

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Board Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
June 3rd, 2002

Attendees:

Cheryl Asnis	Hadas Elami Rabbi	Mark Kasdin
Janice Baer	David Eligberg	Jodi Marcou
Arie Behar	Mitch Frumkin	Cantor Bruce Rockman
Gary Bergman	Cindy Gittleman	Harold Schneider
Larry Cohen	Ann Gold	Lisa Tannenbaum
Elliott Danto	Dan Greenberg	Gary Tinkel
Marc Dillman	Naomi Jackenthal	LouAnne Wolf
Jerry Edley	Jerry Kaminsky	Keith Zimmerman

Not Attending:

Harvey Finkelstein	Madeline Gaynor
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Non-Board Guests

Marc Binder

Call to Order [Mitch Frumkin]

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

Approval of Minutes of May 2002 Meeting [All]

Motion for Approval of Minutes [moved by J. Edley, second by D. Greenberg].
Approved [18 yes, 0 no, 3 abstention]

Dvar Torah [Rabbi]

This week's parsha opens with a somewhat boring story: Moses getting ready to send spies over the border for reconnaissance. It then mentions each member of the spying party. At the end of the long list, it mentions that Moshe changes one of the names of the spies.

We are familiar with Joshua (who used to be Hoshea). Rabbis ask why?

Fast forward to the parsha. When the spies come back from their mission – 10 said they loved what they saw – "it's beautiful, but we'll never be able to conquer the land – we were like grasshoppers." They had very low self-esteem.

Joshua is one of the 2 that say that yes, it is beautiful, and if G-d promised it to us, a little trust would be a good thing. People don't listen to Joshua or to Caleb, the other spy that said that they would inherit the land with no problem.

What did Moses change Hoshea's name? He added part of G-d's name – the yud, hay. He now carries part of G-d as part of his basic identity. As long as you keep that intact, you will have clear vision.

About Caleb, we read a note that says that he was the only one that made an extra stop – in Hebron. Why? He visited the graves of the patriarchs. He is connected to

his ancestral roots, and he wasn't going to give it up for anything. Yes it may be a challenge, but this is what was promised to our fathers and to us.

It seems that we as Jews in the 20th century – we need to make sure that G-d is part of our identity. We also need to have what Caleb had – a connection to our past, to our fathers, and to Israel.

With these 2 things, we will remain connected to the future and to the past. May we always hold on to those 2 pillars to succeed in holding on to Israel.

President's Report [M. Frumkin]

1. Thanks to Keith and all others who worked on this week's program to raise money for Israel.
2. This Sunday is cantor's installation – please join us.
3. Call for volunteers for dues structure committee. J. Marcou volunteers.
4. Congregational Meeting scheduled for June 24 @ 8 PM.
5. The Men's Club bowling league is donating more money this year than ever before. \$2,000.

New Business [All]

- Nominating committee [M. Kasdin]. Thanks to all the members of the committee. Last year, we started staggered 2-year terms.
- A. Gold: Thank you for the mitzvah of allowing me to serve for 4 years on the board.

Expansion Committee Report [M. Kasdin]

We have been on hold due to wetlands issue. Barry Wasserman prepared a letter of interpretation, which was sent to the state 3 weeks ago – we should hear something within a few weeks.

G. Tinkel: This is news. M. Frumkin: it was discussed last month and written up in Hakol.

G. Tinkel: What about mortgage? Nothing new. No progress.

E. Danto: Is there any recourse against the town? We have spent thousands and thousands of dollars based on the info the town gave us. What if they say no? Are we SOL after spending over \$100,000? M. Frumkin: In retrospect, we should have looked at wetlands first.

J. Baer: Shouldn't the town have denied us a permit if there are wetlands? Doesn't work that way.

J. Edley: In my experience, if there is a map that doesn't show it, we should be okay.

K. Zimmerman: what does Barry say? It's not a black/white issue.

G. Tinkel: did we have this for the school too? Don't think so.

M. Binder: will letters help? Or anybody with political clout? Maybe.

M. Kasdin: Thank you to Barry Wasserman for doing this – he is only asking for \$1K donation to SSDS.

Staffing Report

J. Wolf and C. Gittleman were asked to look into the office help situation. Reviewed statistics for shuls of our size. We are underserved in administrative, clerical and custodial.

Not asking for 3 positions. Just asking for 1 part-time secretarial position to serve the clergy. This person would handle correspondence of clergy, appointment book for rabbi, assisting clergy with flyers, research, cheer and sorrow, b'nai mitzvah families correspondence (2005 has 50 b'nai mitzvaot), getting ready for Shabbats, yahrzeits, etc.

Want someone with a creative initiative. Proactive.

Looking at 15 hours per week to start.

J. Baer: the things that this person would do – are they happening now? Yes and no.

M. Frumkin: there is some money in the budget – can we move forward to hire someone?

Probably about \$15/hour. We have about \$11,000 – \$12,000 in budget.

D. Greenberg: Structurally, how will this work? Who reports to whom? This new position reports to Hadas, as does existing secretary.

