

REPORT TO THE TSEGYALGAR EAST ON THE CONWAY SCHOOLHOUSE

INTRODUCTION - The Dzogchen Community in America, Tsegylgar East (TE,) has owned the Conway Massachusetts Schoolhouse since 1994. It was purchased with the full support and encouragement of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and over many years Rinpoche offered numerous important teaching retreats in the Schoolhouse gompa. The Schoolhouse has also provided space for offices, library, bookstore, dormitories, vajra dance and community meditation events. Portions of the Schoolhouse are rented by the School for Tibetan Medicine for teaching, practice and residential purposes.

Periodically the Community has questioned the value and utility of the Schoolhouse without ever making a definitive decision or commitment to its continued function as a community facility. With the many changes that are occurring in the membership of the TE Community, an objective assessment of the facility and its uses was conducted in order to provide the members with a solid base of facts for decision making.

CONWAY SCHOOLHOUSE FACT-FINDING GROUP MISSION - A group of members volunteered to assist in gathering three categories of information about the Schoolhouse, 1) Facility Usage, 2) Cost of Facility Operation, and 3) the current Condition of the Building. Emily Luhys and India Lehr-Farrier reported on Facility Usage, Will Shea reviewed and reported on the Cost of Operation, and Jim Smith and Vern Harrington inspected the building and reported on its current condition.

I. FACILITY USAGE - A summary of the various facility spaces is as follows:

- Residence for Geko - not currently in use
- Indoor practice space - Gonpa
- Indoor Mandala - Gonpa
- Accommodations for TE guests
- Accommodations for STM guests
- Library- housing TE archives
- TE Storage space - office and basement
- SSI rental space:
 - Residence for Phuntsog and Yeshe and Tseyang
 - SSI STM - Office - ongoing Zoom teaching and consultation space - receive monthly rent
 - Live Classroom space for STM intensives (about 3 months year)
 - SS USA bookstore -
- Khandroling Paper Co-op - storage and workshop space

1.What space is occupied by SSI and what percentage of the overall space

is this?

School of Tibetan Medicine

- 2 bedrooms upstairs occupied by Phuntsog Wangmo and Yeshe Tsomo
- communal Kitchen
- Phuntsog's office - Zoom classes, occasional private consults with patients
- Library - only used for Public Zoom events and during in-person classes
- Gonpa- a few hours a day during 2 week intensive for Kunye and practicals
- Most zoom classes are done from Phuntsog's room

Shang Shung USA Bookstore

- Because of the pandemic bookstore is closed for general public. ● Helena, bookstore staff comes once per week to prepare and send the orders.

2.How many days per year does SSI- School of Tibetan Medicine utilize the teaching spaces of the library, offices and gompa?

- 2 weeks per season, per class. (Mid-March-mid April, Summer, September) in Library in-person. Few hours per day, during in-person sessions in Gompa.
- Right now that totals 12 weeks, (as there are 2 cohorts a 2 weeks each) likely there will not be in person classes until summer and/or Fall ○ Daily Zoom from Office and Phuntsog's room

3. What spaces does TE utilize and how many days/month?

GOMPA:

- Pre-pandemic, TE utilized the Gompa for approximately 3-6 practices per week, Ganapujas ranging from 3 -20 people, and 1 weekend retreat per 4-8 weeks (including those participating virtually).
- Since the pandemic, the space is rarely used by practitioners. Individuals or small groups will practice (mostly dance) 1-2x week. Zoom leaders used space to Zoom from Gonpa and may plan to continue to do so. We had a few Ganapujas in-person but has lessened since the summer and with increasing risk. It is remaining an option for people comfortable

practicing there, but we have yet to plan formal in-person events in the Gumpa as of Sept 2021.

- When safe, the space could be used as before, and continuing to welcome virtual participants with the new flat screen TV and improved AV set-up.

OFFICE:

- Not active. Storage area for papers, mail, computer for bookkeeping purposes. Shared with STM. STM would eventually like to have someone using it, but not used now. Storage for the last 2 years. Mostly to pick up mail and check voicemail. Blue Gakyil uses occasionally to get supplies. New bookkeeper is in Shelburne Falls. Our volunteer secretary responds to email from home computer and goes to schoolhouse and post office to check mail. There is a printer and computer that stays on for remote access to Quickbooks.

ACCOMMODATIONS (for guests)

- 2 private rooms, one with a private bathroom are available for personal retreats
- dorm available for community rentals. Up to 8 people (less during pandemic)
- Downstairs bathrooms
- <https://www.tsegyalgar.org/accommodations/schoolhouse-khandroling/schoolhouse-accommodations/>

During summer retreat 2021: 2 - 4 guests total

STM - fall 2021: 2 students for two weeks. Anticipated for Summer 2022: 3-7 students total per class

LIBRARY

Houses large TE text, audio and video archives- managed by Marit Cranmer. Library available for practitioners. Occasionally practitioners loan books, less frequently used now.

