

CHFM Clerks' Retreat Oct 9, 2021

Summary

The Ministry & Worship Committee held the annual Clerks' Retreat online via Zoom on Saturday morning, October 9. After opening worship and introductions, CHFM Clerk Chris Stanley presented expectations for committee clerks. He reviewed the logistics of a clerk's servant role to facilitate the work of a committee. Agendas, reports, a committee calendar, and minutes are elements Listening to the committee is vital. Being open to the Spirit can lead to agenda changes and solutions to problems.

Concerning Quaker process in committees, Chris emphasized establishing a committee community, with time for check-in. Quaker process begins and ends with worship, and a clerk may return a committee to worship as a way to stay centered or refocus. Committees use Spirit-led discernment to find unity while making sure the committee is working communally and all members have opportunities to be heard.

Committees have a role in the Meeting as a whole. Committees do the work of the Meeting, representing all of us. Committees are expected to provide unified recommendations to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MFB) for approval. A committee moved to represent the Meeting as a whole to the outside community must seek approval at MFB. Comments during the retreat were helpful in clarifying ways for a committee to inform the Meeting about opportunities and potential solutions to problems before a committee reaches unity on a specific recommendation. Participants also noted the value in Friends rotating to other committees for a broader perspective on the work of the Meeting.

On the topic of annual reports for benevolences, Chris explained that some benevolences are "under the care of" certain committees. Under the care means a committee has primary responsibility to complete a task and report to MFB. This includes both benevolences and functions. For benevolences under their care, committees need to report to MFB yearly as well as make sure that the Treasurer makes the payment to the appropriate place. Chris suggested making the process of completing donations part of a regular committee calendar. The Meeting approved annual report guidelines this year to encourage building a stronger relationship with each organization.

Participants voiced concern that data collected from Carolina Friends School (CFS) may be slightly different than from other organizations. A suggestion regarding appointees to the CFS Board: trustees from CHFM could meet twice a year and add that to the CHFM description of service on the Board. M&W is available to work with the CFS trustees to see what is needed and then also work with Nominations. The focus on relationships for each benevolence is Quaker-driven and valuable to us as a community. The benevolence process is a work in progress.

Regarding online meetings, Jeff Brown reported that a clerk may ask the Zoom committee to set up a meeting with the corporate account or can use a personal Zoom account. No committees are meeting in person yet.

With gratitude to all in attendance, the session ended with worship.