

Chapter IV

YEARLY MEETING

Organization and Functions

Membership, Purpose

A Yearly Meeting consists of the members of the Quarterly Meetings and thus the constituent Monthly Meeting subordinate to them. The purpose of its annual assemblies is the general ordering and regulating of the affairs of the constituent bodies in the service of God and the maintenance and promotion of Christian faith, love, unity, life and practice throughout the subordinate Meetings. All members have the privilege and responsibility of attendance and participation in its sessions. Monthly Meetings are encouraged to appoint representatives whose responsibility is to attend and participate in Yearly Meeting sessions and to report the work of the sessions to their respective Quarterly and Monthly Meetings.

Jurisdiction

The Yearly Meeting has authority to decide all questions of administration, to counsel, admonish, or discipline its subordinate Meetings, to institute measures and to provide means for the promotion of truth and righteousness, and to inaugurate and carry on departments of religious and philanthropic work.

Clerks

A Presiding Clerk, Recording Clerk and Assistants shall be appointed. The Yearly Meeting shall be opened at the appointed time and place by the Presiding Clerk. In the absence of the Presiding Clerk, the Assistant Presiding Clerk shall perform this service. If neither shall be present, the Meeting shall appoint a temporary clerk. The Presiding Clerk and Assistant Presiding Clerk shall be appointed annually, but not to exceed six consecutive years in one office or a total of nine consecutive years for one person in both offices. The Recording Clerk, or Assistant, shall keep approved minutes of all sessions.

Trustees

The Yearly Meeting shall appoint six (6) Trustees in accordance with the law and this discipline. The said Trustees shall be appointed for terms of six years and one third of the number shall be appointed every two years, with a limit of two consecutive terms of service. Due care must be exercised by the Trustees in carrying out their fiduciary duties.

Fiduciary Corporation

The Wilmington Yearly Meeting Fiduciary Corporation is an Ohio, non-profit corporation organized in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, Section 1715.12. Members of the Corporation shall be the current members of the Trustees of Wilmington Yearly Meeting. Upon any action of the Yearly Meeting electing or removing one of its Trustees, the membership of the Corporation shall change at the same time.

The Wilmington Yearly Meeting Fiduciary Corporation is to provide for the establishment and administration of an endowment fund for the benefit of Wilmington Yearly Meeting. The Corporation has authority to receive, hold and disburse gifts, devises, bequests and funds from other sources; and, to invest, manage and dispose of such funds, subject to the regulations of the donor and/or Wilmington Yearly Meeting.

The Corporation has charge of all property owned by Wilmington Yearly Meeting with authority to hold, invest, control and manage such property for its benefit; and, to purchase, sell, lease and mortgage any real estate owned by Wilmington Yearly Meeting.

The Corporation shall have all the authority accorded such a Corporation by Section 1715.12 of the Ohio Revised Code, subject to the limitations contained in the Corporation's Articles and its Code of Regulations.

The financial books of the Corporation shall be audited annually and a report made to Yearly Meeting.

Property of Discontinued Meetings

When a Meeting is discontinued, the physical property and investments belonging to said Meeting shall be vested in the Wilmington Yearly Meeting Fiduciary Corporation, a subsidiary Corporation of Wilmington Yearly Meeting, except when otherwise determined by deed or other legal restriction.

Such property is to be held for some specific purpose, or used for the advancement of the general work of the Yearly Meeting, as that body may determine. All funds held for such discontinued Meetings shall be administered as far as possible in accordance with the directions of the original donors. A Meeting is not to be considered as discontinued if it unites as an organized group with another Friends Meeting.

Stewardship and Finance Committee

The Stewardship and Finance Committee shall annually solicit projections of expenditures from the Boards and Committees of the Yearly Meeting, and shall determine the financial status of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. It shall balance and refine these into a budget to be presented to Yearly Meeting in session together with an apportionment between the Monthly Meetings of funds to be raised to support the proposed budget. The Stewardship and Finance Committee shall promote fund raising, planned giving and individual stewardship to finance and support Yearly Meeting programs.

The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee and each Quarterly Meeting shall annually appoint one (1) person to the Stewardship and Finance Committee for a three-year term. A person may be appointed to two consecutive full terms.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee shall meet during Yearly Meeting sessions to appoint a Clerk and plan its work.

The fiscal year of the Yearly Meeting shall be the calendar year.

