

OTTAWA MONTHLY MEETING
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)



**COMMITTEE
HANDBOOK**

OTTAWA MONTHLY MEETING COMMITTEES

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Ottawa Meeting House
91A Fourth Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1S 2L1
tel: (613) 232-9923
website: ottawa.quaker.ca

First printing March 2012

OTTAWA MONTHLY MEETING COMMITTEES

"Committee work is a richly satisfying way to put Quaker principles and beliefs into practice. The work of all committees is conducted in the spirit of worship. Most Friends experience, too, a profoundly rewarding sense that they are helping to perpetuate and renew a fundamental tradition of Quakerism. At the same time, serving on a committee is for many the best way to come to know others in the Meeting and to form meaningful new friendships. Newcomers learn much from old-timers; old-timers find new sources of vitality and hope for the future of Quakerism from their close contact with newcomers to the Meeting."

Blue Book of Brooklyn Meeting Committee Responsibilities, 2009

Section I: How our committees work

Historic role of committees in Quaker meetings and their importance

Without paid clergy, Friends from the earliest times (the second half of the seventeenth century) have supported one another in their meetings by sharing the responsibility for pastoral care and the practical needs of the community. For pastoral care, each Monthly Meeting appoints a "Meeting of Ministry and Counsel". To attend to the practical needs of the community, the Monthly Meeting appoints committees. For example, Margaret Fell, who later married George Fox, organized relief funds for persecuted Friends, and in London a Meeting for Sufferings dealt with problems of meetings for worship and Friends in prison. As time went on, various committees became established as the need arose.

Our own Meeting has many committees. The smooth running of these committees is essential to the proper running of the Meeting.

Although final decisions are made in the Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business, committees are often given responsibility to make initial discernment of what the Meeting should do and bring their recommendations to Monthly Meeting.

How we choose our committees

It is the responsibility of the Monthly Meeting Nominating Committee to discern names of Friends to fill positions and to serve on our committees. This work is done in the fall for the next calendar year, the recommendations are brought to November Meeting for Business, and a final slate of names is approved in December.

We encourage regular attenders as well as members of the Meeting to consider serving on our committees.

Committee meetings: the first named, choosing a clerk of the committee, understanding the responsibilities of your committee, keeping minutes

When the names of committee members are initially approved by the Meeting, the Meeting will designate one of those named as the "first named". The sole responsibility of the first named is to call the first meeting, usually at the beginning of the new year, at which the committee will choose one of its members to act as its clerk for the coming year. The Clerk(s) of Monthly Meeting should be informed promptly of the names of the new clerks. Sometimes several members may agree to act as co-clerks but it is important in this case that one member is responsible for contact with Monthly Meeting.

All members of the committee should read the outline of terms of reference for their committee.

It is the responsibility of the clerk of the committee to call meetings. It is necessary to check with the Resident Friend to book space for meetings at the Meeting House--do

not assume the building will be available. The frequency of meetings depends on the committee; for many committees this will occur monthly or every six weeks. From time to time Monthly Meeting may pass a concern to a committee for consideration or action. If the committee feels that it is unable to carry out this task, it should report back to Monthly Meeting indicating what it feels able to do.

A record is kept of each meeting including a list of those present and what decisions were made. These minutes are circulated to members of the committee in a timely manner. Although formal minutes are not necessary, it is a good Friends' practice to follow.

Committees keep a binder of ongoing records including minutes from year to year, and pass them on from one clerk to the next. These records are a valuable source of the history of work undertaken, job description and background information. Ensure your committee gets the binder and keeps it up to date.

The clerk of each committee should obtain a key to the Meeting House from the Resident Friend. Committee members should ensure that one of them has the key to open the Meeting House door for meetings and not assume that the Resident Friend will be there to open the door. For security reasons these keys should be returned to the Resident Friend at the end of the clerk's tenure.

Committees and finances: budgeting for a committee's work

Most committees have a budget allocated for the calendar year by Monthly Meeting. The amount is approved by Monthly Meeting in December for the following year and will be found in the minutes of the December Meeting for Business.

Ongoing expenses within the committee's budget can be minuted by the committee and the bill submitted to the Treasurer without needing approval by Meeting for Business. All are asked to use the expense claim slips in the Treasurers' mailbox.

Any expenses in addition to the approved budget must

be approved by Meeting for Business before action is taken. Clerks of committees can ask the Treasurer for the status of their funds at any time.

