Homewood Friends Meeting Handbook

Approved HFM Meeting for Business 10/4/26

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"Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by; but that all, with a measure of the light, which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Elders of Balby, 1656 Epistle

INTRODUCTION

Homewood Friends Meeting is a congregation of the Religious Society of Friends, part of the organization of Quakers who have worshiped in Baltimore since 1792. Our meeting house is located in the Charles Village neighborhood of Baltimore City, Maryland, where it has been since 1921. The formal legal name of the Meeting is the Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Homewood. However, the Meeting is commonly referred to as Homewood Friends Meeting. A history of Quakers in Baltimore can be found in *Minute by Minute: A History of the Baltimore Monthly Meetings of Friends, Homewood and Stony Run* (Fessenden, Bonny, and Mallonee, 1992).

We humbly acknowledge that Homewood Friends Meeting is located on the ancestral land of the Piscataway and Susquehannock peoples. We honor the peoples and cultures of the many past and present Native Nations in our geographic area.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Homewood Friends Meeting (HFM) is to foster simple spiritual worship and such activities in various fields of service as Friends may feel themselves called to undertake. We maintain a place of worship where Friends and others may meet in religious fellowship. Through waiting worship, we seek the renewal of our spiritual lives and the quickening of our powers of service to the Divine and to our fellow human beings. As a worship community that strives to be diverse and welcoming to all, we embrace people of all races, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as national origins, abilities, and ages.

Nature and Purpose of this Handbook

> *Tested and established practices in a religious society are as important as are good habits for an individual.... A religious group which has a definite character and yet is open to new incursions of Truth is in a better position than one which stresses outworn traditions or one which so neglects the wisdom of the past embodied in inherited custom as to have become like a [person] without a memory.* (Howard H. Brinton, *Guide to Quaker Practice*,1946 and 2006)

This Handbook is intended to supplement the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Faith and Practice and to be used in conjunction with it. All references to Faith and Practice, unless otherwise noted, are to the current Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Most of this Handbook identifies who does what and the commonly accepted ways of carrying out the purposes and corporate leadings of the Meeting. This Handbook aims to share the recommended practices for HFM as received from the wider body of Quaker practice. It is changed periodically by the Meeting for Business. Specific Meeting policies are listed in Part 4 with links to the policies referenced. The Appendices to this document includes more detailed guidelines, where appropriate, for operations of specific committees and carrying out specific functions, as well as selected forms and materials used within HFM, including links to such materials. Commonly used Quaker terms are defined in this Quaker.org Glossary.

Organization and Business Procedure

The basic unit of Friends organization is the Monthly Meeting, which recognizes membership; solemnizes marriage or commitment; consoles bereaved Friends; nurtures young people; provides pastoral care, fellowship, inspiration, and recreation; provides for outreach and acts on social concerns; and maintains the physical and financial resources to carry out these missions. These activities are organized by officers appointed by the Meeting, Meeting committees, and working groups, and are supported by a small staff. In all affairs, the Meeting makes decisions after the manner of Friends.

PART 1. SPIRITUAL and COMMUNITY LIFE

1. Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship is held at 10:30 AM each First Day (Sunday). Simple Meeting for Worship (without technology) is held every Sunday at 9:00 AM. Exceptions to this schedule may be approved at the Meeting for Business. Meetings for worship under the auspices of HFM are under the care of the Ministry and Counsel Committee (M&C).

> *The Quaker experience is that each of us has a measure of that radically loving Spirit which guides us to live justly and peaceably. In worship we enter into stillness of body and mind in order to feel that Spirit of love within and among us, to give ourselves over to it, and to discern what it would have us do.*
> (Statement read at the beginning of HFM Meeting for Worship)

2. Meeting for Business

a. Overview

Quaker business practice is rooted in our deepest religious beliefs; we strive to discern spiritual unity with regard to the matters that come before us.

> *In Meeting for Business, we should listen to the views of all, just as we do in Meeting for Worship. We further believe that as Truth emerges we will have substantial unity in recognizing it, for Truth is undivided and that of God within each person responds to its presence.*
> *(*BYM Faith & Practice*,* 2023*)*

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (Meeting for Business) is held monthly on the first Sunday of the month at 12:30 PM. Exceptions to this schedule may be approved at the Meeting for Business.

b. Agenda

- The HFM Presiding Clerk gathers input and prepares a proposed agenda that the Meeting Office circulates in advance of the meeting.
- Careful attention is given to completing any business carried over from previous meetings for business.
- Standing committees and working groups report to the Meeting for Business when concerns require and provide annual reports according to a schedule approved by the Administrative Committee.
- Items that come to the Business Meeting should generally be seasoned through a committee.
- In order to assist the Clerk in preparing a Meeting for Business agenda, committees notify the Clerk of the need to present a report or concern at the next Meeting for Business, ideally at least 10 days prior to the Meeting. If the agenda is filled, the Clerk may ask a committee to postpone its agenda item. The order in which committees report shall be determined by the Clerk.

c. Queries

BYM Queries for the month are read at each Meeting for Business, and time for reflection on the Queries is given following the reading. The Queries for each Meeting for Business shall be published in the newsletter for that month.

