

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
The Jewish Center of Princeton
Wednesday, August 12, 2015**

Board Meeting Attendees: Naomi Perlman, Jeannette Timmons, Fred Appel, Ginger Schnitzer, Phil Carchman, Michael Bloom, Jonathan Gershen, Jon Shavel, Dan Brent, Steve Hudis, Bob Garber, Gil Gordon, Suki Wasserman, Steven Hubert, Stephanie Will, Polly Strauss, Helaine Isaacs, Linda Milstein, Randy Brett, Judi Fleitman, Linda Grenis, Heidi Shegoski

TJC Congregants in Attendance: Ruth Schulman, Rob Goldston, Bob Goldenberg, and Sherry Rosen

TJC Staff Attendees: Rabbi Feldman, Phil Nordlinger, and Neil Wise

1. Call to Order (Naomi Perlman)

- (a) Meeting called to order at 7:06 pm by President Naomi Perlman.

2. Approval of Prior Minutes and consent agendas (Naomi Perlman)

- (a) A motion was made by Jonathan Gershen to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 18, 2015 – and to approve the consent agendas prepared by the Vice-Presidents and distributed to Board members before this meeting. Phil Carchman seconded. The minutes and consent agendas were approved with four abstentions.
- (b) The minutes of the June 2015 meeting and all future minutes will be posted on TJC website as soon as possible. The goal is to have them accessible to congregants via passwords. Fred will work with congregant Bob Weber on this.

3. Good and Welfare (Naomi Perlman)

- (a) Steve Hudis announced the birth of his new grandson.
- (b) Michael Bloom reported on his family's recent visit to Israel and of a family tree planning ceremony.
- (c) Appreciation was extended to Bob Weber for setting up High Holiday honors system and to Judi Fleitman for organizing Shabbat kiddish lunches during the summer.

4. Fundraising (Neil Wise, Director of Programming and Development)

- (a) Neil noted that he will provide a detailed presentation on all fundraising initiatives – current and future - at TJC at the September 17, 2015 Board meeting.
- (b) Neil discussed this year's Annual Fund initiative. He explained a new "personalize a brick" program. Congregants who at least match their annual fund contribution of the previous year would have the opportunity of purchasing a brick on our new community walkway. There are three brick sizes. A small brick is worth \$180; a medium brick will cost \$360; the largest brick will cost \$720.

- (c) As in previous years 100% Board participation in the Annual Fund is to be desired, and ideally by the High Holidays. Neil will be contacting individual Board members in the coming weeks about this.
- (d) Neil also made mention of a November fundraiser, to be held on Election Day. It will involve a brunch and silent auction. Details to come.

5. President's Report (Naomi Perlman)

- (a) Naomi began with comments on the state of the synagogue's membership. Membership is trending lower than budget projections. We now have 488 billable families, or 18 families under the current year's budget projections. Most of the resignations are connected with a clean-up of the membership rolls; i.e. congregant families who haven't paid dues in years but who have remained members. Other resignations are connected with congregants moving out of the community; the passing of seniors is a third reason. There are other motives too and the importance of outreach to these congregants was stressed. A member of the clergy and the VP Administration is contacting each congregant household that has expressed an intention to resign.
- (b) Naomi provided an update on "Resetting the Table: The Israel Dialogue", the initiative planned with the organization headed by Rabbi Melissa Weintraub (RMW). RMW understands the need to expedite this process.
 - a. RMW will be doing phone interviews with 15-20 congregants representing different age groups, statuses, and opinions re: Israel advocacy before the High Holidays. This is an information gathering exercise. The names of the 15-20 congregants with whom RMW will speak during August and September will be made public.
 - b. On October 21st and 22nd RMW will be coming to TJC with her staff to facilitate two 5 hour workshops involving 40 congregants each. The focus of the workshops will be process, rather than content. The skills worked on will concern how to address deep conflict and disagreement in constructive, respectful ways so as to make all participants feel heard and respected. Workshop participants will include a combination of congregant volunteers and other congregants invited by the President and Head Rabbi – the goal being to ensure a representative sample of congregational views re: Israel advocacy.
 - c. Following the workshops, RMW will design a survey intended for the entire congregation to complete (in December 2015 and January 2016).
 - d. RMW will then return to Princeton during last Shabbat of February 2016 with up to 20 facilitators over that weekend. A "town square-style" event is planned for Saturday February 27, 2016.
 - e. The end goal is less about a series of concrete recommendations than an exercise in which congregants learn to discuss Israel advocacy issues with each other in a more respectful, productive way. During this process (through end of Feb/16) there will be no Israel-related political advocacy programs at TJC.

