

CBS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING AGENDA: OCTOBER 19, 2017

I. Opening Prayer - **Rabbi Ranon Teller**

II. Welcoming Remarks from President - **Stephan Rubin**

III. Approval of Minutes - **Ellen Fiesinger**

IV. Reports and Updates*

A. Clergy updates

1. **Rabbi Teller**- High Holidays went well, RPC will do debriefing
2. **Cantor Mark Levine** -See written report- attached to this report

B. Executive Director update - **Larry Estes** Change of personnel- Celestina no longer with us. We are looking for a replacement. Brandon Johnson is helping out from Israel.

C. Financial Vice President's Report - (**Larry Estes for Elliot Gershenson**)
Elliot has submitted a written report- It is attached.

1. Collection update.
2. FYTD Income Statement/Cash status.
3. Report on YK Appeal and personal outreach
204,000 raised before the appeal. The appeal raised \$109,000. People have already been sending in their pledges.
Usually the YK raises \$50,000.
We budgeted 150,000 in fundraisers this number will help replace this as we don't think that we will raise this much during the fundraisers.
We released Harvey affected families from their obligation. Not all took us up on this.
Beth Yeshurun is paying for their breakfasts and for any costs of meals that they incur.

D. Standing Committees update

1. Religious Practices Committee - update- **Dani Roisman** (Report)
No report as RPC has not met yet.
2. Education Council - update - **Cantor Mark Levine / Ellen Fiesinger** (Report) See attached report
3. Membership Committee - update - **Sara Norris** (Report) See attached report
New membership form. Chavurah placement has been postponed. Guess who is coming to dinner? Has been filled for October. We are at average for 19 new families that have joined the synagogue.
4. Facilities Planning Committee - **Ken Podell** (Report)
We applied for a Home Land Security Grant- Will update video monitoring- Stephan has signed paperwork for this. We will not have to

use supplemental funds. We will not have to take any money out of our budget.

Facility is in high use- Everyone is being flexible about the use of space.

Beth Yeshurun may be back in their building by January

We are hosting Melton.

GMS use of the playground means that sod is no longer a good choice for the space as it needs to be replaced often. They are looking for a playground surface that will be viable. They will keep us in the loop as to what they choose. It will not happen until the summer.

E. Auxiliaries / Other Committees*

1. Men's Club - **Morris Narunsky**- Michael Zlotnik is representing as Morris is not at meeting. Table on Sunday to attract younger members. Fishing trip in the fall. Men's club breakfast. April 20 and 21st Men's club Shabbat. Usually 20-30 show up not sure how many are members but as it is part of the Shul application it is probably many. Stephan Rubin says 125 pay dues. (Report)
2. Sisterhood -**Dori Wind / Denise Mosk** - Sara thinks Membership dinner will be November 6th with Israeli consulate as speaker. Sara Lascar as chair. There are a couple hundred Paid sisterhood members
3. Hazak - **Betty Clark** (Report)
4. Young Professionals (Report)
5. Israel Advocacy - **Terry Gardner, Steve Lerman** (Report)
6. Choir - update - **Hazzan in Residence, David Krohn** (Report)
7. Tikun Olam - **Cantor Mark Levine** (Report)

V. Old Business.

SOAP - Finalize

1. Review and discuss Intent Reports

Soap Board Teams- Working Document – see attached

Stephan- Not set in stone,

The next step is for Captains to make a meeting and work on the plans based on the SOAP.

Mark Jason wants to move to Tikun Olam

Rhonda Kaplan doesn't want to be captain of RPC

Rhoda Goldberg will accept Captain of RPC

LJ move to FAC from Tikun Olam

Amir Halevy wants to decline Captain responsibility – LJ will be asked to captain

Captains will need to have a meeting with their groups before November even though the SOAP is not approved. New version will be sent to us to vote on at next Board meeting.

2. Motion to Approve SOAP
3. Assign Board Members to Intents, as appropriate

VI. New Business.

A. Post-Harvey relief and recovery plans (**Rhoda Goldberg**)

Nancy and Rhoda are still working with people affected by Harvey. Still calling and checking in on people. An email will be sent to the congregation asking for help as people need help moving back into their homes or getting stuff out of storage. 70-80 families are affected.

B. High Holiday no tickets- Permanent policy?

Open discussion- Feedback-

By not selling tickets, \$4000.00 was not eared through sales.

Steven Golderberger- Have we ever sold tickets that had no dollar value?

Larry- We usually mail tickets to members who are in good standing.

If not in good standing, you get a letter to pay on your account.

Sara Norris- Any issues with security?

Larry- No

Debbie Karakowsky is confused about policy

Larry- Any member who is in good standing at any Shul in Houston can attend any services at any shul. This has been a policy in the city for 3 years.

We still want guests to pay for tickets- It can be a collection issue as there is no way to collect.

Debbie Mishael- likes the idea of not charging anyone for tickets. "We are operating with our heart"

Rhoda Goldberg- Most people are respectful of the policy.

Karen Bernstein- Process issues- how do we handle appeals? There are empty cards for guests.

Larry realized that people folded down tabs but we didn't know who they are as they have no names on them. But many guests did pay for their tickets after.

