

VISION & STRUCTURE COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

MARCH 31, 2007

NPYM Vision/Mission Statement, accepted 10/07:

Mission: The purpose of North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is to provide a means for Friends to strengthen and support one another in a common search for divine Truth and Light. North Pacific Yearly Meeting, both as an organization and as an annual session, supports and encourages Friends, as individuals, monthly meetings and worship groups, deepening their spiritual center and moving into Spirit-led action.

North Pacific Yearly Meeting will:

Hold an Annual Session to bring Friends together to worship, attend to business, and build community for all ages.

Serve as an ongoing resource to its Meetings, Worship Groups and Isolated Friends by: fostering leadership; facilitating communication about and among Friends within NPYM; providing opportunities for education, service, and spiritual enrichment; encouraging visitation among Friends; publishing Faith and Practice and other resources; supporting Meetings and Worship Groups to make Quakers a more visible presence.

Nurture spiritual development and a sense of community for our children and young people, and support their transition to adult participation in the life of Friends.

Support discernment and implementation of traditional and emerging concerns arising from Friends' Testimonies.

Foster relationships with the wider world of Friends.

BACKGROUND

When NPYM was founded, its primary activity was Annual Session. Steering Committee's original purpose was to plan Annual Session and season concerns in preparation for AS, and handle the budget. There were about 7 monthly meetings in the yearly meeting.

Now Annual Session is just one part of NPYM's activities. Steering Committee oversees the committees that carry out various activities. SC has an executive committee that handles business between SC meetings. There are 20 monthly meetings, 2 preparative meetings, and 38 worship groups in the yearly meeting.

It is proposed that: primary decision-making for NPYM occur in Annual Session; three new standing committees be formed; Steering Committee be laid down; and a Coordinating Committee link all meetings and committees.

PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE

Our intention is to connect the Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting in a more engaged manner. Under this new structure, NPYM would continue to serve as a resource to its MM's/WG's and isolated Friends, without taking over their functioning.

Some hoped for results of this proposed new structure are:

implementation of the Vision/Mission

wider participation at the MM level in the life of NPYM

better communication and coordination between committees
greater attendance at AS
increased productivity
more active committee participation

ANNUAL SESSION DECISIONS

Policy decisions and other major decisions
Approve nominations
Approve the YM budget

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

This committee would look at the big picture, facilitate information sharing among committees and throughout the YM, refer issues and concerns to appropriate standing committees or AS, and handle “housekeeping” decisions which did not require policy changes or the attention of the Annual Session.

Membership

CC Clerk and Assistant Clerk; CC Recording Clerk or NPYM Recording Clerk; Presiding Clerk; Treasurer; one person from each standing committee (either the clerk or another designated member); five at-large members (proposed by Nominating Committee) for balance.

This membership would give each committee a voice. It would support cross-communication between committees. If a committee was having problems, this would become apparent.

Duties

Meet several times a year (ie. AS, fall, winter/spring)

Assign a specific contact person to each MM/WG. Ask each MM/WG to provide a contact person with whom the CC would communicate and who would carry appropriate NPYM business to the MM/WG. Hold an annual gathering at AS for the MM/WG contact people.

Refer concerns to appropriate committees and/or AS for seasoning.

Oversee the NPYM secretary and any other paid personnel. Oversee the Personnel committee. (It is anticipated that if the YM gets more paid personnel, the Personnel committee will need to be reorganized and personnel policies will need to be developed. Currently the Personnel committee is composed of the SC Clerk, the SC Assistant Clerk, and Presiding Clerk.)

Coordinate YM committees and hold them accountable.

Appoint a Prenominating Committee, which will find members for the Nominating Committee.

Receive reports from the reps to national organizations and refer issues for action to standing committees or MM's as appropriate.

Oversee relationships with wider Quaker organizations.
Approve nominations if necessary between Annual Sessions.
Make necessary “housekeeping” decisions which do not require policy changes or the attention of the Annual Session.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee would report to the Coordinating Committee. Its purpose would be to handle “housekeeping” and referral decisions when needed between CC meetings. It is anticipated that it would function on an as-needed basis using phone and email.

Membership

CC Clerk and CC Assistant Clerk, Presiding Clerk, Treasurer, Clerk of M&O, one at-large member chosen from Coordinating Committee.

