

TJC Board Meeting
April 27, 2023

Call to order at 7:17 ; 24 people present; Joel Berger
Helaine Isaacs for D'rot presentation

ABC- President's Message

This is our last Board Meeting together. Serving TJC the last 3 years was one of the best decisions I made and I mean it. I've challenged myself and made fabulous connections.

Approval of Consent Agenda, and Kashrut Policy and Fishbane Policy-Motion to adapt: Jesse Treu; second Moshe Margolin; Approved unanimously; Lynne Ross abstains.

Neal Masia- Budget presentation

Questions;

Even if we offer the choice of a 3% increase for Religious school, I would not change the budget numbers.

Edye- One area that looks like it doubled is total is "committees"

Neal—this is because of where we allocated the salary for the programming staff person.

Shari—the fundraising number for next year looks very large.

Neal- It's because the fundraiser during Covid was delayed and then we had a Gala. So the numbers are split over two years. Next year we will have a 75th birthday event as the big fundraising event.

Jesse Treu- What's the 30K jump in religious affairs expenses?

Joel—I don't have the exact numbers but it could be high holidays; salary from Ethan

Jesse- when you did the budget was the attitude ...let's do what we can to attract more members Or was it "let's reduce expenses"?

JOEL—We did both

Neal- realistically the vast majority of expenses are on people. Expenses on events are more of a guess and we are more flexible.

Edye- If we are voting tonight or another meeting. Your assumption is a 3% increase in RS dues. Is our base assumption still 3%?

Neal—YES, 3% is the base assumption, but even if we cut the rate for younger kids

Moshe- I would you like you to consider putting the programming position salary, that helps the committees should be listed under professional staff. IF you put their salary under the 'committee category people will be confused and think we are getting more programming. The salary belongs under salaries.

Neal and Joel will talk about it.

Gabby- I think if you show these slides at the congregational meeting the 3% vs. 6% on the slide looks shocking.

Moshe- One of my friends asked the board to get the budget in advance of the meeting to have time to look at it.

ABC – It's required by the by laws so it will go out before the board meeting.

Neal- Yes- it will go out.

ABC- We as a board need to approve it so we might have to have a zoom meeting.

Dana- I agree with Abbye that the 3% vs. 6% is not a good idea to show it as written . Just for execution. We think this is a good idea, but the messaging has to be better.

Neal—yes0 I think we can message it in a fun way.

Jesse- D'rot has a lot to say about voluntary giving. I think we make a mistake mixing up "asks". If we just ask to pay what you want, it will step on the ask from D'rot.

Neal- I agree with that—I know Helaine has a good, interesting presentation. I just wish we had some data. This would be a chance to look at the annual fund, dues, and increase in RS.

ABC- When we moved the Senior dues from 40% to 30% we got some data and most people paid the higher amount.

Helaine—the D'rot is different than the RS ask. D'rot will take a 2 year process. We are going to give an update, but no decision will be made immediately.

ABC- it would be nice to remind people that dues and RS prices did not increase for at least 2 years.

It sounds like we want to hear the D'rot presentation so we can't approve the budget

Neal—no the budget is going to be a 3% increase across the board no matter what. I would message it that way and not worry about whether we are going to offer the choice for RS increases.

Shari- I think the younger families are worrying about the increase. It's a lot of money for religious school and you are asking for more, and some young families may only now have one working adult, and this generation with young kids is going through a lot financially.

ABC- could the school committee message to the young families that it's important to be here for the meeting? We'll discuss it off line. Let's tighten up the slides and send it to the Board

again and then we will have a Zoom meeting to approve the budget. Thanks to Neal and Joel for all of the work and I know Neal will have the perfect style to present to the Congregation.

ABC- Background on the Dorot Initiative

Helaine Report:

Thank you for the background.

I'm starting with a folktale that is relevant to Dorot. Everyone was supposed to put some wine in a well to honor the king, but everyone put water in the well, thinking, I'll put in water so it won't matter. They ended up with a barrel of water instead a barrel of wine. So, Dorot urges people to contribute what they can.

Why Dorot was even formed? We have a decline in membership. Our congregation is aging and current dues is down. Young adults don't join anymore. Remission process is a turn off. Many people are not engaged and cancel easily, 1/3 of our members leave right after bnai mitsvah.

We've interviewed 20 shuls about this and USCJ, and many conversations and gathered a lot of information and met bi-weekly to discuss the information and what may or may not work at TJC.

Many shuls and the trend is to move to sustaining membership amount: contributory commitment model. Congregants are asked to make a commitment of any amount, no questions ask. Communication and transparency is paramount to make this successful. Communication must be done continuously and year after year. The role out must ramp up slowly and educate the congregation and the leadership has to buy in and commit to the model's success.

Dorot committee is making several recommendations.

- Move from a transactional to covenantal relationship.
- Contributory dues model.
- Suggested sustaining amount should be in line with our current dues structure.
- The contributory model will eliminate the remission program.
- This model should attract new members and help keep members even if they pay less. The confirms our value that we want all to belong.
- We should still keep the one free year for exploratory membership. We should ask those people for annual fund gifts, and make sure they understand what it cost to run TJC.
- The annual fund should continue as it has in the past. We think it's important to separate the timing of the ask for contributory ask and the annual fund gift. People should be prepared to be asked for money more than once.
- We need to reach out personally with high end donors.

This model is not a quick fix. It is not wishful thinking. But our recommendations are based on the data we collected from the other shuls that we interviewed.

Neal created a financial model of possible paths to various scenarios.

ABC- Helaine worked so hard on this and took a really deep dive so I want to give her a round of applause before we take questions.

