

Friends Meeting of San Antonio

Minutes of December 20, 2015 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Attendees: David Bristol, Ruth Lofgren, Ken Southwood, Janet Southwood, Dianne Vinson, Val Liveoak, Carol Redfield, Crystal Redfield, Bill Sweet, Pat Sweet, Gretchen Haynes, Jim Spickard, Suzanne Wright Crain, Miriam Moore, Robin Harvey and Michelle DiGiacomo.

The meeting opened in silence, and the clerk read the following quote:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

---Margaret Mead

1. Minutes of November 15 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Minutes were read silently by all attendees. Minutes were approved as read.

2. Welcome letter.

A letter of introduction was read for Ted and Kristal Melvin, from the clerk of Friends Meeting of Olympia, Washington. The Melvins recently moved to San Antonio from Olympia and expect to be here for three years. We welcome them with great enthusiasm.

3. Treasurer's report.

The treasurer distributed and presented the report of the budget through November 2015. Also presented was the first reading of the proposed 2016 budget. The new budget is approximately \$4,000 greater than the previous year. Balance sheet--there will be one more contribution to RAICES before the end of 2015. At the end of 2014, our financial situation looked very similar. There were no questions about the balance sheet.

Statement of activities--the treasurer explained that the statement was fairly typical, except that contributions to the bond fund were significantly increased in response to the article written by FMSA Friends about our actions taken in support of immigrants being held in detention. This article was published in the October 2015 Friends Journal.

Contributions to Quaker organizations have been determined for 2016, but local groups will be reviewed by the Peace & Social Concerns Committee and recommendations presented in a future committee report. (correction)

The treasurer's report was accepted as presented and with details explained. The final reading of the budget will be at next month's meeting for worship with attention to business.

4. Ministry and Oversight Committee report.

The Committee's convener presented the report. A silent retreat will be held January 30, 2016 from 9:30am – 3:00pm at the Meetinghouse. Attenders may bring a brown-bag lunch, and drinks will be provided.

A couple who were married under the care of the Meeting have moved away and are now going through a divorce. Friends considered how our Meeting could reach out to this couple to offer support. Committee member Jim S. agreed to do this.

In response to a question about how the Meeting can maintain necessary files regarding Friends' last wishes and other necessary records, Jim S. explained that there is storage space that exists as part of our web hosting. Some FMSA folders are already set up within these records. Bill W. is listed as owner and is archivist/recorder, so these files are now available and safe from loss.

The committee's report was accepted as read.

5. Nominating Committee report.

Committee clerk Gretchen H. distributed the updated roster of Meeting's positions and committee members for 2016 and reviewed positions not yet filled. This is the second reading for the 2016 roster, which is normally ready for final approval, but the committee expressed concern that there are still some openings. She is especially concerned that the Ministry & Oversight Committee has only one member identified for the next several months because some previous committee members will be out of town or have retired from the committee for health reasons. The clerk of Nominating explained that the two key elements of this committee are spiritual care of our Meeting and of individual members as needed. A Nominating Committee member read from the handbook that M&O Committee should foster and strengthen spiritual growth and encourage members' and attenders' individual gifts of service. The Meeting clerk stated that she needs M&O for spiritual oversight and guidance of her work as clerk. A Friend shared that it is also the responsibility of individuals in our Meeting to provide spiritual encouragement, not just M&O. David B., as committee convener, shared that he has found it to be a joy to be on M&O because its members get to meet newcomers and get to know them.

The meeting for worship with attention to business then entered into a period of silence to contemplate this concern. An M&O Committee member then observed that he sees a difficulty in the current state of the Meeting because there is now a "missing generation." He identified the following responsibilities of the M&O Committee: 1) thinking deeply about the quality of corporate life; 2) caring for individuals in need-- at which he believes the committee has been very skilled; 3) oversight of the Meeting itself – identifying where things are or are not working.

An attender stated that she believes we should have a forum on M&O and that we should consider this concern with open hearts and worshipful silence. The clerk of Nominating stated that she has

grave concern about this gap and "...does not know how we can realistically report that M&O is a functioning committee at this time." She also shared her sense that in the long term we will find our way through this problem if we use conscious effort while mentoring new people through forums and being regularly together in spiritual community. The clerk of the Meeting asked Gretchen where she thought we should go from this point. Gretchen recommended publishing the need for members of M&O in the newsletter.

Friends again entered into silence. Then Jim S suggested that a short forum be held after the next potluck lunch, led by M&O and the Nominating Committee to consider the state of the Meeting and where we stand on nominations. Friends concurred.

Friends accepted the second reading of nominations with the addition of Joe R. as resource for the Property Committee. Carol R. has accepted the clerkship of Trustees, and Jim S. accepted responsibility for the Meeting's Facebook page.

The Nominating Committee's report was accepted.

6. Meetinghouse security/Property Committee Report.

The Committee's clerk presented the report and noted that the parking lot now has a new pole light installed and maintained by CPS electric company. Of concern is the desirability of, but lack of, someone to live on the property as on-site security. There is still evidence that doors are being (or left) unlocked and rooms being entered by unknown persons. The Committee clerk has notified the groups that use our property to remind them to be sure to leave all doors locked after their on-site use. A Friend stated that the property might be perceived as easy to get into since children had been found playing inside the meetingroom with the doors unlocked. There was discussion about how we can improve our outreach to the nearby community and be perceived as good neighbors. It has become clear that the neighborhood does not realize that our property is a "church" – a religious building, and that the property may be better respected if that were made clearer to the public. The committee is considering placement of on-site signage explaining that our property is a religious space and asking for cooperation by the public in helping us to it in good condition. A lockable covered outdoor bulletin board is planned to be hung over the drinking fountain in the breezeway, which can hold announcements and information for the neighborhood. Also discussed was a repeat of Friends staying overnight and speaking gently to people who may gather at the property late at night to "party" -- as had been done successfully some years ago. It was suggested that the Committee interview those Friends who had spent the night in the past to hear how this had been so successful. Friends were reminded that the area's SAPD officers have been alerted and patrol our property regularly.

The Committee report was accepted as read.

7. Solidarity with local groups facing discrimination.

Jim S. stated that he believes Friends are aware of increased Islamophobia by the public, and episodes of vandalism against Muslim buildings in the city because of widespread fear of “terrorist threats.” It would be desirable to show solidarity with these groups, but we need to discern how best to express our support as a Meeting. Friends were united in stating that our Meeting stands opposed to hatred and violence against religious groups, and several Friends agreed to work on an open letter to show support. Upon completion and acceptance by Friends, a decision will be made on how best to distribute it.

8. First Day School.

This agenda item was added by Michelle D., who works with children in the Children's Room every month on the first Sunday. At present only a few children attend most Sundays, but she is concerned that there is presently no one other than our weekly childcare provider to be with any children who attend on other Sundays in the month, and the children would benefit greatly from having actual Quaker-related activities to do. She asked that anyone interested in working with children talk to the clerk of the Religious Education.

With no further comments or business to be addressed, the Meeting for Worship with
Attention to Business ended with a period of silence.

Carol Balliet, clerk of the Meeting

Dianne Vinson, recording clerk