

# Congregation Brith Shalom Board Meeting

## Minutes

March 15, 2012

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

PRESENT: Milton Mosk, Allan Goldstein, Jeffrey Actor, Karen Lukin, Martin Kay, Greg Sheena, Rosine Chappell, Steve Conaway, Joel Dinkin, Peter Gingiss, Ellen Heffler, Seth Lerner, David Lewis, Marc Malacoff, Tom Samuels, Randi Sonenshein, Wendy Conaway, Lisa Estes, Maxine Goodman, Laurie Silverblatt, David Wald, Rabbi Ranon Teller, Cantor Lance Rhodes, Cantor Mark Levine, Larry Estes and Rhoda Goldberg. El Jay Waldman and Mark Katzenellenbogen also attended.

### **President's Report**

Milton Mosk asked El Jay Waldman to report on United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) affiliation. There were two meetings for congregants to attend. Jay Weiner, the Regional Director for USCJ, spoke at the January meeting. Milton presented the history of the issue at the February meeting where approximately 50 people attended.

The sense of the congregation is to remain affiliated with USCJ and pursue efforts to form a new relationship with USCJ that will result in CBS getting more of what we need from USCJ. El Jay and Hy Warshaw spoke with both congregants and community leaders and no one believed that too much was being spent on USCJ dues. Everyone felt that affiliation with USCJ was part of what identified CBS with Conservative Judaism.

Rabbi Teller would like CBS to remain affiliated with USCJ.

Allan Goldstein offered a motion that was seconded by David Lewis to rescind the April 14, 2011 motion withhold dues from USCJ:

**Whereas** at a meeting of the Board of Trustees on April 14, 2011 the following resolution was passed

Motion that effective Fiscal Year 2011 Congregation Brith Shalom redirects the associated fees the synagogue collects for USCJ (using the FY10-11 formula) to a designated "Conservative Movement" fund managed by the Clergy, President and Financial Officers whose purpose is to promote Conservative Jewish education and youth activities and enables CBS to remain actively connected to the Conservative Jewish movement (referred to herein as the "Resolution")

**Whereas** at the annual meeting of CBS several congregants expressed concern about the Resolution and as a result a series of congregational meetings were held to discuss the programs, expenses and philosophy of CBS' relationship with the United Synagogues of Conservative Judaism ("USCJ"); and

**Whereas** in conjunction with the Resolution CBS representatives have also discussed with representatives of USCJ the relationship between USCJ and CBS in order to increase the program and other services CBS receives from USCJ and to better manage the dues assessed on CBS by USCJ; and

**Whereas** progress has been made between USCJ and CBS in order to increase the program and other services CBS receives from USCJ and to better manage the dues assessed on CBS by USCJ; and

**Whereas** at a congregational meeting on February 26, 2012 held to discuss the Resolution along with the programs, expenses and philosophy of CBS' relationship with USCJ the overwhelming position of the congregants speaking at the meeting urged the Board of Trustees to rescind the Resolution and to continue the progress and efforts made to increase the program and other services CBS receives from USCJ and to better manage the dues assessed on CBS by USCJ; and

**Now therefore, Resolved**, that the Board of Trustees hereby rescinds the Resolution and continue the efforts made to increase the program and other services CBS receives from USCJ and to better manage the dues assessed on CBS by USCJ

The amount of dues that CBS will pay is still being negotiated with USCJ. We have offered to pay \$16,000 annually for FY 2011-FY2014. This is 25% of the Synagogue's discretionary funds and is the cost of affiliation.

David Wald moved to table the motion until April. The motion failed.

Maxine Goodman made a motion, which was seconded by Peter Gingiss, to immediately take a vote because the Congregation wants to remain affiliated with USCJ. Jeff Actor called the question.

The motion passed: 15 yes, 2 no, 3 abstentions.

### **Rabbi's Report**

Rabbi Teller spoke about the Hadar project. The goal of this project is to have more in depth Torah learning. Teachers from the Mechon Hadar Yeshiva would present a series of webinars and would also come to Houston on two occasions. The Rabbi is working on this project and underwriters are being pursued.