d. Conduct of Business

- The Clerk then opens the business part of the meeting. A member of M&C reminds Friends about our Quaker business process and new attendees are welcomed. As in a secular meeting, someone presents an item and answers questions of clarification. But rather than debating the matter, the gathering then tries to discern, in an atmosphere of worship, what love requires of us.
- Generally, the Meeting for Business benefits from having items thoroughly considered in advance by a committee. The committee usually brings the item forward with a recommendation, but even if it does not have a recommendation it should have done some work preparing the item and anticipating various questions and concerns. Sometimes, for matters that require extended deliberation, a historical practice called a “threshing session” will be scheduled to provide for further discernment.
- “Holding over”: Important or difficult policy matters are held over by the Meeting for Business for at least one month. Actions typically held over include applications for new membership, recommendations for discontinuation or termination of membership, nominations to offices and committees, the report on the spiritual state of the Meeting, the line-item and narrative budgets, and revisions to this Handbook. The Meeting as a whole may decide to pause and hold over a matter to further consider all concerns raised.

e. Decision-making

- Being attentive to the Light Within allows those present to transcend facts and feelings and to search for unity with Spirit. Our search is for unity, not unanimity. We consider ourselves to be in unity when we share in the search for Truth, when we listen faithfully for God, when we submit our wills to the guidance of Spirit, and when our love for one another is constant.
- “Consensus" is a word sometimes used to describe a Quaker-like decision-making process, but this is not the most suitable term. Consensus is based on the work of human wisdom and reason, whereas "the sense of the Meeting" is based on the prompting of the Spirit. We discern spiritual unity. The Quaker approach reaches toward a higher and greater Truth that speaks to all concerns in ways that could not have been foreseen. Consensus is the product of an intellectual process. Sense of the Meeting is a commitment of faith.
- Friends often find themselves most challenged when, during a Meeting for Business, members offer firmly held but incompatible responses to an issue. When a member feels strongly about that issue and even seeks to prevent the Meeting from reaching a decision, it is important that the Meeting test this person’s conviction in a loving spirit. Friends should examine responsibly the consequences of acting or not acting on the issue. The search for unity rests with all in the Meeting, including those who oppose the proposed course of action. Those who find themselves at odds with those gathered may, upon deliberation and discernment, decide to stand aside and allow the proposal to proceed.

f. Minutes

- Minutes remind us of what we have said “yes” to and help hold us accountable to that “yes” as we continue on the journey of discerning God’s will for us. When read aloud during the Meeting for Business, they can reflect and validate the variety of perspectives among us as well as the unity of

purpose. They can articulate how we got to a point of discernment and can release us to go onward from that point. When read afterwards, they can remind us, and inform others, of how the Spirit moved among us; what we considered; what clarity we received and where we seek further Light; and what decisions were made.

- The minutes produced by the Recording Clerk should reflect the discussion of all items brought before the Meeting and clearly explain the sense of the Meeting in its decisions. Minority views are not dismissed or suppressed.
- If, during a Meeting for Business, the Clerk senses that the Meeting is uncertain regarding an item under discussion, a minute pertaining to that item shall be drafted at once and read for approval to test the sense of the Meeting.
- Other minutes regarding actions to be taken will also be read back by the Recording Clerk for approval at that Meeting for Business.
- Members or attenders who are traveling and will be visiting other Meetings can contact the Clerk to request a travel minute. A Quaker travel minute serves as a formal recommendation from a local meeting, certifying a member is traveling with the Meeting's spiritual blessing and support for a specific concern, ministry, or service. It functions as a letter of introduction to other Quaker communities, asking them to welcome and care for the traveler, while also providing a way for the traveler to report back to their home meeting with endorsements from visited meetings. Ultimately, its purpose is to provide spiritual support, accountability, and formal recognition for the traveler's service. The travel minute will be read and approved at the Meeting for Business.
- Minutes of the previous meeting, unless already approved, shall be approved, with corrections and clarifications noted, at each subsequent Meeting for Business. Minutes should reflect what was actually said and not include subsequent actions or later clarity, which, if necessary, should be recorded in a new minute.
- Meeting minutes, pending approval, will be posted on the HFM website, ideally within 2 weeks of the Meeting for Business.
- Ideally, within 2 weeks after final approval, the approved final version of the minutes, with all attachments included, will be posted on the HFM website, will be filed electronically, and a paper copy filed in the Meeting Office.

3. Membership and Participation

Most activities of the Meeting are open to attenders. An attender is a person who frequently attends Meeting for Worship and other Meeting activities. Attenders may include persons whose membership is at another Quaker meeting. As individuals become more familiar with the Meeting and involved in the activities of the Meeting, they may wish to consider requesting membership in HFM. A person becomes a member of the Religious Society of Friends by becoming a member of a local meeting.

a. Membership overview

- Being a member provides benefits and joys. Membership provides a sense of deep belonging and mutual support, providing an opportunity to care for the Meeting the way it cares about us. It showcases a level of commitment between the member and Meeting, helping our faith community thrive through the work of Friends. It also connects us to the larger Quaker world, the Religious Society of Friends.

