

## **BRIGHT WAY ZEN BOARD**

### **Minutes of Meeting of April 30, 2015**

*Present at the meeting:*

Board members: Domyo Burk, Ellen Shoketsu Carlin, Dawn Holt, Bella Jhunhunwalla, Jim Lewinson, Lorna Simons

Absent: Jeff Young

Guest: Janna Allgood

The agenda and financial report are hereby appended to these minutes.

*Introduction:*

Domyo noted that Janna was attending to report on her research on clergy support by nonprofits, and that we would also be reviewing the 2015 budget. That led to a short discussion of the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status; although it involves a lengthy application process, it would be a good idea to expedite that. The idea of hiring someone to do the application was brought up; also, to consult Great Vow, which previously applied.

Review of 2015 budget: Domyo explained the items in the report and noted that we are ahead of projections as of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2015, and that the proposed housing allowance is included in the projected expenses.

*Janna Allgood's report and subsequent discussion:*

Janna researched priest support for religious organizations by consulting: *Nonprofit Bookkeeping & Accounting for Dummies*; IRS Publication 15, employer's tax guide on churches and religious organizations; and the Foundation Group.

Her recommendations were as follows:

1. Domyo set up files to keep track of the necessary information: background, job description etc. – to have records if get outside funding in the future.
2. Re: obligations for withholding, SS, Medicare:
  - a. There are few obligations because we are a religious organization. And Domyo is already doing some of what's needed, as she has experience with that at Dharma Rain.

Domyo then led a discussion about a housing allowance vs. salary. If a church has "religious employees," they are treated like regular employees in that the church withholds according to FICA and pays the employer's portion of it. On the other hand, if they have an employee classified as "clergy," the clergyperson is treated as self-employed, and the clergyperson contributes to Social Security and Medicare on their own under SECA. Domyo prefers to be classified as clergy and take care of her own taxes; it is simplest and she is already familiar with doing this because of her other self-employment. This makes it less necessary for Bright Way to use a payroll service. Domyo also suggested that for the time being Bright Way pay her a

housing allowance instead of a salary. She will pay SECA on the income but not income tax. Bright Way can pay a housing allowance up to what is reasonable (actual housing costs, so probably up to around \$1000 a month). If we reached a point of increased funding where Bright Way could pay Domyo more than \$1000 a month, we could add a salary.

Process of deciding on a housing allowance: just takes Board approval, no reporting; can't be done retroactively.

Jim had a couple of questions:

- Will the rent for our current space stay the same? That could impact our ability to pay the housing allowance.
  - We are paying month-to-month, and it should remain the same for a while.
- Will we consider moving, and how would that affect the budget?
  - It was noted that a housing allowance is easier to revise than salary.

A motion was made and seconded that a housing allowance of \$350 per month be approved for Domyo for the remainder of 2015, with the amount to be revisited for the 2016 budget cycle. The motion carried with no opposing votes.

It was also noted that we need a second check signer; Ellen volunteered.

#### *Changes to the Board:*

Domyo welcomed the new board members who were recently elected. The composition of the board and the terms are as follows:

- Domyo Burk, ex-officio voting member indefinitely, as Executive Director
- Dawn Holt, appointed to three-year term on 10/18/2012 (expires 10/18/2015)
- Jeff Young, appointed to three-year term on 10/18/2012 (expires 10/18/2015)
- Ellen Shoketsu Carlin, re-elected to three-year term 3/17/2015 (expires 3/17/2018)
- Bella Jhunjhunwalla, elected to three-year term 3/17/2015 (expires 3/17/2018)
- Jim Lewinson, elected to three-year term 3/17/2015 (expires 3/17/2018)
- Lorna Simons, elected to three-year term 3/17/2015 (expires 3/17/2018)

Four new members have 3-year terms. The question of finding a better way to stagger the terms came up. Several ideas were brought up: October 15, 2015 two new members will be elected, we could also elect two interim members at that time. It was decided to table and revisit that issue some time before June 2016. It was also noted that the 7-member board could possibly shrink by 1.

