

## Quarterly Meeting: Final Details & New Zoom Link

Dear Friends,

You are invited to join us for our upcoming Southeast Quarterly Meeting to be hosted by Worcester Friends Meeting on March 17, 2024. Worship will begin at 9:30 a.m. in-person and on Zoom. A potluck brunch will be held at the rise of worship. Our meeting for business and the presentation will take place beginning at 1:00 p.m. in-person and on Zoom (See below.)

Jane Cutting and Karen Sargent will lead a presentation on the [Alternative to Violence Project \(AVP\)](#) (linked) and with others will share Friends' individual experience as participants. AVP is a multicultural volunteer organization dedicated to reducing interpersonal violence.

The complete schedule for the day and agenda for our meeting for business is attached. Directions and COVID-19 protocols for those attending in-person can be found [here](#).

Contact Beth Hansen at [dancingneedle@gmail.com](mailto:dancingneedle@gmail.com) or your monthly meeting clerk for additional information or with questions.

Peace and Blessings,

Beth Hansen (SEQ clerk)  
Rosie Hopper (SEQ recording clerk)  
Karen Sargent & Matt Shorten (Worcester, co-clerks)  
Adriana Steele (clerk) & Jules (assistant clerk) (Providence)  
Kathy Malin (Smithfield, acting clerk)  
Ann Watkins (Westerly, clerk)

### **Join the Meeting on Zoom (new link as of 3/12/2024)**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85676820550>  
[pwd=6HYY6BYXL171Dacv8iVe4gbJup8Lfj.1](#)  
Meeting ID: [856 7682 0550](#) Passcode: [184398](#)

**Meeting of the  
Southeast Quarter of New England Yearly Meeting  
Sunday, March 17, 2024  
Hosted by Worcester Friends Meeting  
In-Person and on Zoom**

**Schedule**

**Join the Meeting on Zoom (updated link as of 3/12/2024)**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85676820550?pwd=6HYY6BYXL171Dacv8iVe4gbJup8Lfj.1>

Meeting ID: 856 7682 0550

Passcode: 184398

Complete details attached separately

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.      Meeting for Worship

Following worship          Potluck

11:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.      Meeting for Business

“An Introduction to the Alternative to Violence Program”  
Jane Cutting and Karen Sargent (Worcester Friends)

**Potluck Arrangements**

Worcester Friends will hold a potluck at the rise of meeting. Friends are encouraged to bring contributions. Please label your dish with your name and indicate if your item is vegetarian or vegan or includes common allergens such as dairy or nuts that may present a concern for others.

**Southeast Quarter of New England Yearly Meeting  
Meeting for Business  
Sunday March 17, 2024**

**Reading and Opening worship**

**Review and approval of the October 16, 2023 minutes**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s3xzKKTbZBDh5N3ix1vpO\\_NnbO-CNad/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109509239735361095189&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s3xzKKTbZBDh5N3ix1vpO_NnbO-CNad/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109509239735361095189&rtpof=true&sd=true)

**Treasurer's report (prepared by P. Swaszek)**

- SEQ General Fund (B. Hansen)
- Aldrich Fund (B. Hansen) - Updates

**Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH): representation on the Board (B Hansen)**

- Additional names for consideration and discernment
- Confirmation of Edie Morren to serve as a delegate to BHFH.
- Next steps

### **Living Faith (Ann Watkins)**

- Updates and Volunteer opportunities
- April 6, 2024, Friends Academy, North Dartmouth, MA.
- See NEYM Events - [Living Faith | New England Yearly Meeting \(neym.org\)](https://neym.org)

### **State of Society Reports**

- Westerly Friends (Ann Watkins)
- Others

### **Right Relationship: Revisiting our gathering in Providence (March 2023)**

- What has happened since then at our meetings?
- Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools Policies in the U.S. Act (H.R. 7227)

### **Announcements and updates from our Monthly Meetings**

- Providence (A. Steele & Jules, co-clerks)
- Worcester (T Brenner & K Sargent, co-clerks)
- Smithfield (K Malin, clerk)
- Westerly (A Watkins, clerk)

