

**Board of Trustees Meeting - August 18, 2024**  
**First Church of Religious Science DBA Oakland Center for Spiritual Living**

**Minutes taken by Nancy Hester**

**In attendance: Reverend Sunshine Michelle Coleman, Beth Van Arkel, Elke Moritz, Nancy Hester, Deborah Jackson, Reverend Aikya Param. Sam Ladion by phone.**

**Evocation:**

**Check In**

Reverend Aikya stated due to health reasons she can no longer act as Secretary to the board. Discussion was held regarding using a recording system to take the minutes. Nancy started recording the minutes on her phone for translation into a document. Sam said he would be able to be secretary in November.

Reverend Sunshine Michelle stated under the state of California, there are three officers that are required for the board, the president, the treasurer and the secretary. The secretary is a recording role. So if we have official business, it usually involves the secretary. Even if we get someone outside of the board, we need a secretary at some point. We will revisit this at the next meeting.

**Elke Moritz - Treasurer's Report**

Our donations are up 19% from last year, which is good.

The growth profits in July were \$26,478.59. Expenses for July were \$28,891.44. So we had a net loss again, but it's about \$1,000 less.

We were in the hole by approximately \$3,000 in June 2024. This July, it has dropped to \$2,500. So we're still going down, moving towards our goal. Part of the reason that the income is more is because the interest on the CD has almost tripled since we moved it from Summit to self-help.

The money market account, where the remaining \$63,000 is deposited, earns over 3%. Kitchen income was extra because Ruth who did the kitchen food did not put in the request for reimbursement, so it was all donations. We paid \$100 for AV maintenance as we had problems with our transmission so we reset the live stream in the sanctuary.

We transferred \$15,000 into the operating account from the reserves in the Self-Help account. We were at \$80K and now the balance is around \$69K.

## **Agenda items - Phones and copier**

### **Phones**

Discussion was held on monthly expenses. We had two things left that we were considering to reduce expenses and those were on the copier and the phones. To recap, we have eight landlines, but we are proposing to reduce them to four. Beth spoke to the phone company. They're willing to reduce the cost of the phone services per month, possibly up to \$12.95 for the main lines and \$6.95 for the less-used lines. We were proposing to remove the four lines that we don't need.

Rev stated we have eight hard phones; one in the kitchen, Steve's office, the main office, Tao, Susan and Rev's offices, prayer line, Peggy. All agreed that the four lines needed are for Rev. Sunshine, Steve, Tao, and Susan.

**Motion offered:** Reverend Sunshine

**Seconded** by Nancy

All were in favor. Unanimous approval.

### **Copier and Computers**

Beth talked to the copier rep and told them that we aren't interested in extending the contract for a longer period of time, we don't want that obligation, and we have concerns about what we're getting for the money we pay.

Rev. Sunshine Michelle spoke with Ron Marshall about the impact that cutting our computer maintenance schedule would have from his perspective. He confirmed her thinking about the value of our existing maintenance schedule and that we're using one of the best and cost effective tech companies in the Bay Area, My Emergency Guy. Currently our service is set up for up to four times a year. They charge us \$95.00/month, plus \$300 per quarter to come onsite to do repairs, maintenance or give us technology advice and guidance. Ron mentioned that we could be fine with a longer maintenance schedule - perhaps every four to six months instead of quarterly, but it depends on what they do when they come for routine maintenance. Ron suspected regular maintenance includes ensuring regular updates are happening properly, checking viruses and anti-virus software, dusting and cleaning out the inside of the computer, ensuring secure connections, monitors, and operating systems, as well as other routine maintenance and preventative activities. Ron felt since we have older computers, we need to keep them in good shape for now and routine maintenance is good to do.

Ron felt that we have a good schedule, especially for older computers. In the last meeting we discussed upgrading our computers and Ron said, "there's no need to upgrade them unless there's a real need to."

He also stated, if we ever need to upgrade our computers or replace them, he has access to Tech Soup, whom we can get refurbished computers from at a great price. However, he said let's leave things as they are for now until there's a critical need to change.

