**Nebraska Zen Center**

Minutes of the Annual Sangha Meeting

and Board of Directors Meeting

February 19, 2023

**Meeting Notification:** Notice of meeting made via Nebraska Zen Center (NZC) website and email.

**Meeting Location:** Nebraska Zen Center and via Zoom video conference

**Board Members Present:**

Pam Griffin President (ending 2024)

Fergus Hoban Vice President (ending 2024)

Vicki Grunwald Treasurer (ending 2025)

George Patenode Secretary (ending 2025)

Scott Rosen (ending 2025)

Michael Pray (ending 2026)

**Board Members Absent:**

None

**Sangha Members Present:**

Daishin McCabe

Sarah Neppl

Ron Semerena

Jenny Schima

Deb Spicka

Eric Thrasher

Karalee Picard

Terra Hall

Benji Frith

Ali McDufee

Song Tran

**Annual Sangha Meeting**

The annual meeting of the Sangha of Nebraska Zen Center (NZC) started at 11:54 am. Pam Griffin, President, presented a report highlighting the activities of the Board and Sangha that occurred for 2022. Vicki Grunwald, Treasurer, also presented a report of the highlights of Treasurer projects for 2022 which included the reconstruction of 2019-2021 Treasury records, the creation of the Roles and Responsibilities document, exception log reporting, back-up Treasurer training and moving the treasurer records to Cloud Storage. The Voting Members present elected Karalee Picard and Eric Thrasher to the Board as new Directors. All other Directors and Officers retained their current positions. Daishin McCabe, who joined NZC as an interim priest in 2022, will continue to attend Board meetings in his capacity as a non-voting member.

And as provided under the NZC Bylaws, all Directors will be elected to serve three-year terms, with the yearly terms of the Directors staggered so that now, as it applies to the current Board membership, Pam Griffin, and Fergus Hoban will each serve one-year terms, Vicki Grunwald, George Patenode and Scott Rosen will each serve two-year terms, and Michael Pray, Karalee Picard and Eric Thrasher will each serve three-year terms. Each term of office will start at the end of this annual Sangha meeting of 2023.

**Voting Members**

The current list of NZC Voting Members at the time of the annual Sangha meeting were as follows:

Sarah Neppl Terra Hall Jaime Sauceda Tom Schulte

Karalee Picard Fergus Hoban Eric Thrasher Bryan Trogdon

Jose Correa Jenny Schima George Patenode Max Hjermstad

Pamela Griffin Matt Huettner Ron Semerena Scott Rosen

Vicki Grunwald Debra Spicka Jon Kayne Alisa McDuffee

Tom Dinaro Benji Frith Ann Gentle

**Board of Directors Meeting**

The Board of Directors meeting was held immediately following the annual Sangha meeting with the same Board Officers and Directors in continued attendance from the annual Sangha meeting.

Meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 12:14 pm. Attendance was taken and a quorum was present.

**Agenda**

The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes of the NZC Board of Directors Meeting of November 13, 2022.

Treasurer Report

Treasurer Agenda was provided to the Board prior to the meeting and is included as an attachment to these minutes. In addition to presenting highlights of the successful Treasury projects completed during 2022 made during the annual Sangha meeting, Vicki Grunwald,

Treasurer, notified the Board of a change of NZC bookkeeping software from Quicken to MoneyMinder, and presented the 2022 annual treasury reports using both applications for comparison. The annual cost for the new software is approximately $179.00 plus $59.00 for Cloud Storage, totaling $240.00 annually. Vicki requested and received approval from the Board accordingly for the change in bookkeeping software and an increase in the annual budget of the Technology Committee from $500 to $750 to accommodate the MoneyMinder fees. The MoneyMinder system allows other Board members to have access for increased transparency. Vicki will amend the Treasurer procedures for the new system. Vicki also requested confirmation of whether $3600 earmarked for the Communications Committee photography project was approved separately or part of the Committee’s budget. After discussion it was determined that the earmark was part of the Committee’s budget and did not require separate Board approval.

Vicki continued by presenting the proposed 2023 Treasury projections with the goal of helping the Board understand the financial health of NZC. The financial values presented were from the NZC “hay day” years 2009-2015 when both membership and donations were historically high. Current NZC membership of 22 members matches the average high for this period. The proposed budget projections for 2023 included expenses for administrative staff, payment to Daishin McCabe for his interim priest services, and fees for the logo branding project, all which were previously approved by the Board. Vicki stated that the current number of donors is 67, as compared to the historical average of 122, and she expressed her concerns that, based on fiscal expense projections for 2023, without the continued support of large donors NZC may incur an $18,161.00 deficit. Additionally, without the continue support of large donors, the projected income for 2023 will be more than $24,540.00 short of the donor income for 2022. These projected figures indicate an overreliance on large donors. Based upon the Board’s review of the proposed budget as presented in the meeting the Board voted to approve the proposed budget with an understanding that the presented figures may change.

Vicki also discussed various miscellaneous Treasury matters that included the formal approval and acceptance by the Board of the “Treasurer for Nebraska Zen Center Roles and Responsibilities” document created by Vicki in 2022 and presented for the meeting. This document highlights general duties and best practices of nonprofit treasurers and will be a reference document going forward. Vicki lastly notified the Board of a formal file checkout procedure for documents held at NZC and the procedure was approved and accepted by the Board.

Communications Committee

Communications Committee Report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting and is included as an attachment to these minutes. The fall 2022 photo session will continue during one weekend in spring 2023 and will include Daishin McCabe. The particular weekend is not planned yet. The social media campaign is currently on hold waiting for completion of the branding project that will produce a new NZC logo and narrative.

