



Varinder Narang  
President  
602-595-0662

Kamal Kharbanda  
Vice President  
480-539-6239

Jagdish Sharma  
Secretary  
480-940-3732

Ashwani Bakshi  
Treasurer  
480-970-4439

Mohini Ahuja  
Joint Treasurer  
602-626-5152

Ravinder Aggarwal  
Joint Secretary  
480-892-7440

Snigdha Sharma  
Director  
480-221-9256

Prem Bhardwaja  
Director  
480-897-1340

Mamta Gupta  
Director  
480-460-7013

Sonia Rajvanshi  
Director  
480-460-0924

Vijay Sethi  
Director  
480-332-7674

Uma Ramchandra  
Director  
623-877-4150

TBA  
Director  
000-000-0000

Vasu Atluri  
Director  
480-563-0891

Surinder Sharma  
Ex-Officio  
480-507-3806



EIN # 86-098-3020  
Phone: 480-874-3200

### **Board of Directors Teleconference March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**Attendees:** Ashwani Bakshi, Prem Bhardwaja, Kamal Kharbanda, Ravinder Aggarwal, Uma Ramchandra, Jagdish Sharma, Mamta Gupta, Sonia Rajvanshi, and Varinder Narang

**Absent:** Vasu P. Atluri, Vijay Sethi, Snegdha Sharma, Mohini Ahuja

**Started at: 8:35 PM Adjourned at: 10:45 PM**

This meeting was a continuation of the meeting on 3/14/06 as that meeting had to be adjourned primarily due to threatening and rude behavior of few devotees ( Mr. Raman Chibber & Mr. Surinder Sharma) causing shortage of time to cover the agenda items. Details of the incident are captured separately.

#### **Agenda Item #1**

Discussion with the temporary Pujari on 3/14/06 was documented. Pujari (Murari Dass) Ji had stated the following in that meeting:

- a) He wants to leave for India ASAP.
- b) He did not want to become a source of problem for the temple (comment made after he saw some of the devotees behaving in a rowdy fashion).
- c) He had no issues with the BOD of the HTA.
- d) He wants to go back to Bombay, India ASAP.
- e) He had explored the possibility of getting airline tickets on his own and sought the help of the board members in getting a cheap ticket.
- f) Departure date depended upon availability of airline ticket.

Based on some of the inputs received from the devotees following resolution was proposed and passed.

Resolution: The BOD should consider paying Pandit Murari Dass Ji up to 3/31/06.

Motion was proposed by Ravi Aggarwal and seconded by Prem Ji

All present voted "YES" and motion was passed.

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## Agenda Item #2

Board then started discussion on the second agenda topic namely the Status of Shastri Kailash Ji. Inputs on the performance of Shastri Ji were sought from each observer present in the board meeting on 3/14/06 and the board members. The following observations were provided. Each board member present gave their inputs also.

- 1) All present observers provided their input. The most common inputs were that Shastri Ji is a good communicator, he is easy to talk to, he attracts young crowd to the temple, delivers good pravachan and relates to the devotees positively.
- 2) Some of the present observers, HTA member & non-member made subjective comments that board has no say or authority to evaluate priest's performance. He is doing a fine job.
- 3) Shastri Ji often extended his vacations or planned absences from the temple and delayed his return after vacations or time away from the temple. This indicated a certain set pattern of behavior.
- 4) The prolonged absence adversely affected temple's normal routine of activities.
- 5) Shastri Ji made statements on several occasions which turned out be wrong, ambiguous and contradictory.
  - a. He stated before going on last vacation that he was going to India for a wedding but he never went to India
  - b. Passport had to be renewed but that was not the case
- 6) To Shastri Kailash Ji performing any Puja was always like a chore that he did not enjoy. He did not exhibit any passion in performing various pujas at the temple.
- 7) Consistently made an attempt to create conflict among devotees instead of diffusing issues. His actions and his way of operating are not supportive of the cause of the temple which often led to dividing the community instead of uniting them.
- 8) Addressed the board in a congregation, as one consisting of "Gadhas and Ghodas" (horses & donkeys). Announced one day to the congregation in the temple that he had decided to leave without even informing any board member or Puja committee.
- 9) Does not know all puja rituals for pujas of deities in the temple.
- 10) Enjoys making jokes during the pujas which are sometime inappropriate.
- 11) He often short changed the Puja rituals and lacked a respect for religious values. Does not put in the effort to learn about rituals required for performing puja for other deities in the temple.

