
A CLERK'S GUIDE TO MINUTE-PREPARATION, OTHER PAPERWORK, AND PROCEDURES

1 Dec 2002

*An essay in parts for the possible use of clerks in the Religious
Society of Friends*

Being an expansion and revision of, and a general tinkering with, a magnificent memorandum prepared by Lee Haring in or about First Month 1964 upon the occasion of the transfer of the Clerkship of New York Preparative Meeting from said Lee Haring to one F B Davis, Which said memorandum made unspeakably easier and more pleasant for the said successor in office the aforementioned transfer of authority, Prepared in its present form for circulation among certain learned and weighty Friends in the humble and sincere hope that it may elicit comments and criticisms suitable for its further improvement, elimination of its errors, simplification of our procedure, and for further edification of Friends at large. For all error, omission, and unseemly expression herein, the present editor takes full credit.

- Fred Bunker Davis, New York, New York; Tenth Month, 11, 1964.

Wholesale rewritings of ON CLERKSHIP (for which this writer is forever thankful), which came to the under-named former clerk of the then Fifteenth Street Preparative Meeting (known as such since 1-1968) from Nancy W Lidell, Helen Taylor Chase Gardella, Kevin O'Morrison, and Faye Fingesten, all, in that order, following Fred Bunker Davis as clerk.

- John Maynard, New York, New York: 1 December 2002

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*Anything herein is free for anyone’s use, anytime,
anywhere*

DUTIES OF MEETING CLERKS - Your yearly meeting’s book of discipline – *FAITH AND PRACTICE* – outlines essential duties and attitudes of a clerk and the general business procedure of a monthly meeting.

Beware! The job of clerk is very largely about paperwork. This is a guide through some of the paperwork. It may seem to say that, since you prepare a lot beforehand, the monthly meeting session will therefore merely be going through the motions, as it were. Not so. The general principle is to handle routine business routinely so as to clear the way for spontaneous and open expression and action. Routine business is procedure and description, membership matters, committee reports, and committee appointments. Accordingly, **WRITE BEFOREHAND** all minutes on these matters. They are ‘routine’ because you can handle each of them the same way in the minutes as they come up in different meetings.

Our minutes are legal documents, and for courts to accept our procedures we must stick to how *FAITH AND PRACTICE* sets them forth. If you prepare minutes beforehand you can make sure that all the information that has to get into them does.

There are notes at the end about the discussions, conflict, and the non-paperwork parts of the job of clerkship.

1. THE HEADING OF THE MINUTES FOR THE

SESSION: After the opening period of quiet, read aloud this minute to call to order:

‘At the (NAME)_____ Preparative, Monthly, or Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held in the meeting house at
A Clerk’s Guide - 3 - John Maynard, et al.

(ADDRESS)_____, (NAME OF VILLAGE, TOWN, or CITY) on
(DATE)_____, at (TIME)_____.’

2. THE LAST MINUTE FOR THE SESSION: Read aloud this minute after the time of quiet at the meeting’s end (After this entry you, the acting clerk, or the clerk-for-the-day will hand-sign the minutes for that particular session.):

‘THEN, after a time of quiet, with (NUMBER)___ present, ADJOURNED at (TIME)_____, to meet again on (DATE)_____ at (TIME)_____.’

3. THE ATTENDANCE LIST: After your signature in the minute book, add a list of all Friends and (separately) attenders present at the meeting. Pass about the room a signature sheet or prepare the list from the clerk’s table.

4. THE ASSISTANT CLERK, ABSENT CLERK, CLERK-FOR-THE-DAY: The clerk appoints the assistant clerk’s duties and should be involved when the nominating committee are selecting her or him. The assistant clerk should be familiar with procedure and current matters. Usually, the assistant clerk reads the letters and reports coming to the meeting. Divide these chores with the assistant: notifying new appointees and writing other letters, noting the names of those present at the business meeting, writing draft minutes of matters arising in the meeting.

The meeting empowers no-one to take over for the day if the clerk is not present. Instead, the assistant clerk or any member of the meeting to whom you have entrusted the papers and briefed on what is to come up at the meeting calls the meeting to order and then suggests that the meeting appoint a clerk-for-the-day. Someone makes a nomination from the meeting floor, and the appointee takes over as clerk-for-the-day.

You prepare this minute and delete as necessary:

‘In the absence of the clerk, Friends ask (NAME of MEMBER)_____ to serve as clerk-for-the-day and (NAME of MEMBER)_____ to serve as assistant-clerk-for-the-day.’

5. THE AGENDA: To set the order of the agenda, write the subject (or proposed minute, if you can) of each agendum on a piece of paper and spread the sheets of paper out on a table. Group the items: a query or advice, needed announcements and concerns, membership matters

where those Friends are present, announcements of deaths, birth, and weddings, committee reports where those Friends are present, money matters, nominations, and committee reports and membership matters for which the Friends concerned are not there. This guide is in that order. You may feel that a different order is better.

6. READING ALOUD THE ADVICE ON THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS MEETINGS:

Some meetings recommend a reading of the advice(s) or query on the conduct of business meetings at the beginning of the business meeting. Then read aloud:

‘The (assistant) clerk reads the advices (or query) on the conduct of business meetings from FAITH AND PRACTICE, and Friends consider them (it) in silence.’

If Friends speak at this time about the advice or query, strike ‘in silence’ from your draft minute.

7. READING ALOUD ADVICES AND QUERIES:

Read aloud one or two advices or queries each meeting. Leave time for Friends to consider the ones you have read. After you have read them, read aloud this minute:

‘The (assistant) clerk reads the (NUMBER)___ advice(s) and-or query(queries) from the book of discipline, FAITH AND PRACTICE, and Friends consider them in silence.’

If Friends speak at this time about the advice or query, strike ‘in silence’ from your draft minute. (It is easiest to write these words into the minute beforehand and strike them during the session if there is no discussion.) You may wish to summarize some of Friends’ remarks in the minute.

8. IF YOU SUMMARIZE THE PREVIOUS MEETING’S

MINUTES: Since Friends approved the minutes as they came up at the business meeting the month before, they do not approve them when you read or summarize them the session following. Approval at a later meeting would also mean that a group of Friends were approving minutes whose contents they had not discussed.

