

## **Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting Communications Proposal**

### **Overview:**

Quaker Meetings are finding themselves in a time of renewal. There are many new avenues of communication and interaction, both for members and attenders of a meeting, and the wider community where the meeting is located. Often, it can be a challenge to incorporate new ways of connection, while also improving current ways of connecting Friends that are working well for a Quarterly Meeting. There are many tools that a meeting can use to connect - websites, newsletters, various social media. These tools can be quite helpful – especially when they incorporate well-seasoned current systems of communications. For this grant, I would suggest experiments in *two areas of communication* and outreach for the Quarterly Meeting.

### **1. VQM Digital Newsletter**

In my time among Friends in Vassalboro Quarter, I have found the news, and faithful witness, and efforts to build or Quaker communities happening within our meetings quite encouraging. Individual meetings have different ways of sharing this news internally - email newsletters, social media engagement, google groups and listservs. Quite often, many of these spiritual initiatives are open to a wider audience, and many Friends in the Maine geographical region would benefit from these programs. I suspect a robust monthly VQM newsletter, not only with announcements but links to more in-depth stories and descriptions, would encourage Friends in Vassalboro Quarter to connect across the Quarter both in prayer and in person. Quakers have had a deep history of travel in ministry - and perhaps this encouragement of news from Maine meetings in a digital space would encourage us to travel more in person as well.

### **2. VQM Facebook Presence**

A number of meetings in Vassalboro QM are experimenting with Facebook for outreach. I believe Winthrop Center Friends Church has participated (for example) in the FGC “Facebook ads” program. Their posts on our NEYM social media channels have also been well received and liked. Often, a meeting needs to learn how to post, what content to post, and how to share content in helpful ways in a developed social media calendar. I propose we create a Vassalboro QM Facebook page as a platform for these “experiments” - invite one member from each meeting on as a co-admin, with ability to post to the platform. I also would create VQM related content to promote news and attendance at all of the meetings within the QM. This initial funding will allow me to do the work of setting up and reaching out to train others. The maintenance of the Social Media accounts could then be shared by members of the QM in the future.

### **Timeframe & Compensation**

#### **Stage 1 – exploratory conversations and approval by VQM of specific actions**

- I would imagine the initial explorations/conversations would be primarily electronically with interested people. I would offer to host a once a month “communications call” to discuss possibilities for a VQM e-newsletter and VQM Facebook page, as well as exploring what else could be of help to meetings in the QM. This would include creating a Social Media policy to come to VQM for approval at Fall Gathering.
- I would create a draft sample VQM e-newsletter and proposals for a VQM Facebook page, with input from meeting volunteers, which would be ready for consideration at Fall Gathering.

## **Stage 2 – Implementation**

- I would create a VQM newsletter (MailChimp) and send it out monthly for one year as the lead editor. Future work would include creating a mailing/distribution list for the newsletter.
- I would create graphics and curate content for a VQM Facebook page, with input and help from others in the QM who are interested in joining in that work as admins.
- Consideration of a VQM website and VQM google group.

## **Stage 3 – Maintenance**

- I see phasing myself out over the course of a year, as Friends in VQM build capacity to carry on the work. I would hope to continue on (unpaid) as one of the co-admins for each of these platforms, in consort with VQM, as approved.

## **Proposed hourly rate for work: \$20 per hr\*\***

(Most social media work of this type, in professionally contracted services, averages \$70-\$120/hr.)

*\*\* I am aware that VQM has other needs for funding, and is also composed of smaller meetings that are not always financially stable. I will accept a commitment of \$1000 for the above services from the QM, with the understanding that more than 50 hours of work will be involved. If the QM is able to find more monies halfway through, or if meetings are able to contribute individually to this plan, that would be a welcomed (but not guaranteed) contribution. Unlike “just a job” – this is a ministry, and I feel a special kinship with the Quakers of Vassalboro QM. I just want to be able to cover my expenses and time in bare minimum.*

## **Qualifications:**

Kathleen Wooten has an extensive background in arts education, community building, dialogue process/focused conversations, and workshop facilitation. Her current work includes explorations and conversations around how Quakers connect and encourage faithful communities in both brick-and-mortar and digital spaces. She travels in the Quaker tradition of Gospel Ministry among Friends with a specific attention to how we are open to the leadings of the Spirit in new and fresh ways, while still honoring and preserving our most helpful Traditions. She currently maintains a resource list and occasional blog at [Quakerkathleen.wordpress.com](http://Quakerkathleen.wordpress.com), and is a founding member and administrator of the Quaker Communications and Outreach Facebook Group. She is the recipient of a Legacy Grant - the “ePublishers of Truth” - which helped her to learn more about Quakers and current communications needs and methods, and develop a set of resources for meetings.