Bringing committee reports and business to Monthly Meeting

Meeting for Business is held on the second Sunday of each month except during July and August when there is only one meeting. Items for the agenda should be submitted to Monthly Meeting Clerks in good time before the meeting.

Committees do not have to report every month. In most cases committee reports are requests for action by Monthly Meeting. It is a courtesy to Meeting for Business and its Clerks to send a clear written report ahead of time. If the committee has a complicated report it is best to have copies for distribution with specific requests for action clearly indicated. It is not always necessary to read the report, just give Friends enough time to read it themselves.

If the clerk of a committee cannot be present at Meeting for Business, another member of the committee may present the report. General information which does not require a decision can be provided in written form as an attachment to Monthly Meeting minutes.

Monthly Meeting asks its committees to provide an annual report of the committee's activities. The terms of reference of the committee may also be discussed and if necessary brought up to date. The timing of these reports is scheduled by the Monthly Meeting Clerks. See the Appendix.

Committees and individual Friends are cautioned that they need approval from Monthly Meeting before they present themselves as representing Ottawa Monthly Meeting in other venues.

Support for committees: What to do if you run into problems

It is important to the Meeting that each of its committees runs smoothly. If a committee you are on runs into trouble there are various forms of support. If there is a question about procedure, you could contact a Meeting Clerk or another knowledgeable Friend; a previous clerk of the committee may be able to help. The Treasurer can answer questions about finances or budgets. If there are interpersonal problems you might talk with a member of Ministry and Counsel or a Clerk of the Meeting.

We are a diverse community but have a common centre, and try to solve such problems in keeping with our common beliefs.

Section II: Committees, positions and terms of service

Membership for most of the committees and positions is open to both Ottawa Monthly Meeting members and attenders. The exceptions, which are noted below, are those which require membership in Ottawa Monthly Meeting, or more generally, Canadian Yearly Meeting (every member of OMM is a member of CYM).

Appointments are for the calendar year except where noted. They are decided at the December Meeting for Business following a slate of recommendations made in November by the Nominating Committee. An appointment is often renewed from year to year, but for various reasons the Nominating Committee may propose the name of a different Friend for a position.

What follows are brief outlines of the responsibilities of the committees and positions. Fuller descriptions are kept in a loose leaf binder in the Meeting library. Committees are urged to keep these descriptions up to date.

A list of the current membership of each of the Ottawa Monthly Meeting committees and appointments to other positions is included each year at the end of the Meeting directory.

Adult Religious Education and Outreach Committee

No preset number, usually 6 members

This Committee organises adult religious education and outreach events on its own initiative or when requested by the Meeting. A major responsibility of the Committee is to

plan and run the annual Meeting retreat which is held on a weekend around the end of January.

Bulletin Board

The person in this position is responsible for keeping the bulletin boards in the Meeting House tidy. This may involve removing out of date or inappropriate notices and moving notices to a more appropriate board.

Clerk, Co-Clerks and Recording Clerks

Must be members of Canadian Yearly Meeting

Smooth running of the Meeting is the responsibility of the Clerk (or co-Clerks) of the Meeting. This requires first of all clerking the Monthly Meeting for Business, ensuring that an agenda is sent out ahead of time and following up on decisions made. The Clerks also deal with phone calls forwarded by the Resident Friend and emails (perhaps sending them to an appropriate committee), and deal with the Clerk's incoming postal mail in a timely manner. The Clerks are also available to act as resource persons to Meeting committees.

The Recording Clerk records minutes at Monthly Meetings, collects reports and distributes the minutes electronically in a timely manner. The Recording Clerk provides a hard copy of the minutes to the person responsible for photocopying and distribution via ordinary mail, and a copy printed on archival quality paper for the Canadian Yearly Meeting archives (see Custodian of Records). The Recording Clerk also helps with the Clerk's correspondence and the agenda.

Committee of Care for Resident Friend

Currently 3 members

The purpose of this committee is to support and advise the Resident Friend, both personally and in relationship to the Meeting. Each year as part of the reappointment process Premises Committee will seek feed back from the Committee of Care for the Resident Friend.

Couple Enrichment Coordinator

The couple enrichment program is based on the Friends General Conference program. It is especially aimed at supporting marriages under the care of the Meeting, but non-Quaker couples and non-married couples are also welcome. Weekend workshops for the program are organized when needed. The Couple Enrichment Coordinator finds and liaises with a leader couple, determines the date and venue, advertises, registers participants, and tracks the finances. The coordinator also provides oversight for ongoing couples events.

