

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JIKOJI ZEN CENTER
DECEMBER 6, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Agenda items: Call to Order; Approval of June 2015 Minutes; Reports from Resident Teacher, Shika, Treasurer, and other committees; Discussion Items; and agreement on Next Meeting Date. It was agreed that Doug Jacobson would facilitate the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 PM. All Board members were present: Cliff Isberg, President; Judy Cosgrove; Vice-President; Edith Bennett, Secretary; Ying Liu, resident's representative; Doug Jacobson; and Val Szymanski. Bryan Gaynor, Treasurer, joined the meeting later. Residents included Mike Newhall, Resident Teacher; John Flood; Joe Hall; Jana Drakka; and Andy Acker. Also present were Hollis DeLancy and Ken Wing.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 2015 MINUTES:

Copies of the June 2015 minutes were distributed. A draft had previously been sent via email to board members, residents, and the Finance Committee for review. Judy Cosgrove suggested a deletion of one statement in the Publications section. Edith motioned to approve the minutes. Val seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

REPORTS (e.g., Treasurer, Resident Teacher, Committees):

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE: Doug reported that various projects and repairs have been taking place. The driveway by the highway has been paved. Minor issues, such as leaky faucets, are being repaired. New projects under consideration include installation of bamboo flooring in the zendo and possible construction of several 10' x 10' retreat huts, although further action is deferred at this time. Additional clarification is needed on the purpose of the proposed huts (habitats versus retreat) and function (long-term or short-term use). In response to questions, Doug stated that the project is doable per input from consultants, but noted that the Board needs to assess the constraints on occupancy, the number of huts, and the timing of the project. Val suggested that a proposal be submitted with pertinent details. Options for the huts include personal retreats, with the possible option of one-month occupancy, or housing for long-term residents. Board comments indicated openness to the idea, and it was noted that there are models of small units at Mt. Madonna and at other retreat centers that could be explored. Ying concurred with Val that a proposal needs to be submitted that would delineate relevant details and circumstances of use. The residents expressed interest in more discussion of its impact on the community. Judy asked about the infrastructure for sanitation and how much growth can be managed with the current facilities. A question was raised about mold testing, which was deferred. Edith suggested that a proposal be submitted by June 2016.

TEACHER'S REPORT: Since the last Board meeting, the Kobun Memorial Sesshin took place, and Mike thanked Judy, Doug, and Cliff for their assistance. Denko-E was led by Doug and Gary Koan from Santa Barbara, and Mike thanked Doug for his contribution. He reported that daily practice is going well, although the number of residents is low at this time. Joe as Tanto (head of practice) keeps daily practice going and provides meditation instruction as needed. Rohatsu begins this week, and Jonathan will receive lay ordination at the end of the sesshin. Mike acknowledged Jana for bringing members of her sangha to Jikoji.

PUBLICATIONS: Hollis reported that Kobun's book is scheduled for publication in the fall of 2016. A series of Kobun's lectures has been transcribed, and Gary Young provided suggestions on how to produce a companion volume. Copies should be available online from White Pine Press. Spring Mountain had acquired about 1500 pieces of Kobun's calligraphy, and Kobun's brother at Kyoto University assisted with the translation. The title of the book will be Precious Mirror. Doug thanked Hollis for getting it to press.

Judy reported that she is finalizing Kobun's book on the Heart Sutra, and that her son is assisting with the typesetting. The book should be ready in a month or two.

Joe added that the e-book version is almost complete and will be available on Amazon. Some income from sales is expected. Joe suggested that a budget for the book would be helpful and asked the Board to adopt the book project, with all revenue going to Jikoji. Last summer, his request was raised with the Finance Committee. Doug requested that Joe write up a proposal, ask for a budget, and work through the Finance Committee. Mike stated that the book projects are important due to our legacy with Kobun Chino, and that it is also our legacy to preserve his teachings as much as possible. Mike thanked Judy, Joe, and Hollis. Judy stated that Angie Boissevain has also been involved in transcribing. Mike suggested that there be a library – physical, digital, or both. Although many of Kobun's teachings have been preserved, they are in different locations. Cassette material is also available. The archival issue will be an ongoing discussion item. (Kobun.jikoji.org and Archive.jikoji.org are Jikoji's current digital archives).

ANIMALS: Three points on behalf of the Animal Committee were made. First, there will be upcoming veterinary check-ups for the cats and shots as needed. Second, it would be helpful to know the amount remaining in the fund. Third, since there are many new residents, the general procedures for animal care that were previously approved by the Board are being re-distributed today. Additionally, a cat door will be installed in the room where the cats sleep. Jana is currently the Animal Ino.

