

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



# Brith Shalom

## MEETING MINUTES- BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date	October 15, 2015	Time	7:04 pm -9:28 pm
Staff	Rabbi Teller, Cantor Levine, Larry Estes	Guests	Mindy Block Gordon, Trevor Bryant
In Attendance	Dani Roisman, Steve Conoway, Moshe Even, Aaron Howard, Steve Lerman, Karen Bernstein, Mitch Kreindler, Milton Mosk, Debi Mishael, Jacobo Goldberg, Ellen Fiesinger, Jeffrey Actor, Steve Rubin, Sheldon Weisfeld		
Next Meeting Date			

### ATTACHMENTS TO MINUTES

No.	ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	Meeting Agenda	
2	Chai Initiative	Description
2	Letters of Intent	All board members are asked to consider signing.

### TZEDAKAH COLLECTED

\$37.00

### MEETING ACTION / FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

No.	Action Item	Owner	Date
1	Send Membership report/update to the board	Larry	
2	Possibly adding Flood Victims to the Chai Initiative agenda	Cantor Levine/ Karen Bernstein	
3	Sign Letter of Intent for Legacy Giving	Board Members	

### MOTIONS OR INFORMATION FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

### 1<sup>ST</sup>/SECOND RESULTS

Be it resolved that the Board of Directors has authorized the President, the Financial VP or their disignees to execute any and all documents to close on loan documets that are part of the synagogue's contemplated refinancing.	Steve Rubin/Sheldon Weisfeld APPROVED UNANYMOSLY
The Board of Directors accept the Initial Assessment Report on the Implementation of the Interim Plan as submitted by the CBS Evaluation Committee.	Karen Bernstein/Ellen Fiesinger APPROVED
A one-page letter should be sent to all congregants via US mail including an on-line link to see the report from the Evaluation Committee titled "Initial Assessment on the Implementation of the Interim Plan." It should not include the committee's 5 recommendations on page 14, and, for reasons of confidentiality and the value of "Lo Busha" , the comment section will not be included.	Steve Rubin/Aaron Howard APPROVED 2 opposed
Mindy Block Gordon's email: <a href="mailto:mgordon@usscj.org">mgordon@usscj.org</a> United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism K'hillah Relationship Manager	

**MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Steve Lerman 1<sup>st</sup>; Aaron Howard 2<sup>nd</sup> Minutes for 9/17/15 approved.

**D'VAR TORAH:** Jeff filled in for Rabbi who was at a Ruach rehearsal and will join the meeting later. Jeff shared a lesson provided by his mother about Noah (corresponding to this week's parsha). The lesson concerned the description of Noah as a "Tzadik" צדיק instead of a "Tamid" תמיד. The final lesson was to emulate Noah and tackle one good deed at a time. We need not be perfect, *Tamid*.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Milton reported the committee to plan the Diamond Jubilee is underway. More details will be provided in November but work is being done currently to set financial goals and to plan. The event will occur in the first quarter of 2017.

Milton also reported that the terms and information from the bank about refinancing line of credit. It is in it's final stages and papers will be ready to be signed in the next few weeks for refinancing. It is a \$150,000 unsecured loan-meaning we did not need to tie the building to the loan to receive approval. Milton requested board to pass motion to allow the officers to sign the documents.

**Motion:** Be it resolved that the Board of Directors has authorized the President, the Financial VP or their disignees to execute any and all documents to close on loan documents that are part of the synagogue's contemplated refinancing. Steve moved and Sheldon 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passes unanimously.

**HIGH HOLIDAY APPEAL:** Larry reported that the High Holiday Appeal raised \$58,000 this year. This is a \$10,000 increase over last year and an increase of the same over the budget expectation.

**LEGACY GIVING:** Individuals were also asked to consider The Legacy program. 20 people left letters in their HH Appeal envelopes indicating they want to be contacted about the program. We have 14 signed Letters of Intent to date. Thus far we are leading in the community response to this program sponsored by the Grinspoon Foundation. Talk to Milton or Larry if you have questions. We are still looking for 100% board participation for Letters of Intent. It will be a powerful fundraising tool.

**MEMBERSHIP:** We have 17 new members since August. Larry will get the detailed report and send it out. We are on our way to meeting our goals set at the start of the year. A new membership committee has been formed. Peter Gingiss is the chair. He met with Rabbi Teller to help define goals. Jeff will also be meeting with him. The membership committee will be working in concert with the Chai Initiative Committee too.

