

## **Minutes of the LifeRing Board of Directors Meeting: March 14, 2021**

### **Call to Order**

It was determined that a quorum of board members was present and the meeting was called to order by Board Co-Chair Lorraine Hull at 9:02am PDT. Other board members present were: Dan Carrigan (Board Co-Chair), George Gidora, Steve Gonzales, Jocelyn Harnois, Jamie Itterman, and Mary Beth O'Connor.

Non-board members in attendance included: Robert Stump, Executive Director; Lisa Swing-Corney (Frontier Region Coordinator); Penny P., Mike H., Jud, Sue, and Michele, all LifeRing members. Chris S., a LifeRing member from Los Angeles, was present and invited as a nominee to the Board with the matter scheduled to be discussed under *New Board Members*.

### **Public Comment**

No public comments.

### **Consent agenda**

The February Consent Agenda package, including the Minutes and Profit and Loss Reports were moved (Mary Beth motioned to approve, Jamie seconded) and carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

#### ***New Board Members*** (Lorraine and Dan)

- 1) Nominations:
  - a. Chris was invited to introduce himself. Dan nominated Chris to the BOD and Jocelyn seconded. All voted in favour. Chris will fill the vacancy left by Ewa Conroy.
  - b. Dan nominated Sue for the remaining vacant BOD seat and Steve seconded. All voted in favour. Sue's term will commence tomorrow (March 15, 2021) on her two-year sobriety anniversary.

- 2) Points on procedure: Mary Beth raised the point that for future we need to consider procedure. BOD members should discuss proposed appointments prior to the actual BOD meeting. In this particular situation it is not a concern but we should sort out procedures for future instances.

Discussion had about ensuring we are clear in our process and following our bylaws when filling mid-term vacancies. The Board can appoint people to fill vacancies mid-term but these must go to a vote at the next Congress.

- 3) Vacant Treasurer position: Steve has agreed to take on the Treasurer role. Mary Beth nominated him, Jocelyn seconded, and all voted in favour.

#### ***Review of last Quarterly Convenor Workshop on February 21, 2021*** (Dan and Sue)

Sue reported that 48 people attended and the majority stayed through for the whole session. The presenters were great and the group was engaged and interactive.

It worked really well to have Sue monitor chat with attendees submitting their questions there.

Robert noted this was the first time we had pre-registration so we captured names and emails. This was the most well-attended virtual training to date.

Penny asked if there is a committee to help with outreach to convenors, training of convenors, etc. Sue said there are single-topic sessions in the works on subject areas of interest to convenors and she would be happy for Penny to help with planning if she is interested. Sue and Lisa are going to have a conversation about what aspects of this work belong with MarCom and what belongs with Meetings Committee.

## **New Business**

### ***Additional information from Women for Sobriety*** (Mary Beth)

Mary Beth spoke with Women for Sobriety again and learned more. They have about 30 Zoom and chat meetings per week and online forums. Also have a convenor certification program.

Among topics discussed were LifeRing and WFS undertaking joint marketing efforts for Recovery Month. Working together to put out a joint press package to the media may result in more traction. BOD agreed this would be great and Mary Beth will pursue these conversations with WFS further.

Mary Beth also signed up for a mailing list that sends notifications when reporters are looking for individuals or groups to speak to a specific topic. If recovery topics come up, we will be aware.

### ***Timeline for Annual Meeting and Congress per the Bylaws*** (Robert)

Robert and Sue assessed the timelines document that already exists and we are on track regarding what needs to take place leading up to our annual Congress. Sue noted they will get the draft itinerary to the BOD.

Discussion had about whether any bylaw amendments need to go to Congress. If so, BOD needs to discuss as soon as possible. Mary Beth asked if there is a process to let LifeRing members know about proposed amendments.

### ***Board needs to assign someone as "Registrar of Voters" for Congress 2021*** (everyone)

Jamie will do it. Robert and Sue can help him with how the process works.