Treasurer

The Nominating Committee shall annually recommend to Yearly Meeting in session a person to serve as Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall receive monies from Monthly Meetings and others, and shall keep records of the same. The Treasurer shall, within budgetary authority, pay out monies as directed by the Yearly Meeting, its Permanent Board, its Executive Committee, or the chairperson of appointed boards and committees, and shall keep records of the same. The Fiduciary Corporation shall annually audit the Treasurer's books and present its report to the Yearly Meeting.

A new position of assistant to the treasurer was created in 2000 and also is to be appointed by the WYM Nominating Committee.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee of the Yearly Meeting shall be composed of those persons designated by the Quarterly Meetings for this purpose. Each Quarterly Meeting shall annually appoint one person to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee for a three-year term. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for all Yearly Meeting nominations except the Nominating Committee itself, some members of the Stewardship and Finance Committee and Friends United Meeting Commission Members who shall be recommended by the Executive Committee to the Yearly Meeting.

A person may not continue service on a given committee or board more than two consecutive terms. After a year out of office a person may be reappointed.

The Nominating Committee shall obtain the consent of each nominee before presenting the name to the Yearly Meeting.

Permanent Board

Organization

The Permanent Board shall consist of representatives from each Monthly Meeting and of persons in the following administrative positions in the Yearly Meeting: Presiding Clerk, Assistant Presiding Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, United Society of Friends Women President, Quaker Men President, Young Friends Committee Chairman, Chairman of Stewardship and Finance Committee, Chairman of Education Board, Chairman of Outreach Board, Chairman of Board on Christian Concerns for Peace and Society, Chairman of Camp Board, Chairman of Trustees, Wilmington College president or representative and the Executive Secretary.

Each Monthly Meeting shall have one representative on the Permanent Board plus one for each two hundred members or fraction thereof over the first two hundred. These representatives shall serve a term of three years and may be reappointed for one additional three year term. A substitute may be authorized by the Monthly Meeting to serve in place of its regular representative.

Each Monthly Meeting should forward the names of its Permanent Board representatives to Quarterly Meeting prior to the annual sessions of Yearly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting shall have the authority to fill, on an at-large basis, any vacancies not filled by the Monthly Meetings.

Duties

The Permanent Board shall represent the Yearly Meeting in the interim between annual assemblies. It may act on behalf of the Yearly Meeting in accordance with Faith and Practice in cases where the interests of Friends render it necessary.

Time of Meeting

The Permanent Board shall meet as necessary through the year. Ten days notice of meetings must be given in writing to all members and the business to come before the meeting shall be stated in the call. The Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk shall be the Clerk of the Permanent Board. The Permanent Board shall name its own Recording Clerk. All matters of business referred to the Permanent Board shall be presented in writing to one of the clerks.

It shall keep a record of its proceedings and annually lay the same before the Yearly Meeting.

Executive Committee Organization

An Executive Committee of the Permanent Board is formed of the following twelve members: Presiding Clerk, Assistant Presiding Clerk, Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, Chairman of Board on Outreach, Chairman of Board on Educational Concerns, Chairman of Board on Christian Concerns for Peace and Society, Chairman of Trustees, Chairman of Stewardship and Finance Committee, Executive Secretary and three members-at-large, representatives of the Yearly Meeting geographically. Preceding Yearly Meeting, members-at-large are to be named for the following year from the membership of the Permanent Board. The Assistant Presiding Clerk shall be chairman of the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee Duties

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Permanent Board and shall have the power to act on its behalf on those matters of business referred to it by that Board.

The Executive Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Secretary. After reviewing the work of the Executive Secretary, it shall make recommendations to the Permanent Board concerning employment, salary, travel expense and other matters.

The Executive Committee shall plan the program of Yearly Meeting sessions, and shall make provisions for handling items of new business.

Executive Secretary

Upon nomination of the Executive Committee the Permanent Board may appoint a person to serve as Executive Secretary. Such a person shall be responsible to the Executive Committee and shall serve the interests of all departments of the work of the Yearly Meeting, meeting with Boards and Committees and be ready to assist and advise wherever helpful. The Executive Secretary shall work with local meetings in the process of selecting pastoral leadership. The Executive Secretary shall give immediate attention and counsel to pastors and meetings if difficulties arise in meetings. The Executive Secretary shall keep the members of Wilmington Yearly Meeting informed of the needs and opportunities in all departments of the Yearly Meeting work.

Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel

Membership

The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel is composed of the members of the Quarterly Meetings on Ministry and Counsel within its limits. It shall meet annually at such times as the Yearly Meeting shall direct, and thereafter on its own adjournment, but in no case so as to conflict with the sessions of the Yearly Meeting.

