

Congregation Brith Shalom Board Meeting

Minutes

February 16, 2012

CBS President Milton Mosk called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Present: Milton Mosk, Allan Goldstein, Jeffrey Actor, Karen Lukin, Gregg Sheena, Mitch Kreindler, Grant Caplan, Rosine Chappell, Steve Conaway, Peter Gingiss, Alan Goldsmith, David Lewis, Marc Malacoff, Tom Samuels, Randi Sonenshein, Matt Stein, Wendy Conaway, Lisa Estes, Maxine Goodman, Lisa Lowenstein, David Wald, Rabbi Ranon Teller, Cantor Lance Rhodes, Larry Estes and Rhoda Goldberg. Steve Rubin also attended.

President's Report

Milton reported that the second meeting to discuss membership in USCJ will be held on February 26 from 5:00 -6:30 PM. Last year's Board voted to withhold payment to USCJ because it was felt that Brith Shalom was not getting value for its money. USCJ has been approached to determine if USCJ would accept an annual payment of \$16,000 for dues for some number of years. USCJ has not responded to this proposal. CBS is still considered a member in good standing, but the Board will ultimately need to make a decision as to the direction CBS should follow in this matter.

The physical plant is being looked at in terms of life expectancy of the facility, what the facility is worth, what changes are needed and what options for modernization are possible.

Cantor Rhodes' contract has been finalized.

The Board Retreat tentatively scheduled for April 22 will need to be rescheduled.

Financial Report

Gregg Sheena, Treasurer, presented the financial report and reported that cash assets exceed liabilities. Without Year of the Torah funds CBS would end the current fiscal year with a cash deficit of \$64,000. With Year of the Torah funds the cash deficit will be \$9,000.

Because two air conditioning units need to be replaced, the term loan will be increased by 30,000 at a 5.15% interest rate. Any excess funds left at the end of the year will be used to pay down the loan.

These types of large expenses contribute to the deficit. Annual giving will need to be raised to help fund these types of expenses. In terms of normal operating expenses, CBS is close to the budget or at a slight surplus.

An endowment of \$4-\$6 million could handle large capital expenses without resorting to bank loans. Board solicitations for the endowment campaign are proceeding. The roll out to the rest of the Congregation will begin after the Board solicitations are complete.

The security fee that is assessed goes toward paying for the security system and the security guard.

Old Business

The motion to approve the Education Council Complaint and Grievance Policy was brought back for a vote. It was approved with 15 for and one abstention.

New Business

Maxine Goodman made a motion that was seconded by Randi Sonenshein to accept the nomination of the following individuals to the Nominating Committee for the purpose of identifying and adding individuals to the ballot for election to the Board of Trustees for the term commencing June 2012: Maxine Goodman-Chair, Belinda Denn, Lisa Estes, Carol Goldberg and Rosine Chappell.

The rest of the meeting consisted of reports from the three Board subcommittees:

Governance

Members: Peter Gingiss- Chair, Allan Goldstein, Karen Lukin, Alan Goldsmith, David Lewis, Marc Malacoff, Matt Stein, Wendy Conaway, Laurie Silverblatt and Rhoda Goldberg

This team is looking into the governing structure outlined in the CBS Constitution as opposed to how CBS actually operates. The team is looking at both the size of the Board and the committee structure in terms of the number of committees and actual committees that are defined as "standing" in the Constitution.

The group is looking into separating the Constitution (mission/vision) from the bylaws of CBS. Karen Lukin is working on separating these two items.

The deadline for this is December 2012. This will allow for the scheduling of a special congregational meeting for the purpose of voting on any changes before the end of Milton's term.

The issue of defining the Executive Director's roles and responsibilities in relation to the CBS governing structure is an issue that will be examined by the Personnel Committee, President and Rabbi Teller.

Membership Engagement

Members: Lisa Estes-Chair, Jeff Actor, Rosine Chappell, Steve Conaway, Ellen Heffler, Norri Leder, Maxine Goodman, Chuck Koller, Lisa Lowenstein, Frances Rubin, and David Wald.

The team has the goal to engage members who, over time, will take on leadership positions. Because membership engagement is a very large topic, the team will work on this specific area.

Committees should have term limits to allow new people to take an active role. There needs to be leadership development structure in place.

At present, the committee structure in terms of the relationship between chair and vice chair is ambiguous. Is it hierarchical or are they equal?

Membership Engagement will need to work with the Governance team to make sure the committee structure is in alignment with the team's goal and the governing documents.

The plan to increase membership engagement in committees is still being developed. Feedback from the Board is needed.

New members complete forms that ask about interests. These forms could be used to identify committee members. A mentoring program that had Board members serving as mentors could also help identify new leaders.

A membership think tank made up of a younger demographic could also identify synagogue leaders.

Strategic Planning

Members: Tom Samuels-Chair, Martin Kay, Gregg Sheena, Mitch Kreindler, Grant Kaplan, Joel Dinkin, Seth Lerner, Randi Sonenshein, Ian Taxman, Sherri Taxman

This subcommittee is beginning to develop a broad vision for Brith Shalom and identify what it is that makes Brith Shalom unique. They have conducted interviews and need more input. The issues that have been mentioned are facility issues, membership, education and programming. As the committee begins to produce a draft for Board consideration a timeline will be produced, but the process will continue into the next fiscal year. The subcommittee will try to streamline its role.

Tom Samuels can no longer be chair of this subcommittee and Grant Caplan will become chair of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee.

Randi Sonenshein and Joel Dinkin will have examples of strategic plans. USCJ may also be able to help.

By the next Board meeting on March 15 each group should send Milton a written copy of what was discussed this evening and what is needed for the subcommittees to reach their goals. Please let Milton know if any group would like to make a presentation at the March 15 Board meeting.

Good and Welfare

Rabbi Aaron Alexander, Associate Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at American Jewish University was the Barish Scholar hosted by CBS. He spoke about the Conservative movement and the younger generation's part in the movement.

On Sunday, February 26 the second congregational meeting will be held to discuss the issue of USCJ membership. Hy Warshaw and El Jay Waldman have asked that Board members attend. The proposal to pay a smaller amount of dues to USCJ will also be discussed at the meeting. There will be a question and answer session.

Purim will be celebrated with Purim at the Oscars and a wine tasting.

At the March 15 Board meeting there will be a review of the proposed budget for FY2013 that begins on July 1. The budget is scheduled to be approved at the April meeting. The Annual meeting will be held in May.

The Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas wrote a thank you note for a donation in memory of Amy Koppel.

Fred and Velva Levine were honored by Jewish Family Service.

Matt Stein read a thank you note from the Surinam Jewish Community thanking CBS for the donation of machzorim. The Surinam Jewish Community is the oldest Jewish community in the Americas.

Peter Gingiss mentioned the success of Dancing with the Stars and Sisterhood Shabbat. Steve Rubin said that Men's Club appreciated working with Sisterhood on Dancing with the Stars.

Rabbi Teller congratulated Cantor Rhodes on his new contract.

Randi Sonenshein announced that she is pregnant.

Grant Caplan announced that Equality Texas, an organization that lobbies the Texas Legislature on behalf of equality issues for the LGBT community is having an event at La Colum D'Or on March 8. Grant and his partner will be marrying soon in New York.

\$58.00 in tzedakah was collected.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhoda L. Goldberg
Secretary