Karen- how do we handle security?

Larry- we need to come up with a model to handle this

Amir-" I want to do the right thing but what about the budget? We are trying to raise money so how do we not ask for people to pay for tickets

Steven G. We know that it worked this year.

Marc Garvin- Is there any evidence from other synagogues?

Larry – no but we can do some research.

Dani liked the no ticket idea but missed the schedule on the tickets.

Also thinks we should still have tickets to help for those who are not current.

Michael Zlotnik- If we don't sell tickets and people don't have children in the school, why would people join?

Rhoda People have options to go anywhere they want and some don't charge so she doesn't think it is a true issue.

Debbie- Can anyone buy a guest ticket?

Larry- No-

Debbie K. Thinks we need to charge or they will not join

Stephan- Let us have a motion- referred to Financial Affairs Committee

C. Board on the Bimah

I will send out a calendar and you can sign yourselves up. If you can't make your date you will be responsible for finding a replacement

VII. Good and Welfare.

- A. Brith Shalom family news
- B. Andrew Zotnik is now part of Jr National
- C. Earle Spielman hosted a pizza party for the choir – thank you Earle
- D. Debbie Mishael recived gift cards
- E. Letter from Beth Yeshurun congregant to Rabbi
- F. Karen Bernstein – Kids happy at Kehilah High

- G. Houston Jewish community news
- H. Avital is now taking over for Lee Wunsch at the Federation
- I.
- J.

- K. Special messages

- L. Other -

VIII. Tzedakah Collected \$ 43

IX. Closing

Dani motion to adjourn

Sara Seconded motion

**** = Reports should be submitted in writing to be presented to the Board of Trustees at the meeting unless an oral presentation is necessary to support a request (motion, resolution, etc..) for the Board to take some particular action.***

REMINDER: Next Board Meeting: November 16, 2017

In attendance- Rhoda Kaplan, Stephan Rubin, Dani Roisman, Mark Jason, Rhoda Goldberg, Amir HaLevi, Debbie Karakowski, Erin Pomerantz., Debi Mischael, Sara Norris, Elyse Evans, Karen Bernstein, Mark Garvin, Steven Goldberger, Ellen Fiesinger Michael Zlotnik- represents Morris Nuranski

Staff: Rabbi Teller, Larry Estes

Not in attendance- Ken Podell, El Jay Waldman, Cantor Mark Levine.

Addendum

FAC Report

October 11, 2017

Elliot Gershenson, Financial VP

I am sorry that I can't be with you at the October Board meeting. I've been asked to give you all a preliminary report on how the Financial Affairs Committee/Financial Development Committee plans to approach this year's work. We have a number of critical issues to resolve, and we plan to do this all through transparency, respect and fairness. With that said, here are the key issues we are addressing and it is our goal to report in full at the November Board meeting.

- We have short-term and mid-term debt, some of which we owe to ourselves. This debt is a culmination of a number of years of deficit spending and therefore it is not easily resolvable. The first step that we are taking is an in-depth review of last year's fiscal performance (the program year ending on June 30, 2017). We expect to have this completed by the first week of November. We also will recommend that we engage an outside firm to do an independent financial review, which is not quite a full audit, but will give us comfort that our processes and procedures are operable (or not), and that the numbers make sense.
- We are in the process of renewing our line of credit, which is a normal piece of our operation. We are, however, seeking to increase the line of credit to take care of some short-term debt issues, more of which will be fully disclosed at the November FAC and Board meetings – once we have a clear understanding of how everything fits together.
- In short, we have an annual issue in that we either overspend or under collect. In either case, this causes deficits that get carried forward. One of our short-term goals is to “fix” this situation and move to annual surpluses that hopefully can lead to an operating cash balance equal to three months of operations (about \$450,000). This is complicated by the fact that we have debt that needs to be paid off before we can create the cash cushion. We are heartened by the very successful Yom Kippur Appeal, which gives us (some of us at least) confidence that there is money available to address endemic budgetary issues. But, we need to craft proposals and successfully act on them to meet our goals.
- The FAC/FDC are looking at a series of Big Goals that will be honed over the next few months for discussion at the Board level – these goals will address leveraging current assets to stop the “ship” from taking on water, and then finding new revenue sources to address the ultimate goal of having surplus budgets. We will, of course, look very carefully at expenses, but since so much of our cost infrastructure is “fixed” through compensation and operations (things like utilities), there is not a lot of play to work with around cost. Don't take that to mean we won't look seriously at every part of our financial picture, but I don't want anyone to presume that cutting our way to solvency is a the most significantly viable opportunity.

In summary, the key issues are:

- We have about \$500,000 in short-term and medium-term debt that we need to address, and in the normative process of our annual line of credit renewal we have the opportunity to move this back to \$250,000 from \$150,000.
- We have about \$500,000 in invested assets within our endowment and about \$1.4 million in total cash and pledged assets – meaning we have some good news as well.
- We have no debt on the building – which means we have an asset that is part of our net worth.
- We have a history of deficit spending that we need to end.
- We need to move to surplus budgets.
- We need to maintain high quality services to our members, so we don't sacrifice quality for short-term fixes, otherwise we will likely undercut our ability to build a culture of philanthropy.

