

DEEP SPRING CENTER

Deep Spring Center Board Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2016 / 8:00 PM / Online videoconference using Zoom

Attendees

Roann Altman, Barbara Brodsky (with Hal signing), Tana Dean, Evelyn Ghosh Williams, Mary Lawton, Robert Lee, Isabelle Mook-Jodouin, Tavis Taylor, Bill Riccobono, Celeste Zygmunt.

Meeting Notes

- I. Brief Silent Sitting
- II. Debrief on International Community meeting (from Sunday, August 7) Lessons Learned
 - A. Review what went well?
 - Bill and Tana shared that they felt the technology piece went fairly well, with only a few hiccups. People shared that it would be nice for the camera to move so the online participants could see who is talking. This was not done this time because of the level of comfort of the technology team with the equipment. It is a goal for future meetings and classes.
 - Several people felt that everyone saying goodbye at the end was helpful for feeling connected, and Celeste suggested we connect that way at the beginning of the meeting instead of the end.
 - Roann shared that she was glad to see participation of students who have been involved with Deep Spring Center for a long time, and that it was good to have their input. She suggested that some of us who know them could personally invite these people to the meetings to engage them in participating, as some of them were people who used to live in Ann Arbor and are now away.
 - Tana raised the question of how do we attract new people? We will need to look at how to do marketing.
 - The agenda really helped with the meeting flow. There was a suggestion, which was well received by the board, that we encourage participation during the whole meeting instead of only at the end. We could build that into the agenda. This might help people to share the ideas throughout the meeting when their ideas pop up.
 - B. Where can we improve?

- Celeste noted that she felt there was too much emphasis on staying on time, and that may have discouraged people from making comments. She suggested a focus on making participants feel we want their input, instead of being too focused on how much time is left for the agenda item being addressed.
 - Evelyn suggested that we place less important points at the end of the agenda and treat them as “nice to have”. That way if people share a lot, we can move those items to the next meeting, as we really want to hear what people have to say.
- Bob suggested that we could ask for feedback on the meeting via email to attendees.
- Bob also suggested that committee leaders include the kinds of skills we need as part of their committee reports to the community, so that we can recruit more volunteers.

C. Going forward – how often? Monthly? Quarterly? Bi-Annually?

- Not addressed, will need to be decided at a future meeting.

III. II. Discuss vision and mission statements (30 min)

A. Difference between vision and mission statements

- Clarity with shared agreed upon definition
- What comes first? The chicken or the egg?
 - The vision statement is our “North Star”, where Deep Spring Center is wanting to be. It is much broader than the mission statement, which is more about what Deep Spring Center does.
 - It was clarified that the vision statement is a statement about the organization of Deep Spring in 5 or 10 years or longer, not about Barbara.
 - There was much discussion about whether it was better to do the vision statement first, or the mission statement first. Several people felt it was best to do the vision statement first, and there were several people who felt it best to do them simultaneously.
 - Bob suggested we use the 3 line mission statement that Aaron has for the Evenings with Aaron class series, as a starting point for our mission statement. Then, using that and looking into the future, we can make the vision statement from there, and refine the mission statement and vision statements together.
 - Barbara felt that they have to come together.

- Barbara then shared that Aaron was asking the Board a question she thought was useful: Could we go around and each person say one sentence say what drew you to Deep Spring Center? What you hope to gain? Aaron said it was a good idea to do so spontaneously, immediately.
- Here are all of the board members' responses:
- Isabelle: What I ask of Deep Spring Center is to support me towards: developing the tools to ease suffering in myself and others, and open my heart fully to myself, to other beings and to the situations that come into my life.
- Celeste: What draws me Deep Spring is that it helps me find freedom, it helps me to be of service and I aim to create a world where all beings' needs are met.
- Mary: Assists me toward my own recognition of who I am.
- Barbara: Deep Spring Center helps me to live with more love, and wisdom and compassion, and supports my own and the world's evolution to higher consciousness.
- Bill: I ask Deep Spring Center to help me get to a better place in Heaven.
- Bob: To find my way back to the Source.
- Tavis: I'm drawn to Deep Spring because it's a community of spiritual people who have a similar outlook and I want to support Deep Spring so that it brings that information to others.
- Roann: Deep Spring provides support, a community of like-minded individuals and resources to anyone around the world who wishes to live with greater awareness, wisdom and compassion.
- Evelyn: What I ask of Deep Spring Center is to support me towards self-realization. (Evelyn then specified, self realization meaning my true God self, my holy Christ self, or freedom.)
- Barbara suggested that we each look at these words, and write out a vision statement for the next meeting, and we could have a list of a half dozen visions that we have together.

