

C O N G R E G A T I O N



Brith Shalom

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Date	May 19, 2016	Time	Starts at 7:06 pm
Staff	Rabbi Teller, Cantor Levine, Larry Estes, Anna Blum, Branden	Guests	
In Attendance	A quorum was reached. 41 are needed for quorum and 56 member units are present.		
Next Meeting Date	May 18, 2017 Next Annual Meeting		

MOTIONS OR DECISIONS MADE	1 ST / 2 ND RESULTS
Motion to accept the slate of officers continuing on the Executive Committee for another year.	Marty Buck Nancy Freed APPROVED
Motion to accept the slate of officers to serve on the board as presented.	Sandy Weiner Allan Goldstein APPROVED
Motion to accept the following: On May 5 th , 2016 the Board of Trustees determined that the interim plan has been successful and therefore recommends to the congregation that the current staffing model remain in place and Brith Shalom will not search for a full time cantor at this time.	Jeffrey Actor Stephan Rubin APPROVED
Motion to approve the budget at submitted.	Milton Mosk Sheldon Weisfeld APPROVED
Motion to approve a Building Repair Fund as presented.	Elliot Gershenson Sheldon Weisfeld APPROVED

- Jeff Actor welcomed everyone and called Rabbi Teller to the podium for an opening prayer.
- All rose for the singing of Hatikvah and G-d Bless America.

President's Report

Jeff talked about "No place like home". He has visited many congregations and we stand out among other congregations in the country in many areas. Jeff proceeded to give a "State of the Synagogue" address. He started by thanking his wife Lori. He commended the many others that make this synagogue run, Rabbi Teller, Cantor Levine, Larry Estes and the rest of the staff. Jeff listed staff members and also asked the Board Members to stand and be recognized. He listed his presidential goals:

1. **Build board spirituality** –Jeff listed many areas where we continue to do well including Friday Night Ruach.
2. **Improve Communications**- We continue the work Allan Goldstein began during his presidency. Rabbi and Jeff have blogs and we are working towards more ways to report and inform congregants. We have also worked to enhance internal communication and between the board and the staff.
3. **Cultivate leadership** – The board works to develop and cultivate future leadership.
4. **Increase membership engagement** -The membership committee is reaching out and touching new and existing member to make them comfortable in the synagogue community. Jeff continued to mention programs by the Education department, the Chai Initiative, the Tikkun Olam committee and the Enhancement Committee, the Israel Advocacy Committee, the Book Clubs and Study Groups.
5. **Improve financial stability**- Jeff mentions some of the goals and we will get more information later in the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

- a. The Grinspoon Foundation encouraged community members to add Brith Shalom to their legacy giving. Brith Shalom was the top leader in the entire Jewish Community (of 18 organizations). The every member of the board has stepped forward to participate in the fundraising effort and events. 99% of the board has signed on for the Legacy Giving program.
 - b. Our loans have been restructured. We have restructured our dues with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism to better align.
 - c. Funds Development Committee and Financial Affairs Committee have been working hard. Big fundraising plans are on the horizon and more details will be provided soon. Mitzvah Campaign will be unrolled in the coming months. Be on the lookout for details of the program and events associated. This campaign will work towards the growth and stability of CBS.
6. **Physical growth**
- a. Members; ↑5% total family units per year (average ~ 2 to 3 per month) Membership is growing but more growth is possible.
 - b. Facilities- Brith Shalom has provided assistance to families affected by the Flood. UOS was flooded. They needed a home for GMS. The board took action to provide a place for GMS to exist. Initially the arrangement was for one year and due to additional flooding we are now looking at a third year.
7. **Increase presence of CBS in greater Houston community-** Increased Visibility within the Jewish Community. We hosted JFS annual meeting. Holocaust Museum hosted Yom HaShoah service here. Interfaith seder was held here. A concert was held with over 700 Houstonians for a free concert for the community. Jeff thanked everyone who worked on the committee. Benefactors events. High Holidays. Sisterhood mishloach manot distributed to every member of the congregation. We held a town hall to get input from the congregants.

Jeff also reported that the Board passed a motion that adhered both to United Synagogue standards and the US Supreme Court decision regarding same sex marriages. [Trustees (Board) resolves that it is the practice of Congregation Brith Shalom to continue welcoming, as we always have, same sex couples and their families and to support the performance of same sex marriages within our religious community on the same basis as opposite sex marriages.]

