



General Board Meeting - March 21, 2021

Present:

Barbara Abramson (1)	Samantha Hirschberg (1)	Naomi Richman-Neumann (2)
Alexandra Bar-Cohen (2)	Helaine Isaacs (1)	Lynne Ross (1)
Joel Berger	Heidi Joseph (2)	Adam Scheer (2)
Rachelle Berkman (1)	Edye Kamenir (2)	Rabbi Elliott Schoenberg
Randy Brett	Judy Kutin (1)	Bob Schwartz (2)
Gabrielle Cayton-Hodges (1)	Nancy Lewis (1)	Ed Simon (2)
Dane Dickler (2)	Jenny Ludmer (2)	Nicole Soffin (2)
Josh Eisenberg (1)	Moshe Margolin (2)	Polly Strauss (2)
Martin Ettenberg (2)	Joshua McCoy (2)	Tom Will (1)
David Greenberg (2)	Lauren Neufeld (2)	

Note: Numbers shown in parentheses are the number of votes each member has according to TJC By-Laws. Executive Committee Members have 2 votes, as well as Committee Chairs who do not have a Co-Chair or whose Co-Chair is not present. All Committee Co-Chairs whose Co-Chair is present have one vote each. Number subject to change based on attendance status of Committee Co-Chairs.

Minutes:

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:34PM and was held via video conference.
2. **D'var Torah** was delivered by Ed Simon, who related the Israelites' journey from Egypt to all of our journeys during this time of COVID. Each act taken by the collective Board Members makes us "G-d's partners in the work of creation." The last word of the book of Exodus is "journeys", though Ed noted that much of the time in the Exodus story the Israelites were actually stationary. We are all on a journey right now. Life is ultimately a journey. He wishes us all Chag Sameach!

Randy Brett thanked Ed for his wonderful and timely D'var, especially at this time of year.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

- The minutes of the February 21, 2021 Board meeting were circulated prior to the meeting for review.
- The minutes of the February 21, 2021 Board meeting were approved unanimously in a motion made by Moshe Margolin and seconded by Joshua McCoy.
- See www.thejewishcenter.org/Resources/Board-Minutes.aspx.

4. Financial Review - Dane Dickler

4.1 Overview of Financial Dashboard

- Dane reviewed the Financial Dashboard at a high level. He highlighted the fact that our Capital Expenditure for the year is running well below budget, with a \$42K favorability.
- Dane reviewed the extraordinary items (insurance policy \$54K and \$220K ULeague lease cancellation) - both of which create budget favorability in the current fiscal year but are non-recurring, as has been highlighted in previous meetings.
- The second draw Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan was approved for \$170K, and we received the money early last week. We have not yet applied for forgiveness for the first PPP loan granted in 2020 for \$150K, because our lender, TD Bank, doesn't yet allow for applying for forgiveness for any loan \$150K+. The portal should open soon to apply for forgiveness.
- Moshe Margolin asked a clarifying question regarding the ULeague lease termination. Dane said there may be an option to defer some of that revenue to next year to help balance the budget. The Finance Committee is determining the best course of action on that now.
- The first pass of the 2021-2022 FY budgets have been submitted and will be reviewed and fine-tuned at 3/25 Finance Committee Meeting. It will be reviewed at 4/11 EC meeting and 4/20 Board Meeting in time for Congregational Meeting on 5/30.
- Randy congratulates and thanks Dane, the VPs and Joel Berger for getting us in such a good position time-wise with the budget.

