

**Tampa Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**

Minutes

13 Second Month 2022

Meeting was held online via Zoom.

Meeting Clerk began the gathering with silent worship and a reading of the queries for the meeting.

Queries for Participants in the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

- How do I prepare myself for meeting for business?
- Do I approach the meeting for business as a meeting for worship, corporately seeking divine guidance?
- In the conduct of business, do I avoid secular practices such as debate, persuasion, coercive devices, and procedures equivalent to voting?
- Do I speak only once on the same issue?
- Do I accept the spiritual need to relinquish control in the meeting for business, recognizing that the meeting's corporate spiritual discernment of God's will may lead in a quite different direction from my own perception of God's will, no matter how sincere?
- Do I accept responsibility to assist the clerk by maintaining openness, sensitivity, and tenderness to others, recognizing that the true sense of the meeting can be ascertained only when all present are clerking the meeting together with the clerk, practicing spiritual discernment to the best of our abilities?
– SEYM Faith and Practice, 2013

Clerks

Nil Wilkins Interim Meeting Clerk
Cynde Mercer Recording Clerk

Attendees

Vincent Cobb
Miki Epperson
Chris Hugues
Steve Kinney
Dustin Lemke

Cynde Mercer
Robin Passmore
Karen Putney
Louis Putney
Nancy Triscritti

Nil Wilkins
Roy Yerrakadu
Cecilia Yocum

Take action

Nil Wilkins brought forth the issue of our witness on the impact of current Florida draft legislation (Appendix A). SEYM will consider this at yearly meeting, but our meeting should consider going ahead with discernment on wording and minuting our concerns. Louis Putney, Robin Passmore and perhaps Jan Dahm will work on wording and bring this back to the meeting for further discernment.

Cecilia Yocum spoke to discernment on the meeting rejoining HOPE. Concerns were raised about HOPE's acceptance of those from the LGBTQ community and how the annual membership fee would fit into our budget. Meeting consensus is that we should not rejoin HOPE at this time.

Nil Wilkins spoke to selecting a date and time for a threshing session of FCNL's 2022 legislative priorities, which are to be submitted by 12 April 2022. Meeting agrees to hold discernment First Day (Sunday) 6 March at 11:30 am.

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SEYM's *Ad hoc* Florida Retirement Community Committee requests F/friends respond to a short survey to discern interest in having a Quaker-run retirement community in our region, and what SEYM Friends' priorities and concerns would be. Survey may be found at <https://seymquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/REPORT-Ad-hoc-Florida-Retirement-Community-Committee.pdf>.

In order to get complete meeting information, F/friends are encouraged to sign up for both the clerk's meeting list (notify ngwvet@aol.com) and the weekly email newsletter (visit TampaQuakers.org/contact).

Events

See TampaFriends.org/events for dates and details.

- 20 February Adult First Day Program at 9 am. Online only.

- 27 February Jubilee House presentation by Sarah Woodard at 11:30 am. Online only.

- 11 March Chopin Project concert at 7 pm. Meeting house (online option TBD).

Business

Chris Hugues asked if the meeting would like to have another Jazz Soup concert in March. Meeting approves.

Chris Hugues presented the Treasurer's report. Monthly expenses continue to exceed donations and this month our year-to-date operating income variance slipped into negative numbers. Friends accept the Treasurer's report.

Minutes of First Month were approved as submitted.

Reports and minutes

Archives – No report.

Communications – No report.

First Day School – No report.

Hospitality and Housekeeping – No report.

Library – No report.

Membership Recorder – No report.

Ministry and Counsel – Nancy Triscritti reported that the Spiritual State of the Meeting should be ready for its first reading in March.

Naming – No report.

Nominating – Chris Hugues reported that the committee is working on nominations and expect to have the first reading next month.

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Peace and Social Concerns – No report.

Property – Chris Hugues suggested we wait for scheduling the CommUnity Picnic until the Hillsborough positivity rate falls; he met with Pyramid about painting murals on the low front wall; banners have been delivered and will be mounted soon (Appendix B); fellowship building exterior painting will begin soon. Another work day needs to be scheduled for cold weather cleanup of landscaping.

Way Forward Committee – Chris Hugues reported that the short-term goal list is complete and the committee is on hiatus until further notice.

Closing worship

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Appendix A

As members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), we feel called to witness to the unjust legislations currently under consideration by the Florida legislature: HB 211 – Transgender Youth Medical Ban (would jail doctors for providing lifesaving, gender-affirming care to young people); HB 1557 and SB 1834 – Parental Right in Education (“Don’t Say Gay”); HB 7 and SB 148 – Individual Freedom (“Stop WOKE Act”); HB 747 and SB 1820 – Protections of Medical Conscience (License to Discriminate in Healthcare); and HB 167 – Abortion (Anti-Abortion bill with no provisions for rape or incest).

These bills target among the most vulnerable of our fellow Floridians, the LGBTQ community, as well as women, and educators, by banning health care services (HB 211; HB 747 and SB 1820; and HB 167); controlling speech in classrooms about race, gender, and sexuality, and banning books (HB 1557 and SB 1834; HB 7 and SB 148).

Especially disheartening is the Transgender Youth Medical Care Ban, HB 211, which puts politicians between trans youth, their parents, and their doctor. The text of the bill can be found at <https://m.flsenate.gov/session/bill/2022/211/billtext/filed.pdf>.

According to Equality Florida, attacks on the transgender community in Florida (especially transgender women) are increasing following the state’s passage of the ban on trans youth in sports (signed into law by you on June 1, 2021). In addition, viral videos show trans children in Florida schools being physically bullied. A 2017 report by the CDC reported that 35% of trans students are bullied at school and 35% attempt suicide. The full report can be found at [Transgender Identity and Experiences of Violence Victimization, Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and Sexual Risk Behaviors Among High School Students — 19 States and Large Urban School Districts, 2017 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/aa50a01a.htm).

As Quakers, consistent with our belief of that of God in everyone and our testimony of social and economic justice, in order to meet our responsibilities to the community and the world, we are to “do all in our power to end governmental, social, economic, and educational injustices in our community and to create equal opportunity for all. {To that end} we are to encourage inclusiveness and discourage discrimination...encourage all efforts to overcome prejudices... and to cherish diversity.” (Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Faith and Practice, Fourth edition 2013)

We are called by scripture to love our neighbor – all our neighbors, with no exceptions (Leviticus 19:9-18 and Matthew 22:37-39). As Quaker William Penn noted, “Love is the most difficult lesson in Christianity; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it.”

Therefore, Tampa Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, recognizing the unloving action, intolerance, and injustice of these proposed bills, calls on our fellow Floridians including all our Florida state Representatives and Senators, as well as Governor DeSantis to not support these bills.

In addition, Tampa Monthly Meeting encourages a letter writing campaign to state Representatives, Senators, and to Governor DeSantis.

If you do not know who your representatives are, they can be found at the following link: www.myfloridahouse.gov.

Email the Governor at GovernorRon.Desantis@eog.myflorida.com and/or a phone call to the Governor’s office at 850-717-9337.

For additional assistance, please call the State Assistance Information Line at 800-342-3557.

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Appendix B

