

Grail Council Monthly Zoom Call ~ MINUTES

March 23, 2021



The US Grail Council

Present: Thanh Nguyen, Laura Kaplan, Judith DeFour-Howard, Lucy Jones, April Goering, Deborah Sullivan, Terrie Puckett (CEO, ex-officio)

Present for Revisioning Group discussion: Carol Barton, Sharon Thomson, Beth Murphy

Opening

Lucy brought a meditation reflection from the Celtic Soul Moment -- *The Deer's Cry*

Request for Bylaws Change

Lucy welcomed Carol Barton, Sharon Thomson, and Beth Murphy from the Revisioning Group to the meeting. The Group has requested a change to the bylaws that would alter the manner of making changes to the bylaws.

Sharon and Carol presented their ideas, explaining that their group is requesting the bylaws change in anticipation of making a bigger change at the GA intended to improve Grail governance. The Revisioning Group is working on a proposal for a different Grail structure to present at the GA. They are hopeful that the GA will produce a resolution for change. They stated their belief that the bylaws change is necessary in order to ensure that a decision at the GA will be able to go forward. They state that this change now will lead to opportunities to make additional decisions and changes.

Council members raised comments and questions:

- You want a change to the bylaws now so that decisions of GA are binding.
- You suggest that structure is the vehicle and your goal is building a greater sense of community, and empowerment in decision-making.
- Why is a change of bylaws necessary to change the structure? Why not present your change of structure proposal to members and allow for a majority vote at the GA or after?
- Council needs to review and consider changes to other bylaws.

When a Council member asked how it is responsible to change bylaws based on interest of 10% of members as stated in the proposed change, Carol responded it would be okay to take that out.

Lucy thanked the members of the Revisioning Group for coming and they left the meeting. After further discussion, Council tabled the issue and will make a decision about this request at our April meeting.

Elder Care Working Group (ECWG) Report & Revised Job Description

Initially the ECWG was concerned with older Grail members who are eligible to receive support from the Health and Wellness Fund (h&W) due to their long service in Grail jobs paid at a subsistence basis. Grail members are long-lived. A percentage of new funds goes to H&W and an actuarial assessment of needs takes place every 3 years. The ECWG has expanded its role and taken on concern for elderly Grail members who are not in Health and Welfare group to work through end-of-life concerns. Some older members have teams to work with them on aging issues. ECWG proposed an update to its team job description to reflect these current realities.

The Grail held several Charitable Gift Annuities that have been managed by Fifth Third Bank. Funds have been transferred from the bank to the Grail for management. In 2020, Martha Heidkamp and Carol Skyrms contacted each of the annuitants, and only one reported that she wished to continue receiving the annuity. ECWG is willing to assume responsibility to manage this annuity within the Health and Wellness Fund.

Decision: Council voted unanimously to approve both requests:

- ECWG job description changes as presented.
- ECWG to administer the CGA.

Grail Listening Forum

In recent weeks and months, members have requested dialog with Council about issues of concern to them. The NLT sought a facilitator for discussion with groups concerned about land at Cornwall and Grailville and has talked with Mary Jo Sullivan, a religious sister with skill in conflict management and resolution. The NLT reached out to Laura, asking her to inform the Cornwall and Grailville groups about this possibility and the Cornwall group stated that they are not interested in such dialog at this time.

Based on Council goals for 2021, members suggested that Council can initiate a series of listening sessions with members and Council focused on communication and healing. NLT suggested Mary Jo Sullivan as a facilitator for such discussions.

One Council member questioned the value of such discussions as well as the skill of an unknown facilitator and suggested that we consider other possible facilitators. A Council member stated that any discussion should have a purpose and focus. Several members stated that the focus would be listening, communication, and healing. Another Council member suggested that it will be important to engage in planning with whichever facilitator we

decide to work with. Laura will develop a list of potential facilitators and present it to Council.

Decision: Council voted unanimously to plan a series of listening sessions aimed at communication and healing open to all Grail members.

