

TJC Board of Trustees Meeting Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024

Attendees: Heidi Joseph, Lew Gantwerk, Melissa Hager, Bruce Goldstein, Jeremy Spiegel, Polly Strauss, Moshe Margolin, Suzanne Esterman, Abby Rose, Edey Kamenir, Diane Girer, Louise Sandberg, Michael Goldin, Roberta Sternthal, Jesse Treu, Lynn Ross, Adam Pechter, Judy Kutin, Jane LeGrange, Dana Molina, Jerry Neumann, Allison Schneider, Leah Boustan via Zoom, Joel Berger and Rabbi Andi Merow. Guest: Randy Brett

President Joseph called the meeting to order at 7:09p.

**RAM Devar**

-Services are however long they are. The opening portion of services will be faster with Shacharit lasting about 15 minutes to keep the sermon on time.

-This week's parashat says Sarah's going to die - why is it called The Life of Sarah when it's about her death? Because we want to remember her life.

**Leah Boustan, Budget Update (see handouts)**

-Page 1: Dues collection is on track relative to last year despite the "late" holidays.

-Page 2: Education collection is faster than last year and not just because of the "pay early" incentive

Programming and Life & Legacy are also ahead.

-Page 3: Total revenue was higher last year due to "restricted revenue."

	Nov. 14, 2024	May 31, 2024
All members	506	489
Full Dues	333	317

This translates to 16 full dues more than last year.

-IIF: All money collected through Israel Impact Fund (IIF) has been sent to Kibbutz Holit, approximately \$600,000. IIF is now closed.

-Annual Fund: Collected \$90,000 this year, compared to \$80,000 last year.

-Many households need reminders to make contributions

-Looking for 100% board participation

Questions/Discussion

Bruce G: Where is the Gala in this?

Heidi J: Last year's budget.

Heidi J: We're about half way to our Annual Fund goal. There's been a lot of communication but we still need people to make calls.

Jerry N offered to make calls as long as 100% of the board participates.

Heidi J said about half of the board had participated at this point.

Adam P also offered to make calls.

Heidi J said that any additional funds that come in for IIF will go through the Federation to be sent to Israel.

**Randy Brett, Restricted Funds Presentation (see handouts)**

-Randy thanked Judy K for all her work on this project to help determine what TJC can use these funds for and how TJC can use them.

-These funds contain donations with conditions; some are permanent stipulations, some are unrestricted or temporarily restricted.

-Temporarily restricted funds make it into the budget and can be used to offset budget lines.

-How these funds are allocated is up to the board.

-The balance sheet has both temporarily restricted funds and permanently restricted funds. The latter often have a person's name associated with them.

#### Questions/Discussion

Where is Adult Ed on this list? JCW?

Randy B: JCW & Mens' Club are their own auxiliary organizations

Jesse T: Suggested that the legal structure is a little sloppy.

Melissa H: Expressed concern about the integrity of the purpose of the donations.

Joel B: Currently, these funds aren't segregated and are in a single account.

Jesse T: Confirmed that the interest income is credited to the general account.

Randy B: The documents associated with a fund will often say that a permanently restricted fund can be used for another purpose if the initial purpose has folded.

-We're looking to simplify the fund process and make it more transparent and presented four possible approaches.

Jerry N: Suggested that a percentage of the remaining funds be put into the endowment fund as a fifth approach.

Randy B: Explained that the endowment fund has a half-million-dollar threshold that the Finance Committee can flesh out.

#### **Jeremy Spiegel, Religious School Update**

-5th & 6th graders went to Lower East Side

-Shabbat Dinner last week was a great success

-Dec 8 is the Legacy Kick off of Let's Have Lunch

-Dec 15 Tikkun Olam Festival marks a month of gratitude

-All kids participated in Hebrew proficiency testing with reports to go to parents shortly

-Teacher observations to be held in next few weeks

-Looking to form a committee to explore how to better serve neurodiverse students

-The B'nai Mitzvah class has grown and he praised the clergy and kids

#### Questions/Discussion

Michael G: Asked how many kids are in Religious School

Jeremy S (post meeting): 151

Edey K: Does TJC have resources to retain kids after becoming B'nai Mitzvah?

