

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting (Brief Version): February 10, 2013

It was determined that a quorum of Board members was present and the meeting was called to order at 12 Noon PST.

New Business

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda this month consisted of the Minutes, the Financial Report, and three Committee reports:

Minutes

The Secretary's report was unanimously accepted.

Financial Report

There was discussion regarding the end-of-the-year report. Comments were made on the final profit and its dependence on inventory. Attention was called to the gross profit, and because of that amount, that we would need to file a "990 EZ Form" with the IRS. This report has actually been filed every year for several years; if we want to receive grants, funders will want information regarding our finances. In sum, it was a good year. With additional discussions concluded, the report was unanimously accepted.

Committee Reports

According to the "Tri-Annual Committee Reporting Schedule", three Committee reports were due this month: Fundraising, Website IT, and Professional Outreach.

Fundraising Committee

Some items related to this were submitted in preface to this meeting. Some funding meetings in Washington D.C. needed to be rescheduled because of hurricane Sandy. These meetings will now take place in early May.

The advantage of using the phrase "Self-Directed" instead of "Self-Help" was discussed in terms of grant proposal writing, and it was agreed that the former could be used in such circumstances. Work is also proceeding to establish a timeline for face-to-face meeting growth, as well as geographic locations and how they have grown. Such information will allow us to discuss growth issues with funders to improve our chances of funding.

In conclusion, the comment was made that operational and strategic planning information are critical in any funding effort.

Website and IT Committee

We will be able to start installing the new theme that we bought on the website. After that the building of a static front page will begin.

Professional Outreach Committee

No additional progress was reported this month.

Old Business

Video Proposal

There is a plan to put together a set of videos based on the “How Was Your Week” booklet for convenors, to make it accessible to people for free, and to also offer “convenor training”. There will be a series of videos broken down into three groups: Introduction, Convening Basics, and Advanced Details. The production company that we are working with has agreed to carry out this effort for cost. In order to cover those costs, the plan is to reach out for grant money for which there is quite a lot for these sorts of efforts. The estimate of about \$12K was made which will cover equipment, crew, talent, locations, and such. For grant money the first approach would be to the government and then to private industry. After the first script drafts are written they will be submitted to the Board for review.

A YouTube site for LiferRing videos has been set up. Of particular interest is a Convenor Training Video that is already there and accessible to all. The solicitation for additional videos was made.

Relatedly, the audio version of the “Empower Your Sober Self” book, written by Martin Nicolaus, will be available soon from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

“Preferred Provider” Discussion

There was a discussion regarding the criterion for a “preferred provider” on the website. It was commented that just because a provider liked LifeRing does not imply that they were a good treatment center. Also commented was that we might be better served to provide people with a list of criteria that they would then use themselves to find a provider. A list of questions could be given to aid such decisions. A webpage listing preferred providers is desirable since it’s one of the ways that we show our appreciation to those providers who donate free space to us for meetings. A new page needs to be put together to convey this information, and this will be done.

“The National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency” Discussion

There is a “National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency” that operates on behalf of the AA organization. They do lobbying and litigation for them. We could use such an organization for LifeRing. We need support in addressing legal issues as well as institutional resistance to us. Support for such an organization from other secular alternatives, such as SMART Recovery, would add strength.

A meeting was held last week with a member of the Sonoma Sobriety Council where it was requested that they remove all specific language regarding referrals to 12-Step programs in their policy documents. It was also requested that such specifics regarding referrals be done separately. Resistance to this continues. An organization such as this Council that addressed issues such as these would be very beneficial. It was agreed to that we would contact this Council this week. Also it would help if we knew of someone who was being directly affected by this policy to make our argument stronger. An organization such as this would add greatly to our visibility, particularly if such an organization also represented other groups. We will continue to pursue.

Annual Meeting

The Bylaws Committee is prepared to give their final proposal to the Board. There are bylaw changes in their proposal that will affect absentee voting. Dissemination of such information needs to be done 90 days before the Congress. In that regard, the Board unanimously approved the creation of a registrar position for this. The Registrar will be responsible for conveying information to convenors that would include instructions for such items as ballot preparation and delegate registration. This is a requirement of the new bylaws proposal. There is ongoing work to contact as many convenors as possible using an existing database.

It was commented that the Executive Board will be determining which of the present board members will not be running again. For those who may not be running, open board member positions will arise and an effort to recruit new board members is needed.

Planning for the Annual Meeting in Denver is proceeding well. The counseling group in Denver that is co-sponsoring one of our speakers with us has their registration page up online already and there are presently 11 persons registered. So it is incumbent upon us to get our registration site up soon. We have such a registration page from last year that just needs to be updated.

The dates of the Annual Meeting were confirmed to be May 31, June 1, and June 2 in Denver. We have a partial schedule of activities to post. We have two one-and-one-half hour speakers confirmed for Saturday. Friday could be used for committee reports and/or breakout sessions. Discussions regarding committees should be done at some point during the meeting: What were we able to accomplish on these committees over the past year? What can we do in the coming year to make more progress?

Adjournment

A motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting concluded at 1:30 PM PST.

The Board Secretary

Submitted on February 18, 2013