Custodians of End of Life Plans

Currently 2 members

The custodians are responsible for the safekeeping and confidentiality of End of Life Plans which individual Friends have requested the Meeting to hold until needed. They supply and revise the forms as necessary, and periodically remind Friends about the availability of the End of Life Plans and related information, such as information about simple funerals.

Custodian of Records

Must be a member of Canadian Yearly Meeting

This Friend records the Meeting's decisions regarding membership and keeps the Record of Current Membership up to date; gathers statistics about our Meeting required by Canadian Yearly Meeting and sends an annual report to the CYM Statistical Secretary; keeps a copy of the minutes of every Meeting for Business, for the Meeting's reference and history, and sends *signed* copies on acid-free paper to the Yearly Meeting Archives (usually every second year).

Finance Committee

Currently 6 members including Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer ex officio. The clerk of this committee and the treasurers must be members of Canadian Yearly Meeting.

The Finance Committee is responsible for maintaining

an overview of the financial health of the Meeting. It supports and advises the Treasurers, ensures that the accounts are audited each year, that financial obligations such as insurance are paid, and that rules of the Canada Revenue Agency with regard to charitable organizations are being properly followed. It may also be asked from time to time to advise the Meeting on particular financial matters.

The Committee is responsible for preparing a draft budget for OMM each year. This budget is presented at November Monthly Meeting and, subject to amendment, adopted at the December Monthly Meeting.

First Day School Committee and First Day School Coordinator

No preset number of members. The Coordinator is named by Monthly Meeting.

The First Day School Committee, led by the Coordinator, is responsible for organizing the program for infants, children, young Friends and young adult Friends during Meeting for Worship, and at other times they may determine.

The object of the program is to help children develop a set of moral standards, based on our Quaker traditions and Judeo-Christian roots, which will serve them now and later in life. The program is dependent on volunteers from the Meeting as well as members of the Committee.

There are no curriculum-based First Day School classes during July and August, but the Meeting provides less formal care for children during these months.

The Coordinator's term begins at the beginning of September.

Hearing System Committee

Usually 2 members

These Friends are responsible for setting up the hearing system for Meeting for Worship, providing receivers for those Friends who require them, and ensuring that the system is properly charged and in good condition.

Hospitality Committee

Currently 4 members

This Committee is responsible for organizing our Meeting's hospitality for Quaker events such as Representative Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting when it meets in Ottawa, including billeting of out of town participants, transportation and food through the use of volunteers from the Meeting.

All members and attenders of the Meeting are expected to help as able.

Library Committee and Librarian

The Committee has currently 4 members including the Librarian

The Library Committee is responsible for the care and upkeep of the Meeting House library including: maintaining the collection in good order and the catalogue up to date, selecting and purchasing new material and receiving donated items, ensuring that borrowed material is returned within a reasonable time, and helping members and attenders find information they require. The Committee makes an annual inventory of its holdings.

The Library Committee also informs the Meeting about new material which comes into the Library and provides an annual report to Monthly Meeting.

Marriage Registrars

Appointments are for an indefinite period. All must be members of Ottawa Monthly Meeting.

Marriage registrars of the Meeting are appointments made by the Province of Ontario on the request of the Monthly Meeting. They are empowered to sign the necessary legal documents when a marriage has taken place under the care of the Meeting. Our marriage registrars can only carry out this function when requested by the Meeting.

See *Organization and Procedure* of CYM, Section 10.8.

Mailing of Minutes

This person mails copies of the Monthly Meeting minutes to Friends who do not get them electronically.

Meeting Directory

The person responsible for the Meeting Directory prepares an updated directory at the beginning of each year, and provides quarterly lists of changes and additions for the Meeting minutes during the year.

Meeting of Ministry and Counsel

All 6 members of Ministry and Counsel must be members of Canadian Yearly Meeting. Appointments are for three years. Only two consecutive terms allowed.

Unprogrammed Quaker Meetings have no paid ministers, and the pastoral role is carried out by the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. Ministry and Counsel cares for the Meeting for Worship, arranges visits to Friends in time of need, and has some responsibility in arrangement of weddings and memorial meetings under the care of the Meeting.

