

Congregation B'nai Tikvah - Board of Director's Meeting - Monday October 3rd, 2011

Gary called the meeting to order at 8pm. He asked if there are any changes to the September minutes and since there are none the minutes stand as written.

The Rabbi gave his D'var Torah regarding the reactions to his sermons on Rosh Hoshanah. The first was a chilling remark that the problem was necessarily that kids who bully know they are hurtful, but that they just don't care that they are hurting other. The second comment was a comment from a congregant who stated that it was just not a school problem, that her kids were not treated nicely at USY also. This should make us aware that this is a problem outside as well as inside school and we need to be aware and proactive as parents.

Gary stated that half way thru the holidays he felt things were going well. He attended a conference in Northern NJ with Jeff Cadoff regarding security which he felt was more of a public service announcement. Jeff attended a webinar regarding greeting and other etiquette during ticket taking, etc., these tips, i.e. standing up vs. sitting at the front table have been implemented. The Kiddush was room open for kibbutzing. It appears like Rosh Hoshana services were not as well attended this year due to less crowding in the hallway. Gary seems to think that it is too quiet regarding congregant complaints he is going to ask for feedback.

Mark Kasdin reported 388 member families which equates to 221 full dues paying equivalent. Concern was expressed because our budget was based on 230

Fewer tickets were held for lack of payment than last year. This is primarily due to more special arrangements. One family, whose tickets were not mailed for lack of payment, showed up and bought an Israeli bond. How did that happen – why was the envelope out there? Apparently there are two different organizers who did not check with each other. Arnie Miller asked how we handle religious school dues for people on special arrangement. Mark replied that we usually don't make special arrangements for religious school, but we have one family that we had to do it for this year.

Gary Wesalo reported that we hired an accountant for our financial review. He has received all of the pertinent documents and he expects the audit/review to be completed at the end of October. Plans are to invite him to the December Congregational Meeting and the Board Meeting to share his findings.

At the end of this month, three months into the fiscal year, Gary Wesalo has requested an email identifying each person with budget responsibility so he can make sure the proper information gets to the proper people. He is also requesting revised monthly spreads for each area for money left between the months of November and July. There will be a budget review meeting on November 14th an email announcement forthcoming.

Several line items, particularly catering and dues are showing better than expected revenue. Expenses are currently underrunning, but due to unexpected

improvements/repairs being made by Buildings and Grounds they will be spent in full. Religious school is still looking to hire.

Marcie reported 28 new families, 12 with religious school kids, who have joined as a part of this year's free membership.

Mirah reported that all of the bookmarks were taken and there was positive feedback all around. The next distribution day will be discussed and decided on soon.

November 13th we will be showing the movie, "The Case for Israel", and having a brunch. In addition to the Rabbi, we hope to have an additional speaker. After a meeting with the religious school committee it was decided that it is ok to show this film to the religious school and/or USY kids. The question came up if it is ok to show this without creating a copyright infringement. Mirah talked about having a panel to discuss pro vs. con Israel and the rabbi said there are some good/ productive arguments vs. just general slander.

Ben said that we could pay between \$100 & \$350 to show this movie and this would allow us to advertise it to the community.

Stacey Rockman offered to teach a class on understanding the Minyon so people would be more comfortable attending. The date is not set yet.

The author of "The Lost" will be coming to CBT, Wednesday April 18th.

Dave Cukor reported that work on the parking lot (line painting and electric) is getting done on Wednesday, October 5th. The poles will be painted by November, The estimate came in 25% below budget - \$20K vs. \$5.6K. Pumps for septic are being replaced from 2 to 1 pump - approx \$12K - \$15K which will be covered by the under-run on the parking lot. This has to be completed before the USY Convention we are hosting in November.

Gas leak problem under the ground, was fixed Tuesday, October 3rd by PSE&G at no cost to us. PSE&G will also upgrade the meter to accommodate the amount of BTU's we actually use; hopefully this efficiency will have a positive effect on our bills and heating equipment. A manifold needs to be made to pull all of this equipment together. The manifold will cost between \$3K & \$4K and will be completed within 14 days so the building will continue to be able to remain open and operational.

The catering payback to us has been reduced by a small amount it should not affect us.

The USY convention planning for November 18-20 is going well. We need more host families for both kids and adults.

Mens Club's Steve Katz is Man of the Year for the northern NJ regional. He will be honored on November 16, at the Grand Marquis at 6pm. The cost of the dinner is \$35. Checks need to go to Bill Greenberg for this event by 11/1.11 for accurate headcount.

