

DRAFT – Subject
to Approval by
Board of Trustees



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Corporate Meeting of Members May 29, 2022

- ◆ Notice of the meeting having previously been given as required by law, Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede, one of the Center's two Spiritual Co-Directors and Co-Presidents, called the meeting to order. The polls were then opened for the election of either Jonathan Hager or Christopher Maley to a three-year term as Trustee. It was announced that the polls would remain open for at least one hour, as required by law. Roshi then announced that he and Sensei John Pulleyn, the Center's other Spiritual Co-Director and Co-President, had re-appointed Dené Redding to a three-year term as Trustee. The Center's other continuing Trustees are Sensei Gerardo Gally, Rebecca Gilbert, Luka Häkkinen, and Thomas Roberts. Roshi noted that under the Center's by-laws, the Board of Trustees, which administers the Center's financial affairs, consists of six members who serve for staggered three-year terms: three elected by the Center's members, two elected by the Board of Trustees, and one appointed by the Spiritual Co-Directors. The Board elects its Chair from among its members; the current Chair is Jonathan Hager. Finally, Roshi reported that the Board had recently elected the following as the Center's corporate officers for the coming year: Co-Presidents – Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede and Sensei John Pulleyn; Vice President – Jeanette Prince-Cherry; Secretary – Scott Jennings; and Treasurer – Barry Keesan. In addition, long-time former Board Chair Chris Pulleyn serves as an advisor to the Board as Trustee Emerita, and Chapin Mill Head of Zendo Donna Kowal serves as Assistant Secretary.
- ◆ The Center's Business Manager and Corporate Secretary, Scott Jennings, announced that the Board of Trustees' annual financial report required under section 519 of the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law was posted on the Center's website under Home>About>Governance>Meetings & Finances. That report is filed as Appendix A to these minutes. Scott then presented a summary of the report to the meeting on behalf of the Board, including the information filed with these minutes as Appendix B.

Scott reported that total operating income for 2021 was \$370,178, or 115 percent of the amount budgeted. Total operating expenses were \$444,026, or 99 percent of the amount budgeted.

Accordingly, after including an operating draw from investments of \$67,793, the Center ended 2021 with an operating deficit of \$6,055, rather than the \$57,880 deficit that was projected when the 2021 budget was adopted in the fall of 2020.

On the income side, the Center was helped both by better-than-expected membership contributions and by the partial recovery of Chapin Mill rental income. Total membership contributions were \$223,170, or 116 percent of what was projected. On the expense side, Arnold Park repair-and-maintenance expenses were higher than projected because of maintenance projects that had been previously deferred. When the staff salary expense accounts for both Arnold Park and Chapin Mill are combined, total staff salary expense for the year was \$64,841, or 100 percent of the amount budgeted. These figures reflect the fact that the number of paid Zen Center staff has not been affected by the pandemic. In this regard, the Center received a federal Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan of \$21,858 in 2020 and a second PPP loan of \$20,237 in 2021. Because we did not lay off paid staff during the pandemic, both of these loans were fully forgiven. Accordingly, these amounts appear as “below-the-line” extraordinary income on our 2021 financial statements.

In 2021 the Center’s Investment Fund increased by \$151,337, or 7.7 percent, before subtracting the \$67,793 operating draw. The total increase after the operating draw was \$83,544, or 4.3 percent of the Fund’s beginning balance.

- ◆ Board Chair Jonathan Hager thanked Barry Keesan for all the work Barry has been doing to launch and develop the Sangha Programs Office (SPO). The mission of the SPO is both to strengthen the Sangha’s commitment, support, and sense of community and to raise the profile and enhance the visibility of the Center in the community at large. Barry then reported to the meeting regarding the SPO’s activities. First, Barry presented a “Balanced Scorecard” strategic-planning map for the SPO that he developed based on a day-long strategic planning meeting attended by Zen Center staff members and volunteers. [*Secretary’s note:* According to Investopedia.com, “A balanced scorecard is a performance metric used to identify, improve, and control [an organization’s] various functions and resulting outcomes.”] The SPO’s strategic planning map is filed with these minutes as Appendix C. The foundation of the map requires modernization and enhancement of the Center’s information and technology infrastructure, a process that has begun with input from staff and volunteers working in support of the Center’s website, in its financial office, and in the SPO. Barry also reported that the strategic planning meeting resulted in a statement identifying and explicating the values that inform the SPO’s work: service, inclusiveness, and love. The SPO values statement is filed with these minutes as Appendix D.

Barry noted that the SPO is now in its third year and that, viewed broadly, the SPO is focused on how we can create positive change within our organization. Among the programs already supported or planned by the SPO are the following:

- › The Zen of Living and Dying, a support group for those dealing with issues of life, death, and illness.
- › Uprooting Racism, a program whose mission is to gain personal insight into racism in order to abandon it on an individual level, dismantle it on an institutional level, and uproot it in our Sangha.

