

**Center for Spiritual Living - Olympia**  
**Core Council Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm

In person and Zoom

*Our Mission is to be an open, expanding, and welcoming community that learns, lives, and shares spiritual principles.*

*Our Purpose is to reveal our wholeness and connection with all that is.*

*Our Vision is to live as Love in a world of Love.*

Present: Rev. David Robinson, Carrie Barrett, David Dickinson, Craig Francis, Greg Laura, Hillary Myers

Practitioner: Buffie Finkle, RScP

Scribe: Hillary Myers

The meeting was called to order by Carrie at 6.

Buffie Finkle, RScP provided the opening prayer.

Opening reading provided by

**Check In — ALL**

Share something you'd like to do for yourself this week.

**Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the meetings on 4/21/2026 and 5/5/2026 were reviewed. A motion was made to approve version 3 of both the 4/21/2026 and 5/5/2026 minutes. Motion seconded. All Council members present approved.

**Approval of Financial Report**

Craig presented the April financial review. Contributions for the month were \$11,326, compared to the budgeted \$14,166. The 2026 budget was set at approximately \$170,000 in pledged income under an intention of prosperity consciousness, while actual pledges are tracking at approximately \$148,000 — consistent with the prior year. As a result, the Center is trending roughly \$30,000 short of the budgeted pledge target, though contributions have historically increased over the course of the year as members catch up on commitments and one-time and annual gifts come in.

A transfer of approximately \$14,682 was made from the investment account to cover operating cash needs. Expenses are running close to budget, at approximately 102% year to date. The projected net operating loss for the year was approximately \$25,800; at roughly a third of the way through the fiscal year, the Center is already approaching that figure, indicating the year-end loss may exceed projections. It was noted that the total revenue percentage shown on the financial sheet was a manually entered number rather than a formula and was not accurate; the figure is closer to 60–70% of budget.

Council discussed that, even at the prior year's pledge level of approximately \$148,000, the budget remains in deficit, and that the higher target was set intentionally as an act of prosperity consciousness and a goal for growth. Rev. David moved to approve the financial report. Motion seconded by David Dickinson. All Council members approved.

### **Art Auction Fundraiser**

The art auction fundraiser previously scheduled for September is being removed from the calendar, as the member organizing the event has had a major health issue and is no longer able to lead it. The event had been anticipated to raise approximately \$18,000.

### **Staff Review Update**

Staff reviews have not yet been scheduled. Rev. David asked to hand off the scheduling of review appointments, which requires coordinating the availability of Rev. David, Carrie, and Craig (last year's Council, who conduct the reviews) along with each staff member being reviewed. Council discussed the need for staff to complete and turn in their self-evaluations, and proposed scheduling a single Saturday block to complete several reviews at once. The written reviews of staff have been completed and are ready to be compiled and presented.

### **Community Gathering – June 14**

The next quarterly community gathering will be held after service on June 14th. Buffie will be giving the talk that Sunday, with ministerial students in town, the day after her graduation. Buffie would like to lead a conversation at the gathering about why people are reluctant to ask for help, such as from the practitioners or the Helping Hands team. The Council also agreed to use the community gathering to begin the broader strategic and visioning conversation (see below).

### **Website & Social Media Refresh / Strategic Plan**

Following Hillary's presentation on the website and social media upgrade to the Finance Committee, the committee responded with questions and concerns centered less on the proposal itself than on the absence of an overall strategic plan. The committee asked the Council to clarify the broader vision — what the Center is working toward, and what the purpose of the investment funds is (for example, paying ongoing operating costs, purchasing a building, or other long-term goals) — before committing to further expenditures.

Council discussed that the website and social media refresh is intended to be funded by donations raised specifically for that purpose, outside of the operating cash flow and without drawing on the investment fund. The larger questions of the Center's compelling mission and the purpose of its reserves were recognized as community conversations rather than decisions for leadership alone. The Council agreed to continue this discussion at the next Council meeting and to introduce elements of it at the June 14th community gathering, potentially including a community visioning process. It was noted that a visioning team is already underway with several sessions planned, though member response to the visioning invitation was lower than hoped.

It was also noted that a foundation, encountered at the CSL Conference, accepts proposals from centers and may provide funding and free consultation for website, audio/video, and social media upgrades. Centers may submit one proposal per year; Shani recently submitted a proposal for an audio/visual upgrade, so a website proposal to that foundation would not be available this year. Council noted that a grant is likely not necessary for the scale of this project.

### **Pride Festival Flyers**

The marketing team asked whether any Council members wished to provide input on flyers to be handed out at the Pride Festival; the team was not planning to have a booth and intended to distribute flyers by walking around. Council expressed discomfort with the optics of distributing flyers without sponsoring a booth and agreed not to hand out flyers by walking around the festival. Instead, the Council favored exploring a shared booth in partnership with Interfaith Works, as well as posting flyers at downtown businesses ahead of the festival.

### **Monthly Newsletter Articles**

Carrie distributed the schedule (via Excel) for the monthly Council business summaries in the newsletter. The schedule can be adjusted as needed.

### **One Parish One Prisoner**

The Council confirmed its support for exploring the One Parish One Prisoner program and agreed to present it to the wider community at the June community gathering, rather than limiting it to the women's group that originally heard Candice speak. Options discussed included having Candice present again or having members who heard her speak share about the program for a few minutes. Council discussed the realities of the program's two-year commitment, the training provided to participants, and the emotional considerations involved for both the returning individual and the support group. The Council will gather interest at the community gathering and then connect interested members with Candice. A handout will be helpful for presenting the program.

### **Council Retreat**

The Council discussed scheduling its retreat. After reviewing several dates and conflicts in June and July, the Council tentatively set the retreat for the afternoon of Sunday, July 12th, running approximately three hours beginning around noon, to be held at a Council member's home with a shared lunch.

### **Piloting Church – Chapter 3**

The Council discussed Chapter 3 of Piloting Church by Susan Beaumont, focusing on her framework of Energy, Inclusion, Program, and Administration (the EIPA quadrants) in relation to the line of sustainability. Council reflected on where CSL Olympia currently sits — below the line of sustainability financially, but showing growing energy, new creativity, and an expanding sense of inclusion, in contrast to a portion of the community that reflects declining engagement. Discussion explored the contrast between the quadrant model and the hero's journey as ways of understanding the Center's current season, the broader pattern of post-COVID decline in attendance

across many denominations, and the importance of focusing energy on those who are engaged and growing. The discussion closed with readings, including a passage from *Creating the Beloved Community* by Jim Lockert on the nature of safe space in spiritual community.

### **BoardSource Book**

Following up on an action item from the 4/21 minutes, Rev. David researched *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* by Richard T. Ingram. It is available from BoardSource for \$29 in either PDF or print. The Council agreed to purchase one copy for the Center, to be paid from the education budget and shared among current and future Council members.

### **Next Steps**

- Rev. David: Hand off and coordinate scheduling of staff reviews; encourage staff to complete and turn in their self-evaluations.
- Council: Compile and present completed written staff reviews.
- Rev. David: Reach out to Interfaith Works of Olympia regarding a possible shared Pride Festival booth.
- Council: Continue the strategic plan / website & social media discussion at the next Council meeting.
- Council: Introduce the strategic/visioning conversation and the One Parish One Prisoner program at the June 14th community gathering.
- Rev. David: Purchase *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* from BoardSource (\$29) from the education budget.
- Council: Read Chapter 4 of *Piloting Church* by next Council Meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 with a closing prayer offered by Buffie.