

Subud CA Council Meeting, February 2, 2022

Minutes as approved at March 16, 2022 Council meeting

Attending:

Committee: Luqman Katz, Hasan MacNeil, Christian Stepien, Henrietta Haines (absent: Jane Katz)

Councilors: Dennis Oliver, Halimah Collingwood, Hannah Kusterer, Meldan Heaslip, Simon Andrews, Henry Couden, Haryanti Jones, Rohana LoSchiavo, Ralph Davila, Michael Myers

Congress Team: Rifka Several (Chair), Elizabeth Trudell, Luke Jones

Regional Helpers: Helena Mertens, Leanna Harrison, Hani'a Abrams (absent, Harlan Gleeson)

Luqman: called meeting to order at 8:03 pm. Helena offered a prayer for our guidance.

Luqman: attended the Subud USA Council meeting where the NH's reported that they tested and received that there should be no National Congress, at least at present.

Our secretary, Jane Katz, was hit by a truck in a crosswalk a few days ago and has a cracked rib and pelvis; awaiting more details and test results. Thankfully, she has not had to be hospitalized as the assessment continues. Everyone is praying for her swift recovery.

Luqman called for approval of the minutes of Oct 27, 2021, previously distributed. Hasan seconded and the Council voted to approve unanimously.

1. 2022 Congress Planning

Rifka: the RH's received the Congress theme: *Deepening Our Surrender Together*. We will be at UC Santa Barbara August 5-8 and UCSB requires that all participants be fully vaccinated. Testing may also be required, but this will be better understood by summer. Everything except the dining hall is very close together; arrangements will be made to provide transportation to the dining hall.

The team is working on how to make the event work well both for in-person onsite and those participating remotely. Latihan and testing throughout will be handled by call-in and someone will be assigned to set up the calls other than the helpers. See other details on attached slides.

Rifka asked Councilors to encourage their members to join us for the Congress! She also asked the council members whether they will attend in person. Most do plan attend but it will depend on Covid conditions. So, planning will have to work with the assumption that the regional council meeting will need to be in-person but with some form of virtual participation.

Elizabeth: May 1 is UCSB's deadline for the signed contract, the \$2500 deposit, insurance paperwork and final program schedule. We have agreement from UCSB for a low commitment of 50 attendees and will get an initial version of the contract for review shortly. The Congress team will have a budget meeting in the next week or two.

Rohana: has some concern about the size of the latihan rooms at UCSB, as these are large meeting rooms but not ballrooms such as a hotel might offer. Meldan suggested we might plan to have multiple latihan times to ensure it's not too crowded.

Rifka: Showed draft agenda, which is color-coded for sessions that are onsite & remote, onsite only, kejiwaan, and zoom only. She noted that a quorum will be established with 38 people, that only those who are present in the room will vote for the election of officers, and that the actual testing will not be

shared over Zoom. The latter is per consultation with the international Helpers. If someone wishes to pre-test to run for an elected position, they can do so in-person with 2 helpers. Candidates must be present in person at the Congress.

Halimah: there was discussion about having all workshops be via Zoom as opposed to only in -person; Rifka noted the plan for workshops is not decided.

Dennis: In addition to promoting Congress to members, can councilors ask members if any children will be attending and what ages, as that's an element of planning that needs to be considered.

0. Chico Loan extension request

Originally, the remaining loan balance was due after 3 years; this was extended for a year until Dec 1, 2021. They have been paying \$240/mo and have asked for an extension. This is a 2nd mortgage in addition to the primary loan they took out from another party to buy the property originally. About \$40,000 is still due to Subud CA and additional interest accrues if we extend. They think that they have identified a way to refinance the lump sum so that they can pay back the full amount in 8 months.

Hasan recommends that the Council approve this loan extension.

Discussion:

Meldan: might they pay more per month? Hasan thought it could be challenging.

Halimah: have they made any improvements in the building; and would it make sense to foreclose. Hasan said the interior of the building is well maintained; foreclosure is difficult as we are the secondary lender.

Christian: any benefit to push for 6 months vs 8? Michael pointed out that we get more total dollars from them if we extend the loan.

Luqman called the question: Does the Council agree to extend the loan to the Church while they refinance their loan? The motion was carried unanimously.

0. Financial Report

Hasan: Asking for any questions about the facts presented in his recent financial report, then discussed what we might do about our negative cash flow situation. Options discussed by Exec Committee:

1. Reduce the Subud USA pledge

The Exec Committee tested and received that it is *not* correct to reduce the flow of money from the Region to the National level at this time. This would cut off the flow from both centers and individuals not just to USA, but to the work of Subud in the world. Luqman invited all the councilors to reflect and receive on this point as well, and review with their centers.

