

Congregation B'nai Tikvah
5 July 2011

Board members attending: Gary Bergman, Ruth Anne Koenick, Aaron Rosloff, Gary Wesalo, Renee Juro, Marcie Kfare, Dave Cukor, Art Cederbaum, Mark Kasdin, Mirah Becker, Dan Reiningger, Andy Ross, Linda Fellen, Arthur Miller, Ben Gottesman, Bonnie Kudwit, Doug Smoller, Michael Weiss, Bill Greenberg, Lauren Cohen, Rob Blackin,

Also attending: Rabbi Wolkoff, Lynne. WeissMarshall,

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Bergman at 8:01 p.m.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as submitted.

Rabbi Wolkoff set the tone for the meeting with a discussion about the words “Mah Tov” in the traditional prayer. It is easy to emphasize problems, he said, which is why perspective is essential. He described an episode in the Torah in which a king seeks a curse on the Israelites. The king’s wish isn’t decisive, however. What’s decisive is God preventing the curse. As the “Mah Tov” prayer suggests, we can see how wonderful our tents and dwelling places are when observed from the right spot, the rabbi said.

Bergman recognized the new trustees and officers beginning the terms this month and described some of the priorities for the coming year. Among those are:

- To acquire at least one new Torah and repair others.
- To initiate a strategic plan toward the congregation’s future.
- To establish a planned-giving program to provide for an endowment for the congregation.

The complete president’s report is attached below.

Financial secretary M. Kasdin reported members in the mid-390s, representing a total of 231 full dues paying equivalents. Kasdin suggested the board move quickly to account more accurately for the disposition of those members who joined under the free trial membership program in the past year. He also reminded the board that more than \$100,000 in dues is still outstanding and that many still owe on the scrip program too.

G. Wesalo in the treasurer’s report said an effort is under way to provide more transparency in the accounting of the many unique funds maintained within the congregation. One of the funds he mentioned was the fund set up to cover the costs of the expansion.

Wesalo suggested a motion would be in order to transfer all funds currently in the expansion fund so that they are available for general operating expenses.

Kasdin made that motion with the additional proviso that the shift address future contributions to the fund as well. With a second from Koenick, the motion is:

Move to transfer all funds in the expansion fund currently plus future contributions to the general operating fund.

The motion passed by a vote of 16 in favor with one abstaining.

There was a discussion about potential encumbrances that might block any future sale of parsonage. Those will be investigated along with details and ramifications about rental.

Regarding activities, Mirah Becker expressed a desire to grow the adult education program. She seeks committee to guide that effort. One possibility is an adult b'nai mitzvah course. Another would be a Yiddish class.

For house and grounds, Dave Cukor described the effort to solicit a better bid for parking lot repair/maintenance.

Cukor informed the board of an inquiry from Classical Caterers regarding redecorating the Kiddush room. No formal proposal was submitted, but in general the thought is to replace the bar and install tile on the floor instead of carpet. Cukor said the décor committee generally approves of the possible changes.

Much discussion focused on the pros and cons of tile, including concerns raised by several about safety and noise. The discussion concluded with a request for several options for the board to weigh.

Cukor said the continuing assessment of the potential for a solar power installation on the roof wasn't yielding viable alternatives for the congregation. Absent investors to undertake construction costs, it appears the initial cost of either roof repairs and/or construction costs might prove too much to bear, he said.

For ways and means, A. Miller described several potential efforts, including:

- A one man show titled "Rothschilds" in November, which might include dinner
- A scrap book event for April
- Casino night in March
- A winter party perhaps in December
- Jets ticket raffle

Aaron Rosloff said Rejoice planning is proceeding while a new start is planned for a seniors group.

Bergman raised the possibility of a USY representative participating in board deliberations regularly.

Rosloff moves to adjourn (Cukor seconds)

PRESIDENTS REPORT for July

I know some of you have been on the board way longer than me but, others just got off the boat. So, I'd like to explain 3 items...

1. We try to adhere somewhat to "Robert's Rules of Order"

If an item requires a vote, first a motion is made and must be seconded before any discussion as to the reason or basis behind it. After a round or two of discussion, a vote is taken whether to entertain the motion or table it for another time. If approved, then an actual vote to approve the motion is taken which must pass a simple majority.

2. We have one of the finest recording secretaries of any administration I've been involved with but, he has a problem. He can only type one person's words at a time. If you have something to say while another person is talking, raise your hand or make a non verbal gesture. I will call you by name so that Howard can preface your words and not get them out of order.

