

Minutes
FMSA Meeting for Business
January 21st 2024

Attending:

- In Person: Val Liveoak, Bill Wilkinson, Denise Wilkinson, Bill Sweet, Pat Sweet, Julie Crum, Von Keairns, Dale Keairns, Kara McGinnis, Stephen Shearer, Lisa Craig, Kieran Matranga, Jim Spickard, Carol Redfield, John Chapa, Gretchen Haynes, Rachael Cundey

The meeting opened with silent worship.

PRIOR MINUTES

Friends approved the Minutes from the Dec 17th Meeting for Business without corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: *reported by Bill Sweet*

Balance Sheet *(attached at the end of these minutes)*

- ✓ \$20,000.00 from Operating Cash, \$10,000.00 from Immigrant Aid and \$5,000 from Relief Fund, a total of \$35,000.00, remains “parked” in the savings account.
- ✓ MINUTE 2023.01.01 allocated \$2,000 from the Immigrant Aid Fund for contributions others as there were no donations from the Meeting in 2022. MINUTE 2023.02.02 specified the recipients and amounts.
 - ✓ The intention was to spread the disbursements over a few months, but only the first two months were paid. The uncompleted commitment was recognized in December and all remaining contributions were sent.
 - ✓ For that account, the balance sheet shows a deficit (in parentheses) because \$10,000 of Immigrant Aid funds are “parked” in (“loaned’ to) the savings account. Thus, the available balance is \$6,156.31 (\$10,000 less the deficit of \$3,843.69).
- ✓ Although funds were withdrawn from the Friends Fiduciary investments for the Relief Fund and the Memorial Wall, there is a net gain of \$58,841.93 this quarter.
- ✓ Per policy, the solar panels and electronic communications equipment were depreciated at the end of the year.

Statement of Activities *(attached at the end of these minutes)*

- ✓ Undesignated contributions in December totaled \$12,079.21. Contributions in 2023 are 118.6% of the budget.
- ✓ Income for Facilities Use is \$402.50, which is 89.5% of budget at 100% of the year.

- ✓ Per Minute 2023.11.01, \$2,600.00 was donated to the Interfaith Welcome Coalition. Although it could have been sent in November, it was sent on 02 December. The expense was charged to 63000 Contributions to Others, 63300 Local Organizations.
- ✓ The CPS bill In December is \$139.83 (\$118.63 last month) for 1.152 MWh (1.042 MWh last month) of electricity. The Big Sun Community Solar off-site photovoltaic panels gave a credit of \$135.77 (\$218.80 last month). After charges for additional services, the bill totaled \$58.80 (\$5.55 last month).
 - ✓ Expenditure for electricity is 63.8% of the 2023 budget.
 - ✓ From the initial connection through December, payment for solar-generated electricity totals \$8,302.10, which averages to \$176.64 per month compared to the amortized capital cost of the panels of \$131.40 per month.
- ✓ San Antonio Water System charge in December was \$104.91, which is typical.
- ✓ Other types of expenses, Miscellaneous expense was for printer ink and paper.
- ✓ Other expenditures were routine.

DISCUSSION: There are charges for additional services which explain the remainder of the CPS bill which are not listed individually.

Friends accepted the committee's report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: *reported by Pat Sweet*

- The Finance Committee Clerk presented the revised 2024 budget for the 2nd reading. (Attached at the end of these minutes.)

DISCUSSION: The revised budget will increase our contributions to outside organizations.

Friends approved the revised 2024 budget on second reading.

MINISTRY & CARE REPORT: *reported by Julie Crum*

Ministry and Care met in person and by Zoom on January 5; present were Gretchen Haynes, Julie Crum, Stephen Shearer, James Goslin, and Val Liveoak.

Worship has been deep and fulfilling, with vocal ministry more frequent and with friends filling the room.

Forums:

January 14: How to be an effective LGBTQ+ ally

January 28: Worship sharing for the State of the Meeting report

February 11: Membership

February 25: To be determined

State of the Meeting worship sharing:

Friends will gather on January 28 to consider a set of queries around the topic of the state of Friends Meeting of San Antonio. We'll write responses to the queries, after which the responses will be read (without attribution) to the group and reflected upon. The responses will be used to write a report for South Central Yearly Meeting.

Nurturing community:

We are encouraging friends to wear name tags, especially during after-worship activities. And we are making efforts to connect with newcomers each Sunday. When visitors leave an email address in the visitor book, we send a welcome email (if we can decipher the address!)

Meetinghouse safety:

We see our way clear to support Property in its discernment regarding managing overnight visitors, and we support their proposed minute:

PROPOSED MINUTE 2023.12.____: FMSA approves a policy of not allowing visitors to sleep overnight at our property or hang out there after dark. Meeting authorizes the Property Committee to use its collective judgement about calling police to ask overnight visitors to move on.

Memorials:

As we develop the Memorial Garden, we are considering how to remember friends who passed before the inception of the garden. We suggest a display of their names for the wall of the community room.

Dream week:

The MLK march was cancelled due to weather. Friends gathered on January 17 for a pot luck followed by worship sharing on racism at the meetinghouse.

HEB gift cards: We have put in an application for HEB gift cards which will be used to help unhoused people and others in need.

Concerns: We discussed concerns for individual friends.

The clerks and conveners meeting will be on Saturday, February 3.

The committee will next meet on February 7, 2024.

DISCUSSION: A Friend wanted more details on our gift card application as there is a local application for up to \$200 or a corporate application for up to \$2000. We have submitted a corporate application for cards to help feed people in need. This process generally takes about 3 months.

