

Zen Community of Oregon Board of Directors Meeting

Heart of Wisdom and Via Zoom

April 7, 2024 3:30-5:30 PM

Minutes prepared by Senkei

Approved August 24, 2024

Attendance

ZCO Director and Officers:

- Nancy Kodo Conover (President & Director)
- Adam Eisan Herr (Director)
- Kassie Ko'un Fisk (Director)
- Darah Shonin Ashton (Director & Treasurer)
- Myoyu Haley Voekel (Director)
- Brad Senkei Biddle (Secretary – via Zoom)

Sangha:

- Hogen
- Fuho
- Kosho
- Soshin
- Myo'On
- Gwen W.
- Esme
- Joe R.
- Jogen (Zoom)
- Onshin (Zoom)
- Ansui (Zoom)
- Enku (Zoom)

1. Call to Order

Kodo opened the meeting with a short meditation and a reading on the topic of Right Speech. She called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was present.

2. Secretary report / administrative items

- On April 2, 2024 Shokan communicated their resignation as a Director. Subsequently Chozen appointed Myoyu Haley Voekel to serve as Director for the remainder of the term that ends in May 2025.
- The Directors deferred approval the minutes from the meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 4, 2024 until more Directors had the opportunity to review.

3. Green Burial

Myo'On provided a detailed update on the Green Burial project and asked for Board approval to post informational content on the topic on the ZCO website. After discussion, the Board approved Myo'On proceeding to develop the content, subject to review and approval by the Board before posting. Issues raised in the course of the discussion included:

- Involvement by GVM in any aspects of the project would require a clear owner at the monastery
- A policy may be needed to address how and where composted remains could be placed at GVM
- Even posting informational content is a meaningful decision – e.g., why this topic and not others? How does this messaging fit in the overall ZCO communications plan? Is there any implicit endorsement of the approach or of specific service providers? etc.
- Opportunities exist for a larger project (e.g. investigating whole body burial, or developing a comprehensive way of approaching and memorializing death, both as part of a priest's ministry and

as a method of long term support for the monastery) but these opportunities would need substantial committed long-term resources .

4. Conflict of Interest form and Bylaws update

Senkei described the Conflict of Interest Policy document that was circulated to the Board, and provided an update about the Bylaws project. Work will continue on both matters.

5. Great Vow update

Myoyu reported on various GVM-related matters. Topics included: 16 different people are leading sesshin and weekend retreats (12 leading sesshin); Bansho is now seeing all new residents in sanzen; lots of transitions – from four years ago only Soshin, Onshin and Myoyu remain; Bansho and Jomon are plugging in (and more). She answered various questions from attendees.

6. Heart of Wisdom and update

Kosho reported on various HoW--related matters. Topics included: receiving more volunteer inquiries; retreats, such as Inner Critic, and Zazenki have been full; discussing ideas like Qi Gong and Friday night activities; 5 precepts class was so full it had to split; EBC Gaza plans have stalled; discussions about Zen Peacemakers event and the concept of trauma-informed Buddhism; Onshin's service position training at HoW. Some discussion also happened around the report that NEXT Biofuels has stopped paying rent and some relevant litigation.

7. Treasurer's update

Shonin highlighted several issues and indicated that further detailed budget information would come from the Finance Committee soon:

- She described plans to put some ZCO money into a CD, given the opportunity of high interest rates
- She said that the idea of paying off some of the current Zirnio property mortgage was under discussion
- She discussed a plan to increase stipends for the ordained, noting that this was not reflected in the current budget but could be paid for because of a change in Bansho's status from paid employee to a stipend receiver, resulting in substantial savings for ZCO

8. Japan pilgrimage information

Onshin provided details about a planned trip to Japan involving Onshin, Bansho, Jomon, Chozen, Hogen and Kodo for a memorial honoring the 700th Anniversary of the death of Keizan Jokin Zenji. Onshin also described his planned long term training stay at Toshoji temple.

9. Earthquake relief donation

Kodo raised the possibility of a \$1000 donation to a fund coordinated by the Soto Zen Bishop of North America for relief efforts related to the 2024 Noto (Japan) earthquake. After discussion, the Board determined that no vote was needed because money had already been budgeted for this type of purpose; Kodo planned to consult with Chozen and Hogen and make a decision about how to proceed.

10. Carbon sequestration planning

Kodo raised the possibility of dedicating 22 acres of GVM property to carbon sequestration, which would involve committing not to use forest land in certain ways. Participants raised various questions about how the commitment would be documented and enforced, specifically what activities would be permissible and impermissible on the land, who would purchase the associated carbon credits and the projected amount and intended use of revenue, and other points. No decision was made.

11. Annual meeting planning

Kodo noted that the annual meeting was coming up and brief discussion of some planning happened, with further planning intended outside of the Board meeting

12. AoB

Ko'un was selected to serve on the 2024 Election Committee, replacing Shokan

13. Closure

Kodo closed the meeting at 5:30pm.