

Milwaukee Zen Center – Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
August 7, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Zen Center was called to order at 11:30 A.M. on August 7, 2022 at the Milwaukee Zen Center, with some board members attending over Zoom.

Present

Susan Winecki, President
Bob Balderson, Vice President
Noah Johnson, Secretary
Frank Fischer, Board Member
Kellett Koch, Board Member
Reirin Gumbel, Resident Priest
Greg York, Treasurer
Jim Zimmerman, Board Member
Charlie Franco (Observing)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 15, 2022 board meeting were brought to attention and accepted without objection.

Treasurer's Report

Greg presented the Treasurer's Report. The current standing of the Zen Center's accounts was examined. The PAXWorld investment fund had moved up and down since last report, eventually ending slightly lower. The total of all accounts was \$41,180, which is a slight increase since last report. There followed an examination of internal fund allocations within the accounts. \$16,706 was the income to date, which is near what was anticipated. The largest income source remains membership dues, followed by events and classes, and finally general donations. \$12,382 was the corresponding figure for expenditures. Payroll, charitable contributions, and utilities were the largest expenditures. An increase in expenditures is expected in the near future on account of an upcoming annual insurance payment.

The Treasurer's presentation proceeded to ongoing issue of the Associated Bank account. Almost everything has been transferred away from the Associated Bank account to the newer Educator's account. However, the Associated Bank account can not be closed until all remaining automated deposits are wrapped up. The Associate Bank account continues to receive Amazon deposits, the origin of which is either Amazon Smile, Winston's royalty payments, or some combination thereof. If the account is closed before these deposits are redirected to the newer account, the deposits will be lost. Unfortunately, efforts to contact Amazon and update banking information have so far proved unsuccessful. Currently, a service charge of four dollars per month is being paid to Associated Bank to keep the account open under a minimum funds threshold.

Reirin then inquired about the prison fund. The current amount stands at \$4,091. Reirin was concerned whether Tonen is being properly reimbursed from the fund for expenses incurred during prison work. Greg responded that it has so far been difficult accounting exactly for what the charges are for, which are few in number and low in amount. Greg recommended that cost accounting may be a more appropriate and efficient method for this situation. Perhaps the Associated Bank account could be re-purposed for prison costs, which would make it easy to account for prison expenses.

Bob moved that the prison fund be switched to Associated Bank account, along with any additional amount up to \$5,500 so that the minimum funds threshold of the bank is satisfied and there are no longer monthly account charges. During discussion the motion was amended so that the additional amount up to \$5,500 would be a donation from the Zen Center into the prison fund, so that the whole of the Associated Bank account would serve as the prison fund. The motion carried.

Subsequently, the Treasurer's Report was accepted by the Board.

Priest's Report

Reirin presented the Priest's Report. The presentation began with a summary of recent events that had taken place in the greater sangha. Events at the Zen Center included a celebration of Buddha's Birthday on May 22, a guest speaker Paula Hirschböck on June 5, and a wedding ceremony for Kent and Elizabeth on June 11, in addition to regular events such as a Full Moon Ceremonies, Zazenkai with Oryoki, Half-day Sittings, Work Days, and a new class discussing Zenju Earthlyn Manuel's book *The Shamanic Bones of Zen*. Events outside the Zen Center included a Buddhist Peace Fellowship annual picnic, healing circle training at Branching Streams, a Buddhist Peace Fellowship event at Shambala on the subject of "Right View," and a retreat at the Siena Center. Interfaith activities included the Interfaith Earth Network, a COVID interfaith vigil, a vigil for the tenth anniversary of the Sikh Temple massacre, participation in an orange shirt awareness event for gun violence, planting a peace pole at Cathedral Square, an interfaith press conference at a Planned Parenthood clinic, and an interfaith Pride event at Watertown.

Ongoing work at the Zen Center involved Demitra organizing and cataloging the Zen Center library, a sewing class, and meals for Guesthouse. In addition, a new gardener started working at the Zen Center on July 21. Five new students arrived: Jason Farris, Helen Norris, Christopher Kolon, Charlie Franco, and Anthony Jones.

Upcoming events include a funeral service for Mike Posnanski, a Jewel Mirror Sesshin at Hokyōji, and interfaith event *Faith in Place: Exploring Environmental Justice from Diverse Faith Perspectives*, and a half-day sitting. On September 17, the Fall Practice Period will commence, with the subject "Deepening Our Practice of Zazen." This practice period will include a new class on the subject of the Genjo Koan.

Old Business

Rear garden

The city attorney reached out regarding damage to the rear garden from city trucks. They are requesting a second estimate, and there is optimism that the damage can be resolved. Reirin reported that the garbage truck is now taking a different route that avoids the spot of the garden that was damaged.

There followed a discussion of the purpose of the rear garden. One proposal was for a rock garden. However, Reirin objected that rock gardens involve much more maintenance than one might think in order to keep the garden clean and free from weeds. Reirin suggested simple plants in the garden, specifically of a variety that would have low maintenance requirements. Several different visions for the garden were presented, until the discussion was tabled for a later time.

New Business

Chairs

The Board considered a proposal for new chairs for the Zen Center. The current chairs at the Zen Center are in poor condition with wires coming out of the seats. The chairs are used each day. The new chairs would be black, fit the Zendo aesthetic, and be stackable. Bob had investigated sources of used chairs. However, many of the used chairs considered were sold out or not stackable.

New chairs, at a count of 16 and a price of \$200 a piece were considered, which fulfilled all the desired properties. A motion to purchase 12 such chairs was defeated. A motion to purchase 14 such chairs carried.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:57 P.M. by Susan Winecki. The date of the next board meeting was set for October 16, 2022.

Minutes submitted by: Noah Johnson