

# **Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association**

Representative Meeting 148

26 Third Month 2022

Virtual via Zoom

## **148-01 Opening Worship**

After a period of fellowship and tech adjustments, Friends settled into worship at 9:05 am EDT.

## **148-02 Greetings, Roll Call, Clerk's Remarks (Attachment A: Attendance; Attachment B: Clerk's Letter)**

Clerk Bob McGahey welcomed Friends. The roll of meetings was called. Brevard Meeting has been laid down. Swannanoa Valley Meeting has withdrawn from SAYMA. Friends held these losses in the light.

Visitors were introduced.

Bob reviewed protocol for good order.

- Remarks are to be addressed to the clerk.
- Each person speaks once to each issue.
- We are not going to create extensive narrative minutes, only as needed for context.

Kendall Ivie reviewed Zoom protocol.

## **148-03 Agenda Review**

The agenda was reviewed. After extensive discussion, the meeting proceeded with the agenda as revised.

## **148-04 Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report (Attachment C: Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report)**

Jennifer Dickie report for the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee. The Yearly Meeting will be in person at Warren Wilson College June 16-19, 2022. Angela Hopkins responded that Friends Committee for Racial Justice will be available to work with Friends at the Yearly Meeting sessions. Friends accepted the report.

## **148-05 Worship Sharing, Lunch, and Reconvening**

Friends entered into worship sharing in small groups around these queries:

- How do I choose to love when it is difficult to do?
- How do I fit the Truth that I have been given with the Truth that others have received?

Friends reconvened after worship sharing and lunch.

Bob McGahey referred Friends to the written reports from Finance Committee and Ministry and Nurture Committee, which are on the website. **(Attachment D: Finance Committee Report; Attachment E: Ministry & Nurture Committee Report)**

## **148-06 Review of Minute from Nashville Monthly Meeting (Attachment F: Nashville Monthly Meeting Minute)**

Friends read the minute from Nashville Monthly Meeting. Those meetings that have discussed this minute shared where Spirit had led them.

## **148-07 Worship Sharing**

Friends entered into worship sharing in small groups around these queries:

- How will we demonstrate love in our actions as a Yearly Meeting?
- How might SAYMA's future be transformed?

**148-08 Reconvening and clerk's comments**

Friends reconvened following worship sharing.

Bob commented that Finance Committee has asked for responses from monthly meetings on items in its report. Monthly Meeting representatives will receive reminders.

Further, Atlanta asked that Ministry and Nurture Committee collect the responses to its minute. Ministry and Nurture Committee has been working on this.

**148-09 Worship Sharing**

Friends entered into worship sharing, speaking from the silence.

**148-10 Announcements**

Tim Lamm is moving to New England. Berea Monthly Meeting will have a potluck in his honor next Sunday, April 3. Friends can send notes or memories to Pat Gailey, or directly to Tim.

**148-11 Formation of *ad hoc* committee and way forward (Attachment G: Ad Hoc Committee for SAYMA's Guidance through Transition Period)**

Bob introduced a way forward, a proposal for an *ad hoc* committee to handle necessary SAYMA business during the 12 to 24 months of suspending business and working with FCRJ. Friends discussed the proposal and made alternative proposals. A Friend presented a detailed proposal for the dissolution of SAYMA at the close of annual sessions 2022 if way forward is not found. Friends were unable to reach unity around the constitution of the committee, although there was general agreement with the principle of creating a plan to be able to suspend business. Friends were asked to discuss the Nashville proposal and the *ad hoc* committee with their meetings as soon as possible. A called rep meeting will be scheduled if needed.

All narrative minutes were read and accepted in the face of the meeting.

Friends closed with worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Dykes,  
Recording Clerk *pro tem*

Robert McGahey,  
Clerk

## **Attachment A: Attendance**

List of attendees in archived print copy only.

## Attachment B. Clerk's Letter

Dear SAYMA Friends,

Developments since our last representative meeting have been encouraging. It feels like SAYMA Friends may be converging on a way forward for the yearly meeting: an interim period in which we call a truce in terms of formal structures while embracing the work of racial justice under the leadership of Angela Hopkins and Friends Committee for Racial Justice.

