

Congregation B'nai Tikvah

Board Meeting Minutes of Meeting May 5th, 2003

Attendees:

Janice Baer
Arie Behar
Gary Bergman
Larry Cohen
Marc Dillman
Ruth Anne Koenick
Cantor Bruce Rockman

Hadas Elami
Rabbi David Eligberg
Harvey Finkelstein
Mitch Frumkin
Madeline Gaynor
Harold Schneider
Mark Sherman

Cindy Gittleman
Dan Greenberg
Naomi Jackenthal
Jerry Kaminsky
Cyndi Kleinbart
Gary Warner

17 votes present

Not Attending:

Jerry Edley
Alan Kane

Mark Kasdin
Jodi Marcou

Gary Tinkel
Keith Zimmerman

Non-Board Guests

Phyllis Alroy
Hannah Ehrlich

Bill Greenberg
Adrienne Ross

Jen Shapiro

Call to Order [Mitch Frumkin]

Meeting called to order at 8:02 PM by Mitch Frumkin.

Approval of Previous Minutes [All]

Moved by G. Warner, second by H. Schneider to adopt minutes of April 9th. Motion approved [unanimous, 1 abstain]

D'var Torah [Rabbi Eligberg]

Want to share a quote from Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Forty years ago, he was found marching with Dr. Martin Luther King in Selma, Alabama. When he was critiqued by the faculty and asked why, he answered, "I'm praying with my feet".

It was terrific to see how many people who joined in that same spirit yesterday at the Walk for Israel in Highland Park. I counted at least 80 people from B'nai Tikvah, and that's terrific! With that in mind, we have another upcoming opportunity to show that same spirit. On June 1st, the Salute to Israel Day parade will take place in New York City. Last year, it was the largest number of groups ever; this year, there are double as many! We have a designated viewing spot on the park side of Fifth Avenue between 65th & 66th Streets. It is a reserved spot. This year we are honoring the ordinary people who continue to live in what has become a very difficult place to live. We will have busses leaving from B'nai Tikvah for a nominal cost [\$5/person; max \$15/family]. It will include lunch, snacks and BT t-shirts; please join us!

Guests

- Phyllis Alroy. Here to talk about FAIR. There is a \$5 billion deficit in NJ this fiscal year; because of that the governor has proposed draconian cuts. Phyllis is here to talk about a proposal to raise taxes on very rich (those who earn >\$400K) to raise \$1 billion for health care needs for needy families. 1.13 – 3.13 % additional taxes for 3 years. Would also raise the floor at the other end of the scale. It's an

attempt to make taxes fairer. There are a host of organizations involved – Phyllis read the list. Phyllis is asking us as a congregation to join as a member organization.

M. Frumkin: The EC felt that it was inappropriate for the Board to take a position like this.

G. Warner: Has the board ever taken positions like this before? A. Ross: Not while I was on board – only political positions related to the State of Israel.

M. Frumkin: is there anything that individuals can do? Yes – can send postcards [which are passed out]. M. Frumkin: Is there anyone inclined to make a motion of support? No response.

P. Alroy: I see Judaism as something that should support this in the name of justice. C. Gittleman: you should talk to Federation [which is on a par with Catholic Charities, which supports this effort].

- Hannah Ehrlich [representing USY]: For Mothers day, USY is selling Lox Boxes. Forms passed around. Please support USY.

President's Report [M. Frumkin]

- The exchange program with Ramle was fantastic.
- Since Mark Kasdin is unavailable, here is the update on the expansion: we essentially have verbal approval from the state; we should receive written approval within a week. Meryl Gonchar put us in touch with an attorney at Greenbaum Rowe that expedited everything. This Wednesday we are interviewing the 2 low-bid contractors. We should have shovel in the ground in a month or so. The other person to thank is Barry Wasserman.

A. Behar: if not for Mitch and the staff in his office, this would not have happened so fast, so thanks. N. Jackenthal: At a temple I used to work at, in a \$4 million campaign, about 10% became uncollectible. Have we planned for this kind of thing? M. Frumkin: What are we doing if someone doesn't pay? We have no policy yet, but will ask Mark Kasdin to address at next meeting. With respect to putting aside some percentage; M. Dillman: We are not behind in collections, and we expect any new members to offset any uncollectibles. R. Koenick: Will there be a groundbreaking ceremony? We need to plan one; will set up a committee. B. Greenberg: Of the final cost, what percentage have we had pledged? We don't have a final number yet, but roughly 70%.

Décor Committee [J. Shapiro]

Thanks to Hadas, we have a pledge to repair both the ark and the Cantor's podium. A craftsman will begin on May 27th, it will take 3 days. The carpet in the sanctuary, which we had done, has a fault in it. It will be changed again at no cost to us. The Bimah carpet will be replaced again. A. Behar: the pews were not put in securely last time. They will pay attention to that. We are also looking into recovering the pews. Labor alone will be about \$14K. The fabric would be another \$3500 - \$5500. M. Frumkin: This should be a Shomrei Tikvah item. ST gets replenished to the tune of about \$10K per year. We have about \$27K in ST now. We also haven't paid for all