Clerks, Reports

It shall appoint Clerks annually and receive reports from the Quarterly Meetings on Ministry and Counsel, and it shall report annually to the Yearly Meeting the conditions and work of the ministry and of the membership; it may address epistles of advice and instruction to its subordinate Meetings, and appoint committees to visit them. The Clerks shall serve no more than six consecutive terms.

Duties

The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall carefully consider subjects which have reference to spiritual needs and may report its judgment to the Yearly Meeting for its action.

Committees

There will be the following Committees: (a) The Committee on Training and Recording of Ministers will be composed of six members, at least one-half of whom shall be other than recorded ministers. Appointments shall be made for three years, the term of two memberships expiring each year. (b) The Committee on Evangelism, Church Extension and Pastoral Care will be composed of twelve members. Each year the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel will name two members at-large for three-year terms. In addition one from each Quarterly Meeting will be named each year for two-year terms by the respective Quarterly Meetings. No more than six years can be served consecutively. The Yearly Meeting Clerk of Ministry and Counsel shall serve ex-officio. (c) Committee to Edit Memorials will have three-year terms, one member's term expiring each year. (d) State of Society Committee will be composed of three persons serving three-year terms, one term expiring each year.

The Executive Committee of Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel will be composed of the Clerks, the Chairmen of the four Committees and the Clerks of the Quarterly Meetings. The Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk and Yearly Meeting Executive Secretary will serve in an ex-officio capacity.

Nominating Committee

Each Quarter will name one person to the Nominating Committee. These names shall be presented

annually to Yearly Meeting. (In case of failure to send these names, the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel has the right to name said persons.)

Recording of Ministers

Evidence of Gift

When a member has spoken to the edification and spiritual help of the congregation, and has rendered said service in such a manner and to such an extent as to afford a basis for the formation of a judgment as to the nature of his/her gifts and calling, the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially recognized. While a spoken message may be helpful in its place, and should be esteemed and encouraged accordingly, not every person who speaks in public should be given official recognition. It should be borne in mind that such recognition in ministry is not only a seal of approval of one who is locally helpful but that it also involves extension of service beyond the local community. Recorded ministers not only have opportunity for service among Friends generally but, because of the increase of interdenominational activity, such recognition opens the way for contacts and associations with ministers and members of other religious bodies.

Initial Steps

When the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel is satisfied that a member has a gift in the ministry and in its judgment, is of suitable character and aptitude, it shall report its judgment to the Monthly Meeting, which shall in turn report back to the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. If this report is favorable, the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall report its judgment by a minute to the Quarterly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, which shall appoint a committee that shall appraise the general fitness of the individual under consideration. This committee shall visit the member under consideration to ascertain maturity, experience and knowledge of the Christian faith and desire to continue in the public ministry as a Friends' minister as well as willingness to pursue a course of instruction to develop understanding of Christian truth and Friends' principles. It shall also confer with persons who know this member and will testify as to his/her qualifications for the ministry. It may, if desirable, meet with the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. If the Committee of the Quarterly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel reports favorably, the matter shall be brought before the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel by an extract from the minutes of the Quarterly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel.

Training and Recording

If the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, after due inquiry, concurs in the action of the subordinate Meeting, it shall refer the matter to the Committee on Training and Recording of Ministers. This committee shall have the person under its care until he/she has completed the educational requirements as set up by the Yearly Meeting. When the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel has received a report from the Committee on Training and Recording of Ministers that a member who has been under their care has satisfactorily met the educational requirements of the Yearly Meeting they shall consider again the whole question of the fitness of the individual to be recognized as a minister. After due consideration, if the way seems clear, the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall recommend to the Yearly Meeting that the member under consideration be recorded as a minister.

Final Action

When the Yearly Meeting has acted favorably upon the matter, the recording is thereby completed and the Clerk shall furnish a copy of the minute to the Quarterly Meeting and through it to the Monthly Meeting of which the individual is a member. Both Meetings shall enter in full this minute on their books of record.

Disapproval

When a proposition to record a member as a minister is disapproved, the body taking this action shall so inform the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel in which the proposition originated.

Rescinding

In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost his/her gift and usefulness in the ministry, a proposition to rescind the action of recording as a minister may originate in the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel of the Monthly Meeting, or the Quarterly Meeting, or of the Yearly Meeting of which he/she is a member. In every case, procedure shall follow the usual course through superior bodies, and final action shall rest with the Yearly Meeting. The individual concerned and the Monthly Meeting shall be notified before final action is taken and care shall be exercised that all rights involved are fully safeguarded.

