

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting (Brief Version): August 11, 2013

A quorum of Board members was present and the meeting was called to order at 12 Noon PDT.

Old Business

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda this month consisted of the Minutes and the Financial Report.

Minutes

The Minutes were accepted without revision.

Finances

We have a \$5K shortfall in funds now. There is a need to focus on increasing revenues and/or reducing expenditures. The latter are about the same as last year, but revenues are down. Major expenses are coming up for printing more copies of both the *EYSS* book and The *RBC Workbook*. Targeted email marketing in specific parts of the country was suggested. For example, we might use the SAMHSA list of providers and target 20 to 25 college towns where we might expect to find populations that are more secular. It was also suggested that recovery centers on a state-by-state basis be contacted, stressing peer-to-peer recovery venues.

“Kickstarter” as a vehicle for fundraising was discussed but not pursued. It was mentioned that The Smithsonian Institution has an “adopt a library” magazine subscription program in which one can buy a subscription to their magazine for one’s local school or library, and that this might be a possible way to populate additional locations with no cost to LifeRing.

Regular Committee Reports

These reports have been suspended for the summer, but will resume next month. Coming up then are: Volunteer Recruitment, Accountability and Transparency, and Convenor Training.

Chat Room Discussion and Concerns

The server on which our chat room is hosted was hacked but appears to be working correctly now. Moving the chat room to another provider was discussed. Right now we are paying 123Flashchat more money than in previous years; with audio/video capability, the cost is now much greater. Another provider, Flashcom, could provide the same service for less money. They would provide us with one month of free hosting during which we could conduct an evaluation. This is a labor-intensive effort, and it was suggested that a group of chat room convenors might be gathered to do this. Persons agreed to conduct this effort.

Volunteering

We have people to help if we have jobs for them, but these jobs need to be well defined. Those in early recovery, being enthusiastic, would be good candidates.

Broader LifeRing “Terms of Use” Definition

It was agreed that we need to establish a more comprehensive “Terms of Use” policy, covering all venues. A specifically targeted policy of this sort would provide a basis of enforcement. A proposal in this regard will be drafted.

New Business

EYSS Book

The EYSS book is about ten years old, and the intent of the publisher needs to be understood. The possibility of a revised addition was discussed, and will be explored.

Report from the Committee on Special Meetings

(This is a new short-term committee established to address the issue of Special Meetings. For a discussion and definition of Special Meetings, please see earlier Board Minutes).

The Committee submitted a proposed New Mission Statement to the Board:

Proposed New Mission Statement:

“LifeRing is an abstinence-based, worldwide network of people living in recovery from addiction to alcohol or to other, non-medically indicated drugs. In LifeRing, we offer each other peer-to-peer support in ways that encourage personal growth and continued learning through personal empowerment. Our approach is based on developing, refining, and sharing our own strategies for continued abstinence and crafting a rewarding life in recovery. In short, we are sober, secular, and self-empowered.”

There was some confusion among those Board members not on the Special Meetings Committee regarding what the present Mission Statement was, what version is on the Website, and what constituted the new one.

For clarity, the Present Mission Statement (that is, the one that is proposed to be replaced) is:

“LifeRing offers sober, secular self-help to abstain from alcohol and non- medically-indicated drugs by relying on our own power and the support of others. We welcome people from all faiths, or none, but our spiritual beliefs, if any, are personal.”

“LifeRing brings people together via face-to-face and online support groups, and provides sobriety tools through original books, publications and interactive online resources.”

The Special Meetings Committee Chair further addressed this confusion in a subsequent document addressed to the Board.

It was commented that the proposed New Mission Statement might be adopted by the Board, or it might be left as a working document for now. This matter will be discussed next month. Some concern about the use of the phrase “self-directed” in place of “self-help” was discussed, with the comment being made that “self-help” has a special meaning. It was suggested that “self-help” does not imply any sort of a community but “self-directed” does.

Policy Statement Regarding Special Meetings

It was noted that a Policy Statement definition for Special Meetings was the ***specific objective*** of this Committee. Their New Mission Statement, while strongly recommended, was not considered to be part of the final work product, but rather was to be used only as a logical component of the workflow.

The present working version of the Special Meetings Policy Statement is:

“LifeRing exists to serve members who are dealing with addiction to alcohol or other drugs. Topical LifeRing meetings may focus on any issue related to recovery provided the meetings are:

- ***Convened by peers in recovery according to our guiding principles of sobriety, secularity, and self-direction.***
- ***Chartered and registered through the LifeRing Service Center.***
- ***Clearly identified as topic-specific meetings in all LifeRing meeting listings and promotional materials.”***

Clarification of the intent of this wording was requested and an example was given: A smoking cessation meeting would fully qualify as a LifeRing Meeting as long as those that participated in it were also in recovery from alcohol or drug addiction, even though the focus of the meeting would be on smoking cessation.

Survey Update

There have been 51 responses to a preliminary mailing regarding the upcoming survey. An e-mail containing the survey will be sent out on Wednesday (August 14) using a large e-mail database. The effort is completely online. The cut-off date for responses is September 15. The results will be reported at the October Board meeting.

Report on LifeRing Meeting Activity in Napa and Sonoma

Meetings have been started, or planned, in Calistoga, St. Helena, the towns of Napa and Sonoma, and Forestville. An excellent focus for LifeRing would be in re-hab and de-tox facilities since many people are exposed to LifeRing there, and then subsequently attend our meetings.

Miscellaneous

- The Annual Southwestern School for Behavioral Health Studies Conference (“SWS 2013”) in Tucson from August 18 through August 22 will be attended again this year.
- The possibility of holding our Annual Meeting and Congress next year in Sacramento was discussed.
- LifeRing Canada indicated that they would welcome more interaction with us, and this is considered a very positive development.
- We were reminded that September is Addiction Recovery Month.

There was no other business at this time, and a motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 1:30 PDT.

Submitted by the Board Secretary

August 24, 2013