Say, ‘I shall (The assistant clerk will) summarize the minutes of our last meeting.’ Then read aloud to the meeting what happened at the previous monthly meeting. You may wish to read a full minute, or the meeting may

wish an elaboration. Repeat the heading for that date. Do not read aloud the letters and reports to which the minutes refer unless Friends ask you to read them. Read aloud for approval the minute:

'The (assistant) clerk summarizes the minutes of the meeting held (DATE)_____ (or: last month).'

Note that the minute does NOT say that Friends approved the previous minutes.

If your meeting sends out the minutes in a newsletter, you will, of course, not need to read or summarize them aloud, and there will not be any such minute.

9. THE CLERK'S REPORT: Letters you receive that are worth reading aloud to the meeting, problems (kind of a monthly state-of-the-meeting report), meetings taking place, &c. Get your information from committee clerks or other members.

10. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS: You receive all membership matters from the pastoral-care committee.

To have membership minutes ready beforehand, you must get the papers, or at least the relevant information in them, from the committee clerk before the meeting. Telephone that clerk for the information and arrange to pick up the papers.

You will need to know which matters the committee are forwarding and:

- a. names, addresses, postal codes, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of membership applicants
- b. names and addresses and so on of persons that committee suggest to welcome the new members
- c. names and addresses and so on of applicants for transfer out of meeting, enrolment of minor children, and the like
- d. name, place, and clerk of the meeting or church to or from which a document travels.

You can avoid several pitfalls of membership matters here by careful attention to documents. NOTE: applicants must hand-sign all membership documents, and the preparative meeting or pastoral-care clerk must hand-sign them as well, thus showing the committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting. Get full names: women's married names (e. g.: Mrs Richard M Nixon) are not enough.

INVITE THE APPLICANT(S) TO THE MONTHLY MEETING that her/his/their membership application is coming up in. If he/she/they will not be coming, postpone the consideration of the application. Our meeting has made it clear that we wish incoming members to be present when Friends accept them into membership. Unless there is incapacitating terminal illness, bring an incoming membership matter to the meeting only when the applicant(s) come(s) to it. We have the children come when they are joining with their parents. One big part of membership of the meeting is showing up.

Before the business meeting, prepare each membership minute and clip the letter(s) to it so that you have the material together.

When a membership application is to come up, make sure that you see the applicant(s), then read the letter of application aloud, saying that it bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting. When Friends have said that they accept the application, read aloud the minute that you have prepared through the statement that Friends accept the applicant(s) into membership of the meeting. Then pause and introduce and greet the incoming member(s). Finish reading aloud the prepared minute. If the pastoral-care committee have not suggested names of members to welcome (a) new member(s), ask two members to volunteer to do this.

When the business meeting is over, you write the letters below that go to the applicant(s) and various Friends appointed as needed.

For transfers out and requests for release from membership, simply read aloud the letters and the minutes accompanying them that you have prepared.

About minor children: applications should state the age and show clearly on their faces whether the applications are for enrolment (full membership) or associate membership (coming up for review at adulthood). Both parents, the living parent, or the guardian must hand-sign any such application, or, if not a member, the non-member parent must sign a consent to such application. The New York Yearly Meeting counts 18-years'-olds as adult members as of 1-1-1973; many meeting

ask the children to write their own letters after the age of 10 or 12 and do not request parents' consent after the age of 16 or 17.

A. MINUTES TO PREPARE BEFOREHAND:

- i. PRELIMINARY MINUTE ON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (Use this if it follows your practice):

'In a letter, (NAME(S) and ADDRESS(ES))_____ ask(s) for membership in this monthly meeting. The meeting forwards the request to the pastoral-care committee to meet the applicant(s) and report back to us when they have done so.'

- ii. FORM MINUTES FOR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS (Strike words that are not necessary):

MINUTE FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

'In a letter, (NAME(S) and ADDRESS)_____ ask(s) for membership in this monthly meeting for herself, himself, themselves, and for her/his/their minor child(ren), (NAME(S))_____, aged (YEARS)_____, as associate/full member(s). The request bears the written consent of (NAME)_____, the father/mother of (NAME(S) of CHILD(REN))_____. The request bears the approval of the pastoral-care committee for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

'(NAME(S))_____ is/are present. Friends approve the request and accept (NAME(S))_____ into membership of the (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care committee, we ask (NAMES of TWO MEMBERS)_____ to welcome (NAME(S) of NEW MEMBER(S))_____ into membership of the meeting.

'We ask the recorder to record this acceptance of membership and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S))_____ a copy of this minute.'

(If a membership applicant applies at the same time for minor children, the minutes can go together. Be sure, in

such a case, to distinguish, if applicable, between a full membership for the parent and associate membership for the children.)

MINUTE FOR A REQUEST FOR RELEASE
FROM MEMBERSHIP:

'In a letter (NAME(S) and ADDRESS)_____ ask(s) Friends to release her/him/them from membership in the monthly meeting. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

'Friends approve the request and release (NAME(S))_____ from membership in the (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

'We ask the recorder to record this release from membership and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S))_____ a copy of this minute.'

MINUTE WHEN THE MEETING DROPS THE
MEMBERSHIP OF (A) MEMBER(S):

'At the pastoral-care committee's request, and after several attempts to communicate with this/these Friends(s), we release (NAME(S) of MEMBER(S) to be DROPPED FROM MEMBERSHIP)_____ from membership in the (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. (Insert any reasons that the pastoral-care committee or Friends would like to add.) We ask the recorder to record this membership matter (If you have (a) recent address(es) for this/these Friend(s), add:) and the clerk to furnish these/this Friend(s) a copy of this minute.'

MINUTE FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE
MEMBERSHIP LISTING OF A FRIEND TO
ANOTHER PREPARATIVE MEETING IN
YOUR MONTHLY MEETING:

'In a letter, (NAME(S) and ADDRESS(ES))_____ ask(s) this meeting to transfer her/his/their membership listing from this preparative meeting to the (NAME)_____ Preparative Meeting, (NAME and ADDRESS)_____,

clerk. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to this meeting.

'Friends approve the request, and we forward it to the monthly meeting for action.'

MINUTE FOR THE TRANSFER OF A
FRIEND'S MEMBERSHIP TO ANOTHER
MONTHLY MEETING:

'In a letter, (NAME(S) and ADDRESS)_____ ask(s) this meeting to transfer her/his/their membership from this monthly meeting to the (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting, (NAME and ADDRESS)_____, clerk. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

'Friends approve the request.