### **NEYM (R Leuchak, presiding clerk)**

### **Closing Comments**

- **Next meeting**  
The next SEQ meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2024 to be hosted by Providence Friends Meeting

### **Closing worship**

**Southeast Quarter of New England Yearly Meeting  
Meeting for Business  
Sunday October 16, 2023  
Minutes**

**Attending:**

- ❖ **Providence:** Jules, Rebecca Leuchak, Ariana Steele
- ❖ **Westerly:** John Bach, Beth Hansen (clerk), Kurt Hansen, Rosie Hopper (recorder), Edie Morren, Ann Watkins
- ❖ **Worcester:** Tom Brenner, Karen Sargent

**1. Opening worship**

**2. Review of the June 18, 2023 meeting minutes**

- The names Karen Sargent and Lucy Candib of Worcester Meeting will be added to the attendance section, and the minutes will be redistributed to monthly meeting clerks.

**3. Treasurer's report (prepared by P. Swaszek)**

- Based on a report composed by the SEQ treasurer, the following fund balances were reviewed:

SEQ General Fund balance: \$ 1,732.78  
Aldrich Fund balance: \$16,904.55  
CLOSING BALANCE \$18,637.33

- The Aldrich Fund Committee clerk (B. Hansen) reminded those present that there have been no grant requests since before the pandemic. Monthly meeting clerks were encouraged to discern possible special financial needs of individuals within their meetings. A query arose as to whether the Aldrich Fund could be used to support hired rides for individuals needing transportation to and from the meetinghouse in order to attend worship. It was recommended that Providence Meeting co-clerks work with Dan Lederer, Providence Meeting representative to the Aldrich Fund Committee (AFC), to put together a related proposal and submit it to the AFC.

**4. Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH); representation on the Corporation and Board**

- Regina McCarthy, Clerk, BHFH Corporation and Board of Managers, joined the meeting via Zoom. She provided an overview of BHFH purpose and operations. She explained that the governance structure includes the BHFH Corporation which is comprised of two representatives from each of the eight NEYM quarterly meetings. Representatives are being sought to fill these positions. Through discussion, the following points were made:
  - Representatives commit to attend one Corporation and Board meeting per year and can do so remotely or in person
  - The standard term of service is three years, but exceptions have occurred
  - BHFH is fully insured, likely protecting individual members of the Corporation from personal liability were a legal suit to arise, however further information on this concern will be obtained by R. McCarthy and shared with monthly meeting clerks, or directly with E. Morren who is interested in serving.
  - A typical Corporation meeting lasts a full day, with a special program in the morning followed by lunch and then a business meeting in the afternoon. Business generally includes a budget review, Board nominations, and other organizational matters required in order for BHFH to operate.

- Anyone interested in serving on the Corporation requires endorsement by their monthly meeting and then by the quarter before their name is forwarded to the clerk of the BHFH Corporation and Board.
- Monthly meeting clerks are urged to seek volunteers.
- R. Leuchak served on the Corporation for a number of years and would be happy to connect with anyone interested in learning more about the role.
- E. Morren has been endorsed by Westerly Meeting to be an SEQ representative to the BHFH Corporation.
- Following the call, it was agreed that at its March meeting, SEQ will review all monthly meeting endorsements of volunteers, and forward the Quarter's endorsements to R. McCarthy in time for the Corporation and Board meeting in April.

## **5. Living Faith 2024 inquiry and invitation**

- The clerk led a discussion on the invitation from NEYM staff Nia Thomas and Ellizabeth Hacala to join the planning committee for the next Living Faith gathering, scheduled to take place in Dartmouth, MA on April 6, 2024.
- After Friends who had attended previous Living Faith gatherings described the nature of the event, it was agreed that the request for planning committee volunteers would be improved if NEYM staff included more details about the type of work the planning committee does, and what sort of time commitment is expected.
- R. Leuchak offered to ask E. Hacala to put together a more detailed description of planning committee duties. Leuchak's offer was gratefully accepted. Leuchak will distribute to SEQ monthly meeting clerks any additional information that is provided so that the clerks can pass the information on, as they solicit volunteers for the Living Faith planning committee.