- › The Nonviolent Communication Group, an online group of Zen Center members dedicated to learning and practicing Nonviolent Communication, or “NVC,” which offers Zen practitioners a practical approach to Right Speech, strengthening the ability to respond compassionately to oneself and others.
 - › Dharma Reflections, a monthly online Buddhist study group, featuring discussion of short selections from Buddhist writings and teachings.
 - › DepreshZen, an online group providing a safe space to talk openly and educate participants and others about living with depression and anxiety disorders from the perspective of a Zen practitioner.
 - › Sangha Brunch Socials, featuring both tasty food and the opportunity to make new connections and get to know one another better.
 - › A Summer Dharma Camp at Chapin Mill for Sangha children aged 8 to 13, the purpose of which will be to foster a nurturing environment for young people to learn about cultural diversity, race, and racism in ways that promote mindfulness and self-compassion.
 - › The annual Chapin Mill Work Retreat, which provides an opportunity to work together on upkeep of the Chapin Mill buildings and grounds – and at the same time to intensify participants’ meditation practice and to enjoy the beauty of Chapin Mill.
- ◆ Bill Lindenfelser, who serves as chair of the Facilities and Sustainable Operations Committee (FASOC), reported on behalf of the Committee. The other members of the Committee are John-sensei, Barry Keesan, Tom Kowal, and Scott Redding. Projects recently completed include (1) renovation of the basement bathrooms and Japanese bath in 7 Arnold Park, (2) renovation of the left side of the Arnold Park garage dormitory, and (3) inspection of the Chapin Mill Retreat Center fire-sprinkler system in order to confirm that there is no urgent need to undertake the very costly conversion of the current “dry-pendent” sprinkler system to a “wet-pendent” system. Projects soon to be undertaken include (1) repairing the roof and upper level windows of the Arnold Park Link, (2) replacing the deteriorated and drafty windows on the third floor of 5 Arnold Park, (3) repairing the structurally-compromised floor in the Chapin Mill barn, and (4) repairing and chip-sealing the deteriorated half-mile-long Chapin Mill entrance road. In addition, substantial maintenance work on the Chapin Mill Farm House and Mill House is needed. FASOC will be coordinating its work with the Development Committee and with other committees as needed.
 - ◆ Chris Pulleyn, Chair of the Development Committee, reported on behalf of the Committee. Besides fundraising, the Committee also deals with issues such as how the Center might better attract, encourage, and retain members in a manner that respects the rigor of the spiritual practice and training offered at the Center. A major current focus of the Committee is working with Sangha volunteer Erika Au, a digital-products designer with much social-media expertise. Erika is helping the Center use digital and social media more effectively in communicating with members,

prospective members, and the general public. Chris also thanked Barry Keesan for his leadership of the project to modernize and enhance the Center's information-and-technology infrastructure.

- ◆ Roshi and Sensei reported to the meeting regarding spiritual affairs. First, Roshi mentioned how happy he is to be back in Rochester after spending the winter in Florida; he plans to stay until late October, when he will return to Florida for the winter. Despite the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the Center has been able to continue offering daily sittings, sesshin, and introductory workshops – at first only online, and subsequently in hybrid in-person/online format. However, the availability of online options, as well as Sangha members' concerns about the pandemic, have reduced in-person participation at Center activities and events. Roshi noted that although online options can be a real help for those who are unable to come to Arnold Park or Chapin Mill, in-person attendance at sittings, dokusan, sesshin, and workshops offers a much richer experience. Fortunately, we have so far been able to avoid problems with COVID-19 transmission at the Center with the help and advice of the Center's COVID-19 task force.

Roshi observed that the Center has two rather different missions: to serve both as a quasi-monastic residential Zen training center and as a "parish church" for the wider Sangha. Almost inevitably, there will be a certain degree of tension between these two roles, and one of the tasks facing both the Spiritual Directors and the Board is to reconcile the two in the most skillful way they can. Roshi emphasized that although the Center is in the process of initiating a number of new programs and activities, he and Sensei are very committed to making sure that core Zen practice is not compromised in the process.

In other news, Roshi reported that in October there will be a pair of ordination ceremonies, one for Jeanette Prince-Cherry and Kathryn Argetsinger, and one for Dené and Scott Redding. Roshi noted that in our lineage ordination as a Zen Buddhist priest is a commitment of full-time vocational service to the Dharma, and is separate and distinct from being sanctioned as a Zen teacher. Roshi also mentioned that he hopes to travel to Casa Zen in Mexico City for the celebration of the group's twentieth year under the leadership of Roshi's Dharma heir, Sensei Gerardo Gally. Finally, Roshi reported that another of his Dharma heirs, Sensei Amala Wrightson, will be visiting this fall; she will attend Roshi's September sesshin and will lead the October-November sesshin at Chapin Mill.

- ◆ Roshi gave heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who help the Center in many different ways. With all the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the contributions of our volunteers are especially appreciated.
- ◆ Roshi introduced those Zen Center Trustees and Officers who were present at the meeting. Sangha members who have questions or comments regarding the Center's finances or governance should always feel free to discuss such matters with any of the Center's Trustees or Officers.
- ◆ The Center's Secretary announced that the polls, which had been open for more than one hour, were about to close and that any member as of the May 5, 2022, record date who had not yet turned in a

ballot should do so.

The results of the election for Trustee were as follows:

Jonathan Hager	74
Christopher Maley	23

Total: 97 members present and voting in person or by written proxy; 469 members eligible to vote as of the record date.

Quorum: Under Article VII(E) of the Center's by-laws = lesser of 100 or one-tenth of the members eligible to vote = 47.

Accordingly, Roshi announced that Jonathan Hager had been re-elected to a three-year term as Trustee.

Submitted to the Board of Trustees on September 23, 2022
by Scott Jennings, Secretary of the Center.