5. Revised Proposal and Vote on 'Friend of TJC' Membership Category - Naomi Richman Neumann

5.1 Proposal: Re-Vamp 'Friend of TJC' Membership Category

- Naomi shared the revised recommendation for the 'Friends of TJC Membership' based on feedback from the prior Board Meeting. (See Exhibit A at the end of this document).
- Based on feedback from the last meeting, the fee will be kept at \$100 (\$180 had been the prior proposal).
- The benefits tied to this membership category were specifically outlined as TJC e-mails, monthly bulletins, and yahrzeit notices through ShulCloud. With regard to events, Members in this category will be treated as Non-Members, subject to Non-Member fees for all events. They cannot attend Member Only events, and they will not receive a discount on High Holiday services.
- The plan is to market this membership category in a targeted way to parents and adult children of TJC members and to former members who have moved out of the area.
- The proposal as submitted and circulated prior to the meeting was called to a vote. Alexandra Bar-Cohen made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Heidi Joseph. The floor was opened to questions.
- Barbara Abramson asked how many former members would we think would be targeted for this? Naomi answered approximately 20 people or so.
- Joshua McCoy asked if we are considering a version of this membership that would include High Holiday tickets? Naomi answered that we could look at the a la carte ticket prices as an add-on to this membership, but it would be something that could be considered further.

- Judy Kutin asked how many people live farther away who are paying full dues? Naomi answered approximately 3 or so. Judy asked if we thought snowbirds currently paying full membership rates might trade down to this offering? Naomi answered that, Princeton, in most cases, is still most local snowbirds' primary residence. Judy said that if we lose two full-paying members, it negates the benefit of the new membership category. Naomi answered that if a snowbird is claiming FL residency, they wouldn't want to have an affiliation via full membership with a synagogue in their former town for tax purposes. Naomi said that this membership category would be available to people who have moved their permanent residence.
- Heidi Joseph stated that we want to make sure that we are not going to trade down people who are paying full dues. Naomi answered that it is a membership category that already exists, so it is just a matter of having it as an option in our back pocket and marketing it in a targeted way to relevant parties.
- Lauren Neufeld suggested that we put the word PERMANENTLY in front of the word "moved." Naomi accepted the amended language.

5.2 Vote on 'Friend of TJC' Membership Category Changes as Worded with Amendment

- The motion was called to vote:
For - 40
Against - 1
The motion passed.

6. Executive Director Update - Joel Berger

6.1 Personnel Updates

- Emily Kafas has joined TJC earlier this month as TJC's new Social Media coordinator. She is doing a wonderful job. She is working on a number of projects, including a press release about Rabbi Merow joining the congregation as our Rabbi to be circulated in mid-May.

6.2 Other Updates

- Joel has been working on the 2021-2022 budget with the Finance team and the VPs.
- Joel is working on a membership audit by reconciling Quickbooks and Shulcloud to ensure accuracy in the member count.
- We are just about to officially launch ShulCloud to the members. An announcement and instructions on how to login will go to members soon. Events, registration, payments and calendar will all be in one system.
- We are very close to upgrading our sound system. Special thanks for the anonymous donor who funded it, Bernie Fleitman and Perry for all of their work to install and refine it. We are about 98-99% done with the implementation.
- Joel has been working with the House Committee and Safety Committee on everything that needs to be done to re-open safely.
- We have an amazing group of volunteers helping older members 65+ to get vaccination appointments. They are also working to re-establish Chavurah Chesed. Joel extends his thanks to all of the people helping with the effort (Martha Friedman, Dana Molina, Lauren Neufeld, Lisa Rogol, etc.). It has been an unbelievable effort to get people vaccinated. Randy added that these are the types of things that make a true community.

7. Rabbi Schoenberg Update

- Rabbi Schoenberg reported that he has been busy getting ready for Pesach. He needs to learn how to kasher his oven. He wants to thank everyone and express his appreciation. He wishes everyone a Zissen Pesach and enjoy your Seders!
- Randy added that he has spoken to Rabbi Merow, and she wishes everyone a Zissen Pesach and she is looking forward to joining us!

