

**Southeast Quarter of New England Yearly Meeting
Meeting for Business
Hosted by Providence Monthly Meeting
March 15, 2026**

Minutes

Attending

- ❖ **Providence** - Bruce Carlsten, MS Morrne, Piper Brossard, Martha Yager, Thia Lord, John Lord, Marcus Mitchell, Dan Lederer, Eugenia Marks, Lex Staples, James Putnam, Steve Schwartz
- ❖ **Smithfield** - Rich Keane,
- ❖ **Westerly** Beth Hansen (SEQ clerk), Kurt Hansen, Pat Gifford, David Madden, Mark Diekmann, John Back
- ❖ **Worcester** Tom Brenner, Andrea Keklak, Halle Fields
- ❖ **Fresh Pond** Phillip Veatch (Sessions Clerk)

Reading and Opening worship Reading by Noah Merrill.

Announcement

- A Recording Clerk is still needed to take on these responsibilities. People interested should contact the Clerk. Kurt Hansen was approved to serve as Recording Clerk for this meeting

Review and Approval of the Minutes

- The minutes of the June 19, 2025, meeting were approved.

Treasurer's report (prepared by P. Swaszek)

- **SEQ General Fund and Aldrich Fund (B. Hansen)** The clerk reminded Friends that this fund may be used by request of monthly meeting clerks, to support activities associated with hosting the quarterly meeting for business. A brief discussion of the Aldrich Fund included examples for helping people with business expenses (rent) or other personal issues. Two checks have been written in the past year.

As of 8-Mar-2026

General Fund Balance:	\$ 2,811.87
Stephen Aldrich Fund Balance:	\$ 16,527.31

Total Closing Balance:	\$ 19,339.18
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Pooled Finds with NEYM:

RI-S QMoF (#19)	\$ 11,933.96
Stephan Aldrich Fund (#42)	\$ 101,002.37

SEQ Administration

- Links vs Attachment Discussion – Some people are still having difficulty with links that are embedded in the agenda. This is due that some people do not have a Gmail account and some links may not work in a PDF format if not entered correctly.
- It was recommended that the Clerk keep a Microsoft Word version of documents, but Adobe versions be circulated. Links can be used if documents are accessible to all.

Memorial Minute (Worcester)

- The minute for Richard Schmitt was read and endorsed.

NEYM Visioning Day: Thriving Quarters: A Day to Explore Quarterly Meeting Health

- Phil Veatch (presiding NEYM Clerk) encouraged all to attend the upcoming workshop on Quarterly Meetings on April 11 in Haverhill, MA. NEYM is trying to determine if a process can be developed that could assist in facilitating discernment during Annual Sessions by engaging quarterly meetings beforehand.
- The purpose for more discernment by the quarters beforehand is the result of the 2025 *Sessions Visioning* process in which Friends expressed ways in which we might “right size” Sessions to better meet our needs and resources. This included shortening the length of Sessions to make them more accessible. Discernment prior to Sessions by quarterly meetings would make this more feasible and establish priorities. Some quarters, like ours, do not have the capacity to do much work; not having any working committees.
- Friends were reminded of the NEYM document, *The Purpose of the Quarterly Meetings-in the Past and Today* (2018) and *Faith and Practice* (1985) as resources.
- Discussion continued about how active our quarter was in the past, organizing quarterly retreats and potential visits by members to other monthly meetings. Smithfield members have started this. It was discussed how Quarterly meetings could have some fun aspect for people to get to know each other across the quarter. Separate meetings could be held on Zoom to conduct discernment with the monthly meetings in addition to quarterly meetings.
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Monthly Meeting Updates

Smithfield (Rich Keene, clerk)

- Smithfield is conducting programmed meetings several times each month with an Interfaith minister and others providing the services.
- Smithfield has been ramping up covering all aspects of monthly including trying to visit others within the Quarter.'
- Smithfield has agreed to host the next quarterly meeting in June.
- They are putting out a newsletter, so contact them if you wish to be on distribution list.

Worcester (Tom Brenner, clerk)

- Worcester was a co-founder of WINIS (Worcester Immigrant Network for Immigrant Support), an immigrant support group involving houses of worship and other faith groups in Worcester.
- Non-violence training has been conducted at Holy Cross College.
- On March 14, Worcester, in collaboration with WINIS and the First Unitarian Church of Worcester, hosted an author talk by Cristina Rathbone, author of , "The Asylum Seekers: A Chronicle of Life, Christina also authored, "The Border is Everywhere: Finding the Small Real Things We Can Do." Partial funding was provided by the NEYM Gift Committee (fna Legacy Gift Committee.)

Providence (Martha Yager, clerk)

- Providence has a very active First Day School.
- RI Council of Churches has a program for the homeless. Providence provided showers on a nightly basis in cooperation with other houses of worship which do not have showers. It was successful in providing support as well as engaging members of the meeting.
- Martha noted that the Meeting was greatly affected by the shootings that took place at Brown University on Saturday, December 13, 2025. This coincided with their annual Christmas gathering and potluck.
- Providence held a series of talks from other members of NEYM to understand how others approach the topic of ministry. A Care and Accountability Committee has been formed to support Marcus Mitchell, a member of Providence. He has been selected as a Fellow for the Friends Incubator for Public Ministry which is under the fiscal sponsorship of Sandy Springs Monthly Meeting (Baltimore.) Marcus will be attending a retreat at Pendle Hill (PA) in late March along with Jules serving as elder.

Westerly (David Madden, clerk)

- Westerly is in the process of revising their website that now includes a welcome video.

- Sponsored table at the annual Peace Day at URI and compiled a survey of issues that the students are concerned about.
- Westerly has asked for support from NEYM Accompaniment Group to see how more members and attenders can become involved. A worship sharing session was held as the first step with two members of the Accompaniment Group.
- Jeremy Langill, Executive Minister of the RI Council of Churches ,came to Westerly to discuss activities centering around transgender students in the Westerly school system. Friends were encouraged to attend School Board meetings and become engaged with this issue.
- Westerly First Day School sang at a local retirement community for Christmas.
- Westerly is sponsoring an essay contest for high schoolers with a cash prize for winning essay on peace.
- Westerly continues to provide a monthly meal for the local WARM shelter and is collecting food or other people in need.

Closing Comments and Announcements

- Beth thanked all for attending as well as Martha for organizing a protest poster-making session.

Next meeting

The next SEQ meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2026, to be hosted by Smithfield. This date deviates from our previous schedule. NEYM will be notified of the change.

Closing worship

Recording Clerk: Kurt Hansen (Westerly)

Clerk: Beth Hansen (Westerly)

Approved: [date]