

## **Milwaukee Zen Center - Board of Directors**

Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2021

### **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Zen Center was called to order at 11:07 A.M. on December 12, 2021 at the Milwaukee Zen Center, with some board members attending over Zoom.

### **Present**

Susan Winecki, President  
Bob Balderson, Vice President  
Greg York, Treasurer  
Noah Johnson, Secretary  
Frank Fischer, Board Member  
Jim Zimmerman, Board Member  
Reirin Gumbel, Resident Priest  
Randy Reddeman, Observer  
William Davidson, Observer

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the October 10, 2021 board meeting were brought to attention and accepted without objection.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Greg presented the treasurer's report, which began with an examination of the balance sheet. The balance was higher than from the previous report, owing to increased performance of the PAXWorld fund, though Reirin mentioned that a refund for an accidental double-order of incense was pending. The balance sheet examination proceeded to a fund report representing the budgeted portions of the checking account.

Further progress had been made on removing automatic billings from the Associated Bank account, which is necessary for closing that account and completing the transfer to Educators Credit Union. Bob had succeeded in removing the We Energies automatic billing from the Associated Bank account. The only billings that still appeared to be active on the Associated Bank account were the Ooma telephone service and the Amazon Smile account, which appears to have been set up in someone's personal name.

Discussion then turned to membership numbers at the Milwaukee Zen Center, for which Frank has an updated list. Greg suggested that the facilities fund may not need to be kept liquid, for it is currently split across Educators Credit Union, Associated Bank checking (excluding the prison fund), and PayPal. The Treasurer's Report was then accepted by the Board without objection.

## **Priest's Report**

Reirin presented the priest's report, which began by mentioning ordinations that had been recently performed. Specifically, there had been a priest ordination for Tom Tolan by Rev. Michael Newhall, as well as lay ordinations for Wren Deetjen-Priester and Kim Hartman. Reirin mentioned that the jukai had been her first ordination ceremony since gaining Dharma transmission.

There had been a practice period from October through November, which included a class on *The Art of Just Sitting*, as well as way-seeking mind talks given by sangha members on Sundays. Participation in this year's practice period had been difficult to measure due to the hybrid Zoom format which was necessary due to the pandemic, but events appeared to be well attended.

Additional recent activities that Reirin mentioned in her report included:

- Live visits and Zoom conferencing with prisoners and ex-prisoners
- Racial equity activities, including
  - Making a video for *Teach the Truth Wisconsin* with Noah
  - *Faithful Action* interfaith action in Kenosha
  - *Week of Action* for racial equity
  - Six-week training for racial equity from October through November

Reirin mentioned that all such activities were performed through non-profit organizations that did not have any political alignment.

Reirin finished her report by mentioning upcoming activities, including leadership training with MICAH, a New Year's sitting, and a New Year's Day peace gathering. The priest's report was then accepted by the board without objection.

## **Old Business**

### Hiring a groundskeeper

Continuing the matter of the resignation of groundskeeper Jack Lavine that had been raised at the October board meeting, Bob brought up the need to hire a new groundskeeper. He mentioned that there may be a possible candidate for the position; however, it was decided further discussion of the matter would be delayed until spring.

### Landscaping project

Bob brought up the landscaping project, on which work has just started on December 8. As of the time of this board meeting, the wall and pavement have been laid, and the project is well along though not yet finished. A wall needs to be rebuilt after an unexpected problem was uncovered. The amount of \$5,000 had been initially approved for the full job, though with the additional work required, the cost will now likely rise to \$5,700 or \$5,800.

Bob made a motion to approve an additional \$1,000 cover extra costs from the project, which was seconded. After fielding a question from Jim about the original cost of the project, the motion was approved. Reirin mentioned how good a job the Rodriguez landscaping company is doing with this project.

## **New Business**

### Solar panels

Reirin brought up the idea of adding solar panels to the Zen center, which had been suggested to her by Chuck Eigen. There may be subsidies available for installation, and Reirin suggested that the board should consider whether they are viable. Bob had reservations about the idea, but said that he would talk to Chuck about the matter and look into it further.

### Humidifier for the Zendo

Reirin mentioned that in summer, the wooden floor of the Zendo is quiet, but once the radiators turn on in winter, the wood contracts and there are noisy squeaking sounds that are disruptive, especially during walking meditation over Zoom. There followed a discussion on whether humidifying the space during the winter would reduce the squeakiness of the floor. Bob recommended that first the humidity within the Zendo should be measured to investigate whether a lack of humidity is the cause of the issue. Jim mentioned that he uses a humidifier with his musical instruments, and Noah said that he would talk to Jim and look further into the matter of the humidifier.

## **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 P.M. by Susan Winecki. The date of the next board meeting was set for February 20, 2022.

Minutes submitted by:        Noah Johnson