NCFF Business Session

12 November 2022

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Friends (about 20) gathered in centering worship (in person) at New Garden Meeting.

Welcome

Clerk Richard Wilcox greeted everyone and thanked New Garden for hosting today.

Clint Corcoran, Clerk of New Garden Meeting, warmly welcomed those gathered.

Inspirational Words

The speaker was Catherine Griffith, pastor of Jamestown Meeting. She spoke about using whatever time we have on this earth “wisely and well.” Using references to Thomas Kelly’s *Testament of Devotion*, the musical *Rent* and *Britain Faith & Practice*, she encouraged us to be intentional about choosing how to spend our time, to live a “concern centered life,” and to be open to the healing power of God’s love. She reminded us that silence helps in seeking God’s intentions for us.

Memorials Received

Richard read the list of those in our Fellowship who had passed away in the last year (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/monthly-meeting-memorials-2021-2022/>).

Minutes

The minutes of the 20 August 2022 meeting were **approved** (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/minutes-of-annual-meeting-20-august-2022/>).

State of the Meeting Reports

Reports from Deep River, Jamestown and New Garden Meetings were presented (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/state-of-the-meeting-report-from-deep-river-friends-meeting-13-october-2022/>; <https://www.ncfriends.org/state-of-the-meeting-report-from-jamestown-friends-meeting-10-october-2022/>; <https://www.ncfriends.org/state-of-the-meeting-report-from-new-garden-friends-meeting-2021-2022/>).

Roll Call

Richard called the roll and the following meetings had members in attendance:

Ararat Jamestown Winston-Salem

First Friends New Garden

Forsyth Somerton

There was appreciation expressed for the 350th year celebrations taking place this year among North Carolina meetings.

FWCC Report

Bill Eagles reported on the Friends World Committee on Consultation Section of the Americas meeting. The next one will be held at Haw River Assembly from March 23-26, 2023. He invited Friends to look at the FWCC website for more information.

FUM Report

Bill Eagles also reported on Friends United Meeting. Sadly, a hurricane hit the school and ministry center in Belize City. No Quakers were injured, but there was some damage to the school and extensive damage to a vehicle.

He reported that the transition from the past North American/white mission focus to local power and decision-making continues, including active participation by East African Quakers in FUM affairs, to the excitement of all. In Kenya, for instance, the effort is to make projects there self-supporting. There is a Maize Project funded by a loan and managed by a group of people living there with a five year lease. More funds are needed, and a suggestion was made that NCFF could support it with some of its trust funds.

Outreach Working Group Report

Richard reported that this group, formerly known as the Missions Committee, was active and had spent money with which they are entrusted. He expressed appreciation for their discernment and enthusiasm (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/outreach-working-group-report-fall-2022/>). A mission statement was included in this report, which was **approved** by the full body. It is as follows:

*The mission of the North Carolina Fellowship of Friends Outreach Working Group is to witness to the love of Christ by empowering the work of God where we see it around the world. We will generously enter into global partnerships with cultural humility as we share the resources we receive that have been given to support “missions.” We will strive to do this in a Spirit that models Quaker testimonies and follows new revelations of Truth.*

Askings Report

There was a report on the payment of askings from each member meeting shared by Richard.

He noted that some of the membership numbers may need to be changed, and knows they are declining in some cases (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/askings-report-31-october-2022/>).

Askings were **approved** to remain the same for 2023 ($9/person for NCFF; $11/person for NCYM, Inc.; $20/person for Quaker Lake and an optional $10/person for the Quaker Lake endowment), but, he noted that they may have to be increased in future years if membership continues to decline.

Financial Report/ Financial Requests/Spending Proposal

Unfortunately, the Finance Committee had not been able to meet prior to today. The current report (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/financial-report-12-november-2022/>) was presented. The report from 2021 needed to be submitted to NCYM, Inc. Richard expressed appreciation for Frank Massey’s assistance with this.

