

Hindu Temple of Florida

General Body meeting held on 11-27-2016

Location: Temple Community Hall

Dear Members and Devotees

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all for General Body meeting of Hindu Temple of Florida. I appreciate you for being here for the meeting on a Holiday weekend. I pray to Lord Satyanarayana and thank him for giving me the opportunity to play a vital role as president of HTFL. It is a huge responsibility to follow the path of predecessors who had a huge success in the evolution of this temple. I am happy to say that, The Hindu community of Tampa is so vibrant with their effort our temple has grown tremendously. Unique identity of our temple is the tallest Rajagopuram in the United States with highly decorated sculptures. It has been attracting not only Tampa bay devotees but also visitors from all over the USA. Our temple has its own specialty in providing religious Pooja's: conducting and performed by our highly qualified priests. Also our prasada sadan is providing Prasad and delicious food for devotees on various religious occasions. Our temple has brought all of the Indian community together.

We welcome all the new members. The HTF incorporated in 1983: the first kumbhabhishekam was on May 19th 1996, followed by Indianization with Gopuram of the temple. With your sincere dedication and sacrifice, it has reached its milestone 20 years. The Hindu temple continues to serve the religious and spiritual needs of the community.

The present executive committee and board of trustees was elected on May 14, 2016 EC meets every month to discuss the finances, activities, keeping records and minutes of the meeting accurately and communicating with the board. Thanks to our secretary, treasurer, vice president for doing a great job. I would like to thank the past EC, board of trustees for their tremendous work in bringing the temple to almost debt free.

Brief report to bring you up to date since our general body meeting in November 2015. We had a successful celebration of our 20th anniversary special event with sahasra kalsa abhisheka in May 2016. The regular daily Pooja activities, monthly poornima and festival pooja's. Grand Ganesh Chaturthi celebration, Ganesha Visarjana, Navarathri and Deepavali celebrations. It was great to see children and young adults participate in Saraswathi Pooja during Navaratri (132 families participated. Young parents bringing their children to participate in the Pooja) , We thank our esteemed priests and the temple staff and attendees for making all this successful.

Articles of incorporation and bylaws:

The Hindu temple of FL is governed by the articles of Inc. and Bylaws, as amended in Dec 2006 and the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of FL. We currently have 33 trustees, 22 of them are elected trustees by the general members and 11 patron trustees. There is an executive committee consisting of

president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, joint secretary and joint treasurer. In addition there are several committees to manage various activities of temple.

I would like to address 3 issues:

1. The new patron trustees, has to be inducted after March 2017.
2. We will keep only life membership to keep the continuity.
3. We would like to have the general body meeting in the first week of December, instead of the last of week of November, as it is a holiday weekend and hard to have a quorum.

I thank the bylaw committee and report will be given by Dr. Chari.

Financial Affairs:

The general revenue of the temple is from puja services, hundi offerings, day to day donations, prasada sadana income and annual fund raising events. I am pleased to say that we are doing well financially: the credit goes to all of you and our dedicated financial committee. We have the monthly expense of \$40- 45 thousand to cover – employee payroll, health insurance, temple insurance, liability insurance ,maintenance, utilities , repairs and prasada sadan expenses. Every year our net income is increasing as well as our expenses also. Thanks to treasurer and joint treasurer, assistant staff and accountant for maintaining all of our accounts and maintaining day to day financial operations, My sincere thanks goes to our CPA Mr. Suresh Kumar and Jaya Shree for their efficiency and commitment in maintaining all the detailed accounts including the IRS form 1099 and donation letters.

Our loan balance has come down to \$110,000. We will be purchasing 2 ½ acres land near the temple for \$285K. We have paid \$25K to escrow account: at the closing we will pay \$200K and the remainder will be paid thru line of credit from Regions bank. We would have been debt free if not for the land we are purchasing. I am confident that with everyone's dedication and hard work, we should be able to make our temple debt free and to continue maintenance with ease.