I am grateful for all the responses from monthly meetings, who have prioritized SAYMA in their recent meetings for business in efforts to address minutes posted in the past few months. The SAYMA home page lists a welter of minutes, in alphabetical rather than historical order, and their sheer volume has led to some confusion. Let me try to put them in context.

The minute from Atlanta specifically asked for meetings to send responses to SAYMA Ministry and Nurture, and many of you did so by the requested date. Ministry and Nurture will report on these responses as requested at our annual sessions. The letter from the Racial Justice Working Group predates our last rep meeting in December, and is posted because it is referenced in a couple of the other minutes. Several minutes address our process of doing business, which has been challenged, and whose flaws have been laid bare. One of the most glaring of these has been the clerk's tendency to rush ahead, driven by the agenda, not asking for narrative minutes to be approved in the face of the meeting.

The core which I wanted monthly meetings to address in the letter I posted in January is to discern a way forward for SAYMA. At that time, there was one minute from Charleston outlining in conclusion some broad options. I have since urged monthly meetings to look at the other minutes, including those from Celo and now Nashville, which address in more detail what our immediate future after annual sessions might look like. It is the progression of these minutes, together with a thoughtful discussion by a full clerk's committee a few weeks ago, which leads me to see a possible convergence. We will test this observation at our upcoming representative meeting by asking each representative present to report the sense of their monthly meeting with regard to those minutes their respective meetings have addressed. We will then sit in worship, both in small groups, and as a body, to consider a way forward heading into yearly sessions. Some queries to guide this process are posted at SAYMA.org along with the agenda before we convene next Saturday.

I appreciate both your patience and the dedication shown to SAYMA, as some meetings have already held extra called business sessions to address SAYMA's needs. We all look forward to a productive representative meeting later this month, full of deep spirit-led listening as we discern our next steps.

Robert McGahey, SAYMA Presiding Clerk

## Attachment C

### YMPC report to Rep meeting, March 26, 2022

*Submitted by Jennifer Dickie, Clerk YMPC*

The Yearly Meeting Planning Committee has been joining together monthly since October via Zoom. The work has been taxing and also joyful. We are excited about what the YM sessions and retreat can hold for us this summer and we are prayerful as Spirit leads us. Our time over the last several months has been focused on the what, where, when, and how of Yearly Meeting sessions and retreat.

**What** - We will provide a SAYMA sessions and retreat that is primarily in person with opportunities for worship, fellowship, and business, embracing our testimony of simplicity—lifting up the importance of re-building community through personal contact while minimizing programming.

**Where** - After exploring several physical venues that were “almost” what we needed, we heard that Warren Wilson College was again welcoming summer programs and was willing to work with us for our retreat in June. We have confirmed with WWC that we wish to hold our YM Sessions there this year, as in the past. WWC has informed us of an increase in rates this year. We have not yet calculated how that will impact registration costs.

**When** - We have secured the third weekend in June - Thursday, June 16 - Sunday, June 19, 2022

**How** - The opening of WWC allowed us to shift from a retreat that was mostly virtual to a retreat that is mostly in person. This decision was made holding our continued concern for those who are most vulnerable in our community.

1. For adults we will work to ensure that there are **some hybrid and virtual options for Friends who are unable or unwilling to join in person;**
2. For our youngest Friends and families the JYM committee has determined through their experience in 2021 that virtual events are not fulfilling nor compelling for building community. **JYM will offer only an in person option for young Friends age 3 through 6th grade.** The JYM committee is excited about reuniting young Friends, welcoming new young Friends and connecting Quaker Families, however they anticipate the turnout of young Friends may be small this year. JYM committee therefore is also planning to hold at least two regional events this year for young Friends and Families to build back the community that has been lost in our 2 year gap in in person programming.
3. For the Southern Appalachian Young Friends, in person retreats have been occurring since October 2021. **SAYF at SAYMA will continue as an only in person event,** including teens who would have graduated from SAYF in 2021.

