

Nebraska Zen Center

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

May 16, 2023

Meeting Notification: Notice of meeting made via email. Waiver of seven-day notice of meeting requirement made by all attending Directors.

Meeting Location: 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)
Michael Pray	(ending 2026)
Karalee Picard	(ending 2026)

Board Members Absent:

Scott Rosen	(ending 2025)
Eric Thrasher	(ending 2026)
Daishin McCabe	

Sangha Members Present:

Terra Hall

Meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 6:00 pm. Attendance was taken and a quorum was present. The May 7, 2023 Board of Directors meeting attendance did not meet the quorum requirement and was rescheduled for this day.

Agenda

The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Annual Sangha Meeting and the Board of Directors Meeting of February 19, 2023.

Treasurer Report

Vicki Grunwald, Treasurer, presented the May 7, 2023 treasury reports for Nebraska Zen Center (NZC). The year-to-date (YTD) bank account balances were discussed. The PayPal account was not reconciled in time for the May 7th report due to lack of PayPal statement, though Vicki stated that the PayPal balance has since been reconciled. The overall income less expenses show a negative balance, mostly due to an outstanding large donor contribution that would otherwise cover clergy and staff salary expenses. Vicki notified the Board that both Pam and

Mike Pray have now read-only access to the treasury reports on MoneyMinder. This read-only access was created to increase transparency and Board oversight. Vicki has completed the written Treasurer procedures and notified the Board that she has decided to start training Sangha member Benji Frith as back-up Treasurer instead of Scott Rosen due to Benji's availability.

Vicki also prepared and presented income comparison totals for YTD 2022 and 2023. The income comparisons included totals for three general income categories of Activities, Donations and Fundraising. The income comparisons net of expenses show that NZC received approximately \$1,200.00 less income in YTD 2023 as compared to YTD 2022. Vicki also prepared and presented donor and donation information for the 2023 spring fundraiser. In comparison to the 2022 spring fundraiser, 37% of last year's donors contributed in 2023, with a corresponding shortfall in donations. The total was well below the \$8,500.00 fundraising target. Vicki, Pam and Terra Hall will discuss other fundraising strategies.

Vicki also discussed recent entries to the Treasury exception log concerning missing corporate credit card receipts, and a \$721.24 budget overage for a recent priest visit due to unexpected mileage and dinner expenses. After discussion, the Board voted in favor of both approving a standing budget of \$1,000.00 for visiting priests' expenses and the \$721.24 budget overage. Vicki also mentioned that the \$3,600.00 previously spent by the Communication Committee on professional photography was part of the \$5,000.00 approved budget and therefore did not need additional approval by the Board.

Communications Committee

Certain items of the Communications Committee Report was briefly discussed with no additional actions requested or voted upon.

Technology Committee

Mike Pray, Director and Chair of the Technology Committee, stated that the Committee members researched reports of a slow refresh of the NZC site and did not identify any reason other than possibly issues with the hosting provider. Mike asked for continued reporting of any additional reports of the site acting slowly for future investigation. A new one-time password (OTP) feature was enacted for security on Zoom for the NZC Sunday Open Zen with the OTP emailed to members of the Committee and two other Sangha members. Potential enhancements to the NZC webmail were also discussed.

Building and Grounds Committee

Pam expressed the need to coordinate with Mike Pray, Director and Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, for a work day in June at NZC for routine maintenance and yard work. Pam and Mike will discuss a date after the meeting. Pam also mentioned an effort in establishing a routine gardening night every other Thursday during the summer. Volunteer

projects were mentioned, with both gardening and volunteer projects communicated in the NZC newsletter or on the NZC website.

Branding Project

The new NZC logo and narrative continues with the efforts of Pam, Vicki, Fergus Hoban and Scott in partnership with Filament Services. Final selections of both logo and narrative are anticipated soon.

Membership Committee

How membership is defined at NZC is under final developments and may include monthly work practice in lieu of monthly money donations. Pam and Vicki discussed how to define work practice and how to communicate membership to Vicki. Membership stands at 24 current members. Pam and Terra continue to discuss new member welcoming that includes free materials (bookmarks, etc.) and mentoring.

Guiding Teacher Search

Pam stated that networking continues with invitations to visiting priests. Several dates in 2023 are now set for several visiting teachers and will present opportunities for income through activities at NZC.

Services, Events and Attendance

Pam previously provided a nearly final 2023 Events and Services schedule showing monthly Sunday morning ceremonies and other events. Pam stated that special events have not met expectations for attendance, except for Sunday morning services which Vicki stated that her tracking shows consistent attendance at 15 to 16 persons. Pam believes that changes in offered activities might help increase participation in special events. A planned memorial service for Rev. Nonin Chowaney in addition to the annual Remembrance Ceremony is planned for the following weekend when Daishin McCabe is in attendance. This should correspond with the new memorial stupa for Rev. Chowaney under development at NZC.

