

Summary Minutes from The Focusing Institute Board Meeting 31 March 2011

The Focusing Institute Board met via a telephone conference call on 31 March 2011 from 9:00 to 11:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time (USA). Those present were: Reva Bernstein, Melinda Darer, Elena Frezza, Mary Hendricks, Harbert Rice, Astrid Schillings, and Rosa Zubizarreta. After a round of checking-in, we worked through the following agenda items.

1. Draft Concern for Japan. During the meeting, we shared our concerns over what is happening in the world, and particularly in Japan. After the meeting call a smaller group (Joan Klagsbrun, Melinda Darer, Pat Omidian, Reva Bernstein, and Rosa Zubizarreta) will begin working on a draft response for the TFI website that will be sent out to all of the Board for approval.

2. Corporate Status. Melinda reported that our non-profit paperwork has been updated and we are currently in good standing with the State of Illinois.

3. Compensation. The Board agreed unanimously and with great pleasure to increase Melinda's salary, and also to give Elizabeth Cantor a raise as initially presented in the compensation report at the last Board meeting.

Compensation Policy. The Board agreed unanimously to have a standing policy in place to review staff compensation on a regular yearly basis. We clarified that this does not include the founders, Gene and Mary. The suggestion was made that for new hires who are hired on a trial basis and at a lower initial salary, it would make sense to schedule the first review at 6 months after their start date and on a yearly basis after that.

Health Benefits. The Board deferred a decision regarding what health benefits we should offer until we have the opportunity to clarify the compensation proposal and obtain more background information. At the same time, we were very glad to hear from Mary that she and Gene have good health coverage in place and are not in need of assistance in that regard.

4. Corporate Office and Agent for the Corporation. The Board agreed unanimously to have the corporate officer slate amended so that Melinda Darer could have corporate signing authority. This means that, if and when it is needed, she could sign official papers on behalf of the Board.

Agent on Record. The Board asked Melinda to look into the possibility of hiring a corporate service as the "agent on record" for TFI, or to assess if it would make more sense for her to act as the agent on record. The role of the agent on record is to receive correspondence from the Illinois State Agency that oversees corporations. Melinda will look into this and report back to the Board.

5. Tec-Web Committee Report. Harbert Rice reported that the Tec-Web Committee has completed a "scope of work". He will send this document along with the summary notes from the committee's meetings to the Board. He reported that the Tec-Web committee has been taking a longer-term view of the website, 3-5 years beyond the current immediate revision. He also reported that the translation issue and how to handle the need for different languages is clearly on the list of things the committee is working on.

6. Policy for Focusing Events on the TFI Website. A subcommittee (Astrid Schillings, Mary Hendicks, Elena Frezza, Melinda Darer and Reva Bernstein) will look at criteria for Focusing workshops/conferences to be listed on TFI's website under headings of "What's New" or "What's New at TFI". This is in response to request from the UK Focusing School to be listed there. The subcommittee will prepare a draft policy for Board's review.

7. Strategic Planning. As a Board we expressed our appreciation for the work that Barbara Dickinson is doing with us on strategic planning. We have found her to be flexible, intelligent, action-oriented, and offering us a lot of positive energy. We agreed to have her to join us for the first day of our May Board retreat so that she can discuss her upcoming report with us.

8. Missing Policies. Melinda has asked for assistance when issues come up between Board meetings for which we do not have any current policy in place. We will be continuing the conversation on this subject over e-mail.

9. Further Discussions. Some members expressed concerns regarding the momentum that is taking place. On the one hand, so much is getting done, and we can feel the efficacy of that. We are moving forward on a structural level, and creating the foundation that can support an ongoing organization. At the same time, some of the new vocabulary we are using can lead some of us to feel not safe. There can be some anxiety about wanting steps to arise organically and not having things become too tightly structured. We want to keep whatever process we use in the light of our Focusing understanding. Since felt-sensing underlies all of language, we can pause and use our Focusing process as we bring in any other process. That way we can make it our own, bring it into a Focusing context, and find our own words for it. There was also appreciation for our new meeting practice of taking a full 20 seconds of silence to confirm any apparent agreement. When we pause for this long to see whether there are any further concerns or issues that need to be raised before we are ready to move on. The pause gives time for a felt sense to form. If no concerns or issues are raised, then we know that we have a full agreement.

Astrid Schillings requested some help with the International Committee – citing a need for others to share the work of initiating the next meeting, reminding people, looking over minutes.

10. Agenda Items Carried Over to Our April Meeting. Given time constraints, we were not able to attend to the following items, or the information was not available to complete the item.

- A. Financial Report and Creation of Outcomes Chart.
- B. Next Steps Regarding the Partnership Pool.
- C. Updating By-Laws.
- D. Policy for Health Insurance for Staff.

11. Next Board Meeting. The next Board meeting will be via phone at 9:00 am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on 28 April 2011.

Respectfully,

Harbert Rice