

TJC Board Meeting
January 26, 2023
Committee Reports followed by minutes

Absent or on Zoom

1. Adam Scheer- no
2. Jeremy Black – no
3. Roberta Sternthal- no
4. Riva Levy-no
5. Michael Leopold- Zoom
6. Tom Will – Zoom
7. Heidi Joseph– Zoom
8. Dana Molina- Zoom
9. Brad Bailey – no
10. Edye Kamenir

In person

Joel Berger
Moshe Margolin
Eve Coulson
Rabbi Merow
Polly Strauss
Nancy Lewis
Debbie Orel
Harry Cummins
Jesse Treu
Susan Falcon
Jerry Neuman
Abbey
Barbara Abramson
Neal Masia
Leah
Shari

Topic: Board Meeting
Time: Jan 26, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86130841795>

Meeting ID: 861 3084 1795

ABC:

Started at 19:06

Board meeting called to order

President's Message by ABC: I had to have my kid call my cell phone to find it and it was in my refrigerator, so I've had a busy day. We're all working hard. All the committees are working hard. I want to thank everyone for juggling everything and for being here.

1. Approval of the Minutes from November 17, 2022 Board Training* and approval of Consent Agenda.*
Motion to approve: Moshe Margolin

Second- Eve Coulson
Unanimous approval of minutes

2. Board Member Spotlight - (3 mins) Neal Masia
Nice to be here. The picture is of me from my bar mitzvah which is my 40th anniversary this shabbat. This is a great memory for me. My father was pretty observant. I went with my father to make the minyan when I was 15 and then I would go to school and that bonded us. This was my junior year of hs. My father died when I was 27. I never missed a kaddish and that's how I got here. I will never say no to make a minyan.
3. Finance Report - Neal (5 mins)
There are no surprises on the dashboard. We got the last of the government checks and we are now done with those payments. We got \$240K from the government so that's good. Short term is going to plan, and we have invested some money in CDs at 4% to generate some interest in the next couple of years. We might invest more since we have a good cash balance now. Dane filled out all of the paperwork.

Finance meeting on Feb. 6. We will discuss investments and figure out the solar panel situation.

Annual Fund report from Susan Falcon: Ended on a high note of \$221,000 of pledges received. Since then we've gotten more pledges that will take us to a little over of \$250K, but we have until June to make our goal of \$285K. The market turndown slowed down donations. The Board members made a huge difference by saying: 1) stop using the words "operating budget" and 2) we want to write notes, not make phone calls' so thank you for the input. Phone calls are still effective and needed; we made about 60 phone calls which got us about half of our donations. We still need 100% board participation, in any amount that is meaningful and comfortable and works for you. Just please give a donation so we can say we have 100% board participation. Thank you.

4. Executive Director Report - Joel (3 mins)
We have a lot of great programming up the next few months. Thanks to all the volunteers and committees. The budget process for next year will be kicking off soon and I'm happy to meet with any committee to discuss.
Tom Will submitted the next security grant steps. We had a minor security incident that turned out to be nothing. A man entered a side door and said he was a legacy member and he left the building. We called the police and sent them a video. It turned out the man came the next day to register his child in the religious school. He had left a different synagogue, but we told him he has to clear up his account with the other shul before he comes here.
5. Committee Focus: Israel and Us (15 mins)- Riva could not be here, but we will give a report. It's the 75th anniversary of Israel's founding. We should mark this occasion. We are aware 'that the new Israeli govt. is controversial but we still

have to mark this milestone. We want to set the right tone. We want to have a lot of different activities

- a. Song of the month—Edna Noiman collects these if you want to submit
- b. Yom Haatzmaut and Israel's 75th
 - i. Playlist to share for simcha
 - ii. Shira B'zibur- singing around the campfire
 - iii. Israel day parade in NYC
 - iv. Israel on our exploratory trail
 - v. History of Israel through music
 - vi. Movie
 - vii. Book discussion
- c. A big Name : David Brosa. Very famous; iconic music. We would advertise for all of Mercer County and we have reached out to the other local shuls to co-sponsor. Rabbi Blum and Beth Chaim and Jay Kornsgold have agreed to sponsor. We met with Federation to talk about it, and CJL also. We anticipate it would sell out. WE have May 3; or later in May.
- d. We should include the religious school students and maybe free; but we are working on this.

