



## AGENDA

- I. Opening
- II. Introduction of the Board and Corporate Team
- III. Report of the Board
  - A. Board's Plan for the Future
  - B. Treasurer's Report
- IV. Report of Operations
- V. Heart of the Dragon Award
- VI. Self-nominations for the Board of Directors
  - A. List of those going off the board and comments by them.
  - B. Self nominations by others in the community
- VII. Member Comment and Questions
- VIII. Closing Remarks
- IX. Adjournment

### **Member Comment Cards**

Member comments and questions can be given during the appointed time in the meeting or by using the available 3x5 cards. To use the cards, please take a card from the front of the box and write down your thoughts or questions during the Annual Meeting. Please be sure to include your name and email on the card. Instructions are also in the front of the box.

After the meeting closes, we will be gathering the cards to review and address the comments at a regular board meeting. This way, even those members who are not able to comment publicly will still have a voice.

In addition, please note that starting this year we posted this report on the website a week before the retreat, so that those who wanted to could read it ahead of time.

## Opening

Good morning and welcome to the Dragonfest 2025 Annual Meeting. I am Ellen Valentine, and I serve as your Board President. First I want to thank you all for your support. It has been a rough couple of years for me personally and I want to thank all of of you for your support.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you for taking time out of the Retreat to join us this morning. We are pleased to see you all here, taking an active interest in this community and this Retreat – which is made up of each of you.

For 40 years we have gathered in August, with a few exceptions: fires, pandemic, etc. The point is that each of us was new at one point and we found a way to engage with this community.

Each of you has a stake in this community. By working together, we can grow, foster, and sustain our community where members practice and share their diverse spiritual paths and learn from each other. We welcome all, first timers, old timers, and everyone who cares about the land, the community and the retreat itself.

This organization takes a dedicated group of community members to plan, organize, and run this Retreat each year. I'd like to introduce and recognize some of the people that make our success possible.

First, your Board of Directors who are elected by you, to serve a three-year term –

Hank Kaplan – Treasurer

Challon (Aeneas) Winer - Director of Finance

Carroll Fanning - Secretary

Mark Lewis - Acting Vice President

We would also like to thank Rachael Fling for her service this spring as a board member. Please join me in thanking these volunteers for their time and commitment

Next is our Corporate team who serve this community throughout the year. These volunteers are appointed by the Board to assist in the day-to-day operations of Dragonfest:

Mike Ball and Tanna Sage – Directors of Operations

Kate Steffes – Registration Director

And Evelyn (Kestrel) Wiant - Corporate Communications Director

Let's thank these volunteers for their dedication and passion for this community.

Finally, putting on this Retreat doesn't happen without the work of many community members who volunteer to serve as staff. Their work starts in January and culminates to these magical five days we all enjoy. If you are a part of the volunteer staff, please stand so that we can recognize and thank you for your service to our community.

## Report of the Board

We have made great strides this year to modernize and update our retreat in many ways. We have also started thinking about the future of our retreat in setting up a long range planning committee.

The board has an annual retreat where we discuss what is working and what needs to be updated. This year we are implementing a new schedule for elections, almost year round registration, and upgrades to our infrastructure.

We created an updated plan for organizing our growing volunteers including new positions like outreach coordinator and a purchasing coordinator.

Mike will tell you about the updates and changes from the Operations perspective, and Challon/Hank will give a more in depth Finance report

Part of the Board's planning for the future has included our annual Planning Session where we set a long-term path and goals for our organization. During this planning, we focus on our vision, which is:

Dragonfest of Colorado seeks to create and sustain a vibrant, engaged, and spiritually focused community.

We value and honor all expressions of Paganism and have varied thoughts and beliefs regarding Deity and our relationship with Nature.

We are committed to a strong, participatory community that is diverse and includes all generations.

This vision is served by the following mission:

Dragonfest of Colorado will intentionally Grow, Foster, and Sustain the Dragonfest Community where members Practice, Share, Teach, and Learn their diverse spiritual paths.

