

January 25, 2024  
TJC Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

President, Heidi Joseph called the meeting to order.

Absent:

1. Melissa Hager
2. Jesse Treu
3. Alexandra Bar Cohen
4. Dana Molina
5. Ari Meisel
6. Michael Leopold
7. Eve Coulson
8. Riva Levy
9. Neal Masia
10. Harry Cummins

Present:

1. Heidi Joseph
2. Charlene Borsack
3. Michael Goldin
4. Lew Gantwerk
5. Fred Appel
6. Lynn Ross
7. Jane LeGrange
8. Brad Bailey
9. Alison Schneider
10. Pam Zaifman
11. Jeremy Black
12. Jeremy Speigel
13. Tom Will
14. Moshe Margolin
15. Andrea Hoberman
16. Diane Guvenis
17. Jerry Neuman
18. Rabbi Merow
19. Joel Berger

Call to order at 7:07

Rabbi- We have beautiful dried fruits and nuts to snack on in honor of T'bishvat. It is a new year for the trees in terms of when you can pick produce from a tree that is 3 years old or older. The mild temperatures of an early spring in Israel meant you can plant trees earlier but it is still winter in Israel now. There is darkness now. Our ancestors new they had to plant in the gloomy winter to get fruit in the Spring. I feel like the Jewish people are in a time of gloominess, so it is time to go out and plant. We have to find Jews wherever they are and ask them to be part of the flowering of our community. We have to plant seeds and bring people into the Jewish community. We have to plant seeds when we think they won't grow. We have to plant seeds in our community so people will keep coming back to our building. Know that the fruits of your work on the board will bring about joy.

Heidi- we have a few reports.

Alison and Jeremy- school report. We are up to 154 students in our school which is great. The 4th graders are going to the Brooklyn Jewish Children's museum. The older kids are going to DC to learn about advocacy. We are trying to build community. We are doing grade level kiddush luncheons. The teenagers have a teen lounge and it's been a big success. There are about 30 students who came to a football event and loved it. We have a TJC tot Spot group that is kicking off and hopefully will grow.

Rabbi- a young family wanted something for their young baby and we connected them with 2 other families with young babies so our staff arranged for the young baby families to get together twice a month here, and at other houses. They use our baby room, which is downstairs. We also have babysitting on shabbat during services.

Alison- so in the spirit of community we have spearheaded some parents at different grade levels to act as class parents who will organize small social events outside of TJC so the families get to know each other. TJC will provide wine, or pizza, or small funding for these social events. We are enthusiastic about this and we are going to kick this off in the next few weeks— breakfast, lunches, dinners, etc. They are all now putting together their plans.

Heidi- the feedback we have gotten is that there is no cohesiveness. So the parents don't know each other and don't have a network. So we are trying to be social engineers to create comraderies so that each grade can grow together. So thank you for getting this done.

Joel- update on annual fund- Good news bad news scenario. Good news- we budgeted 300K for the annual fund and today we are at 304K! We hit our budget. There are 12 donors in the \$1800 range and they have not yet given so hopefully they will renew their donation. There are 186 family units that have given to annual fund. The bad news is the 360 member units gave zero. That means we are leaving a lot of money on the table. Thank you to those who made phone calls. Now we are shifting to a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising effort.

Heidi- you can still call you names for the annual fund, if you have not yet called.

Jerry Neuman- it's good to know what people have given in the past so we know what to ask for this year.

Lew- it's disturbing that 62.5 % of our families have not given anything. I know we make phone calls but is there anything else we can be doing? Even if each of those families gave \$36 that's a lot of money. I don't know what else to do, but how do we get people to give?

Heidi- we can do a text to everyone. We did send the pre-recorded message that left a voicemail on their phones about donating. So we could try that again.

Pam- maybe publishing the list of donors is a good thing to do now? So people see what others gave and that will motivate them to give?

Heidi: I'm worried if we post what people gave for the annual fund now, this will have a negative effect on fundraising for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have to ask for more money now.

Lynn- I think we should educate the congregation and say that 62.5% did NOT give, so please give something.

Jeremy- I don't think that's the good way to persuade people because I think people are contributing in different ways. People not appreciate being guilted into giving or being compared to other congregants.

Pam- maybe it's time to put a pie chart in the newsletter to show where we are with fundraising and how much more we need.

Moshe- This is not so easy. Because the guilt trip is unconjurable. We have to ask ourselves is there is better way to get the message out? It's not our business to get into why people can't pay. I think it's great to give \$18 because it makes you part of the community but beyond that I don't think we can force people to give because we don't know their business. I think everyone can give \$18. So, is it a reflection on us that only 30% gave? Does that mean that people don't like TJC? Why won't they give even \$18 above their dues?

Brad- maybe we can ask for the annual fund in the billing statement?

Joel- we have no fundraising chair. It's an empty board position, so we really need someone to champion the fundraising efforts. So your comments are all great and we hit our budget number. But the potential to get more is there. My biggest concern is that we are 4 months away from the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we have raised zero, so we have a major effort to do.

