



# LifeRing Board of Directors Meeting

## Minutes

December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Call to Order & Identification of Public Attendees**

Meeting was called to order at 9:01am.

Board Members present at this time were Lisa Swing-Corney, Anna Bedolla, Michael Toal, Lorraine Hull, Mary Beth O'Connor & Sue Betts (Chair).

Joshua McLaughlin was present as Secretary.

Members of the Public in attendance were Bobbi C., Kemper M., Mark Franklin & Robert Stump (Operations Manager).

### **Approval: November 2022 P&L Report | November 2022 BOD Minutes**

The Chair recognized Steve Gonzales (Board Member and Treasurer) as having joined the meeting at this time.

Lorraine moved a motion to approve the November 2022 P&L Report, which was seconded by Sue. The vote to approve the November 2022 P&L Report was unanimously approved.

The Chair recognized Rafal Klopotoski (Board Member) as having joined the meeting at this time.

Michael moved a motion to adopt the November 2022 BOD Minutes, which was seconded by Lisa. The vote to approve was unanimously passed.

### **Bobbi Campbell | BOD Candidate**

Sue opened this item reiterating Casey's departure and the vacant board seat it created. She noted there was one interested candidate that she had not heard back from. She then asked Lisa to introduce her candidate: Bobbi Campbell.

Lisa gave an overview of Bobbi's LifeRing involvement, noting she has been active since 2007 with LifeRing. She has participated in email groups and managed LifeRing social media platforms; however, she had to step back from social media management. She has since returned as the social media manager. This has led to Facebook becoming our number one referral site. She lauded Bobbi's work ethic and added that she would be a great addition to the board.

Sue thanked Lisa and Bobbi, opening the floor to questions for the candidate. There were no questions at this time.



Lisa moved a motion, which was seconded by Lorraine. The vote to appoint Bobbi Campbell to the vacant board seat was unanimously approved.

### **Updates Requested: BOD Contact List**

Sue opened this item reminding the members to complete this contact update. She noted that the information was confidential and will be used for Wellness Checks in emergencies and for sending out cards. She asked Bobbi to complete a bio for the board page as well. She clarified that BOD contact information is not mandatory, rather a courtesy.

### **Ongoing Business – Status Updates**

#### **Notification fo Bylaws changes to the IRS | Form 990**

The Chair recognized Ivona S, and Rick S as having joined the meeting at this time.

Steve opened by confirming that the IRS does require an update for the change made regarding compensation for the Executive Director position. He informed that this will be filed as “Schedule 0” to the 2022 Tax Returns.

#### **Significant Changes, Conflict of Interest Policy | CPA Response**

Steve informed that based on his research and feedback from the Board CPA, he does not see where LifeRing is required to have a Conflict-of-Interest Policy. However, the board has elected to adopt one anyway. He then asked if there were any questions.

Sue thanked him for his work on these items. She noted that Mary Beth did get us a Conflict-of-Interest policy, which was approved.

Mary Beth recalled that it was not approved, rather circulated to the board members for review and feedback. She noted no questions were received, which would mean the board can now approve the policy. She did not recall the policy being previously approved.

Sue thanked Mary Beth and asked if this should be approved in the executive session, or at this time.

Steve noted that he believed it could be decided in the public meeting; however, the policy was not linked/available.

Sue shared that it was contained in the previous board agenda. It was not linked in the current agenda as she was of the understanding it was previously approved. She offered to send it out again at this time.

Steve noted that the previous minutes listed the policy as in the working stage.



Mary Beth recalled that an extra month was given for feedback as the board members needed time to review the draft. She has asked for specific questions to be sent to her so that she could clarify with the board legal representatives. No questions were received, so she left it to the board members to indicate if they were comfortable with moving forward to a vote.

Sue asked if a vote could proceed at this time.

Lorraine suggested that the matter be put off for a few weeks to facilitate review.

Sue moved a motion, which was seconded by Lisa. The vote to table this item at the next meeting was unanimously approved.

### **LifeRing Privacy Policy**

Sue opened this item asking if the members were able to review the changes to the policy. She further asked if changes were ready to be updated, to which Lorraine agreed.