This mission and vision informed the goals we set as a board this year including:

- We will engage with our community/membership weekly to encourage interaction, support and sharing
- Board and Staff will acknowledge or respond to electronic messages including but not limited to emails and text messages within 48 hours.
- We will strive to enroll and support 250-300 members by July 2026
- We will endeavor to break even or use no more than \$1,000 of our savings each year by continuing to modernize our equipment including purchasing a better kitchen set up utilizing a trailer, electric refrigeration, and solar technology as well as purchasing our chairs and tables so we can lower

our expenses each year and utilize membership dues more effectively.

- We will recognize our volunteer staff by offering a complimentary meal and gift while we are on the land each year.
- We will grow and encourage leaders within Dragonfest by codifying written job descriptions, reorganize our volunteer staff reporting structure. Also start planning a spring 2026 leadership weekend retreat to learn what it means to be a leader.

## 40 year Celebration

In 2020 we wanted to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the retreat, but due to COVID we were not able to do this. Instead, we have worked hard to create a wonderful 40th anniversary celebration in 2025.

I want to thank those of us who served on the 40th anniversary party including: Phil Catalano, Jaylo Wilson, Rachael Fling, Deb Martin and myself. I especially wanted to thank Deb for all of her hard work and dedication to making this happen, as well as all of the staff members who contributed to the give away bags.

Challon, Director of Finanace, will now give the Treasurer's report.

## Treasurer's Report – 2025 Annual Report

The Board of Directors is pleased to present the following Treasurer's Report as part of the 2025 Annual Report. This report summarizes Dragonfest's financial status and key developments for the fiscal year.

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### Current Statement of Accounts (as of July 2025)

Account	Balance
Checking Account (#7588, as of 7/2/2025)	\$33,285.32
EJ Investment Account (as of 4/2025)	\$36,238.59
Charity Charge Secured Account (#3923)	\$10,001.05
Total Funds Available	\$79,524.96

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### Revenues and Expenses

As of July 14, 2025, Dragonfest has received a total of \$27,956.93 in revenues from memberships and sponsorships. Estimated retreat expenses are approximately \$25,700, resulting in a net positive balance of roughly \$2,200. This represents the first year Dragonfest has operated at a surplus since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Strategic Cost Management and Investments

Several key initiatives contributed to the improved financial outlook:

- **Asset Investment:** Dragonfest purchased tables and chairs this year, eliminating recurring rental costs and saving over \$2,300 in 2025. These assets are now made available for off-season use by the landowner through a revenue-sharing agreement. This partnership is expected to reduce our land rental fees by \$500 to \$1,000 annually while maximizing the value of our investment.
- **New Breakfast Program:** A revised breakfast plan was implemented to better align food expenditures with actual attendance and usage. This change significantly reduced food waste and controlled retreat meal costs, contributing to the overall surplus. Notably, these savings were achieved without a significant increase in general membership dues, making the retreat more cost-efficient and sustainable.

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## Investment Performance and Financial Flexibility

The Edward Jones (EJ) Investment Account continues to yield consistent returns that match or exceed prior Certificate of Deposit (CD) performance. Unlike CDs, the EJ account offers immediate access to funds without penalties, enhancing liquidity while still supporting long-term financial growth.

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## Operational and Governance Highlights

- The revised membership structure including Dragon Guard memberships has led to greater revenue realization and more flexible budgeting.
- The Charity Charge secured card continues to be managed under strict internal controls, with all expenses tracked through a formal process.
- Dragonfest remains fully compliant with IRS 501(c)(3) regulations, with all required filings submitted following the organization's reinstatement.

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## Summary

Dragonfest's financial health has markedly improved in 2025. Through strategic decisions—such as investing in durable infrastructure, revamping meal planning, and improving revenue alignment—the organization has stabilized its budget and positioned itself for future success. These gains were achieved with minimal cost to members, demonstrating a commitment to both stewardship and accessibility.

The Board extends its thanks to all members and volunteers whose contributions have made these achievements possible.

Thank you Challon. I would also like to thank each of you for your support. We've come a long way since the first Dragonfest, where a small group of like-minded people decided to go off into the woods for a little Pagan camping, and that is thanks to the strong community that you all have helped to build.

Next, Mike will give the Operations Report

## Report of Operations

[Provide Operations Report. Please do not open up for questions. Members will have the opportunity to ask questions later in the meeting.]