Council 2021 Goals - Judith

Council members reviewed and briefly discussed Council Goals for 2021. Some action plans will be added next month.

Decision: Council voted unanimously to accept 2021 Council Goals.

Sale of Grail Land

Deborah has been in contact with Drees Homes. The due diligence period is continuing with attention to environmental issues. The Grail informed Drees that we would prefer that the Drees construction project **not** use the Grail name in any way, and Drees has assured us that it will not use our name.

When the due diligence period is concluded, Council will be able to make the contract available to interested Grail members. This should be soon as the contract was signed in mid-December and due diligence was estimated to take about 90 days.

Annual Review of Bylaws

Every year Council reviews the bylaws and makes any needed changes after consultation with membership.

Action: Judith and Laura agreed to initiate this process as a way to become familiar with bylaws. They will contact Carol Siemering as a resource person on this issue.

Request from Membership Development & Enrichment.

As liaison with MD&E, Laura brought a budget request for 2022 for funds to send hard copies of the member list to all Grail members.

After discussion, it became clear that some members may want a hard copy of the list and some others do not. An electronic version of the member list is available on the Grail website member dashboard. About 20 members who do not have internet access automatically receive a hard copy of the member list. Any member can request a hard copy list from the office and receive it. Further, the annual budget already includes funds under printing and postage to cover the expense of sending hard copy members lists to those who want them.

Action: Laura will write an item for the National Grail News to alert members that they can request a hard copy member list from the office, and she will report back to MD&E.

ED March Report – Terrie

Terrie Puckett submitted her report to Council, noting that a family has rented Tidings for ongoing use, Rural & Migrant Ministry has painted the interior of the Cottage and spruced up the basement of the Grey House, and that she is exploring ways to seek grant funding for local programs.

Terrie noted a major maintenance item that needs attention (in addition to those previously approved) is to re-route the internet cables in the Ark office building so that they run indoors rather than outdoors. Cost estimate is \$1800.

Terrie requested approval to sign on as the Grail to social justice letters and statements of a Cincinnati faith collaborative if the statements reflect articulated policies in Taking a Stand.

Decisions: Council voted unanimously to approve the expense to re-route the internet cables.

Council also voted unanimously to grant Terrie approval to sign on for the Grail to statements congruent with our Taking a Stand policies.

International Concerns

Lucy alerted Council to a number of international concerns:

- The UN Commission on the Status of Women will begin tomorrow, March 24, with virtual meetings.
- International Grail Zoom meetings focused on spirituality are coming up on April 10 and April 24.
- The upcoming NGN will include a call for nominations for International Council Rep.
- The upcoming NGN will also publish all international Zoom meeting dates and times for the year.
- The International Leadership Team election process is underway. There will be a Zoom meeting on July 17, 2020 to meet the candidates.
The new ILT will take office in January 2022.

Other Business and Concerns

Council members shared information about a number of other concerns:

- Judith requested that we talk about the future of Cornwall at our April meeting.
- Council will need to initiate process soon to identify a GA planning team.
- One member asked when we will debrief from the anti-racism training. Another suggested that might be a part of on-going work. Already Grail members are developing meetings for women of color and for white women.
- The team working on the process for international donations has been meeting and will develop a recommendation.

Closing

April commented on the death of Mary Gindhart on March 22, just one day before this meeting. In Mary's memory, we played a recording of the Gregorian chant: *In paradisum deducant te Angeli...*

Schedule for Council Meetings / Zoom Conference Calls

Date: Monday, April 12, 2021

Time: 10 am-12 noon EDT

Date: Monday, May 24, 2021

Time: 10 am-12 noon EDT

Date: Monday, June 28, 2021

Time: 10 am-12 noon EDT

Schedule for Virtual Face to Face Meetings / Zoom Conference Call

Date: Thursday, April 21

Time: 10 am-12 noon and 2-4 pm EDT

Date: Thursday, April 22

Time: 10 am-12 noon EDT

Date: Saturday, April 24

Time: 10 am-12 noon and 2-4 pm EDT