

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

Meeting Minutes  
October 16, 2022

### **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Zen Center was called to order at 12:06 P.M. on October 16, 2022 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

### **Absent**

Kellett Koch, Board Member

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the August 7, 2022 board meeting were brought to attention and accepted without objection.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Greg presented the Treasurer's Report, which focused on the two-month period since the last meeting. The total balance was down \$10,000 since early August on account of purchases of new furnishings, landscaping and grounds improvement, and continuing losses from PAX-World. However, the Zen Center still remains in good financial shape. Over \$12,000 has been allocated to the facilities fund, and the retired teacher's fund will pay out in November. The scholarship fund has not been tapped yet. Tonen has reduced her contributions to the prison fund as recommended, since there are sufficient funds.

Membership contributions are the highest revenue for the Zen Center, followed by events and classes, followed by donations. Typical expenditures include payroll and insurance. There was a large insurance payment to Church Mutual at the start of September. Charitable contributions are the third-highest expenditure. New expenditures are expected from upcoming purchases of furnishings and landscaping. Finally, Amazon deposits are continuing to go to the Associated Bank checking accounts.

Bill Davidson and Greg are discussing the transition of the Treasurer role to Bill after the next election cycle in April.

Noah asked for clarification about the Amazon deposits. Amazon deposits are currently going into both Associated Bank checking accounts. There is currently a \$4 per month main-

tenance fee per account. One of the Associated Bank accounts is the dedicated prison fund and the other one is the Zen Center's former primary checking account. Greg recommended that the accounts be left in the present state, as the small Amazon deposits are balancing out the small maintenance fees.

Frank confirmed that there is now a new, paying member at the Zen Center. Bob confirmed that non-members are continuing to pay activity fees for participation in events at the Zen Center. Bob also inquired about the total number of paying members. Frank responded that there are 41 paying members, which is about the same number as it has always been. The Treasurer's Report was then accepted by the Board.

### **Priest's Report**

Reirin presented the Priest's Report. Beyond the regular weekly schedule, regular events at the Zen Center included two Full Moon ceremonies, two Half-Day Sitzings, and an Equinox Ceremony. Special events included the following:

- Hokyoji *Jewel Mirror Sesshin*
- Carl Jerome's workshop on the Diamond Sutra
- Kerri Parker from the *Wisconsin Council of Churches* on immigration
- Zazen and dharma talk at Ancient Dragon Zen Gate over Zoom
- Funeral for Mike Posnanski
- Youth group led by Jonathan Elmergreen through the Mindfulness Community

The Zen Center is currently in the midst of a Practice Period, in which 10 practitioners have made commitments. There is also an on-going class on the *Genjo Koan*, as well as a sewing class, in which Frank and Jonathan have finished their rakus.

Participation continues in the *Buddhist Peace Fellowship* and local interfaith groups. Visitors learn about Buddhism on Wednesday evenings, and some visitors have returned for further participation. There has also been on-going care for Monika Mullin as well as dinners given at the Milwaukee Guesthouse. Regarding the library project, all books with ISBN codes have now been scanned into the digital system and are awaiting sorting.

Upcoming events include Jukai ceremonies for Frank and Jonathan and a ceremony for Buddha's enlightenment. The Zen Center will also be hosting *Faith Voices for Justice*. The *Buddhist Peace Fellowship* will be providing a conversation series "On Shila." There will also be *Soto Shu in America 100th Anniversary Celebration* in Los Angeles and the Hokyoji Rohatsu Sesshin. Finally, Reirin will be on vacation for a week at the end of November.

### **Old Business**

#### Garden design

The garden wall has been fixed and the garbage truck has changed their routine to avoid the corner. Discussions began on the design of the garden. Bob suggested the garden should be as low maintenance as possible. Reirin says that we have not found anyone yet to regularly help with the garden. It is now a bit late in the year for gardening, so a decision on the garden design will be tabled until spring.

#### Old chairs

Bob asked where the old chairs that were replaced currently are. The old chairs are currently in the basement of the Zen Center and not in good condition. They would be difficult to do-

nate in this condition. Bob moved that the chairs be put out on the street to see if someone takes them, and donate two chairs to Monica if she wants them. The motion carried.

## **New Business**

### Ash tree

The ash tree in the back yard is currently vulnerable to the emerald ash borer. A decision needs to be made whether to treat it or leave it alone. Bob obtained two quotes for treating the tree. The tree has not been attacked yet, so this would be a preventative measure. The preventative treatment lasts for two years. Two quotes were around \$200 and \$240 for the treatment, and \$1000 for trimming the tree, including a few branches that are high up. The best time to treat the tree would be in the spring. Reirin voiced concerns that the treatment would poison wildlife. The decision was set aside pending further research.

### New computer

Noah presented a proposal for purchasing a Chromebook to replace the current laptop for Internet streaming, on account of the current laptop having troubles keeping up with the demand of realtime streaming. Greg suggested a better model of Chromebook around \$500. Jim suggested a Windows laptop. It was then brought to attention that the Treasurer already has a more powerful laptop, which could possibly perform better in the role of Internet streaming. The proposal for a new computer was tabled pending examination of how well the Treasurer's laptop would function for streaming.

### Fundraising drive

Bob moved that the Zen Center put out an annual fundraising letter campaign as in the past. The motion carried. The mailing list will need to be updated, and then the mailing and distribution work can be contracted out.

## **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned by Susan Winecki. The date of the next board meeting was set for December 11, 2022 at 11:30 A.M.

Minutes submitted by: Noah Johnson