RESIDENTS REPORT: Ying reported on behalf of the residents. The number of current residents is nine; one temporary resident will depart soon, leaving eight residents and four rooms available. A need was noted for more senior practitioners, women, and more diversity in general. Additionally, information on resident applications will be added to the website. The residents acknowledged improvements in internet access, paved roads, and in practice. There have been many new visitors to the Sunday Program due to the increased awareness of mindfulness in Silicon Valley, and the program is expected to grow. There is also a need to better understand how the infrastructure can support larger numbers of visitors as the institution evolves. Ying suggested more conversations about collaboration, communication, and decision-making to support the changes.

Discussion about the mid-week program included bridging practice to the community at large. Various ways to engage the community in practice are being explored. It was noted that economic changes also impact attendance at programs, and attendance can fluctuate. Audio streaming may also be an option. It was agreed that discussion of these matters will continue.

Cliff proposed an increase in residents' fees beginning in January 2016. Doug read Cliff's suggestion of new resident fees: \$750/month for guest long-term retreatants and \$500/month for long-term retreatants. Current long-term retreatants will be grandfathered in at their current rate, generally \$400/month and \$600/month for guests. (It was noted that "residents" is a challenging term for legal reasons and "retreatants" is preferred.) Mike clarified that special arrangements for fees and/or a sliding scale can be available through discussion with the resident teacher. It was emphasized that "we need rates that reflect the reality of where we are and what it costs to maintain the community." A recommendation was made to look at available data in further discussion. Cliff made a motion to increase the retreatants' utility fee as described above, with the grandfathering language noted. All were in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS/WEBSITE: Joe reported that the website has been adding functions, such as applying for sesshins and completing residency applications, and that these functions are being used.

SHIKA: John reported that Jikoji is reserved most weekends from February through April and May 2016. Several regular groups are returning, and there are also some new groups. This year is anticipated to be similar to or better than last year. An increase from \$10-\$20/night is projected as the cost of living has gone up and we continue to upgrade our facilities (e.g., water filtration system, new roofs). John acknowledged the contributions Doug has made to the renovations, in addition to minor grounds maintenance.

Doug acknowledged improvements from the professional cleaning service and pointed out that adding this service is another reason to raise rates. It was also noted that Jikoji is one of the least expensive retreat centers in the area. Ying suggested an increase over the next three years so that Jikoji becomes comparable to other centers. John stated that "70% of the work here is keeping the facilities clean" and that it's important to have very clean rooms for the guests. A \$250 cleaning fee has recently been requested from all groups. A resident raised the issue that the Shika/Guest Manager be a paid position, as is the case in some other centers. Doug suggested the option of a paid Jikoji cleaning crew, with the agreement that if the work is not done, a professional service would be hired. It was noted, however, that there is an uneven number of residents for multiple reasons, which could limit the ongoing feasibility of this option. It was agreed that both options could be considered and decided by the Shika on a case-by-case basis. Doug thanked John for his work.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Bryan reviewed the 2015-2016 fiscal year budget and provided handouts to the Board that included the revenue and expense report as well as the proposed budget. He noted that a bookkeeper has been hired in Arcata. Bryan reviewed and clarified the fund categories for the Board and the implications of the figures noted. He reported that "although we overspent, we essentially broke even" because of a funds transfer. A loan was also taken out that will be repaid in five years. Going forward, we will also spend more on accounting and bookkeeping, but should receive more revenue from non-Jikoji retreats. An increase in revenue would also provide a buffer in the teacher fund. The new bookkeeper's accident prevented her from doing a comparison of the

current and previous fiscal years, so that data is not available at this time. Insurance premium costs were also clarified. Doug motioned that the proposed budget be adopted. Val seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION/FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

Energy Usage: In July, an email was received from PG&E with information on decreasing energy use. Mike suggested contacting PG&E and filing out any application needed. It was noted that it could be worthwhile to have an energy audit. Doug will follow-up on this.

Other Maintenance Issues: Residents have noticed that signs near the pond have been torn down. During the summer months, there is more traffic through the property, which has resulted in vandalism in the area. There is currently a temporary barrier of brush. Possible solutions to the problem include: 1) putting up a gate, which Open Space may be willing to do according to a discussion with an Open Space ranger; and 2) relocating the trail through the property. Doug said that Bryan would provide input on this matter since Open Space would be putting up a gate on Jikoji land, which may have legal ramifications. Bryan would therefore negotiate the details of any gate with Open Space.

