

Minutes
TJC Board Meeting
March 23, 2023

Meeting of the Board of Directors
Social Hall
March 23, 2023
7pm

1. President's Message - Alexandra

Welcome. We have 2 guest presentations: Fred on apartment and Sharon for school committee on bnai mitzvah

President's message: This Monday was the last day I said Kaddish for my Mom. She passed away on 4/29/22. I've been thinking a lot of what it means to show up for kaddish because I've been going to my Dad's minyan a lot on Zoom because they need 10 people and I was happy to give back to them and to be with my dad on Zoom every morning and it was extraordinary. TJC minyans are holding steady, and we usually get 10 people. I am always asking you to show up in so many ways. I want to thank you for being here for me these past 2 years, and I know that TJC provides comfort and solace to so many congregants. It is really important to go to minyan to support and show up so people can say kaddish. I will continue to show up for the community that gives so much to each of us.

2. Adoption of Consent Agenda – Any questions?

- Minutes from February 23 Board meeting -- Unanimously approved

Moved to approve: Moshe Margolin

Second: Jesse Treu

- Committee reports were emailed in advance.
- Communications proposal –
 1. Q: how will people be able to access the style guide for their committees? It's in the ebinder and all board members should use it.

3. Executive Director's Report - Joel Berger (7:10 pm)

- Budgeting Update – I started emailing the budget spreadsheets this morning to the committee chairs. Budgets are aspirational

Q: Moshe- how do we know the ultimate allocations for the programming committee before we look at our budget? Right now we'll base it on last year.

Neal and Joel have been working on budgeting ideas. They can meet with any chairs that want to discuss the budget.

We got another PPP payment this year so the budget will look good this year.

The 30% discount for seniors has been instituted and we will be moving it to 20% above the dues price for seniors. It is voluntary.

The annual fund collected \$227,000 so far. We got 175 gifts from members. We expect to get 30K to bring it to \$258,000. The budget was \$285,000. There are some donors from last year that did not give yet this year. We hope to get those gifts to make budget. There are 260 member who did not give anything. Last year we raised 300K so we are below that this year.

- Building and Operations
 1. We are going to get information for solar panels
 2. We looked at the playground for upgrades
 3. We are planting a new meadow in the front lawn.
 4. We are going to clean the facility for Passover now.

Broza Concert: Israel's 75th and next steps –Broza Concert ticket sales are going well, as reported by Joel.

- 34K in sponsors for Broza concert
- 4K in ticket income
- We estimate 42K for the event. We haven't planned the décor or menu yet.
- We are getting free security from K-street Security for the event and will also have Princeton Police.
- Please invite your friends; volunteer to be an usher, or sign people in.
- This event is also supported by Beth Chaim, Beth El, Federation, etc.
- We are still figuring out how to get the kids ticket for the concert.

3. Joel is going to Orlando to chair the Synagogue Administrator Convention next week for 6 days. The theme is making the impossible, possible and improving customer service.

4. Committee Spotlight on the School Committee: Rebuilding the B'nai Mitzvah Program - Sharon Diamondstein (7:20 pm)

- We need to provide continuity and stability to the RS families from start to bnai mitzvah.
- Sharon: thank you for inviting us and sharing in this work. We will continue to reevaluate the program. This is a work in progress, with me, Avi, and Rabbi ready to hear your questions at the end of the program.
- Our students suffered education deficit due to covid
- The silver lining was 1-1 learning.
- Meeting with the parents are with Rabbi, Avi, Sharon to discuss goals of the family for the bnai mitzvah.

- We want to focus on the child as a whole and help each child as needed with appropriate interventions and will track each child.
- Attendance is a challenge and regular attendance to services and classes is a problem and contributes to the child's success (or failure.)
- The kids have mastered trope, but we want them be life long chanters and not just shine on their bnai mitzvah. We want them to be able to read torah, not just memorize the prayers.
- We want to have a fail-safe situation in place so everyone can read, chant, understand how to read a parsha and understand their Chesed project.
- We are going to continue to triage and reevaluate to combat the deficits from Covid.
- Rabbi Merow has streamlined a handbook for the bnai mitzvah families.

Q: Some students may need more than 1 year to prepare. Parents may have different expectations for their child and each child may need more time.

A: Rabbi – says the dates are given out 3 years in advance and each child will get what they need.

Q: Judy Kutin- thank you for the great presentation. I feel like the majority of the parents who are coming to TJC might not have a conservative Jewish background. Do you have a plan to walk the parents through how things work for the services and engage the parents?

A: Rabbi-I gave a crash course on the Saturday morning service with the parents and then a longer class for the parents who took part in it, and I will do it again next year with the fifth grade meeting.

The handbook does not list what we expect of a bnai mitzvah because we don't want to scare anyone off and we want to customize the bnai mitzvah program for each child.

Q: Andrea- It would be great to have an interfaith component, so the non-Jewish spouse knows what to do at the b'nai mitzvah. To make it more inclusive. I know the handbook has a place for feedback and assessment. I would say that it got a bit overwhelming and confusing having multiple tutors and meetings for my daughter. We should consider if we want to have 2 tutors for each child.

A: Sharon- that started during Covid to make sure the students were getting the Hebrew they needed but we should reevaluate this and work on that now that we don't have to zoom as much.

Q: Josh Zinder- Did you consider requiring parents to stay at services with their kids on Shabbat?