If we hire someone from congregation, we need to advertise a lot. And have extensive confidentiality requirement. Please wait until after budget is approved for advertising.

Hadas: wants dates for next year ASAP.

Vice-Presidents Reports

Activities [E. Danto]

We took in about \$8,000 last week for the kids.

Ways & Means [J. Marcou]

With regard to the scrip program, Rachel Shaneson will chair it for another year, but has some requests (see report).

M. Kasdin: we need to be trained if the board is going to do it. Absolutely.

M. Binder: can we go after school parents? Not really.

We will try to add to billing statement a scrip order form.

The credit card program is being discontinued – see report.

Administration [A. Behar]

- We will hire Milkin & Guttenplan to do a review of our books (last year). Price is \$5500. We have that in the budget. It is a constitutional requirement. We had interviewed 2 firms and selected these guys.

C Asnis: Is it a review or an audit? Review.

What is the difference? C. Asnis: An audit is an attestation process. A review is looking at the numbers that we give them.

Marc B.: the word 'examine' (in the bylaws) implies an audit. M. Frumkin: we may have used the wrong word, but it was not intended to be an audit. M. Binder: there was a discussion at that time, and the goal was that we should do an audit.

M. Frumkin: if anyone feels we should do an audit, let's hear it.

M. Binder: do we need an audit for bank loan? No.

When was the last time we were audited? Over 10 years ago.

C. Asnis: what does United Synagogue recommend? They don't require an audit.

J. Kaminsky: what is the price difference? \$5,500 vs. \$7,500. Moved [by J. Kaminsky, second by D. Greenberg] that we accept contract for \$7,500 to do an audit.

M. Kasdin: Do we need to alter the budget to find the extra \$2,500? Yes.

G. Bergman: what do we gain for the extra money? J. Kaminsky: more checking and validity of the numbers. Might check with congregants, with vendors. Check systems, etc. It's a significant benefit for very little additional money.

M. Dillman: The accounting firm probably wouldn't review the items that Jerry said, because they aren't big-ticket items. We should go with the review.

M. Binder: They will check 3 things: Mortgage balance. Cash accounts. Trust accounts. We need an audit so that people know we are doing the right thing.

A. Behar: Most people don't know the difference. And we probably don't need the audit.

C. Asnis: an audit is necessary and important – we should do that.

M. Binder: it won't uncover theft, embezzlement, etc. It gives assurance.

M. Kasdin: is the scrip account included? Yes. Did the accounting firm give a scope? Yes. Why is the price so low? Ed's relationships.

Motion is called [by J. Edley calls the question. Second by D. Greenberg]. Motion to get an audit instead of review passes [14 yes, 5 no, 1 abstain].

- High holidays are only 3 months away. M. Binder: thanks to Larry Cohen. for agreeing to chair the honors committee.

L. Cohen: You will get email shortly to ensure that people who deserve honors get them.

Education [H. Schneider]

Nursery ends in 2 weeks. Religious school has ended. Record of 10 graduates. USY rec'd two awards. New USY officers.

A. Gold: Should attendance at a convention be required (to be an officer)? It didn't affect anyone.

Financial Report [G. Tinkel]

441 members; 307 Dues Paying Equivalent. 74 families on special arrangements.

Letters did not go to the 8 families discussed last month. They can't reregister until they bring their accounts up to date. Of the 13 families who have paid no dues this year, one is on the board. These 13 will be getting letters this week. 22 other families owe over 2 quarters.

These numbers are on track with previous years.

Pledges for expansion: 9 families have pledged that haven't paid. We have no process in place. What do we want to do?

Mark Kasdin will speak with Jeff Schwartz and Mark Roller to establish a procedure.

Treasurer's Report [M. Dillman]

No Report.

Men's Club [J. Edley]

There will be a \$2,000 check from bowling.

Sisterhood [C. Asnis]

Made \$3700 at fashion show. Probably a record.

A portion of this will be for the Israeli Emergency Fund.

June 14th dinner. Was co-sponsored by Sisterhood -- Mimi Schwartz. 45 people. Thanks to Bette Koffler for help in setting up.

Looking forward to more joint programs.

50+ Club [M. Gaynor]

No Report.

Rabbi's Activities [Rabbi]

We dedicated the book cart in the sanctuary. And it's being used "religiously."
[Secretary's note: Please excuse the pun]

Recent projects:

- Developed a series of B'nai Mitzvah packets to help move the Bar Mitzvah process forward.
- Working on high holidays revision of musaf service.
- Kashrut. The caterer made a change in his kashrut supervision without going through the proper channels. Caused a lot more work. Lots of time doing research to bring kashrut up to level it should be at.
- Jewish state: Chabad opened an office on Finnegan's Lane. This prompted call from Rabbi Carlebach to say they had nothing to do with the person operating in South Brunswick. They proselytize, and we are all targets.
- Chaplain for North Brunswick for Memorial Day parade. Very good to see so many congregants participating.

L. Cohen: Thanks to all who attended bond breakfast 2 weeks ago.

Board went in to Executive Session at 9:40 PM.