Transfer

The status of a minister is transferable by certificate of membership from one Yearly Meeting to another. It is expected, however, that a minister planning to engage in the pastoral ministry will endeavor to meet the educational requirements of the Yearly Meeting to which transfer is made.

Standards of Preparation for Recording

The minimum requirement for one to be recorded a minister in Wilmington Yearly Meeting shall be the equivalent of a high school education. All persons contemplating service in the ministry shall be encouraged, insofar as possible, to attend college and seminary. All candidates for Recording will submit transcripts of college and seminary work for examination by the Training and Recording Committee. The Yearly Meeting Committee shall determine areas of deficiency, if any, and shall recommend specific courses for completing training. All student ministers shall also be urged strongly to attend other helpful assemblies, including the Ohio Pastor's Convocation, the Yearly Meeting's Pastor's Short Course, Yearly Meeting sessions, and the sessions of Friends United Meeting, etc.

Yearly Meeting Boards

Board on Property

The Board on Property shall coordinate the property and financial interests of the Yearly Meeting and shall be composed of members of the Trustees of the Yearly Meeting, the Camp Board, Historical Materials, representatives of Wilmington College, Legal Counsel and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer. The Chairman of the Yearly Meeting Trustees shall be the Chairman of the Board on Property and shall call the Board together at the request of the Executive Committee of the Permanent Board or one of the groups within the Board on Property.

Board on Christian Concerns for Peace and Society

The duties of this board shall be to carry forward concerns of Friends for peace, public morals and the improvement of the social order.

The board shall be composed of 12 members appointed by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, with terms staggered so that four members are appointed each year. The terms are to run for three years and one person may serve for two consecutive full terms. Ex-officio members of the board are those persons appointed to the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, William Penn House and Quarterly Meeting Chairmen.

Board on Christian Outreach

This board shall be composed of persons appointed by the Yearly Meeting plus ex-officio members: Yearly Meeting Treasurer, United Society of Friends Women President, Quaker Men President, FUM representatives to Wider Ministries Commission and Quarterly Meeting Chairmen.

Its duties shall be to carry forward concerns regarding missions, stewardship, cooperation with Friends groups and other Christian groups.

Board on Educational Concerns

This board shall be composed of persons appointed by the Yearly Meeting plus ex-officio members: Quarterly Meeting Chairmen, FUM representatives to the Meeting Ministries Commission plus three Young Friends named by Young Friends Quarterly Conference.

Its duties shall include planning and supervision of camping activities at Quaker Knoll, directing children and youth programs throughout the year and at Yearly Meeting sessions, strengthening relationships with Wilmington College and leadership training programs.

Other Committees and Boards

Other Committees and Boards may be appointed by the Yearly Meeting to carry forward concerns and programs as desired, such as the Quaker Knoll Camp Board.

Relations with Wilmington College

Trustees--The Board of Trustees governing Wilmington College shall consist of at least twelve and not more than twenty-four members, a majority of which shall be members of the Religious Society of Friends. (Charter amendment, 1960).

Election

The Board of Trustees shall be elected in accordance with the procedure set forth in the amended Articles of Incorporation provided however, that: (a) The Joint Committee shall consist of three members of the Board of Trustees, and three members of Wilmington Yearly Meeting appointed by the Yearly Meeting. (b) Every member of the Joint Committee has an equal right to suggest names in nomination to the committee. (c) Should the Yearly Meeting not accept one or more of nominations of the Joint Committee, the matter of the remaining vacancies will be referred back to the Joint Committee for further nominations, but if after this referral the Yearly Meeting is in disagreement with the nominations, or if there is no clear majority recommendation of the Joint Committee, the Yearly Meeting may make its own selection.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the general management of the affairs of Wilmington College, all within the limitations of the law, and the Articles of Incorporation. The Board of Trustees shall be attentive to advises from representatives from the Yearly Meeting, duly appointed for that purpose, giving careful consideration to any concern proposed with possible deferment of action until an understanding is reached, with the Board of Trustees however, having responsibility and authority for final action.

Records

The Board of Trustees shall keep correct and complete records of accounts and minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees and committees of the Trustees. Such books, records, and minutes may be examined by any member of the Board of Trustees, by any authorized representative of Wilmington Yearly Meeting, or by the agent or attorney representing either body, for any reasonable or proper purpose and in any reasonable time.

Term of Office

Beginning with the 1962 election, each newly elected Trustee shall be eligible for a maximum of two successive terms of six years duration, after which he/she shall become emeritus and eligible for re-election for active trusteeship only after a lapse of one year.