Regarding the new Open Carry laws that took effect in January, the board decision abides by Texas law and our own members' values. Brith Shalom is a weapon free zone due to the fact that we are a school building. We have undercover police officers at major events. We have highest quality of security officers. These costs are absorbed in the budget and will force us to address increased costs. [**Resolved**, that with the exception of active military personnel, Congregation Brith Shalom is officially declared a weapon-free zone. Be it further resolved that this policy actively communicated to the congregation and to appropriate security personnel and law enforcement.] [**Resolved**, that the CBS Board of Trustees (Board) approves and authorizes its administrative professional staff to take all necessary and appropriate steps to provide security personnel, all of whom are armed during the periods of time when a large group meeting, program or event occurs.]

Jeff described the past year spent looking at how our clergy and staff operate in the synagogue. We have evaluated the Interim Plan put in place more than a year ago. This was not done in a vacuum. Hours and hours of time were given by individuals to provide feedback. [Mid-year and final reports can be found on the Synagogue website.]

Jeff is looking for another year of growth and involvement with everyone.

Rabbi Teller has been with us for 11 years. It is time for Rabbi Teller to recharge his spiritual batteries. We are in a good position to fulfill our contractual obligation to provide a Sabbatical. Board is 100% behind him and have begun the process to make this seamless. He will be gone for 3 months(December 2016-February 2017).

Rabbi's Report

I'm happy to report that from my perspective, our shul community is strong. Our volunteers are passionate and focused, our lay leadership is active and supportive and looking to the future, our professional staff is cohesive and inspired, our membership is active and engaged. Our relationships are deepening and broadening. One of the major goals for this past year was membership engagement and I am pleased to report many successes.

Tikkun Olam Opportunities – Sherri Taxman, Laurie Silverblatt under the guidance and inspiration of Cantor Levine have created a menu of volunteer opportunities that we pray will result in long-term relationship with our membership. Go to one of these and create the relations and make tikkun olam part of your Jewish journey. 25 members so far.

Chai Initiative: Jamie Weiner– under the guidance and inspiration of Cantor Levine has created a strategy to engage our membership when they are looking for guidance and connection – during life cycle moments. programs and ceremonies, End of life support and comfort, increased our support and connection during after a child is born.

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

A word on **Cantor Levine** – we challenged Cantor Levine this year to groom a young educator, take on the BM program, take on membership engagement opportunities and take on clergy and leadership roles, lead davenning, keep our programming calendar, and keep the religions running effectively and We have had Sage Shabbat, 80+, retirement efficiently. Well he's done all that and taught adult education classes and read torah. So, kol hakavod and thank you. **Membership Committee**, under the leadership of Peter Gingiss is forming new chavurot – talk to Peter Gingiss. We also had an incredible new member brunch event that resulted in new friendships, connections, and synagogue engagement. **Adult Education** – Aaron Howard led us through a great year of learning, and Pam Geyer led Sisterhood **Diversity Outreach** Worship. Our **HHD experience** has been exceptional and beautiful thanks to David Krohn our Hazzan in Residence. The choir, under his inspired leadership, is blossoming in musicality, in kavannah and in numbers. Our **Shabbat morning** community is strong and engaged. Our challenge, our project that we'll be working on is a continual, self-reflection and improvement. We have incredible professional and volunteer resources and the goal is to build on our success and over time, build a unique, powerful spiritual davenning experience. The feedback is that we're doing really well, but we're not quite there yet. We're going to get there together – as a community – through a community process of exploring our goals, and our potential through self-reflection and education. More to come on that throughout the year. **Friday Night Ruach**– great attendance, great membership engagement up on the bima with our musicians and singers -- and in the kitchen. Shout out to Lori Rubin and Gavi Roisman all their work. Family services are fun and energetic and engaging once a month – **Mishpacha minyan and miniminyan**. When I show up late to Friday night davenning or skip out of Shabbat morning services – I'm with the young families. The state of the shul is strong, growing, and deepening. I'm proud to represent and lead our incredible Brith Shalom community.