'We ask the (NAME of the TRANSFER-TO MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting to accept the transfer of (NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ and to report back to us when they have done so.

'We ask the recorder to record this transfer of membership when the (NAME of the TRANSFER-TO MONTHLY MEETING)_____ has accepted it and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ a copy of this minute.'

MINUTE FOR THE TRANSFER IN OF THE
MEMBERSHIP OF A FRIEND FROM
ANOTHER PREPARATIVE MEETING IN
YOUR MONTHLY MEETING:

'The (NAME of YOUR MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting has asked this meeting to accept the transfer of (NAME(S) and ADDRESS(ES) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ from the (NAME)_____ Preparative Meeting to this preparative meeting. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval.

'Friends accept the request and welcome (NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ into this preparative meeting.

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care committee, we ask (NAMES of TWO MEMBERS)_____ to welcome this/these Friend(s) into the meeting.'

MINUTE FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE
MEMBERSHIP OF A FRIEND IN FROM
ANOTHER MONTHLY MEETING:

'In a letter (NAME and ADDRESS of REQUESTING MONTHLY MEETING)_____ asks this meeting to accept the transfer of the membership of (NAME(S) and ADDRESS of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

'(NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ are present, and Friends accept the transfer of her/his/their membership to the (NAME of YOUR MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care committee, we ask (NAMES of TWO MEMBERS)_____ to welcome (NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ into membership of the meeting.

'We ask the recorder to record this transfer of membership and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S) of TRANSFERRING MEMBER(S))_____ and the (NAME of the TRANSFERRING MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting copies of this minute.'

MINUTE FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE
MEMBERSHIP OF A FRIEND TO ANOTHER
RELIGIOUS GROUP (This is not a transfer at
all, but rather a release from membership.):

'In a letter, (NAME(S) and ADDRESS of MEMBER(S))_____ tell us that he/she/they is/are attending the (NAME AND address of RELIGIOUS GROUP)_____ and has/have joined (or: intend to join).

Friends approve the pastoral-care committee's suggestion that we release (NAME(S) of MEMBER(S))_____ from membership in the (NAME of YOUR MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting. We commend her/him/them to the loving care of (NAME of the OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUP)_____. We ask the recorder to record this membership change in the rolls of the meeting and the clerk to furnish these/this Friend(s) and the (NAME of the OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUP)_____ copies of this minute.'

MINUTE TO ACCEPT THE SOJOURNING MEMBERSHIP OF A MEMBER OF ANOTHER MEETING:

'In a letter, (NAME of REQUESTING MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting, (NAME and ADDRESS of CLERK)_____, clerk, asks this monthly meeting to accept the sojourning membership for (NUMBER of YEARS)___ years of their member(s), (NAME(S) and ADDRESS(ES) of INCOMING SOJOURNING MEMBER(S))_____. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

'(NAME(S) of SOJOURNER(S))_____ are present, and Friends accept them into sojourning membership in the (NAME of YOUR MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends for (NUMBER)___ years.

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care committee, we ask (NAMES of TWO MEMBERS)_____ to welcome (NAME(S) of SOJOURNER(S))_____ into sojourning membership of this meeting.

'We ask the recorder to record the acceptance of this sojourning membership and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S) of SOJOURNER(S))_____ and the (NAME of REQUESTING MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting copies of this minute.'

MINUTE TO REQUEST ANOTHER MEETING TO ACCEPT THE SOJOURNING

MEMBERSHIP OF A MEMBER OF YOUR MEETING:

'In a letter, (NAME(S) of MEMBER(S))_____ ask(s) this meeting to ask the (NAME of ANOTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting, (ADDRESS)_____, (NAME of CLERK)_____, clerk, to accept her/him/them as (a) sojourning member(s) in their meeting. He/She/They live(s) at (ADDRESS)_____. The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval for forwarding to this monthly meeting.

'Friends approve the request and ask the (NAME of OTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting to accept this/these Friend(s) as (a) sojourning member(s) in their monthly meeting.

'We ask the recorder to record this sojourning membership and the clerk to furnish (NAME(S) of SOJOURNER(S))_____ and the (NAME of OTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting copies of this minute.'

iii. MINUTE ON GIFT PRESENTATION TO (A) NEW OR SOJOURNING MEMBER(S) OR TO FRIENDS GETTING MARRIED:

'The clerk presents (NAME(S) of NEW or SOJOURNING MEMBER(S) or FRIENDS GETTING MARRIED)_____, whom we accepted into membership (or: who married (under the care of the meeting)) on (DATE)_____, a book as a gift from the monthly meeting.'

iv. MINUTE ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD OF (A) MEMBER(S): Feel free to bring the meeting's attention to the birth of a child and ask the meeting to approve sending a welcoming letter to the infant. You may include a minute like the following:

'(NAME(S) of PARENT(S))_____ announce(s) the birth of her/his/their child, (NAME(S) of CHILD(REN))_____ on (DATE)_____ at (NAME of VILLAGE, TOWN, or CITY)_____. (NAME of CHILD(REN))_____ is/are present, and we ask the clerk to send her/him/them a letter welcoming her/him/them to the meeting.'

- v. **MINUTE ON THE DEATH OF A MEMBER:** Read aloud an announcement or this minute, and follow it with a period of quiet:

'The recorder reports the death of our member, (NAME of MEMBER)_____, in (PLACE)_____, aged (NUMBER)___ years, (NUMBER)___ months, and (NUMBER)___ days.

'A memorial meeting is to take place (DATE)_____, at (TIME)_____, at (PLACE)_____.'

If the Friend had ever been a member of another meeting, please add to the minute:

'We ask the clerk to send an announcement of (NAME of MEMBER)_____ 's death to the (NAME(S) of MEETING(S) that the member was FORMERLY A PART OF)_____ Monthly Meeting(s), (ADDRESS(ES))_____.'

After a time of quiet, take up the next agendum.

- vi. **MEMORIAL MINUTE:** These are to be factual, descriptive, and inspiring as well.

'The pastoral-care committee have forwarded this minute of the life and labors of (NAME of MEMBER)_____:

'(insert memorial minute)'

(If the Friend was active in the quarterly and-or yearly meeting, add:) 'We ask the clerk to forward this minute to the quarterly meeting and to the yearly meeting (and, if the Friend was ever a member of another meeting, add:) and to the (NAME(S) of MEETING(S) the member was formerly a part of)_____ Monthly Meeting(s), (ADDRESS(ES))_____.'