We started our 40th anniversary staff meetings all virtual, mostly due to weather conditions. We did resume hybrid with some online and some in person with the May meeting. There is some interest in having all of our meetings remain virtual, but we will see what 2026 has in store.

We had about 73 staff members this year.

Lance Bishop has taken on the Emergency Response as a corporate position as he is experienced in dealing with emergency situations, which hopefully is non-existent.

Tanna Sage has stepped in to be Ops II and we will continue to do the Ops of the Day program

William Steffes and Kate Steffes have been working really hard with the different registration codes and adding the breakfast plan.

William has also helped keep the Director of Ops on target and has always been there when I had questions.

Challon Winer has taken on the position of Officer Of Procurement and has been an incredible help with getting the potties, golf carts, tent, and other stuff like tshirts, wrist bands and our new Kitchen Trailer.

On that note, we bought our own tables and chairs with a kitchen trailer that Carroll Fanning helped a lot with getting settled

.  
During Work Weekend, or as I like to call it, Dragonfest Preseason, we rebuilt the Phoenix Bridge with the help of Pat, Pappa Dan, Jean, Chainsaw Charlie Brokaw. The Corral was repaired by Dancing Otter, Morgan Brokaw, and Cyan Babcock. The permanent pottie on the west side of Starlight Meadow was painted by Jaylo Wilson and Jason Allen. The Labyrinth was repaired and spruced up by Carmen Consalvo, Doug, and Rachelle Monge.

We moved workshop areas to be in alphabetical order as the cart flies. We hope this will make it easier to find and get to certain workshops as needed.

Because we decided to allow amplified music with permissions at the retreat, we decided to take on an idea originally put forth by one of my predecessors, Bruce Kessler, and have a dance on the Wednesday night of the retreat as an unwind, relax and meet our fellow festians. We hope this kicks off our 40th anniversary in style and makes it a little different from previous years.

I would also like to work on communication with the community. If you have an idea, let's hear it. Some ritual or workshop you would love to try? Bring it!

This is "OUR DRAGONFEST" Not just mine. Let's make it the best yet.

Thank you Mike and Tanna Sage. Let's thank the Operations team and the volunteer staff once again for this wonderful Retreat.

## Heart of the Dragon Award

We also wish to thank one of our community members for their service with the Heart of the Dragon award.

The Heart of the Dragon award honors a community member whose commitment and engagement in this community exemplifies the Heart of Dragonfest. This year's Heart of the Dragon Award goes to Cecelia Thomas, or Cece

Cece first attended Dragonfest in 2000. She started as assistant to the Special Events coordinator and worked as a workshop coordinator, as well as publications and communications. As a communications coordinator she was one of two folks responsible for talking to the press in 2008 and 2009. She joined the board in 2002 as a board appointed treasurer and held that position until 2010 when she ran for the board. As treasurer she helped to update our accounting practices introducing board members to profit and loss statements and encouraging board members to take classes in nonprofit management. She served on the board from 2011 to 2015, serving as both vice president and president. While treasurer and as a board member she helped to set up the permit with the county, interacting with multiple offices including the sheriff and fire station, estimating contract amounts, interacting with various staff and ensuring we had a safe retreat.

Most importantly, she is also the creator of the Heart of the Dragon Award. This is the 10th year we have awarded this distinction and I think it fitting that it goes to its creator. When I asked her what her inspiration was for creating the award, she

said she had been working with various nonprofits at the time and saw how they used awards like this to draw in people, recognize volunteers. She also saw a need to acknowledge our aging elders and ancestors. She found a way to honor those who came before us with a plaque and a spot on the website.

Cece is unable to be with us due to health concerns, and I am pleased to present this award to Thor, her husband. Please join me in thanking Cece for all of her hard work and dedication to Dragonfest.

Thank you Cece for your many contributions to this community.

## Self-nominations for the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is made up of six elected volunteers from the community who provide their leadership and vision to develop and sustain the future of Dragonfest. This is no easy task. I think I speak for the entire Board when I say that, no matter how much you knew about being on a board, the work this board puts in is more than each of us expected. It's not a matter of just sitting around a table, voting on a few things, and then continuing on with life. At times, it is challenging work. At times, it is very involved. And sometimes, the conversations are difficult.

