

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT - Summary

BOULDER MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (2021-2022)

The Boulder Meeting of Friends, the second largest Monthly Meeting in Intermountain Yearly Meeting (IMYM), is a community of faithful individuals with diverse leadings, needs, and strengths. This report offers a window into the tremendous amount of personal and committee work required to keep our Meeting's body and Spirit nurtured. We hope for a revitalized, reconnected, and recommitted Meeting in the coming year.

Ministry and Worship (M&W) Committee's primary task is to monitor and maintain the quality of worship and the general spiritual health of the meeting. In early 2021, we reopened the Meetinghouse for in-person meetings, while connecting with Zoom participants. M&W took on the responsibility of scheduling tech host and meeting closers to enable the blended/hybrid in-person and Zoom gatherings. We hosted six Zoom program hours and two spring potlucks. Two separate Christmas programs, one for in-person attenders and the other for Zoom attenders, were held. Much of the M&W's time later in the year was focused on addressing the long-developing burnout and difficulty in recruiting and retaining participants for key committees. We plan a series of program hours on how to revitalize our Meeting.

Oversight and Membership Committee (O&M) is concerned primarily with the well-being of the Meeting's individual members and their connection with the Meeting. Working with Service Committee, we responded to Friends and Attenders in need, with two dozen people requiring support owing to COVID-19 and personal medical and financial hardships. We completed outreach to Friends who have been absent from Meeting for some time. We have also been reaching out to newcomers and longtime Attenders regarding membership. A major focus of the latter half of the year was revising the Meeting's policy on Memorial Minutes. We supported a Friend's transfer of membership to another Meeting and have taken up the question of a dual membership.

Building and Grounds (B&G) Committee continued with routine maintenance and completed various projects, although our building remained closed into the Spring of 2021. In 2021, some highlights included: installing a Wifi thermostat in the Worship Room, hiring arborists to remove and trim trees, replacing all fire extinguishers, coordinating with Xcel Energy to relocate boxes and power lines to the proper easement, removing a section of chain-link fence, conducting monthly workdays to maintain the grounds, planning for the purchase and installation of two furnaces and a new water heater, and replacing the kitchen sink disposal.

Fellowship Committee was mostly inactive during 2021.

Finance Committee oversees the Meeting's finances and advises the Meeting on financial issues. During 2021, the committee reviewed the Treasurer's reports and gave assistance and advice to the Treasurer; prepared the budget and schedule for outside donations for Fiscal Year 2022; sent out an annual donation appeal letter; continued to monitor the Meeting's need for major furnace upgrades and repair work by Xcel Energy and its effect on our flood risk; hired an outside bookkeeper; continued to monitor the Meeting's financial status, planning, and procedures in response to changing conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and responded to M&W's queries on consolidation of Meeting committees.

Grief and Bereavement Committee had a busy year, hosting several memorials, and presenting a program hour on death and dying for the meeting via Zoom. This year we lost members in our meeting, including Robin Powelson, Lee Bentley, and Betty Herring. We hosted memorials for Jim Walton (a relative of a former member), Carl Feitler (who died the previous year but the family had to wait until 2021 to have a memorial outdoors), and Robin Powelson.

Indigenous Peoples Concerns Committee (IPC) members wish to increase our understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Peoples and support them in exercising their rights and achieving their goals. We drafted minutes urging Friends to write letters to our representatives asking them to cosponsor the bill to establish the first formal Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools. We continue to provide modest financial support to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. Locally, we provide support to Right Relationship Boulder (RRB). We provide support to Isna Wicca Owayawa Loneman School of the Pine Ridge Reservation; Youth Healing Camps (Pine Ridge); Native American Rights Fund's Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative; Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes language programs; and Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, a program of Friends Peace Teams. We gave a workshop on Land Acknowledgements at IMYM and have posted our BFM land acknowledgement inside our meeting house.

Library Committee has continued to meet on Zoom with individuals doing necessary tasks relating to maintaining and developing our library collection. We received word that the Boulder Carnegie Library needs BFM to remove our collection of documents dating from the 1950s because they lack space. The convener worked on several options, and the most promising is to transfer BFM papers to the University of Colorado Archives where they can be safely preserved.

Nominating Committee was able to fill some vacancies that cropped up during the year. During the pandemic our work has had to rely on email and phone contact as we continue to have limited personal contact for lobbying Friends in the Fellowship Room during February as is our custom. Progress has been steady in finding willing Friends for positions and committees for the slate beginning May 2022, though significant challenges remain.

Program Committee decided not to be "proactive" in developing program hours as in the past, and basically to serve as a contact and keep the calendar/schedule for Program Hours. Individuals and committees who were led to develop programs did so and publicized their offerings on their own.

Peace and Social Justice Committee (PSJ) worked to keep Friends informed of peace and social justice issues at the national and local levels. Close ties were maintained with FCNL and AFSC. We actively participated with the Boulder County Sanctuary Coalition. We worked with the Quaker Palestine Israel Network (QPIN) to establish a website. PSJ wrote a Minute expressing support for rights of Palestinian children and their families, approved by Boulder Friends Meeting. A workshop on Palestinian Children's Rights was arranged for IMYM, and a Minute was introduced to and approved by IMYM. Members partnered with the NAACP, Black Lives Matter Freedom Schools, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and other organizations to work toward equity and accountability in education and policing. With BFM's Working Group on Racism and IPC, PSJ facilitated two book readings and discussions.

Religious Education Committee made adjustments due to COVID-19 to keep our children's First Day School going. Our convener was able to send out books appropriate to the monthly theme to most families, and often they were used as part of Zoom lessons. We had six families participate, working mostly with the K-6 grade group. We have had very few of the littlest children attend. We also have had only a few events with the Junior and Senior Young Friends. Again, we had the Christmas Program online, with great success and much participation from all age levels. We have also been able to keep the summer programs going with outdoor attendance.

Service Committee was again forced to curtail its in-person volunteer service to the many nonprofit aid organizations in Boulder County, due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 Service Committee provided financial support to: Boulder Homeless Shelter, Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA), Boulder Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN), Boulder Bridge House, and Harvest of Hope Pantry. We also continued to provide basic household and personal care products for Echo House.

Web Committee had a constructive year during this time of cautious re-opening of the Meetinghouse. We used the website to facilitate communications, working closely with committees and Friends to share their information and coordinating with the Weekly Bulletin and the Miscellany. Zoom tasks this year included continuing to train Zoom users and tech hosts, scheduling and posting Zoom meetings, and beginning a potential partnership with IMYM by using their larger Zoom account for program hours with a greater numbers of participants.

Ad-Hoc Committee on Accessibility has adopted the philosophy of universal design: the premise being that an adaptive building choice benefits far more than the people it was designed to help, in ways not always detected. We have approached the Meeting and B&G about dangerous spaces in our front lawn, about the need for safer egress, and a fire drill.

Ad-Hoc Committee on Reopening was formed so that Business Meeting would not have to wrestle every month with the questions of when, and to what extent, we could begin using the Meetinghouse again. Once we had a limited opening of the Meetinghouse, we facilitated “blended worship” where some friends are in the worship space and some are on Zoom. It quickly became apparent that there were many other benefits to having a blended meeting that would outlast the pandemic. We recommended and the Meeting approved, spending about \$9,000 to purchase an AV system to facilitate blended worship. Already, it has resulted in a much-improved worship experience for both in-person and online participants.

Submitted by Chris Griffin-Wehr, Clerk
Compiled by Rebecca Morris, Associate Clerk