Heidi- we have raised the same amount as the last year in a shorter amount of time. We could get to 400K by June if the missing annual fund pledges come in, but we need to create buy in and a feeling of community so that people will feel committed to show up and contribute.

Annual fund allows for some big gifts and we had about 60 big donors above \$1800, but there are 12 big donors who did not give. There are 2 committed but the other 10 did not commit yet.

Joel, if all our number hit perfectly, we'll still have a deficit after the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The annual fund is on budget. But there is \$175K operating deficit.

Jerry- the 200K is budgeted for income for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and that will still give us a deficit? I suggest we put the Annual fund to the side and target those people who can donate generously for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I volunteer to work on the fundraising committee for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Heidi- Moshe and Rabbi and Israel and Us committee have spent a lot of time working on this. Drum roll....

Moshe – we are having an Israel solidarity mission lead by Rabbi Merow, **March 9-March 15**. This is going to be a great program. It's not a sight-seeing program. It's an intensive mission with work and meeting with families of hostages, visiting soldiers who were injured; you will hear from the government, meet Bedouins, etc. It's focused in the Negev where we have a sister congregation in Omer and we will visit them. And we will visit our Israel Impact fund recipients. It will be a great program. The only real travel to Israel these days is a mission trip. Based on 20 people a single person is \$2,465, does not include airfare. We are staying in a hotel in Tel Aviv. Airfare, is tricky. There is high demand for flights which cost \$1400. This also includes a bus from shul to EWR. Most meals are included, except for 3 or 4 dinners. The itinerary is fantastic.

Rabbi- we are announcing the trip tomorrow. We are using Keshet. We know the situation will change by March but we will be flexible and will adjust as needed. All the Israelis say it is amazing to them when they see Americans come and volunteer. And it is important to go and bear witness and show support. We need a minimum of 20 people.

Joel- Thank you Moshe. We are having a constant contact glitch issue. So emails are delayed, but we are sending it tomorrow at 10 am. The problem is on the Constant Contact end, so let me know if there is a problem with receiving constant contact tomorrow so we can forward the information in a timely manner, as needed.

Rabbi- we need you to be ambassadors and advertise this trip. Even if you are not going to go on the trip, please talk it up with your social group. This is a real timed down thing—we need to know that we have enough people to go ASAP. We will advertise to TJC people first and one week later if we have room, then we will advertise to at least one of the other shuls who said they would publicize.

Lew- If you want to stay longer can Keshet work with us?

Rabbi- YES

Chabad is doing a trip in June with Princeton Faculty and staff.

Membership:

Jerry- Metrics for membership-Since June we are up 37 new members including some exploratory.

Andrea- In January we have 4 new members. We are going to say the names of the new people at each meeting so that everyone will be aware of the new members.

Jerry- 4 resignations in January. Some are unhappy; some just did not renew.

Rabbi- we have followed up with the resignations extensively.

Diane- Membership plan- When new members come on board we want to make them feel as welcome as possible and bring them into the fold. There is a plan of a schedule of calls from Rabbi and other TJC staff and board members. There is also a welcome bag. The most important part is to assign a buddy so that the new member feels connected. I know this has been done in the past, but we need to beef this up again and make it active. I think the board members need to step up and volunteer to be a buddy. Like, Lynne who volunteered to drive a new member to the tour of the Beth sholom shul trip and then will go out to dinner with them. You just need to make an effort to connect. We are all busy, but these moments of connectivity are so important. When people are nice you feel good about it. We need to do this as individuals. I don't know if we want to create something very formal, or just raise your hand, but we have to get buddies. It can be any congregant, not just board members.

Andrea- last year the people who had previously volunteered to be buddies were not willing to continue, so we need more people. So, for example we have 4 new people this January so we should get a buddy for each of those 4 people.

Michael- last shabbat Rabbi Merow pointed out 4 new members sitting behind me, so after services I asked them to sit at kiddush with me. And it was a nice thing and an easy thing to do. So it was an easy spontaneous thing to do.

Andrea- some tangible easy things to do is to deliver the welcome bag and then ask them to join you at one TJC event.

Rabbi- or invite them to shabbat dinner.

Lew Gantwerk- are you asking for volunteers? I volunteer. I have already sat with Samuel Cohen

Lynn- I'm driving Samuel Cohen so I'll take him. I'm also talking with Malka.

Rabbi- I have 2 members that need to be integrated. They come a lot but they haven't made friends outside. So even if they come they might still need a buddy.

Michael Goldin sat with Hecker

Andrea- so each month we want to assign a buddy to the new people.

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Heidi- we have to vote on minutes:

Pam and Moshe – move to accept Mid. Year 2023 minutes—unanimous

Pam and Moshe- move to accept December 2023 minutes unanimous

Good and Welfare- Lew Gantwerk- come to Shabbat for our anniversary.

Heidi- thank you all, Meeting adjourned.