



General Board Meeting - August 23, 2020

Present:

Barbara Abramson	Helaine Isaacs	Dana Molina (guest)
Alexandra Bar-Cohen	Bret Jacknow	Lauren Neufeld
Joel Berger	Heidi Joseph	Lynne Ross
Rachelle Berkman	Edye Kamenir	Adam Scheer
Randy Brett	Jonathan Katz	Rabbi Elliot Schoenberg
Gabrielle Cayton-Hodges	Judy Kutin	Robert Schwartz
Dane Dickler	Nancy Lewis	Nicole Soffin
Josh Eisenberg	Jenny Ludmer	Polly Strauss
Judi Fleitman (guest)	Moshe Margolin	Cantor Jeff Warschauer
David Greenberg	Andrea Martinez	Tom Will
Samantha Hirschberg	Joshua McCoy	

Minutes:

1. Meeting called to order at 5:02 PM and was held via video conference.
2. **D'var Torah** was delivered by Joshua McCoy.
3. Randy Brett welcomed new Board Member Nancy Lewis as Co-Chair of Religious Affairs, replacing Jay Schnitzer.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
The minutes of the July 12, 2020 Board meeting were approved unanimously in a motion made by Bob Schwartz and seconded by Alexandra Bar-Cohen. See www.thejewishcenter.org/Resources/Board-Minutes.aspx.
4. **Finance Report - Dane Dickler**
 - 4.1 Revenue Review & Commentary
 - On the revenue side, collections are tracking well relative to historical timing, because invoices went out earlier, and congregants are sending in dues on schedule or even a little earlier than usual to help with cash management.
 - TJC received a \$50K anonymous donation for Security, which is helping that revenue line.
 - The \$144K CapEx revenue is not budgeted and came from ULeague termination and escrow moved to income.
 - The \$122K under "Other" was the ULeague security deposit plus \$52K collected on accidental death insurance policy on RAF z"l.

- Loan forgiveness isn't appearing yet on the statement, but that will happen when the PPP loan is officially forgiven by the federal government.

4.2 Expenses Review & Commentary

- On the expense side, we are tracking to budget.
- Education revenue is down relative to last year, because families were invoiced later than usual.

4.3 Membership Discussion

- Membership numbers are at 363 total received packages back. FTE = 218. Dane noted there have been 14 resignations and 6 new members (5 of whom were Exploratory last year). Many resignations were people who moved or passed away; others resigned or froze their membership.
- School enrollment is down, but packets went out late. Challenges were noted to enrollment process. School Committee Co-Chairs to work with Sharon Diamondstein to address technical issues.

4.4 Looking Ahead

- Dane noted that if we do not secure a tenant in the school building next year, there will be \$137K shortfall. Joel Berger has contacted a number of area schools to see if they need additional space.

5. Discussion on Re-Opening for Shabbat and B'nai Mitzvah Protocols - Alexandra Bar-Cohen

5.1 Update on Re-Opening In-Person for Shabbat

- Alexandra noted that the previous day (August 22), TJC successfully opened to 10 people in the sanctuary. Dan Brent ran point on making sure everything went smoothly. Alexandra reviewed the registration protocol and rules inside the shul that were previously circulated. She requested Board members to volunteer to come into the shul to help remind and guide people of the protocols during services. Randy Brett noted some typos in the previously circulated document and that it will have to be re-issued. Randy thanked everyone who helped make this happen, as well as Joel Berger and Cantor Jeff Warschauer.
- Joshua McCoy asked if the Zoom maximum attendee limit could be increased beyond 100 people during larger services. Randy Brett noted that this issue has already been fixed.

5.2 Discussion About B'nai Mitzvah Protocol

- Alexandra noted that this has been a year of struggle and isolation. We are trying to balance safety and security while making the b'nai mitzvah simcha special.
- The document circulated prior to the meeting outlined options for 'in sanctuary' and 'in home' b'nai mitzvah options, written by Cantor Jeff Warschauer, with assistance from Alexandra and Nicole Soffin.
- It is TJC's goal that each child have a simcha that is meaningful and that each family feel celebrated and supported.