4.How else is the facility being used?

- Khandroling Paper Cooperative uses basement for storage and workshops. They held outdoor workshops this summer for public 1/week for two hours. Plans to continue weekly or bi-weekly workshops in Fall, both in-person and online. Usually a few people.

- Basement: Laundry room and Storage of supplies.

Numbers:

We have 70 people on our local TE google group. Not everyone is local to the area but most are. We have 20-30 active local members participating in Schoolhouse events. In-person retreats average.

2021 Summer Sangha Retreat had up to 45 in-person. Of those approximately 16 were local and additional 5-6 in northeast region that can more easily participate in local events. All was outside at Vajra Hall. 2-4 people stayed in dorm at Schoolhouse.

Former and current members list- 404 people (Kundrolling and TE combined). Current members 232.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE - Based on the information gathered on the above questions, what are some possible options for the TE Community to consider for its future facility needs?

At this point, TE is not utilizing much of the space at all due to Covid. We are having discussions about a Winter Retreat of one or two weekends, as well as resuming regular ganapujas and weekly practices in the gompa. The main space that is used is the residents' space, upstairs and STM office downstairs. People love to practice together and have been meeting at Khandroling over the summer.

The space is large for the amount of locals here. When we do have in-person retreats, since Rinpoche's passing, there have been max 20 people in addition to connecting with more on Zoom. We also now have high-quality AV set-up for Zoom from Gompa.

II. FINANCIAL ISSUES - Review and analysis of the Schoolhouse finances involved a review of the Community's 2020 P&L and Balance Sheets and projections for 2021 and 2022. A summary of the 2020 expense categories for the various Community facilities (first table below) recorded that the Schoolhouse represented 21% of T-E's total expenses, after the assignment of the allocable costs of insurance and geko's time / salary. Although the mortgage is recorded as schoolhouse expense, a portion (est. 40%) was also used for the purchase of Lower Khandroling; a reclassification has been included to reflect this.

Projections for 2021 and 2022 forecast a continued overall trend from 2020. Increases in expenses are offset by the increased rental income from SSI from \$500 to \$1,000 per month during 2021. The expense projections utilize average trends and inflation factors; this is subject to volatility of commodity prices. In any case, it is expected that the schoolhouse expenses range between 21-25% of T-E total expenses in a given year.

Draft - for discussion purposes
202 Expenses by Category

2020 QB P&L	Preliminary 2020 Jan - Dec	Allocations/ Adjustments Insurance	Allocations/ Adjustments Payroll	Allocations/ Adjustments Mortgage	2020 Adjusted	% of Total Expense
Expenses						
Schoolhouse	\$ 24,642	5,118	3,400	(2,240)	\$ 30,920	21%
Upper Khandroling	32,060	7,589	12,580		\$ 52,229	35%
Lower Khandroling	4,054	3,317	680	2,240	\$ 10,291	7%
Dark Retreat Cabin	690	492	340		\$ 1,522	1%
Payroll Expenses	25,942		(25,942)		\$ -	0%
Insurance	20,162	(20,162)			\$ -	0%
General Admin - & Other	7,760	3,646	8,942		\$ 20,348	14%
Dzamling Gar House	15,000				\$ 15,000	10%
IDC Membership Contribution	16,272				\$ 16,272	11%
Retreat Program Expense	4,097				\$ 4,097	3%
Total Expenses	\$ 150,679	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150,679	100%

Notes:

Excludes Depreciation Expense

Payroll Allocation per David's time estimates

Assumes 60% of mortgage is for schoolhouse debt

Draft - for discussion purposes

Schoolhouse Finances	Unaudited 2020 Jan - Dec	Preliminary 2021 Jan - Jun	Projected 2021 Jan - Dec	Projected 2022 Jan - Dec
Income				
Restricted Donations - (Identifiable) for Schoolhouse Repairs	\$ 3,810	\$ 2,328	\$ 2,328	\$ -
Usage Fees Shang Shung / Bookstore				
Shang Shung / Bookstore (1)	6,630	4,001	10,001	12,000
Dorm Fees:				
Dzogchen Community			453	600
Shang Shung students			560	672
Total Dorm Fees	-	0	1,013	1,272
Total Schoolhouse Donation and Usage Fees	\$ 10,440	\$ 6,329	\$ 13,342	\$ 13,272