- Membership also carries with it spiritual and practical obligations. Each member is called to participate in the Meeting's spiritual life and to attend worship regularly. Members recognize and nurture each other's gifts and talents. We seek guidance from one another and the Meeting in spiritual discernment. We hold one another in the Light (pray for each other) and provide support for each other.
- The vitality of each Monthly Meeting depends on its members' investments of time, energy and financial support. Friends put practical meaning into their spiritual commitment through regular participation in Meetings for Business, service on committees or as officers, regular financial giving, taking part in service projects under the care of the Meeting, assisting in maintenance of Meeting property, and representing the Meeting in various communities and wider Friends' organizations.
- HFM offers two types of membership: full membership and associate membership. Adults are full members; children may be requested by their parents to be associate members if at least one parent is a member.

b. Application process for new Friends

- When an attender is ready to request membership, they write a letter requesting consideration for membership in HFM, typically describing their spiritual journey and what has led to their decision to apply for membership. The applicant should be familiar with the Spirit and procedures of both the Meeting for Worship and the Meeting for Business. The letter can include a request for associate membership for any children.
- The letter is sent to the M&C Committee. M&C will appoint a clearness committee to meet with the applicant. See 4. Personal Leadings and Clearness (below) for an explanation of clearness.
- Members of the clearness committee will meet with the individual or family and endeavor to become better acquainted with the prospective members, until both the committee and applicants are clear that the applicants are in sympathy with Friends' principles and understand the significance and obligations of membership in the Meeting. It is recommended that applicants attend at least one Meeting for Business as part of the application process.
- Upon receiving the input of the clearness committee, M&C considers the membership request. If M&C feels that the applicant is not ready for membership, members of M&C and the clearness committee will continue to support and offer guidance to the prospective member.
- When the Committee is ready to proceed, it brings the application to the Monthly Meeting at its Meeting for Business with a recommendation for acceptance. It is helpful if the applicant can attend the Meeting for Business when the “first reading” of the membership recommendation occurs, to be introduced to the Meeting. The membership recommendation is laid over for one month to allow others in the Meeting to become better acquainted with the applicant. The “second reading” takes place the following month, at which time the membership is considered for approval.
- Upon approval of the membership, a welcoming committee is named.

c. Transfer of membership

- Members of other Friends Meetings may transfer their membership to HFM by requesting a letter of transfer from the other Meeting to be sent to HFM. The letter is forwarded to the Recorder, who informs M&C before bringing the letter to the Meeting for Business. After approval by Meeting for Business, the Clerk should advise the other Meeting of the acceptance into membership of the transferee. The Nominating Committee should meet with the transfer member to ascertain their interest in service to the Meeting. Upon acceptance of the transfer, a welcoming committee is named.

- A member of HFM who desires to transfer membership to another Monthly Meeting, or to be removed from the membership rolls, should address a letter to the Recorder of the Meeting. The Recorder will bring this to the next Meeting for Business. In the case of a member who asks to be removed from the membership rolls, the Meeting should be sensitive to the spiritual needs of that person, and M&C may appoint a member or members to meet with them.

d. Welcomings

- When the membership is approved, a two-to-five-person committee is named to plan a welcoming for each new or transfer member or family during the Meeting for Business. The welcoming committee plans an event to welcome the new members.
- Periodically, Community Building & Outreach will plan welcomings to the Meeting for children following birth or adoption in consultation with their families.

e. Inactive members

If the Meeting feels the need to consider removing inactive members from its rolls, the Meeting for Business, exercising care and tenderness, may do so upon recommendation of M&C. Inactive members should be contacted and if possible visited. If extended efforts are unavailing, or the member cannot be located after five years of absence, and the Meeting for Business concurs in the judgment of the committee, the member may be removed from the list of members, and if possible, notified by the Clerk.

f. Membership of children

- Parents may request associate membership for their children. Associate members have the same rights and privileges as members, other than serving on member-only committees. This type of membership is for children too young to decide for themselves about membership.
- Associate members may request full membership at any time by letter to the M&C Committee. They are encouraged to apply for full membership as they mature in understanding of the significance of membership. Some associate members choose to take this step in middle or late adolescence.
- Associate membership generally terminates when the individual reaches age 25. They will be contacted by M&C or the Recorder sometime after the age of 25 and be asked if they want to become full members or be removed from the membership rolls. If they do not respond when contacted, the Recorder will remove their names from the rolls. If they seek full membership status, they should follow the previously outlined procedure for applying for membership.

4. Personal Leadings and Clearness

- It is expected that individual members and attenders of the Meeting will sometimes have personal leadings for which they seek the Meeting's support and nurture. Clearness committees are used by meetings as part of the membership and marriage procedures. Friends may also request the support of a clearness committee in order to discern how best to deal with an important personal decision, whether to make a change in the circumstances of their lives, whether to test a leading, to deal with a conflict, or for some other reason.
- Individuals with such leadings may seek financial or spiritual support from the Meeting, or an endorsement to travel under the Meeting's care. Whatever the leading and the circumstance, an individual is encouraged to discuss this matter with a member of M&C who will refer them to the appropriate committee, individuals or groups within the Meeting for support and consideration.
- In addition, any person seeking to clarify a leading or personal problem or conflict, or who is needing support to sustain a leading, may ask M&C to appoint an ad hoc committee for clearness and/or support.

M&C might encourage that person to invite others, including individual members of M&C, to serve on such a committee. The clearness committee meets with the person(s) concerned as needed, reporting back to M&C occasionally during and at the conclusion of the clearness/support process. Typically a leading is seasoned at HFM before it is taken to BYM.