This also implies that you should weigh your words carefully and not repeat yourself.

3. The function of the Executive Committee is to make recommendations to the board and to set the agenda. So, if you have an issue to bring to the board, the proper channel is to first bring it to the attention of the executive committee by communicating with the VP responsible for the area you're concerned with. If you're not sure then bring it to me.

When I was first asked to join the board about 10 years ago, I didn't know what to expect and I didn't know most of the people on the board and honestly I felt uncomfortable for a longer time than I thought necessary. So, I'd like to start this year with a pool and barbeque party at my house on Sunday August 14. Bring the spouses and the kids, or borrow some. The pool is heated and bring something parve. If the 14th doesn't work out for the majority, we can make it the following Sunday.

On a personal note...

As some of you know, I've been on the board in various capacities, including VP of administration but, I have to tell you, the hardest for me was my first term as VP of activities. There's nothing as frustrating as creating a new program, trying not to spend too much money, just to have no one show up.

It's a systemic problem at B'nai Tikvah

But I can remember back in 1984 or 85, I was at a religious school function, when my wife, Bobby, asked: "Do you see any board members here?". I said, you're talking to the wrong person. I don't know who most of them are.

But I still hear that question a lot, and not just from my wife.

Ask yourself, the last time you came to shul for services or any occasion or function:
How many board members did you recognize?

I made a small attempt to approach the problem several years ago by posting the all the board member's pictures on the website. So at least there would be a better chance of people recognizing that board **does** make an attempt to be part of synagogue life.

A few years ago, when Danny Greenberg was president, he made name badges for the board to wear at High Holy Day services. I thought that was a great idea, so I had them remade and I hope that they're not used just on the High Holy Days but, at any significant gathering during the year. I'm going to ask Lynne to provide a place in the office where the badges can be kept, so you can find them when you come to services or an event. I ask that you return them to the office so you don't forget them at home as I often did.

I think too many congregants don't appreciate or understand how hard some of us work around here. I'm hoping this small gesture will help quell the criticism of people wondering if the board has any interest in being part of our synagogue life.

Lastly, I'd like to outline some of the projects we face in the coming year and what is being planned.

1. We are in need of at least one new Torah and repairs to others.

If you would like to help with this effort to raise funds and find solutions, please see Ruth Anne Koenick.

2. There are members of the congregation, including a few previous board members, who strongly believe we need to be involved with strategic planning for the future. If you think this is something you'd like to be involved with, contact Danny Greenberg.

3. We have missed many opportunities to raise significant funds through planned giving and legacy programs. Last year, Federation made a presentation to the board on how we can participate in a program they developed and I believe B'nai Tikvah is one of the first synagogues to sign up. We need to publicize this and ask congregants to participate. Ruth Anne is leading this for now and will keep us informed as the Federation moves forward in this process.

Report from Administration:

Parking Lot - Working with Jeff Cadoff to get a better estimate and more reasonable cost to clean and fix drainage system. Goal to have the work done around Labor Day weekend.

Exterior lights in parking lot and Temple grounds. Goal to have all lights replaced to better energy efficient system and to have them all working before High Holidays.

Caterer - Caterer would like to replace carpet in Kiddush room with ceramic tile and to redo the existing bar. Working with decor committee. Any feedback is always appreciated.

Ritual - Taking any and all suggestions to make our High Holiday services run even smoother (if possible) to present to Ritual committee at their next meeting.

Parsonage - Sometime in the next week or so to go in and figure out what needs to be done to get the house ready to rent before our November deadline.

Cemetery - Will start working with that committee to get us update on plots that are available and to review policies and make sure we are up to date on everything.

Decor - Discussions and estimates are being sought to paint the ceiling in the Sanctuary along with replacing the ceiling tiles and possibly painting some or all of the Sanctuary.

Budget - There will be some changes in the 2011 - 2012 budget process. Primarily budget will be due earlier and VP's will be responsible for making a monthly spending spreadsheet so we have more accurate information going forward. The budget committee will also be meeting twice during the year to make sure that there is nothing out of the ordinary that has to be accounted for so we have no surprises when the process starts in the spring.

Solar - Would like to get feedback from the board if it is something that we feel as a whole that should be investigated more. Already have met with a bunch of companies and will present in a nutshell this evening on what we have heard.

As always I am available for any questions or thoughts on how to make CBT run more efficiently