Lorraine moved a motion which was seconded by Michael. The vote to update the privacy policy was unanimously approved.

### **New Business**

#### **LifeRing Support App**

Michael opened this item informing that the Android and iOS apps were now completely synchronized. Both apps are still in the beta testing phase. He noted there were concerns regarding potential negative impact on sales for Recovery by Choice ("**the workbook**"); however, that the app did not provide a free copy of the workbook. Users are informed that the app covers certain domains of the workbook but cannot replace it. Users can enter personal notes in the featured domains.

The app now has a donation function, which is tied in with Stripe and will allow donations to be received through the app. The app shows upcoming meetings, allowing users to join Zoom meetings via the app (Zoom launches separately). On closing the Zoom app there is room for a landing page to attract more donations. The app contains a moderated blog which allows posts to be reviewed before approval and posting.

A chat function is also included, which allows for the creation of private chat groups.

Rafal shared how much he loved the app, noting that it works in his timezone. He noted concerns with text running over text in the app.

Michael responded that he was aware of the issue and it is currently being worked on.

Sue asked if Michael would be fielding app related questions. Michael responded in the affirmative and also noted that feedback can be submitted through the app.



Mary Beth thanked Michael for his work on the app. She then asked him to confirm what percentage of the workbook is currently contained in the app.

Michael responded that there are currently only two domains in the app. Fields are provided which can be filled out by users, which in turn populates a personal recovery plan generated as a PDF through the app. The personal recovery plan in the app is based in the domains in the workbook. At this stage only two domains are available; however, Michael expressed hopes of including all nine domains. He noted that a choice will have to be made as to how many of the domains will be added. His personal view was that having all the domains present would be more beneficial than having two available in the app and requiring purchase of the workbook to access the other seven. He saw this as an opportunity to make the personal recovery plan more widely available, as it is referred to heavily within the LifeRing community. Whether in the form of the nine domains of the workbook or another style, it would be good for promoting the concept of personal recovery plans.

Sue shared that there is a PDF available for the personal recovery plan on the LifeRing website currently.

Mary Beth reiterated her concern of providing a free copy of the workbook, noting the need to understand how this might adversely affect sales of the workbook. She also noted that it is worthwhile to understand current revenue from workbook sales to make an informed decision. She was cognizant of existing budgetary constraints and how loss of sales might strain finances.

Lorraine raised the question of whether Marty (Martin Nicolaus) had weighed in on the issue, or given an okay to the workbook being provided, all or in part, on the app for free.

Michael responded that he had spoken with Marty and had an email exchange. However, he was unable to obtain a definitive answer from Marty. He has since reached out to Marty for a more in depth review of the app and subsequent decision but has not heard back from him.

Anna shared that she was familiar with software development. Though not as a developer, she has worked with development teams and shared appreciation for the amount of work Michael has put in. She offered to assist in any capacity, except for programming. She noted the validity of Mary Beth's concerns and suggested the domain expansion be undertaken in phases. Initially, she sees the app as an information platform, providing background on LifeRing and access to meetings. For the introductory stage a reference to the personal recovery plan and workbook may be sufficient.

Michael understood Anna's points and shared that this was why only two domains are currently covered in the app. He was willing to take this portion of the app out, or re-design a more generic version. He, too, was cognizant of the financial dynamics at play.



Anna was mindful of the amount of work that Michael has done, expressing concern over potential depletion of his personal resources. She asked Michael if he needed any help with logistics, i.e., finding beta testers, management of requests for changes, etc. She offered to assist with any of these if needed.

Michael responded that more testers for iOS may be needed. At this time, he and Jef (Jef Bryant) have been doing the bulk of the testing. He noted that more bugs and enhancements would become evident as app users increase. Still, the core development of the app is coming along well, with extensive testing. He noted a legal concern regarding chat encryption. He intends to contact the Bureau of Industry Security under the U.S. Department of Commerce to clarify the Encryption and Export Administration Regulations (EAR) compliance requirements.

Mary Beth offered to liaise with the Bureau of Industry Security. She asked Michael to provide a write-up she can send to the Bureau and gather the necessary information.

Sue thanked Mary Beth and Michael and called on Rafal.