The primary function of Ministry and Counsel is to consider the overall spiritual tenor of the Meeting. Adult Religious Education Committee, First Day School Committee and Peace and Social Concerns Committee all have roles in spiritual nurture. Ministry and Counsel's concern is to be sensitive to gaps or needs that may arise, discern ways to respond constructively, and to provide a confidential process where needed to resolve difficulties.

Membership in Ministry and Counsel carries especial responsibilities since Ministry and Counsel is often called upon to deal with sensitive and personal issues.

See *Organization and Procedure* of CYM, Sections 7.1-7.8, for further details.

Nominating Committee

Usually 3-4 members. Names for Nominating Committee are not brought forward by Nominating Committee itself. Instead

Ottawa Monthly Meeting sets up an ad hoc Naming Committee at its November meeting and instructs the Naming Committee to bring names for the next year's Nominating Committee to the December meeting.

Nominating Committee is responsible for bringing names of Friends to fill positions for Monthly Meeting committees as required. The Committee brings a slate of names to the November Monthly Meeting for Monthly Meeting committees and positions in the following year. After possible modification, the slate is approved in December. The Meeting may also ask Nominating Committee during the year for recommendations to fill vacancies when these occur.

In February Nominating Committee is asked to suggest names for Yearly Meeting positions. After approval by Monthly Meeting these names are sent forward to Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee for consideration.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee

No preset number of members

This Committee provides Ottawa Monthly Meeting with discernment and practical advice with respect to peace, social justice and local community concerns.

As well as projects carried by Friends collectively, the Committee encourages and supports individual Friends who want to deepen their understanding and act on these issues. Ottawa Monthly Meeting supports some projects financially, often in collaboration with Canadian Friends Service Committee. Peace and Social Concerns Committee reports attached to minutes of Monthly Meeting give details of recent activities.

Peace Force Committee

Currently 2 members

Responsible for recommending where Peace Force funds should be spent.

Photo Board

The person responsible for the photo board keeps it up to date by taking photos of members and attenders and adding them, and removing photos of people who no longer attend. New attenders are encouraged to allow their photos to be added.

Premises Committee

Currently 5 members including the Resident Friend ex officio

The Premises Committee is responsible for overseeing the upkeep and improvement of the Meeting House and garden, as well as the Resident Friend's apartment. It works with and supports the Resident Friend in the performance of routine duties, supervises the long term rental requests, checks that the outside notice board is kept up to date, hires a cleaner for the Meeting House and ensures that the cleaning is properly carried out.

The Premises Committee also brings recommendations to Monthly Meeting when it sees a need for major expenses for repair or improvement under the Building Fund.

Each year in April the Premises Committee brings a recommendation to Monthly Meeting concerning the appointment of the Resident Friend (a Resident Friend's appointment is for one year, starting in the Fall, renewable up to three years). If the Resident Friend is completing a third year, or the Premises Committee does not recommend renewal, the Monthly Meeting will strike a search committee to find a new Resident Friend.

Quaker Book Service Committee

Currently 6 members. Appointments are ongoing and changes in membership of QBS are only made at the request of the Committee.

The Quaker Book Service is operated by a committee of the Meeting on behalf of the Publications and Communications Committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting and has operated since 1979. Its mandate is to make Quaker literature readily available to Friends in Canada as well as

filling international book orders. The work of the Quaker Book Service must be attended to daily, every week of the year, so in that respect it functions like a business as well as a Meeting committee.

Refugee Housing (OMRA) Committee

Currently 3 members

OMRA is a Mennonite initiative which is supported by a coalition of churches in Ottawa including our own Meeting. Members of the Refugee Housing Committee sell prepaid grocery cards. The grocery companies donate a percentage of the amount paid for the cards to OMRA and this is used to finance houses which are owned by OMRA and rented at reduced rates to incoming refugees.

Regional Gathering Liaison Committee

Usually 2 to 4 members

Friends from Quaker meetings and worship groups in Montreal and Eastern Ontario meet twice a year for a weekend at St. Lawrence Valley Regional Gathering. Our representative acts as liaison with the other meetings in the organization of these Gatherings. Groups which meet take turns being responsible for programs for adults and children, registration and food preparation. The Regional Gathering Liaison Committee through prior planning and attendance ensures that the Meeting does its share in all these aspects.

Resident Friend

When a new Resident Friend is required, an ad hoc search committee is set up by Monthly Meeting in the spring to advertise publically for the position and then recommend a candidate to Monthly Meeting. The appointment is for one year starting in September, with possible renewal up to three years.