## **6. Staying connected (redux)**

- Tabled for lack of time

## **7. Working towards Right Relationship**

- Tabled for lack of time

## **8. Announcements**

### **NEYM (R. Leuchak, presiding clerk):**

- Annual Sessions attendance was approximately 600, including members and attenders of the 80+ monthly meetings in NEYM, plus robust online participation by members of Quaker meetings in Cuba
- The theme was "Be like a watered garden..." (Isaiah 88.6-11)
- Presentations included:
  - Musical performances
  - Storytelling by Joseph Bruchach and son Jesse Bruhac of the Nulhegan Abenaki Nation
  - Bible half-hours led by Bolivian birthright Quaker, Emma Condori Mamani
  - A message to NEYM from Jorge Lusi Peña Reyes, clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting
  - A presentation by the Accompaniment Group, recently created to visit with monthly or quarterly meetings to assist in working through internal conflicts
- Presentations are available online <https://neym.org/2023-sessions-recordings>
- Takeaways from the the Annual Sessions Meeting for Business:
  - Approved a minute in support for the American Friends Service "No Way to Treat a Child" campaign, urging NEYM members to encourage congressional

representatives to pass Congressional bill H.R. 3103 defending the rights of Palestinian children in Israel and Gaza

- Approved forming a small working group to draft best practices for resolving conflict within Quaker meetings and communities
- Approved continuing to encourage individuals and meetings to learn about and support passage of Senate bill S.1723: The Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.
- Approved reinstating the NEYM Ministry & Counsel Committee, which had been laid down

**Worcester (T. Brenner & K. Sargent, for D. Barnard, clerk)**

- The Meeting's semi-annual "Market Day" event provided a pleasant opportunity to connect with neighbors while also offering pies, plants and used books for sale.
- The Meeting once again prepared and served food for the monthly community supper held by the LGBT Asylum Task Force which provides support for individuals seeking asylum from countries that do not allow free expression of gender identity or sexual orientation
- As an extension of its commitment to right relations with indigenous peoples, the Meeting approved providing rent-free office space for representatives of the Pocasset, Pokanoket and Nipmuc nations.
- The Meeting held an unveiling for the land acknowledgement engraved on a plaque and displayed on the grounds of the meetinghouse. In attendance were tribal members who conducted a smudging ceremony to consecrate the event.

**Westerly (A. Watkins, co-clerk)**

- On a monthly basis the Meeting continues to prepare and supply supper for 50, served by the Westerly WARM Center.
- A memorial meeting for worship and reflection was held in acknowledgement of the many losses of friends over the last three years.
- Nine members attended "The Elements of Quakerism." To build on the success of that series, the Meeting's Ministry & Counsel Committee is putting together another bi-weekly session on SPICES. The sessions will run in November and January. An invitation to participate will be issued to everyone in SEQ via clerks of SEQ monthly meetings.
- Members of the Meeting joined a service at the Westerly synagogue, Shara Zedek, to show solidarity with the Jewish community in the face of antisemitism.
- On September 22, the Peace and Social Justice Committee had a table at International Peace Day on the campus of URI. [R. Leuchak asked if Westerly Meeting had ever considered holding mid-week worship on the campus. K.Sargent shared that this had been tried by Worcester Meeting--without much traction--on the campus of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).
- Due to its location on the border of two states, the Meeting continues to work with groups in Connecticut as well as Rhode Island, including the ARC of Eastern Connecticut, the New London chapter of the NAACP, and the Westerly Interfaith Peace and Justice Group.
- The Meeting responded to the FCNL survey on reproductive rights and abortion, and will be holding a related hybrid threshing session on Thursday October 19 at 6:30 p.m. Anyone within the SEQ is welcome to join, using the same Zoom link used for the SEQ meeting hosted by Westerly Friends.
- A. Watkins will be attending an extended meeting for worship, and will be bringing back to Westerly Friends the possibility of hosting an extended meeting for worship.
- Bolivian Friend Emma Condori Mamani came to the Westerly Meeting to speak on the effects of climate change.