A: Sharon- we would love that to happen. If we can figure out a way to do that, it would be great and then the parents would feel more comfortable. I think it would be very worthwhile.

Q: Jesse-how is the Hebrew of the kids?

A: Sharon- it varies with each child; we have many strategies: Apps, and other things for the student to do at home. They need to come to synagogue and work on their Hebrew at home.

5. Presentation of Religious School Renovation plans- Josh Zinder

1. We want to house the Uganda refugees in the apartment in the school building.
2. Federation will contribute to the funding of the renovation
3. We have pledges from the Rabbi and other congregants. We already have a third of funds needed for the renovation if we move forward.
4. Josh- we have been studying the housing solution for the refugees over the last 5-6 months. There is an apartment over the school building on the third floor that has been empty since Jay Craig, passed away. We need to bring the apartment up to current fire codes. We looked at several solutions and priced them out, but the most viable solution is splitting the hallway in half and making a new egress for the school and apartment. (Images in slide show.) We received several estimates from contractors we have used before. We recommend David Kaler General contractor and the estimate is \$57,765 but recommend a contingency of 10% for a total of \$63,522 for the job. I am confident in this contractor.
5. Two issues that are unknown for construction: 1) The washer and drier are being donated by Mrs. Gs, but we need to get in there to see where we can locate those. The shower might not fit where the current tub is. We have to figure out where the water is located.
6. The drawings are completed and ready to be submitted for permits as soon as we are given the go-ahead.
7. We recommend we stockpile all the materials for the project. It should take 2-3 weeks for the project.

Q: Charlene: What are we going to use this apartment for in the future?

A: ABC: It is an apartment that we foresee is to be used for those in need or a visitor, or Israeli guests who do programming in our community. It will be purposed for those who need our help in the community.

A: Fred- it's like the free loan society and this is a great step to help the community. I commend the Board for doing this work.

Q: Dana-Are there changes to our budget in the future as a "landlord". What are we budgeting for that?

A: ABC—it's not free rent; we usually charge around \$300 to support the facility. It's not for profit, but it's rent for maintenance.

A: Josh—it's better to have a place occupied to keep it well maintained.

A: ABC- Thank you to Fred and Josh for this work. We'd like to get this started ASAP .

Q: Judy- but we only have 1/3 of the funding right now. So how can we start.

A: ABC- great question. But I don't want to wait for the next meeting.

Charlene Borsack - I'd like to make a Motion that the Board vote to approve we move ahead with this construction project contingent upon funding.

Moshe- Second Motion

Q: Roberts' Rule of Order – ABC sent our a follow-up/clarification email about Robert's Ruled the next day. (Content is below)

- Judy- we can't vote on new business at the same meeting it is raised. Don't we have to wait for the next meeting?
- Jerry- Robert's rules say we should wait
- ABC- that was Randy's Methods, but it is not required by our by laws.
- Jesse- Moves to amend the motion to submit the project permit drawings.
- Barbara and Josh- I don't agree with that. We should just move ahead.
- After a discussion about Robert's Rules, we went back to the original Motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Gabrielle- abstention.
- ABC- the motion passes—thank you. We will keep you updated. We are going to submit the permits immediately and then run full throttle at funding for the apartment.

6. **New Business (8 pm)**

a. **Lobby Refresh Project** - Heidi and Alexandra (5 minutes) We have a plan and need funding. Will think about this moving forward.

- Comments:
 - Swivel chairs are not a good idea—kids are going to play on them
 - If the chairs are too low, that's not good for seniors
 - Dana—high end offices are selling their furniture at a discount so maybe we can buy furniture that way.
 - Crypton fabric is best fabric. ABC- we currently have that and it did not hold up.
 - Barbara- we need a big table in the lobby because we use it a lot for registration, display, etc.

b. **Affinity Group Campaign** - Alexandra (10 minutes)

ABC- we have moved from the chrysalis period of loss and isolation and doubling down in engagement. Our next natural step is to make small group movements next year. What does it mean to be a community? We are going to launch a small group movement. We need a better a name for this and we are collecting information from the congregants. We are going to make this programming more robust and more small groups based on what the congregants want.

For example, when you get your b'nai mitzvah date it's an instant affinity group. Or start a Fauda discussion group after shabbat. Things that come from our members grow into a new affinity group. Like a new version of a Havura. This is a movement that the congregants can start for their own interests.

We hope to launch this at the High Holidays.

7. Good & Welfare

TJC has 2 regular volunteer opportunities at Cornerstone and the Trenton Soup kitchen

Rabbi- there was a funeral of a long term member this week and they noticed how much is done by the TJC community and we need volunteers for the Chevra Chadesha.

Lew Gantwerk is starring in One Flew over the Cuckoos Nest in Somerset for the next few weeks. Villagers theater

Lew's daughter was named as one of 12 Jewish women who make a difference.

Joel – if you want to tour the school building to see the corridor that will be divided, third I will take you in.

We are cleaning out the old gift shop to convert it to a coat closet, and we are giving Little Brook all of our old paper .

We are having a blood drive on May 10 at TJC. A joint event with the Muslim community.

Extend condolences to Edye for the passing of her mother. Thank her for being on the zoom tonight, but she is not working right now.

Abbye- Board members need to make phone calls to congregants to say Happy Passover . I will send out the email.

Passing around tzedakah box and sign-up sheet to be a greeter at TJC services.

Moved into Executive session

ABC- Jerry move to adjourned. Debbie Orel second. Meeting adjourned.