**GOLDBERG MONTESSORI SCHOOL:** Generally everything is running efficiently. There are minor clitches that are to be expected with this kind of collaboration. Specifically, date scheduling and office notification has been discussed. A social event social between their teachers and our teachers is being planned to help make the shared classroom situation smoother. Our building is cleaner than ever. No major conflicts from our parents. Some families living on Cedar street were complaining via social media. Larry reached out to the family but no reply as of yet. Several comments were made by board members about how helpful and professional Larry has been in facilitating these issues.

**SIMCHAT TORAH-** There were 150 people who attended the dinner. Many were new. Over 200 in attendance for services. Unfortunately, the office staff posted pictures of the event in opposition of our policy to not take pictures on *Yom Yovim*. This was a learning opportunity and will not be repeated. Along the same lines, the Board is asked do not send emails or conduct synagogue business on Shabbat and holidays.

**UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM:** A special Guest, Mindy Block Gordon spoke. She is the our district which is the largest and covers an area from Canada through Mexico...a swath down the center of our country. She is the liaison between each *K'hillah* and USCJ. She described her job as similar to a

## MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

“primary care physician” that we go to first with questions. She will refer us to other specialists if needed. There are a number of services she can provide to us, for example, Leadership Training for Boards, Sulam(Ladder): for Presidents, Strategic Planning, Emergent Leaders, Financial Sustainability. Mindy went on to describe a variety of services available to us through USCJ at no additional cost. We can contact Mindy in the future and she will direct us to the appropriate resource person(s) and/or materials. Mindy met with Rabbi Teller today and with other Rabbi’s in our area in the past few days. Steve Rubin asked that Mindy send the data on congregations with cantors to him and Jeffrey. Anecdotally, she reports that fewer congregations have cantors. As they retire, they are not being replaced or cantor/Ed. Directors are being combined. [mgordon@usscj.org](mailto:mgordon@usscj.org) USCJ Convention is coming up Nov. 13-17 in Chicago.

**CANTOR’S CONCERT:** Steve Rubin reported on the Cantors Concert. Lori Rubin is the Committee Chair. She has amassed a great team. They are in the process of establishing a budget and creating the goals. Milton has been helpful in working with the committee. Monday 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm next meeting. Come and join the committee.

**CHAI INITIATIVE:** Cantor Levine reports that a demographically diverse group was asked to join the committee. They came in with a list of ideas and the committee narrowed down the focus to some key areas where they will put their focus for the present time. (see attachment) Wellness Team, Mourning Team, Career Moments Team, New Member Engagement, Special Birthday Team They are now at the step of finding additional members to help them. This is the “come-and-do-good-stuff” committee. Karen Bernstein asked if we could possibly reach out to the 30-35 families of CBS effected by the flood. Karen and Cantor Levine will follow up.

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL:** School enrollment is up to 150 students. Some classes are 20+ students and there are no more classrooms to split the classes. Kehillah High started with 125 kids enrolled in this inaugural year. There are 7 Rabbis teaching and 3 principals plus others. They have raised \$500,000 thus far to support this program from private sources and foundations. Mr. Barrish has offered to help go to other donors to fund the future trips to Israel. The enrollment is about the same as the uncombined number of students from the 3 synagogues enrolled. It is quite possible that a year down the road Emanuel might join their 125 students with K’hillah High. This will create a positive problem of finding an appropriate location. Some option are being explored currently.

**TEEN TORAH READERS** Teen Torah Readers are Listed in madrich and ebulletin. The calculation of how many verses have been read is restarting with the new year. Opportunities for celebrating milestones for individuals and for the group are being created. This is the beginning to a long term program.

**CBS EVALUATION COMMITTEE:** Jeffrey gave a whole hearted thanks to Mitch Kreindler and all members of his committee: Trevor Bryant, Carol Goldberg, Alan Goldsmith, Amy Halevy, Yoel Kluk, Salomon Lahana, Eta Paransky, Eljay Waldman and Sheldon Weisfeld. Mitch reported about the process. A petition has arisen and possible community conflict was boiling up. A committee was formed made up of members with diverse and balanced opinions from all sides of the issue. It speaks well to the Brith Shalom Community about how this was handled all the way through. The committee used the “Varde Motion” as its guide and scope of responsibility. The time frame in which to complete the task was tight with summer and HH. 220 Surveys were completed. 157 of the 220 added additional written comments. The people who answered the survey were pretty close to the actual demographic of the congregation as a whole. Membership, B’nei Mitzvah Program, Choir, High Holidays and Shabbat Worship were the areas evaluated. General results are that everything is good. Generally, better than last year. Things are working without a full-time cantor. (Please see the full report for more details.) Mitch believes we still need to assess the Religious School. The Religious School had not been in session when the work has been done.