Rafal agreed with Mary Beth's views of fiscal awareness. He also recognized the need for a formal review and decision from Marty. He shared a concern for the app being used to funnel book sales. Though he understood the importance of sales, he was wary of a potential "bait and switch" scenario arising from providing partial access to the domains and requiring purchase of the workbook to access the remaining domains.

Michael understood Rafal's concerns and noted that sober apps in general are quite popular. There is a possibility of increased donations, which could be taken into account when revisiting the issue in the future.

Steve shared the finances regarding workbook sales. He noted that the previous version of the workbook was available as a free PDF on the LifeRing website. He suggested that this be reviewed and potentially replicated in the app.

Michael asked Steve to confirm if it was the workbook or How Was Your Week ("HWYW") that was provided for free on the website.

Robert clarified that the previous version of HWYW is on the website. However, the workbook only has a couple of chapters exposed in the review. Therefore, the full workbook is not available on the website.

Steve then asked Michael if he had done the same kind of content dissemination on the app.

Michael confirmed that he added only two domains on the app. Noting that this was the "bait and switch" scenario Rafal mentioned earlier.

Steve understood this but accepted it is a natural consequence of dealing with copyrighted works.



Rafal further shared that he uses WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) in his mental health recovery work. It is a system that is similar to the LifeRing workbook, with an electronically fillable PDF. He wondered if there was any way of doing something similar with the LifeRing Support App. This would mean making the full plan available, without providing the entire workbook free. This way users could use the plan but would have to buy the workbook to go more in-depth.

Michael agreed this was another way to go about it. By creating a separate recovery plan, the app could provide a full recovery plan outside of the LifeRing Workbook. The app could either create a separate recovery plan and not rely on or promote the workbook, or the workbook could be used and promoted. Michael asked that for whichever is chosen, board feedback be given.

Sue thanked Michael and called on Lisa.

Lisa clarified the financials for the workbook sales, for which Steve thanked her.

Sue asked if there were any other questions. She shared that Michael and Jef have reached out to the LifeRing community for beta testers and encouraged board members to reach out to them, if interested in volunteering for beta testing.

Sue asked Michael who the contact was for the beta testing volunteers.

Michael responded that he was the point of contact for Android and Jef is the point of contact for iOS.

Lorraine asked if users could simply join through the app store.

Michael responded that an open testing version is currently available in the app store. Anyone can download the app currently.

Lorraine thanked Michael for his hard work on the app.

Anna reiterated that Michael asked for a decision on the relationship with the workbook and the app.

Sue suggested that this be taken to the executive session.

The chair recognized Stephen and Mark Fussell as having joined the meeting.

### **DEI BOD Awareness: DEI Integration Framework and Stages**

Lisa shared a link to a graphic representation of DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) awareness in organizations. She included the assessment of LifeRing in line with the growth stages.

Sue thanked Lisa and asked if there were any questions.



Lorraine commented that it is imperative that DEI starts with the board. She noted that concerns were being raised from time to time by meeting participants regarding the use of personal pronouns and offensive language being used. She emphasized the importance of creating a safe and welcoming environment within the LifeRing community.

Michael asked if DEI awareness could be incorporated into the opening and closing statements.

Lisa responded that meetings are free to use opening and closing statements that work for them, only if they are not contrary to LifeRing principles. She suggested that opening statements be modified to include respectful and understanding as precepts of the meeting. She was hopeful that more could be done in the coming year to improve on these areas.

Michael understood the current system at the meeting level. He suggested that this be tackled at the organizational level, by clearly communicating the DEI stance of LifeRing as an organization. This could be done through communications and policy statements.

Sue thanked Michael and asked that the topic be revisited in the new year.

### **High Level Review of Finances**

Steve shared that we have received a \$20,000.00 donation for the Comeau Family Foundation. There was also an additional donation of \$5,000.00, which he believed was donated anonymously.

Sue clarified that the donation was received from an e-group participant. There was a separate donation of \$3,800.00, which was anonymous.

Steve informed that he hadn't seen the latter donation at this time. He recognized that donation campaigns and general donor engagements were reflecting positively in LifeRing finances.

Sue thanked Steve for the encouraging news and called on Anna.