IV. "Evenings with Aaron" Fundraising Idea from Bob

- Bob clarified that the calls out to past donors is to gather information. He suggests not even mentioning money during these calls, as this is not about getting more money from those already contributing, but rather about what brought them to Deep Spring Center. One of the things Deep Spring is planning for the near future that may interest people is connecting with

spirits other than Aaron, as he has said he wants to expand the number of spirits that share with us. Barbara has already suggested a few sessions later this year that would include the Mother and Father John and Jeshua.

- Bill suggested asking people if they would be interested in participating in online activities. Bob said he will add that into his script guidance for the calls..
- Bob clarified that each person can direct their discussion in any direction you want. Once you get the discussion going, then just keep going. Bob shared that one person that he has already called, who is withdrawing from Deep Spring Center, shared that they felt that the people that volunteered were the meditators, and have since left Deep Spring, and the people who did not volunteer were those on a spiritual quest rather than meditator. Bob think that this suggests we'll have a hard time getting people involved as volunteers since the meditators have left.
- Roann suggested that maybe some of the people who were contributing were not valuing what DSC was giving to an appropriate extent, and they may have been contributing according to their finances or not. They may also not be appropriately valuing the online content.
- Bob pointed out that it's difficult for people to gauge the value of the online content without having tried it.
- Roann suggested we also involve people on our advisory committee, as they know the past members, and would likely be happy to help out.
- Evelyn asked why we are not asking for money during these calls. Bob clarified that we are only bringing in \$8,000 now, and need \$30,000; we are unlikely to get that gap from those who are currently contributing, so the priority is to get information about what people value so we can attract more donors. However, if you want to ask for money, that's fine.
- Barbara pointed out that the call can also be informative, for instance sharing that the Aaron nights will be available by videoconference, to help them see how they can directly connect with Deep Spring Center. She also suggested that we include those who come to the emerald isle retreat, as some of those folks know about us, but don't have a direct connection to Deep Spring Center.
- Celeste volunteered to contact the emerald isle retreatants, because she is the coordinator and has their contact info.
- Hal shared that when he helps with fundraising for different non-profits, he always tells people that it's a 501(c)(3) organization because that can encourage people to donate since sometimes the whole thing comes off their taxes. Bob noted this, and said that he will include a line in his instructions to this effect.

- Evelyn pointed out that the way the website is set up, it can seem that we are asking for just \$10 (because that's the first option in the pull down menu). Tana agreed to change it on the website so that all the options are visible on the page.
- Evelyn suggested using tools such as eventbrite, where people can sign up and classes or workshops come out as an event on the website, on facebook page, and by notification email.
- Bob noted that all of these ideas will be a part of the next stage, right now we're just getting started gathering information.
- Isabelle to put the donor spreadsheet on google docs and highlight those that Bob and Celeste have identified as already being taken care of..
- Aaron: I understand that you need money on this place, but on another plane the money is already there. I would ask all of you to picture all the people in the world who have valued Deep Spring Center, thinking, "it's been some time since I donated. Maybe it's time to donate again." Think of all that money coming in, and your needs being met. Focus on abundance instead of scarcity.

