

What we heard in our listening sessions

- As a community, we value the opportunity for broad discussion of how we share our resources, but we don't want to spend excessive time on exactly which organizations to give to and how much.
- People already feel stretched and are reluctant to create additional structures and processes that will ask more of community members.
- Our process works well when responsibility for bringing a seasoned proposal to meeting for business is assigned to a committee, standing or ad hoc. If that committee does its job well, it should be grounded and Spirit led as well as efficient. Meeting for worship with attention to business is not where we should be debating the recipient and amount of each donation. It is important for community members to engage in the process earlier when opportunities arise and for the larger body to respect the work and final discernment of the committee.

Our considerations

- Given the points above, it would be simplest to have another existing committee take responsibility for the pot of money designated for "Quaker and Community Groups" that was formerly distributed by Finance Committee.
- A review of the groups that have traditionally received funds from the "Quaker and Community Groups" list shows that many of them fall within the mission of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee.
- Dividing up the funds more granularly among committees according to their missions would add an additional layer of discernment (and time and energy) about exactly how much money goes to each committee.

Our proposal

1. For the sake of simplicity, we suggest that the entire \$5,000 allocated to "Quaker and Community Groups" be put under the care of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee. These funds would be intended for direct donations, separate from the granting process that P&SC already undertakes annually, with no request required from the receiving organization.

To make sure there is room for community discernment without placing too great a burden on either the committee or the community, Peace and Social Concerns (potentially along with Stewardship) would facilitate a Meeting-wide review and discussion of the recipients and amounts on a regular basis.

As they take over responsibility for these funds, we recognize that Peace and Social Concerns will need to consider donations to some organizations that do not strictly fall within the scope of that committee's mission, namely, those organizations that work to keep our Quaker faith vital. When making decisions about the recipients of these donations, we can be guided by the following aims, which were drafted during this discernment process, and which we hope can be further developed and formally approved in meeting for worship with attention to business:

As a meeting community, our purpose in making donations is:

- *to support institutions and groups that keep our Quaker faith vital (examples: FGC, Friends Journal)*
- *to support groups that embody Quaker witness in the wider world and which we want to explicitly support (examples: AFSC, FCNL)*
- *to share resources with those in whose work addresses social injustice and inequity and with which our community is actively involved (examples: PIHN, Ujima Peace Center)*
- *to encourage stewardship of the Earth and our cultural and natural environments (examples: Historic Fairhill, EQAT)*
- *to foster positive social change and racial justice through supporting the individual ministries of meeting community members (P&SC grants).*

These annual gifts express our corporate support for the work these groups are carrying out.

We also distribute funds to groups of which we are a member (examples: POWER, PYM, PQM). Additional specialized funds are also available upon request for tuition assistance, emergency living expenses, and travel.

2. In addition, we suggest that the POWER member contribution (which constitutes %0.5 of our annual budget, or this year \$864) be paid as a separate line item in the budget. This would better reflect our commitment to being a member congregation within POWER.
3. There were concerns raised and ideas shared during this process about the bigger picture of how we share our resources (for example, how we decide the size of our contribution to PYM). We suggest that the process our Ad Hoc Committee used this year could be employed on an as-needed basis to address broader financial discernment needs. The need for an Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Discernment could be raised by:
 - The clerk, in response to concerns that arise during meeting for worship with attention to business (for example, if there concerns raised about how we support public education when the Tuition Assistance Committee brings their report),
 - A committee, in response to a perceived need (for example, if the ARC wanted to start a reparations fund),
 - An individual through a committee or the clerk.

There could be a basic membership of such an ad hoc committee (e.g., clerk, treasurer, and representatives from each of the committees who distribute funds). Others could be invited to join based on relevance to the issue at hand or individual leadings. It would be the responsibility of all of us to be alert for the need for greater financial discernment before the budget comes to the Meeting for approval, understanding that any discernment process would likely take months to complete.

4. Finally, we recognize that there are more worthy causes and organizations than we can possibly support and that valid rationales can support many different organizations. It is important not to perseverate over (unnecessarily revisit) our choices, but to move forward in faith and trust that our money is being put to good use.