

Attendees:

Cheryl Asnis
Arie Behar
Gary Bergman
Elliot Danto
Marc Dillman
Jerry Edley
Hadas Elami
Rabbi David Eligberg
Harvey Finkelstein
Mitch Frumkin
Madeline Gaynor
Cindy Gittleman
Ann Gold
Dan Greenberg
Mark Kasdin
Jodi Marcou
Cantor Bruce Rockman
Harold Schneider
Lisa Tannenbaum
Gary Tinkel
LouAnne Wolf
Keith Zimmerman

Not Attending:

Janice Baer
Larry Cohen

Naomi Jackenthal
Jerry Kaminsky

Non-Board Guests

Nick Damore
David Kutliroff
Millie Kutliroff
Renee Levin
Aaron Rosloff
John Wolf

Call to Order [Mitch Frumkin]

Meeting called to order at 8:03 PM by Mitch Frumkin.

Approval of Minutes of July 10, 2001 Meeting [All]

Motion for Approval of Minutes [moved by H. Finkelstein, second by J. Edley] Minutes Approved [16 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention]

D'var Torah [Rabbi Eligberg]

Torah has an interesting phrase when talking about Sukkoth: "you should have nothing but joy." How

can we possibly have nothing but joy?

There was a king, known for his wisdom and knowledge, and a queen with tremendous wealth from a neighboring kingdom. She heard that the king celebrated all these interesting and unusual holidays throughout the year, and wants to celebrate them as well. The queen travels far to see him, he welcomes her and tells her she is welcome to stay and celebrate Passover.

After the Seder and the celebrating, the king becomes very quiet and goes quietly walking in the garden. The queen notes how somber he looks, in contrast to the celebrating of earlier. He responds that it is important to celebrate not only the liberty of the Holiday, but to reflect on what to do with the liberty that G-d gave us.

Next she hears about Shavuot, she goes again to celebrate, and again, he becomes quiet and somber. When she questions why he is not overjoyed at this holiday giving us the Torah, he responds that he is, but that there needs to be serious thought about what the Torah means to us as well.

Lastly, she hears that Sukkoth is the most joyous of holidays. She goes to visit him again, but he welcomes her in his little sukkah, open to the stars, and she witnesses a joyous celebration. She asks him why he can't celebrate like this in the comfort of the palace, where everyone can celebrate in comfort and joy?

He responds that being in the sukkah reminds him of all the blessings from G-d – not being rained on, the harvest, and the comforts of the palace.

We must remember that what we take away from the holidays is important – not just the moment of the holiday itself.

Guests [Various]

- **Nick Damore** (South Brunswick Post). Nick indicated that there is an ongoing series in his newspaper about the religious communities in the area. He is here talking to people attending the open house for potential new members.
- **Renee Levin** (regarding High Holiday babysitting). There were mailing problems with the forms – therefore they will be accepted for another several weeks. Other than extenuating circumstances, there cannot be any exceptions. Last year went very smoothly – we are trying to duplicate that. The board is encouraged to tell everyone they see to get their forms in.
- **Millie Kutliroff** (cemetery committee). [Aside from Mitch: We will be having a ceremony to dedicate the new cemetery markers ceremony in Millie's honor on August 24th. Everyone is encouraged to attend.] One of the columns memorializes the history of the various congregations that eventually became Congregation B'nai Tikvah; the other has prayers (in Hebrew) remembering our departed friends and relatives. Balance is \$2071. Bette Koffler has volunteered to help Millie with the cemetery committee. Much applause.
- **Aaron Rosloff** (insurance committee). Aaron has overseen insurance for our synagogue for over 40 years. His report and advice on High Holiday safety issues is attached.

He stressed the absolute chaos and panic that can set in at even the mention of smoke. With the portable chairs that we use, it is even worse. We NEED to have wide aisles as well as constant reminders during the service of emergency exits. We must remember that the fire code is a bare minimum, and that we should set the chairs up to exceed that code.

Question (K. Zimmerman): Have the chairs been set up properly in the past? Answer: Sometimes. We have used 18" for rows sometimes, we really should use 20". There are always choke points – look for example at the torah procession – they always have trouble getting through. Aaron wants these standards to be institutionalized in the minutes and the bylaws. The ushers need to be empowered to move strollers and to replace chairs that are pulled out of rows.

It was pointed out that we already send out seating maps and instructions by mail to all congregants – however, it was pointed out that it seems no one reads their mail.

