

Minutes of Subud California Regional Council Meeting

March 16, 2022

Minutes approved at the May 25th Council meeting

Exec Committee: Luqman Katz, Christian Stepien, Hasan MacNeil, Henrietta Haines; absent: Jane Katz
Councilors: Dennis Oliver, Halimah Collingwood, Sjahari Pullom, Diego Salgado, Ralph Davila, Hannah Kusterer; Absent: Haryanti Jones, Michael Myers, Meldan Heaslip

Helpers: Helena Mertens, Hani'a Abrams, Leanna Harrison; absent: Harlan Gleeson

Congress Committee: Rifka Several (Chair), Elizabeth Trudell (Communications)

Sitting in: Simon Andrews (Chair, San Diego Center), David Carter (Chair, Arcata Center)

Luqman opened the meeting at 8:05 pm and quorum was established. Helena led us with a prayer of gratitude. Halimah introduced David Carter, new Chair at Arcata Center, sitting in to gain understanding of the Council role.

Luqman asked for a vote to approve the minutes of the February meeting. All voted in favor.

1. Helper Report

Hani'a and Helena are planning for an evening of stories and perhaps songs from members via Zoom as a way of connecting. Leanna and Helena have been supporting several individuals with latihan. When it becomes possible, the helpers will begin to visit groups in person.

2. Congress Report

Rifka reviewed the roles at Congress which need to be staffed. We need people who can 1) provide site transportation, 2) run coffee bar as an enterprise, 3) support regional helpers by managing conference calls logistics for remote participation in latihan/testing, 4) help with registration, 5) plan and support a gallery. The registration fee can be waived for those taking such roles.

ACTION: Rifka asked council members to communicate these opportunities to their members and encourage participation on the team.

Elizabeth reviewed the proposed registration pricing for Congress: \$40 for virtual and \$60 for onsite, which is much lower than in prior years and based on breaking even with 60 members onsite (cost of food and lodging at UCSB are charged addition to this fee).

The team proposes establishing a fund for scholarships up to a total of \$2,000 to enable those who need some financial assistance to attend. \$750 was already donated for this purpose by attendees of the 2021 virtual congress, so an additional amount of up to \$1250 would come from the general fund.

Luqman called the vote. The proposal was unanimously approved by the Council.

3. Humanitarian Relief Funds:

Henrietta said that an amount of \$4,500, received by the Region for Venezuela food relief which has been awaiting the ability to be sent safely to Venezuela, has now been offered to Susila Dharma for relief

to Ukraine. This will be sent to Susila Dharma as soon as SD has determined how it can best be deployed for Ukraine.

4. Financial report

Hasan reported that the Chico loan is currently being paid back at required amount and he anticipates that this will continue during the extension period.

The overall balance has improved compared to prior report. The general fund got a boost when Sonoma paid back payments due on their insurance. Marin has adopted a policy to send 10% of their monthly income to the Region as their pledge and has also made a back payment on their insurance.

5. Council Resolution authorizing a \$32,000 loan to Subud Sacramento to replace the duplex roof.

Background: There has been a lack of harmony for the center in the past months. Hasan and Christian attended a kejiwaan zoom meeting with Sacramento and the RH's. The Sacramento center suggested some test questions which were useful and the experience was very positive. There was not sufficient time to complete a process of achieving harmony with each other, but it was a start.

Hasan then chaired a business meeting for the center which focused on whether the center wished to request a \$32,000 loan to repair the roof of the duplex. The members voted unanimously in favor of requesting the loan. While it does not resolve the open question of how to regain harmony, this decision was clear. The Center will make the payments for the first year and subsequently the payments will be made by the duplex.

Hannah seconded the motion to discuss the proposed loan.

Halimah: will the new loans improve the general fund? No. The original duplex loan was from the Region's general fund, but that is an anomaly and all other property loans are made through the property fund. So, the proposed duplex roof loan will come out of the property fund.

Halimah: why will first year paid by the center's general fund vs the duplex? Hasan: both buildings are owned by the center and on a cash flow basis it makes sense for the center to cover the first year. By the 2nd year there should be a surplus in the duplex fund which could then be used to fund future repairs on any of the buildings.

Rohana: reported on a note she had forwarded to the Council member, which came from Miriam Moyer, former Sacramento member and renter of the duplex. Miriam offers a perspective on the importance of providing more than financial support to Centers that are going through difficult times. The situation would benefit from support that is not just monetary but also about the health of the center overall.

Hasan: Sacramento does need support as they do not have many active helpers and there are significant relationship issues. By addressing the material issues of the loan, the Region is not taking a "side" on the situation that exists among members. More focus on helper-led support is needed for Sacramento.

Simon: There are unresolved issues about how the property is being managed. However, whatever adjustments are needed, the roof needs to be fixed.