Cantor's Report

Cantor Levine- Year of great growth and change. **Anna Blum** is our assistant educator. Anna has brought enthusiasm and new ideas. She has been a blessing to the school. We welcome **Keshet**-a Federation sponsored Jewish education program for students with disabilities. Keshet class has been fully integrated into the RS. They are paired with 6th grade and integrated into all events and programs. We provide Jewish learning for all. **GMS** -Goldberg Montessori School was added to our site and despite transition issues we are doing well. Religious School started this year with 150 students and growing forward we will need to split classes and hire additional teachers. Kehillah High community school started with 125 students. This program was enabled by \$50,000 in community funding with grants and help of Federation. Kehillah High trips included Galveston retreat. 12th Grade went to AIPAC and were moved by that experience. **High Holiday youth programs** with 10 different stations set up in the church next door. This last Sunday, the Holocaust museum opened to work with the RS students. Cantor thanked Federation for their assistance with school programs. Cantor described upcoming programming including **Shavuot** and **Adult Education**. **B'nai Mitzvah** has improved qualitatively and quantitatively. Cantor Dorff has been very well received and Cantor Levine has been working with students every 6 weeks and not only just at the end of the prep process. **Mentor committee**- Leslie Weiner and Debi Mishael continue to lead a team of mentors working with B'nai Mitzvah families. **Teen Torah Reading** program -450 verses have been chanted by teens in our community. When we reach 613 we will hold a celebration for all. He specifically mentioned the following people for their ongoing assistance in education matters: Ellen Fiesinger, Grant Kaplan, Aaron Howard, Mitch Kreindler, Larry Estes and his team. He also thanks Rabbi Teller for his inspiration and passion in creating a unique working environment. He concluded by thanking our supportive community.

Nomination & Election of Officers & Trustees– Allan Goldstein

Allan Goldstein begins nomination of Officers & Trustees and the Election of Officers and offers the slate of officers for the next year. He thanked the people on his committee for their assistance.

CONTINUING TO SERVE on executive committee FOR AN ADDITIONAL TERM are:

Jeffrey Actor, Stephan Rubin, Amy Halevy, Seth Lerner, Milton Mosk, Debi Mishael

Motion to accept: 1st Marty Buck 2nd Nancy Freed. APPROVED 1 opposed

Allan thanked THOSE THAT ARE LEAVING THE BOARD:

Mitch Kreindler and Moshe Even

Steve Conaway, Outgoing Men's Club President

Lisa Lowenstein, Outgoing Sisterhood President

BOARD OF TRUSTEES WHO ARE CONTINUING TO SERVE ADDITIONAL TERM:

Karen Bernstein, At-Large

Ellen Fiesinger, Education Council Chair

Iris Fisherman, At-Large

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

Jacobo Goldberg, At-Large
Allan Goldstein, Immediate Past President
Aaron Howard, At-Large
Steve Lerman, At-Large
Morris Narunsky, Men's Club President
Dani Roisman, At-Large
Sheldon Weisfeld, Religious Practices Committee Chair
Dori Wind, Sisterhood President
*Facilities Planning Committee

Mitch Kreindler was the only one going off the board because he has reached the term limits. Allan listed the many areas of involvement Mitch has held. Moshe Even will be leaving the board voluntarily due to excessive work obligations.

NOMINATED TO SERVE A TWO-YEAR TERM ON THE BOARD:

Rhonda Kaplan, At-Large
Ken Podell, At-Large

Rhonda is a Ph.D. and works with adult cancer patients. She is married and has been a member since. Serves on the Chai Committee. Ken works at Houston Methodist Hospital and is a specialist on concussions. He has received outstretched welcoming for himself and family here at CBS. Both he and Kathy have been involved in many activities and feel at home here and are pleased to give back and assist with board responsibilities. Motion to accept the slate: 1st Sandy Weiner 2nd Goldstein
APPROVED

Any nominations from the floor? None came forward.

Motion to address March, 2015 Congregational Request

Point of Order- Moshe Vardi asked if we have a quorum. 41 are needed for quorum and 56 member units are present. Jeff thanks Moshe Vardi for his involvement that enabled us to have a quorum on this rainy Thursday night.

Congregation Brith Shalom members, at a duly recognized Special Meeting on March 30, 2015, agreed to a period not exceeding 20 months (through November 2016) to implement the Interim Plan for a new staffing and program model as adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Directions stemming from that decision dictated that if by November 2016 (or at a future time), the Board determines or acts not to seek to engage a full-time Cantor, a Special Meeting will be called to ask the Congregation whether it approves that Board action. Without such approval, a search for a full-time Cantor must start by November 2016.

We had an interim plan committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. One of the first tasks of the board last year was to form a committee which was lead by Mitch Kreindler. Jeff recognized the full committee by name (Trevor Bryant, Carol Goldberg, Alan Goldsmith, Amy Halevy, Salomon Lahana, Eta Paransky, Eljay Waldman, Sheldon Weisfeld). The Committee thoroughly evaluated the new staffing plan for effectiveness in areas including: B'nei Mitzvah, Religious School/Youth Programming, Member Engagement, High Holiday Services, and Shabbat Morning Services. Two reports were presented to the board, and findings were communicated to the congregation. [Oct, 2015 and May, 2016]

To fulfill the obligation of the March, 2015 request, we hereby bring forward: On May 5th, 2016 the Board of Trustees determined that the interim plan has been successful and therefore recommends to the congregation that the current staffing model remain in place and Brith Shalom will not search for a full-time cantor at this time.