B. LETTERS TO SEND ABOUT MEMBERSHIP MATTERS:

- i. **LETTER TO (A) NEW OR SOJOURNING MEMBER(S)**
(This is the only certificate of membership that there is.):

'(NAME(S) and ADDRESS of NEW or SOJOURNING MEMBER(S))_____:

'Dear Friend(s):

'At the monthly meeting on (DATE)_____, Friends approved the following minute:

'(Insert entire membership minute)

'I should like to welcome you into (sojourning) membership in this meeting. (Add anything else that you would like)

'For the (NAME of YOUR MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends,

(your signature), clerk'

- ii. LETTER TO THE WELCOMERS OF (A) NEW OR SOJOURNING MEMBER(S): Notify the welcomers of their appointment, including the name, address, 'phone number, and e-mail of the new member(s), and any thing that you know that is pertinent to her/him and her/his connection with the meeting. You instruct the welcomers on their duties. Ask welcomers to report to the monthly meeting promptly, in writing, and also to inform the nominating committees of any special skills or interests that the new member(s) may have.

'(NAMES, ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, and E-MAIL ADDRESSES of WELCOMERS)_____:

'Dear Friends:

'At the monthly meeting on (DATE)_____, Friends asked you to welcome (NAME(S) of NEW or SOJOURNING MEMBER(S))_____. He/She/They live(s) at (ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, and E-MAIL ADDRESS)_____.

'Please invite her/him/them to a meal at the house of one of you to do this. Feel free to have a time of quiet together and to provide an occasion to discuss her/his/their participation in the meeting, her/his/their

interests, and any questions he/she/they may have about the meeting or the Society of Friends.

'Please acquaint her/him/them, if he/she/they do(es) not already know, of the organization of the monthly meeting as well as the finances and Friends' responsibility to help meet them. He/She/They will need to know of our relationship to the quarterly and the yearly meetings and the international groups of Friends and their work.

'When you have welcomed the new (or sojourning) member(s), please report that fact, along with any comment you may have to the monthly meeting. Please continue to introduce the new Friend(s) to others in the meeting.

'Please tell the clerks of the nominating committees, (NAMES, ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, and E-MAIL ADDRESSES)_____, respectively, about any of the new (or sojourning) member's(s') special skills or interests upon which the meetings might wish to draw. (Here, insert any relevant information about the new or sojourning member(s) that may be helpful to the welcomers.)

'Thank you, /s/ (YOUR NAME)_____, clerk.'

- iii. LETTER FOR GIFT BOOK(S) FOR (A) NEW OR SOJOURNING MEMBER(S): Notify the library committee of the acceptance of (a) new member(s) and ask them to select and secure (a) book(s) to present to the new or sojourning member(s). The library committee will deliver the book(s) and the bill at the appointed meeting, and you suitably write in the book(s) and present it-them publicly to the new or sojourning member(s), noting such presentation in the minutes. Ask the new or sojourning member(s) to be present for this.

'(NAME of LIBRARY COMMITTEE CLERK)_____:

'Dear Friend:

'At the monthly meeting on (DATE)_____, Friends admitted (NAME(S) of NEW or SOJOURNING MEMBER(S))_____ into (sojourning) membership in this

meeting. He/She/They live(s) at (ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBER, and E-MAIL ADDRESS)_____.

'As we customarily present new members with a book or pamphlets about or by Friends as a gift from the meeting, will you please get in touch with the new (or sojourning) member(s) to find a book suitable for this purpose? The clerk/I should like to present the gift(s) to the new (or sojourning) member(s) at the next possible meeting.

'Thank you, /s/ (YOUR NAME)_____, clerk.'

iv. LETTER TO ANOTHER MONTHLY MEETING REQUESTING A TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP THERE:

'(NAME AND ADDRESS of OTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____:

'Dear Friends:

'At our monthly meeting today, Friends approved the following minute: (insert entire minute about transfer of membership)

'Please let us know when you have accepted the transfer of (NAME of MEMBER SEEKING TRANSFER)_____'s membership, as he/she stays on our membership rolls until we know the transfer is complete.

'We send you our greetings and best wishes.

'For the (NAME of YOUR MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting,

'/s/ (YOUR SIGNATURE)_____, clerk.'

v. LETTER TO A PERSON WHO HAS ASKED THE MONTHLY MEETING TO RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP OR WHOSE MEMBERSHIP THE MONTHLY MEETING HAS DROPPED:

'(NAME and ADDRESS of PERSON NO LONGER A MEMBER)_____:

'Dear Friend:

'At the last monthly meeting, Friends approved the following minute: (insert entire minute of release from membership)

(If you know the person, write anything that seems fitting, but at least something like:) 'We are grateful for your time as a member of this monthly meeting and hope that the time was good for you. We know that people's needs change over time and hope that you have found a religious or other situation that meets your needs. Anytime that you wish to come to this meeting or any other, you will be most welcome.

'For the (NAME of YOUR MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting,

'/s/ (YOUR SIGNATURE)_____, clerk.'

11. WEDDING

- A. PROCEDURES AND MINUTES TO PREPARE BEFOREHAND:
Follow the procedures carefully and legally spelt out in FAITH AND PRACTICE. In short,

- the couple write a letter to the monthly meeting asking to marry under the care of the meeting; you give the letter to the pastoral-care committee.
- This committee will send two people to interview each applicant for marriage and, if they find nothing standing in the way of a marriage, then report this to the full committee.
- If the committee agree to forward the application to the monthly meeting, the clerk of the committee must sign and give you the application letter stating that the interviewers found nothing standing in the way of the marriage and that the full committee forwards the application to the monthly meeting.

- They are to suggest the names of four people to oversee the wedding and give you the date of it.

- You read aloud the application letter to the monthly meeting, stating that the pastoral-care committee have found nothing standing in the way of the application and that they forward it to the monthly meeting for action.

- Introduce the applicants for marriage to the meeting

- If and when Friends approve, read aloud this minute:

i. MINUTE FOR A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL AND APPROVAL AND THE APPOINTMENT OF FRIENDS TO OVERSEE THE WEDDING:

'In a letter, (NAMES of COUPLE)_____ propose to marry under the care of this monthly meeting. The Friends whom the pastoral-care committee appointed to enquire into the clearness of the couple to proceed in marriage found nothing standing in the way, each parent has consented (if appropriate because the couple are under 18 years of age), and the pastoral-care committee have forwarded their proposal to us with their approval.