You may notice that I have not offered a theme for this year's retreat. That is because Spirit has not seen fit to guide us to unity around a theme yet, and rather than rush this process we are continuing to meet more regularly for discernment. As the clerk I will share my sense of our direction. I feel an optimism that underlies a deep sense of uncertainty. I feel a hopefulness aligned with a need for transparency about our current conflicts. I hear a leading toward queries rather than instruction.

## **Attachment C**

### **YMPC report to Rep meeting, March 26, 2022**

*Submitted by Jennifer Dickie, Clerk YMPC*

I would like to express my deep gratitude for the Friends who have served on this committee for the last year and a half and those who have newly joined or returned to the committee for this year. It is challenging and rewarding work and I am grateful for their presence in it.

## Attachment D.

### Finance Committee Report to Rep Meeting 3/26/22

Members of finance include Geeta McGahey, Caty Clark McAfee, Karen Morris, and Kendall Ivie, acting treasurer. Finance still is looking for new members, a new treasurer or assistant treasurer and a new clerk. Please talk to the nominating committee if you are willing or if you have any ideas. We are happy to report that as of 3/5/22 this fiscal year assessment income is \$27,642.75 and expenses are \$13,383.98. We have approximately \$34,000 in unrestricted funds. We encourage meetings to suggest what we should do with the funds. Possibilities that have been suggested are lowering meetings' assessment, funds to reimburse FCRJ for their work, more for WQO's, funds to support our delegates and third world delegates to the 2024 World Conference of Friends in South Africa. URJ also requested \$10,000 for their work last year, which was not funded. Any expenditures or changes need to be approved by Yearly Meeting. We will be circulating a budget to Monthly Meetings in May.

SAYMA received a \$25,000 bequest from the Kenworthy family to be designated for young adult scholarships to Quaker events. M&N will take the bequest under their care and is working on a use policy, following the steps M&N has taken with other funds for disbursement, hopefully including input from young adult friends, with recommendations from monthly meetings. The SAYMA clerk thanked the Kenworthy family for the donation for YAF's.

If SAYMA were to have a suspension of regular business, finance would probably need to continue to function as it is for fiscal oversight.

**Attachment E.**

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee Report to SAYMA Representative Meeting

3/25/2022

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee met nine (9) times since last Representative Meeting.

We are in agreement to respond to Atlanta Friends Meeting's request to review all the responses and minutes to their Minute on Reparative Justice and Reconciliation we receive. We look forward to completing the process already begun in discerning what unity we might enjoy and report that minute to SAYMA at Annual Sessions in June.

We labored in discerning the minutes we provided to SAYMA's monthly meetings and worship groups to assist in some humble way as each Monthly Meeting and or Worship Groups crafts their own Report.

This committee spent some of our worship sharing time reflecting on and answering the queries we then had provided SAYMA monthly meetings and worship groups. In fact, it was because we felt so deepened in our worship and - boldly I will say – our love for each other, that prompted us to provide them to the monthly meetings and worship groups to enjoy as Spirit led. We answered the queries first as individuals and are now in process of answering them as a corporate body. SAYMA will have at Annual Sessions a State of SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee Report in addition to what has been traditionally provided, the State of SAYMA Report.

Please know that we anticipate receiving any additional responses and or minutes to the Atlanta Minute that still might be in process. (We know that it is quite a spell of calendar between the requested time of 1/31 and now but encourage any and all to be provided us.) We look forward to all State of the Meeting/Worship Group Reports still outstanding, as well. Although April 1<sup>st</sup> (April Fools' Day) was the requested return date, this committee will be next meeting April 12 and we ask any outstanding reports be provided us prior to that date.

Holding us all in the Light.