Fund Raising 2016 and Ongoing Projects:

The fund raising event on Oct 29th was well attended. We collected \$ 158,515.25, from that event and more donations are still coming. (We may reach \$170,000)

I thank Committee chair Dr. M Reddy and team: also thank all the donors for their continued support. Ongoing projects, the compound wall/fence, landscaping, acquiring a ratha for rathotsava. Long term projects, expansion of vidyalaya: library, construct the priest accommodations: Hindu family services trust: and last but not least, the parking lot. My humble request for the devotees to come forward and donate generously for this cause.

The annex is completed and have certificate except for yagasala. We are waiting for fire marshal approval to have homakunda inside.

Indianization of the annex is continuing and will be finished in about 3-4 months. Jay Kanth and Parmaiah are working on it. Temple and Annex roof leak have been repaired. . Priest quarters repairs were also completed: shutters of garbagudi are all finished: which was donated by Dr. Manjul Derasari. Our sincere thanks to them. (We are trying to procure additional security, enforcement from the county and the security company)

Facia of the Maha Dwara was redone: which was donated by Vijaya Dasika. Our sincere thanks to him.

The names on the steps are going to be installed soon.

They building committee meets every week and I appreciate their commitment and time. Bipin Parek and Nagabhushan and their team are helping the temple in maintenance activities such as air conditioning, leakage and repairs etc. The building committee will go over their report.

Membership:

Our temple is growing in all respects: the membership has also shown a significant increase in the last 3 years. Currently we have at least 520 members. Our hearty welcome to all the new members. At present the members are eligible to participate in all the activities and attend the general body meeting and each family eligible for 2 votes during elections. We need to discuss about providing more benefits for them in due course.

Staff / Personnel:

Now the hindu temple has a total of 4 qualified priests, 2 administrative assistants, 1 manager as well as 2 prasad sadan paricharakas and 1 prasada sadan assistant. We also have 3 cleaning personnel on the pay roll. There are a total of 9 full time and 3 part time employees also on the payroll. Our sincere commendation to them for their work.

Real Estate:

The Hindu temple owns the main and annex building on the 3 acres of land. The parking lot is shared between the temple and India Culture Center (ICC). In addition the temple owns 3 other properties in the neighborhood that are housing our priest and staff. The temple is renting 2 other properties in the neighborhood for our priest and staff.

2 ½ acres of land in the vicinity. The asking price for this land is \$285K: We have already given \$25K to escrow. After the survey and the requirement are finished, then we should be able to acquire the land.

Volunteers:

Hindu temple is managed and run by the volunteers which includes the Executive Committee (EC), Board of Trustees (BoT) and all the committees'. The volunteers play a major role in assisting the special events and food distribution on all occasions. Vidyalaya activities promote language classes, Shloka classes, Bhagavatha classes for all age groups. It is our vision to expand these activities to reach our youngsters in an ongoing basis about faith, culture and heritage. I appreciate the volunteer committee.

Website and email communication:

The temple website is www.htfl.org: all the announcements are made on the website.

The website has annual temple calendar: Pooja / Seva can be requested and paid on the website. We have been trying to improve by adding recent photos, activities of both past and present. The temple has an email list for devotees and all announcements, Special Pooja information are communicated thru the email. Devotees can update their email address directly on the web page, so that they do not miss any communications.

Web committee is also helping non-Indians to have a tour of the temple and learn about Hinduism.

Front desk, Prasada, Cash and Card receipts:

The temple has a seamless web integrated system for receipts both at the front desk and prasada sadan. Ipad/PC system can take the order and within seconds the receipt is sent to the donor. This has helped the accounting process tremendously. We need to motivate our devotees to make use of the opportunity to do private Pooja either in the temple or at home. Prasada Sadan is providing delicious food and prasada for all the religious occasions. Our prasada sadan is extremely busy during the weekends. We are looking into ways on how to improve and make our members comfortable by not having to wait in long line. We are thinking of modifying the prasada sadan.

Religious Activities:

Our main purpose of the temple is to conduct daily religious worship of all our deities as prescribed in our Agama Shastra. Our esteemed priests are highly qualified in Agamaas and have been responsible for maintaining sanctity of our temple. Attendance of devotees not only at major festivals but in daily events also has increased.