Motion: to approve the recommendation of the Board Jeff brings the motion.

A Point of Order by Moshe Vardi who believes this motion is in conflict with the constitution.

Appeal to presidential opinion to continue with the motion.

Jeff wants to separate the two issues on the table.

Moshe states that point of order must be addressed prior to continuing. Roberts Rules of Order dictate the rules. Jeff reminded the congregation that the board has discussed the ramification and the constitutionality of the motion prior to appointing the Interim Plan Committee. The opinion was that there was no problem and conflict with the Constitution. This board decision allows us to move forward and separate the two issues. The board also discussed the issue this last week. The board opinion is that we have acted in good faith and 4 lawyers have all come to same conclusion (Mitch Kreindler, Amy HaLevy, Allan Goldstein and Stephan Rubin). Additionally, Sandy Weiner was consulted. Jeff asked how many of those in attendance have actually read the constitution. Jeff asked for Shalom HaBayit and requests that the appeal be withdrawn on this motion on the constitutionality.

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

Moshe raised his point of order and described the process he believes should be followed. Called the question to proceed to vote on the appeal. PASSES, 3 abstention. Jeff rules that there is no constitutionality problem.

Moshe presented his reading of article 9 in the constitution (page 12) He believes this has been an issues since last year when the decision to go with an Interim Plan. "Initial election ..." President allows Moshe to bring his point of order but not to elaborate on the history. Jeff ruled against the point of order. An appeal was made by Moshe.

Called the question on the appeal. Motion Passed (9 Opposed, the rest in Favor)

Voting now took place on the appeal –congregation has a chance to vote against the president’s decision. (10 in favor; 47 against, 1 abstention.) The appeal of the president’s decision did not pass.

Motion was 2nd by Stephan Rubin.

Congregants spoke on the motion.

Melvin Buck asked what will happen in the future when we may decide to hire a cantor in the future? Jeff commented that we have a staffing plan that works currently. If personnel changes in the future or situations change then the Board responsibility is to evaluate and explore the options for the best future of the congregation. At this time, the opinion of the board is that the current staffing model works.

Sandy Weiner commented that he was skeptical at first about the plan but has been convinced by seeing how it works. It works because of the three head staff currently in place. If that changes, then we will need to address it. He spoke briefly about the constitutional description of a cantor and that a Cantor-In-Residence(CIR) does not fulfill that definition. The constitution describes how to hire a cantor but the CIR is not that and those procedures to not apply.

Harvey Rosenstock also commented that originally, he was skeptical but has also been convinced. He gave a vote of confidence to the team. He commends Rabbi Teller’s vision for this model.

Jeff Actor took the microphone to speaking as a congregant [not as the president.] He appreciates all comments by members. Appreciates the passion and care that all are showing by their involvement in this discussion. He also thinks the three staff show utmost care and passion for our CBS community. In the future, we will need to reevaluate the plan if current staffing change.

Does present circumstance need to be reflected in the Constitution? At many times in the past we have not had a cantor or rabbi and we have been able to function

Call the question...1st Mitch Kreindler, 2nd Milton Mosk PASSED

Vote to accept the recommendation as presented by the board. 52 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstain PASSES

Proposed Budget & action thereon – Milton Mosk, III

Budget –Milton Mosk and FAC-Financial Affairs Committee met on Tuesday night where congregants had a chance to ask questions in details. Estimate numbers were based on March actuals. Milton explained the highlights of the significant budget areas. Annual Giving Revenue is \$20,000 less than anticipated. Membership is up and provides growth for the future but we had planned to be a bit more aggressive on increasing member giving level and that was not addressed until late in the year. It will be more reflected in next year’s annual giving growth.

Net we believe we are \$60,000 short for this fiscal year.

Milton discussed budget notes for the upcoming fiscal year. We have a collection rate of about 95% this current year and had budgeted for a 90% collection rate. We addressed and collected many past debts this year. (Past collection rates have been closer to 35%.)

