



**Columbia Church of Religious Science dba Columbia Center for Spiritual Living
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, August 19, 2025, online using Zoom – APPROVED

Attendance: Zita Johnson-Betts, Laura Service, Reggie Kapp, Claudette Gadsen, Dale Kane, Harry Leffmann, Mary Anne Marsalek, and Rev. Rafe A. Ellis – Non-Voting Member of the Board.

Absent: Robin Farinholt.

The Board of the Columbia Center for Spiritual Living convened shortly after 7:00 pm, led by Board Vice President, Laura Service (Board President, Zita Johnson-Betts' arrival was delayed):

- The meeting opened with an affirmative prayer led by Harry Leffmann.
- Claudette Gadsen read the Columbia CSL Vision, Identity, and Mission statements.

Welcome and Brief Member Check-In

Each Trustee checked in, sharing what is happening in their lives and how they are doing in the moment.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- There were no minutes for the July BOT meeting to approve as no one volunteered to prepare them, and the position of Board Secretary remains vacant.
- Confidence was expressed that someone would step forward to serve as Board Secretary.

Treasurer's Report

- Reggie Kapp, Board Treasurer, reviewed the financial reports for July 2025, and it was noted that while our income remained steady, there were some additional expenses due to insurance payments and that we were operating at a deficit for the month, which has happened in the past.
- It was also noted that additional funds were expected because of the transfer of funds from Greater Baltimore CSL and on-going restitution payments.
- It was confirmed that earlier in the day, Rev. Rafe was presented with a check signed by Robin and Mary Anne on behalf of Greater Baltimore CSL for \$36,806.03, \$4,796 of which is designated for sound equipment pursuant to a Hefferlin Grant and the funds were deposited into CCSL's checking account.

- Although this influx of funds improves CCSL's financial status, it was noted that CCSL is still spending more than it brings in, which highlights the importance of the pledge program. Rev. Rafe also pointed out that there are fees associated with online giving through Breeze and that not all of those who donate online also include these fees in their donation.
- The July 2025 financial reports were approved by consensus.

Senior Minister's Report

- Rev. Rafe reviewed the Minister's report.
- Rev. Rafe submitted the application for an Evergreen Grant on behalf of CCSL to fund a learning management system (LMS), which would allow for controlled access to classes for a fee. Various LMS's are being explored, and the plan is to return 10% of the revenue from the system to the Evergreen grant until the full amount of the grant has been returned.
- Rev. Rafe is working to finalize the fall schedule of classes.
- Rev. Rafe presented a draft letter of call for Frank to serve as Assistant Minister. He emphasized that this was not an employment contract but a requirement to start the "ordination clock" for Frank contingent on his passing his oral panels on August 27. The Board reviewed the draft, and Rev. Rafe provided clarification that Frank would report to him as his supervisor and he would serve as an independent contractor. After discussion and consideration, the letter of call was approved by consensus.
- Claudette observed that it would be helpful to have Board documents, both the minister's report and the meeting agenda, at least five days in advance to permit better opportunities for review, to which there was agreement.
- Rev. Rafe also mentioned plans for an online evening meditation program.

Old Business

- 1) Update on the Peace and Wellness Festival scheduled for October 11, 2025
 - Rev. Rafe reported that they are working to reduce expenses, particularly in music costs, by requesting that musicians donate their time.
 - Robin was not present to report on the status of efforts to secure sponsors, vendors, and donors for the Festival.
 - Rev. Rafe and Robin are going to finalize sponsor and donor outreach letters.
- 2) Formation of a fundraising team to offset Festival production costs
 - The Board approved the formation of a team including both Board and community members to coordinate fundraisers to help defray the production expenses associated with the Peace and Wellness Festival. Laura has volunteered to lead the team.

- Laura mentioned the possibility of partnering with a restaurant as we have in the past, where 15% of the sales from the center's participation on a particular date would go to our organization.
- 3) Selection of date for BOT Induction Ceremony and Board dinner
- Claudette reported that the survey results suggested that the weekend of November 8 & 9 were the preferred dates for the BOT dinner and the Board Induction Ceremony.
 - Rev. Rafe explained that part of the significance of the ceremony is honoring past and outgoing Board members.
 - Rev. Rafe will let the Board know whether November 9 is available for the Board Induction Ceremony.
 - Venues for the Board dinner were discussed and Laura agreed to propose several options for the Board's consideration, including Robin's offer to host the Board at her home.

New Business

- 1) Creation of the 2026 Planning and Budget Team
- The Board approved the creation of the 2026 Planning and Budget Team, to be led by Claudette. Laura and Reggie have also volunteered to participate on the team.
 - The team will engage in the creation of a strategic plan for 2026, as well as a budget.
 - Laura asked about exploring higher interest-bearing accounts for investing center funds and Rev. Rafe noted that this could involve using "CD ladders" (so that certificates of deposit matured on different dates).
 - It was noted that this would be a matter the Planning and Budget Team could explore.
- 2) Plans for A Frame Signage
- Dale Kane mentioned her interest in pursuing creation of an A Frame sign for placement on the sidewalk for Sunday service.
 - Rev. Rafe noted that he had mentioned creation of an A frame sign in the past and committed to working with Dale to research costs and make a proposal for consideration at the September meeting (if possible).

The meeting adjourned with Mary Anne giving a closing prayer.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2025, at 7:00 PM via Zoom.