

QUEST COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: May 13, 2025

Council held its monthly meeting at 25 Broadway in Room 7-39. President Donna Ramer called the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m.

Council Members Present: Karen Cullen, Mary Ann Donnelly, Peter Fleischman, Paul Golomb, Bob Gottfried, Vince Grosso, Nan McNamara, Donna Ramer, Ilene Winkler, and Judy Winn.

Newly Elected Council Members Present as Guests: Bob Belfort, Victor Brener, Stu Parker, and Ruth Ward.

Council Member Absent: Tamara Weinberg

I. General Administration: Donna Ramer

- After distributing the agenda, Donna thanked Council members Mary Ann Donnelly, Paul Golomb, Nan McNamara, and Ilene Winkler, who were leaving, and welcomed newly elected members Bob Belfort, Victor Brener, Stu Parker, and Ruth Ward. She then reminded everyone that Council discussions were confidential to encourage free and open discussion.
- Donna reported that this summer Tamara and Tracey Lee will attend the Southern Regional Lifelong Learning Conference on behalf of Quest.

II. 2025-2026 Committee Chairs and DEI: Donna Ramer, Nan McNamara

- Committee Chairs
 - Donna distributed the revised (May 10) Committee Chair Guidelines, approved at Council's April meeting, and summarized the Council's process and timeline for appointing committee chairs. She said that per the Guidelines she had reviewed with Council Secretary the tenure of the committee chairs and discussed chair positions with existing committee chairs and potential new chairs. Donna then submitted for Council's approval her proposed list of Committee Chairs for 2025-2026. She went through the list and the chairs for each committee; six of the committees have new chairs, including the four committees with term limits: Auditing, Curriculum, Membership, and Scheduling; and two of the non-term limited committees: New Members and QReview. Next month Donna will distribute the list of the Council liaisons for each committee.
 - Council commented on and discussed the proposed committee chairs. A few members suggested that this year serve as a transition year and that next year more of an effort be made to rotate new chairs into the non-term limited committees with long-standing chairs. Donna reminded Council that certain committees have a need for particular expertise, like the Technology Committee, which justifies a longer tenure for the chair and that for certain committees it was difficult to find a qualified member willing to be chair.

- Donna made a motion, seconded by Karen, to approve the submitted list of Committee Chairs for 2025-2026. After discussion, Council unanimously approved the motion.
- **DEI:** Nan then reviewed the recent (post-Covid) history of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.
 - Laura Lopez, chair during the 2022-2023 calendar year, and Nan, chair since the fall of 2023, have struggled with and received low or no responses to various initiatives. To increase the efficiency and success rate of DEI publicity, advertising, and marketing efforts going forward, Nan suggested integrating DEI with the Marketing and Communications (M&C) committee. She said that DEI was originally part of M&C and that the M&C chair, Maureen Berman, supports bringing DEI back under its umbrella.
 - Ilene said she agreed with Nan's proposal and suggested that Quest needed to search for ways to collaborate with other organizations. Bob Gottfried also agreed with moving DEI into M&C and recounted his unsuccessful outreach efforts with the United Nations retiree program and his current efforts to initiate a dialogue with the Islam community via the speakers from the recent Questers Choice class on the Quran, Women, and Islam in America.
 - Bob made a motion, seconded by Judy, that it was the sense of Council that the duties formerly undertaken by the DEI committee be assigned on a temporary basis to the Marketing and Communications committee. After discussion, Council unanimously approved the motion.
- Paul said that bylaws should not include standing committees and that most committees should have the flexibility to change their structure, combine, form, and/or reform, without Council's intervention. Many Council members agreed. Donna suggested this issue be discussed the next time the bylaws are reviewed and amended.

III. Treasurer's Report: Peter Fleischman

- Peter distributed and reviewed his 5-13-25 Treasurer's Report.
 - CWE's 4-30-25 holdback report on the CWE holdback account showed a balance of approximately \$4,000. This balance reflects Quest cash that CWE holds to pay Quest non-rent expenses, primarily the salary payments to technology assistant Felix Pina and administrator Raquel Rivera. Paul recently transferred \$20,000 to the holdback account to cover Quest's non-rent expenses for the next several months. Peter noted that this is the first time this fiscal year that Quest has had to add cash to the holdback account.
 - Tuition (membership fees) received for fiscal year 2024-2025 is approximately \$7,000 less than budgeted. Contributions and additional investment income covered the shortfall.

