Notes from NPYM Ad Hoc NPYM Structure Evaluation Committee
September 21, 2013
Ann Stever

Present: Co-Clerks Chris Cradler & Ann Stever, Margaret Coahran, Ted Etter, ELee Hadley. Kate Jaramillo by phone part of the time.

In the opening sharing we noted that opportunities to share (e.g. Coordinating Committee) have not been taken and/or are not valued. We recognized that that kind of participation is highly dependent on personality so it is hard to structure without being depending on personalities. Listening to and offering support to one another IS the work of the Yearly Meeting.

We are committed to supporting Chris Willard as he clerks CC. We want to give him a chance to make CC work and offer to be a resource to him, to be used any way he wants. We propose that M&O be asked to provide support as well.

The biggest problem is that people don’t know what the job of CC is, or how to do it and do not see value in CC. However, there are other problems. Many Meetings are disconnected from the YM and each other. Few people can be active in all levels of Friends (their own local Mtg, Quarterly Meeting, Yearly Meeting AND other Quaker organizations), not to mention dealing with their own lives!

WHAT IS NEEDED?

1. Reach out to Meetings (probably by the clerk): Develop an exciting, visionary, inspirational paragraph about what CC is and could do, using mission & vision re being a resource to MMs and why the idea of identifying emerging and converging concerns could be compelling. Possible ideas: a testimonial on “Why would I like to go to a CC meeting and love to bring my Meeting’s experiences and hear from others.” And/or, share (invent?) ideas of discussions that might be exciting, e.g. issues that MMs might be interested in, e.g. “Do you have young families with kids and how to you involve and support them?” “Are you getting
applications for membership? How do you welcome and involve new people?” (Unclear WHO would develop such a wonderful document!)

2. Educate CC members about their role and provide ideas and support. We suggest that Chris craft expectations:

   a) Connect the YM together by sharing experiences and resources from Meeting to Meeting as well as from Standing Committees.
   b) Support and hold standing committees accountable.
   Facilitate seasoning and prepare for decision making at Annual Session (spiritually and practically). This includes clarification of the difference between seasoning and decision-making. CC is basically not a decision-making body.
   c) Prepare for CC Meetings in advance. Suggest that members come to CC meetings with something to share and wanting to take something back to their Meetings or committees. Find out from their Meeting (in a business meeting if possible) what their community has to offer to other Meetings (experience, resources) and what it might like to get from other Meetings (how do other meetings deal with . . .?).
   d) Develop a decision-making flow chart. This needs to be relatively simple and might have a concern starting in a MM and another, starting in a Standing Committee. The important role of a Standing Committees should be included. Most decisions would end up at Annual Session, so clarify where seasoning takes place and how.

3. Consider some new ways of engaging people. It is important to note that it is hard to get folks from East of the Cascades to travel or engage. Include them in some way in the face-to-face meetings via phone? Internet? What are the possibilities? Develop a buddy system between experienced and new members? Between members present and those not? Between Standing Com clerks and Mtg folks? Initiate conference calls to connect people, especially to involve those who cannot travel to meetings? (Probably not try to do a conference call with the whole committee!

4. Track and acknowledge what is not working and try to fix it. Avoid language of “new structure” – just keep talking about what CC is for – trying to make it work.
OTHER IDEAS, DISCUSSION and QUESTIONS in our Meeting.

1. The Ad Hoc Committee reviewed the job description of CC and offers the attached revision.

2. Might the YM (probably through M&O) sponsor a face-to-face consultation of MM Clerks? Might there be gatherings around some other topic, like the Youth Summit of a few years ago – either in or outside of a CC meeting.

3. Traveling ministry around the YM to connect/inspire/offer resources – by whom? Researched by O&V?

4. Can we find out more about what Meetings might like or find valuable from NPYM? Youth Coordinator was seen as valuable. The Directory could be a greater resource.

5. WHAT IS IT THAT IS EXERCISING THE YM? Ideas re what happened in Annual Session 2013 “meltdown”. It is important for members of CC and Annual Session to understand that our business process is spiritual. Would there be a way for Friends to “tell their stories” of the Spirit moving in a business meeting? Organize interest groups on this? Focus queries for worship-sharing around this issue. Who is Friend in Residence and can s/he address this? Talk about participation in Business Meeting – be disciplined, do homework and become educated, be spiritually centered.

6. How do we provide spiritual refreshment for standing committee clerks and officers? They should be asked what they would like to share and what they need – make it easy to ask for help. Who would do this? M&O? Nom Com? Who?

7. Does CC meet often enough to really work? Are people willing to meet more often?
8. Is it worth the time of folks to come if CC is not a decision-making body? We believe it could be (see what is needed above.)

9. We once more recognized that the three Quarterly Meetings are very different from one another. One factor is that PNWQM has a regular site to which it returns on predictable dates – the last full weekend in September and last full weekend in April.

**TO DO:**
Notes of the meeting will be circulated for suggestions, additions and corrections.

Chris Cradler and Ann will talk with Chris Willard about our ideas and proposal. We will also check with him about whether he knows when and where the spring CC meeting will be, or will that be decided at the October 19 CC meeting.

Ann will talk with Tom Rawson about our ideas re Annual Session and Spirit-led business.
PROPOSAL:
Continue CC as it is for the fall and spring meetings, giving it a serious effort to make it work. See above ideas.

The Ad Hoc to Evaluate the NPYM Structure Com will meet on the Sunday following the spring CC meeting to determine its recommendation to the Annual Session to either:

a) continue CC as is because it has widespread participation and has become a vital resource with effective links to MMs, fulfilling the mission of NPYM

Or

b) go back to the original make-up of CC, including the Clerks of Standing Committees, the NPYM officers (Clerk and Asst. Clerk of CC, Presiding Clerk of the YM and Treasurer) and a few (review number) members from Meetings (assuring variety of geography and Mtg size). And/or, consider whether MM members are necessary at all. Standing Committees would take primary responsibility for maintaining communications and connections with MMs. Bigger pictures would emerge as these committees shared at CC meetings. In this way, CC should be able to identify emerging and converging concerns. We would need to acknowledge that there is a tension between having a small group of people makes decisions (Exec. Com) and our inability to find people to serve on a larger body.

In both scenarios, a primary responsibility of CC is to support and be sure Standing Committees are operating effectively.