

Minutes from the Temple Beth Israel Board Meeting
April 14, 2016 7:00 PM
Temple Beth Israel Library

Present: Mindy Schlossberg, Richard Argosh, Nathan Phillips, Pearl Wolf, Bruce Kreitzberg, Jessica Lambright, Amy Steckel, Aura Solomon, Jared Rubin, Jeff Kirtner

Absent: Justine Lovinger, Geraldine Moreno-Black, Maram Epstein, Michael Griffel, Craig Starr, Scott Fellman

Also attending: Rabbi Ruhi Sophia, Nina Korican

Agenda:

Torah Study

The real story about how an orange wound up on the seder plate.

Open Forum

Nothing.

Minutes Approval

Minutes approved as presented.

Rabbi Report

Some points from the written report: (1) the value based decision making process on membership is well underway: three forums held in March to gather community input; 50 people total at the three meetings; the task force is meeting to draft a proposal based on best practices from elsewhere and the forums; (2) Israel Task Force: will have an event on Yom Ha'Atzmaut; high level of pastoral care this month.

Issues not on the written report: (1) Rabbi Ruhi Sophia has recruited the "liason committee;" (2) Teen programming: Rabbi Ruhi has been holding a monthly havdallah/dinner program since January, which is going well; w/Shabbat ending later, she'll host them at her home, with the next one on the last night of pesach; she has had good feedback about it. She's thinking of doing a confirmation/leadership program, w/paid madrichim. Jacob Siegel may facilitate/host. Confirmation is a reform movement practice, often with weekly programming mixing Jewish learning and social time. She's thinking of a program meeting twice per month, with one meeting focused on leader training for madrichim, and the second focused on learning on a Jewish theme

or topic. This is all very much in the development and visioning phase. She's thinking the confirmation program would be formalized and end with a formal "graduation."

Executive Director Report

Executive session on a personnel matter.

Moved, seconded and approved: the interfaith community group can use the building on a date in June to be determined.

Nina update on membership committee: it is now working well.

Talmud Torah Director Report

Jess—one thing to add to the TT written report. They are putting together a survey to give to parents, students and teachers. The original impetus for the survey was to determine how the curriculum change has gone, but it's being broadened to get input on various other potential topics, including among other possibilities determining the needs and desires of parents, students and teachers, and determining whether some more fixed curriculum should be developed (right now there isn't one). The committee is open to ideas for questions; email them to Jess.

There was discussion about the usefulness of developing a way to communicate with teens, so that all of them are informed of upcoming events. Everyone agreed this was a good idea. No action steps were proposed.

Budget approval

Amy: Financial report for March: shows we're on track for the year. It still looks like we'll end the year in the black. The budget proposal projects the current year to year end (6/30), and it also indicates we're on good financial track for this year.

Nathan: A few highlights of the budget: Have again budgeted a \$35K loss with reserves to be used to make up the deficit. A significant change is to put an end to the "mortgage interest assessment program," and replace it with the "building assessment program." While there is still a mortgage, it is much closer now to an appropriate level for "generational equity," and attention should now turn from getting the mortgage paid down to establishing a building fund for capital improvements and maintenance. The idea behind "generational equity" is that each "generation" should pay to fund building improvements and maintenance for the period they use the building, so that all of us share the life and cost of the building.

Bruce indicated the importance of this change in terminology and focus. He will work with Nathan on presenting a cogent explanation of the change in the materials for the congregational meeting.

Amy: She would like to have congregational meeting materials include some brief statement or message about the importance of paying more or full dues, so that we don't have to raise dues.

Nathan made the point that if everyone paid 10% more than we do now, we would be able to fully fund our operations, and not take out of reserves.

Nina commented in writing on the budget, but mentioned a few points here. The budget includes hiring an administrative staff person—that has been true for the past several years, but next year that position will be filled. There was also a brief discussion about the computer system, which is in dire straits, over-taxed and needs to be addressed immediately. The proposal is to move the system to the cloud, some of which is happening now, and some of which will occur over the next fiscal year. That is in the new budget for approximately \$23,000.

Aura moves to approve the budget. Bruce seconds. Approved unanimously.

Other things for the annual meeting: the introductory dues discount program (\$360 for the first year) is not going well. Nina suggests eliminating it. It is not achieving the goals for which it was designed (attracting new members), may be counter-productive (by making it harder to get members to pay full dues in later, among other things), is difficult to administer, and is not necessary (because new members with financial hardships are already likely aware of our policies on dues discounts). For those reasons and others, Nina recommends eliminating the reduced first year dues program.

Bruce moved to end the first year welcome membership dues. Aura seconded. Unanimously approved.

Nina would also like to eliminate dues for members age 90 and older (lifetime membership). There was discussion about the reasons for doing so, the likely positive response among most, the possibility that some might receive it negatively, and the importance of striking an appropriate tone in delivering the message. But there was general agreement that overall it would be received positively.

Mindy moved to have no dues for members 90 and above. Approved unanimously.

Status of By-Laws update – Treasurer term of office

Nathan commented that the bylaws presented in the meeting materials address the issues discussed at prior meetings about membership categories. Nathan recommended making one change: to increase the term of the treasurer to two years. With the current term of one year, and the current term limit of three years, the treasurer would only be able to serve for a maximum of three consecutive years. Given the steep learning curve and the importance of institutional memory in that office, that is too short a time. Nathan proposed making the term of treasurer two years, so that the treasurer can serve for up to six years rather than three.

Moved, seconded and unanimously approved to adopt the bylaws as presented with the amendment that the treasurer will have a two year term.

Strategic Planning

Mindy reported that she has formed a committee whose members are: Mindy (chair), Elliot Farrenn, Jeff Kirtner, Nathan Phillips, Sharon Rudnick, and Julie Raiskin. The first meeting will be in late April.

Respectfully submitted:

Jeff Kirtner