Edye- I want to applaud you and the committee on the depth and breadth of the work that you did, I think this effort is different because you took a broad view of the landscape and you took a look of the financial model. Is there a financial model that will be shown to people. There might be some other financial people who want to look at the financial models.

Maybe someone might ask what would a financial projection model look like relative to other models that could be under consideration. This might be something to consider.

Helaine—we went into this without any preconceived notions, but we learned that the fair share model was not liked by another shul in MA. The contributory model bubbled up as the most sensible.

Edye- I think the models would be helpful to explain what we are trying to do.

Shari- I want to make sure I understand this. So the contributory model is that we pay what we currently pay—the sustaining amount. Or people can pay more or less.

Helaine—yes—according to Beth Chaim, most people will pay the sustaining amount. Some go up and some go down.

Polly- it sounds like this is an annual process but I'm wondering if it makes sense to ask people what would the project be in the future. Maybe ask people what can pay in year one, year two, etc.

Helaine- yes- the one on one conversations that can be done but people need to feel good about what they are doing.

Abby—I like that idea—would people keep their pledges the same each year or increase it so you get an idea for the future. Would the RS still be a separate budget line?

Helaine—we didn't even look at the RS. That's a separate amount.

Jerry- Thank you Helaine for that amazing report. Is it possible for you to circulate the report? (yes)

Contributory pledge model ...is it also called something else? Helaine- yes—we can call it what we want

Jerry—what is the back up plan? 10% 20%

Helaine—Full disclosure -- Beth chaim had a large shortfall this year, so this is not a quick fix. We don't know what the actual numbers are and if the contributory model doesn't work we would have to switch to a different model.

The capital assessment would go away
The annual fund would stay

Jerry- I think the one on one meetings would be great

Helaine—we have 9 categories of congregants and we want to make sure we hear from all of those voices before we make a recommendation,
The hope is the next fiscal year we roll out the new model. But we will have a meeting first.

Leah- I WANT TO EXPRESS my support and thanks to the committee for this. 1) I think it will attract new members; 2) there are some millennials who come ala carte, but maybe they will join now and pay \$500 and that is a win
2) I think there are people who can give more and many do give through the annual fund, but when they see the bill that's a bill, But if they see the sustaining letter they might give more. And the annual fund and it comes at a different time of year, but I think there is a lot of potential. There is uncertainty but I think there is the opportunity here.

Lew—does this make more people join or does it just make congregants happier.

Helaine- its' a combination. For example, Beth chaim got 89 new members to join who paid a lower amount than the sustaining recommendation, but they got those people in the door.

ABC—this plan takes a lot more work to make it work. So Beth chaim has more members, but they have a big deficit, so we have to work with the new members.

Dina- would we still charge for HH tickets? I think if we did NOT charge for HH then people would like that they can bring their family members, etc.

Jesse- there are all type of operational details that we will have to work out when we get closer.

Helaine—one of our top donors said this can't be on the back of the same 15 top donors who always give. We plan to talk to everyone.

Judy—Helaine thank you. Of the 20 shuls you spoke to do they offer any type of extra benefits for big givers? Do they get better parking, is there a president's club?

HELAINÉ—each place is different. It's a cultural thing. WE would have to ask this at a listening session. Do you want your name on a board? Reserved parking? Dinner with the rabbi? It's a cultural question. It was totally individualized for the culture of each shul. I think this is a question that should be asked at the listening session.

Eve- It sounds like this was a newer dues structure for most of the shuls you spoke to. This is not a new idea. There is a lot of history on this at churches. It might be worth looking at and maybe we can learn something.

ABC- It's very late now so I want to say thank you again to Helaine. Thank you so much. Switching to old business:

Apartment is moving forward; we have 25K but we will start fundraising after the annual fund. Federation might help fund with a matching grant. They want a member of their board to be part of our committee and have 3 points to settle:

1. How do we make it a true community asset
2. What is the recognition of Federation in this project aside from the plaque?
3. What is the policy of the apartment?

Life and Legacy

Two more promises were made last week, by board members. We will now receive the matching funds. 13 new promises were made during this administration. So thank you all. May 23 luncheon for all donors. Part of the strategic planning process was for life and legacy. You can also donate right now via a real time LL pledge.

Annual Fund-we learned that people were unhappy making phone calls and we learned that letter writing was great. But there is no substitute for making calls. The larger donors all came in because they got a call. What we really need in our last week of the drive is to get to make phone calls. We have a matching grant for 18K. I have a list of names and we really need this last push. The matching grant ends on Sunday and we need to make these calls or emails if that is better. But these are people who have never given so this is a chance to get them involved. WE can make some serious headway.

David Broza is next week on Weds. May 3. Please sell more tickets. Help advertise the program.

Heidi- presented flowers and thanked Alexandra for her service. And an incredible year.

ABC- Wrap up the Board Year

I feel I made connections- with Gabrielle we sat on lawn chairs. I feel like I can sustain the connections. I met people even though it was covid so being on the board I was able to achieve bringing our family out and connected.

Lew- I think it was a great 2 years; working with a new Rabbi co-chairing a committee that failed (cantor search) coming out of Covid. And working with ABC has been wonderful. I was happy to contribute to this place and I hope that this will continue when I work with the Rabbi on a committee to help congregants feel connected.

Lynn—reminder we have a blood drive coming up in partnership with Muslim community.

ABC- To perpetuate our covenantal community I was going to write a message in our Creating Sacred Communities book and pass the book on for inspiration. So, thank you rabbi and thank you Joel.

Move into Executive session.

Motion to adjourn- Shari; second; Moshe