The Resident Friend lives in the Meeting House. The main responsibilities of the Resident Friend are care of the Meeting House and grounds, arrangement of bookings for the rental of the premises, and responding to inquiries about our

meetings for worship on Sunday. See Guidelines for the Resident Friend.

The Resident Friend works closely with the Premises Committee (see Premises Committee).

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

These positions can only be filled by Friends who are members of Canadian Yearly Meeting. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are ex officio members of Finance Committee.

The Treasurer is responsible for making payments on behalf of the Meeting for properly accounted expenses, keeping accurate records of all Meeting income and expenditure, and ensuring that the Meeting fulfils the rules of Canada Revenue Agency for a charitable organization. The Treasurer makes monthly reports on income and expenditure to the Meeting, prepares an annual financial statement for auditing, and submits the appropriate forms to CRA in a timely manner (T4 slips for employees in February, and the Registered Charity form before the end of June). Problems relating to Meeting finances are brought to the attention of the Finance Committee.

The Assistant Treasurer is responsible for recording and depositing income received each month, and issuing appropriate charitable receipts each year to donors.

Both the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer have signing authority on the Meeting accounts. The Meeting also arranges authorization for two other Friends to sign in the event that the Treasurers are not available.

Trustees

Trustees must be members of Ottawa Monthly Meeting. Appointment as a Trustee continues indefinitely unless the Meeting decides to terminate the appointment or the Trustee decides to retire. Appointment of Trustees is covered by Provincial Law. A meeting at which a new Trustee is appointed must be publicly announced (posted on the door of the Meeting House) eight days in advance.

For duties, see *Organization and Procedure* of CYM, Section 2.17.

Website Committee

Currently 3 members

This Committee is responsible for recommending policy for the use of the Meeting's website (ottawa.quaker.ca) and ensuring that the website is up-to-date and a positive representation of the Meeting.

Representative to Representative Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting

Must be a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting. Appointed for 5 years.

This Friend represents Ottawa Monthly Meeting at the twice yearly meetings of Representative Meeting (which is Canadian Yearly Meeting when the latter is not in session) and reports on these meetings at Meeting for Business.

See *Organization and Procedure* of CYM, Section 6.4.

Representatives to Local Non-Quaker Bodies

Appointments for 1 year renewable. One or two appointments to each body according to interest.

Capital Region Interfaith Council

Encourages interfaith contact between different faith groups in Ottawa.

Centretown Churches Social Action Committee

CSSAC was formed in 1967 to respond to social needs in the Centretown area. Our Meeting supports the Centretown Emergency Food Centre through a monthly collection taken from November to April for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Christian Council of the Capital Area

Encourages ecumenical interaction between the local churches.

Women's Interchurch Council

This ecumenical organization brings church women together to promote the Christian message, and is responsible for the local organization of an annual world day of prayer.

Appendix: Schedule for committee reports to Monthly Meeting

OMM clerks will advise committee clerks a month in advance of a needed report.

January Reports

Library Committee - annual report

February Reports

Statistical Report

Update of OMM directory

Ministry and Counsel - State of the Society Report - first draft

Adult Religious Education Committee - retreat report

March Reports

Committee of Care for Resident Friend

Quaker Book Service annual report

Ministry and Counsel - State of the Society Report - for approval

Nominating Committee - CYM - Nominations

Women's Interchurch Council (WICC) World Day of Prayer

April Reports

Choose delegates for CYM

Other reports/agenda items for CYM

OMRA - annual report

May Reports

Centretown Social Action Committee/Centretown Emergency

Food Cupboard donations report

First Day School Committee - end of year report and summer plans

Representative Meeting report

June Reports

Church Council of Capital Area (CCCA)

Capital Region Interfaith Committee (CRIC)

Couple Enrichment Co-ordinator annual report

Regional Gathering Committee report

July Reports

Audited Finance report

August - no Monthly Meeting

September Reports

CYM delegates' reports

First Day School Committee (plans for the coming year)

October Reports

November Reports

Trustees

Finance Committee – draft budget for following year

Nominating Committee – draft nominations for following year

Adult Religious Education Committee - retreat plans

Regional Gathering Committee report

December Reports

Representative Meeting report

Treasurer – final budget for the following year

Nominating Committee – final nominations for following year

Naming Committee (for Nominating Committee)