- Role of a clearness committee: It is especially important for the members of the clearness committee to accept fully that their role in the session with the Friend is not to offer advice, nor to tell stories about their own possibly similar experiences, but to ask questions that enable the Friend to discern whether there is sufficient clarity regarding the issue or leading to move forward and take action.
- For more information on clearness committees, consult this link from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, which provides an excellent guideline for clearness committee procedures.
- Minute of Support: If the Friend has tested a leading with the assistance of the clearness committee and together they are in unity to seek the support of the Meeting for that leading, the matter is reported to M&C and then to the Meeting for Business. If the Meeting decides to support the leading, the Clerk will draft a minute of support. Such a minute acknowledges the role of the Meeting in approving the implementation of the leading and the ministry it entails, and the minute may also recommend the formation of a committee to provide guidance, support and accountability for the Friend and the ministry.

5. Marriage

An overview of the procedures for marriage under the care of Monthly Meetings is described in the BYM Faith and Practice. For the marriage to be under the care of the Meeting, one person in the couple must have been part of our community for a length of time and be known to the Meeting, but not necessarily be a member.

The procedures for engaging in the process of marriage under the care of HFM are outlined below.

a. The couple sends a letter to the Clerk, in hard copy or via email, stating their intention to marry; the Clerk forwards the letter to M&C. Couples are advised to allow at least four to six months prior to an anticipated marriage date to allow for consideration of their request by the Meeting.
b. Requests for approval of a celebration of commitment or re-commitment are to be processed and accorded the same care and consideration as requests for approval of a marriage.
c. Two committees are involved in marriage under the care of the Meeting. A clearness committee ascertains the couple's clearness for marriage. A marriage committee plans the marriage Meeting for Worship.
d. M&C will name a clearness committee to meet with the couple and to commence the clearness process. Through a series of meetings, the clearness committee ascertains the couple's clearness for marriage utilizing the queries in BYM Faith and Practice as a guide. They instruct the couple on the Meeting's procedures for marriage under its care. The clearness committee and the couple will identify recommended names of persons to serve on the marriage committee.
e. The clearness committee will report back to M&C. If M&C feels that the couple is not clear for marriage at this time, the clearness committee will be asked to periodically continue to meet with the couple. If the couple is felt to be clear to marry, M&C brings forward the request for marriage under the care of the Meeting to the next Meeting for Business, including the couple's clearness for marriage and names of proposed members of the marriage committee. The Meeting for Business makes the decision about whether the couple should be married under the care of the Meeting and names the marriage committee, which must include at least one member of HFM.
f. It is the responsibility of the marriage committee to see that the wedding is carried out in good order and after the manner of Friends; that legal matters are properly carried out; that copies of the marriage license

and the wedding certificate are given to the Meeting Office for the Recorder; and that a report is given to the Meeting for Business following the wedding. The marriage committee should utilize the HFM Wedding Checklist as a guide. It is expected that the marriage committee will remain available to the couple to provide support throughout the marriage.

g. Marriages under the care of the Meeting, at the meeting house or elsewhere, are public events and open to all. All weddings are to be carried out in a dignified and spiritual manner. The Meeting does not permit the recording of weddings through photography or videography. It is an option to have the marriage include a virtual component, which may be recorded.
h. Circumstances that do not meet all of the above guidelines for marriage under the care of the Meeting should be brought to M&C, and, if deemed necessary, to the Meeting for Business for its consideration.
i. Scheduling for use of the meeting house for weddings will be handled by the Meeting Office and will be on a first come, first served basis. However, special consideration will be given to HFM members, associate members, and regular attenders.
j. Couples who wish to hold their wedding at the Homewood meeting house, not under the care of the Meeting, must contact the Meeting Office, which will consult the HFM Clerk. If approved, the wedding will be scheduled by the Meeting Office with a building use contract. HFM policies around drugs including alcohol (see 7 below) must be followed.

6. Memorials

a. Upon the death of a member or regular attender at HFM, M&C will reach out to the person's family to express condolences and explore plans for a memorial Meeting for Worship, also known as a memorial service, at HFM. A memorial Meeting for Worship will be scheduled, when/if the family deems appropriate, in conjunction with the Meeting Office and M&C.
b. M&C will identify members of a small planning committee, which will utilize the HFM Memorial Meeting Checklist as a guide. It is an option to have the memorial include a virtual component, which may be recorded. A printed program will be prepared by the planning committee and the family in conjunction with the Meeting Office.
c. Typically, the family of the deceased person provides food and drink for a reception that is supported by Homewood volunteers for setup and cleanup.
d. Following the memorial, M&C will take responsibility for drafting a memorial minute for the person, and the minute is brought forward to the Meeting for Business for approval. If the person was active in and known by BYM, the memorial minute or an obituary will be shared with BYM, prior to Annual Session.

7. Drugs Including Alcohol

HFM does not allow consumption of alcohol, smoking, vaping, illicit drugs or cannabis on our premises. When HFM events are held in other places, typically alcohol is not served. An exception to this rule is the consumption of wine at ceremonial events hosted by renters using the HFM building.

