
Portland Friends of the Dhamma Special Board Meeting

April 13, 2016

Portland Dhamma Center, 1404 SE 25th Ave, Portland

Directors Present: Charla Chamberlain (Chair), Kristen Saxton, Sakula (Spiritual Director)

Officers Present: Tena Hoke (Secretary), Greg Satir (President Emeritus)

Others Present: Bonnie Wilson (Treasury Team), Alistair Williamson (Finance Committee)

The meeting convened at 6:45 following a short meditation.

The Secretary stated that, a quorum of Directors being present (3 of 3), the meeting could transact business.

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Minutes Approval. The minutes from the previous meetings held on March 3, 2016 were approved.

Q1 Finance/Budget Report. Bonnie presented the Balance Sheet. Of the \$23,815 in the bank, \$14,681 is in the General Fund and the remainder is set aside for specific purposes. Bonnie reviewed the Profit and Loss statement compared to the budget for the first quarter. We are 25% into the year so far, and our income is at 23.7% of budget, and expenses are at 21.2% of budget, so we are tracking nicely. Alistair noted that he was attending this meeting in his capacity as Finance Committee member, and that on Rachel's recommendation he would continue to attend any finance-related board meetings until a new Treasurer is brought on board.

The following resolution regarding **rent payments** was unanimously approved:

WHEREAS: PFOD needs its bookkeeping to be simple and straight-forward, and needs to be able to track rental income vs. budget;

Therefore be it RESOLVED: That no renter pay any part of their rent by having their members make tax-deductible donations to PFOD.

The following resolution regarding **Treasury Team responsibilities** was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED:

1. Sakula and Charla to be Key Account Executives on the Wells Fargo bank account (and ideally neither should have access to enter, edit or delete transactions in QB, but in the short term this goal shall not be met);
2. No change to current check signers (ideally check signers should not have QB access; current signers are Sakula, Tena and Charla. Charla and Tena currently have QB access, but that will change when we bring on a Treasurer);
3. Charla and Tena should be set up for bank read only online access, and Bonnie should be set up to do bill pay online. Bonnie to write guidelines for online bill pay once we know how Wells Fargo's commercial bill pay system works;

4. Tena will do the bank account reconciliations, further separating treasury duties for internal control purposes;
5. Bonnie will have physical control over the check books (and note that she does not have check signing authority).

Spiritual Director Update. Sakula reported that the commitment of parents to consistently utilize the children's program was not at the same level as the required commitment of her, Asha, and Jacob to put on the program. However, after Ajahn Sona's visit, Asha has agreed, in cooperation with Jacob, to develop and lead a Buddhist instructional component of the program, which may bring families in more regularly.

Sakula discussed the Upasika program with Ajahn Sona. He was very encouraging and is interested in working on ways to connect his Upasika group with PFOD's. He also offered to lend his expertise to our Upasika program by skyping in.

Overall, Sakula reported that the Children's Program and Upasika Programs, which have been a focus of her attention over the past year, have been fruitful.

There was a 10-minute break.

Fundraising Planning work session. The original budget called for a fundraising goal of \$8500, but after re-budgeting we will probably not have to raise that much. Charla led a series of exercises to brainstorm around fundraising. First we listed aspects of fundraising, which were later grouped into: community, raising visibility, practice, offerings, fun, dana, accountability, no pressure. The following fundraising ideas were considered feasible in the shorter term (May-Sept): coin jar (kids), open house, tea & conversation/story time, movie night, restaurant night. These additional ideas were brainstormed but not targeted for the short term: kickstarter, block rentals, rummage sale, healthy bake sale, handmade offerings for sale in bookstore, heat pump specific ask, building-focused fundraising, financial updates given at Friday and Sunday programs.

Sakula noted that she is uncomfortable with the idea of block rentals (rental of the whole building) being viewed as a fundraiser. The idea of block rentals is being tabled for now, and needs to be reconsidered when we have time to explore the philosophy behind block rentals.

There was another 10-minute break.

Organization/Spiritual Director Annual Review Process. Kristen presented the proposed plan for the review process. The plan (see below) was unanimously approved. The agenda for the May 11 Board meeting will be devoted solely to the review process, and a new board meeting has been added on May 18 to cover the topics previously intended for May 11th.

Items for follow-up.

1. Follow-up discussion on how to apportion the work to achieve our budgeted goals for income so as not to put undue pressure on any single person or small group.
2. Make sure property tax for tax year 2015 and tax year 2016 both get paid.
3. Schedule a series of check-in's on the 2016 budget so it is closely tracked next year.