I leave you with some good feelings, I hope. The Rabbi in his Kol Nidre Sermon/Appeal talked passionately about his own realization that the synagogue he works for is worthy of his own philanthropy. He made a case that the work of Brith Shalom not only is meaningful for our members, but we play an important role in the community. He set the stage for a new philanthropic reality, if we seize this moment. The proof comes in that this KN Appeal was the most successful ever. We proved that people will respond when a plan is laid out and well executed. We solicited about 45 families prior to Yom Kippur and received just over \$200,000 in pledges and then we raised more than \$100,000 on Yom Kippur and since. The typical YK Appeal raises about \$50,000, and the \$200,000 in pre-YK gifts represent an increase of over \$185,000, meaning that those donors gave about \$16,000 last year. This means that the rest of the congregation committed to a 300% increase over last year's YK Appeal. Sure, we had an emergency, but what this shows us is that a well-executed plan works and it is likely that if we restructure the YK Appeal going forward or whatever our development plans may be, additional funding is attainable.

Our job now is to maintain the excitement and commitment and find new ways to encourage our members to assure that Brith Shalom is financially and programmatically strong. We have about 600 households. An average net increase of \$300 a family would annually raise about \$180,000 in new revenue. That comes close to what appears to be our annual short-fall (don't hold that number firm quite yet). We are not talking about a gigantic funding shift to make our synagogue "work" financially.

So, we need to 1) do our due diligence to fully understand where we are; 2) be transparent about what we find; 3) develop a series of plans to address whatever our ongoing shortfall and overspending is and execute on them.

I am convinced, through my years at Brith Shalom, and my experience in the non-profit sector, that our issues are resolvable as long as we have the wisdom and will to address them and act on them in a competent fashion. I look forward to sharing more with you at the November Board meeting and welcome your calls in advance.

I do ask one thing: everything we do and say is a reflection on how Brith Shalom is perceived. Perception drives the philanthropic impulse. Every negative word works against that precious impulse. I ask that as the FAC discloses what we find, you use this information with great sensitivity, perspective and respect. If we misuse information by giving impressions of failure, we will do irreparable harm. So, I ask that you all take a long view, be responsible leaders, and stay positive through our discovery period. Some of the information may be hard to hear, but if you trust in yourselves as leaders that we have the power and will to address every issue fairly, squarely and responsibly, we will lead CBS to a new level of excellence.

Mitzvah Day Update – Elise Shepherd is the chairperson.

- The three congregations have had several meetings.
(Brith Shalom, St. Theresa’s Catholic Church, Maryam Islamic Center)
 - 17 sites are set as is the Blood Drive that morning.
 - Budgets are being finalized (using the grant obtained from the HCJF)
 - Publicity is set to go
 - On line sign up is being created and should go live in the next 7-10 days.
 - Dinner will include a brief speech by former Mayor Parker and possibly current Mayor Turner a well. (Dinner will only be open to those who volunteer and their families).
 - TV stations and Newspapers are being contacted.
 - Roberta Herman from the HCJF attended our recent meeting, is pleased with what we are doing, has volunteered to captain a site and will be asking other members of the foundation to volunteer.
 - Reverend Han from IM is taking what we have created and approaching other faith communities to encourage them to follow suit.
 - Security is being arranged for dinner.
- We should come in under budget – all from the grant provided.

Religious School

1. Anticipated Enrollment for coming year – budgeted 162 for 2017-2018 (last year 157)

Current

PreK & K	27
1	19
2	20
3	18
4	20
5	14
6	8
7	18
8	12
9	2
10	9
11	6
12	6
Totals	181

Staff

PreK/K	Hana Karny
1	Rachel Mohl *
2	Hanna Sasson
3	Rina Erlichman
4	Mindy Pollak
4	Erin Lepselter *
5	Bonnie Blumberg
6	Rosa Gross*
7	Rachel Silton
7	Michael Duke *
Tutor/Sub	Ilana Lothman

- Starred names equal new staff.

New Business

Hiring an Assistant Educator going forward – either for next year or the following year based on Anna Blum’s availability.

Classrooms - visioning for the future

The Education council is recommending exploring the rental of an offsite place for 7th grade to accommodate the growth of the school in future years.

Adult Education

Fall Evening Mini-Series (The first of three mini-series for the Year)

Sunday Mornings - Musar

Saturday Morning Study Sessions

- Wendy Lerman leads a monthly Torah study class
- Inspired Book Club meets monthly following Shabbat lunch

Annual Film Festival - Three Sunday evenings in January

Scholars-In Residence

1. Dr. Shai Cherry – last weekend in November
 - a. Friday evening – during dinner at RJT’s - “The Legacy of Tzelophchad’s Daughters”
 - b. Saturday D’var Torah
“How Maimonides Understand Lech Lecha”
 - c. Following Lunch
“Cain and Abel in Modernity”
 - d. Saturday evening at Restaurant with Adult Ed Committee and Ed Council
2. One bi-annually through the Yom Limmud fund. We are scheduled to receive the funding for the coming year.