'The couple live at (ADDRESS(ES))_____. They are present.

'Friends approve the proposal and free (NAMES of the COUPLE)_____ to proceed with their plans to marry according to the custom of our society.

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care committee, we appoint (NAMES of FOUR MEMBERS)_____ to advise the couple on the proper procedures for the accomplishment of the marriage, to see that they have obtained a marriage licence and a wedding certificate, to attend the wedding and see that it is properly conducted, to make sure that all requirements of the law of the State of New York are fulfilled, to make sure that the certificate is delivered to the recorder for recording, and to report to the monthly meeting when all their work is done.

'We ask the recorder to record this marriage in the books of the meeting and the clerk to furnish the couple a copy of this minute.'

ii. MINUTE FOR WHEN ANOTHER MONTHLY MEETING ASKS US TO OVERSEE A WEDDING OF THEIR MEMBER(S):

'In a letter, the (NAME and ADDRESS of the OTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting asks us to make the arrangements for and oversee the wedding of their member(s), (NAME(S) of MEMBER(S))_____. That meeting says that they have enquired into the couple's cleanness to proceed in marriage and have approved the couple's proposal and freed them to proceed with their plans for marriage.

'The request bears the pastoral-care committee's approval, and, at their suggestion, we ask (NAMES of FOUR MEMBERS)_____ to advise the couple on the proper procedures for the accomplishment of the marriage, to see that they have obtained a marriage licence and a wedding certificate, to attend the wedding and see that it is properly conducted, to make sure that all requirements of the law of the State of New York are fulfilled, to make sure that the certificate is delivered to the recorder of these/this Friend(s) meeting, and to report to this monthly meeting and these/this Friend(s)'s monthly meeting when all their work is done.'

iii. MINUTE FOR WHEN WE ASK ANOTHER MONTHLY MEETING TO OVERSEE A WEDDING OF OUR MEMBER(S):

'At the request of (NAMES and ADDRESS(ES) of TWO FRIENDS THE MONTHLY MEETING HAS APPROVED GETTING MARRIED UNDER YOUR MEETING'S CARE)_____, we ask the (NAME and ADDRESS of THE OTHER MONTHLY MEETING)_____, (NAME of CLERK)_____, to oversee the wedding of these two Friends.'

Then send a letter to the other monthly meeting quoting the first marriage minute and this one and ask them to proceed as if the wedding were under their care, but

asking them to inform this meeting when all the requirements have been accomplished.

B. LETTERS:

i. TO THE FRIENDS GETTING MARRIED:

'(NAMES of FRIENDS getting MARRIED)_____:

'Dear Friends:

'At the monthly meeting today, Friends approved the following minute:

'(insert minute about the proposal of marriage, its approval, and the appointment of Friends to oversee the wedding)

'I am most delighted to know of your plans, and please let me know if there are any things I can help you with on the plans for the wedding.

'For the (NAME of YOUR MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting, /s/ (YOUR NAME)_____, clerk'

ii. LETTER TO THE FRIENDS THE MEETING HAS APPOINTED TO OVERSEE A WEDDING (Change as needed):

'(NAMES, ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS, &E-MAIL ADDRESSES of the WEDDING'S OVERSEERS)_____:

'Dear Friends:

'At the monthly meeting today, Friends approved the following minute:

'(insert minute about the approved marriage proposal)

'In addition to the duties listed in this minute, it is our custom to buy and give the couple a fitting Friends' book or periodical subscription, the former suitably inscribed on behalf of the monthly meeting. Please include the title in the wedding report to the meeting and send me the

bill. (CLERK: The bill goes, with your signature, to the treasurer for debit from the pastoral-care committee account.)

(If fitting:) 'Please ask the pastoral-care committee or the quarterly-meeting office (or, clerk, supply it with this letter) for the guide to change the back of the civil marriage licence. Change it well before the wedding day: there are several things to change to make it conform to Friends' practice.

'In FAITH AND PRACTICE there is a section that sets forth certain duties of the Friends whom a meeting appoints to oversee a wedding. Please read this and let me know what questions you have about this appointment.

'For the (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting, /s/ clerk'

Send a copy to the couple and to the municipality's marriage-licence bureau, and send the couple a letter of greeting as well.

12. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: check FAITH AND PRACTICE about this. A Friend who plans to visit Friends' meetings while travelling asks for a letter of introduction to take to those meetings. You prepare this minute:

'(NAME of MEMBER)_____ plans to visit Friends' meetings while travelling in the (say:) next few months. We ask the clerk to furnish (NAME of MEMBER)_____ a letter of introduction to any meetings he/she visits.'

You then prepare a letter for the member addressed to Friends' meetings to whom this letter may come, greet them, and tell them of the member's travels and possibly interests, mention perhaps some concerns of the meeting at this time, and invite persons whom the Friend meets to indorse the letter: write on the back of it.

Give the letter to the travelling member, who returns it at the end of the travels, when you read it to the monthly meeting.

13. TRAVEL MINUTE: check FAITH AND PRACTICE about this. This is for a member who plans to travel to other Friends' meetings to

raise a particular concern or do a particular job that the meeting endorses.

The request probably will need the approval of the pastoral-care or ministry-and-worship committee for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

You prepare and read aloud to the meeting:

‘(NAME of TRAVELLING MEMBER)_____ would like to (Insert here a description of the concern or the job and where it is to take the traveller.) The pastoral-care or ministry-and-worship committee have approved the request for forwarding to the monthly meeting.

‘Friend approve the request and ask the clerk to furnish (NAME of MEMBER)_____ a travel minute to be returned when the concern is satisfied/work is done.

(If the concern or job is to take the member beyond the quarterly meeting, add:) ‘We forward the travel minute to the quarterly/half-yearly/regional meeting for their endorsement.’

(If the concern or job is to take the member beyond the yearly meeting, add:) ‘We forward the travel minute to the quarterly/half-yearly/regional meeting for their endorsement and to forward to the yearly meeting for endorsement.’

You then prepare a letter addressed to the particular Friends’ meetings the member will visit, greet them, and quote to them the entire minute that Friends approved about the concern or the job. You invite those meetings to endorse the letter at the end of the member’s visit.

