

08/15/2020

SCYM AFSC Representative Report

Richard Corl - Live Oak Friends Meeting

Attended AFSC Corporation Meeting Virtually on April 17-18th.

The event was held by Zoom with approximately 300 in attendance from all over the country. The event was very professionally done with multiple hosts taking turns leading the event. All other participants were listening with video turned off and muted unless they needed to ask a question or make a comment. There were three opportunities for Worship Sharing, one two and a half hour business meeting on Friday night and another three and a half hour business meeting on Saturday afternoon.

Friday April 17th, 7:00pm – 9:30pm ET First Corporation Business Meeting Session

Phil Lord addressed the gathering and welcomed everyone followed by silent worship.

There was a roll call conducted for all the attendees that had signed up and an affirmation of quorum for the meeting was announced. There was an update on the Clerk search to replace Phil Lord and it was announced that the search to that point had not been successful and the committee felt that they would not be able to fill the role, asking for guidance on how to proceed. Phil agreed to stay on as Clerk at least through the June board meeting while the search continued.

Standing Nominating Committee Report was reported and a sense of the meeting to approved the nominees for Members-at-Large, Yearly Meeting Appointees, Board of Directors and the Friends Relations Committee.

Information was provided for nominees for Board Officers and the Board Executive Committee with an Invitation to sign up and invite others to volunteer for committee service.

Report from the 2019 Ad Hoc Committee to Name the Standing Nominating Committee, Nominations to the Standing Nominating Committee were approved. Followed by the appointment of the 2020 Ad Hoc Committee to Name the Standing Nominating Committee and nominations to the 2020 Ad Hoc Committee to Name the Standing Nominating Committee were approved.

Minutes of the 2019 Corporation Meeting were approved and then General Secretary's Report from Joyce Ajlouny was presented. This was followed by a report from the Friends Relations Committee, Treasurer and finally the Clerk's Report.

The first business meeting was adjourned.

Saturday, April 18th, 1:00pm – 4:30pm ET, Second Corporation Business Meeting Session

The meeting started off with discussions and desire about engaging Yearly Meetings in COVID-19 Response. Followed by the presentation of the AFSC's Strategic Plan for 2020-2030. Joyce Ajlouny provided an overview of the process and expressed gratitude for the Quaker process that was used throughout. The final draft was presented at the corporation meeting but there would be additional feedback collected that would influence the final draft that would be presented to the AFSC board in June for approval.

In June the AFSC Board did approve the Final Draft and published for internal distribution only. It will be professionally designed, formatted, printed and translated before it is made available for external sharing beyond AFSC staff and governance.

The following are a few excerpts for the report.

A note from our general secretary and board clerk

As we launch the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Strategic Plan for 2020-2030, we find ourselves facing a global pandemic that is raising old questions in new ways. What keeps us safe? How do we build community in fractured societies? Where should we commit our energies to ensure just peace is durable? The interconnectedness of our world has never been so apparent—nor the urgency to resist the many forces that fuel inequality, oppression, and violence. The widespread response to racial justice realities in the U.S. has also powerfully illuminated the shared histories of the struggles experienced by many around the globe.

The problems before us can feel daunting. And yet, we remain steadfast and even hopeful—drawing strength from the legacy that Quakers and so many others who came before us and responded to injustice and war with a courageous vision for powerful and transformative change.

AFSC begins a second century of service with many sources of strength. The passion, creativity, and talent of our staff; the dedication of our volunteers; the financial support of faithful supporters; and the trust we enjoy from our community partners all equip us to effectively challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace. So does a strong foundation of compelling work that will continue to evolve as we embrace new opportunities, approaches, and engagements in response to emerging global trends.

Because we are anchored in Quaker values, how we work is inseparable from what we do in the world. We will continue to support and be guided by those affected by conflict and injustice. And we will continue to speak truth to power while fostering dialogue and reconciliation—even where, or rather especially where, the odds are long and the divides are wide.

To develop this AFSC Strategic Plan 2020-2030, hundreds of staff, governance volunteers, Friends, partners, and members of the communities with whom we work joined in a collective examination of the state of the world and AFSC's role in it. These opportunities for listening and authentic engagement built a stronger AFSC community, revealing issues of convergence and strength as well as areas of divergence and means for addressing them.

The result is reflected in these pages.

We see this document as one that captures the heart of who we are as one community knowing that AFSC also has special meaning to so many people, based on their unique experiences with the organization over many decades. This plan builds on our shared

vision for the future, promoting coherence and stronger links between our work in the United States and globally; it also enriches our intersectional approach to peace and justice.