PART 2. MEETING ORGANIZATION

8. General Structure

a. Officers

HFM has the following officers, all of whom must be members of the Meeting: Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Recording Clerk(s), Recorder, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, and the Trustees. All these officers, except for the Recorder, are named by the Nominating Committee for a three-year term with an option of a second three-year term and will generally not serve more than six consecutive years. The Recorder's term is indefinite, but is reviewed every three years.

b. Standing Committees

The Meeting for Business is responsible for making decisions about Standing Committees: their creation, laying them down, reorganizing, or renaming them. Standing Committees are central to the functioning of the Meeting and consist of members and attenders, as nominated by the Nominating Committee. Service is typically for three-year terms, which are renewable for an additional three years. At times, the Nominating Committee, for a variety of reasons, may recommend that certain Friends remain on committees for longer than six years. Standing Committees are described in 10. Standing Committees.

c. Ad Hoc Committees and Working Groups

- *Ad hoc committees:* As the need arises, the Monthly Meeting may choose to create ad hoc committees for specific purposes, and to lay down such committees once the committees' purposes have been achieved. The Nominating Committee is not responsible for nominating individuals to serve on ad hoc committees. When an ad hoc committee is established, a time limit is set for its duration. At the end of that time, a decision is made by the Meeting as to whether the ad hoc committee is to be continued for another specified period of time or laid down. If no decision is made by the Meeting, the ad hoc committee automatically is laid down when the time limit expires.
- *Working groups:* To serve ongoing specific interests and functions of the Meeting, the Meeting for Business is also responsible for creating Working Groups, which will typically be under the care of a Standing Committee or the Administrative Committee. Recommendations related to creation and laying down of Working Groups will come from the Meeting for Business, Administrative Committee, or Standing Committees. Working Groups can come to the Meeting for Business with requests to become standing committees. Those requests must include the mission of the group and proposed name. Members of these new committees will remain the same until the next Nominating cycle.

d. Personnel Committee

- The Personnel Committee is responsible for Meeting staffing, including developing job descriptions, interviewing and hiring candidates, supervising staff, and evaluating staff performance. The Committee also accepts resignations and decides about employment terminations. The Committee reports all personnel changes to Meeting for Business.
- The Personnel Committee consists of the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, representatives of Trustees, House and Grounds, and Religious Education Committees. Meetings are called by the Clerk.
- Annually, in September, the Personnel Committee makes recommendations to Trustees regarding staff salaries for inclusion in the Meeting budget.
- The committee identifies one or two persons on the committee who are responsible for day-to-day supervision of the Operations Coordinator, which includes weekly meetings to review their work plan.

They also will designate supervision of the Tech Coordinator.

- The Religious Education Committee clerk/representative is responsible for supervision of child-care and teaching staff.
- The House & Grounds Committee clerk/representative is responsible for supervision of custodial staff.

e. Youth Safety Committee

- The Youth Safety Committee (YSC) ensures that the Meeting has an up-to-date Youth Safety Policy that is known to the Meeting's members, attenders, staff, and building users, and that the policy is followed.
- The YSC is composed of the Presiding Clerk or Assistant Clerk, the clerks or representatives of Trustees and Religious Education, and at least one additional member (usually a parent) to be selected by the Committee and approved by the Meeting's Administrative Committee.

f. Administrative Committee

- The Administrative (Admin) Committee consists of the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, and clerks/representatives of Standing Committees. Working group facilitators and representatives of affinity groups are invited to attend.
- The Admin Committee meets every two months, generally on the last Sunday of odd months, and on an as needed basis, as called by the Presiding Clerk.
- A primary purpose of the Admin Committee is to serve as a forum for communication and coordination between the Meeting officers and committee clerks. Clerks or representatives are expected to represent and communicate back to the working groups and ad-hoc committees under their care.
- Admin Committee is responsible for designating a working group to develop non-urgent health and safety plans. Admin Committee then reviews and revises them in preparation for and approval by Meeting for Business.

g. Rapid Response Team

- The Presiding Clerk convenes the Rapid Response Team when a situation requiring an urgent response arises between Meetings for Business. The Rapid Response Team discerns if it is appropriate to act upon an urgent situation or request without waiting for authorization of the Meeting for Business.
- Members of the Rapid Response Team include: Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, clerks/representatives of Trustees, House and Grounds, Ministry and Counsel, and Community Building and Outreach. The Operations Coordinator or representatives of additional committees can be called upon to serve, if indicated by the situation.
- Meetings of the Rapid Response Team will be called only rarely by the Presiding Clerk when there is need for emergency response, e.g., public health issues; urgent issues that arise related to the HFM building; or urgent requests of the Meeting that require a decision before the next scheduled Meeting for Business.
- The Rapid Response Team develops and implements urgent emergency response as needed. Non-urgent health and safety plans are under the purview of Admin Committee.
- Any decisions made by the Rapid Response Team will be reported on and discussed at the subsequent Meeting for Business.

h. Directory Review Team

- The Directory Review Team is composed of the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Recorder, Ministry and Counsel Committee representative, Nominating Committee representative, Community Building and Outreach Team representative, Operations Coordinator, Breeze Coordinator, and others as deemed appropriate.

- The Directory Review Team meets quarterly to review the current contents of the Homewood Directory; to discuss who should be moved on the newcomer-attender-member flow; to identify persons in the Homewood community who may need outreach or pastoral care, general check in, to be asked about membership, or to be contacted for another reason; and to identify persons who might be nominated to a committee.
- Directory Review Team procedures are available at this LINK.

i. Organization Representatives

The following organization representatives are named by the Nominating Committee:

- American Friends Service Committee Quaker Liaison
- BYM Representative
- BYM *Interchange* Correspondent
- Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting (CQM) Representative
- Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Quaker Contact
- Quaker Voice of Maryland Liaison

j. Staff

The Personnel Committee manages the staffing of the Meeting. The Personnel Committee assigns direct supervision of staff. (See 14. Staff for list of current staff positions).