Technology Committee

Mike Pray, Director and Chair of the Technology Committee, stated that direct access by the Communications Committee to the NZC site has increased due to the creation of rule-based access permissions and that if anyone else needs use of the site to let the Committee know. The project to include all NZC dharma talks to YouTube is near completion, in addition to the creation of a new IT Charter document. Daishin expressed an interest in the development of a podcast with Mike and that would include other Sangha members.

Building and Grounds

Mike Pray, Director and Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, stated that he contracted with Sure Lawn for snow removal this winter at $80.00 per removal and the contract may be cancelled at any time. Pam suggested that trim painting for the NZC building is needed and should be done during the warm months of 2023.

Branding Project

The project to create a new NZC logo and narrative with Filament Services continues under the effort of Pam, Fergus Hoban, Scott Rosen and Vicki. The interviews with Filament are now completed with clear NZC themes discovered. The next step is for three logo designs proposed by Filament.

Membership Committee

A proposed onboarding plan for new members was recently created by Fergus Hoban, Vice President, who asked for suggested revisions from the Board within the next week. Terra Hall reported that a membership drive is planned for later in the year. A discussion followed of how to define membership, and the benefits of becoming a member, and what potential welcoming materials for new members would be provided.

Guiding Teacher Search

Pam reported that two previous candidates of interest for the Guiding Teacher position are now unavailable. It was understood by the Board that that even though these candidates did not express an interest they were still wanting to be engaged as a networking resource in the recruiting process. Pam and Terra proposed a networking strategy that would include inviting various teachers to visit NZC during the year and in engaging with other teachers for recruiting advice. Daishin suggested offering NZC for use as a site for teachers in training who would practice as a head Guiding Teacher for a short period of time. Obtaining a list of teachers in training and recirculating recruiting materials with the SZBA was also suggested.

Interfaith Opportunities

Vicki mentioned that NZC will participate in Spiritual Saturday with other religious organizations in April 2023. This will be a one-time event held at the Gene Leahy Mall in Omaha. A local yoga studio may be interested in holding yoga classes as NZC or offering an intro to Zen practice class at the yoga teacher’s studio and Scott is investigating.

Bylaws Revision and Code of Ethics

Pam proposed revisions to Section 13.0 of the Bylaws for corporate ethics and compliance and introduced a new Code of Ethics for NZC. Pam asked the Board for review suggestions for future approval.

Miscellaneous

Pam mentioned that Terra Hall is performing well in her new role as a paid administrative assistant and that she has been of great help in a number of areas, such as keeping the NZC events calendar up-to-date. The 90-day evaluation period had ended and the Board approved to continue Terra’s paid position at 10 hours per week. The Board will evaluate in 90 days whether 10 hours per week is sufficient. Terra also suggested the use of her friend as a consultant for non-profit financial, regulatory and marketing matters via Zoom at no charge to NZC. Karalee also offered to investigate board training offered by NAM and the use of grant writing and will advise the Board at a later date. Pam notified the Board that the memorial marker for recently departed Rev. Nonin Chowaney was a redesigned flat marker that will incorporate a Buddha statute already in possession by NZC. Pam requested and received Board approval for a budget of $400 for the purchase of the marker.

Notice of the following Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for Noon on Sunday, May 7, 2023 at NZC and via Zoom video conference.

The meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm.

**Attachments for the Record**

Treasurer Agenda

Communications Committee Report

George Patenode

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors

February 19, 2023

Treasury Information

2023 Annual Meeting and Board Meeting 2/19/2023

Treasurer Agenda

1. Successes of Treasury
   1. Reconstructed books 2019, 2020, 2021
   2. Wrote Roles. and Responsibilities document
   3. Wrote Procedures document
   4. Standardized reporting
   5. Created NZC Exception Log
   6. Trained a backup treasurer
   7. Moved to the cloud
2. MoneyMinder
   1. Official approval $179 plus $59 annually
   2. Increase Tech Committee budget $500 to $750 to include software
   3. Allows others to have access (Mike, Scott, Pam and myself)
   4. Writing new procedures. Expect completion by end of April
3. NZC Exception Log (see attached)
   1. Updated IT Committee to Technology Committee
   2. Photos $3600 already paid $1800. Part of Communications or a different item requiring approval
4. Annual Report for 2022 with Banking Summary (see attached)
   1. Annual reports (Quicken versus MoneyMinder) side by side
   2. Has income and expenses on the same line
   3. AmazonSmile going away
   4. PITA to separate PayPal fees paid by donor or NZC



1. Miscellaneous
   1. Don't think like a for-profit
   2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Treasury updates,/ (attached)
   3. Files with checkout procedures (attached)

**Communications Committee Report 2/19/23**

1. Created Messaging Brief for 2023 (included for Board)
2. Newsletter changed to biweekly: intention is to be able to provide some stand-alone emails in between newsletters. Surveys, etc.
3. Fall 2022 photo session - finalizing selection (50) for finishing, but all are available for use, and are being used in communications. Spring or early summer for second photo session, to include garden and Daishin.
4. Website: Terra has direct access to post and make some changes. Some hitches now with posting newsletter to website archives. Made some changes to the look; new rotating pictures, want to include vision statement. Creating new upcoming events tab.
5. Social Media: In stasis. We need to set a foundation and specify goals, weekly posting numbers, etc. We may start creating a table for social media posts going forward.
6. Sangha Survey: sent out Tuesday 2/7; strong response so far.
7. Membership drive planned for March- Terra drafting messaging.
8. Getting ahead on content- early notice of Daishin weekends, and Mindful Self-Compassion Workshop Intro and six-week course.