

## Milwaukee Zen Center – Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes  
October 10, 2021

### **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Zen Center was called to order at 12:00 P.M. on October 10, 2021 at the Milwaukee Zen Center, with some board members attending over Zoom.

### **Present**

Bob Balderson, Vice President  
Susan Winecki, Board Member  
Frank Fischer, Board Member  
Noah Johnson, Board Member  
Reirin Gumbel, Resident Priest

### **Absent**

Greg York, Treasurer  
Jim Zimmerman, Board Member

### **Approval of Agenda & Minutes**

Due to the sudden and irregular resignation of the former President on October 9, there was no formal agenda for the meeting and no minutes from the previous meeting to approve.

### **Re-establishment of Order**

Bob proposed an *ad hoc* agenda for the meeting, based on agendas from prior board meetings. There was a discussion concerning how to interpret the former President's improper resignation, since it had not technically been addressed to the board. The board of directors determined the most orderly course of action in this exceptional circumstance would be to accept the former President's email with subject line "Resignation" as a formal resignation effective immediately.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report that had been submitted by Greg prior to the board meeting was discussed. The balance sheet was examined and determined to be in proper order. Payment for QuickBooks service was brought up, which was then determined to have been already approved at an earlier board meeting. The Treasurer's Report was then accepted by the Board without objection.

## **Priest's Report**

Reirin presented activities at the Zen Center that had taken place since the last board meeting, in addition to the regular activities of the Zen Center. These additional activities included:

- Zazen presentation on September 10 at a warehouse
- Setting up the fall practice period
- Monday classes that are well attended
- Meeting with potential new members

Bob asked about the fee structure for the classes and activities of the fall practice period. There followed a discussion about whether payment of fees was being consistently enforced and whether changes to the fee structure were in order due to the hybrid in-person/Zoom format that is now being used on account of the ongoing pandemic. It was decided to remove further discussion of this topic to the New Business.

## **Old Business**

### Investment Policy Statement

Noah mentioned that he had been working with the former President on an Investment Policy Statement to determine guidelines for the proper allocation of the Zen Center's excess funds. It was decided to leave this business for a future board meeting.

### Resignation of Groundskeeper

Bob brought up the resignation of the Jack Lavine, who had previously been approved to work as a groundskeeper for the Zen Center. Since there had been a prior issue with whether Jack would be classified as an employee or independent contractor, and a special arrangement on the matter had been reached, Susan asked whether Jack's departure was related to dissatisfaction with this agreement. Reirin clarified that, apart from being presently busy, Jack had gone on a retreat and based on insight gained therein had decided to go in a different direction in his life. The Board considered offering the position to someone else, though nothing was formally decided upon during the board meeting, and the matter was left for a future board meeting to resolve.

### Landscaping Bids

Bob presented multiple bids that had been received from contractors for landscaping work on the back garden. Susan moved that the board hire Rodriguez Landscaping, with a cost ceiling of five thousand dollars for the work. Her motion was seconded and passed without objection.

## **New Business**

### Resignation of the President

There was a discussion of how to properly respond to the unexpected and irregular resignation of the former President on the previous day. An informal understanding was reached to request the minutes of the previous meeting but otherwise take no further action on the mat-

ter. Following procedures established by the Bylaws, Susan was elected as the interim President.

#### Mask Policy

Masking policy related to the ongoing pandemic was discussed. The membership of the Zen Center is divided on the issue, with some people more strict about masks than others. The discussion covered issues about whether a minority that favor strict masking policy should force the strict policy onto everyone, when remote options through Zoom are also available. Frank made a motion that at events people are asked whether they are comfortable with some people being unmasked, and if that is not the case, that people be required to wear a mask for that event. Eventually, it was decided to leave the mask policy as it is, to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

#### Use of Incense

Incense use on the ground floor had been discontinued by a prior motion by the Board due to complaints that it made it difficult to breathe, but the members who had been most troubled by the incense had not attended in-person for more than a year. Permitting the use of incense once again was discussed. Susan moved that the use of stick incense be re-instated. The motion was seconded and passed without objection. It was also decided that the membership should be informed of this change in policy.

#### Need for a Secretary

The position of Secretary had been unfilled since the departure of Isabel Kent on June 14 for Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. Bob moved that Noah be elected Secretary. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 P.M. by Bob Balderson. The date of the next board meeting was set for December 12, 2021.

Minutes submitted by:        Noah Johnson