Motion to Adopt the standards and practices made by Aaron in his memo [moved by A. Gold,

seconded by H. Finkelstein].

Discussion: M. Frumkin suggested that that these procedures fall under the VP for Administration. We already have a computer diagram used in years past showing the chair layout, however that diagram describes the layout to code, while Aaron's suggestion is more than code – we will lose several rows. J. Marcou suggests that the babysitters be trained on proper procedures. E. Danto notes that people already get very rude and obnoxious when they are told that the chair or stroller must move. There must be announcements from bimah.

Motion to Adopt Aaron Rosloff's standards under the direction of the VP Administration Approved [14 yes, 0 no, 3 abstentions].

John Wolf. John (at M. Frumkin's request) headed a study regarding ethics and procedures for congregants doing work (donated, at cost, or for a profit) on behalf of the Congregation.

John started by saying he did NOT conduct a survey, but instead had informal talks with people, looked at various codes of ethics, etc. He spoke mostly (and thanked) A. Gold. The threshold question that John looked at was would the board permit the synagogue to do business with congregants? The answer is yes, of course. We have many people with varied skills that we need to take advantage of. Would we accept contributions of substantial value? Also yes. The issues are ethics and conflict of interest rules.

John distributed a Draft of Code Of Ethics for Members of the Board of Directors. See Attached. Paragraphs 1 and 2 are very general; paragraphs 3 and 4 deal with access to information and not being able to use information for personal gain. Paragraph 5 is the meat, and can be written a number of ways.

Question [H. Finkelstein]: What constitutes 'immediate' in the phrase 'immediate family?' Answer: It's up to us. Question: Who is a Director? Answer: Everyone on the Board.

Question [C. Asnis]: can we add a provision that Directors should follow the law? Answer: We shouldn't have to have a provision that we follow the law. We are all assumed to be doing things that are legal only. Rabbi: Maybe that should be a provision in the procedural manual.

A. Gold pointed out that we discuss projects at meetings and therefore we know about things long before others might – paragraph 3 is essential.

John presented second document: Draft of Standards Applicable When Congregants Render Services to the Congregation.

Rabbi asks for practical example; for example, congregant offers to clean the carpets in the sanctuary for free or reduced cost.

Discussion: when we accept a service, are we liable if they screw up? No – see paragraph 4. We can set any conditions we want. Can the congregation sue a congregant? Absolutely. Right now, committees make decisions – concern about handcuffing the committees.

Question [A. Gold]: what about the need to communicate to everyone before 'bids' are taken? Maybe there should be a threshold of \$1K before an Request for Proposals be sent out. J. Edley suggests a \$2,500 threshold. M. Frumkin thinks we are looking for trouble.

Motion [moved by A. Behar, seconded by K. Zimmerman] to adopt both draft documents.

Motion to Amend [moved by J. Edley, seconded by G. Tinkel] to adopt the drafts without the alternative language where applicable.

A. Gold feels we are moving way too quickly.

Motion [moved by A. Gold, seconded by J. Marcou] to Table both documents until next month [15 yes, 2 no, 0 abstain]: Motion to Table Approved.

E. Danto suggests that people may wish to discuss. G. Tinkel volunteered to help John and serve on his committee.

M. Dillman suggests that many of the issues that have been raised as applicable to the board should also apply to non-board volunteers.

[NOTE: Up to this point in the meeting, there were 17 voting members of the Board present. L. Tannenbaum and L. Wolf – who had been running an Open House for potential new members – joined

the quorum at this point.]

President's Report [M. Frumkin].

Hadas will be going to visit Suse Rosenstock in the hospital in California – she is making the trip from Las Vegas. Hadas will bring any and all wishes we send. Also, Hadas was elected to the board of directors of the local chapter of synagogue administrators,

Welcome to Bruce Rockman on his first official meeting as Cantor.

Anyone who would like to be on the 'sitting on the bimah' cycle should make himself or herself known. The weekend of August 31st – September 1st: we need someone for the bimah both Friday and Saturday.

The stained glass windows are now in and we are waiting for the lighting to go in.

Nine of the 10 windows have been sponsored. Aaron Rosloff would like to donate \$1,000 and dedicate the remaining window to the memory of his parents. Mitch indicated that there has been a suggestion that we either accept Aaron's \$1,000 offer for a stained glass window or instead reject his donation and put a plaque in Aaron's honor thanking him for over 40 years of service to the synagogue. Question: what was the original cost to the other donors? Answer: \$3500 per window.