Duties

May advise CC Clerk regarding agenda items and referral of concerns to appropriate committees.

Approve nominations if necessary between CC meetings.

Make necessary “housekeeping” decisions between CC meetings which do not require policy changes or the attention of the Annual Session.

Report any actions taken to CC

STANDING COMMITTEES

The goal is to have at least one person from every MM in the Yearly Meeting serving on a YM committee. Friends from Worship Groups are also encouraged to serve. Standing committees would be encouraged to hold a committee meeting at each AS. All committee members are proposed by Nominating Committee and approved by AS.

Standing committees already in existence

Annual Session Planning (about 10 members, clerked by Presiding Clerk and GA Clerk)

Nominating (6 members, two from each Quarter)

Finance & Legal (4 members + YM Treasurer)

Site (6 members)

Discipline (9 members)

Outreach and Visitation (4-6 members)

Information Technology (IT) (3 members + Webmaster)

Proposed new standing committees

Ministry & Oversight (6 members)

Peace & Social Concerns (4-6 members)
Youth Programming (7-8 members)

Each new standing committee would meet face-to-face at AS and one other time during the year, as well as by conference call.

Standing M&O Committee

Membership

This committee would include 6 people, with at least one person from each QM and at least one person who is from a WG or is an Isolated Friend. There should be a balance between people from large and from smaller Meetings.

Duties

Continue to do the duties currently done by the AS M&O Committee.
Plan retreats and workshops throughout the YM, including adult religious education.
Facilitate communication between the M&O committees of the MM's.
Act as a resource for problem-solving, without taking over the QM M&O functions.
Inform other committees as desired about trends and needs within the YM.
Work closely with the Outreach & Visitation committee and the Discipline committee.
Appoint a member to serve on the Annual Session Planning committee.
Appoint a liaison to each Quarterly Meeting M&O.

Standing Peace & Social Concerns Committee

Membership

This committee would include 4–6 people with geographical diversity and involvement in a variety of concerns.

Duties

Season appropriate minutes that come to the YM from the monthly meetings and Quarterly Meetings, in preparation for decision at AS.
Help the MM's coordinate social action responses.
Facilitate the networking of MM information, resources & activities.
Receive information and stay in touch with the YM reps to appropriate organizations (e.g., AFSC, FCNL, Friends Peace Teams).

Standing Youth Programming Committee

This committee would be a resource to the YM, but would not run the children's program at AS. Beyond a few specific tasks, the Vision & Structure committee was unclear as to what was needed and wanted at the local level from such a committee. Therefore this committee would be charged with initially defining its work.

Membership

One children's program resource person; one Central Friends advisor; one Junior Friends advisor; one Junior Friend; one Young Friend; two at-large members named by Nominating Committee and selected to provide balance to the committee.

Duties

Administer the Youth Opportunity Fund.

Develop YM policies and procedures regarding the safety of minors.

Consider the advisability of NYPM hiring a youth programming coordinator to carry out its ongoing work.

During its first year, define the ongoing work of the committee to implement the Vision/Mission statement related to youth. This may include a new name and/or membership for the committee. Possible suggestions are: serve as a resource for MM/WG religious education programs; find ways to support religious education teachers; provide networking opportunities for MM/WG religious ed. programs; develop activities and resources for youth throughout the YM.

OTHER DISCUSSION

This proposed structure would give Nominating Committee significantly more work than it now has. It is hoped that Nominating Committee will do more networking with local MM nominating committees.

Cost information for this structure has not been developed beyond basic estimates. Currently for 3 Steering Committee meetings approximately 30 Friends from around the YM attend. In the proposed structure, 2 Coordinating Committee meetings with around 20 Friends would convene, and the new standing committees with around 20 individual members would each meet annually, besides AS. Additional telephone conferencing for the three new committees would be needed. Basic costs for the proposed structure could be roughly equivalent to current costs. A recommendation from the new Youth Programming Committee to hire a paid coordinator would certainly require added expenditures and increased assessments.

NEXT STEPS:

The Vision and Structure Committee asks each Steering Committee rep and/or Meeting Clerk or contact person to present this proposal to your meeting/worship group. Please tell us what you like about the proposal and your substantive concerns about the proposal. Send them by e-mail to Chris Cradler fergler@comcast.net by June 15.