## Financial Report

Martin Kay, Financial Vice President, gave the current financial report and the proposed FY 2013 budget that will be voted on at the April meeting.

As of February 29 CBS has \$75,000 (6%) more in revenue and is \$50,000 ahead in expenses of \$952,000. At the end of the fiscal year we should be ahead by \$21,000. Because annual giving is being collected over a ten month period, very little will be collected over the last two months of the fiscal year.

Martin reported on the proposed budget that was developed by the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC):

In the proposed budget for FY 2013 the increase in individual annual giving will be 2.5%. It is estimated that the total revenue collected for FY2013 will be \$1.26 million and total expenses will be \$1.33 million. Year of the Torah funds will make up the \$77,000 deficit. After this withdrawal \$90,000 in Year of the Torah funds will remain.

The fixed costs for compensation, utilities and building maintenance make up 90% of the expenditures. The collection rate is over 90%. Year of the Torah Funds have been funding the deficit. However, after FY 2013-2014 very little will be left.

The FAC is recommending that the Board approve a separate building repair fund that each family will be assessed in the amount of \$50.00-\$500.00. The FAC felt that this would be preferable to raising the annual giving amounts. These funds would only be used for significant maintenance and repairs. The FAC feels that it is preferable to have a separate fund for repairs. There is a need to have adequate funds for repairs without going into debt.

Benefactors will also need to be approached if an additional assessment is to be added to the higher levels of giving, since benefactors were told that there would be no extra fees at the higher level.

Joel Dinkin asked about the Board's role in determining the budget. Board members will receive detailed information about the budget and there will be more discussion at the April meeting.

Seth Lerner was concerned that a building repair assessment could conflict with the Endowment Campaign. There needs to be coordination between the FAC and the Endowment Campaign.

Joel Dinkin pointed out that the amount of fundraising that is done is important because of the perception of members. They are being asked for what could be a 15-20 % increase in total giving.

Martin said that we would need 60 new members to meet the expected revenue gap.

We currently have a \$130,000 loan at 5.1% over five years. This has been used to pay for replacement of the HVAC units.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Larry Estes reported that the Chaver-Web will be available for testing by the Board next week. The new website will be up by the end of April.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

Rhoda Goldberg made a motion that was seconded by Maxine Goodman to donate \$1,000 of the Board tzedakah fund to the Jewish Family Service Good Works Fund. The motion passed with one abstention.

David Lewis made a motion that was seconded by Martin Kay to form a committee to look at revising the CBS Constitution. This will be voted on at the April meeting. The actual motion will be sent out to the Board.

The Committee will look at changes that will make governance more effective in today's environment. There is no effort to take governance of Brith Shalom away from the Board or the Congregation. Any change will have to be approved by the Congregation at a special meeting that will be called in December 2011. This will be a transparent process. Smaller meetings will be held before the congregational meeting.

The Committee needs to be in alignment with the CBS Constitution.

### **Good and Welfare**

The Torah Fund event honoring Elaine Kellner with the Marcia Sheena Memorial Award will be held on April 15.

Jeff Actor thanked Larry Estes, Wendy Conaway, the Building and Grounds Committee and the Enhancement Committee for their efforts in completing the lighting improvements that were funded by the Department of Homeland Security grant.

Sisterhood is sponsoring a program at Miller Outdoor Theatre on Sunday, March 25. Matisyahu will be performing.

The Purim at the Oscars program was a great success, thanks to Jess Faerman, Cherye-Ann DeLong and Carrie Comensky. Jess is doing a wonderful job with programming.

Hans Mayer was awarded the Hyman J. Ettlinger Award for his work with Hillel.

Rabbi Teller attended a farewell event for Alice Cahana at the Holocaust Museum Houston. She will be moving to Portland.

The Yom HaShoah commemoration will be at CBS April 22 at 3:00 PM.

Cantor Levine thanked the Congregation, Board, Rabbi Teller and Cantor Rhodes for their support after the death of his mother.

\$35.00 in tzedakah was collected.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhoda L. Goldberg  
Secretary