He then presented the Spending Proposal (attached to the Financial Report) and noted that trust funds are to be stewarded and spent. One item was for assistance for a retired NCYM pastor for medical and other expenses, and there was a suggestion to raise this amount, due to medical expenses often being extremely high. Another concern was whether there should be a line for emergency help. A suggestion was made to raise the possible assistance for the pastor to $10,000, donating up to that amount as necessary at the discretion of the Clerk. And a suggestion to add an emergency line is to be considered at the March NCFF gathering. The $3000 in travel expenses for the Faith & Practice Committee members was a part of this proposal as well. These requests were all **approved.** Gratitude was expressed by Deborah Suess for the body’s willingness to spend money for the benefit of others.

Faith & Practice Committee

This committee has been meeting in person with each of the member monthly meetings and asking them the same queries. There are four meetings left to visit – Bethel, Miami, Springfield and Statesville. Richard noted that this committee is in hopes of having $3000 approved from the Church Extension budget line to reimburse the committee’s travel expenses to Miami.

Report from NCYM, Inc. Cemetery Committee

The NCYM, Inc. Cemetery Committee is seeking assistance for care of cemeteries under their care. Each meeting is asked to discern how they might respond, with feedback needed by June 30, 2023 (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/ncym-inc-cemeteries-report-2022/>).

Nominations Request from Quaker Lake Board

There has been a proposal to separate the board members into classes (see <https://www.ncfriends.org/quaker-lake-board-membership-report-fall-2022/>). This was **approved**. Following, there was a request by Kathy Adams for reports to come to NCFF from the Quaker Lake Board.

Nominating Committee

Wallace Sills reported. This committee met to nominate a treasurer (Alicia Sharp) and a representative to the American Friends Service Committee (Carol Cothern). These Friends have been asked to serve 3 year terms, normally beginning in January, but in this case immediately, due to resignations of the Friends currently in the positions. Alicia has agreed to serve and Carol is considering it. Therefore, Alicia was **approved** and Carol was **tentatively approved**. (If Carol cannot serve there will be another search.)

From the floor Deborah Suess, current representative to the North Carolina Council of Churches, indicated that Wess Daniels may be interested in taking her place in January. Understanding that this is not the usual procedure for nominations, it was **approved** that Wess become the new representative if willing, and if not Deborah will continue in that role.

Margaret Rowlett noted that it is important to receive reports from the representatives, especially to realize what a pleasure it is to do this volunteer work.

NCFF Structure

Richard noted the need for better structure. He needs to know names of the representatives to various organizations from NCFF. And each committee needs to have a convener.

Wallace noted the need for complete job descriptions as the Nominating Committee seeks representatives. Friends agreed that this was important, and Jack Ciancio has a document he and Frank Massey created that may be helpful. Cassandra Israel suggested that before the March meeting Jack share this document and each representative write a job description. Richard agreed to share the document and request job descriptions. And Cassandra is willing to help with writing them.

Relationship with NCYM, Inc. to be revisited

NCFF was to evaluate the relationship with NCYM, Inc. after 5 years, and that time has come. A discussion will be held in March 2023, but Richard asked for a small group to consider it prior to that meeting. The following Friends agreed to meet and consider this: Jack Ciancio, Cassandra Israel, Marcie Newell. Richard will request a few more. This group will develop queries for discerning the way forward. One important consideration is what the financial pros and cons of remaining in this relationship would be.

Proposed NCFF Meeting Dates

After some discussion, the following dates were **approved**:

March 4

August 19

November 18

Announcements

Jack Ciancio’s book, *Through the Eyes of Mark: His World, His Gospel*, was enthusiastically recommended. Winston-Salem and Jamestown have used it for book studies.

Tim Lindeman, Clerk of Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation, announced that each meeting can nominate up to 3 representatives to that organization. The meetings are once per year. More information can be found at fcncl.org

Today there is a celebration of the life of Bill Rogers, 6th president of Guilford College at the College beginning at 1:30pm. More information was available on the registration table.

The Clerk thanked all for their presence and attention. Marcie Newell also expressed appreciation – for the love, compassion, understanding and discernment of NCFF.

The meeting ended with a prayer offered by Deborah Suess.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Hood Seel, Recording Clerk