1. Annual Giving Assumptions

- A. Assumed collections rate – 90% (Actual FY2016 slightly higher)
- B. Prior year collections rate – 35% (Estimated AR @ 6/30: \$80 - \$100k)

2. Annual Giving Increases

- A. Sustaining level: \$2,975 (was \$2,750)(Total Contribution \$3,225 incl. Bldg. Fund \$250)
- B. Pillar level: \$4,000 (was \$3,600 and includes building repair and higher security)(last raised fiscal year 2012)

3. Kitchen Revenue

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

- A. Identified a group of volunteers with a goal of generating \$18,000 in new revenue for Shabbat sponsorships (A question was asked about the actual cost of sponsoring an Oneg. The actual cost is \$1,200.00 but the new sponsorship program will allow congregants to contribute portions towards Oneg costs and will not need to pay full cost to sponsor.)
4. **Security Fee Assessment**
 - A. Raising to \$125 per family (currently \$85) to meet our needs
 - B. Member religious school families will be capped at \$200
 - C. Non-member religious school family \$125
5. **Fundraising Opportunities – \$176,000 (net of expenses)**
 - A. Gala Event to be held in early 2017 – Net \$125,000
 - B. Directory – Net \$40,000
 - C. Carryover pledges for Cantor’s Concert – Net \$11,000
6. **Outsourcing Accounting Function**
 - A. Kesef Accounting Services will be providing our bookkeeping, accounts receivable and payable functions
 - B. Enhanced reporting to help manage our business
 - C. Stability, accuracy, efficiency gains to be realized
7. **Staffing Model Change**
 - A. Due to economics, we could no longer support our administrative staffing model
 - B. Headcount reduced by 1 and tasks reassigned to ensure member services are covered
8. **Goldberg Montessori School**
 - A. Net contribution \$31,800
 - B. Second year of two year contract with optional third year
 - C. Tax Day flood impact on UOS and a permanent home
9. **Debt estimated at June 30, 2016**
 - A. Estimate Line of Credit (loan) balance - \$100,000
 - B. Permanent financing balance - \$269,000
 - C. Total Debt outstanding - \$369,000
 - D. FY 2017 takes into consideration full year impact of permanent financing that was approved by the board in Oct 2015 to finance then LOC balance of \$217,000 and remaining permanent financing of \$93,000. Permanent Loan has 5 year amortization
10. **Endowment Distribution**
 - A. Budget takes into consideration that we will need to start supplementing our budget with income from our endowment
 - B. Significant activity planned to increase our endowment in the near future so we can sustain our financial condition

We are moving to a model of planned annual fundraisers and future planning from several areas. Milton’s goal is to have line of credit down to 0. The Endowment and future giving are areas we have not seriously addressed in the past and are being addressed now. A team has been put in place to make a significant impact on our financial future. Lori Rubin thanked Milton for his commitment to addressing this important issue.

Motion to approve the budget as presented 1st Milton Mosk 2nd Sheldon Weisfield all in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstain. PASSED

Building Repair Plan

Milton addressed the need for a Building Repair Fund.

1. Building is 30 years old
2. Major infrastructure components (roof, HVAC, social hall, etc.) has shown signs of age
3. Need to reinvest in property to keep it operational

Purpose of Building Repair Fund

1. Segregated fund to cover costs of major infrastructure projects before failure
2. Funds need to be set aside to cover major repairs – pre-fund cost rather than assume significant new debt
3. Goal of attaining \$100 thousand in reserves
4. Annually needs will be reviewed and assessment adjusted based on need

MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

He addressed a list of potential items in need of repair.

Description	Sevty.	Proj. Cost	Notes/Comments
Office renovation	1	\$20,000	Need 2 additional classrooms for FY2017
HVAC controls	2	9,500	Controls system is unsecure and needs upgrading
HVAC – kitchen	2	15,000	Obsolete unit needs to be replaced soon
New IP Cameras	2	5,000	Need to replace existing analog cameras that have failed
Roof	3	125,000	Roof is failing and has been leaking
Movable Partitions	4	200,000	All partitions are beyond normal use; Chapel needs attention
HVAC – Main Bldg.	4	120,000	Had to replace R/S systems; Major systems > 30 years old
Total Est. Project Cost		\$494,500	

Milton explained the tiered funding levels based upon Annual Giving. It would be an annual repeatable assessment.

1. **Tiered funding levels, based on Annual Giving:**

- A. \$0 – \$99: \$0
- B. \$100 – \$249: \$25
- C. \$250 – \$499: \$50
- D. \$500 – \$999: \$100
- E. \$1,000 – \$1,499: \$150
- F. \$1,500 – \$1,999: \$200
- G. \$2,000+: \$250 (included within Benefactor giving levels)

2. **Estimated receipts: \$65,000 (est. 90% collection rate)**

Motion to implement a Building Repair Fund as presented. 1st Elliot Gershenson 2nd Sheldon Weisfeld PASSED

Motion to adjourn meeting...Jeff, second Steven Lerner...ALL IN FAVOR