Outreach

NZC participated in Spiritual Saturday with other religious organization in April. This was a one-time event held at the Gene Leahy Mall in Omaha. Karalee Picard stated both attendance and participating by all religious organizations was low but felt it was otherwise important for NZC to participate. Pam stated that she is investigating NZC participating in Omaha Together One Community (OTOC), and that she recently gave a talk at Unity Church and hosted two college classes at NZC. Scott will present a proposal to the Board during the next meeting in NZC working with a local yoga studio. Pam also announced NZC will be participating in Open Omaha, a city-wide open house sponsored by Omaha by Design scheduled for August 5-6, 2023.

Pam will also explore the possibility of NZC volunteering at Habitat for Humanity and Open Door Mission in the future. Vicki expressed her concerns that the Sangha may not have the resources available for this year and perhaps 2024 may be better.

Miscellaneous

Terra's personal friend who works as a consultant for non-profit financial, regulatory and marketing matters is still available and Terra will coordinate with Fergus, Mike and Pam on setting a date for a consultation via Zoom. Pam and Karalee will create summarized training materials for Board members based on the NAM training that Karalee recently completed.

Discussion then turned to the matter of the previously cancelled sale of NZC to Bridge Church. The realtor for NZC had recently asked for any information NZC may have concerning the intention of Bridge Church regarding title company release. Pam stated that the Board has not had any contact with Bridge Church in over a year and NZC already signed the release. After discussion, it was decided that no further action is needed by the Board concerning the matter.

Notice of the next Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for Noon on Sunday, August 13, 2023 at NZC and via Zoom video conference.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Attachments for the Record

Agenda

Communications Committee Report

George Patenode

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors

May 16, 2023

AGENDA
Nebraska Zen Center
Board of Directors Meeting

May 7, 2023

1. Meeting to order; attendance; approval of prior minutes
2. Financial Report – Vicki/Scott
3. Committee reports
 - a. Communications – Pam/Terra
 - b. Technology Committee – Mike
 - c. Building and grounds – Mike
 - d. Branding – Pam, Vicki, Scott, Fergus
4. Membership (Pam/Terra):
 - a. Membership definition and benefits
 - b. 2023 membership drive and welcome efforts
 - c. Member/new attendee support and onboarding
5. Priest Search/guest teacher visits – Pam, Terra
6. Fundraising
7. Services, events and attendance – George, Pam, Daishin
 - a. 2023 to date
 - b. Scheduled future events
 - c. Attendance/service participation
8. Outreach – Vicki et al
 - a. Spiritual Saturday
 - b. OTOC
 - c. Unity Church
 - d. Yoga - Scott
 - e. Open Omaha
 - f. Volunteer days? Habitat, Open Door
9. Miscellaneous:
 - a. Nonprofit consulting
 - b. NAM and board training
 - c. Bridge Church

Communications Committee Report

May 7, 2023

Email:

- Continuing biweekly delivery of newsletter.
- Experiencing some issues with Mailchimp; Terra has to take steps to bypass the issue.
- Spring appeal emails completed now, including thank you email; lackluster response.

Social:

- Terra is taking over social media, posting on Instagram and FB;
- A [social outline](#) has been created.
- Need to coordinate with Laura on passwords for FB account and how to connect Insta and FB posts, and how to embed links to events and use ad function.
- Working on SM goals for 2023

Website:

- Webmail- Matt and IT group will try to work through issues with webmail; what is the ideal system for emails to NZC? Who should be checking and responding to emails? What should we be using the website.nzc email address for, vs. webmail?
- Ahead for website: incorporating new logo and palette. Incorporating vision statement in rotating pictures; creating new material for newcomers and membership.
- Reviewing other ZC websites for ideas: [Rochester Zen Center](#), Greater Boston etc.

Upcoming events:

- Beginning at 9 am on Sunday, April 30, NZC will offer Just Sitting, three periods of zazen with kinhin in between.
- On Sunday, May 7, Rev. Daishin McCabe will share a dharma talk via Zoom at Open Zen.
- NZC will have its quarterly board meeting after Open Zen Sunday, May 7. All are welcome to attend.
- Rev. Jan Chozen Bays, teacher at the Zen Community of Oregon and co-abbot of Great Vow Zen Monastery, will share a dharma talk via Zoom at Open Zen on Sunday, May 14.

Upcoming content:

- No luck getting people to submit material for What Brought You to Zen blurbs.

Branding Narratives: Have received three narratives from Filament; consider developing one from all three and incorporating them in our messaging going forward.