9. Officers

a. Presiding Clerk

Clerks are encouraged to refer to the BYM Faith and Practice for guidance regarding clerking. The Presiding Clerk responsibilities include the following:

- prepare the agenda and preside at all business sessions and be kept informed of all business matters that affect the Monthly Meeting;
- see that decisions of the Monthly Meeting are carried out as directed by the Meeting;
- respond in a timely manner to information by Meeting members and attenders of all unexpected or emergency matters related to the Meeting;
- convene the Administrative Committee meetings;
- convene the HFM Rapid Response Team, as needed;
- authorize, in consultation with the Assistant Clerk, the use of the Meeting's electronic and postal mailing lists (other than those already approved, such as Newsletters, Silent Announcements, and some on-going committee communications);
- approve, in consultation with the Assistant Clerk, use of the meeting house for any events that do not fall under parameters in the Building Use Policy;
- convene the Personnel Committee annually in September to review salaries, and as needed;
- serve as ex officio** member of Trustees and M&C;
- serves on Personnel Committee, Directory Review Team and other groups;
- act as liaison between and spokesperson for Homewood vis a vis outside groups;
- designate the Assistant Clerk (or if unavailable a member of M&C) to fulfill time-sensitive Clerk responsibilities, when Clerk is unavailable.

Additionally, the Clerk shall be informed of the death of members and regular attenders as soon as possible.

b. Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk shall:

- work closely with the Clerk and provide assistance as needed;
- serve as Presiding Clerk of the Meeting for Business and Administrative Committee when the Clerk is unable to be present;
- serve as Presiding Clerk when the Clerk is out of town or otherwise unable to serve;
- serve as ex officio** member of M&C and Trustees:
- serves on the Personnel Committee, Directory Review Team and other groups.

The Assistant Clerk may be expected to succeed the outgoing Clerk at the end of the Presiding Clerk's tenure.

c. Recording Clerk

The Recording Clerk shall:

- record minutes at all HFM business sessions, including announcements of births, marriages, and deaths and all approved action items and policy decisions;
- provide the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Meeting Office with an electronic copy of minutes that are pending approval and after they are approved.

d. Recorder

The Recorder is in general charge of all Monthly Meeting records. The Recorder is responsible for all non-fiscal HFM records. (Fiscal records are managed by the Trustees and Treasurer.)
The Recorder may be nominated for an indefinite term, but the nomination must be reviewed every three years by the Nominating Committee, which shall report its recommendation to the Meeting for Business.

The Recorder shall:

- update Meeting membership records;
- maintain the files and lists for all members and associate members, including birth dates, membership admission dates (including transfers), and deaths:
- correspond with other meetings regarding membership transfers to and from HFM;
- provide an annual report on membership statistics to Meeting for Business, usually in March;
- report annually on Meeting membership statistics to BYM, as required;
- handle communications related to transfers of membership;
- supply information regarding marriages, births, and deaths to the HFM Interchange Correspondent for the BYM Interchange publication;
- obtain paper or electronic copies of certificates of marriage and signed marriage licenses for all who are married under the care of the Meeting.

The Recorder also manages HFM written records. This task includes:

- developing and updating a Meeting records retention schedule, which shall govern the following:
  - managing the Meeting records (organization, disposition, local storage, archiving);
  - overseeing the disposition of short-term records;
  - overseeing the preservation and long term storage of Meeting records, including Meeting minutes, committee minutes, and other long term records;
  - transferring designated records to the Quaker Collections at Haverford College for permanent storage, according to their requirements.

e. Treasurer / Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the orderly receipt and expenditure of Meeting financial resources. The Treasurer does the following:

- ensures that the Meeting maintains requisite financial records and books, as directed by Trustees;
- ensures that expenditures are made in accordance with the annual budget approved by the Monthly Meeting for Business;
- makes biannual reports comparing budget to actual income and expenditures;
- ensures that all requisite government filings and reports are made and taxes are paid;
- signs checks;
- tracks and reports to the Meeting alignment of expenses and the annual operating budget;
- provides guidance to the Bookkeeper and Operations Coordinator;
- serves as ex officio** member of the Personnel Committee, Administrative Committee, and the Trustees Committee.

The position of Treasurer may be shared by two people, a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer must be members of the Meeting. The Assistant Treasurer is also an ex officio** member of the Trustees Committee.

f. Trustees

The Trustees hold the legal and fiscal responsibilities for the Meeting. See description of Trustees Committee responsibilities.

10. Standing Committees (*member only committees)

a. Community Building & Outreach Team

The Community Building and Outreach Team (CBOT) nurtures the community life of Homewood Friends Meeting, strengthening connections with the wider Baltimore community and within the Meeting. CBOT supports healthy growth by helping Friends, attenders, and visitors move into deeper participation in the life of the Meeting. The team seeks to share, without proselytizing, Quaker faith and experience with those who may be seeking a spiritual home. CBOT supports and collaborates closely with other committees and groups to host gatherings and public events, support public witness, and foster engagement within and beyond the Meeting. CBOT understands its work as an expression of faith in action.

b. Green Organizing Action Team (GOAT)

The Green Organizing Action TEAM (GOAT) seeks to raise the level of concern and encourage spirit-led action in response to the climate crisis through the promotion of ecological sustainability and environmental justice. GOAT organizes educational events, recreational opportunities, advocacy, maintains our native garden, and engages in other activities that move the Meeting and individuals toward adopting more sustainable practices and actions in our everyday lives and in the world. Homewood Friends is recognized as a leader among congregational green teams.

c. Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee assures the availability of “Simple Lunch” on Sundays. This ministry enables us to visit with one another after worship and provides simple ways to get involved in the lIfe of the Meeting. The committee also makes arrangements for food for special events and keeps the kitchen clean, organized, and well-supplied.

d. House and Grounds (H&G) Committee

The House and Grounds Committee manages the building and hardscape of our historic meeting house in order to support the spirit-led work of the Homewood Friends community. The committee also monitors the work of the custodian and the cleaning contractor.

e. Library Committee

The library supports the spiritual development of the Meeting by offering an assortment of materials about Quakerism and topics of interest to Quakers. The Library Committee selects and reviews additions to the meeting house library, maintains the library systems and facilities, and generally keeps the library attractive and usable. Materials can be borrowed. The Library Committee accepts donations of Quaker-related books.

f. Ministry & Counsel (M&C)*

The Ministry and Counsel Committee nurtures and provides oversight of the spiritual life of the Meeting. In particular, the committee is concerned with the quality of meetings for worship, meetings for business, memorial services, weddings, and other special meetings such as those for "threshing" an issue. People on the committee are Meeting members because of the nature of their work. Insights into Homewood Friends' spiritual condition are much valued. The committee also maintains concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of individual members and attenders. It provides clearness committees for membership, for marriage under the care of the Meeting, and for other issues including career and family concerns. Anyone may request a clearness committee. Members of M&C are introduced each Sunday at the conclusion of worship to be available for people with questions about Quakerism or Homewood.

g. Nominating Committee*

The Nominating Committee seeks to recognize the talents, interests, and leadings of members and attenders, inviting them to serve on the Meeting's committees and as officers. The committee carries out its work through a spirit-led process of discernment, with loving attention to the spiritual gifts of the Meeting community. A Search Committee may be named by the Monthly Meeting to identify new members for the Nominating Committee when there is a need.

h. Peace and Social Justice Coordinating Team

The Peace and Social Justice (PSJ) Coordinating Team is responsible for the following: responding on behalf of the Meeting to time-sensitive PSJ related requests/actions; ensuring coordination between the various PSJ Spirit Led Action Groups; informing members and attenders of PSJ-related actions/events; managing the Peace and Social Justice contingency fund; and recommending donations from Homewood Friends to peace and social justice organizations for the annual budget. Proposals for the formation of Spirit Led Action Groups from 3 or more members/attenders can be brought to the PSJ Coordinating Team. In addition, ad hoc work groups consisting of 3 or more persons can request to sponsor special events; these ad hoc groups will take complete responsibility for planning and implementing the events using the Event Planning Checklist.

i. Religious Education (RE) Committee

The Religious Education Committee considers the spiritual education of the children of the Meeting by planning First Day School (Sunday School) and special events. First Day School provides an opportunity for children to learn about Quakerism, the Bible and other topics of religion. Special activities such as the spring trip, picnics, and intergenerational activities offer opportunities for community building. The committee also provides oversight of childcare in the Nursery for Meeting for Worship. The RE committee clerk serves on the Youth Safety and Personnel Committees.

j. Trustees*

The Trustees Committee holds the legal authority of Homewood Friends Meeting. The committee is responsible for all real and personal property and all financial resources of the Monthly Meeting. This includes assessing the Meeting's insurance needs, approving and signing all building and rental contracts, stewarding the Meeting's investment portfolio and making awards from endowed scholarship funds. The Trustees are responsible for developing fiscal policies. The Trustees manage all HFM fiscal records. The fiscal records retention schedule will be developed, reviewed regularly, and updated accordingly by Meeting Trustees and Treasurer. The Trustees Committee works with the Treasurer to develop an annual operating budget for the Meeting's approval. The committee periodically informs the Meeting about how they are caring for and using the Meeting's property and financial resources. The Trustees monitor the work of the HFM bookkeeper. Trustees must be members of the Meeting. The Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Presiding Clerk and Assistant Clerk are ex officio** members of this committee.

11. Standing Committee Procedures

Most committees consist of members and/or regular attenders, including persons who clerk those committees. Ministry and Counsel, Nominating, and Trustees are member only committees.

The following are general procedures for operation of the standing committees:

a. Nominating Committee is responsible for building and maintaining the Meeting's committee roster of members and attenders. Each year the Nominating Committee works with members and attenders to refresh the committee and officer roles, and presents an updated slate of committee members and officers at the May Meeting for Business. Corrections are requested and a corrected version is presented at the June Meeting for Business in time for terms to begin on July 1. Most committee members and officers run on this schedule, but there are exceptions and they are mentioned below.
b. Membership on committees shall be on a staggered, rotating basis, generally consisting of a three-year term which can be extended to a second three-year term.
c. Generally, individuals do not serve on a committee for more than six consecutive years. However, nothing in this Handbook should be interpreted as barring any person from serving in a specific capacity when special circumstances warrant.
d. Committee clerks should inform the Nominating Committee of resignations by members of their committees. If the committee needs a replacement committee member, the Nominating Committee will help find a new member. The appointees may meet with their respective committees--including the outgoing committee members--at the regularly scheduled June committee meetings.
e. Committees' responsibilities are assumed by the new members at the July committee meetings. At its July meeting each committee chooses its clerk, and often a recording clerk, for the coming year. After its July meeting, each committee should inform the Office and the Nominating Committee of who is assuming the role of clerk of the committee for the coming year.
f. Each committee should provide orientation to new committee members.
g. Each committee meeting should be documented with meeting minutes that include at least a record of participants and all decisions that are made.
h. Each clerk should keep a record of the committee membership and a list of recurring items for which the committee is responsible.

