

## CBS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 19, 2013

Meeting was called to order by Allan Goldstein, President, at approximately 7:10 pm.

The following persons were present:

Allan Goldstein; Stephan Rubin; David Lewis; Jeff Actor; Karen Lukin; Sherri Taxman; Leah Wolfthal; Peter Gingiss; Seth Lerner; Steve Conaway; Milton Mosk; Lena Malacoff; Aaron Howard;; Sheldon Weisfeld; Mitch Kreindler; Michael Engelhart; Marc Malacoff; and Karen Bernstein;

Tom Samuels; Grant Caplan; and Amy Halevy were absent.

Also in attendance were the following persons: Rabbi Ranon Teller and Rhoda Goldberg. Special Guest, Lena Malcuff, attended in her capacity as Chair of the Membership Committee.

Aaron Howard will present his Prayer at the next meeting.

The following items of business were addressed at the meeting:

### **1. *Prayer or Blessing (offered by Michael Engelhart)***

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us the time and wherewithal to serve on this Board of Trustees so that we may help to direct this shul in positive ways that benefit our fellow congregants. Please continue to bless us and help us to find happiness and satisfaction in our professional relationships and to gain the respect of our colleagues based upon hard and disciplined work. To have rewarding and loving interactions with our families.

To improve our ability to recognize what is true and what is of long-lasting value rather than that which is phony or ephemeral.

And finally, help us to find what is interesting and funny in our experiences so that we can remain intellectually engaged and continue to lead exciting and meaningful lives.

And together we say, Amen.

### **2. *Strategic Initiative – Brith Shalom Chai (Rabbi)***

Rabbi made a presentation as to how to fully engage and encourage participation by our membership. Rabbi proposed a “vehicle”, or task group to (1) Intensify life cycle experiences; (2) expand add life cycle events, such as birthday celebrations; and, (3) intensify random, daily experiences, all so as to be a shul that cares even more about its all of its members.

Discussion ensued. Goldstein believes this is a worthwhile initiative, but requires Board involvement and commitment. Begins with the Board and filters out. Aaron Howard encouraged

everyone to read Ron Wolfson's book on Relational Judaism.

### **3. *Cantor Transition Team report (Jeff)***

Goldstein reported that Cantor Rhodes has indicated he wants to look, starting January 1st, for other employment. Actor assembled a one-time task force to investigate what we need to do to cover duties if Cantor goes out for an interview. Actor, Rabbi, Cantor Rhodes, Debbie Mishael, Larry Estes, (with input from Lori Rubin), participated in the meeting. Reviewed Cantor's duties, including education, administrative, pastoral, etc..., to make sure everything is covered. All responsibilities, except one outside, can be readily covered, with his help. Remind synagogue that nothing has changed, other than he has informally notified his non-renewal, with letter signed by Cantor, President. B'nai Mitzvah families require more support, to be addressed when it arises, using membership to support. Bernstein suggested that letter include ending date for his contract. Actor says staff will be directed to advise members what resources will be available to address needs. Important dates on calendar that we can request that Cantor not take off, such as fundraising events when we will want to showcase our clergy. Letter to be sent out promptly after he gives formal notice on January 1st.

Goldstein pointed out that the task force conclusion is a recommendation that needs to be acted upon by Board.

Weisfeld moved that Board adopt proposal, seconded by Engelhart. Passed unanimously.

### **4. *Interim plan for Cantor discussion (Allan)***

Goldstein: Four options exist: (1) put together a search committee to begin looking, not an idea supported by Goldstein; (2) hire interim cantor; (3) readjust our staff resources, including second Cantor (Levine); and (4) or use lay Cantors for davening. Goldstein opened it up to discussion. Bernstein expressed concern over High Holidays. Rabbi says we would need to hire High Holiday Cantor upon notice by Cantor Rhodes. Gingiss expressed concern over shul finances; Actor said savings not adequate to justify concern. Readjusting staff discussed - concern over allocation of Levine's time. Goldstein responded that other adjustments needed to address Educational Director duties. Bernstein and Lukin believe a professional Cantor needed. Lewis said we should look for more volunteer lay leaders, and argued that we need to ascertain congregation's wants and needs. Engelhart asked why option #1 not advocated by Goldstein. Weisfeld said we have reputation for preparing Bar/Bat Mitzvah kids and absence of Cantor will affect our image.

