
Portland Friends of the Dhamma Board Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2017

At the home of Sakula & Alistair, Portland, OR

Directors Present: Greg Satir (Chair), Charla Chamberlain, Kristen Saxton, Sakula (Spiritual Director), Stephanie Allderdice

Officers Present: Tena Hoke (Secretary), Alistair Williamson (Vice Chair), Bonnie Wilson (Treasurer)

Community Members Present: Nathan Varns

The meeting convened at 6:35 with a guided meditation.

A quorum was declared, with all Directors present.

The agenda was changed to remove discussion of the Board Job Descriptions, and instead to allocate 15 minutes to Spiritual Director Feedback.

Minutes Approval. The minutes from the previous meeting held May 24, 2017 were approved with one change: waiver of interest for one year -> waiver of 2/3 interest for Year 4 and waiver of 1/3 interest for Year 5.

Spiritual Director's Report. Sakula noted that letting go of volunteer management really does significantly increase the amount of time she has available for other priorities (for example, with the task incomplete it has already required her to write 32 emails to deal with lining up volunteers for the monks' visit). Sakula reported the following:

- Mid-year appeal letter written.
- Teachers' round table restarted.
- Plan to invite Muslim teacher to Sunday Sila.
- Lay teacher visits being scheduled: Debbie Stamp, Joseph Kappel, Cator Shachoy.
- Jessica adding weekly Monday night meditation program and dropping 1x/month Saturday evening meditation.
- Children's program going extremely well under Jessica's leadership.
- Sakula has accepted an invitation to lead a retreat at Wat Atam (Woodinville, WA).
- In the process of:
 - getting the digital info for the book Parami
 - writing an Upasika handbook
 - refurbishing the downstairs
 - moving library to dining room once walls are painted

Annual Community Meeting Reflections. Charla reported that the potluck community meeting was a success. Jessica's flexibility around the children's portion of the event was appreciated. It was a good opportunity for people to get to know each other on an informal basis. Next year we might want to aim for 2 community events – one a meeting, and one a more social gathering.

Making Operations Sustainable, Part 1 - Introduction. Greg reviewed the twin goals of 1) engaging volunteers more effectively, and 2) allowing the Spiritual Director (SD) to focus on spiritual responsibilities.

Making Operations Sustainable, Part 2 – Vision for Operations. Kristen and Charla reviewed their write-up “If we had smoothly organized operations, this is what we would see” (changed from “If we had a smoothly organized operations team...”). Additions suggested to the vision were:

- no burnout
- new people coming in & getting involved
- people are developing new skills
- volunteering is understood as a spiritual practice

The sense of the meeting was that this is a good vision for operations.

Making Operations Sustainable, Part 3 – Job Description. Greg and Bonnie reviewed the job description they wrote up for a Head of Operations. The paragraph “You will flesh out (in collaboration with the Spiritual Director and the Board) the remaining needs/role/systems needed to free up the Spiritual Director to focus on spiritual responsibilities. Some of these may become part of operations, others will not.” was removed in order to keep the job description more focused. There was a question about how much the Board would be involved in helping the Head of Operations do their job: the answer is “very little” - we want to find somebody who will be creatively and organizationally adept at figuring out how to get the work done.

Making Operations Sustainable, Part 4 – Next Steps. The Board unanimously accepted that the job description, the vision, and the scope (the two goals listed under Part 1 above) are congruent. We agreed that the job description does not have to be any more detailed at this point. Our best guess is that this job required 10 hours per week. We do not want to overlook any possible candidates, so we will publicize the job description rather than following a people-centric approach and speaking only with hand-selected people about the job. Following are the next steps:

Action items: Sakula, Stephanie & Kristen:

- Wordsmith and preface the job description so it is ready to be publicized
- Within 3 weeks (i.e. by July 5th) present the job description to PFOD and to other dhamma communities in alignment with PFOD
- Have Bonnie & Greg vet the above process

Spiritual Director Feedback. (History: Greg had proposed by email that we hire an outside expert to help us with a formal review process for the Spiritual Director. Sakula noted that we don’t have money for this in the budget, and the attention this would take is a precious commodity which might be better allocated elsewhere this year. Alistair counter-proposed that Tena collect feedback from all Board members, officers and teachers, focusing on just a few questions, and present it informally to Sakula.) Tena asked for clarification on this process, and the following was agreed:

- Tena will develop the feedback questions in consultation with Sakula. Consider including in the feedback a question tied back to the SD job description, and one related to the SD’s effect on individual’s spiritual practice.
- Feedback given will be confidential, seen only by Tena, who will summarize the feedback and present it to Sakula.
- This process is intended to be for the benefit of Sakula.

Action Item Tena: Gather feedback on the SD, summarize it, and report to the SD. (No completion date was set.)

Action Item Review. All action items were completed, unless noted below.

- **Action Item Greg:** Ensure that the Mid-Year Appeal has been mailed by June 28th.
- **Action item Alistair and Tena** – Present a finished version of the Roles document at the July meeting for Board approval.
- **Action item Tena** – Write up a resolution to approve our change of banks.
- **Action Item Bonnie:** Work with Sakula to determine the best way to communicate the mortgage status to the community, and then make sure it gets communicated prior to the July meeting.
- **Action item Kristen:** By the July meeting, have sent a draft to Sakula of an email that would go out to the whole community to announce the Fred Meyer rewards program.
- **Action item Kristen:** Recommended next steps on the electrical project by the July meeting.

Calendar Review. We continue to be on track.

Action Item Greg: Add auction planning to the calendar in July.

Action Item Greg: Update the “Create Volunteer Structure” section of the calendar.

Review of System for Follow Through. A goal for this year was to develop a system for Board accountability and follow-through. This has been implemented via the yellow-highlighted action items in the minutes and their review at each meeting. The consensus is that this is working well, particularly since the review provides a method for giving any item that is not getting done extra attention in a non-judgmental way.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25.

Additional Decisions Approved by E-Mail

The following proposal from Kristen was approved unanimously by all Directors by email on June 5, 2017:

The building committee has been working to gather bids to fix some electrical wiring issues in the shrine room. We have had 3 electrical companies look at the lighting and give us their proposals.

We would like to choose one of these proposals, which would require the front two fixtures nearest the altar and further investigate the status of our current wiring within the walls and ceiling space. This proposal would cost \$750 and would also provide us with more clarity about next steps toward upgrading the wiring in our entire upstairs.

As this project falls within the scope of capital reserve projects, we, the building committee, are requesting approval for use of \$750 from the capital reserve funds.

The following proposal from Bonnie & Greg was approved by a quorum of 3 of the 5 Directors (Kristen, Greg & Stephanie; Charla excused herself from deliberation due to pressing family matters; and Sakula was excluded because it would have been a conflict of interest) by email on June 29, 2017:

- We provide Sakula with a \$1,500 bonus (net of taxes), which will show her our appreciation for her years of service and for her continuing efforts to grow in her job and to provide a core around which PFOD can grow.

- Bonnie will look for a way to keep the total budget unchanged by finding Income lines that can be increased or Expense lines that can be cut over the remaining 6 months of the year. She will monitor the actual vs budget for the remainder of the year.
- We don't yet know what will come out of the mid-year appeal, and if it results in more donations than budget, it could provide some of this money. If it appears that we need to approach a select group of donors, we can do that when the need arises.

The following proposal from Tena was approved unanimously by all Directors by email on July 13th, 2017:

RESOLVED: That PFOD move its banking relationship (consisting of savings and checking accounts) from Wells Fargo Bank to Rivermark Community Credit Union. Sakula, Kristen, Stephanie and Bonnie shall be the initial signers.