

Ad hoc Committee on Financial Discernment

Discernment Session 1 -- Raising Awareness

Sunday, January 10, 2021 at 12 pm and Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 7 pm

How does the Meeting financially support outside organizations, including Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, civic groups (Peace and Social Concerns Grants), Quaker institutions, and tuition assistance for Quaker schools?

In 2018, the Meeting asked an ad hoc committee to establish a process for distribution of the funds for Quaker organizations. The work of the ad hoc committee culminated in a report to Meeting for Business in October 2020. At that time, the Meeting approved reconstituting the committee with a renewed effort to determine a process for determining the recipients of the grants and to further work with the Meeting to newly discern the relationship of the Meeting, through its covenant gifts, to the Philadelphia Quarter and to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Further reading about the history of the funds listed below can be found on the Meeting's web page. Click on this link to get to the documents.

History of Grants and Covenants.

1. **Grants.** Grants can fluctuate in who we give and how much.

- a. **Quaker Organizations.** Since 1972 the meeting has contributed money to Quaker organizations outside the Meeting. Until 2015 or shortly thereafter, the grants were made as part of the budgeting process. Each year the Finance Committee would review the list, make changes to amounts and organizations based on conversations with the groups and with members of the Meeting. Since 2015, the Finance Committee has offered the same amounts to the same organizations without review, and recently asked the Meeting to develop a process for the review.
- b. **Social and Community Activism (aka Peace & Social Concerns) Grants.** The Yarnall family made a gift of stock to the Meeting during the mid 1980's. The meeting decided to use the interest from the investment to fund social activism and tuition assistance to the children of meeting members and attenders. The interest income for those grants was between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year.

The Yarnall fund was used to purchase land for the new meetinghouse 2008. At that time, In order to bring the Meeting to unity about using the fund in this way, we committed ourselves to continue to pay grants that had been paid with the interest from the Yarnall fund from ongoing income. From 2008 through the present, \$15,000 has been included in the operating budget with \$5,000 each going to Quaker organizations, local social justice and activism organizations sponsored by meeting members, and tuition assistance. In fact, the Meeting struggled for quite some time with the issue of whether to build a new meeting house or use the money for social good in the community. Some attenders/members of the Meeting eventually stood aside and allowed the Meeting to go forward in deciding to build a new building. Some attenders/members left CHMM either over the decision to build or the decision to employ a builder that did not use union labor.

- c. **Tuition Assistance Grants.** The tuition assistance children from our Meeting who attend Friends' Schools. The grants have been determined by the Tuition Assistance Committee.
- #### 2. **Covenants.** We pay covenants to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and the Philadelphia Quarter because they are part of our organizational structure. We get services and support from yearly meeting and

from the quarter. Covenants are presented here as part of the picture, but not as the focus of discernment for these sessions. We will put in place a structure that will allow for reconsidering how much covenants are but not necessarily able to grapple with that this year.

- a. **Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting Covenant.** Regional Quaker Meetings are often referred to as “Quarterly Meetings” because they usually meet at least once a quarter to make decisions about issues and concerns that affect the local group. The Meeting has always supported the work of the Philadelphia Quarter. It is through the Quarter's discernment that Monthly Meetings send any Minute of Concern that they want eventually for the Yearly Meeting to consider. The Quarter highlights the work and talents of the various Meetings in the "program" part that generally precedes the quarterly business sessions, helping us "get to know one another in the things that are eternal".
The Quarter's only employee is a part-time coordinator whose work is the creating of connections between the 8 worshipping groups and Meetings of the Quarter. It's the coordinator who keeps in touch with all the groups, pulls together a newsletter, distributes relevant information to the reps and to the Monthly Meetings in general.
- b. **Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Covenant.** Quoted from PYM webpage...Covenant contributions are one way that the 103 monthly meetings in PYM join together to nurture Quaker faith and practice in our region. The covenant is a pledge made between each monthly or quarterly meeting and the yearly meeting, indicating what level of financial support that monthly or quarterly meeting will contribute to the yearly meeting for the upcoming fiscal year. The collective work of Friends in our yearly meeting is sustained by the ongoing generosity of our monthly meetings.

Specific examples of benefits of belonging to and participating in a yearly meeting is

3. **How much money are we talking about?** The total amount of the Meeting's expenses for 2019-2020 was \$168,654. We paid approximately 26% in the following in grants and covenants. For more information and graphs showing these figures, see the addenda.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting covenant -- \$26,500
Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting covenant -- \$2,200
Grants for Quaker Organizations -- \$5,000
Peace and Social Concerns Grants -- \$3,750 (though \$5,000 is budgeted)
Tuition Assistance -- \$6,000

4. **Next Steps.** Based on what you now understand about how our meeting has engaged with its financial decisions. What is arising for you spiritually? Future sessions will be devoted to exploring these concerns more deeply and turning the findings into a process.
5. **Addenda.** Charts, graphs, and explanations that may further understanding of current giving.
 - a. PowerPoint Presentation
 - b. Social Concerns Grants
 - c. Quaker Organization Grants
 - d. Organizations Receiving Grants
 - e. Grants & Covenants Charts
 - f. Grants & Covenants Comparison with Neighboring Meetings of Similar size
 - g. PYM Explanation of Meeting Covenants
 - h. PYM letter asking for increase in covenant