Motion [moved by J. Marcou] to dedicate the window to Aaron Rosloff and not accept his donation.

Motion to Amend [moved by H. Finkelstein] to accept Aaron's \$1,000 donation.

Motion to Amend [moved by G. Bergman, seconded by A. Gold] to accept his \$1,000 donation and to install 2 plaques – one in the memory of his parents, the other thanking Aaron [17 yes, 2 no, 0 abstain]: Motion Approved.

Financial Report [Gary Tinkel].

Membership stands at 435 families – that number is deceiving because we actually picked up about 12 new families. We dropped 8 families for non-payment; dues-paying equivalents is at 311, up from 304.

This is always the time of year that people make good on their dues since High Holiday tickets only go to paid-up members. Mitch sent out a letter to that effect recently – members must be paid up through 4th quarter of last year to receive tickets. As it stands right now, 42 families will not be getting High Holiday tickets. We can expect to receive payments from 90% of these and we can expect our membership to peak over the next few months. We can expect another dozen new members by the end of the month.

Question [A. Gold]: Are the number of people who are on senior memberships and special circumstances the same as usual? Answer: The seniors category is a little higher; the special circumstance numbers have remained about the same for the past 10 years. There are about 60 – 80 per year.

Question [M. Gaynor]: Are any of the new members seniors who should be welcomed by the 50+ Club? Answer: We don't know. Per J. Marcou, the questionnaire that new members fill out tends to not be looked at; that is something we need to change.

Treasurer's Report [Marc Dillman]

Distributed the first pass at year-end statement for fiscal year ending July 31st, 2001. Note that this is first cut only and that there will be changes and adjustments made over the next few weeks.

There was an \$88K positive variance from the budget – we had thought we would have a \$63K positive variance. Unanticipated differences included catering (\$10K extra in 4 months) and dues collections –

this is the first time we have exceeded budget for dues collected – hats off to Gary, Hadas, and all others involved in dues – we collected \$8K more than we thought we would.

Our cash on hand is \$475K, of which \$373K is designated; non-designated cash on hand is \$102K.

We should consider adding some of this excess into reserve funds.

Old Business

Expansion Update [Mark Kasdin]

The soil test has been completed; results have been forwarded to Mitch.

We had a 'field trip' to South River where the yeshiva just finished building an gymnasium addition for ~\$60/ft. It gave us a good sense of what low budget construction gives us.

The architect is running very late on getting the bid package to us – we should have it by late August or early September.

There will be a letter in the next Hakol to update people on the progress.

We have gotten calls from several people who had declined to participate in the campaign before who want to now participate.

Question [M. Dillman]: Are we still looking at sources other than pledge revenue? Answer: There 's been no progress at looking at grants – Irwin Millinger was looking at some, but we have no knowledge of any yet. Currently, we are looking at having about \$940K available for construction, including the renegotiated caterer dollars for the next 3 or 4 years.

The current timetable is (assuming we get the bid package in September): it will go out for bids by October 1st, they will need roughly 45 days to get bids back, and it is possible that we will break ground in December.

Vice-Presidents Reports

Administration [Arie Behar]

Report submitted – see attached

Motion [moved by A. Behar, seconded by K. Zimmerman] to acquire a credit card that Hadas could use.

Discussion:

- A. Behar noted that this is both for convenience and potential money savings online
- G. Bergman noted that the same motion was defeated last year
- L. Tannenbaum pointed out that there was already a checking account available – others note that some things require a credit card: hotel room for cantor, deposit for chairs rental, etc.
- L. Tannenbaum expressed concern that this will escalate – both Nursery and Religious Schools will want credit cards too; too much potential for abuse

Motion to Call the Question [moved by J. Edley]: Unanimously approved.

Motion to Approve Credit Card for Hadas [16 yes, 1 no, 2 abstain]: Motion Approved

Per Arie, we have been trying to renegotiate the mortgage since last year – Fleet Bank (which took over our old bank) is having problems issuing mortgages to religious institutions. We are working with them for a quick resolution.

Activities [Elliot Danto]

The date for the "Meet the Presidents" has been changed to April 14th.

There will be an ad in the upcoming Hakol for several open positions: adult education, programming and activities. There was a call for volunteers; A. Gold responded and is now doing programming.