Raise the roof done was done on Sunday Oct 2nd.

Next birthday Shabbat is October 14th – Bill encouraged members in attendance to approach young people celebrating who are there celebrating a birthday with a handshake, etc.

Aaron stated that the 50+ club is looking to rename itself. Currently they are trying to resurrect programming to get more people interested and out to meetings and events. Aaron is formally retiring from Rejoice as of January 2012. He spoke about the different approach for Rejoice in Syracuse. It is run by their Federation – both in and out doors. Food prepared by volunteers and the profits go back to Federation. They have about 15 - 20 vendors. We did ask our Federation and first they were interested and then they said they didn't have the budget. Rejoice this year should have made about \$10K profit and we may be able to use this or some of this to hire a professional to do it next year.

Sarah – planning for convention and hosting Chinese in the Sukkah at the Shindler's house

Cantor Rockman was happy to see so many young people attending Rejoice. He gave credit to USY (Lauren and Sarah) for getting the word out.

The Cantor is planning an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Six Mile Run Church. The theme is angels, writing an essay on this topic will be a contest for the religious school.

December 11 is the L'dor Vador concert with Craig Taubman. Please come out to hear this inspirational Jewish Gospel Music. Go to his website and check him out or search for him on Amazon for his free download.

Lynne is going to find out about CBT Announcements and she heard were Channel 3 in South Brunswick. Who is putting them there, are they accurate and can we announce our activities in South Brunswick and other communities.

No old business

The Rabbi gave congratulations to Aaron for being honored by the South Brunswick Community Development Association. South Brunswick was named one of the 22 best places to live in the USA, one of the reasons being the great facilities and activities for seniors as a result of Aaron's work over the years.

Marcie motioned to adjourn, Ben second.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We're halfway through the High Holy Days, and from what I can tell from my view at the bima, it went very well. A few weeks ago I went with Jeff Cadoff to a presentation from New Jersey's department of Homeland Security regarding preparation for the Jewish Holidays. Considering the experience we already have and the preparations that Lynne made with the North Brunswick police, Jeff and I found the sessions to be more of a Public Relations campaign than anything else. They basically talked about being aware of suspicious or out of ordinary behavior and not to hesitate to report it. But if it made anyone feel more at ease that we went, then I guess, it was worth our time.

Jeff also attended a webinar, presented by the Jewish Outreach Organization, which we felt was very beneficial in helping to create a more inviting and friendlier atmosphere, especially to congregants and visitors who don't show up here very often. Subtle things like having the ticket takers greet people standing up instead of sitting behind the desk proved very effective. I was also told that the opening of the Kiddush room was well appreciated and helped keep the noise down. The only criticism I heard, and it was more of an observation, than criticism, was that it didn't appear the services were well attended because there were less people crowded in the lobby than usual. I countered that by pointing out that there were more adults attending the Junior Congregation service in the Gym than usual.

So far, portions of my president's reports have somehow wound their way into becoming Hakol articles. And I'm wondering if the following observation might wind up there as well... I'm somewhat surprised at the lack of phone calls, emails, or other correspondence directed to me from disgruntled congregants. I used to field many more questions and complaints before I became president. I know I may be asking for trouble here but, when things appear to be running that well, that's when I get a little paranoid. Now we do have some serious problems with our physical infrastructure that Dave will fill you in on but, I'm talking about all the "people problems" that I was expecting to encounter once I took office. Are we really doing that well or are people just being kind in not wanting to bother me. In my business, the lack of correspondence doesn't always mean having a satisfied customer. So, I'm thing of reaching out to encourage criticism but, my Yom Kippur speech is already written and I believe the topic I've chosen has a higher priority.

VP Administration Report

Report from Administration for October 3 board meeting:

Parking Lot - Company has been hired to drain the parking lot and replace the manhole covers with locking covers for future ease of access (currently they are cemented in and have to be broken out and re-cemented when draining) and lower costs. This company is doing the job at about 25% of the original budgeted amount. Manhole covers are supposed to be in today and the work will be done tomorrow.

We have also contracted someone to paint all the parking lot lines (white, yellow and blue). They will also be adding a yellow line down the middle of the entrance of our parking lot off of Finnegan's Lane. Weather permitting, this week. The light poles will be painted also in the near future.

