Meeting, but it is incomplete and has also become cumbersome in the Google spreadsheet format. She noted that she was unsure of the purpose as far as the membership is concerned, and what format would be most useful, given that electronic formats can compromise confidentiality. David Smith kindly offered to assist with the project, as he has experience with developing such documents. It was **approved** that when the directory is completed, paper copies will be printed and distributed to members, and any electronic use will be internal and guarded.

Nominations

NCYM, Inc. Board - **Edith Shepherd and Dottie Hobbs were approved** to replace Frank Massey and Bill Davis.

Quaker Lake Board – **Martha Farlow**’s term ended, but she agreed and **was approved** to serve another 3 year term. A request to add a young adult as a member-at-large was **also approved**.

AFSC and FCNL still need representatives from NCFF. The Nominating Committee will accept and follow up on any recommendations for Friends who would be willing to serve.

Announcements

Jack Ciancio will be offering a Medieval Theology course – “A (Very) Brief Introduction to Medieval Theology” - in February at Jamestown Meeting (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/medieval-theology-course-to-be-offered-february-10-17-2024/>)

Mary Allen reported on the fire at the Allen Jay House on July 31, 2023. The building became unusable, but Springfield Meeting offered their Youth Room to be used for the FEMAP (Friends Emergency Material Aids Program) group. Of note is that all branches of Friends contribute in various ways to this program. It has been learned that the building is restorable, and will be preserved.

Bill Eagles has information on FUM (Friends United Meeting) and FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation), which he is happy to share with anyone interested.

Dan Allen reported on FDS (Friends Disaster Service). Trips to New Bern were made last year. The owner had many challenges to overcome (i.e., injury, fire), but it is hoped FDS will have the house completed during the trip next March. Contributions are welcome. Announcements of this trip should be made to member Meetings and placed on the NCFF website.

Kathy Adams reported that since the pandemic, prisons have not allowed AVP (Alternatives to Violence Program) to be offered. There will be a basic AVP course offered at Jamestown Meeting on February 2-4, 2024.

Members were reminded to check the NCFF website for accuracy on their Meetings, and that announcements submitted there are welcome and helpful.

Meeting Dates approved for 2024

**March 9** was approved, and **Deep River** offered to host.

**September 7** was approved for the Annual Meeting at **Quaker Lake**. Richard will confirm this.

**November 16** was approved, and **First Friends** offered to host.

Nancy Daughtry, Clerk of Somerton Meeting, thanked Friends for attending this meeting and invited all to have lunch.

Lou Gordh invited Friends to remember Sylvan Pathways (Sylvanpathways.com) for meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Seel, Recording Clerk