8. Safety Protocols Discussion - Josh Eisenberg

8.1 Background and Context

- Naomi Richman-Neuman provided background that last fall, the Religious School came up with an indoor protocol that Safety Committee approved. After a parent survey, the parents decided they prefer virtual.
- Randy provided further context that he has seen some e-mails that have been rather aggressive toward the Safety Committee's recommendations and hope that the Board understands the role of the Safety Committee and how hard they are working to keep the congregation as safe as possible. This Board owes the Committee their support when talking to other congregants who may not have the whole picture. The members of the Committee are taking the big picture on safety protocol and looking out for the good of the congregation.
- Jenny Ludmer asked if there was an intent to re-Survey the Religious School parents. That point was addressed later in the discussion.

8.2 Update from the Safety Committee

- The floor was turned over to Josh Eisenberg. He shared that the Committee has had several meetings over the last few weeks. We have been in Phase 2 of the re-opening plan for 5-6 months. The Committee believes TJC can safely move to Phase 3 of the re-opening plan.
 - Starting in April, we will increase the number of members in the sanctuary from 25 to 40. No singing in the Sanctuary will remain as a restriction, because all available data suggests that singing remains a high-risk activity for virus transmission.
 - For all outdoor activities, physical distance of at least 6 feet distance with mask-wearing will be required.
 - For Religious School, they can sing OUTDOORS if the teacher is vaccinated. Students and teachers can be indoors or outdoors with at least 6 feet of physical distance. Vaccination status doesn't change the regulations, since not all are eligible for the vaccination at this point, especially children.

8.3 Questions and Comments

- Randy asked the School & Family Co-Chairs if there was another survey planned for Religious School families. Gabrielle Cayton-Hodges said there was another survey going out very soon regarding plans for next school year; specifically relative to the possibility of

moving at least one mid-week instructional day to virtual only. There are already plans in place for instruction for the rest of the school year to be outside. Randy asked if the School Committee could prepare a 1-2 pager to the rest of the congregation about this approach. Edey Kamenir raised the point that previous communication in prior Board meetings mentioned a second survey regarding instructional model choice for the remainder of the current school year had been promised for February but never happened. The decision for outdoor learning for the remainder of the year was made without survey input.

- Judy Kutin reminded the Board of the vaccination policy approved several years ago by the Board for the Religious School. Would we consider that approach for the adults in the congregation to enter the Sanctuary? Also, do we have any data about how many members have been vaccinated? Are there any updates to rules established by the Safety Committee to allow actual Torah reading live in the Sanctuary, which is halachically correct? Josh Eisenberg said that because the vaccines are all being used under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the FDA, TJC can't really require members to get a vaccine. We can encourage congregants to be vaccinated, but we can't require it due to the current FDA approval status. Josh was not sure what percentage of the congregation has been vaccinated. Regarding reading the Torah, the risk is not touching the Torah/fomite transfer - it is more about air space and where clergy is standing relative to Torah readers walking in proximity of clergy. Clearing the air space might take a lot of time that would not be realistic in the middle of services. Cantor Jeff was most concerned about his wife Deborah not being vaccinated yet, and he did not want to bring any illness home to her due to his exposure. Josh said there is unclear data to know whether, even though Cantor Jeff vaccinated, he could still transmit the virus to his spouse.
- Joshua McCoy asked if there is any consideration to having indoor or outdoor Friday night services. Josh Eisenberg answered that any activity with 6 feet of physical distance with a mask and no singing will be allowed.
- Nicole Soffin expanded on the earlier point made that there is concern about air space relative to Cantor Jeff, there is also concern about others sharing the Bimah space, such as a B'nai Mitzvah family.
- Joshua Eisenberg added that infection rates are increasing nationally and in Mercer County in terms of infections and hospitalizations.
- Rachele Berkman asked for clarification for what Religious School looks like after break. She feels that it is very important to have in-person school. She feels that we should determine what is the best way to educate the children, not rule by Committee.
- Randy said that this is a really good question across the board. Are people willing to come back to the campus this year? Some people think it is easier to be on Zoom, and others are afraid to be in person. This is an issue to wrestle with.
- Gabrielle said that Sunday Religious School classes in the Fall will be in-person unless there is a health crisis/another virus spike. But we are still figuring out whether the virtual only mid-week format is a viable option for the Fall. For this Spring, the Religious School is unable to support both in-person and virtual formats simultaneously, because we don't have enough staff. We will rotate which class will be on-site outside in the Courtyard.
- Randy hopes that by the Congregational Meeting in May, we will present a POV on plans for in-person for all campus activities
- Nicole raised the point that people have planned their lives around current scheduling. We cannot eliminate the remote option entirely due to that factor.
- Samantha Hirschberg said the School & Family Committee will follow-up with what exactly Religious School will look like for the rest of the year.