Ralph: the situation in Sacramento has blossomed in part because the Region has not exercised more direct management of all the regions properties. For example, what follow up is being done on the property assessment reports that were completed in 2018? How are we going to address this larger issue of the managing our houses?

Dennis: In the past, we had a Property Management Committee but this has fallen to the wayside. It is very difficult for volunteers at the Regional level to exercise authority over the local membership at various locations. What can we propose that would give the Region the needed authority?

Ralph: need to strengthen the authority of property oversight, especially for locations where there are large outstanding loans. As members of a Board of Directors, it is our responsibility.

Halimah: This is a critical situation because, in many centers, only a few people are dealing with the property issues. At Arcata, this was recently addressed when the Center liaison with the (non-Subud) Property Manager stepped down. The group had a meeting and one of the Subud members tested and is now the Property Manager.

Simon: there may be a way to gradually implement some policies, e.g., establish terms by which we or someone we hire has an active role in managing the properties.

Luqman: As Chair at Los Angeles Center, he was grateful for the support of the region's PMC to address issues with rental planning, etc. Having an active PMC to provide support to centers on things such as downsizing to a more manageable location, maximizing rental activities, handling maintenance, etc. is desirable.

Hani'a: personality issues happen. If we can make ourselves attentive, we can recognize and interact both with the outer personality and the inner person. Best to catch things when they are small, before it has grown to a point where people leave their group.

Rohana: agreed with Ralph's point; this could be the focus of an entire meeting. Doing the business aspects correctly is crucial. We need to be smarter about how we run our businesses.

Luqman reminded us that two years of Covid has affected all the rental incomes. Follow-up will be key.

Luqman called the vote: The resolution passed with 9 in favor, 1 opposed (Meldan sent in his vote re the resolutions via email prior to the meeting, so his vote was included in the count). Halimah said she could not vote in favor of the loan until, for reasons of oversight, the Property Management and the Treasury were not handled by members of the same household.

Ralph, Sjahari and Simon reinforced the recommendation that increased oversight of the center should be part of the implementation.

Hasan: The Regional Committee has looked at allegations that were made by Sacramento members and line by line at expenses. Center members could work together to change the property management and financial management, but there is distrust and speculation.

Rohana: there needs to be focus on supporting members who feel that their opinion is not being respected by the Region. A safe environment for discussion needs to be provided.

Hani'a reported that the RH's talked to both sides, but it was too late to make a difference at that time. Perhaps it could be addressed again. It is a spiritual growth problem to balance the worldly side and the spiritual side. We all need to test ourselves and see all the problem as coming from someone else.

Leanna noted that she and Helen have been working with the women in Sacramento.

Sjahari: to sum up, there are problems on both the business and spiritual side. We should resolve to continue oversight and reactivate the PMC in order to move this forward.

Simon thanked the dewan for all the effort that has gone in and suggested that there could be something akin to a community "roof raising" event, where we come together to help Sacramento.

6. Council Resolution authorizing limited transfer from Property Fund to the General Fund.

Hasan: Projecting future cash flow is not easy to do in our uncertain environment when centers are not yet earning rental income. We do have funds to pay Henrietta for 2021 and the Congress upfront costs are lower than normal, so immediate need for drawing on this transfer authorization is not yet known.

Rohanna seconded the motion.

Discussion: What is the time frame in which this will occur? As written, there is no time frame or sunset.

It is an authorization for no more than \$50,000 without a time limit

Dennis: we don't know what will be needed and when; should not have a sunset.

Henrietta: Would be used if and as needed up to \$50k.

Ralph: can the council revoke this depending on what happens in the future. Do we need an escape clause?

Christian: Not needed as the council could at any time cancel this with a new resolution.

Ralph: it would seem more comfortable to have that cancelation capability stated in the wording.

Hasan proposed amending the wording to include "the council can vote to rescind this at any time."

Dennis: this is a unique request to transfer funds from the property fund to the operating fund, which has been largely driven by center income loss due to Covid. This emergency back-up may not be fully required but ensures that the Region has room to maneuver.

Revised wording: *"The Council authorizes the Regional Committee to transfer up to \$50k from the property fund to the general fund if needed to enable payment of expense. These transfers are not loans, but are reassignments within the board's authority. A record and running total shall be kept and reported at each council meeting. **The council can rescind this at any time.**"*

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Next Council Meeting

There was a feeling in the group to hold the next meeting in person if possible. After discussion, the date of June 4th seemed viable. Ralph will see if Santa Cruz can host in that time frame. Focus for the meeting is on doing a "reset" for the Council in terms of balancing the spiritual and the material for issues such as property management.

Luqman thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Submitted by Elizabeth Trudell, sitting in for Jane