V. Status of upcoming retreats from Celeste

- Celeste reported that she has not received any responses from the community about what people need. We need a process for people to connect with us. Celeste started contacting people from Bob's list and asking what their needs were with respect to retreats; the conversations continued from there.
- Oakwood retreat: we are slowly preparing for the retreat; Mary is heavily involved. We are preparing a letter to send out to all participants, outlining what they will need, and how to conduct themselves. Celeste will be talking with Ted, Manager of Oakwood, this coming week, about how people can take on tasks as Oakwood reduced costs for us in exchange for our help. Celeste will be creating a signup list for the retreatants to.
- Bill shared that this retreat is full (32 participants), there have been a few cancellations, but people on waitlist have taken their places.
- Barbara shared that she and Aaron are working on the program; it is well underway with clear idea of where we're going.

VI. Communication Planning

A. Email

- Evelyn noted that there are many emails being sent to the board. She suggested that it would be good to have a communication plan, which she can do in excel, outlining the team members and their leaders, as well as the entire board. This way the committee-specific items can be shared with

the committee, and the leader can send a periodic report to keep the board informed. If there is an immediate need, or something bigger that needs more immediate discussion, then we can email the whole board.

- Roann suggested that it would work best if we decide what is going to take place at the meetings, and whatever needs to be discussed at the board meeting gets put on the agenda for the next meeting. She shared that she would like her participation to be basically attending the board meetings, and then participating in committee work between meetings.
- Evelyn noted that it has been difficult to keep up with the emails. She agreed with Roann that it would be good to clarify what will be discussed at the meetings, instead of by email. The committees can talk amongst themselves, and then send items to add to the agenda for board meetings. Trying to make decisions outside of the meetings is overwhelming, so we need a way to mitigate that. Evelyn proposed that she would put together the communication plan and send it to Isabelle so she can put it on google docs and send it out to everyone. She asked that we be clear about what is committee work vs Board – let’s filter from the committee leaders or send to Evelyn as a topic for an agenda. Dialogue should be during the meetings not via email - this also helps to avoid any confusion that can arise because of with written communication.

B. Slack

- Not covered, as people liked Evelyn’s communication plan. Will use that for now.

VII. Review / Q&A of Tana’s Business report

- Tana brought up that Deep Spring Center needs a 4th director, now that Amy has resigned, we need a president.
- Tana shared that class registrations are a little slow, but not abnormal for this time of year. She will be doing social media this coming week to market it out there, but she is confident the class registrations will pick up.
- Tana shared that the website is continually updated.
- Year-end fundraising – it is a good time to start thinking about it. There was an outline in Tana’s report to the Board with dates that things are needed. She has already talked to Barbara, and thinks we need videos for the year end emails. Barbara and Aaron will each do one, and Tana is suggesting that Evelyn could do one, and maybe a Deep Spring teacher could do one. 1.5 to 3 minutes long. She has also asked Barbara to make a few videos to have on the main Deep Spring page, to keep content fresh for visitors.
- Tana brought up the topic of her salary raise, which the Board approved earlier this year. She shared that, given the funding challenges Deep Spring

is currently facing, she is still willing to take the 20\$ an hour, and she could bank the 5\$ and receive that as bonuses once DSC is thriving.

- Evelyn asked if anyone opposed Tana's suggestion, and there was no opposition from anyone, so we are moving forward with that.

VIII. Upcoming Proposed Topics: Decision making options (e.g. consensus, majority rules via voting, etc.)

- Not discussed, will be added to next agenda

Action Items

1. Board to consider sending a survey to participants after future community meetings.
2. Board to decide on how often to schedule the community meetings.
3. Board members to read and reflect on the vision statement exercise and prepare a sentence for the next meeting.
4. Tana to update the donation page on the Deep Spring website so that it shows all the options without the pull down menu.
5. Board members are to remember that the funds we need are already there; focus on our needs already having been met.
6. Evelyn to prepare communication plan and email to Isabelle.
7. Isabelle to put communication plan on Google docs and share with the Board.
8. Tana's salary to rise to \$25 an hour, banking \$5 an hour until sometime next year.
9. Evelyn to add "Decision-making options" to next meeting's agenda.
10. Evelyn to add "Board Meeting Time" to next meeting's agenda.

Next Meeting

September 25, 2016, 8PM EST