

**Clouds in Water Zen Center  
November Board Meeting**

**December 15, 2013**

Attending: Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Carla Breunig, Kurt Errickson, Sosan Theresa Flynn, Carol Iwata, Angus MacDonald, Byakuren Judith Ragir, Nathan Thompson, Rachel Vilsack, Wally Waranka

Not present: Arlene Kelly, Sergio Valverde

**Nathan called the meeting to order at 11:15 AM.**

**AGENDA**

**I. Welcome**

Nathan welcomed Angus and Karin, who have been gone from the last two meetings.

**II. Membership Appeal and 2013 Financial Update**

Sosan updated the Board on membership pledges and donations, which sits at \$68,429, or 92 percent of our \$75,000 goal.

Byakuren suggested that Board members make telephone calls to existing members who have not renewed their membership pledge for 2014. Angus, Carla, Karin and Kurt volunteered to help with telephone calls.

Sosan provided an overview of the 2013 year end budget, which projects a \$5,700 deficit.

The Board discussed contacting Youth Practice parents for additional donations.

Nathan mentioned that we need to continue the cultivation and message of dana across the sangha.

Carla suggested that a group of teachers speak with Mark Nunberg at Common Ground to see how they treat and encourage dana.

Byakuren asked Sosan if the teaching of dana should be a topic of discussion at the Teacher

Ryo.

Sosan said that envelopes or pledge sheets for credit card donations could be more readily made available on Sundays or during classes or workshops to encourage giving.

Carol complimented Sosan on our expenses being better than budgeted; it's the income that is below.

Karin mentioned the possibility of have a 15-minute "behind the scene" meeting option with sangha members on Sundays about the budget and how the staff and volunteers work to keep the Center running.

### **III. Retreat Planning Update**

Nathan and Carol provided an update on the annual Board retreat. The Board discussed possible meeting dates in February, including February 2 and 9.

Motion: To accommodate the cost proposal of the retreat facilitator the Board approves an increase in the initial retreat budget by \$250, from \$500 to \$750. (Angus made the motion. Kurt seconded.) **Motion passed.**

### **IV. Space Committee Update**

Carla and Kurt have met with commercial realtor here at Clouds, so they get a sense of the space and amenities we need. The Space Committee will be meeting with an additional realtor this month. Carla mentioned that we will need to make a realtor selection soon. The Board expressed that the selection of a realtor be left up to the Space Committee.

A meeting with Gail Graham, general manager of Mississippi Market, will occur on January 14 at 5:30 pm at the Dale/Selby location for interested Board members to learn about their experience.

Carla shared an information handout on City of St. Paul zoning information. Some highlights:

- Parking requirements for churches: one off-street space for each 250 square feet of Gross Floor Area in the main unit of worship. Given our current zendo space, we'd need a minimum of six (6) off-street parking spaces.
- Different scenarios exist for the renovation of an existing church space or residential

space.

Carla shared the Board e-news template, which includes a Buddhist teaching, Board news, and updates from various committees. This will be included in the monthly sangha newsletter.

The Board discussed phases and amounts necessary for a capital campaign.

## **V. Stub Budget Discussion**

Nathan offered the following assessment of the stub budget draft:

- We need to aim for a balanced budget.
- The discussion about Jizo Hall (leased through August 2014) should be tabled. Our retreat may provide grounding for our priorities.
- Identify if there are any expenses we can move to July, which will be the first part of our budgetary cycle in 2014.

Sosan provided an overview of the stub budget draft:

- We'll need to emphasize dana donations.
- A donor is available to help cover the cost of the Jizo Hall lease through August 2014.
- Membership donations need to increase.
- Spring appeal would include two hosted events (\$1,500/each), an auction (\$3,00), in addition to a \$15,000 in direct appeals.
- Boost rent for Jizo Hall/or other areas.
- Class and sesshin income are increased over previous year.
- Discontinue Zen Dog program.
- Boost in-kind donation for office supplies.
- Reduce flower budget.
- Technology budget remains the same, due to a need for a new computer.
- Furniture budget has been reduced.
- Phone budget increased.
- Delay payment (for June sesshin) to Hokyoji until July 1.
- Continue to request food donations for sesshins to keep food costs low.
- Move to online advertising/communication for Spring Appeal.
- There are no special events planned.

Byakuren wondered if we could include a push for membership or donations from people who primarily interact with us online. One example could be a pre-recorded message attached to online dharma talks.

Byakuren raised the issue of renting the zendo space out for music events, due to the space's good acoustics.

The Board discussed additional hosted events, including something planned by LGBT members that would coincide with Pride week and a music event.

Motion: Approve 2014 Stub Budget as presented.( Kurt motioned. Wally seconded.) **Motion passed.**

#### **VI. Tech Committee Update**

Carol provided an update on the technology committee. An initial meeting took place, which includes Carol, Sosan, Wally and Amy. The highest priority issue from the meeting is the need for an upgrade to the main computer system used at Clouds by Tim, Sosan, and volunteers. (The system crashes frequently.) The stub budget includes expenses for an upgrade.

**Nathan called the meeting closed at 1:29 PM.**

Board minutes submitted by Rachel Vilsack.