6. Administrative Report (Phil Nordlinger)

- (a) Phil reported on the successful on paver replacement work.
- (b) New wallpaper will be installed in main lobby and front lobby – project to start within weeks (in August 2015) and completed by Rosh Hashanah.

- (c) Phil added comments on the membership rolls, emphasizing the importance of contacting congregants who are not current with their dues.
- (d) A new procedure for synagogue room rentals is being worked out – to ensure that staff has more lead time for private congregant events.

7. Clergy Report (Rabbi Feldman)

- (a) Rabbi Feldman acknowledged the hard work done by TJC staff this summer.
- (b) Re: High Holidays – as part of a Young Family Initiative, there will be a special young family kiddish at the tent on the synagogue grounds. Board members are encouraged to introduce themselves to new congregants, in particular those with young children.
- (c) Clergy trips with congregants are currently being planned for 2016: at this time Rabbi Feldman plans to journey with a group of interested congregants to Poland in July 2016; and Hazzan Dulkan has plans to travel with a group of Jewish Center families to Israel in December 2016.
- (d) The Conservative movement's new Siddur is being published by December. Hazzan Dulkan is on the editorial committee.
- (e) There was also a short presentation about the section of the Princeton cemetery consecrated for Jewish burial and designated for The Jewish Center members: arrangements have been made for five plots purchased by individual congregants to be gifted to TJC in perpetuity. The plots will remain vacant.

8. Finance Report (Jonathan Gershen)

- (a) Jonathan Gershen took the Board through the operating budget of the current FY (up to July 31, 2015).

9. Additional VP Reports

- (a) Judi Fleitman distributed a sign-up sheet for Board members to volunteer to make presentations to Bar/Bat Mitzvahs on shabbat mornings.
- (b) Ginger Schnitzer reported on enrollments for Religious Schools for 2015-16. She reiterated her recommendation that the ECE not continue in 2016-17 (the season after this one). Parents of children enrolled in ECE this coming season will be contacted. This will be an item on the agenda of the next Board meeting (Sept 17th). Interested ECE parents will be invited to attend to speak to the issue.
- (c) Jeanette Timmons reported that the programming guide will be sent out to congregants after Sept newsletter is distributed. She also mentioned several upcoming events, including a congregational Sukkot dinner on Friday Oct 2nd and the Richard B Fishbane Shabbat Tribute evening – Friday Sept. 18, 2015.

10. New Business

- (a) Congregant Ruth Schulman expressed support and gratitude for the recent decision to post minutes of TJC Board meetings on the synagogue website.
- (b) Ruth Schulman also inquired about the motion passed by the congregation at the last annual congregational meeting of May, 2015, re: restarting TJC's Israel advocacy programs. The question concerns who is to be responsible for enacting the motion after the RMW "Setting the

Table” initiative is complete, and how the motion would be implemented. There was discussion about this matter.

- (c) Rob Goldston asked how the shul determines what constitutes Israel political advocacy and what does not during 2015-16. It was noted that the Israel Affairs Committee has already books several Israel-related programs for 2015-16 that clearly do not fall under the rubric of political advocacy – one including featuring Magen Dovid Adom.

11. Executive Session

- (a) Items discussed in this section concern confidential matters – such as (but not limited to) personnel.

12. Adjournment

- (a) Naomi P. adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Fred Appel
Recording Secretary