Leah- I'd be interested to hear some personal experiences via Zoom from Israel .

Jesse- I urge us to be sensitive to our congregants because someone might be a supporter of Netanyahu.

ABC- We have to be respectful that we have a diverse set of opinions on Israel politics. The Great Debates have been healing the rifts, so we want to have open dialogue. At the last Great Debate there were difficult questions, but it was handled very well.

Shari- I think there is a space for a way to hear from many opinions from Israel.

Moshe—the gov't. of Israel is different than the state of Israel; and the celebration is for the STATE, not for the government. If I want information about what the protests are about and I don't think TJC should get involved with that . I would say TJC should avoid the controversy.

ABC- maybe the salons about "Zionist Ideas" should be the next stage of the Great Debates.

Rabbi: There has been some other programs that touched on Israel this year. And I do give sermons on Israel occasionally. WE should be able to pray for the State of Israel from any perspective, but we should be worried about the state of democracy.

We should recognize the miracle of Israel at 75 as a state; not a government.

6. Discussion of "The Purpose - Driven Congregation," *Creating Sacred Communities* by Ron Wolfson (20 mins)
 - a. Are you ready to say "Belonging to The Jewish Center will transform your life?"
 - b. What else is needed for me and TJC to do?

Barbara Abrahamson- the part that resonated with me is to look for a need and need it; look for the fear and relieve it. TJC needs to find a need and meet it in a global sense. Our website does

not have a purpose driven mission. Our website shows a lot of activities, but it doesn't show a strong mission statement. And I can't say "TJC will change your life".

Jesse Treu—I agree. We are trying to get people to put in time and energy but to what? What are we trying to accomplish. What question are we answering? Is it loneliness?, is it spirituality? We are trying to grow membership but why should the unaffiliated person want to join our shul?

Jerry Neuman—I agree with Barbara's excellent comments. But we are all adults and we made our choices. A success of TJC is that the children come through and it is reflected in their lives that they are leading Jewish Lives. As a shul it is all about the kids.

Susan Falcon—I think that TJC offers a Jewish Community and that syncs with the covenantal model instead of the transactional movement. I think TJC offers a lot and different people want different things from TJC. I wanted exactly what I wanted from a Jewish Community, and we do that beautifully; we just don't market that well.

Debbie Orel—"Welcoming, community" those are great things of how we look at ourselves. The parents make the decision to be here and to have their kids here at TJC. TJC is a marketplace—it's a choice of time and money. It's a choice. It's expensive to be Jewish—Jewish Camp; synagogue; is all expensive. We need to use different words for different people. Branding with words like spiritual; welcoming; connections; community.

Abbey: Programming is amazing but there is very little for young families. There are a lot of young families and babies and want that community, but we are not offering that demographic enough. Especially since there is no pre-school here anymore.

The website does NOT help with marketing. People are just showing up at the door, but we have to market more.

ABC—we need to fill up the gap for the affiliated or unaffiliated people with very young children. We want to meet them and figure out how to accommodate them.

Leah—I would say belonging to TJC has changed my life. The more I come the more I got to know people. In the beginning it's awkward. I really like the on ramping of involvement—the first moment, builds to the next moment, etc. And the more you come the more you get to know people and feel more comfortable. The fear is "I don't know anyone" I don't know the songs". That is the fear, so what is the ramp to onboard this person to come to the next event and feel comfortable .

Andrea- When I was on membership committee we tried to assign mentors, but people don't want to do it for various reasons; not able to do a good enough job; not comfortable out of my demographic;
How do we get the existing community to be ambassadors.
We need find people who really want to do outreach

Eve: welcoming is important but that just scratches the surface.