Anna shared that it would be helpful to see how much money is coming per month, rather than a cumulative view. This would help differentiate recurring donations from one-time donations and help to gauge growth of the donor base.

Lorraine shared that Sue could speak to this, as it is discussed in the Fundraising Marketing and Communications Committee Meetings.

Sue responded that these figures are linked in the agenda.

Steve stated in summary that the donor base is increasing, to which Sue concurred.

Sue informed that the recurring donors are termed "sustaining donors". We currently have 56, having started the year with 43.



Anna suggested that this could be useful to include figures in the board meeting. Sue replied that this information is linked in each agenda.

Steve shared that the software infrastructure required to integrate those figures into finances is currently outside of our reach. Most of the work, outside of QuickBooks, is done manually in terms of data presentation. Anna thanked Steve for clarifying.

Steve asked if there were any further questions. Sue offered thanks to him for being the bearer of good news.

Steve shared that he is still pursuing the authorized signer issue. Though the prognosis was not good, he would continue to seek resolution to the issue.

## **Committees and Workgroups Status Updates**

### **Committees and Workgroups Status Reports**

Sue opened this item asking if everyone was able to review the report. For new board members, she explained that the report outlines the work of each committee and workgroup to ensure open communication between committees and workgroups.

The board members confirmed that they reviewed the report.

### **Strategic Plan Status**

Lisa shared that a designer has been working on the public release portion of the plan so that it can be released in January. Though it has been a busy month, she shared that work was coming along well. There was nothing new to report at this time.

Sue thanked Lisa for her efforts.

### **All Hands on Deck | This is Life with Lisa Ling**

Sue opened this item and called on Lorraine to share.

Lorraine shared that there will be a watch party where the LifeRing meeting portion of the episode was filmed. She will be inviting Treatment Heads from the Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council to attend.

Globally, we are preparing for the influx of LifeRing engagement and inquiries. She reached out to the producer to ascertain what kind of engagement LifeRing should expect. The producer advised that another non-profit was inundated after a similar episode aired in the past.

Though she can't put a number on the engagement figures, we do need to be prepared for an increase in engagement. An appeal was sent to convenors to join the "Fire Crew" as reserve convenors to help manage the participant loads, starting around the 19<sup>th</sup> of December.





Sue echoed the importance of having all hands on deck and recognized Mark Fussell as having rejoined the meeting. She thanked Mary Beth for agreeing to do intros as well. Rafal assisted with reviewing the “Game Plan” for operations during the airdate and potential user spike following the episode. She went on to thank all committee members, chairs, and members of the community for expressing interest in assisting during the time. She then opened the floor to questions.

Lorraine offered thanks in advance for those assisting.

### **DonorBox Donations | \$8,831.90 over 2021 annual**

Sue opened this item sharing that we are currently over the annual total for 2021 by \$8,831.90. She noted that as of the first week of December, we had five one-time donations totaling \$4,284.00. We are currently at \$35,700.00, with last year's total being US \$26,800.00. She expressed gratitude, noting that we are ahead with efforts visibly paying off. She opened the floor for questions.

Rafal queried the status of the previously tabled Donor Appreciation Event.

Sue responded that due to the lack of traction during the last iteration, we will be aiming to do this event in January 2023 to thank all donors for the year 2022. She thanked Rafal for remembering this, and opened the floor to questions again.

Lorraine called on interested board members to reach out with content to be shared on our schedule of twice weekly MailChimp Requests.

### **LifeRing 2022 Gatherings**

Sue opened this item sharing that gatherings will be held on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve and New Years Day. Mark Fussell has graciously hosted in the past and we are hoping he will do so again this year.

### **Adjournment of Board of Directors Meeting**

Sue called for a motion to conclude the business of the board. Michael moved a motion, which was seconded by Rafal. The vote to conclude was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 10:23am PST.

### **Public Forum**

The LifeRing visitors presented various topics.

### **Executive Session**

The board conducted a closed Executive Session. Items discussed:

- BOD Matching Fund
- LifeRing Press Royalties and Ownership



- Substantial Donation
- LifeRing App: Personal Recovery Plan

*Minutes submitted by Joshua McLaughlin*

*LifeRing Secretary*

*5<sup>th</sup> January 2023*