**Providence (A. Steele & Jules, co-clerks)**

- The Meeting is transitioning from the clerkship of V. Ekk to that of A. Steele and Jules.
- Providence Meeting co-clerks invite Westerly Meeting to share its minute in support of women's reproductive rights, in order for Providence Meeting and potentially the SEQ to endorse the minute.
- In-person participation in worship appears to be on the rise, including more families with young children, raising questions within the Meeting about informing newcomers of behavioral expectations and practices.
- The Meeting is growing its First Day School to accommodate the increased number of young families.
- Paula Palmer spoke to the Meeting about the history of Quaker boarding schools and mistreatment of indigenous schoolchildren.
- A sister meeting relationship with Lauro Perez MEETING in Cuba was approved.
- Bolivian Friend Emma Condori Mamani came to speak about the impact of climate change.
- The Meeting is actively supporting the Alternatives to Violence Project.
- The relationship with the Pocasset and Pokanoket nations continues to develop
- There is involvement in the development of the new Tomaquag Museum on the campus of URI.
- The Meeting continues to await next steps in the Rhode Island History Medallions Initiative to s a marker at the Saylesville Meetinghouse (1703) recognizing its role in the Abolitionist movement.

**9. Aging Resources Consultation Program**

- The clerk encouraged Friends to participate in the October 18 session led by Patti Muldoon, coordinator of NEYM Aging Resources Consultation and Help Program.

**10. Purpose and function of SEQ**

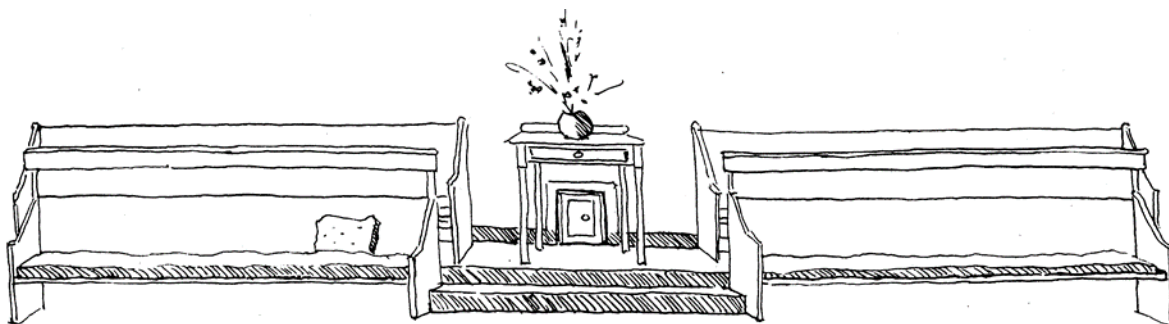
- Tabled for lack of time
- Friends were asked to review the queries provided by the clerk and prepare to revisit the topic at a future SEQ meeting.

**11. Next meeting**

- The next SEQ meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2024, to be hosted by Worcester Friends Meeting.

**12. Closing worship**

Recorded by Rosie Hopper



During the past year, Friends at Westerly Monthly Meeting wove “a network of intentionality” among ourselves as we returned to familiar practices and learned how to improve on adapting to new ways of being together in accordance with our faith. While our attendance had not consistently reached the level before the pandemic, some First Days we were getting there. We were aware of the conflict in the world and sought to build peace within ourselves as well as in the wider world. This act of weaving created a mutual flow of learning between ourselves and the world around us. During 2023 some of us participated in the NEYM network by attending Sessions, special workshops, extended worship, Bread Day and training in “Elements of Quakerism.” Our Meetings for Worship continued to be predominately silent but enriched when Friends were led to speak. Sometimes we were deeply restored by this gathered silence and at other times some found it challenging to wait on the spirit.

In Winter 2023, the co-clerks of the Meeting took part in “Elements of Quakerism” led by Phil Fitz (Northampton Friends Meeting) in order to lead future discussions at Westerly Meeting. Throughout the spring, we held a series of hybrid meetings on Thursday evenings every two weeks. These meetings were seen as informative and helpful in furthering our spiritual journeys and we also got to know each other better. They also inspired another discussion series focused on the SPICES, which began in November with a discussion on simplicity.