Respectfully submitted,

V. Adrian Mehr, Co-clerk of SAYMA M&N Committee

Diana Masso, Co-clerk of SAYMA M&N Committee

**Attachment E.**



## **Attachment F.**

### **Nashville Friends Meeting Statement Regarding SAYMA**

Approved on 3/6/22

Rufus M. Jones once wrote of Quakers' ability to "speak right on," in plain, blunt fashion and tell us in yeoman language of the inward battles which they have fought." Our commitment to speaking plainly calls on us to name things for what they are, without euphemism, elision, or unnecessary complication. When it comes to the issues currently facing SAYMA, that means stating clearly what is going on and what is under consideration.

The conflict in SAYMA began with disagreements surrounding a sizable budgetary allocation made to the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee ("URJ"). Those funds have been spent and that annual budget has been superseded. If any budget item is allocated to URJ (or any other committee) in the future, it will inherently involve new funds, committed through a new process. While some have voiced concerns about various aspects of how the earlier money was allocated and/or spent, there is nothing that can be done about that budget or those dollars now. There is no live conflict involving that budget to resolve.

What continues now is, instead, a conflict with no solvable core, perpetuating itself—and indeed growing—through its own momentum, rather than being driven by any piece of business that must be resolved or goal that must be attained. It is the strong sense of Nashville Friends Meeting that SAYMA must either move beyond that self-perpetuating conflict or, if that is impossible, reconsider whether SAYMA, as a body, should continue to exist.

Moving on does not mean ignoring what we have learned and still can learn from where we have been. The URJ process has illuminated issues that we should, and indeed must, continue to address, including with regard to the ways that we have departed from Quaker process. SAYMA's failures surrounding URJ have also brought to light many of the ways that we have privileged some voices (particularly white and male voices) over others, including by vesting those favored voices with the mantle of authority and dismissing those who disagree as outsiders. These problems are bigger, harder to solve, and far more important than any budgetary or interpersonal disagreement.

While the struggles for justice and against racism must continue, there is no need for the unproductive acrimony that has dominated SAYMA meetings for the last few years to persist in monopolizing our efforts and attention. To that end, Nashville Friends Meeting would support:

- Prioritizing the conflict transformation process led by Friends Committee for Racial Justice, with an understanding that SAYMA will prioritize building a healthier foundation for the future, not relitigating the past;
- A suspension of ordinary SAYMA business (with exceptions for core functions that must be performed);
- For SAYMA to devote its shared time primarily to worship-sharing related to issues of spiritual grounding and Quaker process, followed by attention to antiracism and social justice;
- Monthly meetings doing their own anti-racism work/confronting white privilege on a local level using outside resources;
- Monthly meetings reporting to SAYMA the anti-racism work that they are doing/have done; and
- More small regional meetings of monthly meetings that would build regional Friends knowledge and understanding.

After our spiritual bonds have been tended to, we may be able to move forward as a Yearly Meeting.

One Friend reluctantly stood aside from the consideration of this Minute.

## **Attachment G.**

### **Ad Hoc Committee for SAYMA' s Transition Guidance**

The SAYMA clerks committee will serve in this ad hoc role, charged with working out details of SAYMA's staffing and reduced activities during suspension of regular business meetings for one to two years, as proposed in the Nashville minute. SAYMA will continue to sponsor an annual retreat at the time of its yearly sessions in June 2023 and 2024. The committee will act as a liaison, aided by the administrative assistant, with FCRJ as they pursue the racial justice work that SAYMA has requested and was agreed to in a letter addressed to SAYMA and FCRJ August 20, 2021, signed by the Presiding Clerk.

As stated in several minutes reviewed at RM 148, SAYF will continue to function under its present structure, and be financially supported by SAYMA. Specific details for other necessary yearly meeting functions during this period of renewal during suspension of regular business will be worked out by the committee and presented to the body at YM 51 for approval. Among these procedural details, it is important to decide who gives authority for dispensing funds, and who has check-signing privileges. The committee may designate sub-committees to work out some of the details (for instance, financial ones) and may also recruit others from SAYMA with necessary skills or information, as needed.

The ad hoc committee will terminate its functions at the close of YM51, and be laid down.