**Nebraska Zen Center**

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

November 5, 2023

**Meeting Notification:** Notice of meeting made via 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)

Karalee Picard (ending 2026)

Daishin McCabe (non-voting member)

**Board Members Absent:**

Scott Rosen (ending 2025)

Michael Pray (ending 2026)

**Sangha Members Present:**

Terra Hall

Ron Semerena

The meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 11:49 am. Attendance was taken and a quorum was present.

**Agenda**

The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of August 13, 2023.

Treasurer Report

Vicki Grunwald, Treasurer, presented the November 2, 2023 treasury and attendance reports for Nebraska Zen Center (NZC). Vicki made the recommendation that, as a means of managing the treasury exception report, withdrawals within Board approved budgets no longer need exception log reporting. Any item on the exception log may now be coded as “Informational”, meaning that Board approval is not required, though any exception log item is still subject to review at any time. Vicki will be providing to Pam administrative login credentials to MoneyMinder for treasury report review. The use of Venmo as an additional portal for donations was presented by Vicki who requested Board approval. Venmo only allows for a single administrative access right by Vicki, and transaction history is only kept by Venmo for three months. After discussion, the Board all voted in favor for the use of Venmo. Vicki also notified the Board that NZC recently opened three Edward D. Jones & Co. accounts with deposits: a one- and a two-year CD accounts and a Money Market account. Pam and Vicki each have access to all accounts.

Concerning the final fee payment to the marketing company Filament, the Board approved $7,800.00 as the final amount. This is a correction of the $7,500.00 previously approved by the Board during the August 13, 2023 meeting. Vicki expressed her concern that the 2023 fall fund raising campaign may not meet expectations and other methods of fundraising were discussed. Vicki presented to the Board NZC documents that are older than seven years and now eligible for destruction and requested approval. After discussion, all Board members approved Vicki’s document destruction request. Vicki presented year-to-date attendance information and stated that it has trended upward, mostly due to attendance by members of Zen Fields and the Lincoln Zen Group. Attendance is higher for events when a Zen teacher is present than not.

Communications Committee

Pam presented recent Committee activities that included messages concerning fund raising, Rohatsu sesshin in early December, and the Guiding Teacher residency program. A current revision of the brochure previously used for Open Omaha is also planned. Pam stated that the 2024 Communications Committee plan is available for review. Pam proposed advertisements with the River City Chorus and National Public Radio (NPR). Total costs for both are within the remaining Committee budget amount for the year.

Technology Committee

Pam presented the written Technology reports for the absent Mike Pray. Roger Schmeits has joined the Technology Committee whose duties will include NZC website updates. Daishin McCabe stated that it may be helpful to have a set schedule of when NZC dharma talks are published on YouTube.

Building and Grounds Committee

Pam also presented the written Building and Grounds Committee report for discussion including strategies to increase attendance for yard clean-up days. The Board discussed and approved the hiring of a structural engineer to perform an inspection of the NZC building foundation and provide a written report. The $690.00 cost for the inspection is within the current Repair and Upkeep budget. The replacement of the ageing kitchen stove in the NZC building was discussed and all voted in favor of its replacement for an amount of $1,500.00 or less.

Membership Committee

Terra Hall stated that NZC membership is holding steady and she is looking for ways to transition potential members from viewers of NZC content on Facebook to active and in-person donors.

Guiding Teacher Search

Pam and Terra provided an update on the continued search for a Guiding Teacher that involves networking with other Zen teachers (Zen community advisors) and the NZC resident teacher program. Taizan Alford was selected as the first resident teacher at NZC starting in January 2024. The Board approved paying $1,000.00 per month stipend to Taizan while he is in residence. The Communications Committee will issue messaging to the Sangha concerning Taizan’s residency.

Fundraising

Concerning the grant process, Karalee Picard stated that the Board will need to create a list of projects first before she is able to effectively search for grant money. Each grant has its own intended use and she mentioned two foundations for potential grants. Potential projects for grant money and fund raising were discussed.

Services, Events and Attendance

Pam described Rohatsu sesshin dates for this year, and George Patenode, Secretary, discussed how ceremony training for the Sangha may work while Taizan is in residence.

Outreach

Vicki stated that the membership fee had increased with Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) and her request for fee reduction is still pending. She also discussed recent activities with OTOC and received permission from the Board and Daishin McCabe to act as a representative of NZC and Zen Fields, respectively, in offering moral support to the Jewish community at TriFaith Initiative, located in Omaha. Pam mentioned that she and Terra had a recent meeting with Mindfulness Outreach Initiative (MOI) for potential cooperative activities in the future.

Miscellaneous

Daishin confirmed that the initial application for registration with the Soto Shu in Japan was recently completed and mailed. No additional action is needed until response from the Soto Shu. Copies of blue prints of the NZC building and grounds may be required if the application is accepted and how to produce a copy for the Soto Shu was discussed. Daishin also mentioned that a Japanese Soto Zen priest will visit NZC sometime in 2024 as part of the Soto Shu registration and he will notify the Board when he knows more. Karalee discussed providing at least one of a total of four board training videos for February’s Board meeting. Pam reminded the Board that a performance evaluation meeting with Daishin is required. A performance evaluation with Taizan will also be required during the end of this NZC residency. Terra stated she will complete a job description of a new executive director position for Board review.

Notice of the next Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for Noon on Sunday, February 4, 2024 at NZC and via Zoom video conference. This meeting will also include the Annual Sangha Meeting that includes the elections of Board directors and officers.

The meeting adjourned at 1:22 pm.

**Attachments for the Record**

Agenda

Communications Committee Report

George Patenode

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors

November 5, 2023