Tabled items. The following issues are tabled.

1. Develop a simple system to understand when the SD is able to take her unpaid time off and when she is working hours beyond what she is being compensated for.
2. Develop a method for tracking non-cash donations (e.g. someone buys a plane ticket for a monastic to visit or donates cleaning supplies for the building).
3. According to the State we are required (based on our taxable status) to assign a Board President yet our Board assigns a Chair. Why? Do we need both positions? Do our ByLaws need revision in this regard?
4. Leadership Development (Board recruitment) Update – Charla
5. Focused discussion on Block Rentals, especially regarding philosophy.

Upcoming meeting dates:

- May 11 ,2016 – Special Board meeting – Annual Review
- May 18 ,2016 – Special Board meeting (Greg will be absent)
- June 8, 2016 – Annual community meeting, Q2 Board
- July 13, 2016 – Board/Finance, mid-year budget review meeting
- September 14, 2016 – Q3 Board meeting
- Oct 12,2016 – Board/Finance
- Nov 9, 2016 – Q4 Board meeting
- Dec 15, 2016 – Special Budget Meeting
- January 11, 2017 – Board/Finance Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Organization-Wide Review Process

Introduction

At the Board meeting on March 3, the Board asked Kristen and Greg to bring a draft process for an annual review with the following guidance:

Goals for this year's annual review

In respect of this being our first year doing an annual review, we might focus our goals on learning about the process itself:

- Begin in harmony, end in harmony - acknowledge anxiety
- Build the habit of doing an annual review
- Keep this year's process simple and uncomplicated
- Learn about the strengths and weaknesses of this process
- Come up with a couple of concrete steps that could be completed that would move our mission forward

Areas to focus on

To keep it simple, we will focus on gathering information from one or two of these three areas, with the one(s) to be decided later:

- Programming
- Ambiance of the building
- Community involvement - developing leaders and volunteers

What follows is our draft proposal.

This Year - One Theme

We (Kristen and Greg) recommend focusing on the single theme of "Community Involvement: Engaging people in the support and operations of the Dhamma Center." Why just this one of the three above? Of the three choices given by the Board, we discerned the theme Community Involvement as having the highest potential for lending beneficial information when setting goals for this coming year.

Having said this, we begin this process with the recognition that Board and our community have not (as yet) written goals regarding this particular theme of which we can review ourselves against. Taking this into consideration we recommend the use of a "straw man" that describes the implicit goals of this past year. We can then use these intuited goals as the basis of a review.

Here are our (best guess) goals for last year regarding Community Involvement:

Half of the people who have been attending for six months or more:

- *understand that being involved at the center is a part of practice, and*
- *are involved at the center in one of these following ways:*
 - *Impromptu - Helping out when they are asked in the moment*
 - *Sign Up - Signing up for jobs at an upcoming event or work party*
 - *Ongoing - Committed to a regular, ongoing roles*

Sources of Input

We recommend gathering information from three sources.

- Community - anyone attending an event the week(s) we gather information
- Leaders - board members, teachers and anyone leading a committee or team
- Spiritual Director

We will have people at the various programs to do mini-interviews with the community. The SD and leaders will answer a questionnaire. None of the sources will be anonymous and the answers will be seen in its unedited form only by Board members. A summary (possibly with unattributed quotes) will be made public.

Timeline & Roles

- ~~Mon, Apr 4~~ - Review proposal with SD Done!
- **Wed, Apr 6** - Kristen and Greg email proposal to board for reading one week before meeting and encourage clarifying questions over email.
- **Wed, Apr 13** - Board edits and approves this document (including questions below) and selects people for roles discussed below.
- **Wed, April 20** - We will send out an announcement to the PFOd community explaining that we will be conducting short interviews after programs on April 22, 24, 25 and anyone who is interested can participate in these interviews.
- **Fri, Apr 22 thru Mon, Apr 25** - Community interviews at Friday Investigations(Greg and Charla), Sunday Sila(Kristen and Tena) and Monday Beginners class (Greg and Alistair)
- **Mon, Apr 25** - Leader/SD questionnaires due
- **Wed, Apr 27 thru Wed, May 4** - Review committee compiles information. The committee's role is to make the information consumable while not drawing conclusions. **(Greg and Kristen were nominated to be the review committee)**
- **Wed, May 4** - Review committee emails compiled information to board one week before meeting
- **Wed, May 11** - Board discussion, facilitated by review committee to understand information and determine next steps.