i. The clerk should ensure that all committee materials, including meeting minutes, are stored on the HFM Google Drive for that committee.
j. M&C, Nominating, and Trustees are considered closed committees consisting of Meeting members only. This means that only members of the committee and those specifically invited can attend their meetings. All other committees are open and their meetings can be attended by people who are interested in the work but not officially members of the committee.
k. If a person is interested in joining a committee mid-year, they can talk directly to the clerk of that committee or to the Nominating Committee. If the clerk of the committee thinks it is appropriate to add them to the committee, they should record this in the committee minutes and communicate the addition to the clerk of Nominating Committee. Nominating can also talk to the clerk of the committee to see if the addition would be appropriate and if so add them.
l. The addition of new committee members is recorded in the committee's minutes and communicated to the Presiding Clerk and the clerk of the Nominating Committee.
m. An official committee representative, typically the committee clerk, is provided a building key.
n. Committees planning events must use the HFM Event Planning Checklist to plan Meeting events, in collaboration with the Operations Coordinator. Committees are responsible for assuring that all responsibilities required for planned events are fulfilled.
o. Committees will make an annual report to the Monthly Meeting for Business following Annual Report guidelines.
p. All committees are responsible for adhering to the Meeting's approved operating budget (with overages approved by the Trustees) and for reviewing reports from the Meeting bookkeeper of all financial transactions for which they have oversight.
q. Committee clerks are responsible for approving appropriate payments to be made from the operating budget for the committee, and from any special Meeting funds over which the committee has oversight. A trustee or the Presiding Clerk/Assistant Clerk must approve reimbursements to committee clerks.
r. If committees are struggling for any reason or a committee member is struggling with their committee responsibilities, they or the committee clerk should contact the Nominating Committee for assistance.

12. Affinity Groups

The Meeting is enriched by several affinity groups. These include:

- Homewood Quaker Queers (LGBTQIA+) (under the care of CBOT)
- Friends of Color (under the care of CBOT)
- Young Adult Friends

13. Organizational Representatives

a. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Friends Liaison receives the monthly Acting in Faith Newsletter which includes updates on AFSC's work, upcoming events, and engagement opportunities for Friends.
b. Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Representative attends Annual Sessions and BYM Interim Meetings and reports back to HFM business meeting regarding important issues that are being decided upon.
c. **BYM Interchange Correspondent** serves as the designated liaison for the Interchange (the Yearly Meeting's newsletter published three times a year). They facilitate the submission of news, events, and reports from HFM to ensure communication across the Yearly Meeting.

d. **Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting (CQM) Liaison** attends CQM and reports back about meetings to HFM business meeting.
e. **Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Quaker Contact** receives FCNL updates and advises the Meeting on action alerts.
f. **Quaker Voice of Maryland (QVM) Liaison** receives legislative updates of interest to QVM and keeps HFM updated through the weekly announcements and newsletter.

14. Staff

HFM has the following staff positions. The Personnel Committee has responsibility for providing job descriptions for these positions.

a. Operations Coordinator

b. Custodian and Groundskeeper

c. Childcare Provider/Childcare Assistants

d. Religious Education Teacher

e. Tech Coordinator

f. Contracted Service Providers

- Bookkeeper
- Cleaning Service

* Member only committees

***Ex officio* means that the person is a member of the committee by virtue of their position as an officer. This does not necessarily mean that they must attend all the meetings of this committee. It does mean that they can (and should) be notified and/or called in to meetings when their office may have information relevant to the current discussion; and that they can attend a meeting of the committee if their office has an issue that should be attended to by the committee.

PART 3. CHANGES TO THE HFM HANDBOOK

Changes to the HFM Handbook may be initiated by the Monthly Meeting or by any member or any committee of the Monthly Meeting. The proposal first should be presented in writing to the Presiding Clerk for consideration at a regularly scheduled Meeting for Business or referral to a committee for seasoning. Changes to the Handbook will undergo two readings at Meetings for Business. The Clerk, assisted as needed by the Operations Coordinator, shall see that approved changes are incorporated into the Handbook. All revisions must be reflected in a revision history to the Handbook.

Revision History

Revision	Date approved	Date published
First version of Main Handbook and Policies approved at Meetings for Business over several months up to and including October 2026. Appendices	10/4/2026	11/15/2026

reviewed by members of Handbook Working Group and/or already in use. For publication: PDFs of Policies and Appendices created as needed and stored in website (Wordpress). Main Handbook modified to include Revision History and links to Policies and Appendices. Main Handbook converted to PDF and stored in website. Handbook made accessible from HFM website via links at 1) the bottom of the "About Us" page, and 2) the Policies section of the Meeting Hub page.		

PART 4. HFM MEETING POLICIES

a. Building Use Policy
b. Harassment Policy
c. ICE Response Policy
d. Respiratory Virus Plan
e. Youth Safety Policy

APPENDICES

a. Annual Reports from Committees to Monthly Meeting
b. Directory Review Procedures
c. HFM Meeting for Business Office Procedures
d. HFM Event Planning Checklist
e. HFM Memorial Meeting Checklist
f. HFM Wedding Checklist