Give the letter to the member, who is to return it at the end of the visit, when you read it to the monthly meeting. If the letter needs the endorsement of the quarterly or yearly meeting, you send the letter to the quarterly-meeting clerk, who (or, if it is to go to the yearly meeting, the yearly-meeting clerk) delivers it to the travelling Friend.

14. NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS: Remind the nominating committee in September that they are to submit a roster of all appointment nominations for Friends’ consideration at the November monthly meeting and then (after Friends’ comments) at the December monthly meeting for Friends’ approval.

Remind the pastoral-care committee and the monthly meeting on ministry and worship at the same time that they submit nominations for members of the nominating committee in November and December also.

You should note and refer vacancies on existing committees and new-committee appointments to the nominating committee at once. If you prepare a copy of the monthly-meeting minutes for them, simply note such vacancies there.

The nominating committee should furnish you the address of any non-member they nominate to a committee. Members' addresses are in the yearly-meeting and monthly-meeting directories or, for recently-admitted members, in the minutes.

Refer important nominations straight from the floor to the nominating committee.

Friends who do not wish to serve with a committee should send their requests for release from service (not resignation) to the monthly-meeting clerk.

- A. MINUTES TO PREPARE BEFOREHAND:
 - i. MINUTE FOR THE FIRST READING OF NOMINATIONS:

'The nominating committee suggest the name(s) of the following Friend(s) to serve in this/these appointment(s) for the term(s) listed:

'(insert name(s) and term(s))

'This/these name(s) will come to us next month for appointment.'

Or, for the nominating committee:

'The pastoral-care and ministry-and-worship committees suggest the name(s) of (NAME(S))_____ to serve with the nominating committee for (a) term(s) ending (DATE(S))_____. This/these nomination(s) will come to us next month for appointment.'

- ii. FOR THE FIRST READING OF A ROSTER OF NOMINATIONS: Don't print the list in the minutes this time.

'The nominating committee suggest a roster of nominations for appointment to service with the meeting. After Friends' consideration, the roster is to come to us next month for our approval.'

- iii. MINUTE FOR APPOINTMENTS: You print the roster with the minute this time:

'At the suggestion of the nominating committee we appoint these/this Friend(s) to service to the committee(s), post(s), and term(s) listed:

'(insert name(s) or roster of appointments).'

- iv. MINUTE FOR APPOINTMENTS TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

'At the suggestion of the pastoral-care and ministry-and-worship committees, we appoint (NAME(S))_____ for service with the nominating committee for (a) term(s) ending (DATE(S))_____.'

- v. MINUTE FOR RELEASE FROM SERVICE:

'At her/his request, we release (NAME)_____ from further service with the (NAME)_____ committee (or: as clerk/treasurer/recorder). We ask the nominating committee (or pastoral-care and ministry-and-worship committees) to suggest the name of a Friend to fill this vacancy, the term ending (DATE)_____.'

(Or, if the clerk has noticed that an appointee has not attended at least three consecutive committee meetings or done the appointment's work:) 'At the clerk's request, we release (NAME)_____ from further service with the (NAME)_____ committee (or: as clerk/treasurer/recorder). We ask the nominating committee (or pastoral-care and ministry-and-worship committees) to suggest the name of a Friend to fill this vacancy, the term ending (DATE)_____.'

B. LETTER TO NOTIFY APPOINTEES:

'(NAME(S) of APPOINTEE(S))_____:

'Dear Friend(s):

'Today the monthly meeting appointed you to (NAME(S) of COMMITTEE(S) or POST(S))_____ for (a) term(s) ending (DATE(S))_____.

'This appointment's duties are (insert duties from the HANDBOOK). At the end of your term of service please give the meeting a short report of your work.

(If the meeting appoints a whole committee:) 'It is the convener's (the first-named of the appointees) immediate duty to call you together to organize. At that meeting, the convener should preside till you have selected a clerk (if applicable). Promptly thereafter, the convener should tell the monthly meeting clerk the committee clerk's name.

'For the (NAME of YOUR MEETING)_____ Monthly Meeting, /s/ (YOUR NAME)_____, clerk.'

- C. THE COMMITTEE ROSTER: You or the nominating committee prepare a roster of appointments each year in enough copies for Friends to have. On the list, committee clerks have asterisks next to their names, those with terms of more than one year have the dates of expiry of their terms next to their names, and persons who are not members have their names highlighted in some way.

15. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: Committees report at least once a year according to the schedule at the back of the monthly-meeting HANDBOOK. Notify them two months beforehand.

If the report is oral or of no moment for the minutes, prepare only a minute that so-and-so reports acceptably for such-and-such a committee. If there is lengthy discussion or some action needed submit a minute about it to the meeting.

If the report is written and to be included in the minutes, submit this minute:

'The (NAME)_____ committee report acceptably as follows: (insert report).'

Summarize reports, if you can, with an outline of each point in the report. The reason for this is that there are many ways to shorten most reports that the report writers have not taken.

Keep non-included reports in a separate committee-report folder.

16. REPORTS OF THE BUDGET-AND-COLLECTIONS

COMMITTEE: This committee brings a projected budget for the following year in November for Friends' examination and questions. Don't print it in the November minutes.

'The budget-and-collections committee present an expense budget for next year for Friends' review and will present it again next month for approval.'

In December, they bring it again, perhaps with changes, for Friends' approval, and you print it with the minutes:

'At the suggestion of the budget-and-collections committee to adopt this expense budget for next year: (insert budget)'

It is the budget-and-collections committee's job to recommend budget increases, extra money for a committee's use, or other special and specific expenditures. For the treasurer's direction, they are to say where the extra money is to come from or how they expect to collect it:

'At the suggestion of the budget-and-collections committee, we approve the (NAME of COMMITTEE)_____ spending up to (AMOUNT) \$_____ more this year. The budget-and-collections committee plan to raise the money in their next appeal letters.'

All requests for more money go to the budget-and-collections committee first. This is at the direction of a monthly-meeting minute.

17. REPORTS OF THE TREASURER: The treasurer prepares quarterly reports in April, July, and October and an end-of-year report in January. For the quarterly reports, minute the following, but don't print the full report:

'The treasurer reports acceptably for the year till the end of the last quarter.'