#### **Diane Girer, Membership Update**

-Membership has grown by 32 households this fiscal year

-Committee is further honing onboarding procedures including

-script for those delivering welcome bags to describe the buddy system to keep new member engaged;

-2025 new member events in planning stages - 1 for empty nesters and 1 for young families

- Religious School's Tot Spot is a good engagement tool for new members and the Membership Committee is taking the lead to keep it going
- Looking for additional ways to build impressions within the larger community

### **Jane LeGrange, Religious Affairs Update**

#### **High Holidays post mortem:**

1. Security was good.
2. Trees in social hall were also a +.
3. We needed more seating. Need to develop rules for holding seats/seat reservations. For example you can only reserve until a pre-specified cut-off time. If you are going to a family service, its ok to save a seat. Action item: to hold a training for ushers with clear seating guidelines.
4. Alternative service should be moved to day 1 at about 4 to increase attendance and it is nice to have it before Tashlich.
5. We should mail our tickets for tot service to people who signed up and/or have a stack of them to give out at the ticket table.
6. Prior to holidays, we should have targeted advertising for family programs, tot services, and alternative services in addition to advertising that outlines all of our programs.
7. Alternate Yizkor service on Yom Kippur works well between chair yoga and forum.
8. We want to start Minchah, Neilah services 15 minutes earlier, so they do not have to be rushed.
9. Ideas for a break space include Jewish themed jigsaw puzzles and photobooks from the previous year's events.
10. The personal reflections were excellent.
11. The new community break fast was very successful with 30-35 people in attendance. If it gets bigger, we could set up social hall during the afternoon/neilah service-in the back.
12. Babysitting should be reserved.
13. There is interest in replacing the teen forum with a teen program, however, teens should be invited to full service. The teens should not be babysitting. Instead we should hire teacher(s) who could run activities for the kids in babysitting.
14. RAC will select the hatan and kallah for Simchat Torah. This spurred a discussion on making videos illustrating celebrations for different holidays.
15. High holiday planning should start in January.

#### **Hannukkah**

1. Sherry Meyer has volunteered her house for latkes making.
2. We are trying to organize a Christmas day Chinese food and movie outing. We would like to reserve a room and pre-order a vegetarian banquet and light candles.
3. We will have a zoom candle lighting with Magen Avraham from 5 to 5:30 PM on Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Tu B'shevat**

1. Harry will talk to Edna about a program with Magen Avraham on February 12.
2. We will have a school-wide seder.

#### **Purim**

1. Purim is on 3/14, Pi day.

2. We will look into buying a shpiel which we can modify. We will have dinner, the shpiel, and the Magillah reading.
3. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade will present a skit on Einstein.

#### **Pesach**

1. We are going to look into a synagogue-wide second seder.

#### **Shabbat Across TJC**

1. Myra is cochairing this event and is looking for a cochair. It will be held on May 9.
2. Possible cochairs/committee members are Dana Molina and Judy Richman.

#### **Shabbat services**

1. Friday night services will start at 6 PM, starting in January, for a few months as a trial run

#### **Heidi Joseph, New Business**

- Jan. 25 is the Great Jewish Laugh Off fundraising event with two comedians
- We may have another event in May with a Billy Joel or Elton John tribute band.
  - She asked if board thought this could be held during the week since Shabbat ends so late and the consensus was that Thursday from 7p to 10p works.
- TJC hired Robin McGovern as a part time grant writer to take care of the four-page wish list.
- Boiler will be replaced in the school building after getting 3 bids to replace the old oil burner with a high efficiency gas burner. Utilizing PSEG rebates, it will cost \$27,000.
- The Apartment is awaiting final township approval for the new outdoor staircase and expect that approval Jan. 2025.

#### **Lew Gantwerk, Governance Committee Update**

- Explained that Phil Carchman is leading this committee that will recommend how the board should be restructured, if at all. Most likely, recommendations will not be presented this fiscal year.

#### **Joel Berger, Social Media/Advertising**

- A \$300 investment in Facebook advertising produced more than 19,000 impressions with very high open rates.

Heidi J moved to accept the minutes from last meeting.

Jeremy Spiegel made the motion to accept minutes from Sept. 19 meeting

Lew Gantwerk seconded the motion which was accepted unanimously.

#### **Good & Welfare**

Rabbi commended the new, safe ark.

Heidi J announced that Neal Masia has resigned from the board.

Meeting adjourned.