Years ago we had HEB gift cards but were not able to give them all out and eventually gave them to Catholic Worker who were very appreciative and used them quickly. M&C does not yet have a firm plan on how to distribute the cards this time but will be considering this issue and bringing their ideas to the Meeting. We could have giving the cards to Catholic Worker as a backup plan. San Antonio Food Bank has a lot of need as well.

Re: proposed minute concerning overnight guests – A member of Ministry & Care is developing a list of resources that unhoused people can be referred to. This will be posted.

A Friend expressed concerns about putting people in danger by calling the police and by how our Quaker values are reflected in these decisions.

When calling the city non-emergency mental health unit, police will be sent to de-escalate the situation, with possible eventual follow-up by the mental health unit, by which point the person in crisis has often left.

The Meeting has experienced some vandalism of the property by unhoused guests in recent months. Generally people who have been asked to leave do move along (but not always). Police have been called a few times. A recent call was due to concern about an individual sleeping outside in the severe cold, with the goal of moving him to a warmer setting.

Property Committee needs guidelines about when to call police. There is a strong feeling that mercy trumps property – and yet there are concerns.

For insurance purposes, we need to state the rule in the proposed minute. Also, if we allow people to stay on the property and a major emergency occurs (eg, fire), the insurance can refuse to cover it.

In general, unhoused people are aware of resources available, but often choose not to use them, preferring to remain independent. No one can force people to use these resources. These resources also come with limitations – like men and women not being able to stay together.

We do also have a responsibility to our larger community, the surrounding neighborhood. The neighboring apartment complex has contacted meeting multiple times with concerns about activity on the property.

Do we need to establish a certain number of days that individuals can stay before calling the non-emergency unit, as well as guidance around concern for their safety (as during the cold weather)?

A member of the Property Committee expressed concerns about unhoused individuals needing water during very hot weather – for drinking, showers, etc.

Are there other groups who have already dealt with this issue on their properties that we might reach out to for their insight? How might we be able to generate conversation among concerned parties?

Throughout the discussion, there were expressions of compassion for the unhoused individuals, and a desire to find a balance between reflecting this through support and care for them while still meeting the needs of our meeting.

Suggested revision to proposed minute: substitute “the non-emergency police line” for “Police.”

Rachael asked to be recorded as standing aside.

Suggested revision to proposed minute: substitute “discouraging” for “a policy of not allowing.”

A Friend shared about her experience forming community with people in need by providing food and fellowship and felt that the group was expressing a desire to engage in more positive outreach.

Our new insurance agent announced he has quit, and we are being assigned a new agent who may be asking about our policies and practices. Insurance companies across the country have recently been denying coverage to churches over 20 years old, and we are nearing that. It would not be difficult for them to deny coverage if we are found to be allowing overnight stays.

Proposed revised minute:

FMSA approves discouraging visitors from sleeping overnight at our property or hanging out there after dark. Meeting authorizes the Property Committee to use its judgment about calling the non-emergency police line to ask overnight visitors to move on. We intend to form an ad hoc group to continue to examine this concern. We will revisit this decision in May.

A Friend had major issues with the revision from the original language of “policy of not allowing” to “discouraging” because this could imply to the insurance that we are in effect allowing overnight stays and lead to cancellation of the policy.

Friends decided to send this issue back to Ministry and Care. Any Friends who wish to be part of the ad hoc committee are encouraged to volunteer.

A Friend was not easy with the memorial suggestion for the community room wall but would like to discuss further with the committee and at next business meeting.

Friends accepted the committee’s report.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT: *reported by Jim Spickard*

The Property Committee did not meet this month, though we exchanged emails and numerous texts on various issues. We did not have enough decisions to make to warrant a formal meeting. This is what we accomplished:

1. We have ordered memorial plaques for Doug Balfour, Mark Hickman, Janet Southwood, Ruth Lofgren, and Marian Carter. We put off ordering a plaque for Rusty Carter until we could find his birth and death years, which we have now found (1930-1993). The five plaques will be ready for pick-up in 8-10 weeks. Rusty's will be a bit later.
2. Despite being assured by two separate internet companies that we could get fiber strung to the Meetinghouse, there is no fiber yet installed on our side of the street. We are thus stuck with Spectrum's overpriced internet service. Several companies, including Google, claim that fiber will be coming "soon". We are reminded of the famous Beckett play, "Waiting for Gogol".
3. A need to buy more paper towels for the bathrooms created a flurry of text messages about what other supplies we need, along with a rather humorous conversation about the worth or non-worth of our previous custodian's favorite cleanser. (We're switching brands.) Thanks to Julia for buying the supplies.

4. Many thanks to Kara and her father for staining the gate.
5. We cancelled our monthly workday. The temperature was predicted to range from 21° at 8am to 34° at noon. Brrrr.
6. Our custodian reported on January 13th that someone had unsuccessfully attempted to break into the Meeting Room storage closet.
7. We either have fewer nighttime visitors (other than D_____) or they know how to hide from the cameras. We suspect the former.
 - a. We await the Meeting's discussion of when/whether to inform police of potential night visitor troubles.
 - b. Despite his assurances to Val, D_____ continued to sleep on the porch during the worst of the cold. Discovering this, Bill spoke with Jim on Monday evening, and they agreed to ask the police to check on his safety. We believe he agreed to go to a shelter. Jim and Bill are comfortable with their decision.
8. Everything else is still on our To-Do list, including the window-washing on which we reported last month.

Respectfully,
Jim Spickard, Committee Clerk

DISCUSSION: Friends appreciate the switch to a new brand of cleanser.

Friends accepted the committee's report.

The Meeting closed with silent worship.