Appointment of new board officers was discussed next.

Chair to work with Domyo and organize and run the meetings. Jim volunteered.

Vice Chair: to help the Chair as needed. Bella volunteered.

Treasurer: Must have one to keep an eye on the financial records, make sure they are done correctly, and is usually a check singer as well. Can also be given access to the center's

Quickbooks data if tech savvy. Ellen volunteered. Domyo told us that we bank at Rivermark Community Credit Union.

Secretary: Keeps minutes and records of meetings, is also the contact person (agent) for the State or Oregon. Lorna volunteered.

It was moved and seconded that the above appointments be approved. Motion passed with no dissenting votes.

### *Membership Report*

Records are now being kept on Tuesday and Sunday about the number of attendees and whether they are there for the first time. Current impression is that Sunday averages 10-12 and Tuesdays 16-18. The Monday and Indra's net meetings have been discontinued.

There are about 35 pledging members. 6 people will take Jukai in 2015.

Someone is needed to enter the membership data into an Excel spreadsheet. Ellen volunteered.

### *BWZ team to work with the Village Support Network*

The New City Initiative is faith-based organization that works to end homelessness, and one of their projects is the Village Support Network, which matches teams from local religious organizations with families coming out of homelessness – the idea is for the team to support the family as they adjust to their new home and accomplish some of their goals.

Bright Way has formed a team, composed of Domyo, Sean Graham, Frankie Borison, Shoketsu, Bella and Lorna. We've had two orientations at the New City offices, and we've also raised \$1200 to support the project (the program requires a fund of \$1000). We will have a team meeting with a staff member from New City in May, and then we will wait to be assigned to a family. We are excited about this opportunity and about its potential for helping the family succeed.

### *Other Issues*

Discussion about repainting the lines in the parking lot. We have permission from the owner of the property, and have already eliminated the one space that blocks access. We could schedule a work day this summer to do that ourselves, as hiring it done would be very expensive. Jim will do some research on how best to do it.

### *Dreams*

New Location: We have a really good deal at present; we could see if a 2<sup>nd</sup> room in the building would come available, though it is in use at this time. Finding a new location is complicated by zoning issues, since it has to be commercial or we would need a conditional use permit, which is costly and a lot of work. When we researched locations before, there was a commercially zoned space in Farmington, but it was \$1800/month and was just one big room.

The consensus was to leave it as is for now. If we need more parking, we could ask the neighboring property for permission to use their space, since they don't meet when we do.

Also about parking, we cannot park on the bark-covered area next to the paved parking lot; we should put up a sign to that effect.

It was also agreed that members would keep their eyes open and ask around to see if anyone knows about possible locations.

In the meantime, we could rearrange the zendo to make a couple more seats.

Changes to meetings, content: The idea of adding one more night meeting was brought up, maybe Thursday night, or a group for text study. But Domyo commented that in order for that to happen, the sangha needs to develop more, as she would need more help to make that happen. A group for text study has low priority at this time.

Domyo said her preference would be to try to incorporate more of the traditional liturgical ceremonies, like the Festival of Buddha's Birth, Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, someone to do the priest's assistant role. She said that all helps to build community and get more people involved.

There was a comment that defining and describing what's involved in the volunteer positions would be helpful. The consensus was to discuss this at our next meeting, considering the volunteer roles and how to find people to do them.

Domyo also noted that as Zen centers develop, they often create a separate body to discuss practice issues, a practice committee. The issue about that is the possibility that such a committee might suggest/approve some practices that would not be a good fit with customary or approved practices. No further suggestions were made at this time.

*Next Meeting:*

It was agreed that we will meet about quarterly, and the next meeting will be in late July or early August.

*Communication with the Board*

Jim agreed to see if he could set up a Google Group for the board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorna Simons

Treasurer