Kudos to Keith Zimmerman and his wife, Tammy, for chairing Super Sunday on behalf of the Federation. This event is on October 28th – let's all try to lend him our support.

Ways and Means [Jodi Marcou]

Big thanks to Gary Bergman for doing the calendar – he did a great job. We made a profit for the first time ever thanks to him.

The New Year's Eve party is a go. Congregants have priority until October 1st. the charge is \$100 per person and includes everything!!

Entertainment books are now available – we make \$6 per book, so please get as many people as possible to buy them.

We are still looking for a chairperson for our major fundraiser.

School and Youth [Harold Schneider]

We have new USY advisors. We are still looking for volunteers for the Passport to Israel program. K. Zimmerman will try to volunteer.

Men's Club Report [Jerry Edley]

This week's US News and World Report identified 20 American heroes – people who have made a difference in their world. One of the 20 was Jim McCloskey of the Centurion Ministries in Princeton, who the Men's Club featured at one of their monthly breakfast meetings last year. Everyone is encouraged to come out and support the Men's Club and their interesting programs.

Sisterhood Report [Cheryl Asnis]

The August board meeting was August 13th – the new mission statement was approved. The next fundraiser is the High Holiday Flower Sale. Sales of High Holiday cards were not bad.

We will be adopting a needy family through Jewish Family Services, as well as sponsoring a team in the Race for the Cure.

50+ Club [Madeline Gaynor]

The next meeting will be August 28th – and will feature Jane Brady, Middlesex County Freeholder. Also in the works is a going to see a play: "Mixed Emotions."

New Business

M. Kasdin: Since we may lose up to 100 chairs for the High Holidays, – can we limit the number of guest tickets? We already limit them to 4 per family; mailing announcing this is already prepared and is Going out tomorrow. Much discussion ensued – no resolution.

Rabbi Eligberg:

1. Asked the Board to have the synagogue officially become a sponsor of Mazon – there is no cost or obligation – we will ask for a contribution to Mazon from all families celebrating a Simcha. 3% is the encouraged amount.

Motion [moved by D. Greenberg, seconded by H. Schneider] to become an official sponsor of Mazon

[19 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain]: Motion Approved

2. Asked the Board to have the synagogue become a sponsor of Partners of Environmental Quality. This group encourages people to buy their utilities from companies that use renewable resources. The cost to congregation is none – cost to consumer is about \$12 more per month. The synagogue will get a kickback of \$20 per person that signs up through our efforts.
Motion [moved by M. Gaynor, seconded by D. Greenberg] to have someone from PEQ to come talk to us and explain the program[19 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain]: Motion Approved.

Cantor Rockman: Jeffrey Scott Jewelers is constantly fixing our silver torah decorations. Can we do something for him? Mitch will talk to Hadas to do a plaque or letter as appropriate.

Rabbi Eligberg: Each Board member will be getting blue and white ribbons for the “You Are Not Alone” campaign. Please show your solidarity with Israel by tying a bow around a tree or pole to show we are tied to the land of Israel. Please take pictures and we will send them to Israel, as well as post them on the website. Please encourage friends to do the same.

Rabbi Eligberg: Elections to Zionist Congress are coming up. We need to make sure that we have maximum number of people on Mercaz – the number of people elected directly affects the number of Conservative institutions that are helped in Israel. Look to Hakol for more info.

Rabbi Eligberg: There will be a major series of rallies on September 23rd at noon – in NYC, LA and other major Jewish communities throughout North America. We will try to have a significant presence to show our support.

Jerry: the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs is sending a mission to Israel. Please see Jerry Edley for more info.

Good and Welfare [Rabbi]

- Aside from K. Zimmerman: he has been speaking with Dinah & Gary Harmon and they have expressed numerous times how comforting the Rabbi and the Cantor have been, and they are very grateful.
- Condolences to the families of Joy Indik, Sue Levine, and Jack Green.
- Speedy Recovery to Stan Levine, Suse Rosenstock , Deb Spigner, Adam Zweig and Norm Berings.
- Mazel Tov to the Sookermans on the purchase of a new home and to the Weisenbergs on their daughter Pam’s wedding.

Confirmation of next Meeting

Next meeting is moved Monday, September 10th, 2001.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. [Moved by J. Edley, second by J. Marcou] Motion Approved.
Adjourned 10:45.