MOTION: Karen moved that we accept the report as submitted by the Evaluation Committee. Ellen 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion Passed. Discussion about the report ensued.

## MEETING MINUTES- Board of Directors

Mitch explained the five recommendations of the committee as stated in the report. The committee now needs feedback from the Board about the next step or additional direction.

The Board needs to make a decision about how this report is going to be disseminated to the congregation. Jeff recommends that another report be presented in March, prior to the congregational meeting. There is value in the process. The need for evaluation and feedback is ongoing and not just as a result of the "Vardi motion."

MOTION: A one-page letter should be sent to all congregants via US mail including an on-line link to see the report from the Evaluation Committee titled "Initial Assessment on the Implementation of the Interim Plan." It should not include the committee's 5 recommendations on page 14, and, for reasons of confidentiality and the value of "Lo Busha" לא בושה (not to humiliate) , the comment section will not be included.

Steve Rubin made the motion/Aaron Howard 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion Passed with 2 abstentions.

## GOOD AND WELFARE:

- Stewart Feldman sent a nice letter about the way cantor and Rabbi lead High Holidays.
- Little Milton's Bima presence was mentioned.
- Book?? Jeff...I missed this part of the conversation. Please fill-in details.
- Funds were sent to the Holocaust Museum to honor the Levine's
- Thanks to Wendy Lerman for her contributions to education department
- Milton presenting his journey as Jew by Choice to a Havurah.
- Larry mentioned that our staff member Brandon Johnson just completed conversion. The office staff purchased a tallit for him.
- Touching members lives...Rabbi commented about Cantor Levine's outstanding work.
- Thank Men's Club for Pizza in the Hut and set-up and breakdown of the sukkah.
- Karen mentioned that she picked up a carpool of smiling faces after Kehillah High.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 PM.

C O N G R E G A T I O N  
 **Brith Shalom**

AGENDA

- I. President's Welcome
  - A. Approval of minutes (1 min)
- II. Clergy Report
  - A. Rabbi's report
    - I.
- III. Financial Report (10+ min)
  - A. FYTD Financial Report
  - B. High Holiday Appeal and Annual Giving status
  - C. Cash flow and Refinancing status (Amegy). Consider resolution for transaction.
  - D. New members (Aug-Sept-Oct)/avg sustaining
- IV. Old/New Business/Updates
  - A. High Holiday discussion –additional post 9/17/15 comments (5 min)
  - B. Fund raising plans/updates: (10-15 min)
    - I. Houston Jewish Community Foundation – Life & Legacy
    - II. Cantors Concert Update – January 16th, 2016
    - III. Next FY (Diamond Jubilee or 60th)
  - C. GMS – update?
  - D. Discussion: Policy for pictures on chaggim (5 min)
  - E. Committee reports – (as needed, (5-10 min)) - request on-going reports for November meeting
    - I. Membership committee formed, meeting planned
    - II. Excellent work by all others!
  - F. Educational report - CML (5 min)
    - I. Chai Initiative
    - II. Community High School/CBS School/Melton
  - G. Interim Plan Review Committee Report (20 min)
  - H. Mindy Block Gordon, District Kehilla Relationship Manager, Central District, USCJ discussion (15 min)
- V. Good and Welfare – Adjournment
  - A. Little Milty IV ..... oh, what bimah presence!
  - B. Letter(s) – Zoey Hess
  - C. Funds sent to Holocaust Museum to honor Levines

**I. Initial Goals set for EC (5/7/15)**

- 1) Build a SENSE OF SPIRITUALITY from the board
- 2) Increase intra-board and inter-congregant communications
- 3) PHYSICAL GROWTH of synagogue
- 4) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPEMENT and MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT
- 5) FINANCIAL STABILITY
  - a) Programs developed on a cyclical basis and for targeted groups
  - b) Endowment and Naming opportunities
  - c) Equipment and daily operations
- 6) INCREASED PRESENCE in the greater Houston Community.

**II. EC EXPECTATIONS**

- Have FUN! Enjoy your service to CBS.
- HONEST and open discussion of issues
- TEAMWORK towards common goals
- VISIBLE LEADERSHIP – increase our presence in the congregation
- EFFECTIVE LIAISONS to committees. Each EC member will work as a liaison to a committee, not to micromanage the committee but to serve as support and conduit to the board.