President

The President of the College or the Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall make an annual report to the Yearly Meeting upon the condition of the college including significant events of the year, its physical property, endowments and finances, and the developments of its faculty and academic achievements, and its goals.

Yearly Meeting Relations

The Yearly Meeting will exercise its supervisory power as provided in the Articles of Incorporation over Wilmington College through: (1) Appointment of all members of the Board of Trustees. (2) Sharing with the faculty and the Board of Trustees in the nomination of a President.¹ (3) Sharing with the Board of Trustees in Charter Amendments, and Amendments to the Regulations. (4) Reports from the President of the College or the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to the Yearly Meeting at the Yearly Meeting sessions. (5) Consultations with the President or the Board of Trustees, both formal and informal, which may be carried out by representatives from the Yearly Meeting duly appointed for the purpose.

Amendments

Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation will be made by the Yearly Meeting, but only after consultation with the Board of Trustees.

Amendments

Amendments to the Regulations may be initiated either by the Board of Trustees or by Wilmington Yearly Meeting, but before their final adoption by the Yearly Meeting, the Board of Trustees must concur.

Sources of Business

Quarterly Meeting Concerns

Quarterly Meeting concerns may be introduced at Yearly Meeting for consideration and action. Boards, Committees--Business may be introduced to the Yearly Meeting from the Permanent Board, its Executive Committee, Yearly Meeting Boards or Committees, or from Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel.

¹ When a President of the College is to be elected, it shall be done in the following manner: The Board of Trustees will select three of its members, and the Wilmington Yearly Meeting will select three of its members; and the Faculty of Wilmington College will select three of its members to compose a Nominating Committee which will gather, investigate, interview and nominate to the College Board of Trustees, candidates for President. This Committee, so appointed and organized by the Board of Trustees, will develop its own requirements for candidates. The President shall be elected by the Board of Trustees from candidates nominated by this Committee. The Nominating Committee may disband itself by majority action and request a new committee to be constituted, whenever it feels it is unable to make further progress. (1960 Charter Amendment).

Other Sources

Business may be introduced by Friends United Meeting or from other Yearly Meetings. Business may also be laid before a Yearly Meeting by any of its members in which case it is referred to the Executive Committee before discussion by the Yearly Meeting.

Young Friends and Junior Yearly Meeting

Organization

Young Friends and Junior Yearly Meetings may be held during Yearly Meeting sessions under the direction of the Board on Educational Concerns.

Officers, Business

The youth and children appoint officers and committees from their own number and carry on their business according to the manner of Friends. They participate in the meetings for worship and conduct discussions of such topics as missions, peace and temperance. Classes are provided for the study of the Bible, and of the history, teaching, and practices of Friends. Reports are forwarded to the adult Yearly Meeting and communications exchanged with other Young Friends and Junior Yearly Meetings.

Miscellaneous

Interdenominational Memberships

Wilmington Yearly Meeting is a member of the Ohio Council of Churches. Appointments requested by this body shall be named by the Nominating Committee. Persons named to represent Wilmington Yearly Meeting may report to appropriate Boards or Committees.

Member Meetings outside of Ohio may affiliate with a comparable interdenominational group on approval of the Yearly Meeting.

New Yearly Meetings

When it is proposed to establish a new Yearly Meeting by setting off a portion of an existing Yearly Meeting, or portions of two or more Yearly Meetings, or when two or more Yearly Meetings wish to be united, such meeting or meetings shall consult and seek approval of the Yearly Meetings involved. If approved, the Yearly Meetings involved shall request Friends United Meeting to establish a new Yearly Meeting.

Transfer of Quarterly Meeting

A Yearly Meeting may transfer a Quarterly Meeting, upon request of that body, to the jurisdiction of another Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting to which transfer is made shall act upon said transfer and notify the Meetings involved of its action.

Revising Faith and Practice

Proposition for the amendment or revision of the Book of Faith and Practice, coming to the Yearly Meeting from constituent Meetings, must be referred to the Permanent Board or to a special committee for consideration for one year before being acted upon.

Bond of Union

The bond of union between Yearly Meetings is maintained by annual correspondence, by issuing and receiving credentials of ministers and others for special service, by granting and receiving certificates of membership in cases of removal, by joint participation in religious and benevolent enterprises, and by common membership in the Friends United Meeting. Though the constituent Yearly Meetings delegate certain authority to the Friends United Meeting, they retain their original independence in the transaction of business.