

Deep Spring Center Board Meeting

20 November 2016 / 8:00 PM / Zoom

Attendees

Isabelle Mook-Jodouin, Tana Dean, Bill Riccobono, Roann Altman, Robert Lee, Celeste Zygmunt, Tavis Taylor

Regrets: Barbara Brodsky, Evelyn Ghosh Williams

It was requested that Board Members log in 15 minutes ahead of the meeting start time in order to resolve any technical issues. This will allow us to start the meeting on time.

Notes

- I. Committee Status, includes fundraising letter status
 - A. Archives committee
 1. The archives committee has not met since last Board Meeting, but work is continuing between meetings.
 2. The committee had decided in their first meeting to have several members of the committee review transcripts not yet reviewed by Barbara and Aaron, in order for them to get posted onto the archives. These transcripts have a disclaimer at the beginning indicating that Barbara and Aaron have not yet reviewed them. Isabelle has started this work.
 3. Roger has moved the archives to the new host. This is the same host where the main Deep Spring website is currently hosted. Roger is working on getting a demo of new platform up for the archives committee to review.
 - B. Technology Committee
 1. Bill sent out the tech committee update report. The committee identified 5 items on which to focus for the next 6 months (January to June 2017).
 - a) 2 Day-long workshops, possibly running from 9AM-3PM.
 - b) Dharma journal: once a month, Aaron does a short dharma talk (10-20 minutes) and it gets put up on the DSC website. Tana will be working on one of those next week.
 - (1) It was pointed out that shorter videos might be better in some instances, depending on the topic. Aaron may have input to give on that.
 - (2) 10-15 minutes may be best as people may not watch if it's much longer than that.
 - (3) Tana thought this could replace the newsletter we no longer have. The goal is, in part, to create a sense of community on the internet for those not local.
 - (4) Will go onto Youtube.
 - (5) Aaron and the Mother excited about this.

- c) Marketing messages: 2 mins of marketing messages from Barbara, and could expand to testimonials maybe at some future point.
 - d) 1-day retreat online and in person
 - e) Weekend online retreat
 - 2. The committee discussed doing a one-day workshop for donations instead of for a set fee. The intention is to help people get in the door, as well as for community service.
 - 3. The tech committee has gotten over a lot of glitches, and even though we still have some glitches, we will be ramping up over the next 6 months to get more content up, both live and pre-recorded.
 - 4. If Barbara can send a rough outline of what the daily schedule of a retreat would be like, that would help Celeste a lot. There are new issues related to time zones with the online retreat.
 - a) Tavis pointed out that considering that West Coast participants don't have to travel for the online retreats, they may be willing to wake up early to participate. Tavis to email Barbara to share his perspective on this.
 - 5. There was a suggestion to put a calendar on our Board page, for planning purposes, as Barbara and others could look at it to help figure out dates.
- C. Retreat Committee
 - 1. Steiner Retreat in March: teachers need to be finalized and we need to move forward on this in order for marketing to be done. Tana needs all the details of this retreat, including pricing, to be finalized by mid to end of December in order to get marketing and registration preparation done in time to fill this retreat.
 - a) Tana has asked to be cc'd on any emails regarding this retreat.
- D. Fundraising Letters
 - 1. The physical fundraising letter went out Tuesday, November 15, and was sent to 227 people. The physical mailings are shrinking because people are signing up for email a lot more. The only way Tana gets mailing addresses nowadays is when people register for a class, a workshop or retreat.
 - 2. Tana needs to do some work with the constant contact database to ensure that all of the email addresses we have are in the database for the fundraising email.
 - 3. The Board discussed whether we need to see all the fundraising emails again before Tana sends them out.
 - a) The Board will already have seen the letters that will be in the emails, so don't feel the need to review before they go out.
 - b) Bob suggested we add a line at the beginning of our fundraising messages, thanking people if they have already contributed.
 - c) Tana to check with Evelyn to see if she wants to see the emails before they go out to the mailing list.
 - 4. Crazy Wisdom ad - ¼ page ad
 - a) Tana to connect with Evelyn for final approval.
- II. Decision Making Options with Bill - Part 2
 - A. Sense of the Meeting
 - 1. The Board had a brief discussion on the Sense of the Meeting process of decision-making.