However, for the end-of-year report, prepare this minute, in which you print the full report:

'The treasurer reports acceptably for last year as follows:'

'(insert report)'

18. REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR: After the auditor goes over the treasurer's books and speaks with the treasurer about any findings, the auditor is to give you a copy of the report. The auditor reads the report to the monthly meeting in the late winter, and you prepare this minute:

'The auditor reports acceptably on the audit of the books of the monthly meeting as follows:

'(insert report).'

If there are any recommendations for Friends' approval, minute:

'We accept the recommendations and ...(describe what Friends approve)'

19. STATE-OF-THE-MEETING REPORTS: The monthly meeting on ministry and worship appoints one or more of their members to write and submit a draft of the state-of-the-meeting report early in the year. When they submit a final draft after Friends' comments, a month later, they should bring copies enough for those present. The report should contain figures for average attendance at meetings for worship throughout the year. Prepare this minute, with which you print the full report:

'The committee on ministry and worship have prepared the following state-of-the meeting report, which Friends approve for forwarding to the quarterly and yearly meetings:

'(insert report)'

Send as many copies as the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel direct: the monthly meeting's committee on ministry and counsel will give you the address to send them.

20. THE RECORDER'S REPORT: At least once a year, the recorder is to make a statistical report to the monthly meeting on the meeting's membership. As births and deaths occur, the recorder reports them too. Prepare this minute:

'The recorder reports as follows for the last year: (insert report)'

(Or:) 'The recorder reports the birth of (NAME of CHILD)_____ to (NAME(S) of MEMBER(S))_____ on (DATE)_____.'

(Or:) 'The recorder reports the death of (NAME of MEMBER)_____ on (DATE)_____, aged (NUMBER)___ years, (NUMBER)___ months, and (NUMBER)___ days.'

Please refer to the section above on membership concerning letters to send about births and deaths.

21. A CALLED MEETING FOR BUSINESS: FAITH AND PRACTICE outlines the procedure for this. From time to time, Friends may wish to hold a business meeting in addition to the regularly-scheduled ones to consider a particular matter. Or, after a request from three members, you may call a session of the business meeting for a date one week after an announcement of it and the subject of its business to a regularly-scheduled meeting for worship.

The called meeting may take up only the matter(s) for which you or the monthly meeting called it, and you prepare minutes for it as you would usually do. Change the heading minute to read: AT A CALLED SESSION OF THE (NAME)_____ MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, &c.

22. TYPING MINUTES: Type or compute the original minutes into the minute book on archival-grade rag-content paper and hand-sign them.

Be sure to number them.

Keep a running index for a final index to prepare at the end of the year and bind in the minutes.

Put a note in the margin about each item to help you or anyone else find items later on.

A copy goes to the newsletter editor, the clerk of the nominating committee, the assistant clerk, and any people mentioned in the minutes whom the meeting has appointed to a committee or some work.

Keep a copy as well in a binder for when the originals go to archives.

Take one home.

Post a copy on the notice board.

Buy a sturdy minute-book and archival paper at a stationery store; give the receipt to the treasurer to repay you.

23. PREPARATIVE MEETING'S REPORTS TO THE

MONTHLY MEETING: Each month, the preparative-meeting clerk reports to the monthly meeting. Send all membership matters, including all original papers, and anything else Friends approved to forward with the report. **THIS IS THE FIRST THING YOU DO AFTER THE PREPARATIVE MEETING: THE MONTHLY-MEETING CLERK NEEDS YOUR REPORT RIGHT AWAY.**

Forward to the monthly meeting only those matters it **MUST** consider, along with concerns that members have prepared, but not matters with which the meeting does not wish to deal.

A. FORM FOR THE REPORT TO THE MONTHLY MEETING:

'To the NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting to be held (DATE)_____:

'The (NAME)_____ Preparative Meeting met at the appointed time and place, (DATE)_____.

'The clerk read the advices/queries number _____.

'The meeting received and approved for forwarding to the monthly meeting the membership/wedding applications of (NAME(S) and ADDRESS(ES))_____.

'There was no further business to report to the monthly meeting.

's/_____, clerk.'

B. MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE MONTHLY MEETING:

- that the preparative meeting met
- that the clerk read the advices or queries
- names and addresses of new clerk, assistant clerk, ministry and counsel and pastoral-care clerks, and treasurer on appointment
- membership matters
- request for permission to suspend meetings for any month
- report of the preparative meeting's expenditures at year end
- state-of-the-meeting report
- nominations or appointments to the monthly-meeting committees
- reports, memorial minutes, letters, concerns, or other business that the meeting specifically forwards
- in the months of quarterly, half-yearly, or regional meeting:
 1. any change in officers since the last quarterly/half-yearly/regional meeting
 2. whether or not advices or queries have come up in the preceding period
 3. reports of activities in the meeting of interest to other meetings beyond the monthly meeting
 4. concerns the meeting may wish to share with other meetings beyond the monthly meeting
 5. reports of sufferings

24. MONTHLY MEETING'S REPORTS TO THE QUARTERLY/HALF-YEARLY/REGIONAL MEETING:

Every three months you report to the quarterly meeting. Report membership changes and anything else Friends approve for forwarding with the report.

Forward only those matters the quarterly meeting MUST consider, along with concerns that members have prepared.

A. FORM FOR THE REPORT TO THE QUARTERLY/HALF-YEARLY/REGIONAL MEETING:

'The (NAME)_____ Quarterly/Half-Yearly/Regional Meeting to be held (DATE)_____:

'The (NAME)_____ Monthly Meeting has met for business as appointed. We have heard and considered the (NUMBER)_____ advices and queries.

'We forward the following minute: (insert any minutes of concern or travel)

B. MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE QUARTERLY/HALF-YEARLY/REGIONAL MEETING:

- that the monthly meeting has met
- that the clerk read particular advices and queries
- names and addresses of new clerk, ministry and counsel and pastoral-care clerks, treasurer, recorder, and any preparative-meeting appointments
- state of payments of budgetted amounts due the quarterly/half-yearly/regional and yearly meetings
- copy of the state-of-the-meeting report, which you also send to the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel
- reports, memorial minutes, letters, concerns, travel minutes, or other business that the meeting specifically forwards
- any appointments to the quarterly-meeting committees
- once a year: a list of births, deaths, and weddings in the year before, from the recorder's report
- reports of sufferings

25. PAPERS: Membership and wedding proposals, travel-minute request, and reports of deaths go to the recorder to file in the permanent records of the monthly meeting. Send as well copies of letters of introduction and papers to do with conscientious-objector status for members.