0. Fundraising to encourage direct donations

The executive committee felt it would be appropriate to have semi-annual fund raising to encourage individuals to give directly. The successful year-end matching fund campaign has led the way.

0. Draw money from the property fund

This may be necessary in the range of \$30-\$50,000 to address immediate cash needs while fundraising are other actions are developed. The proposal will be sent in writing so that councilors have opportunity

to review with centers and then voted on at the next meeting. Testing could be done at centers if that seems helpful to fully assess the meaning and correctness.

Dennis: asked for confirmation that this is a contingency transfer or loan from the property.

Simon: asked for confirmation that the Chico loan will go back to the property fund. Yes to both.

Hasan: It is hoped that post-pandemic impact, the centers will be able to generate more income through their property rentals as well, to help us all flourish.

Luke: having reviewed Hasan's report, summarized that the Region is running a deficit averaging \$13,000 per year. He noted that accounting costs have increased recently due to having to clean up inaccurate data entry that occurred a couple of years ago, and posed the question whether there may be ways to reduce accounting costs going forward; e.g., outsourcing to a service.

Hasan: Currently, all centers except Sonoma are paying the amount allocated to them by Church Mutual. A review of other insurance providers will kick off next month to assess possibilities for reducing center insurance costs.

Ralph: asked Christian to comment on his receiving about the Subud USA donation question. Christian reported that he felt a strong energy stream and to cut the stream would interrupt the flow all the way to WSA, and back to individual members.

Hasan: Bapak recommended a multilevel flow concept many years ago; i.e., to ask what is the average amount per month that is needed per member to fill the flow.

Meldan: the council has a responsibility to seek alternatives for outsourcing the regional office functions to determine if there is another model which can meet our needs. Noted that Subud members in CA have benefited from the rising property values and have more resources than some regions.

Hasan: A task team has begun to identify all the functions that Henrietta handles to see what tasks could be handled differently, whether by volunteers or outsourcing.

Henrietta: switching 30 accounts from Bank of America to Chase was a very large task which consumed much time in 2020. Dealing with correction of past accounting, and catching up so that accounting reports are not so delayed, took extra time in 2020 and especially 2021. Total hours spent should now be lower. Negotiating with insurance companies is another large task which could be handled by a member with the right expertise.

Rohana: if we owe Henrietta money, she should be paid; per appropriate business practice. Hasan agreed but suggested waiting until there is a vote re transferring \$\$ from the property fund, to ensure we maintain cash flow. Need to manage current funds to avoid running out of money before more is available.

Rifka: Need to meet our obligations to contractors; concerned we may need to draw more than the amount currently proposed from the property fund to cover expenses.

Ralph: thanked Meldan for bringing up those points. Commented that a lot of work was done in the past to raise money to buy our properties, and we need to consider how members of the Board of Directors (Council) can help in the process to get donations. Should we form a fundraising subcommittee to pursue possibilities with a strong focus?

Luqman: asked for volunteers for this, noting that Bapak was the first to contribute to the Hope Street Hall.

Simon: when does the insurance policy need to be negotiated? Henrietta said we could start shopping now to replace our current policy (cancel and get a refund) if we find something better. She and Hasan have been reviewing the current terms and how minor language changes can make a huge difference in actual coverage. A good agent might be able to work with us to get the coverage we need at a lower price. Simons suggested that other centers that can afford it cover the insurance costs for Sonoma, which is \$2,400/year. From time to time we have to help our fellow centers; communicating this to all centers is key.

Helena: from RH perspective, there is concern that Covid restrictions may have reduced member connection to the latihan and to Subud. The RH's have not been able to be out in the community. Interactions such as Cal Chat do help build community. Helena believes that the RH's could do more to create that kind of energy, and are planning to hold virtual kejiwaan events on Saturday every two months, at least for as long as Covid is a constraint. She also suggested we find a means for people to share their powerful experiences in the latihan, a Subud "Moth Radio" concept. Sharing stories can lead to increased inspiration; this can then lead to increase support. Testing on this could help define it.

Meldan: kejiwaan events and building stronger community are indeed the core priorities to focus on.

Christian: we are in a long-term decline in membership and that needs action and consideration of whether it is sustainable to continue to support all our properties. We should consider that the Region is asset-rich and think about additional paths.

ACTION: Rohana, Luke, Ralph and Helena volunteered to form a fundraising committee which will address these points and also incorporate the inspirational elements related to the latihan.

Next meeting: **March 16th is the proposed date for a next Council meeting**, which will include a vote on shifting up to \$50k from the property fund to cover immediate shortfall. This action would pair with reducing operating expenses, activating fundraising, and further exploration of additional paths.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Trudell (acting for Jane in her absence)