2. Someone asked who summarizes the sense of the meeting, and Bill clarified that it would be the convener or the person presiding on the meeting.
 3. Approved - the group would like to use Sense of the Meeting as our decision-making process.
- III. Silence or Guided meditation - seeing DSC thriving with all financial needs met for 2017 and beyond
- A. Deferred to next meeting
- IV. 2017 Budget - includes how fundraising supports and where it stands now
- A. End of year: DSC got great income from Oakwood. DSC is running a \$2K profit for the 2016 year to the end of October. Between now and the end of year, we are expecting another \$2k from monthly donors, and \$4-5k expenses to end of year (insurance and Tana's salary). Also, we will have some fundraising coming in this calendar year.
 - B. Budget for next year: Bob is working out the details. Bob is putting in a budget line for the back-salary we owe Tana for easier tracking, and is also suggesting that we start to rebuild our reserve. Bob feels we should have at least one year of expenses in that reserve. His suggestion is that we build that reserve over 3 years, \$6K per year, and then we would need to identify another \$6K in income for next year to reach the goal of \$24K.
 - C. Attendance at retreats dropped off noticeably during the financial recession of 2008. Bob shared that he feels there are lots of potential headwinds economically that may be heralding a recession, so we need to plan how DSC will weather that if there is a recession soon.
 - D. Whoever set the rates for Oakwood did a great job, because we made over 4.5K.
 - E. Could maybe have 2 Oakwood-style retreats in 2018 (weeklong retreats). Bob pointed out that when we lost Emrich, we never replaced it.
 1. We need to search for another venue for the 2nd retreat.
 2. We could also explore bringing the West Coast and Emerald Isle retreats under the DSC umbrella.
 - a) Celeste shared that the Emerald Isle retreat is self-contained, so it doesn't belong to a particular center. It was started by a group of student, a lot of whom are no longer attending it. If we'd like to discuss bringing them under the DSC umbrella, it needs to be done with tact and diplomacy. We did have a suggestion that we go to them to ask for donations to help DSC, which Celeste will do.
 3. Oakwood % add-on was 15% rather than the traditional overhead of 25%. Since this retreat was full, it seems clear that there is demand for this type of retreat, and people are willing to pay, so there seems to be room for charging an additional amount. Some of that overhead could be used for scholarships for those who would not otherwise be able to attend.
 - a) This needs to be discussed further as people who are in financially difficulties may not be able to afford a higher fee.
 - b) There are 2 scholarships available at each retreat, and they cover 1/2 of the fee.
 - c) Bob suggested instead of decreasing fees for everyone, we could offer more scholarships.
 - d) This will be brought back to the retreat committee for discussion.

- e) We could also put out requests for donations for scholarships for retreats specifically. People may be willing to offer this service to other sangha members.
- 4. It may have been Amy that set the numbers for Oakwood. She clearly had a good sense of what to charge because the retreats she organized were profitable.
- 5. It did seem at the end of Oakwood that maybe not enough people had offered Dana to the staff.
- 6. 95% of people wanted meat at meals - may have been a decision to not serve meat to keep costs down. Retreat committee will discuss and decide for next year re: meals.
- F. For evenings with Aaron: People are seeing the monthly donation appeal on the website and getting Evenings with Aaron for free, and we've seen an uptick in monthly donations around the time of Evenings with Aaron starting.
- G. Bill shared that Bob's proactive approach to financial planning is very appreciated. The Board agreed.

Action Items

1. Tavis to email Barbara re: West Coast participants and online retreats/workshops.
2. Board members to cc Tana on all planning emails related to the Steiner retreat.
3. Tana to check with Evelyn to see if she wants to see the emails before they go out to the mailing list.
4. Tana to connect with Evelyn for final approval for the Crazy Wisdom ad.
5. Celeste to contact the Emerald Isle participants to ask for donations for DSC.
6. Retreat committee to discuss raising the fee for Oakwood for next year, and offering more scholarships.
7. Retreat committee to discuss meal options, specifically the inclusion of meat, for Oakwood next year.

Next Meeting Agenda

December 18, 2016 - 8 PM EST - via Zoom