- We are working on a Ark Chain project - a socially distant way to involve students to build and construct an ark that would travel from student to student. Peter Smith is volunteering his services to help with construction. The challenge will be transporting an object of that size from home to home.
- Lauren Neufeld asked a clarifying question around use of siddurim in homes when people might not be wearing masks. Randy Brett said that it's difficult to tell people what to do in their own homes, but we are setting things aside (including the Torah) for a number of days before they come back in and go to other families.
- Lauren asked if the Kiddush items in the synagogue are disposable.
- Lauren also asked if grandparents of the b'nai mitzvah do not attend in person in the synagogue, do those spots or places in the sanctuary go to the family or do they go back to the community? Randy answered that it will always be a balance and the document addresses the broad framework. Bret Jacknow wanted to expand on Lauren's point, because he believes the balance should be more in favor of the b'nai mitzvah family.
- Rachelle Berkman asked if we are following the state guidelines on indoor capacity, which appear more lenient than TJC's rules. Josh Eisenberg said that TJC is taking a more conservative approach than the state. The 25 person limit in the sanctuary should increase, but that there are a lot of surges in schools, colleges and other communal places that have opened. We are hoping not to vacillate back and forth, and just take a steady, cautious approach, especially as school re-opens.

6. High Holiday Update - Judi Fleitman

6.1 Overview of the Approach

- Judi reported that the HH Committee was charged with creating the best virtual service possible, knowing that we can't be physically together at this time. The document circulated prior to the meeting outlines the approach to High Holiday services this year. Many portions are pre-filmed, while other portions will be live-streamed from the bimah or from people's homes. Judi recognized the contributions of Cheryl Mintz for her incredible production expertise.

6.2 Questions and Discussion

- Edye Kamenir raised a question around the changed timing for Yizchor, which is moving to end of day on Yom Kippur. Judi answered that because we are trying to condense the main service into 2 hours to avoid Zoom fatigue, it's difficult to fit everything into that time. It was a unanimous decision of the HH Committee to move the service to 5:30PM. The intent is to make it special in honor of RAF z"l, and taking it out of its usual spot gives it more prominence and makes it a focal point.
- Joshua McCoy asked about the link that will be sent out - every household will have their own individual link that can't be shared.
- Randy Brett informed the Board of some decisions made regarding HH tickets for family members and non-members relative to prior years. If someone has adult children in their household, they are included in the membership cost. If someone wants to send the link to a relative, there will not be a charge. Non-members who

belong to another synagogue will also not be charged. All will be asked for a donation. This is considerably less money than we have charged in the past.

- Jenny Ludmer asked what will happen for the Shofar blowing event. That will be a separate event the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah with an opportunity to sign up for a slot and pull up like a drive-in movie.
- Polly Strauss thanked Judi for her contributions and wisdom throughout the process of pulling together this year's High Holiday observances. Randy called Judi our "Broadway Producer" on this.
- Cantor Jeff Warschauer asked where the shofar blowing would be done on the holidays themselves. Judi said it will be done from the shofar blowers' homes live on Zoom during the respective services Rosh Hashanah Day 2 and Yom Kippur. (Rosh Hashanah Day 1 falls on Shabbat this year, so the shofar is not blown).
- Goody bags to congregants will include plastic shofarim, in addition to machzorim and other goodies. Bret Jacknow asked when the goody bags will be going out. Judi said they will be at TJC for pick-up, with volunteers dropping off at homes for people who can't drive.