That being said, it is also incredibly rewarding work. As a part of the Board of Directors, you will help shape this community and this organization into a spiritual retreat we can all be proud of. When community members talk about how meaningful Dragonfest is in their lives, you will know that you helped make it that way, that you helped touch the life of another community member.

It is meaningful and powerful work. And each year, there is the opportunity to join it's ranks.

This year we have some changes to the system that we think will make things more efficient and move things forward. We inherited a voting system that was based on using snail mail to both send and receive the ballots, this resulted in board members not convening until the following January after the retreat. This next year we made the self nomination form available when registration opens and folks have been free to discuss and get to know the community during the retreat. The self nomination form

must be sent to the board by next Sunday, August 10. This will let us get the ballot out electronically by Monday, August 11, 2025. And the voting will end on August 30th and our new board members will be active at the next board meeting on September 13, 2025. If you have questions about this process please hold them til the end, or write them on a comment card.

Before we move forward with any new self nominations I'd like to give the outgoing board member a chance to speak.

Hank

Challon

Thank you for your comments and your service.

We also recognize and thank Rachael Fling for her service as a board member this spring.

Our by-laws state that to be eligible to serve on the board, you must be:

- A member of Dragonfest – this means that you have attended the Retreat within the last two years
- A legal adult – adults 18 and older are eligible
- and after last year's election, recognizing that we have many out of state contributors we amended the bylaws to say we can now have up to two directors from outside of Colorado

In addition, you can not have a spouse, significant other, immediate or extended family, or a member of your working group (such as a coven) also serving as a Director.

That's all that is required to be eligible. Anyone who meets those requirements may nominate themselves by filling out the Self-Nomination Form on the website and sending it to the Board by the 10th of August.

I also have some nomination forms here that you can pick up, along with a link to sending them to the board. We do still need to receive an electronic copy at [board@dragonfest.org](mailto:board@dragonfest.org) no later than August 30th.

This year we have 3 positions which will be open on the board. We need at least 4 people to run for those positions in order to hold an election. I personally would like to see at least 5 to 6 people run for the board, to make sure we have a good representation of our community on the board.

In addition, we have a tradition at this meeting for community members to announce their intention to run for the Board. If there is anyone here who would like to announce their intention, please raise your hand so that you can be given the opportunity to speak.

[Call on community members with their hands raised. When there are no others, transition to:]

Thank you for your passion to serve this community and good luck in the next election. Please remember that you must still send a completed self-nomination form to the Board in order to be a candidate in the next election. The forms up here have a link to the webpage and you can email the forms to [board@dragonfest.org](mailto:board@dragonfest.org)

## Member Comment and Questions

We will now open the floor for member comments and questions. Each member may have up to three minutes for comments or questions until there are no more members who wish to speak, or we run out of time. If we run out of time or you simply do not want to speak publicly, please fill out one of the 3x5 cards and place it in the back of the box. The Board will review and address those comments at a later meeting.

If you wish to have time, please raise your hand and wait to be recognized.

[Address public comments and questions, managing side conversations, outbursts, and members talking over speakers. When there are no more speakers or time runs out, transition to...]

Thank you everyone for your input. We will be following up on the cards and any lingering questions.

## Closing

As we draw to a close, be sure to mark your calendars, journals, and star charts for next year's Retreat which will be held Wednesday, July 29th through Sunday, August 2nd, 2026.

We will be collecting the comment box at the close of this meeting so be sure to get any final cards filled out right away. Of course, the board is always available by email. Please see the website for more information.

Finally, I want to thank you all once again for taking the time to join us at this Annual Meeting. It is your active involvement in this community that makes Dragonfest what it is today.

Thank you.

I will now entertain a motion to adjourn the 2025 Dragonfest Annual Meeting.

[Await a motion]

Is there a second? [Await second]

All in favor? [Await Ayes]

Any opposed? [Await Nays]

The 2025 Dragonfest Annual Meeting is now adjourned. Have a wonderful Retreat everyone!