



Grand Lodge of Virginia
Independent Order of Odd Fellows
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November 16, 2015

To all Lodges under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Virginia,

By now the news of the Closing of the Oddfellows Home of Virginia is being circulated throughout the State. I am receiving phone calls and emails from members wanting to know the cause. I feel it necessary that every member know the basic facts to date. This letter is to be the official reply and information for those requests.

The "Home" is a certified Assistance Living Facility and under the direction of the Department of Social Services and must comply to strict regulations set by the State and enforcement inspections are a regular occurrence. When an infraction is found, it is recorded and brought to the attention of the Administrator. Depending on the infraction, correction methods and penalties are stated as well.

The Home Board is the governing body elected by the Grand Lodge of Virginia and Rebekah Assembly of Virginia, to act in accordance to the bylaws and code of Virginia in the ruling of the business operation of the "Home". The Board can not close or sell the Home without following the guidelines, Trustee involvement and vote of the Grand Lodge and Rebekah Assembly.

On November 3rd, 2015 the Board Chairman notified the members that an emergency call meeting was being held on Friday, November 6th for an important matter. The reason was not disclosed in the email notice. At the meeting, the Board was advised that a notice of closure due to complaints and infractions found by the State. The Home Attorney was present to give legal advice .

Due to a total of 26 infractions and coupled by complaints of some Home Staff to the DSS, the State had elected to close the home on the 17th of November. An appeal could be filed before this date if the Home so desired. The Board had to make a decision on that date to meet the deadline. It was advised by the Attorney not to file an appeal, that it was very unlikely that it would be granted and the cost to just file would be in five figures. If by an outside change we were granted an appeal hearing, the original closure order would most likely be upheld . After the Board heard the merits for the closing order and with the advice of the Attorney, a vote was held and carried to not file an appeal. The board did not vote to close or sell the Home as some rumors have it. This must be done by direction of our bylaws and state code. The call meeting was only for the vote to appeal or not. No other business could be discussed.

The Attorney advised the DSS of the decision and on Monday the efforts were started to re-locate residents to other facilities. Sister Royal, the Rebekah member living there, will be cared for the rest of her life at another facility as she was at the Home.

"We Seek To Elevate The Character Of Man"



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The Home operates at a loss. The investments are flexible and down some due to the stock market at this time. When the Administrator's report was given at the Board meetings, infractions were advised, but noted they were being taken care of and if enforcement was made, it would most likely be in the form of probation. The Board felt comfortable the Administrator was handling this and were unaware of the closure notice until the day of the special meeting. As Grand Master, I too was not made aware of this when it first came to the attention of the Home Administrator and Chairman of the Board.

We can not change what has been done to date. The Home will be closed as soon as the residents can be relocated and moved, and employees leave. The future of the Home property and assets are uncertain, but restructure and staffing considerations have yet to be discussed.

As your Grand Master, I feel an obligation to the general membership to inform everyone of the basic facts of the matter and how it came about. To go beyond this and comment on any internal problems and possible future investigations and actions that may be taken, would not be in the best interest of the Order at present. A full report will be made at the Grand Session, as is required. If a special call meeting of the Grand Lodge is found necessary, it will be done as well.

The infractions are a matter of public record, which may be found on line under the Commonwealth of Virginia web site searching DSS and Assisted Living Facilities. Any speculation beyond what is outlined in this letter and found on line, is just that, pure speculation and assumption.

I will answer any letters, emails or calls to me pertaining to this matter, but will not go beyond the statement of facts herein contained.

Fraternally,

David Carter., Grand Master

Jack Gibson, Jr., Grand Secretary