

Nebraska Zen Center

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting August 18 2024

Meeting Notification

Notice of meeting made via Nebraska Zen Center (NZC) website, newsletter and email.

Meeting Location

Nebraska Zen Center

Board Members Present

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Pam Griffin | President (ending 2027) |
| George Patenode | Vice-President (ending 2025) |
| Vicki Grunwald | Treasurer (ending 2025) |
| Mike Pray | Secretary (ending 2026) |
| Fergus Hoban | (ending 2027) |
| Karalee Picard | (ending 2026) |
| Daishin McCabe | (non-voting member) |
| Scott Rosen | (ending 2025) |

Board Members Absent:

None

Sangha Members Present

Terra Hall
Diane Jorgensen
Sarah Neppi
Shinkyu Cote

Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 12:00 noon. Attendance was taken and a quorum was present.

Treasurer's Report (12:07)

Vicki Grunwald, Treasurer discussed finding someone who can effectively serve as a backup and auditor for the treasury position. Vicki mentioned that Heather Hildreth, a Zen fields member, can serve in this position. Vicki discussed concerns with eight hours spent on grant writing, as opposed to three. Vicki asked how the board would like to categorize the hours. The board has previously agreed to how to categorize this, and reaffirmed that 'organizational support' is the correct category for grant writing. Pam requested that Terra mention the specific effort while categorizing 'organizational support', e.g., "a grant from a given foundation".

The board discussed the Temple's insurance, which is from Church Mutual and if there were more cost-effective premiums. Fergus offered to contact State Farm to get a comparable quote.

Vicki also added that she wanted to have quarterly meetings of the Treasury committee, but her volunteers have come and gone. She intends on having the next committee meeting soon.

Communications Committee Report (12:16)

Pam Griffin, Board President gave a brief report about the activities of the communications committee, including on-going newsletters which include membership messaging. A summer survey for non-active members has been back-burnered. Website updating is ongoing, which requires interaction with the Tech Committee especially regarding the WooCommerce store.

The board discussed how to track people finding the Zen Center, especially Intro to Zen. Currently we believe that most new people find the Center via the website, but we do not effectively use Google Analytics or other tools to be able to bring data.

Terra mentioned that our account in Instagram has about 400 followers, many of whom are current members of other Zen Centers across the country. We do not currently use GA or GTM (Google Tag Manager) to build and track marketing campaigns. Mike Pray offered to spend time on improving our Google Analytics and GSC (Google Search Console) presence.

Shinkyu and others discussed ideas for furthering social media engagement, including creating more daily content and creating a TikTok account. We decided that Terra and Shinkyu would take an action item to create content.

Technology Committee Report (12:35)

Mike Pray, Committee chair of the Technology Committee, gave a report discussing the activities of the technology committee. Current committee members: Mike Pray (Board member and committee chair, Corson Androski, Roger Schmeits)

Volunteer committee members are intermittently able to help. WooCommerce store has been set up. Mike gave a brief report of website visitors and what drives traffic, which is mostly Google.

Mike also gave a review of the YouTube Channel analytics, where the best video is "[Eight Points to Optimize Zazen](#)", with 700+ views and 18+ subscribers.

Building and Grounds Committee Report (12:37)

Mike Pray, Committee chair of the Building & Grounds Committee, gave a report discussing the activities of the building and grounds committee (current member is Mike Pray):

Last work day was in July. Four people attended the last one. There is a Friday morning weekly work period. September will be the next work period. Daishin suggested that we do a Sunday morning work period.

Ethics Committee (12:38)

Daishin, as chair of Ethics committee, is collecting Conflict of Interest statement signatures from board members, as of Aug 18, every board member except one has signed the form, with the final signature forthcoming

Report on services and practice (12:39)

Daishin discussed the separation between the priest and the temple and the desire for a full-time priest. He described this as a healthy incompleteness and tension which is driving growth and which drives healthy discussions of identity of the Center and preparation for when there is a full time priest.

Pam and Daishin discussed the grant writing effort and how the effort and intensity of managing grants can often preclude their usefulness for fundraising. Our grant writing effort is experimental and will keep this challenge in mind.

Daishin expressed excitement about several Sotoshu Zen priests who will be visiting the Center in the coming months. Daishin was hopeful that a Japanese priest might be interested in residency in some form at the Center.

The Center is doing Intro to Zen and a Sesshin every month, with Zazenkai every other month. These have gone well and we will continue them. Daishin, Joyce, and the Lincoln Zen Center will be working with a correctional facility in Lincoln.

Zen Fields is doing a once-a-month meeting about the Precepts. Several people from NZC have attended.

George mentioned that we have finalized morning service. Diane and Jenny have begun Doan training. Diane (sangha member) requested that there be an explanation and conversation for why service positions are important.

Shinkyu mentioned that future resident priests-in-training would benefit from a sit-down with the Board to have a conversation about Center workings and how business gets done. Pam requested that Shinkyu document his findings. Shinkyu offered to create a packet for future resident priests-in-training that describes things they would need to know or benefit from knowing.

AD Report (1:06)

Terra Hall, sangha member and Administrative Director, gave a report discussing the activity of the Administrative Director.

Terra described the auction findings. There was significant engagement from people outside the Zen Center. \$5,000 was raised from the auction that took 30 hours from Terra with more from other volunteers. Last year's traditional fundraising mail campaign took in \$2,500 (not counting a matching major donor) with significantly less work from the AD and volunteers.

Regarding grants, we did not receive the calligraphy grant. Shinkyu is helping catalog Nonin's calligraphy. We will continue with the plan to host art on Fine Art America, who can provide printmaking services.

Karalee indicated there is an opportunity for the Nebraska Arts Council grant regarding Nonin's calligraphy, with the requirement that we would need a public gallery exhibition.

Regarding the Khyentse Foundation Ashoka Grant, we have applied for a grant for teacher residency.

Karalee identified the Frederick Lenz Foundation as a possibility. Our goal is to fully subsidize the residency with grants.

Floors Floors Floors is a Benson community space that has opportunities for outreach especially during the Benson First Fridays. Terra is working with them for an outreach opportunity in October.

Other outreach includes the November 12 Film Streams Community Collaboration, our 50th anniversary celebration.

Regarding the resident priest-in-training program, it is time to begin searching for the next resident. The board discussed several potential candidates.

Volunteers, especially for organizing the library and committees, would be appreciated.

We further discussed the kanban board and where to put it.

Miscellaneous Item (1:30)

Vicki has yet to do the Secretary of State information update. The deadline is January 2025. Vicki indicated we should wait until Feb 2025 to file the information when the officers change so we do not have to pay the filing fee twice.

Pam indicated Terra's role as AD is tenuous given other potential opportunities for her.

Next meeting date is November 3 2024.

Next annual meeting date is February 16 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

We discussed the best place to store and collaborate on videos and ended up on a WhatsApp group.

The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes of the NZC Board of Directors Meeting of May 5, 2024.

Pam adjourned the meeting at 1:40pm.

Attachments for the Record

Agenda

Treasurer's Report

AD Report

Conflict of Interest Policy

NZC Visioning March 2024

Mike Pray

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors

August 18 2024