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- 12) He has done a serious damage to the temple image by dividing the community and instigated confrontational behavior among certain devotees. Objectively tried to divide people over the departure of guest Pujari Murari Dass Ji.
- 13) Brought unannounced guests to the temple premises for extended stays without notifying any of the board members or Puja committee
- 14) Shastri Ji was found to be intimidating in his dealing with the temple administrators. Strong confrontational personality causes serious damage to the Temple's reputation.
- 15) When requested to arrange for a Puja by the temporary Pujari created a big fuss and refused to talk to the member of the executive committee saying he will only speak with the president.
- 16) Made false statement in the board meeting that he was never paid for mileage for driving to devotee's house for Puja. This was challenged by the ex treasurer who stated that he himself had paid on several occasions for mileage. This statement by the ex treasurer was not challenged.
- 17) Our guest Pujari, Murari Das , stated in the meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>, with board members as following:
  - a. Hum kahan phas gaye (I am entrapped )
  - b. Kailash ji had asked Murari Lal Ji to come to Phoenix and had promised to him that "His meter will start as soon as he arrives in Phoenix".
  - c. With reference to his association with Kailash Ji , the temp priest stated that " If I had known him as I know him now I would not have come here"
  - d. That the board has dealt with him for over 2 years and they should know better about his personality.
  - e. "Dekhio Ji jab koyola ki khan mein haath dalo gey to haath hi kaaley hon gey"(meaning if you put your hands in coal mine, your hands are bound to get dirty) Implied meaning understood.
  - f. Upon asking by a Board member as to why not to go to Canada to meet Kailash Ji, instead of waiting here in Phoenix, Pandit Murari Ji said, "Chhodo Ji, usko lekar kya karma hai ab, who Kailash hi nahin hai jisko mein janata tha( forget about that, he is not the same Kailash who I used to know)
  - g. He further said, " haathi key daant khaaney key aur dikhaaney key aur" (meaning that All that glitters is not gold")
- 18) Performance in religious ceremonies is less than desirable. Lacks Vedic Dharma expertise.
- 19) Consistently failed to perform his regular duties:
  - a. Left temple open on many occasions unattended without informing the BOD.
  - b. Left temple unattended for extended periods of time and seen at other people's houses during temple hours.
  - c. Temple keys given to devotees without the knowledge of the BOD.
  - d. Ignored these issues when they were brought to his attention by the board member.

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- e. Temple's confidential mail including bank statements was found opened. When confronted stated that the mail came in the opened state. Even after he was told not to open any temple mail the bank statements were found opened time after time.
- f. Extremely poor accountability—refused to maintain a ledger for outside pujas that was provided by the treasurer last year for accountability purposes.
- g. In spite of genuine efforts during last two years refused to sign a service contract. Never accepted the document stating basic responsibilities and duties.

- 20) Went on extended vacations, 30-60 days of vacation time per year
- 21) Total disregard for requests made by the BOD for proper performance of his duties
- 22) Observation since day 1- Did not know much about puja Vidhis and was trained by Bakshi Pita Ji.
- 23) Papa ji had to perform outside pujas as he refused to go on one pretext or another.
- 24) Calls people and incites them against the board.
- 25) Often was on the phone for extended periods and as a result devotees and other temple responsibilities got ignored.
- 26) Leaves temple unattended and goes to his room.
- 27) Does not take care of items required for puja—e.g. for the Shiva Lingam milk from the previous day was seen lying near the Lingam, hardly cleans the Temple altar and changing the clothing on deities.
- 28) Never does evening puja or aarti regularly, including Ganesh Vandana.
- 29) On occasions, he found to be rude to devotees - stops in the middle of puja to reprimand about small children moving around in the temple.

Based on above observations (All board members contributed to above list of observations) a motion was proposed by Kamal Kharbanda and seconded by Prem Ji.

Motion resolution:

Based on all inputs it is recommended that the board should withdraw its employment offer made to Kailash Shastri Ji and not extend his contract pending to the final legal counsel review and approval.

All members present voted “yes” and the motion was passed.