Jerry- look at the challenge of transformation through different demographics. Adults can transform, but I see the biggest results through the children.

Gabrielle-The longer I am here, the more comfortable and useful I think it is to know people outside of your demographic. I know people from all different demographics because I got more involved. That's how you would be able to keep people as members.

Shari- we are trying to fill in gaps for the religious school.

Samantha- We talk about these issues as a PTO. We are trying to get the parents to feel more comfortable and then get other parents involved. Want to make a party board—someone makes a party and sponsors it with a minimal charge for the event. We are trying to get the parent talking to each other on a different level and to bond—not grade specific, but has them make connections at TJC and outside of TJC so they would

ABC- Community
-Website

Rabbi- his idea of ministry; and that each person in the organization is serving the ministry. What is your gift and how do you serve the larger community. It is a different way of thinking about volunteering and that it is covenantal. Just a sense of not being broken or lonely.

Barbara Abrahamson—sometimes the word religion makes nonbelievers think it's all about God, and that may turn them off. There has to be another reason why people would join TJC.

7. Old Business (10 mins)

Next Saturday 4-6 Havdalah all new members will be getting an invite to Andrea's House

Rabbi- This week is pajama Havdalah with the kids

Atidaynu- listening sessions are going on and we need you to come to them and give feedback. The in person meetings are great.

Engagement forms—we need more of them. They are being collated by Emily Covit—we will send out more information.

Apartment update—we have several quotes to renovate. The religious school building has to be upgraded to meet the forward code. The hallway has to be partitioned to separate the religious school classrooms from the apartment up in the attic. We did a walkthrough in the actual apartment and there are some minor repairs that are needed. We have to pick the contractor who will submit the paperwork to zoning. It could take 1-4 weeks for the paperwork and we hope that the apartment will be done by Passover. We are reaching out to local stores to see if they'll do pro-bono work and donations like paint, carpet, appliances.

If you can get to know Esau and Yonahtan contact Judi Fleitman who coordinates their social life.

We will seek board approval before any spending is done.

8. New Business (10 mins)

ABC: See slide

We need to change the website so it reflects who we are.

We are keeping a list of website issues so send them in to ABC or Joel.

We have started to update the policy page.

The EC went through the E-binder and each committee should be submitting documents to the E-binder for institutional knowledge.

The Nominating committee is chaired by Lew Gantwerk and will be announced soon. VP Educaiton; VP Religious Affairs ; 2 trustees

**Harry moves to move into Ex. Session; Moshe seconds.

Meeting dismissed- 8:50

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Committee Reports

Committee Reports:

Annual Fund Report submitted by Susan Falcon

The AF is not over, but we ended 2022 on a very positive note.

As of right now, total AF donations are more than \$221,000 from over 160 donors.

Our budgeted goal of \$285,000 is well in our sites and we will continue our efforts until late spring and the end of our fiscal year.

We went into this year's campaign expecting challenges due to 2 factors. First, we had just completed a successful fundraising effort combined with the Rabbi's installation weekend and Gala event and, second, due to the timing of the Gala, the AF campaign did not kick off until after the Jewish holidays.

It turns out that, as I mentioned at the Board retreat, most donors do understand that periodically, we will hold social events which have a fundraising component and that one does not dilute the other.

A third factor, that was not anticipated, but has had a sobering effect on our results is the downturn in the equity markets in the middle of last year. Hopefully, we will realize some of the gifts that have been delayed, early this year.

Two of the most important and positive shifts in our efforts came from the Board. The input received at the Board retreat led to tangible changes in how we communicated to our congregants.

Based on comments, instead of stating in our letters and emails that the proceeds of the AF go to covering operating expenses, we focused on how the money enhances our educational and general programming, both areas which are part of our operating expenses.

There were many thoughtful comments stating why making phone calls to friends and fellow congregants was not comfortable and that sending notes was a better way to communicate. Based on this we pivoted our efforts and asked each member of the Board to write personal notes on the congregational mailing. There is no doubt that these notes were read and appreciated.