After completing interviews, we will ask interviewee to initial the written page in order to determine which were face to face interviews and which were written without an interview.

Questionnaire for Community - Please fill out and leave here

We are doing an annual review at Portland Friends of the Dhamma. The Theme of this, our first annual review is, "Community Involvement: Engaging people in the support and operations of the Dhamma Center." We are seeking input from anyone participating in our events for at least one or more months (such as Sunday or Fridays weekly offerings or Monday Introductory Classes). **Thank you for your time!**

Name _____

How long have you been coming? _____ **How often do you come?** _____

What is your favorite program? _____

In addition to practicing at PFoD, have you been involved in other ways? For example: washing dishes/helping at work parties/helping set up cushions in the meditation hall/preparing tea for monastics/raking leaves, etc.

If you have helped out, how did you learn of that opportunity? For example: were you personally asked to help out? Did you read about it in the e-group or website or hear it announced at an event?

At this stage, are you looking for opportunities to get more involved? Why or why not?

Have you ever been involved in helping or volunteering at another organization? What was that experience like?

Would you prefer to look around and see what needs to be done or have a specific task assigned?

Anything else you'd like to add? (Please continue on the back if necessary)

Questionnaire for Leaders

What are some opportunities PFoD offers for people to get involved in our organization?
For example: washing dishes/helping at work parties/helping set up cushions in the meditation hall/preparing tea for monastics/raking leaves, etc

What opportunities might we consider adding for people's involvement?

How well have we defined and communicated opportunities of involvement?

In the past year, what role did you expect to play in community engagement? How well were you able to accomplish that?

Can you list a few ways you have seen Sakula demonstrate/communicate that community involvement is important to PFoD and an important part of our own practice.

Questionnaire for Spiritual Director

How do you, as Spiritual Director, understand the role of volunteering as part of our practice?

Where does cultivating community involvement currently fit into the priority of your time?

What would support you to better cultivate community involvement?

What systems are currently effective in cultivating community involvement? What other systems might we consider creating to cultivate further involvement?

When you reflect on community members being involved, what comes to mind?

A Plan for This Year's Annual Review of the Organization and SD

Goals for this year's annual review

In respect of this being our first year doing an annual review, we might focus our goals on learning about the process itself:

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Some things to keep in mind (advice from the Unitarians)

- It's mutual - the organization and the Spiritual Director are mutually supportive and a review of one must include the other
- Plan to collect information from several sources, including congregation members.
- Avoid anonymous surveys or check-a-box forms. These do not tend to produce very useful information.
- Ask open-ended questions rather than simple yes-or-no
- Part of the review should be a self evaluation contribution from the minister
- Focus on strengths as well as growing edges - both are important
- Include the minister in the planning process for the annual review

Areas to focus one

To keep it simple, we will focus on gathering information from one or two of these three areas, with the one(s) to be decided later:

- Programming
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Next Steps

- **By April 6** - Kristen and Greg will produce a draft a process with the following details:
 - Which area(s) we will focus on
 - Who exactly we will gather information from (spiritual director, board, community leaders, congregation members, etc.)
 - How we will gather that information from these groups (questionnaire, interview, etc.)
 - What questions we will ask each group
- **April 13 Board meeting** - The board will edit and approve the process
- **By May 4** - Do the approved process and bring draft of results to Board
- **May 13 Board meeting** - Board talks about input and decides on next steps, including what to share at the annual meeting

Sample questions - As an illustration of what we might do

Area of focus: Pastoral Care

Questions for the Spiritual Director (Questionnaire)

- Where does pastoral care fit in the priority of your time?
- Is there anything you need in order to better provide pastoral care?
- Do you wish you could offer more or do you feel that what is offered is appropriate?
- Do you see the need for pastoral care growing?

- What are your strengths in this area? Anywhere you don't feel strong?
- While maintaining confidentiality, can you give any examples of how things went well or poorly?

Questions for the Board (Questionnaires)

- Where does pastoral care fit in the priorities of PFoD?
- Will the need for pastoral care grow? Are we meeting this growth? If we are/aren't meeting this growth then (write some open-ended question about that).
- Is there anyone we should talk to (including yourself) who has experience seeking pastoral care?
- How is the Board supporting the Spiritual Director/Organization in this focus area?

Questions for the Community (Mini-interviews before and after Fri, Sun, Mon)

- Have you ever talked to Sakula or brought her a specific question to address?
- Are you aware that you can request an appointment with Sakula?
- Have you ever requested one? What was your experience?