(1) Shang Shung monthly rent increased from \$500 to \$1,000 in 2021

(2) There were \$453 DCA dorm fees in July '21

Expenses

Schoolhouse				
Plowing	\$ 680	\$ 475	\$ 700	721
Repairs and Maintenance	5,718	6,414	6,614	4,000
Utilities				
Cable	2,430	1,706	3,763	3,875
Electric	4,763	1,537	3,089	3,182
Propane	5,452	4,334	5,699	5,870
Total Utilities	12,644	7,577	12,551	12,927
Applicable portion- 20% of Geko's salary & payroll tax	3,400	2,176	3,400	3,400
Subtotal - Operations and Repairs	\$ 22,442	\$ 16,642	\$ 23,265	\$ 21,049
Insurance - Property	4,618	4,687	5,302	5,461
Liability	500	508	531	547
Mortgage - Interest Expense (3)	3,360	1,680	3,360	3,360
Total Schoolhouse Expenses	\$ 30,920	\$ 23,516	\$ 32,458	\$ 30,416
Net of Restricted donations and Usage Fees	\$ 20,480	\$ 17,187	\$ 19,116	\$ 17,144
- Funded by Memberships and Unrestricted Donations				

Balance Sheet 6/30/21

Conway Property

Assets

Conway Improvements	\$ 196,539
Conway Land	45,000
Conway Property - Other	128,575
Subtotal	370,114
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(238,008)
Total Conway Property	\$ 132,106

Liabilities

Mortgage (2)	\$ 87,224
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(3) The purchase of lower Khandroling was added to the Schoolhouse Mortgage

Notes / Assumptions

Inflation estimate %	1.5% for July-Dec '21, 3% for 2022	1.015	1.03	1.50%	3.00%
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2021 Year End expenses based on the ratio of 2020 Total to six months applied to 2021 six months.

III. THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE BUILDING - An informal inspection of the schoolhouse revealed the following:

Basement:

- the furnace is new and looks like it has many years of life to go •
- The humidifier is working but needs to be emptied periodically
- The recent problem with a plumbing pipe has been repaired and the floor has been patched.
 - Laundry is functioning
 - Supply room is neat and organized

First Floor:

- Both bathrooms have been refurbished
- Library in good condition, former leak from the roof is not a concern

Second Floor

- Guest bedroom has been remodeled
- Kitchen is functional but updating is needed
- Dorms are comfortable with some new mattresses; new carpeting is needed

Attic

- Has been completely insulated and appears leak free

Gompa

- The new heating system and air filtration system is working well
- Heavy curtains are ready for winter
- Basement not inspected
- Ceiling tiles have been replaced

Exterior

- The trim around the windows, corner moldings, soffits and cornice are all in need of scraping and painting. This is a major repair that should be initiated in the spring of 2022. It could be handled over 3-4 years at a cost of \$2000/year, or a one-time cost of \$8000
- The roof was not directly inspected but there is no sign of leaking and some periodic improvements have been made. \$3000/year should be allocated for annual maintenance and improvements on the slate roof.
- Fire escape has been updated
- There's some need for repointing on the brickwork

Leach field

- Was redone some years ago and is up to code

General Considerations:

- The windows throughout the main building need to be secured with the top sash fixed so they can be locked and sealed. This is resulting in the loss of heat and are hard to open in the summer.
- Some improved landscaping would add to the general appearance of the building.

IV. CONCLUSIONS: Some of the most important findings about the Schoolhouse:

- A. The Schoolhouse provides spaces for a wide variety of uses including the gompa for teachings, community practices including Vajra Dance and spaces for the community's archival materials in the library, the bookstore and offices. In addition, it provides space for the Tibetan School of Medicine classes and practicum as well as residential space for teachers and students. In effect, the Schoolhouse provides a public identity for the Dzogchen Community.
- B. The cost of maintaining the Schoolhouse represents approximately 21%-25% of our total annual operating expense
- C. The basic operating systems of the Schoolhouse including heating, air filtration, plumbing, insulation, fire safety and septic are all in reasonably good working order. Work is required on the exterior painting and ongoing maintenance of the slate roof.
- D. The cost of replacing the multiple venues of the Schoolhouse, either totally or partially, would seem to be beyond the financial capacity of TE at this time.
- E. While this process of gathering facts was directed specifically at the Schoolhouse, it points to the need for the TE Community to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of its programs, properties and finances leading to a long-range strategic plan for the Community.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS: With the understanding that this report only addresses the current issues pertaining to the Conway Schoolhouse and not the entirety on TE's properties, the Fact Finding Group makes the following recommendations to the members of Tsegyalgar East:

1 Until a more comprehensive plan for all TE's programs, facilities and finances can be conducted, it is recommended that TE commit itself to the ongoing multiple uses of the Conway Schoolhouse including in-person and online

practices and teachings, Vajra Dance, library archive, offices, and Shang Shung Institute's School of Tibetan Medicine and bookstore.

2. That TE commits to the ongoing maintenance of the building including making incremental improvements such as the beautification of the gompa and the dormitories.

3. That TE continue to recognize that the Schoolhouse is the Seat of the Shang Shung Institute in America and that we continue to seek opportunities to integrate the vast knowledge of the Director of the School of Tibetan Medicine with the Community's activities and events.