7. Rabbi Search Committee Focus Group Moderated by Polly Strauss and Dana Molina

7.1 Background

- Polly and Dana provided the Board the instruction to take off our personal hats and put on our leadership hats for this module, since many Board members have participated in other focus groups prior to this evening.
- Polly provided the following summary of the focus groups conducted thus far:
Overall, the predominant tone of our focus group discussions with more than 200 congregants was optimistic. From what we heard, our congregants are ready to bring in a forward-thinking and visionary leader who will revitalize our community and usher in a new era of renewal in multiple ways...for example, religious services would become more spiritually engaging and joyful ... a community builder who will help everyone feel they truly belong and that TJC is their Jewish home. While one person can't do this alone, they can set the tone and break down our silos and make a priority of connecting with and engaging all members...from getting on the floor with little kids to maintaining their composure during challenging conversations with teens, to creating warmth and space for interfaith families, to drawing people in by providing compelling and relevant ways for us to put into practice our Jewish values through congregational involvement in the greater community...and a carling pastoral leader who will be there for us when we need them in our most difficult times. Finally, we heard over and over again that our congregants are our greatest strength. We need someone who builds bridges among us so that we can maximize our greatest strength. Someone with the proven skills and experience to make every congregant feel validated. Someone who listens respectfully and accepts different perspectives. A Rabbi who can guide and facilitate difficult discussions and can help us work through complex issues.
- Dana provided a view to the next steps, including a congregational survey to ensure we are engaging all parts of the congregation by the end of September, which will

inform the creation of the job description and criteria for selection. Candidates will apply between November and January.

- The team has been holding focus groups with general congregants, school committee, and other specialty audiences to ensure representation and inclusivity.

7.2 Focus Group Discussion

- Polly and Dana led the Board discussion to answer 5 key questions:
 - 1) What role do we feel as a Board the Rabbi should have in Board meetings and synagogue leadership?
 - 2) What is the Board perspective on what we would want the Rabbi to change?
 - 3) What do we as a Board want the Rabbi to preserve?
 - 4) What plans or dreams do we have to change the physical space at TJC?
 - 5) 14 aspects of Rabbi
- Randy Brett suggested the Committee send the questions and the list of 14 attributes to the Board for further feedback, since the question required further reflection.

7.3 Other Discussion

- A question was raised about whether it was a requirement that an applicant be a member of the Rabbinic Assembly. The answer is that we are guided by our by-laws that requires the Rabbi be qualified for membership in the RA. If we don't get enough applicants that qualify by a certain date, then we can loosen that restriction per the by-laws.
- Randy thanked Dana, Polly and the entire Committee for their hard work.

8. Old Business

- There was no old business.

9. New Business

9.1 The Schnitzer Family Gift

- Bob Schwartz discussed the proposal of the Schnitzer gift in honor of their daughter's upcoming bat mitzvah to provide 400 shekels to any TJC child who wants to go to Israel after their bar or bat mitzvah (The Schnitzer Shekel Fund for Adventures in Israel). The child would get a certificate in their gift bag that would be able to be redeemed for 400 shekels in the front office when the child has plans to go to Israel. The fund can be donated to.
- A formal vote is required according to the by-laws since it would be a restricted fund. Joshua McCoy made a motion to accept the restricted fund. Moshe Margolin accepted it. Comments were raised that it may be too restrictive from David Greenberg. Bob Schwartz provided more context as to the family's intent. Edey Kamenir raised a comment on the length of the list of gifts in the B'nai Mitzvah bag that needs to be read on Shabbat during the gift presentation. Randy Brett asked that the Religious Affairs Committee discuss that point. 16 - 4 motion passes.

10. Good & Welfare

10.1 Bob and Carol Schwartz will be released from quarantine in Canada tomorrow and get to meet their grandchild for the first time.

10.2 Barbara Abramson's daughter finished her graduate degree and received her MPA.

11. Adjournment

11.1 The meeting was adjourned at 7:02PM in a motion made by Bob Schwartz and seconded by Joshua Eisenberg.

11.2 The next meeting is September 17.

Minutes recorded by Edye Kamenir