

Feb 2, 2025

5pm EST – 7pm EST

In attendance: Elanda Tonil, Yenie Antagar, Anonymous Member 1, Former Member 1, Anonymous Member 2

Elanda Tonil and Yenie Antagar met with Anonymous Member 1, Former Member 1, and Anonymous Member 2. Elanda and Yenie were there as representatives of the TarValon.Net Board of Directors. Anonymous Member 1, Former Member, and Anonymous Member 2 were there as representatives of a group of TarValon.Net members who have submitted a petition with suggested ways to improve the culture and administration of TarValon.Net. This meeting's purpose was to clarify the points in the petition and improve understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the members represented in the petition.

The meeting was separated into two parts. The first part consisted of the petition representatives explaining their understanding of and experiences in and around the recent problems at TarValon.Net. The second was the Board members asking questions the Board had compiled to further their understanding.

The petitioners described what they perceive as a cultural shift in the community, shifting from a community of friends to a more corporate, authoritative environment. This was demonstrated in the use of titles such as "CEO" and "COO" instead of "Amyrlin" and "Keeper." This shift is problematic for them because it has made it feel less like a community being led by one of us who stepped in to help, and more like a boss at work passing down edicts with little or no recourse.

They were very concerned about a mismatch between Officer responsibilities and the skills and temperaments of current and recent Officers. Several instances were raised of Officers, past or present, venting in various spaces within their jurisdiction specifically about their positions at TarValon.Net. While everyone needs to have someone they can vent to, and all parties agreed with that, the petitioners presented the position that venting regarding their duties to the community needs to be confined to their direct peers (Amyrlin, Keeper, Cordamora), or unaffiliated parties (at RL knitting nights, to RL coworkers, or other people not affiliated with the community).

A lack of meaningful accountability for the Officers was another concern raised. Members of TarValon.Net are held accountable for their actions by the Moderators, their Membership Admin, and the Officers. The Officers are held accountable for their actions only by the Board of Directors and the Board has, historically, been reluctant to actually act as a check on the Officers. They believe there needs to be a meaningful way for the membership to hold the Officers accountable for egregious actions that harm the community.

All participants in the meeting agreed that the community is divided into factions right now. The petitioners believe this has been caused by a lack of leadership from, primarily but not necessarily exclusively, the Officers, specifically the Amyrlin and former Cordamora. They posit

that this division has been caused or exacerbated by behaviors (improper communication within the community, actions which appear retaliatory, policy changes applied retroactively) of these Officers. The Board recorded specifics and will investigate the matter.

The combination of these factors has caused the crisis of confidence in the TarValon.Net leadership the petition expressed.

The petition was shared in the spirit of brainstorming. They don't expect every suggestion to be implemented, but hope the community can use these ideas as a starting place to bring us back to a community instead of a corporate environment. TarValon.Net has long been a place where we can all come to set down the weights we carry in everyday life, where we can all relax and have fun. But in the past few years, it feels like we all need to have our guard up all the time.

The Board members asked several questions about specifics contained in the petition.

Clarify confidentiality expectations:

- There should be a distinction, both in understanding and in punishment severity for improper sharing, between Confidential information (personal info, sensitive info, things that can hurt people) and Private information (upcoming Raisings, typical DMs, etc.).
- The Hall NDA should be less intense.
- GDPR compliance. We should know who has access to our info, what info is being stored, and how it's being used.

Some things the CoC should have

- Whistleblowing provision. (Sharing private info, raising awareness of a situation that has the potential to harm the wider community). There can, and should, be a structure around how to whistleblow, but there needs to be no repercussions or consequences for doing so.
- Emotional safety for our members, provisions to handle anti-semitism, LGBT+ safety, etc.

Changes to the Board

- Original idea called for 9 so there could be 3 rotating groups of 3, but due to community size, 7 is more feasible. There should be an odd number to prevent ties. It needs to be large enough to have a reasonable quorum size.
- Terms for the Board prevents it from being too insular. Members rotate through so a variety of views go through. Gives the Board a less confrontational way to usher out a Board member who isn't participating. Helps Board members not linger after they're emotionally done with the position.

Changes to the Hall

- The basic takeaway: less confidentiality, more representation.

- Being more representative enables the membership to take more ownership of the community culture, gives us all a sense of agency, a sense of having skin in the game. It restores meaning to the position.
- Decisions made will lie on the Hall members instead of the leadership.
- There will still be some conflict. Some members will still hold on to prejudices.

The participants discussed more than this, but this is a representative sample of the topics covered and the discussions that were had. The Board members appreciated the consideration and effort the petitioners put into preparing for this meeting. The meeting was carried out in a productive manner with an attitude of collaborating toward further understanding. Elanda and Yenie have taken the discussion back to the full Board to consider these perspectives along with additional opinions from across the community.