

Minutes of the LifeRing Board of Directors Meeting: December 14, 2014

It was determined that a quorum of board members was present, and the meeting was called to order by Board Chair Njon Weinroth at 12 Noon PST. Also present were Rick Boman, Dan Carrigan, Mahala Kephart, Byron Kerr, Jeff Koch, Emily Marcus, Joe Mott, John Owens, Robert Stump, Craig Whalley, Carola Ziermann, and Tim Reith.

There were no non-Board members present who requested anonymity in the Minutes.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consisted of the November 2014 Minutes and the Treasurer's Report. It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously to accept both as submitted.

Public Forum Comments

Jeff requested a discussion regarding the refusal of the Service Center to grant a new meeting charter requested by another member. In particular he believed that this refusal constituted a Bylaws violation, as per Section 6.4.2. Njon commented that any issues of this sort should be submitted in writing to the Service Center, which in turn will determine if the item needs Board attention. If so, the Administration Committee will work on it and determine the need for other committee involvement.

Committee Reports

Revenue

Carola said that a donation request was sent between Thanksgiving and Christmas as planned. A follow-up letter will be sent shortly. There were two book orders from Canada, totaling a large amount. There was also a very generous donation from a single member.

Member Support

Robert commented that a meeting was held on December 7. The items discussed included job descriptions at the Service Center and areas (states) for which Regional Representatives would be responsible. Craig is soliciting representatives for these regions and will have names for the Board to consider next month.

Dan commented that there will be a Convenor training (support) session for the Bay Area on January 31.

He went on to describe his workgroup, comprised of several members. A concise outline for new Convenors on how to run a meeting was composed, in part based on materials already on-hand. A draft was presented to the Board.

Craig commented that the next task for the Member Support Committee is to set up a structure for new volunteers with a list of job descriptions and the skills needed for them. This is posted on this committee's website.

Mahala mentioned a new Convenor Survey that will be sent early next year.

Governance Advisory Panel

Continued interaction with SMART Recovery and Women for Sobriety was suggested.

A congressional bill introduced by Senators Portman and Whitehouse regarding evidence-based addiction was discussed with the suggestion that a joint letter with SMART and WFS be written to the bill's sponsors expressing our support. The bill:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s2839>

It was reiterated that our interactions with Canada should continue, including an explicit invitation to attend the upcoming 2015 Annual Meeting.

It was suggested that our long- and short-term goals be drafted; they should be ready for discussion and approval at the July 2015 Board Meeting at which time the new Board will meet for the first time.

Tim volunteered to consolidate all our policies, guidelines, and statements and to suggest others as needed.

Njon commented that he would like this committee, in addition to interactions with SMART and WFS, to consider interactions with WAFT ("We Agnostics and Free Thinkers"), a splinter group of AA that is seeking ties with other secular recovery groups. He will provide contact information for their Executive Director. WAFT is interested in making ties with other secular groups. They are affiliated with AA Agnostica, and a determination needs to be made regarding their relationship for subsequent Board review. There appears to be a good match with what we are doing. Byron commented that they invited LifeRing to give a presentation at their annual convention, and this was done. The presentation was well received, and copy of it is available for purchase.

LifeRing Press and External Outreach

Mahala commented that her focus over the past month has been on the SLC Meeting, and that two new members have been recruited for this effort.

She is also working on website and brochure updates. In particular she is working with Joe on a rewrite of the "Choice" brochure, to update it and to add more current legal information.

She has sent out a call for submissions to the *Stories of Secular Recovery* book that Kathleen is editing.

Marty is writing a book entitled *The New Recovery Notebook*. Whether it would be appropriate for LifeRing Press to publish it needs discussion. Robert commented that we might sell it but not publish it. Njon suggested that Mahala put together a presentation on this for review. She will do this for next month.

Administration

There was no specific activity. Njon commented that overlap among various committees should be brought to his attention.

Agenda Items

Communications

Robert created a "lifering.org" email address for each Board member, and test emails were sent and successfully received. Njon asked him to set up more internal groups. He will send Robert the appropriate names. Still to be determined is the way in which persons outside of the LifeRing groups will interact with them. Document sharing also needs to be addressed.

The 2015 Annual LifeRing Meeting and Congress in Salt Lake City

Mahala said they are firming-up the library venue on the University of Utah campus. Her contact there is moving from the area, and a new contact needs to be established. She should have this matter resolved by the January meeting.

With Byron, she is working to finalize the speakers. One of the speakers they are suggesting is Peter Gaumond, the head of the Recovery Branch of the White House Office of National Drug Policy. Funding to cover his transportation and lodging is needed. There would be an absolute maximum of \$2500 for this expense. He cannot accept a speaker fee. Although local SLC funding is expected to cover all costs, the Board was asked to endorse LifeRing funding as a backup if needed. Importantly, Mr. Gaumond's participation will provide enhanced national exposure for LifeRing. She is also seeking additional speakers from the University Brain and Genetics Institutes for evidenced-based presentations, as well as more speaker diversity.

Joe moved that we accept Mahala's proposal to formally invite Peter Goumond and to pay for his travel and lodging expenses up to a maximum of \$2500. The motion was seconded and carried with one dissent from the Treasurer.

Other Items from the Board

Byron commented that National Geographic is no longer considering the inclusion of LifeRing in their upcoming production in the Bay Area (see last month's Minutes for details).

He also commented that a new Santa Rosa meeting is starting in January at the VA clinic.

Njon has been appointed to the San Francisco Mental Health Board. They are an advisory committee to the Board of Supervisors. They are pleased to have someone representing substance abuse being on their board. Recognition of the relationship between mental health and substance abuse issues is increasing.

Tim mentioned last month that the Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona expressed a desire to start an in-house LifeRing meeting. He visited them on November 12, made a LifeRing presentation, and advised them on how to start their meeting. Their meeting was started and has 15 to 20 participants. Tim asked for advice on how to obtain additional details from them. Njon suggested that this be handled off-line.

There were no other items from the Board.

Other Items from the Public

Rick asked about our brochure "We Come Recommended" and specifically what we already have in place. Joe suggested that a procedure be set up for vetting local providers who endorse LifeRing. Njon commented that a template for this would be a good outreach tool. Craig commented that this effort might be dealt with by the Regional Representatives in conjunction with local groups.

Adjournment

Given that there was no other business, Njon moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm PST.

Submitted by Tim Reith

LifeRing Board Secretary

January 4, 2015