

MIDCOAST MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS

JUNE 22, 2025

Thirteen Friends gathered in silent worship before Clerk Guy Marsden opened the session. It was a brief meeting dealing only with a report on FINANCE by Bruce Rockwood. He noted the increased cost of heating oil and expected the price to rise due to the violence in the Middle East. So an additional draw of \$1,000 on the Meeting's NEYM Pooled Reserve Funds reserve has been requested and will be sent on July 1, 2025. After short discussion the meeting agreed to continue use of the annual budget plan to meet future costs of heating oil. The brief meeting then closed with silent worship.

At the close of the regular Business Meeting the assembled Friends opened the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MIDCOAST MEETING CORPORATION. The usual assurances and reports were duly given and the text of the Corporation Meeting was approved.

CALLED MEETING dealing with QUAKER PROCESS AND DECISION-MAKING.

JUNE 22, 2025

A Quaker Speaks video opened this session. In it the distinction was made between consensus as an overall agreement among participants and sense of the meeting as a unifying response to a leading of the SPIRIT or GOD. Quaker decisions should not be based on counting votes but seeking divine guidance as experienced by the group. A further video explored the variety of Minutes that may be utilized in Quaker process.

The question arose whether or not a Minute recording a decision after complex discussion should be drafted and approved in the course of the meeting rather than composed afterward and approved at the next Meeting for Business as has been our practice. Drafting during the meeting for prompt approval seemed to be favored.

Further consideration on this arrangement will be taken up at the next Business Meeting.

A wide-ranging “threshing session” followed covering a variety of topics related to decision making. It was noted that we have a small membership and members are absent for various reasons and at various times. It is not a simple matter to discern who can speak for the meeting when a relative few may take part in a given Business Session. Sue Rockwood has a special role as part-time staff and leader of the Midcoast Outreach and Peace Center.

A number of Quaker meetings and agencies issue statements on public issues that invite endorsement by Midcoast Friends. Careful consideration should be given to each such sign-on. At times it may prove helpful to draw on such public position statements in composing a parallel statement by Midcoast Friends.

Some structural and procedural points were raised. The current committee set-up should be reviewed. We seem to have two largish committees—Pastoral Care and Ministry and Counsel—

with little overlap and a lack of effective coordination and communication.

Strong support was expressed for circulating by e-mail well in advance of a Business Meeting the agenda for the meeting, any relevant documents (e.g. budget summaries), and an indication of complex issues expected to be addressed. Actual proposed Minutes on complex issues should NOT be sent out in advance.

A request was made to preserve the worshipful tone at Meetings for Business and not to fall into a rapid pace just to get items approved promptly. If a member expects to miss a Business Meeting where an important matter is to be discussed, she/he can inform the Clerk as to her/his view on the matter and the Clerk may share that information during the meeting but only those present will form the sense of the meeting for any decision-making.

The Called Meeting was brought to a close with the query, “What is our next step?” in the expectation that further discussion will take place and the issues will be explored in depth at future meetings.

Jim Matlack – Recording Clerk