### ***Ideas to incorporate advertising at Annual Meeting*** (Mary Beth – email attached)

Ideas for encouraging convenors to help promote LR? (see email in meeting package)

Idea proposed to have session at annual meeting about how convenors and members can help promote LifeRing during Recovery Month.

Lisa mentioned that anything we can do to help make the job of convenors in new areas easier is welcome. Getting the word out in new locations is difficult and we can provide support and resources to those who are not as comfortable with the marketing side of things.

Discussion turned more generally to how to get the word out about LifeRing and updates were provided when questions were asked about the proposed new brochure discussed at last meeting.

***Need for Regional and Area Representatives*** (Lorraine and Lisa)

Lisa gave a brief presentation illustrating the need for regional and/or area reps, especially in frontier regions. How we can best support meetings and keep track of what meetings are running? Lisa and Tim cover most of U.S., need help in California (has 83 meetings, needs to be broken into areas). Lisa also manages connections with some of the international meetings. (ex: Australia has 2 meetings)

Penny, Chris, and Michele all expressed interest in helping with the above initiatives and will join the Meetings Committee.

George noted that we need to look at how to develop an international structure and clarify what it means legally. This was in response to a question from Michele regarding Ireland working to be independent and have its own Charter. Mary Beth pointed out that if the relationship between Ireland and LifeRing in the U.S. is changing, it needs to be discussed by the BOD. Lorraine will reach out to our contacts there.

***Grant Opportunities*** (Lorraine and Dan)

Lorraine and Dan attended some grant training sessions. Broadly speaking, these covered where to find grants and how to put together a good proposal. When considering a particular grant we have to decide as a board if we are ready to apply given the amount of work involved both in the proposal and in data collection/meeting reporting standards once a grant is approved.

***Policy Statement – Abstinence definition for convenors and members. What is the LifeRing policy regarding doctor-prescribed medical marijuana for both personal use and for discussion in a meeting setting?*** (everyone)

Came up at quarterly convenor workshop. LifeRing is an abstinence based organization. However, now some states have legalized marijuana. An example given at training was a doctor who said it was ok for a person to use marijuana for general use, but it was not a formal medical prescription.

This opens up gray areas and we need a more specific policy for our convenors. Mary Beth pointed out it is hard to get too formal about whether something is prescribed or not because use could indeed result from a more informal approval from a doctor. Steve noted that, as with other medications, LifeRing's policy is that this is something between the individual and their doctor.

Robert said what he needs is a clear policy statement he can give to convenors. The policy needs to address the above, as well as how far use can/should be discussed in a meeting setting. George stated that the comfort level of other participants has to be considered since marijuana is the drug of choice for some members and conversation could be triggering.

A pop-up committee including Jamie, Steve, Jud, Penny, and Lisa will discuss this further. Steve will chair the committee.

### **Committee Reports**

#### ***Executive Committee*** (Dan, Lorraine and Robert)

Deferred.

#### ***Finance Committee*** (Mary Beth)

As per new business, Steve has agreed to be Treasurer and was nominated and elected by the BOD.

#### ***FunMarCom*** (Lorraine and Sue)

Lorraine shared updates on what is being called the Outreach Promotion Project and a proposed budget for different initiatives. (print promo pieces, personalized note cards, brochures, translations, etc. Lorraine will send out document to BOD.

#### ***Meetings Committee*** (Robert, Lisa, Jamie, and Jocelyn)

Deferred. New members as per above.

#### ***Outreach*** – annual meeting planning, Draft Agenda attached (Dan and Michele)

Lorraine shared that this committee is working on the agenda for the upcoming annual meeting. The current draft will be sent out so BOD members can have a look. The group meets again this coming Friday, anyone is welcome to join. Dan said planning is on-target and any specific questions related to the annual congress can be sent to the Board.

### **Pop-Up Committees**

As per above, a pop-up committee to discuss a clearer policy re defining abstinence in the context of medical marijuana has been established.

### **Adjournment to Executive Session**

Motion was made to adjourn (Dan), seconded (Mary Beth) and carried unanimously.

Submitted by Jocelyn Harnois  
LifeRing Board Secretary  
April 5, 2021