Nebraska Zen Center

# Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting February 2 2025

## 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 Outgoing President (ending 2027)

George Patenode Outgoing Vice-President (ending 2025)

Vicki Grunwald Outgoing Treasurer (ending 2025)

Mike Pray Secretary (ending 2026)

Fergus Hoban Incoming Vice-President (ending 2027)

Karalee Picard Incoming President (ending 2026)

Daishin McCabe (non-voting member)

Scott Rosen Incoming Treasurer (ending 2025)

Benji Frith (ending 2028)

Sarah Neppl (ending 2028)

## Board Members Absent:

None

## Sangha Members Present

Jose Correa

Diane Jorgensen

Jacob Wichert

# Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 11:40 AM.

Pam indicated that Daishin will continue his service in the interim priest role for the next three years.

Pam read through the 2024 Annual Report (see attached) to guest members. Highlights of the 2024 year and upcoming NZC activities include:

* a memorial for Kyoki
* full-time priest search continues
* program offerings slightly increased
* more one-day zazenkais
* calligraphy workshops and family programs will likely be dropped due to lack of attendance
* sesshin will be every other month with zazenkai in between
* service roles are continued as an opportunity for sangha members
* hungry ghost ceremony will be continued
* jukai for new members may be in the fall
* three sangha workdays with fair participation
* weekly Friday work practice
* kanban board has been set up and will continue to be iterated upon
* membership has gradually increased
* attendance is doing well for Sundays and other activities, e.g., daily zazen

Fundraisers do not cover the expenses, which with engaging volunteers, will need to be a focus for the coming year. We explored three grants in the last year, but none were successful. We will continue to build relationships and try again in the future.

Shinkyu digitized all of the small calligraphy from Nonin which will soon be available to purchase from our website.

Our newsletter has 800 subscribers with a good open rate.

Vicki gave a Treasurer’s report for the annual meeting. Per our audit finding we need a process to show by what amount we were off by on the balance sheet for estimates. We were only off by a few hundred dollars from our initial estimates.

We ran a deficit by $8700 in 2024. Vicki recommended streamlining activities such as the newsletter in order to bring spending down. Vicki indicated that if the current budget with the AD position holds, there will be a deficit of up to $20,000.

### Board Member Election (12:06)

Two board members (George Patenode and Vicki) are retiring from the board at the end of their term, which is today. Pam thanked them for their service, without which we would not have been able to restart the Zen Center. Pam nominated Sarah Neppl. Pam moved to elect Sarah, Fergus seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Pam further moved to nominate Benji Frith, Karalee seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Additionally, Pam is stepping down as Board President. Benji nominated Fergus for President, who respectfully declined, and Fergus nominated Karalee.

There was some discussion regarding the responsibilities for the role of the Board President. George read out the description of the role from the Bylaws. Vicki suggested that to share the load of volunteering, we consider requiring work practice as part of Jukai and/or membership.

After more discussion, a motion passed to elect Karalee as the Board President for a one-year term.

Benji nominated Fergus as the Board Vice President and the motion passed

As Vicki is stepping down as Treasurer, Vicki indicated she has found a successor, Scott Rosen, and has built a transition plan.

Benji nominated Scott Rosen as the Treasurer, and the motion passed to elect Scott as the Treasurer.

Karalee nominated Mike to continue as the Board Secretary. The motion passed unanimously.

# Board Meeting

Pam called the board meeting to order at 12:35PM. Attendance is described as above. A quorum was present. A motion passed unanimously to approve the November Board Meeting minutes and the September special meeting.

Pam mentioned that the individual the board hired as the new AD, Sabrina Navaratte, is stepping down. Various complications led to her resignation. The board had some discussion around how we can fill the gap left by Terra.

Discussion was held around committees. Committees are:

* volunteer coordination (new)
* fundraising (new)
* technology
* building & grounds
* ethics
* communications

### Technology Committee Report (1:00)

All website hosting payments, logins, and MFA has been moved to Mike, Pam, or the main administrative email account. All new officers and directors will be given access. The temple internet has been moved over to Cox Business. Bitwarden continues to be the host for our password management. Vicki moved ownership of the Google Drive. Scans of Nonin’s calligraphy is available for purchase on Fine Art America which has an iframe integration into our website at https://nebraskazencenter.org/purchase-calligraphy/

### Building and Grounds Committee Report (1:04)

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

There was a work day in November with good attendance. There is a Friday morning weekly work period where one or two people show up. Next work period is not scheduled.

We are on the list for Hughes tree service to remove the crabapple and trim the locust tree.

Mike started a radon test in the basement, which will need to be mailed into a lab in 3-6 months.

Basement windows have been sealed with spray foam and caulk.

### Fundraising (1:10)

Pam discussed options and strategies for fundraisers, including a 50-hour sit for our 50th anniversary

### Report on services and practice (1:13)

George discussed adding back group discussion during World Peace ceremonies. Pam asked if we wanted to consider an official Ino position. Daishin discussed exploring a list of precepted students to recruit from.

Pam suggested we begin with George as the Ino and that he works with Daishin to fill the role in the future.

Without a resident priest-in-training, we continue with the ‘ghost’ doshi position for morning zazen. Certain students trade-off for leading Wednesday nights.

There was good attendance for Rohatsu sesshin, especially later in the sesshin.

George is using a spreadsheet to solicit service volunteers.

### Report on Resident Priest-in-Training Search (1:22)

Pam discussed the next candidate for resident priest-in-training. The candidate needs to work out something with his job, but is enthusiastic and plans to bring his girlfriend. We expect the candidate to arrive sometime mid-year.

### Miscellaneous (1:29)

Pam and Vicki discussed Vicki’s work with OTOC (Omaha Together One Community). We discussed how we are focused on our own budget and work, and not currently able to contribute as a full member of OTOC. Vicki is unsure if she is currently able to serve as a Buddhist representative to OTOC and Tri-Faith.

### Budget Discussion (1:43)

In the service of balancing the budget and coming to a budgetary approval today, Pam and Karalee indicated that we could halve the existing time and expense for the AD position, from 30 to 15. Given that we do not have a resident priest-in-training for the entire year, we adjusted the budget accordingly. We discussed various other budget line item estimates, including B&G work like tree work and termite inspection, and a 50th Anniversary celebration.

Pam moved to approve the budget as amended, and Fergus seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion unanimously passed to approve roles as responsibilities as discussed above.

### Board Training (1:49)

Karalee indicated that the new board members should view the NAM board training videos, and recommended that existing board members should review them.

Karalee recommended we should review the strategic plan.

Next meeting is May 4th 2025.

Karalee adjourned the meeting at 1:52PM.

# Attachments for the Record

Agenda

Treasurer’s Report

Annual Meeting Report



Mike Pray

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors

February 2 2025