## **Fundraising Events**

### **Online Silent Auction - 32 Auctions**

Nancy Hester provided an update. The fundraiser for 32 Auctions is officially launched...Yay! Nancy sent an email to all the donors from our last auction asking them if they want to donate again. A good number of people are willing to do the same auction, such as the Brazilian dinner, Thomas Ng services, just to name a few. Additionally Maureen and Gabriella are on board again to help run this auction.

Rev. Sunshine Michelle didn't want to announce the auction to the community until we've announced the chair dedication, because she doesn't want to bombard the congregation with too many requests at the same time. She stated she would announce the chair fundraiser at service on September 1st.

### **Chair Dedication**

Rev. Sunshine Michelle stated there was a setback for the chair campaign for several reasons: Paul is on a leave of absence and is no longer supporting the project; the engraving company had a problem with their engraving machine, which delayed production of the samples; then the company provided non-plated samples, which was not the original request so the samples had to be redone. . Reverend Sunshine stated there are four tiers: bronze (\$50, 2 lines), gold (\$100, 3 lines), silver (\$200, 4 lines), and platinum (\$500, 5 lines). The company provided four sample plates so people could see what they look like (Rev. Sunshine donated the cost of the sample plates that include one for Ernest Holmes, one for Lillian Hopper, one for Dr. Dan, and one for herself). The plates will have 2 - 4 holes in them that can easily and quickly be drilled in the wood in the backs of the chairs. Paul can simply screw them in place. . Steve is finalizing a form on Breeze for people to use to order from our website, which will allow them to complete the form and inscription, click, and pay.

### **Sound Healing event**

We're looking at having several artists for the sound healing event. Harpist Destiny Muhammad has tentatively said yes. The Evening of Blessings event will be held on Friday night, November 1. Then the Sound Healing event will be on Saturday, November 2, late afternoon.

### **Other fundraisers**

Nancy started looking into the Halloween party with bingo games. She reached out to Tao asking are there any restrictions? The answer is yes, we are not allowed to do bingo as a gambling activity due to our non-profit status. There is a registration that could happen, but it complicates things significantly. Therefore, we will drop the idea of Bingo as a fundraiser, but keep the Halloween Costume Funday Sunday and perhaps involve Y&FM to help in the planning.

### **Class Discussion**

Classes are at a minimum right now. We are taking it slowly based on reduced participation in classes and workshops in our community. It was decided we will do the Quick Start class in person as a requirement for the next new members, as a refresher for those who haven't taken classes in a while, and as an offering of spiritual principles to newcomers.

Meanwhile, the Education Core has decided to await more information and research actual costs for the hybrid equipment that the Hefferlin grant will help support so that we are making an appropriate investment as we monitor our current financial situation and plan for long term sustainability.

### **Minister's Report**

Reverend Sunshine offered the minister's report verbally as she didn't get to draft and submit a written report, for which she apologized. She said she would write up the verbal report and distribute it in writing at a later date.

Sam reported on the OCSL participation at the Laurel Street Fair.

### **Choir Discussion**

A lot of people are interested in a choir in one way, shape or form. Reverend Sunshine stated she is in touch with Tyrone Cozy to get his thoughts on the feasibility of starting a simple choir. She will report back on the status of this idea after talking with Tyrone.

### **Youth & Family Ministry**

Reverend Sunshine had a conversation with Jacquie who stated we're running out of room in the Education building for youth programming. It may require a bigger conversation at some point, possibly involving the Board. Jacquie stated the youth want their own space. There's nothing for the Board to do right now other than to know that this is a perceived issue that Rev. Sunshine Michelle is exploring and she will keep the Board updated.

### **Policies**

There are policies that the Facilities Use team should discuss with people interested in using our space, such as leaving no food in the refrigerator after events in the Social Hall. The designated/restricted funds policy still needs to be finalized and communicated within our community. There were two policy changes that the Board approved last year that are still not in the Employee Handbook, such as the retirement contribution statement and update to the holiday schedule to include Juneteenth.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm

Next Board meeting is September 15, 2024