**Approved Minutes for November 12, 2023**

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business

Adelphi Friends Meeting

**Clerk Marcy Seitel opened worship** by reading two queries from *BYM Faith and Practice Resource*:

How have I been changed by deeply listening to another, to God, to nature?

How does my own perception affect the way I understand what others say?

About thirty of us were present: sixteen in the meeting room and fourteen online. Jade Eaton offered to **hold the meeting in the Light** today.

Martha Wood read the **anti-racism queries** from Baltimore Yearly Meeting:

* How could this decision affect those who have been harmed by racist behavior?
* To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision? Will this decision promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness? Will it enable us to be more friendly and whole?
* How will we provide for those most likely to be directly affected by our decision to influence that decision?
* How does this decision support the declaration of our Yearly Meeting to become an anti-racist faith community?

**We approved the minutes** of the October meeting for business.

**Friends Community School lawsuit:**  Victor Thuronyi, clerk of Adelphi Meeting's Trustees, reported on a lawsuit brought recently against Friends Community School, Adelphi Meeting and Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The lawsuit pertains to alleged actions of child abuse that occurred more than 20 years ago. A civil suit against the same defendants by a different plaintiff was settled in 2019. The perpetrator had been convicted in criminal court, and died by suicide while in prison. The new lawsuit arises now, from a different plaintiff, because beginning October 1, the Maryland legislature has lifted the statute of limitations for cases involving child abuse. Victor read a letter from Neil M. Brown, Interim Head of School, addressed to the FCS community. (The [letter was included](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i1VBxU61qFJnVRjV3zSlUyzU5hLRa7uI/view?usp=sharing) in the documents folder for the business meeting.) Our trustees will handle the meeting's involvement in the situation. While our trustees share a desire with Friends Community School to be as transparent as possible about this situation, they ask us all to recognize that detailed transparency is not possible when a suit is filed.

We paused to hold our whole community in the Light.

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**Peace and Social Concerns:**

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought a proposal that the meeting display a large banner in front of the meetinghouse, reading "Cease Fire Now." The committee proposed to obtain the banner along with 50 yard signs for Friends to display at their homes for a cost of under $1000. If approved by the meeting, the committee would proceed immediately to implement the proposal.

We heard some questions and concerns about the message on the banner: Would it specify which conflict? Would "Cease Fire Now" be taken (by some) to favor one side of the conflict? We heard a suggestion that the phrase "war is not the answer" should be either added to or substituted for the proposed message.

We heard a reflection that the war in Gaza is a modern day replay of the US settler colonialism and genocide of indigenous peoples on this continent. We heard that Quakers have historically supported the oppressed who, in this conflict, are the civilians on "both sides," and are not the state of Israel. We heard suggestions about more inter-faith educational opportunities.

We returned the issue of the language on the banner to the committee, with an acknowledgment that further clarity on this issue might be brought to a called meeting for business for discernment and approval.

The clerk also heard a need for a longer/ deeper conversation about the issues involved in this proposal. We heard that the committee is planning to convene such a conversation.

**Nominating Committee:**

We heardfirst and second readings of nominations as listed in the [committee's report](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NYiiNLUsl0nBcC0ztGKHNJfTYInPizyElXcdUckT1Ag/edit?usp=sharing), which was made available in the folder for today's meeting. Arthur Karpas was approved as clerk for 2024 and 2025.

**Naming Committee:**

Ken Leonard has reviewed the procedures for the Naming Committee. Historically (and in our procedures) the Naming Committee is called the Search Committee. The Search Committee is supposed to bring names for the Nominating Committee in March. Ken Leonard recommends a return to that procedure and timing. The Clerk asked the Naming Committee to bring revised procedures to our next meeting for business.

We heard a question about some names for the Nominating Committee that appear to be brought forward by the Nominating Committee itself. We were reminded that, for the Nominating Committee, the fall of each year is a sprint to call *all the members*. Sometimes they discover someone who would like to be on the Nominating Committee, and they pass that name along to the Naming Committee.

The clerk offered a first reading of James Wilkinson's name to be a member of the Naming Committee.

**Clerk:**

We approved the creation of an ad hoc White House Refresh Committee. As an ad hoc committee, it will be under the care of the meeting for business, with a purpose to make the white house more appealing, more comfortable, and more functional for the work of the meeting. The creation of an ad hoc committee is a recognition that the group is doing the work *of the meeting*. We asked the group to develop a charge and a plan with a budget, which the meeting could consider and approve. Some items are likely to fit under some existing budget items.

**Building Committee Update:**    
Plans came back from the architect. Trustees have approved going forward with the architect to "develop schematic plans into contract documents that can be bid on." Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contractors will create similar documents for those functions. Then Building Committee will come back to meeting with a reasonable cost estimate, and meeting can decide at that point whether cuts need to be made in the design elements. Building committee still needs to contact Civil Engineers about their work.

**Finance Committee and Treasurer:**

On behalf of Finance Committee, Treasurer Reuben Snipper brought [the second reading of the FY2024 budget](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zzSDLTyLDqTaqlE5wr3c7rEceAIUTfEp?usp=drive_link) for approval. The budget, as updated for the second reading, was available with our other meeting documents.

On the income side, the budget shows slightly lower numbers compared to the first reading. And some more committees have come forward with their budgets.

Our income appears to fluctuate from year to year, a little more than it used to; this is due to some contributors "bundling" their contributions every other year in order to take advantage of tax regulations. We anticipate that our investment returns may go way up this year, unless and until we spend from the building fund. This uncertainty (in timing) affects several lines in the budget.

We are counting on income from the Strawberry Festival, so we hope that construction will begin *after* that event.

The Aid fund continues to spend less than recent years.

Committee budgeting: Committees make plans for activities and estimate their costs. Their budgets are built on those plans and estimates of cost. So the number in the budget is not a cap, but an estimate. If, during the year, there's a need to spend significantly more than is in the budget, the committee should contact the Finance Committee about requesting an increase in the budget line.

We heard a question about budgeting for the Climate Action working group. Right now, there is a separate line for the working group, but there's nothing on those lines. (The co-clerk of P&SC noted that the estimate for Climate Action Working Group activities was included in the committee's overall budget request. The treasurer commented that the budget for working groups could be included in overall committee budgets or could be based separately on their own estimates.

We approved our budget for the 2024 fiscal year which begins on December 1.

**Announcements :**

Ken Leonard needs help from a technologically knowledgeable person who will coordinate with Ken about our sound system. M&W is looking at assessments of and changes to our sound system, both in meeting and on Zoom

**Climate Action Working Group** is inviting Jamie DeMarco to speak next Sunday on the 2024 state climate agenda

**We closed our meeting in quiet worship.**