

## Charter and Bylaws of The Northeastern Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (NERM)

### A. Charter

The Northeastern Regional meeting (NERM) is an association of all neighboring Monthly Meetings (MM) and affiliated worship groups (WG) of the Religious Society of Friends within the northeastern region of New York State. As such, it is one of nine such regional groups (also called Quarterly Meetings) that constitute The New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM).

The NYYM is incorporated as provided by New York State Religious Law. It is a registered 501(c)(3) non profit religious organization with the IRS.

Regional meetings bring together Friends from several Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups for worship and counsel. Through pooling of effort and resources, they can consider wider and more varied concerns than individual meetings. [Ref: NYYM *Faith and Practice*, 2014, p. 95].

### B. Bylaws

#### I. Name, purpose, territory

The name of this group is the Northeastern Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (NERM). Its purpose shall be to provide administrative, spiritual, and fiscal support for the Monthly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) located in the northeastern region of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (NYYM). The territory of NERM is roughly bounded by Hudson, New York on the south, by the New York state line on the East, by the US-Canadian border on the north, and by Quaker Street on the West.

#### II. Membership

The specific Monthly Meetings (MMs) currently served by NERM include: Adirondack, Albany, Easton, Hudson, Old Chatham, Quaker Street, Saranac Lake, Saratoga, and Schenectady. The Worship Group (also sometimes termed a Preparatory Meeting) includes North Country Friends. The contact information for these, their meeting locations and schedules may be found in the current NYYM Yearbook. The membership of NERM shall include all individual meeting members (including youth or associate members) of the above Monthly Meetings and Worship Group.

#### III. Oversight of NERM

Within the Religious Society of Friends, organizations are built from the bottom up. Historically the normal flow of business has been from the Monthly Meetings to the Regional Meeting, to the Yearly Meeting. The Region delegates members to serve on the NYYM Nominating Committee, which is responsible for proposing nominees for all NYYM Officers and Committees, and through this means NERM participates directly in NYYM operations.

However, as a legal entity, NERM is an affiliated organization of NYYM. In particular, NYYM is responsible for establishing standards for Faith and Practice of all monthly meetings within its borders, for authorizing new Monthly Meetings, for holding fiduciary responsibility for funds contributed by the Monthly Meetings to the NYYM operating expenses, and for general oversight of Regional Meeting functions. Sometimes Monthly Meetings are discontinued or laid down. In this case, real property

responsibility associated with that MM typically devolves to the NYYM Trustees. In some Regions, additional real property (cemeteries, schools, historic structures, meeting places) may also devolve to the Region, either by designation by constituent meetings (e.g., during consolidations), historical precedent, or legacy. At present, NERM does not hold any real property.

#### IV. Officers and their Nomination Process

NERM Officers include the Clerk, Treasurer, and Clerk of Regional Ministry and Counsel. A Recording Clerk or Secretary may also be designated. The officers comprise the Scholarship Committee which authorizes fiscal support to NERM members towards their Monthly Meeting sponsored Quaker leadings.

Since the officers do not serve specific terms of office, nomination of new officers is done by a Nominating Committee, which is constituted from members by a Regional Meeting gathering. The Nominating Committee identifies a suitable candidate who is willing to serve as the successor to an officer who resigns or otherwise relinquishes his or her position. This candidate is presented by the Nominating Committee to the next Regional Gathering, and the candidate is then normally confirmed by the Body; i.e., those members of Regional Meeting who attend the Gathering. If a candidate cannot be confirmed by the Body an alternate candidate may be chosen from the floor. Failing this, an interim Clerk will be designated for the following gathering, while the Nominating Committee or an ad hoc Naming Committee confirmed by the body either identifies an alternate candidate or requests further prayerful consideration of the candidate in question.

In addition to its officers, NERM uses a similar process to designate (at least two) representatives to the NYYM Nominating Committee, to NYYM Ministry and Counsel, and from time to time to other NYYM Committees.

