

## Questions & Answers for LEYM Committee Clerks

Question: Should a business matter be brought to Executive Committee or directly to a business session?

Answer: If in doubt, bring it to Executive Committee. Between meetings, run it by the presiding clerk.

Question: What does it mean to season an item?

Answer: To give a matter attention over a period of time and by disparate Friends; taking the time to seek the Light rather than moving into a matter hastily; actively working to increase one's understanding and to discern God's will.<sup>1</sup> An item can be seasoned outside committee meetings by bringing it to Executive Committee or consulting with the presiding clerk or other seasoned Friends. (A "seasoned Friend" is a Friend who has a deep understanding of Quaker process, lives a life of faith, and listens to and obeys the Inner Teacher.<sup>2</sup>)

Question: What do I do when someone uses Quaker jargon and I don't know what it means?

Answer: Be comfortable asking what it means.

Question: Are there items that should be brought up at Annual Sessions rather than Representative Meeting?

Answer: Yes. Certain actions and authority are reserved to Annual Sessions. See *Policies & Procedures* II.A.3. for a complete list. They include: endorsement of a concern -- to expedite matters, notice of the concern should be given to the presiding clerk in writing well in advance of Annual Sessions; additions & changes to policies and procedures; and setting up, recognizing, and laying down standing committees. If in doubt whether to present an item at Representative Meeting, check with the presiding clerk.

Question: What should be in a committee report to business meeting?

Answer: Tell the meeting what your committee has done since its last report that is of general interest to the body. This should be much shorter than the committee minutes. Omit details such as where and when you met; how often you met may be of interest. Include matters you are working on. Any items that need the meeting's action should be presented separately from the report.

Prepare a written report and make three copies for the clerks' table, both of the report and of any projected documents or handouts. This helps our clerks understand, record, and track the business that comes before the Meeting. If you are unable to have your report typed for the business session, you can provide a written copy and e-mail a typed report later. In all cases, it is helpful to the Recording Clerk if you can provide the report on a thumb drive during the business sessions or e-mail the file following the meeting.

Question: Is the committee clerk the only person who can give a report for the committee?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches*, by Mathilda Navias, 2012, Friends Publishing Corporation, p. 301. Available from Mathilda as well as from *Friends Journal* and QuakerBooks, FGC's on-line bookstore.

<sup>2</sup> ditto

Answer: No. Anyone on the committee can present a report for the committee, whether the clerk is available or not. Whoever is most familiar with the content of the report should present it. The person presenting a report is presenting it on behalf of the committee, not on behalf of the committee clerk.

Question: What can simply be reported, and what needs to be brought to the yearly meeting for its decision?

Answer: Any decision that is within the committee's charge (what the committee has been tasked with doing – found in *Policies & Procedures*) is reported to the meeting. For instance, the Earthcare Committee can report that it has published a pamphlet and disseminated it to LEYM meetings.

Anything outside the committee's charge – recommendations for changing the committee structure or charges, for instance, must be decided by the yearly meeting. If the committee wants LEYM to approve a minute, that needs to be presented as an item for decision. Make sure that a recommendation to the yearly meeting has been approved by the committee before being brought to business meeting. There is a section in *Policies & Procedures* (II.D.) that addresses "Acting on Leadings and Concerns" that should be useful for some committees. Be careful that you present items for the meeting's "consideration," not its "approval".

Question: When should I alert the clerk to an item my committee will be bringing for decision?

Answer: When you have business that the committee wants to bring to Representative Meeting or Annual Sessions, please e-mail the clerk well ahead of the meeting, at least two weeks before, if possible. For any business that comes up just prior to a gathering, please phone the clerk. For business that comes up during your committee meetings at a gathering, please talk to the clerk before you bring it up in Meeting for Business. This will help alleviate a unnecessary confusion on the floor of the business session.

If the item for decision involves a lot of detail, such as a prepared minute or a slate of nominations, it is best to make it available to the body before the business session in which it is to be considered. This allows Friends to look at it and consider it so they can be prepared to discern. This can be done by posting it outside the room where business is conducted and perhaps in other locations. Check with the clerk.

Question: How do I present an item for decision?

Answer: See the excerpt below from *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches* by Mathilda Navias.

### **Presenting an Item for Decision**

- 1) This is the item of business.
- 2) This is where it comes from: this is what has happened in the past that brought the matter to this point. Give a historical review of one to ten sentences, including how the meeting has handled it in the past. This may involve some digging in old minutes, or conversations with others who remember what happened because they were present and part of past actions.
- 3) This is who worked on it (the standing committee or an ad hoc committee with the names of the people serving on it and anyone else involved).

- 4) This is the process by which we arrived at our recommendations: what we've considered, who we've talked to, what we've done, etc. Anticipate people's questions of whether someone has been consulted or an option considered.
- 5) Make a recommendation. In a few cases, it may be reasonable to present a few alternatives, but generally it is most helpful to the meeting in its deliberations to bring forward one specific suggestion, whether that is what is ultimately decided or not. See if there are questions; it is good practice to allow the clerk to ask for questions rather than the person presenting the business. Once any questions have been answered, the presenter should turn the running of the meeting over to the clerk.

The *Quaker Process* book makes further suggestions.

Question: How do LEYM committee clerks get chosen?

Answer: LEYM committee clerks are nominated by LEYM's Nominating Committee in consultation with the committee. It is assumed that they will remain as the clerk of the committee for the rest of their committee term unless they ask to step down as clerk or there are reasons to find someone else.

Question: Whose responsibility is it to see that LEYM committee clerks know what they're doing?

Answer: It's the responsibility of the committee clerk to find out what they need to know and to seek guidance as appropriate. The yearly meeting's presiding clerk is tasked with undertaking responsibilities not specified in *Policies & Procedures* "for the smooth functioning of the organization" (III.A.1.1.) so they are the go-to person for information and guidance. The Yearly Meeting Worker, other members of the committee, and the previous committee clerk are also sources of information and guidance.

There are two documents in addition to this one to help committee clerks: "Resources & Good Practices for LEYM Committee Clerks" and "Guide to the Annual Records of LEYM" are available on LEYM's web site on the LEYM Committee Resources page at [LEYM.org/committees2](http://LEYM.org/committees2).

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