

**Board of Trustees Meeting - September 15, 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, Nancy Hester, Deborah Jackson, Reverend Aikya Param, Sam Ladion. Absent: Elke Moritz**

**Evocation: Reverend Aikya**

**Check In**

Beth read the notes for the treasurer's report in Elke's absence. Details were provided by Tao. Total contributions for the month of August were \$19,021.22 which is less than 1% increase from the same month last year - \$18,965.55. Gross profit income for the month of August - \$24,359.65; Total expenses were \$33,016.00. Net loss for the month - \$8,656.35.

Rev. Sunshine Michelle advised and requested of the Board, the Education Core, and the Hefferlin Foundation that the \$3,700 grant monies be allowed to be reallocated to replace the two stolen cameras used for live streaming. The Board previously granted approval for Rev. Sunshine Michelle to replace one live stream camera which has been done and is in use.

Discussions were held on ways to reduce our monthly expenses (Beth provided a handout of items researched/discussed). Deborah stated our cycles have changed, schools are now open May to August as opposed to June to September. This could possibly be why monies/tithes are lower; they are all cyclical. Rev. Sunshine Michelle stated that we are seeing a lot more "red" in the financials this month due to this cyclical change. However, we are booked for rentals of our facility for the remainder of the year, which is income generating. Additionally the burglary was a hard hit and caused us to dip unexpectedly into our funds. Regardless, we continue to find opportunities for abundance.

The \$2500 donation of stocks offered by a congregant is still being processed. Deborah raised the question "where are we getting the biggest "bang" for our buck? Reverend Sunshine Michelle suggested we see what happens by month end in September. Additionally we are approaching pledge season. It's a tricky thing with pledges, as they are predictions of what can be expected in the future. Reverend Sunshine Michelle said she will speak with Tao regarding the status of pledges vs actuals.

**Picnic Update**

OCSL paid our part for the three church picnic which amounted to \$1248.00.

Beth stated our workers comp insurance has increased from \$130 per month to \$203, a \$73.00 increase. We are questioning this increase and Reverend Sunshine Michelle said she will speak with Tao about the increase.

### **Monthly Expenses**

Beth stated that the phone lines have been reduced to 5 lines. We will simply keep the other phones and just unplug/store them. The prayer line has to be included. The bill is now under \$100.00.

It was decided we will keep using My Emergency Guy quarterly for computer services. We are only charged if they come out. We are charged \$150.00 for a visit when they do come out for services as needed instead of \$95 per month whether use their services or not. We aren't locked into a contract. It's important for everyone to maintain their computers, making sure they accept all updates, to help cut down on visits.

### **Chair Donations**

Reverend Sunshine Michelle and Steve are monitoring the chair donations coming in. We can keep a table out front after services from time to time to provide forms for those who choose not to go on line for a chair purchase. Additionally this form needs to be uploaded onto Breeze.

### **Financial Responsibilities and Reserve Policies**

Reverend Sunshine Michelle made a motion to approve the two policies that are pending: Financial responsibilities of the Board and restricted/designated gifts and contributions.

Reverend Aikya seconded the motion. All other members agreed.

### **Discussion using WORD vs. Google Doc**

It was decided that we will leave all documents in Google docs.

### **Status of New Membership Class**

New membership classes (Quick Start), so far we have only 3 people interested. If we don't get more interest we may have to cancel this class.

### **Eliminating Non Profit Partners for 2025**

Beth suggested a proposal to not have NPP for next year to help cut expenses. Deborah stated we shouldn't eliminate NPP. We need to be plugged into the community, to be more aggressive in our giving and receiving. As we give, we receive and we ARE an abundant community. Sam

agreed; Reverend Sunshine Michelle stated perhaps we simply cut it down to 6 from 12 NPP acknowledged in a year.

Deborah feels we are going through a cycle right now. She didn't feel we should cut this in order to save money. Reverend Aikya added not to cut it completely but also go from 12 to 6 per year. Deborah stated "let's see what comes in before we decide to cut back" during the nomination process. Perhaps we simply need to advertise more frequently.

Reverend Sunshine Michelle stated perhaps we can do a "both/and". We can take nominations that we currently have. Sam added he would like to see more local based non profits apply and be supported, as people can relate easier to those in our community. Action: get applications out for the 2025 nomination process and include them in the newsletter.

### **New Secretary Position**

Nancy agreed to be the temporary new secretary, at which time Sam is willing to take notes after November. Deborah suggested that perhaps it can be a shared responsibility, with Sam taking notes and Nancy providing backup, as a co-secretary. Motion was offered by Deborah, seconded by Sam, agreed by the rest of the Board.

### **Vanguard Account/Safe Deposit Box**

The Vanguard brokerage account is still pending, which will support us receiving the donation of stocks that someone in the community wants to donate.

We currently have documents that need to be placed in a safe deposit box. Beth went to Bank of America but they didn't have any available. Summit will provide us with one for \$80.00/year. Additionally they charge \$20.00 for two keys. Beth is pursuing securing a safe deposit box for our use.

### **Approval of last months BOT minutes**

Beth asked for approval of last month's minutes. Reverend Sunshine Michelle stated a new process - Nancy will type the minutes and forward to her prior to sending out to board members for approval.

Motion offered by Sam, approving minutes and moving forward with new procedure. Reverend Aikya seconded the motion and remaining Board approved.

### **New Contract - Comcast**

Beth asked what the cost would be for changing speed from 140 to 500 mbps - our internet keeps going down. Reverend Sunshine Michelle said our equipment is old and needs to be upgraded. She wants to have another conversation with Steve Carter as we are possibly losing people tuning in on line for weekly services. Previously Steve said we have too much activity

for our current bandwidth and need to increase speed. Reverend Sunshine Michelle suggested perhaps we can move to the next tier up as we do use a lot of bandwidth during service.

## **Burglary**

Reverend Sunshine Michelle proposed to the Board that we withdraw the insurance claim with Church Mutual for the burglary, given the high deductible (\$2500) in relation to the value of the property stolen and damages (approximately \$3500). Paul came out of pocket \$400.00 for some of the expenses.. Reverend Sunshine Michelle said, if we get the security grant we recently applied for, it could help pay replacement costs for some things such as the installation of the alarm. Linda said it will cost \$60.00 to replace the cash drawer that was stolen; Reverend Sunshine Michelle feels we should pay it. Beth made a motion that we use Hefferlin Grant for camera purchase and that we don't file a claim with our insurance.

Reverend Aikya seconded the motion, other Board members agreed.

## **Grant Writer**

Nancy found a possible grant writer to help make our facility more secure since the burglary. Nadine Scott is a grant writer who was referred to her by a relative. It was agreed that we will take necessary steps to secure this grant writer.

It was agreed by all Board members that we will move forward with securing grant writer Nadine Scott. This grant will help with security costs of OCSL. As of this writing, Nadine Scott successfully submitted the (grant name) for OCSL before the Sep 23, 2024 midnight deadline! Nadine's cost for the grant writing is \$700.00; upon grant approval she will receive an additional 10% of grant amount.

Closing Prayer - Reverend Sunshine Michelle