carpeting yet – still have about \$5K to pay. Moved [by J. Baer, second by C. Gittleman] to spend not more than \$20K to recover the pews. C. Gittleman: We are going to deplete ST, but that might help in the campaign in the fall. R. Koenick: We need to go ahead with this, it looks bad now. This is the time to do this, while we are refurbishing everything. A. Behar: I hate to see ST depleted totally; I don't think this is the right time to spend this money. G. Warner: the motives are good, but from a financial perspective it doesn't make sense. We should not deplete all ST funds. C. Gittleman: we're building something new, we should complete the "main room of the house". H. Finkelstein: These are restricted funds set aside for exactly this kind of purpose; it may even help Jeff Schwartz at High Holidays to show people what we've done with the funds. This is our sanctuary; this needs to be done. Bill Greenberg: we only have 70% pledged; we can't go to the well again and again. M. Frumkin: The congregation approved the expansion knowing that we would take on additional debt. H. Elami: To raise additional funds, we could sell plaques on the pews. Rabbi: People who make contributions to ST want to see their money used. It will help us raise additional funds. A. Behar: We should not overspend any monies. M. Dillman: We have \$270K in dedicated funds – the board may choose to undedicate funds as well. A. Ross: As a congregant, people choose dedicated funds with dedicated purposes. You cannot undedicate those funds without going to the congregation. Question is called by D. Greenberg, second by H. Finkelstein. Motion carries [12 yes, 1 no, 3 abstain].

USY [A. Ross]

Our USY Chapter won recently won 3 awards, including Most Improved Chapter. We have a lot more active kids [at least half come to every program]. Here to ask the Board to continue to support the various youth programs. We have the opportunity to host USY convention Feb 6th – 8th, 2004. It's Tu B'Shevat. Looking for board approval to submit application [and to help house the kids!]. Moved [by D. Greenberg, second by R. Koenick] to support the convention application. Unanimous, 1 abstention.

Budget Committee [Marc Dillman]

The Budget Committee has been working very hard at putting together a budget. The numbers that we are looking at are at least \$60,000 from where we want to be. With that kind of shortage, we would be looking at an increase of about \$275 per family. That would not be palatable. We are facing a very serious situation.

For example: \$6K less from caterer. \$3500 from credit card program gone. \$30,000 difference in nursery school revenue [from \$35K profit to \$5K profit]. We are looking to add a Bar Mitzvah tutors instructor for \$2500. Looking to add \$10K to building expenses. Looking to add 50% to number of hours to rabbi's assistant [about \$10K]. New contract for cantor [\$8K]. \$2500 for religious school secretary. \$7000 Hebrew school teachers increase. Fewer students in this coming year. Insurance going up by 25%. Bank card charges have gone from \$4K to \$8K.

Biggest chunk of this belongs to nursery school, so we are going to go back to them to have them retool their budget to keep more in line.

We are going to see if fundraising can be increased. We are going to look at all discretionary spending and ask for 10% cuts. Last year we budgeted a carryover of \$57K to this year – we actually had a \$90K carryover.

This year, we anticipate a carryover of \$47K. That means that a break-even budget would put us \$100K behind.

Passionate discussion ensued.

M. Gaynor: I wish this presentation were made before the decorating was voted on.

J. Kaminsky: Is there additional security built in to the new budget? No. What about operating the new building? Nothing, because it will be a very small part of the fiscal year, and we have identified \$80K in the expansion funds as being for operating costs.

H. Finkelstein: Does the school subsidy change? No, it's remains at 30%.

H. Finkelstein: Our current budget has a deficit of about \$100K, right? Right.

H. Elami: The \$8K that we have in credit card payments → we can save at least a few thousand dollars by an online credit card processor that absorbs those costs.

M. Sherman: I don't understand how the schools have gotten to the point they're in. Explanation by Harold, generally losing students.

Long, raging discussion ensued.

Membership Report [B. Greenberg]

From January 1, 2002 to May 1, 2003, we gained 22 new member families, but we also lost 20, so we only had a net gain of 2. The trend has been down in recent years: in 1993 we had 483 families. April 2001: 450 families. April 2003: 442 families.

Where are we going to get new members? Use the new building to market ourselves. Would like to get ourselves know in Northern & Western Jersey. People looking to move here will be more likely to join us.

C. Kleinbart: There are a lot of families unhappy with EBJC; what can we do to get them to look at us? Rabbi: We can't poach another shul.

B. Greenberg: We have some great ideas for ads.

Why do people leave? For all different reasons. Some big reasons and some little reasons.

Staff Review [Naomi]

We have a committee of 4, looking to expand the committee. Please let me know if you're interested.

VP Reports.

Hard copies of reports distributed.

Social action [J. Baer]: Regarding the family whose mobile home burnt down. They have nothing. The mother is pregnant and due in August. We are putting together a virtual baby shower.

H. Elami: The calendar meeting is June 12th. Need all dates by last date of May.

Sisterhood [R. Koenick]

May 18th is the last meeting – also elections. Installation will be on June 13th. We hope to have board representation there.

50+ Club [M. Gaynor]

Martha & Herman Rotter, as well as Sally Chase, shared their experiences with us at our Yom Hashoah observances. On May 27th, we will have the Franklin High Steppers for entertainment.

Good & Welfare [Rabbi Eligberg]

Unavailable due to technical difficulties.

Board of Trustees Installation Dinner [G. Warner]

In light of the financial situation we find ourselves in, no token gifts will be given out to board members, as had been planned.

Confirmation of Next Meeting

Next meeting is Monday, June 2nd, 2003.

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by G. Warner, second by M. Sherman. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 PM.