All the major festivals are celebrated with religious worship as well as cultural performance. The New Year started with the busiest day and I have already mentioned all the festivals, monthly poornima Pooja and 20th anniversary celebration. Our religious committee chair Dr. Sreenath will be giving a report later. My sincere thanks to him and the committee.

Private Poojas:

Our temple priests are performing religious events at homes for devotees as well as in our temple. Vahana Pooja's are done at the temple. This also has increased. Our priests are striving to schedule private pujas for devotees, by trying to accommodate as many as possible. Members can call the front desk for schedule. We thank Uma and Jayaprakash for managing the desk.

Prasada Sadan:

This is one of our important branch of the temple.

Prasada sadan prepares the daily naivedyam to all the deities. The temple offers annadana, three times a year – at ganesha festival, ganesha visarjana and deepavali dinner. Ganesha festival dinner seva and visarjana seva has been provided by 2 devotees.

Our temple is popular for the annadanam and mahaprasadam during all of the major festivals performed at the temple. My sincere thanks for the devotees for their seva, In addition, prasada sadan is serving our devotees with delicious food during the weekend: masala dosa, onion dosa etc. are highly popular as you know. Prasada sadan also provides delicious food for religious festivals and other functions at the homes of our devotees. The revenue from the Prasad sadan continues to grow and is an important component of our total revenue. It is a requirement to expand our prasada sadan to provide more space. I am sure we can accomplish this with all of your support.

Cultural Activities:

HTF conducts the Hindu religious and cultural activities throughout the year. Community participation has shown a tremendous increase during all cultural activities. Including participation of the youth. The cultural activities report will be given by the cultural committee chair Sunita Sharavanan.

Food Committee:

I appreciate the food committee helping and assisting in prasada sadan and making sure that our priestly cooks and other helpers are efficient. The volunteers are organized by the food committee. The report will be given by the committee chair Uma Setty. Our thanks to all of them.

Vidyalaya Activities and Discourse Committee:

I have already mentioned that we have classes for all ages. The report will be given the chair – Lakshmi Murthy and Ramakrishna.

The temple is also renting out the space for private teachers for classical dance, music and group meetings, stage rehearsals etc.

Community Hall:

The community hall is rented to private individuals or associations on a first come first serve basis. It has been used not only for private functions but also for music concerts, cultural events hosted by different associations, yoga seminars, and spiritual discourses. At this time I would like to mention that the temple conducts a yoga seminar every year. The temple hall is also used for mahaprasadam distribution during all major festivals and events when there are more than 100 people. Hall rental activity is managed by Jaya Prakash.

Charity and Out – Reach Committee:

This year we have started our thanks giving donations to homeless shelters: we gave \$250 and it provided food for 50 people. Also this time we sent thanks giving gesture to our neighbors in Williams road and Lynn road by giving them fruits, candies and a thanks giving card. We are also giving a \$500

scholarship for a needy student in Leto High school, in this neighborhood. This will be the 3rd time that we have given scholarship: usually this money comes from the health fair. We conduct health fair every year and this has been the 19th year of holding the health fair.

My sincere thanks to the Doctors organizing the Health Fair. This year we are including hindu family services in our project. Devotees can donate exclusively for that cause and will keep that money to give to families in need. We are in the process of streamlining the outreach committee for families in need.

Special mention to volunteers who have been making garlands every week, since day one. All flower decorations are by these dedicated devotees. Our sincere thanks to devotees who have donated Vajrangi, Muthangi, Kavacha and Prabhavalies to deities. This temple belongs to every hindu community. We request all of you to take part in all the activities.

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to all the past and present presidents, board of trustees, EC, fund raising and all the other committees. My special thanks to our esteemed priests, all the devotees, volunteers and each and every one who has donated time, effort and money in making this temple the center of our culture and faith.

I request, all of us to come together and be a good example of practicing what we preach. That is true values by accepting each other regardless of our differences. I look forward to members input and cooperation to continue to grow the organization to a higher level of excellence. Last but not least, it is because of you, devotees that the temple stands strong year after year: has become a strong pillar of hope and faith for several generations to come.

Sincerely Yours,

Best Wishes

Renuka Ramappa

President HTF