Goldstein wants to form team to explore strategic vision and interim plan.

### **5. *Endowment Campaign update (Seth)***

Lerner reported that meetings have been, and are taking place to discuss increasing annual giving / endowment. Lerner also suggested that 10th Anniversary of Rabbi tenure will also provide opportunity for fund-raising.

**6. *Financial Update (Tom or Milton)***

Mosk reported on behalf of Tom Samuels. We are tracking projections, except cash position is not what was expected. Concern that directory advertising sale would help; project has not occurred. April / May will be problematic unless we do fund-raising. Directory will not take place until next fiscal year.

**7. *Membership Snapshot and initiatives (info and Lena)***

Lena Malacoff reported prospects met with her tonight and joined! She will be meeting with more families in the near future. Working on brochure. Rabbi suggested let's do a Shabbat service honoring our new members. Lena is working with Gingiss.

Goldstein reviewed Membership Analysis with Board.

**8. *Big Tent Judaism initiative – Jewish Outreach Institute Report (Peter)***

Gingiss generally discussed JOI Report and its implications for CBS. Wwe are doing good, but not great. Action items were identified for later discussion.

The following was submitted to the Secretary after the Meeting for inclusion in the Minutes regarding the JOI Report:

[Larry Estes Notes]

Background – A Federation task force has been evaluating how to improve accessibility to Jewish institutions and organizations by those unaffiliated, un-engaged or new to the metro area. As part of their efforts they engaged the Jewish Outreach Institute, based in New York. The JOI conducted a community-wide scan of 27 Jewish institutions and organizations. The scan included: email, cold call into the office, and a review of websites.

Community-wide results – The overall result of the scan was that the community, as a whole, had only a fair level of accessibility, ease of openness and creating a welcoming environment that encouraged a person not presently engaged to “see” themselves as becoming part of the active Jewish community.

CBS Specific results – Our results were consistent with the community-wide results. We were “okay” with one of two cold calls that came into the office. Our attempt at being responsive was more a reflection of a lack of training than poor communication skills. A second call was not returned; clearly a problem. Our response to an unsolicited email was considered reasonable. Our website, while not poorly received, didn't include photos which are considered a method of indicating inclusion. It also had lingo and Hebrew that some may consider a barrier to access.

Our action items -

1. We are working on to include more photos and photos on the home page in the top banner section of the website and elsewhere, where appropriate

2. We are working on a way to simplify how a person new to the website can easily and quickly access information that is relevant to the newcomer
3. We are putting at the fingertips of our front line staff, copies of the Madrich and e-bulletin so that we have information about forthcoming events handy
4. We are capturing contact information when a person calls in and we can't connect them to a person (xfr call to voicemail) so we can ensure follow up
5. We are going to participate in some free training to be provided by the Federation next year
6. We are working on revising our current brochure and creating new bouchee for prospective members
7. We are ordering business cards w/out a specific name for prospective members to have for future reference
8. We are building a process to track prospective members from initial contact through their joining (or not)

**9. *Safrai Gallery fundraiser update (Larry)***

Estes said we are looking for a \$15k net. Banner out front. Save the date. Newspaper promotion. Safrai will contribute. Grant Caplan is Chair. No cost for art. We get 20% commission, meaning we will need to sell \$90-100k.

**10. *Update on USCJ dues situation and variance request (Allan)***

Goldstein did not have new information regarding proposed USCJ dues structure changes, but we negotiated a past variance (\$16k) and are seeking a variance for the same amount in the coming fiscal year.

**11. *Texas Kheillot Shabbaton (Allan)***

We can and should all still sign up, per Goldstein!

**12. *Good and Welfare***

Goldstein congratulated Sisterhood for their Shabbat. Taxman credited Wolfthal for her organization of Sisterhood Shabbat.

Karen Lukin acknowledged Lena Malacoff's selection as Woman of Valor. David Lewis was thanked for Mitzvah Day activities.

Marc Malacoff acknowledged CBS volunteers for Super Sunday (ERJCC).

Ruach is this Friday evening.

Wolfthal commented on how there was joyful singing at last weekend's Kiddush Luncheon.

*13. Tzedakah: the sum of \$39.00 was collected.*

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephan Rubin,  
Secretary