#### V. Duties of Officers

Duties of the NERM Clerk: The NERM Clerk presides over Regional Meetings also called Gatherings. To begin, the Clerk calls for a Recording Clerk that subsequently provides minutes of each gathering. This recording function is presently provided on a rotating basis by the MM hosting that NERM Meeting.

The NERM Clerk coordinates Regional Meeting activities and serves between gatherings as the principal officer of NERM. In particular, the Clerk coordinates the dates, local hosting, and notification of member meetings of Regional Gatherings. The Clerk may redistribute communications of NYYM or of other regional events to the MMs. The Clerk determines and publicizes the agenda for each Regional Gathering. The Clerk also provides current information about the Region to NYYM for the NYYM Yearbook, and may recommend particular Regional Meeting members to serve on specific NYYM Committees. The Clerk should send copies of NERM Minutes to the NYYM Office and/or to the Friends Historical Society for archival storage. In addition, the NERM Clerk serves to assist the Treasurer whenever he or she is unavailable. In this capacity the Clerk is authorized to disburse funds from the NERM bank account as a sole signatory.

Duties of the NERM Treasurer: The NERM Treasurer maintains and reports on the financial status of NERM. Historically, the NERM Fiscal Year has coincided with the Calendar Year. The Treasurer receives dues from constituent MMs, maintains and records the bank account balance, and disburses NERM funds as authorized. These authorizations are typically by the Scholarship Committee, by the Body at NERM Gatherings, or to provide services to host Regional Meetings and NYYM

Representative Gatherings. To enable these approved disbursements the Treasurer is authorized to be a sole signatory on the NERM bank account.

The Treasurer reports at each NERM Gathering on income, expenses, and balance of the NERM treasury, on the status of dues receipts from constituent MMs to NERM, and also on the status of covenant donations from constituent MMs to NYYM. The treasurer serves as our Regional representative to the NYYM Finance Committee. The NERM Treasurer also maintains applications forms for new and approved Scholarships.

Duties of the NERM Clerk of Ministry and Counsel: The Clerk of Regional Ministry and Counsel coordinates Ministry and Counsel activities across the Region, working with MM Ministry and Counsel Clerks as well as regional MM members who constitute a Regional Ministry and Counsel Committee. The Clerk of Regional Ministry and Counsel also is responsible for calling periodic meetings of the Committee – some by telephone and some at Regional Gatherings – to share MM and YM leadings.

## VI. Meetings

NERM Regional Gatherings are normally held twice yearly and shall be held at least annually. Gathering locations normally rotate among the MMs in alphabetical order, and in the event that a MM is unable to host, then the next Meeting in alphabetical order will be asked as an alternate host.

The Spring Gathering normally meets during the last weekend in April or the first weekend in May. The Fall Gathering is either the last weekend of October or the first weekend of November. The Host meeting decides whether the Gathering should be held on 7<sup>th</sup> Day (Saturday) or 1<sup>st</sup> Day (Sunday), and normally, in consultation with the Clerk, determines the speaker and schedule for the day.

Gatherings normally include a Meeting of the Regional Ministry and Counsel committee, Meeting for Business during which the Treasurer's report is read, a social hour usually with a pot luck lunch coordinated by the Host meeting, and a speaker. The gathering may also include children's activities or singing. Child care funds to proctor young children are available from the NERM Treasurer.

## VII. Amendments to this Charter and Bylaws

A proposed amendment to this charter or bylaws may be originated either by a constituent Monthly Meeting, by recommendation of the NERM officers, or in a Regional meeting. Proposed changes shall be sent by the Regional Meeting Clerk to the Monthly Meetings for approval by consensus.

## Appendix: Current Officers

Reference NERM Meeting Minutes dated 10/25/2009 naming James Ralston NERM Treasurer  
NERM Meeting Minutes dated 7/23/2013 naming Nathaniel Corwin NERM Clerk

## Revision history

Guidelines For Conducting Business In the Quaker Street Region; adopted c. first month 1972