- For calendar year 2025-2026 Quest has already received tuition payments from about 70 members.
- Quest members are now using Zelle to pay for Culture Quest events, as well as tuition.
- Quest's balance sheet, \$999,000 as of 5-10-25, remains healthy.
- For fiscal year 2024-2025 YTD, actual income exceeds expenses by \$47,532, and after accounting for the anniversary dinner and certain tech and admin expenses, Peter expects we will end the fiscal year with a positive number, barring unforeseen expenses.
- Peter said that budgeting for fiscal year 2025-2026, which starts July 1, begins with the committees sending their requested annual budget to Donna and Peter. After necessary adjustments, Peter will submit to Council a final budget for its approval at the June meeting.

IV. Curriculum: Paul Golomb

- Debbi Honorof will be the new chair of the Curriculum committee.
- Paul will send a request to all lead coordinators that they submit a course outline with information about each of the classes in their respective courses.
- Paul said that 104 separate Quest members (40% of the total membership) coordinated and/or presented in classes this spring.

V. Membership: Ruth Ward

- Quest added 40 new members this year and currently has 268 active members. Several people have expressed interest in joining Quest. (Some people with inquiries heard about Quest through Road Scholars.)
- Ruth complimented Madeleine Brecher for doing a terrific job with QPals this year; because of term limits Madeleine is no longer on the Membership committee.
- 70 members have already sent in checks/cash through Zelle to pay for the next year of Quest beginning in September. The committee will send members an email reminding them of the June 30 deadline for paying membership fees.
- Non-member registration for free Summer Encores is June 3 and 5.
- At Donna's request, the committee will send members an email reminding them that the Summer Encores program is free, that they should encourage their friends to come, and that non-members intending to attend should RSVP by May 29 and register in person on June 3 or 5. As in the last three years, the non-photo ID for non-member Summer Encores registrants will include a yellow lanyard.

- Paul suggested the Council consider dedicating any late fees received to a particular cause. Donna suggested we defer this discussion until we know the total revenues from late fees, if any. Bob pointed out that hopefully there will be very few late fees.

VI. Marketing and Communications: Donna

- The Marketing and Communications committee has been very busy. It has sent information on the Summer Encores program to everyone on Quest's subscriber list and has placed digital ads for Summer Encores in the Tribeca Tribune and The Broadsheet. The Broadsheet will include an article about Quest in the near future. The committee will also be placing a series of digital ads for Quest in The Amsterdam News.

VII. Technology: Victor Brener

- The Technology Committee has been researching options for providing members with Wi-Fi access at 25 Broadway; the committee recently presented their recommendations to CWE tech lead, Robert Hernandez. Robert approved and will work with Quest on the recommendations; he said that CCNY does not need to approve them. Subject to the Council's approval, the committee proposed that Quest install a T-Mobile router and extender in the lunchroom and the Quest office, and that it set up the router/extender in June for a two-week trial run.
- Council members had questions about the proposal's cost. Victor explained that the projected costs of a two-year contract with T-Mobile are about \$1,000 a year, and that Quest can cancel the contract at any time. Donna pointed out that, along with Wayne Cotter, Victor, George Chung, and Tamara Weinberg, all from the Tech committee, worked on this proposal. George will be the point person with T-Mobile.
- Karen thanked Victor and the Tech committee for responding to members' requests for Wi-Fi. Donna pointed out that having Wi-Fi can help Quest in its efforts to recruit new tech-savvy members.
- Bob made a motion, seconded by Vince, to authorize the Technology committee to spend up to \$1,500 on T-Mobile Wi-Fi service for Quest. After discussion, Council unanimously approved the motion.

VIII. New Business: Donna

- Donna thanked outgoing Council members Mary Ann Donnelly, Paul Golomb, Nan McNamara, and Ilene Winkler for their service and again welcomed new members Bob Belfort, Victor Brener, Stu Parker, and Ruth Ward.

The next Council meeting will be at 25 Broadway on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 12:45 p.m.

Donna adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Cullen, Secretary

*Documents distributed at meeting: Agenda, Committee Chair Guidelines (rev 10 May 2025),
Quest Committee Chairs 2025-2026, and 5-13-25 Treasurer's Report*