Congregants would say to Joel and me, “we got your note, instead of “we saw the letter about the AF”.

Thanks very much to all of you who took the time to write the notes, especially, Andrea, Harry and Leah, who wrote multiple notes and Joel, who wrote around 300 notes so that no one would receive a letter without a personal greeting.

Finally, while notes are important, calling individual donors is still the most important means of asking for donations as well as stewarding past donors. We were lucky to have some of the best phone callers on the planet, ABC, Lew, Heidi, Linda Meisel, as well as myself. Collectively, our efforts brought in more than \$125,000 from around 60 calls and we are not done yet.

Finally, we discussed the importance of getting 100% Board participation to the AF and we have not quite reached that goal. I continue to encourage all Board members to make their donation at any level that is meaningful and comfortable. We are the leaders in this effort and our participation does make a difference.

Israel committee submitted by Lynn Ross

- The Israel committee is focusing on Organizing Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut.
- I am also looking into the Jewish/Muslim dinner, or cooking demonstration and the salute to Israel parade, although I do not have a commitment from any committees yet to take them on

JCW

- JCW is working on 2 major events for the Spring/Earlky Summer:
 - 1) A womens' retreat with Rabbi Merow
 - 2) Combined JCW?ens' Club Shabbat

Dates are yet to be determined for both of these events.

Long Range Planning Committee - Board Report

January 26, 2023

Alt-Rev Committee

Nothing new to report.

Dorot Committee

The Committee reached back out to synagogues they previously interviewed who implemented an alternative dues model and still conduct other fundraising activities, to better understand how they communicate these multiple asks to their congregants.

Talking points for proposed alternative dues options are being prepared, which will be discussed with potential top donors. This will assess the likelihood that we can get significant participation in a revised revenue structure.

To complement their work on changing our membership revenue model itself, they are also focusing on a goal to recruit new members and retain more of our current members. To do this, they are preparing recommendations to expand opportunities to engage congregants.

Endowment Committee

A full review of Atidaynu activities was presented to the Congregational Meeting in December. At this point, the Committee will work to coordinate any further activities so they are fully coordinated with the other LRP activities, especially those focused on communications with congregational members.

Atidaynu Committee

A full review of Atidaynu activities was presented to the Congregational Meeting in December. Discussion meetings with members of the congregation started 1/22.

Membership Committee submitted by Jerry Neuman

- 1) Metrics - 40 new members (since 6/1/22), including five (5) returning members;
- 28 resignations, whether by moving away (relocation, retirement, to be near adult children) or for other specific reasons;
 - Net increase=12 members;
 - \$24,000 in additional dues revenue to TJC (\$2,000 x 12)

2) Initiatives -

- Shabbat Under the Stars Friday Night Dinners - Held monthly throughout the year - have been well-attended (60-70 participants on average) by old members, new members & prospective members
- A New Member Gathering event is scheduled for Saturday evening, February 4th at 4:00 pm at the home of Andrea Hoberman Martinez, VP-Administration
- Scheduling Meet & Greets over the next few months with Rabbi Merow and New Members, particularly those that she has not met yet
- Professional Staff enhancement - Emilie Kovit, our new Programming & Engagement Director - has made a positive impact on TJC's membership development efforts
- "Ask Me About The Jewish Center" ribbons for all Board members to wear while attending TJC events - part of the "Answer Team" in formation - has been well-received by all
- "Sponsors" have been assigned to all New Members, in order to better acclimate these new members into our community
- Exit Interviews for the resigning members - to learn how we can improve in the future
- Rating system for existing members, in order to identify any "at risk" members with whom we'll all need to engage - so as to avoid them falling into resigned member category

3) Assistance

- Board members to join the "Answer Team," in order to help promote TJC while attending (plus, be sure to wear your ribbon!) services, classes & social events, as each Board member is a subject matter expert on the current role of their Committee (e.g., Programming, JCW & Men's Club, Social Action, et al)