File copies of reports to the next bigger meeting.

Keep a file of your correspondence on issues.

26. SENDING MINUTES TO ARCHIVES: The New York Yearly Meeting has an arrangement with the Friends' Historical Library: Swarthmore College; Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081 to house records from meetings in this yearly meeting. When you wish to send records there, speak with the yearly meeting secretary about how exactly to do that.

Be sure that you have copied the minutes and bound them in a book, perhaps to put in the library reference section, or the other records you will send: you will not be able easily to see them again.

27. MONEY MATTERS: Give your receipts for minute-books, archival paper, copies, and postage to the treasurer to repay you.

Towards the end of the year, tell the budget-and-collections committee how much money you think you will need for the next year's treasurer's budget.

28. THE SENSE OF THE MEETING: Read FAITH AND PRACTICE's section about business procedure.

29. SOME NOTES ON MINUTE-WRITING: Minutes have two functions: 1) to record action, events, concerns, or opinions; and 2) to authorize action in the future.

Actually, 2) is more important. You should not cram the minute book with items better suited to a history of the meeting. However, if the tone of the meeting is that an item is of enough interest for record, submit a simple minute of record.

Read past minutes to give you the flavor of Friends' jargon. In general, quakerese does not embellish with many adjectives or adverbs, is rather impersonal, and is in the present tense and active voice: 'Friends approve,' 'The meeting asks,' 'The meeting receives a letter from....'

Check a minute to see if it needs any of the following:

- a. SOURCE: whether a letter, committee report, person in the meeting or outside, the meeting's agreement. ('Friends suggest....')
- b. SUBJECT: what the letter is about or what the meeting discusses. You would like to do justice to the item's uniqueness, but time and space lead to spare wording. ('Friends consider the proposal to meet for worship in the open area behind the meeting house.')
- c. OPINION or AGREEMENT: what the meeting felt about the item Friends raised. ('Friends agree with the concern.' Or: 'The meeting is sympathetic with the concern, but....')
- d. ACTION AUTHORIZED: write about specific action to take place. In meetings with shifting populations it is important to be specific as a means of continuity that is lacking in personnel.
- e. WHO IS TO ACT: place responsibility clearly. You inform the actor whose job it is, so name an actor. Lacking others, the clerk is the meeting's general executive and does all unclaimed jobs. Therefore, suggest freely to the meeting that they name someone or a committee to do a job. USE EXISTING, RATHER THAN AD HOC, COMMITTEES.
- f. WHEN ACTION IS TO HAPPEN: appointments are where this is essential, but also ad hoc reports that are to come to the meeting at a set date. If no-one can foresee final reports, provide for an interim report at least once a

year. Flexibility is important; so is a deadline to keep things from dragging on forever.

- g. WHERE TO SEND IT: specify if the clerk refers the item to someone or a committee.
- h. DISCRETION OF THE CLERK: avoid this in minutes: give someone the responsibility of doing something at a certain time in a certain place.
- i. WHEN NOTHING COMES OF IT: a minute from the Norwich (Ontario) Preparative Meeting in 1861 reads: After carefully feeling after the true judgement, the meeting concludes to let the matter rest in our minutes for further consideration.'

In other words, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW.

On a subject that comes up freely in the meeting, take notes of what speakers say in separate paragraphs. From what you have written remove each Friend's name and substitute 'One Friend says,' or 'Another person says.' Read aloud such remarks as the suggestion for a minute. If there is some conclusion about the matter, record that. Friends may or may not wish you then to record the summary of what they said on the subject. A minute that shows the flow of thought on a subject is known as 'a minute of exercise' or 'the exercises of the meeting.'

A WORD ON PIOUS AND TRENDY LANGUAGE: Watch out! You do not want minutes to sound theatrical or rhetorical or stuck in a period language style. Avoid anything but facts in what you write. But when your minute refers to what a Friend has said, as when you put a committee or state-of-the-meeting report or an epistle into the minutes, then quote freely the Friends' remarks even though you don't name the Friend in the minutes.

Another reason to be watchful about pious language is that the minute should not promise what Friends cannot do or live up to. We do not really often know what God and God's will are: probably we can merely guess at what might be good to do.

Further, a minute ought not to refer to something that is implied by the kind of language that readers later on will have to guess at because they no longer use the language in the same way.

Keep it simple.

30. YOUR WORK AND HOMEWORK: Your own bias and feelings can block the meeting's work, so you may not express them. You are not to give your opinion on any matter coming before the meeting. This goes for the assistant clerk and any other person at the clerk's table. Do not stand down to give an opinion: it is not necessary. However, you may ask questions about such items on the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW line.

If you cannot keep your opinion to yourself, ask the meeting to appoint another member to serve as clerk for the matter under consideration, and leave the room or step down – only then - to speak.

Study beforehand any matter to come before the meeting and ask questions of the proposers to make sure that the presentation will be complete. If a proposal is more than a small item, have the proposers

write it, with a copy to you so that you can prepare a minute beforehand that at least includes the proposal. Write as much of a minute beforehand as you can so that you are sure that you have the facts in the minute.

You may bring up positions yourself that speakers have not brought up about the matter.

Keep talkative and repetitious Friends to the point. A Friend may bring up a matter far from the one under discussion: do your best to keep the discussion on the point. To stop people from repeating themselves, propose a minute, or at least part of one. This may help to move the matter along.

You may wish to tell the meeting that it can do whatever it wants to about a matter.

Encourage shy Friends to speak, particularly if you know that they have information or opinions about the matter that need hearing.

Summarize the discussion points every now and then, emphasizing the points the meeting has agreed so far.

In confused, tired, rough, or awkward moments, feel free to ask for quiet and guidance. There may be Friends who can suggest a good resolution or even words for a minute. Just nod the head to begin some silence.

Wait for the right way when Friends are saying all kinds of things.

Leave time in the meeting for things not on the agenda to come up.

After and outside of meeting you will have many occasions to talk about the things that have come up in monthly meetings. Also, visit committees to see how they are doing their work.

It is good after the monthly meeting to meet some others for a meal away from the meeting house.

Being clerk is an accidental entrée into many conversations and discussions of mutual concerns.

Some Friends who are pushy and determined about certain actions will test a lot of your self-control. Talk about these things with your friends in the meeting or the assistant clerk.