Both sewerage pump for the new wing broke right before the holidays. We were less than a foot from flooding the parking lot. They broke due to poor installation and the wrong cement floor being installed that collapsed and broke the shafts of the pumps as they slide into the base. This was an emergency so we had the pumps pulled out and the water shut off on that side of the building. We are switching to a one pump system due to costs and everything will be installed properly with a new base and a breakaway system for ease of maintenance and lower future costs. The money to pay for this will come from the over budget of the parking lot drainage. We hope to have this fixed by the end of October, just waiting on a pump.

Exterior lights in parking lot and Temple grounds: All the electrical wires have been done. The light heads are suppose to be in today and the new lights should be installed on Tuesday. All lights in the parking lot will be working. We also took off one of the big brown box lights off of the roof by the school wing (there was already another light on the wall there) and replaced the broken one that was facing the synagogue by the handicap parking area. Also added two spot lights on the walkway where the kids get picked up after Hebrew school.

Caterer - Evan's concept was approved by the board for a tile floor in the Kiddush room. He will be working with his decorator and go through the Decor Committee. For a one year period Evan's cost for kid's plates that he pays the Temple was slightly reduced (less than \$5000 to the Temple and his extra bookings and off premises jobs will replace this money). We will review at the end of the year.

Ritual - Everything seemed to go very smoothly during the holiday services. Thank you to the ritual committee and all the volunteers that helped to make the service's successful.

Parsonage - No changes and nothing to discuss until Rabbi decides to move completely out of the home. This is not costing us anything so there is no time line or pressure for the Rabbi to complete his move.

Cemetery - We have a new committee leader, Art Cederbaum, and will work with the committee after the holidays.

Decor - Getting estimates put together for the complete make over. Expecting to make a proposal to the board in early spring.

Proposed Shabbaton - Had a great meeting with Dot, Dassy (head of USY), Gary, Evan, and the Cantor. Everything is shaping up for a great and safe Shabbaton.

Maintenance - Will be working with the maintenance staff to get them to check thermostats through out the building to make sure we are not wasting heat or AC when rooms are not being used.

Gas leak - This has been an ongoing issue for years that we have no choice but to deal with. There was a small leak underground that apparently was reported to PSE&G. They wanted to shut us down but with some discussion, convinced them that all work can be

fixed without closing the building (yes it is safe for everyone to be in the temple). PSE&G did the underground work today and we are getting prices to fix the leak in the pipes and build a proper manifold to the meter. The first price was \$25,000 (obviously getting more bids). We have a month to get this fixed. PSE&G is also switching our meter to a 7 million BTU meter from a 3 million BTU meter. If everything was on in the Temple at once we would be running at 6.7 million BTU's. PSE&G's biggest reason for shutting us down was they feel we have been getting gas without paying for it. With the new meter we might see an increase in our gas bill but with the leaks being fixed we hope to see a wash.

Hoping for a less exciting October than September!!!

David Cukor

VP ACTIVITIES REPORT

L'Shanah Tova

September Accomplishments:

** CBT Bookmarks completed for distribution tomorrow (first day of RH) to first 200 member families. EC very happy with how they came out.

** Showing of the new landmark documentary with Alan Dershowitz "The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost" on Sunday, November 13th at 4:00 pm in the Social Hall. Discussion to follow.

** Stacey Rockman has volunteered to lead a Minyan class that will be targeted to those members who may be open to performing this mitzvah but feel intimidated due to lack of basic knowledge of the service.

** The renowned author Daniel Mendelsohn will be here on Wednesday evening April 18th, 2012 to discuss his powerful book The Lost as part of our Yom Hashoah programming.

I realized that my vision for creating a sense of community comes from a place of openness. Every single person has an area in which we are strong. For some it may be reading Torah, for others it might be knowing Jewish law and ensuring that when we are in schul we conduct ourselves accordingly, for others it is the Holocaust and a desire to see the community connect with it in a more emotional and genuine way, for yet others it is a deep understanding of Jewish history or Israel, or social action. It is important that we all feel comfortable expressing those individual strengths, individual passions, with the community.

But I would argue that each of us needs to be open to growth in the other areas of Jewish life and identity and strive to learn new things so that on some level we are all healthy well rounded Jews. That should be our goal. It is not easy to get muscles in realms that we have not worked out our muscles before--but my hope is if the environment is right and learning and feeling are considered goods in and of themselves, and that we show respect to those members who are indeed willing to leave their comfort zone, because that requires courage, we will have created one of the most dynamic, engaging, supportive and compassionate communities around.