With this plan, we rededicate ourselves to working hand in hand and with all who seek a world transformed. Join us.

Yours in peace,

Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary

Phil Lord, Clerk of the Board

VISION

A just, peaceful, and sustainable world free of violence, inequality, and oppression

MISSION

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with communities and partners worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.

VALUES

We respect the equality, worth, and dignity of all people and regard no one as our enemy.

We seek right relationship with all life on a sustainable Earth.

We accept that our understanding of truth is incomplete and seek ever deeper insights from lived experience.

We trust the Spirit to guide discernment of our collective actions.

We assert the transforming power of love and active nonviolence as a force for justice and reconciliation.

Where we are going: Highlights of the Strategic Plan, 2020-2030

History shows that injustices are human-made, and so can change. We can envision and create a better future. As we bear witness to the injustices that undermine peace in our own day, we see that militarized approaches can give way to peaceful, people-

centered solutions. Economic systems that favor the wealthy can be transformed into a sustainable economy that works for people and the earth. The forces that displace large numbers of people can and must be challenged, and the rights of those seeking safety and peace must be respected.

We will focus on three strategic program areas over the next ten years, described in more detail on pages 6- 17:

- Our program on Shared and Sustainable Peaceshifts the mindsets that prioritize militarized approaches over peaceful and people-centered solutions.
- Our program on An Economy that Works for People and Earth promotes sustainable economic systems that benefit everyone, rather than those that favor the wealthy and exacerbate inequality and environmental crises.
- Our program on Just Approaches to Forced Displacement and Migration challenges forced displacement and champions the dignity and rights of all people on the move.

Clearly, injustices do not operate in silos—and neither can we. We know that these issues are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, and that intersectional analyses and collaborative actions are required for the transformations we seek.

We aspire to be agile and must adapt our methods to the broad variety of contexts in which we work. We are most successful when we connect the local to the national and global and use complementary and innovative methods to achieve change. Based on our comparative advantage, competencies, and values, our toolbox of methods includes the following, which are further elaborated on pages 18-20:

- Bridging and convening.
- Community organizing and civil society strengthening.
- Advocacy.
- Research and analysis.

To support successful implementation of the Plan, we have also set five organizational development goals, described on pages 21-26:

- Promote financial sustainability.
- Advance engagement with Quakers.
- Amplify program impact and learning.
- Strengthen relationships with communities and partners.
- Build internal practices for inclusion, cohesion, accountability and justice.

As we move forward, we will become a learning organization and strengthen our capacity for systems thinking. We will integrate climate justice in ways that draw on our unique strengths, making the links between climate change, violence, and displacement, and adding to the grassroots energy on this existential issue.

Strengthening Our Commitments

The following commitments emerge from our understanding of what it means to live into Quaker values in this era. When followed faithfully, these commitments will profoundly affect the work AFSC does in the world and our organizational life.

During the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan period, AFSC makes the following commitments:

We commit to enact a more fully anti-racist/anti-oppression organizational agenda. AFSC will more actively embrace and enact an anti-racist/anti-oppression agenda that centers the concerns and leadings of people in oppressed groups. This work will build on previous progress and align with existing policies on community, equality, equity, and justice. More fully embracing anti-racist/anti-oppression principles will inform both our programmatic work with communities and partners and our internal work to embody our values as an inclusive and anti-racist organization.

We commit to embrace gender justice and feminism.

We will incorporate feminist principles in our organizational policies and practices, embracing values that are inclusive, interdependent, compassionate, empathetic, and rooted in human dignity. We will deepen our pursuit of gender justice in our programming. We will align these efforts with other anti-oppression work, including dismantling white, cisgender, and patriarchal privilege, both internally and externally.

We commit to actively engaging young people in our programs and organizational life. AFSC will engage young people to bring about their personal power as valuable contributors towards peace and social change, equipping them with tools, skills, and competencies towards their individual and collective liberation. We will uplift the visionary and creative voices of young people in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of AFSC's programming in support of social change movements.

Required Steps

We recognize that these commitments are closely linked; each commitment builds upon the others. Together, they represent powerful possibilities for organizational transformation and compelling work towards peace with justice. These commitments will require us to:

1. Develop shared understandings of each commitment, based on community-wide dialogue on these concepts as well as their implications for internal and external practice.
2. Determine how each commitment is woven into program design, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Ensure that these commitments are reflected in organizational policies and procedures.
4. Establish a baseline of our current state and how we will measure progress through monitoring and assessment processes.