In March, the Meeting helped to sponsor three students from Brown University who attended Spring Lobby Weekend. Then, in September, the Center for Peace and Nonviolence Studies at the University of Rhode Island invited the Meeting to have a table for the International Day of Peace at the Kingston campus. The Peace and Social Justice Committee responded by creating a display of information about the work being done by FCNL and AFSC.

After Sessions, we hosted a visit from Emma Condor Mamani. She spoke to us about the devastating effects of global warming and the effects of the climate crisis in



Bolivia. Among those effects is a huge shortage in the harvesting of potato crops. Emma related these grave concerns while at the same time pointing out what young Friends are doing to combat this change through potato plantings and digging wells.

A member of the Meeting continued to meet with Westerly Area Peace and Justice, a local group that witnesses and works for the causes of peace in our community. We were represented on the Westerly-Pawcatuck Clergy Association and some of us participated in activities and events organized by the Westerly Anti-Racism Coalition. Another member represented the Meeting at the New London NAACP Awards Banquet, an event that featured a powerful speech by Representative Bennie Thompson (D-MS). Two attenders and a member remained involved with FCNL by connecting with established advocacy teams in Rhode Island and Connecticut. In Connecticut, a member joined with other Connecticut residents to lobby Senators Murphy and Blumenthal to maintain funding for three initiatives: atrocities prevention, reconciliation programs and complex crisis prevention. We accepted an invitation from the local synagogue, Sharah Zedek, to attend a worship service there. This invitation followed a letter of support we sent to our Jewish friends in 2022, letting them know we support them in this time of rising antisemitism.

We replied to the request from FCNL to respond to their survey questions on reproductive health and abortion. While several of us reached unity that reproductive health and abortion are basic human rights that should not be deprived to women, we could not reach unity on what the next steps, if any, should be. We tabled what to do next to review nationwide input received on the FCNL survey.

After meeting every other week for the past few years, First Day School experimented in the fall with meeting every week. We found that most families continued to attend a few First Days per month, so each weekly FDS gathering had fewer children participating. The FDS families decided that it was preferable to gather as a larger group on the first and third First Days. FDS teachers were committed to providing the best opportunities for children to learn about Quaker testimonies in a gentle, caring atmosphere.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of a member of the Communications Committee, we acquired a new website, a workable setup for hybrid meetings, a new system for emailing as well as a Donation option. We reached unity on having hybrid meetings for worship on the second First Day of the month after the Meeting for Business was held. Since the electronic equipment is downstairs, we gathered there for both meetings rather than in our recently refurbished meeting room upstairs. We always

had our geographically distant Friends in our minds and hearts and wanted to maintain our connections with them as much as possible.

At the same time, we continued to be aware that there are a relative few who were doing the majority of the work to keep the Meeting operating effectively and nourished spiritually. We were grateful for the efforts Friends made to the body and spirit of the Meeting but were also concerned that too much was being asked of the same individuals at times. We were challenged to maintain our financial wellbeing as costs increased and giving, due to our smaller numbers, decreased. However, thanks to the generosity of Friends, we were able to end the year in healthy fiscal shape.

There was also concern that our position on the FUM policy regarding homosexuality has not been fully resolved. It was recognized that the Bayard Rustin fund has been an authentic way to deal with this matter and it has proved to be at least partially successful in giving Friends the opportunity to make their voices heard. Yet there was some astonishment that this issue still hasn't been fully resolved. That a policy going against our foundational belief that the Inner Light is to be found in every heart is still in effect at FUM was seen as being "disillusioning."

In 2023, we saw peace as both a process and a goal. We continued to be a work in progress. We were aware of our accomplishments, but also of the work that still needed to be done in ourselves, our Meeting, our wider community and the world at large. We ended the year with hope founded on our faith that we will be able to continue work based on our Quaker values in the coming year.

Read and approved at the March Meeting for Business  
Westerly Monthly Meeting  
March 10, 2024