Men's Club Committee Update Report submitted by Jeremy Black:

- Planning to hold an upcoming Torah on Tap for February - working on date/speaker

- Supporting upcoming Sarah Aroeste event on February 5
- Sponsoring World Wide Wrap on February 12 (tefillin/wrap during minyan that takes place every Super Bowl Sunday; started last year with RAM)
- Plan to support the Purim carnival on March 5 with grilling
- Planning a March Madness NCAA basketball tournament event with Howard Levy on Sunday, March 19th
- Coordinating a Passover wine tasting with JCW in late March (working with Joel on details)
- Assisting on a construction project with Peter Smith (building platforms for TJC garden)

Current Safety Guidelines at TJC: 01/26/23- Submitted by Corey Langer

Last year, at the height of the pandemic, our committee agreed that when Mercer County entered the “orange” zone, we would be mask mandatory, while making the synagogue and its interior public spaces mask optional at levels yellow and green. Currently, with level orange, masking, per the CDC site, is strongly recommended, though not necessarily mandatory. Under these circumstances, we believed it was important to revisit and potentially refine our current policy for the congregation in the sanctuary and in communal spaces indoors. To this end, we “met” by email and phone.

Our current guidelines formulated on 01/12/23 follow:

- Mercer Co community risk – level orange: Masks are very strongly recommended, though not mandated indoors; please be aware of and sensitive to the needs of those around you, particularly those who might be more vulnerable to infection. If ill with respiratory symptoms, please stay home and watch services on livestream or Zoom.
- Mercer Co community risk – level yellow: Masks are optional, though still recommended; they are not mandated.
- Mercer Co community risk – level green: Masks are optional; they are not mandated.
- If at some point, the Princeton area school system returns to a “mask-mandatory” policy due to an increase in infection rates or hospitalizations, then we too will adopt a “mask-mandatory” approach
- We will continue to provide masks on the table in the lobby for those who need them.

We fully realized that a single policy may not satisfy all congregants, but these guidelines have evolved after considerable discussion and give and take; and we believe they underscore our desire to keep the congregation as healthy and as safe as possible, particularly as new, more transmissible COVID variants emerge.

Security Committee Update submitted by Tom Will

- We had a suspected security incident with an intruder that may have entered main building through unlocked door, was confronted by staff, and left premises without further

incident. The intruder was later determined to be a relative of member. Nonetheless, Joel instituted lock door procedures to ensure doors stay locked, and is looking into door alarms.

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- For the 2022 Non-profit Security Grant Program grant, we have worked with Josh Zinder and his team to put together designs for the Environmental and Historical Preservation submission we made to NJ Homeland/FEMA on January 13th, and will use this material to work through bidding process for work and materials to perform the security enhancements.

Social Action submitted by Lynn Ross

- Continue to support refugee resettlement families.
- Get a regular group from TJC going to TASK again. We have a few folks going, but it would be nice to have an organized group again.
- Promote and utilize the amazing materials that Bob Karp put together for the Social Action Imperatives Handbook

<https://w9qc99.n3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TJC-Part-1-Final.pdf> .

- Recruit more volunteers for Jessica's garden and the nature trail.
- Develop more ways to support the Chesed program making these projects possibility more longstanding and bringing in families.
- Host and interfaith blood drive
- Find a cochair for social action committee

From President Elect Heidi Joseph

Community works—a non profit Networking Organization Conference

The mission of **Princeton Community Works** is to enable non-profit boards, staff and volunteers to work together more effectively through networking, developing skills, and raising community awareness.

The conference provides a great opportunity for our board members to focus on areas of interest and to receive additional training at a very reasonable cost. It is also useful for the staff to participate. Since this is all done remotely now, I would highly suggest that people sign up. Here's the website [Community Works](#)

In 2021, they hosted their first virtual conference with more than 700 participants. In 2023, they will again be virtual, spanning January 30-February 1. Please check this website for updates.

<https://www.princetoncommunityworks.org/pcw-nonprofit-conference/>