Workshops: Joe said that agreement is still needed on how to process income from workshops. Although programs account for significant income, there is currently little revenue. When free workshops were scheduled, there were often no-shows or cancellations. Mike asked the Board to keep the vision afloat and empower Joe to have workshops, starting with a few simple ones to see how they go. It was previously suggested that workshops could be handled similarly to sesshins if consistent with Jikoji's mission, with guest teacher's receiving stipends, or 1099s if they make more than \$600. It was clarified that if Michael approved handling workshops as sesshins, that could happen. Doug suggested that we schedule workshops going forward. Mike and Joe will work out the details.

Proposed Increases for Guest Lodging: Bryan suggested a \$20 per person increase for individuals per night from the current rate, and a flat rate of \$800 for groups of 10 or under. Groups larger than 10 would see an increase of \$10 per night. Ying motioned to approve the increase. Cliff seconded the motion.

Cleaning Fees: Further discussion took place on rates for cleaning services. It was suggested that Jikoji staff cleaners be paid at a comparable rate to a professional cleaning service. John would like to get the rate for professional services reduced to \$250. As an interim plan, John was authorized to spend an equivalent amount to Jikoji cleaning staff comparable to a professional service. A quarterly professional cleaning expense is also a possibility, and \$250 can be authorized when the need for deep cleaning arises. The costs have been about \$400/group, and the goal is to get it to \$250. A "middle number" was also suggested for staff rates. Cliff proposed a compromise of up to \$325 for Jikoji staff and up to \$400 for an off-site service. Ying suggested that the costs be tracked for review in six months; given the high expense, it should be tracked carefully. Bryan stated that the new charge of \$20 for lodging should offset this. There was a recommendation to report back in three months on the costs, and John will maintain a spreadsheet. Ying motioned to authorize \$400 cleaning for groups and \$325 for cleaning services performed by residents. Cliff seconded the motion.

Cleaning Resident's Kitchen: Testing in 2015 indicated the presence of various varieties of mold in and around different buildings. Cleaning needs are ongoing, and the residents are trying to do their part. Duties may be assigned to residents, and it was noted that residents should clean the kitchen area. Bryan stated that additional funds could be spent on deep cleaning periodically. Specifically: several rooms and locations were tested, and mold was found in one resident's room, on the decks, and in the residents' pantry new refrigerator. It was noted that pantries and rooms should be ventilated periodically.

Shika as Paid Position: The Board revisited the earlier suggestion that the Shika's position be a paid position. Cliff recommended that the discussion item be tabled at this time because it is a complex issue and also concerns others' salaries and increased expenses. Bryan concurred. There was agreement that the discussion be deferred.

Reimbursement for Errands: There was a request that a resident who performs an errand for the Shika be reimbursed \$25.00/hour for Jikoji business. Currently the Board approves up to 10 hours/month at \$25.00. Val made a motion to set up a reimbursement schedule up to 12 hours/month at rate of \$25 for purpose of obtaining Jikoji supplies instead of mileage reimbursement. Cliff seconded the motion. This motion is retroactive to May 1st. At present the Shika has a stipend of \$200, and a question was raised as to whether he would also be entitled to these additional hours. Bryan stated that an issue of fairness is valid, as several residents are also employees. Val amended the motion to include up to 12 hours, with the Shika having the authority to designate hours to others. It was agreed that this practice will be reviewed.

Book Budget: Joe raised the issue of the costs for an ISBN number. Bryan clarified that there is \$500 in the budget for books. Questions were also raised about intellectual property rights on the book Judy has edited entitled *Kobun Sesshin Talks*. She is working on a biography of Kobun's life, and the proceeds from both books will be donated. Val suggested that more details are needed regarding projected costs and a budget. Doug asked how many books are projected. Joe responded that it would be "print on demand," possibly \$3.00 per copy, and more if color. Hollis raised a question about reporting sales tax. Bryan directed Joe to prepare a proposal for the Finance Committee's review. Bryan agreed to investigate intellectual property issues associated with publishing books like the *Kobun Sesshin Talks* that are based on Kobun's recorded teishos. The Committee could approve a proposal after the copyright/intellectual property rights issue is resolved. The Finance Committee can authorize up to \$1000. No motion is needed at this time, as a proposal will be provided. The topic is currently tabled. After Bryan has a consultation with an I.P. attorney, he will inform the Board regarding intellectual property issues.

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 5th at 2PM.