

Minutes of the LifeRing Board of Directors Meeting: August 10, 2014

A quorum of board members was present and the meeting was called to order by Board Chair Njon Weinroth at 12 Noon PDT. Also present were Dan Carrigan, Mahala Kephart, Byron Kerr, Anna Libet, Emily Marcus, Joe Mott, John Owens, Illona Ruhoff, Robert Stump, Craig Whalley, Carola Ziermann, and Tim Reith.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consisted of the July 2014 Minutes and the Treasurer's Report.

It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously to accept both as submitted.

Committee Structure Proposal

The proposal was drafted by Mahala, Emily, Tim, and Njon. Several iterations of committee structures over the last few years were reviewed and consolidated into five new ones, while ensuring that all functions described previously were covered. The present proposal consists of five committees. An abbreviated version of each committee description is shown below:

Advisory Council

This committee acts in a strictly advisory capacity; its members do not vote. Membership is composed of LifeRing's legacy leaders who share their perspectives and insight in board discussions. Invitations are extended by the board to other key members on an opt-in basis.

Comments regarding the Advisory Council

This committee replaces the previous Executive Committee with some changes as noted.

Those Items requiring immediate attention (emergencies) formerly addressed by the Executive Committee, will be addressed by the Board Chair, the ED, and the Deputy ED. This responsibility needs to be explicitly defined.

We need to review the by-laws and make sure we are covered in terms of officers acting on behalf of the entire board as necessary, and references to the Executive Committee edited appropriately to reflect this structural change in print and electronic media. (Shown as a footnote relating to this committee.)

There was a clarification regarding why the Advisory Council is defined as a stand-alone committee.

The Advisory Council name was discussed with the possibility of a change.

This committee should not be confused with the Professional Advisory Board which has not been formally established. If created, it would be part of the Administrative Committee, described next.

Administrative

This committee is responsible for creating, vetting, and implementing LifeRing's operational, governance, strategic planning, and policy initiatives. A core group of board members engages others on an as-needed basis. It works closely with all other committees. Membership includes the Board Chair, the Secretary, and the ED or Deputy ED.

Comments Regarding the Administrative Committee

The format is flexible. The core group identifies work items that are delegated to sub-committees, the chairs of which then staff as appropriate with persons of specific expertise.

LifeRing Press & External Relations

This committee is external-facing and focuses on clear and consistent messaging and branding. Because of the nature of its work, this committee works closely with the Member Support and Administrative Committees.

Comments Regarding the LifeRing & External Relations Committee

This committee should include at least one current board member and a broad cross-section of others with outreach-related expertise and interest. This pool is talented, large, and presently not well leveraged.

It is responsible for external press or other related entity requests.

It is responsible for crisis communications such as serious meeting disruptions. In such situations it works especially close with the Administrative Committee.

Member Support

This committee is member-facing, is chaired by the ED who has autonomy, but who also works closely with the board for support. It includes at least one current board member. It specifically supports online venues, face-to-face meetings, convenor training, election logistics, and assists all other committees in recruitment and retention of volunteer workers and potential leaders from our membership.

Comments Regarding the Member Support Committee

This committee builds structure around the ED and Board Chair who now enjoy very little support. It invokes membership support to supplement those duties that the ED and Board

Chair now perform alone. It takes advantage of many convenors and volunteers, who will be essential to mitigate the increasing workload that LifeRing is now experiencing.

Revenue Committee

This committee is preferably chaired by the Treasurer with the participation of the ED or the Deputy ED, and includes at least one current board member. It is responsible for the development and coordination of revenue-generating initiatives. It works closely with the Membership, Administrative, and LifeRing Press & External Relations Committees to coordinate messaging, communications, and strategic planning. It engages in matters related to budget, audits, and financial controls.

Comments Regarding the Revenue Committee

A non-board member may chair this committee. If so, one current board member must be included.

Summary of Committee Structure Proposal Discussion

A motion was proposed to accept the basic committee structure draft as outlined, contingent upon some minor corrections. With such changes, it was agreed that the formal vote would be held next month. It was seconded, and passed unanimously.

Njon will send the new committee structure to the BOD list after board approval of the final document.

Appointment of Committee Chairs

The appointments will be made next month. It was agreed that Njon would propose a list of appointees followed by approval votes. All persons will be voted upon and appointed together.

Communication Protocols

These will be posted on the BOD list for review before next month's meeting. Participation is welcomed. The Administrative Committee was charged with coordination.

Suicide Prevention Guidelines

Mahala will work with Illona to modify the SMART Recovery Guidelines for use by LifeRing. The new document will be reviewed for approval next month.

Anti-Predator Policy

The draft was written by Mahala and approved last month. Dissemination and incorporation into the by-laws was discussed. It was agreed that announcement of it will be made in the next newsletter. After its approval last month, Robert added it to the website as a policy statement.

Inmate Correspondence Guidelines

The Santa Clara Prison has requested an in-house LifeRing meeting but also wants a correspondence effort begun. Byron composed some guidelines for the latter with input from Tim. Some comments were taken directly from our TOU policy. The facility has requested that we provide a protocol in this regard. This is an urgent need, and they have agreed to accept a draft of it from us interimly. Njon proposed that we approve the draft now for presentation, contingent upon acceptance from the facility. Byron will take this forward to the Member Support Committee for further clarification. He will request additional input from the facility, with the expectation of a subsequent LifeRing policy statement.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to submit this draft to the facility as written, with one small change regarding a sobriety statement.

Non-Discrimination Policy for Foundation Grants

Mahala commented that we have an opportunity to apply for a specific grantor often require organizations to have specific policies in place. The actual grant application is not due until October 1. She will send a policy statement to the Board for approval next month to meet that deadline. She asked that comments be sent to her beforehand for her incorporation. Other policies may be needed as we apply for other grants.

Other Matters

ONDCP Webinar

LifeRing has an opportunity to participate in a webinar that the Office of National Drug Control Policy is conducting for members of their Recovery Oriented Systems of Care Learning Community, which at this time involves 14 states. They are doing a broader outreach for this webinar. LifeRing has been invited to participate with Women for Sobriety and SMART Recovery to present information on secular mutual aid support groups. This is an attractive opportunity to work with these organizations. The webinar will be August 19. Mahala will send specific information regarding the openness of it.

Given that the ONDCP now has a recovery branch, it is possible that a representative of this organization might be solicited for a presentation at our next Annual Meeting.

Newsletter

Carola commented that the next newsletter will be distributed during the first week of September. Input must be received by August 29. Dan and Emily, as new members, were invited to introduce themselves.

Adjournment

Since there was no other business, Njon moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm PDT.

Submitted by Tim Reith

Board Secretary

August 21, 2014