- Randy asked if there were plans to enact a Vaccine Passport. Joshua Eisenberg said that the CDC has been vague on the number of people that can congregate without a mask. The CDC has advised that if anyone in the group is unvaccinated, guidance reverts back to everyone needs to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet and wear a mask. Judy said the CDC said vaccinated people could be in a room with unvaccinated people with low risk. Joshua said that the advice Judy cited was caveated with "cohorted groups" so it would not apply to a congregational setting.

9. Bimah Project Update - Randy Brett

- Fundraising for the project has officially kicked off. Congregant and architect Josh Zinder has weighed in on the plans, and the architect retained for this work is revising the plans. It will be bid out soon after those revisions are incorporated.
- Last week over \$13K in new donations were collected with a target of \$250K, which includes the new sound system, bimah access, hearing impairment system (donated by a congregant), and redecoration (new carpeting, new seat cushions, painting).
- Randy asked for Board participation in the Fundraising effort. One of the ways we have maintained community is that we have all come through for each other. From check-in phone calls, to help we've given congregants with groceries, vaccine appointments, et cetera, everything we have done for each other shows the real way we are a community. Making the Bimah accessible is another important manifestation of that community-first approach.
- The goal is to start construction by the 3rd week in June and be completed by 3rd week of August before the High Holidays. It will be a great way to welcome people back into the sanctuary. It will be beautiful, and everyone who wants to come on to the Bimah will be able to do so. It is truly the way we can show community.
- Randy and Alexandra Bar-Cohen will send out a weekly e-mails to show our progress toward the goal. New plans and renderings will be posted on the website to encourage everyone to get involved.
- Barbara Abramson asked if we can use Capital Expenditure resources for this project? Randy said he made a commitment not to do that. We have a history of things breaking at TJC, so we need to have money for those unforeseen occurrences.

8. Old Business

- There was no old business.

9. New Business

- There was no old business.

10. Good & Welfare

- Randy booked a trip to see his grandchildren for the first time in a year. Randy is also going to his sister-in-law's in DC for Seder, which will be the first time Debbie has seen her sister in a year.
- Moshe Magolin is going to Colorado.
- Edye Kamenir reported her daughter got her Siddur last night at the Gimmel Class Siddur Ceremony.
- Barbara Abramson is happy to report that she and her husband Bernard Abramson are fully vaccinated.
- Ed Simon is looking forward to having an in-person Pesach with family in California and is fully vaccinated.

11. Adjournment

11.1 The meeting went into Executive Session at 8:51PM.

11.2 The meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM in a motion made by Moshe Margolin and seconded by Naomi Richman-Neuman.

11.3 The next meeting will be held on 4/20/2021.

Minutes recorded by Edye Kamenir

EXHIBIT A: Friends of TJC Membership Category

FRIEND OF TJC MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (for people who live 50+ miles away)

- Annual Fee: \$100 (revised recommendation – keep as-is)
- Benefits
 - TJC emails and monthly print bulletin
 - Yartzeit notices through Shulcloud, on request
- Events and Services
 - Can attend live or virtual events that are open to nonmembers; pay nonmember fees if applicable
 - Cannot attend events that are open to members-only such as JCW events, except for exceptions to be approved by VP Programming
 - Do not receive discount on High Holiday Tickets
- Marketing
 - Advertise in bulletin for parents and adult children of TJC members
 - Market individually to former members who have **permanently** moved out of the area

Note: Highlighted text was added as an amendment before the vote.