

**Kehillat Beth Israel**

**Board of Directors  
March 16, 2020  
Teleconference  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Ilana Albert-Novick  
Yossi Bokhaut  
Mordecai Brodt  
Norm Ferkin

David Lyman  
Joel Sachs  
Judah Silverman  
Harvey Slack

Donna Strauss  
Eric Weiner  
Helen Zipes

**Secretary:**

Jay Amdur

**Clergy Present:**

Cantor Jason Green  
Rabbi Eytan Kenter  
Rabbi Deborah Zuker

**Staff Present:**

Rena Garshowitz

**Regrets:**

Jodi Gitter  
Harland Tanner

**1.0 PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

**1.1 Call to Order and Welcome**

**Judah Silverman**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

**1.2 D'var Torah**

**Rabbi Eytan Kenter**

[Please note that due to the interactive nature of this evening's Board meeting, the information outlined below is not in chronological order but has been grouped thematically to better reflect the various discussions that occurred.]

## **2.0 HOW IS EVERYONE DOING?**

- Judah opened the conversation by asking the Board members how they were all doing under these exceptional circumstances.
- The general consensus was that Board members are coping as best as they can under the circumstances.
- Judah said that he had heard from three individuals over the past few days, one of whom was not even a congregant but had received our electronic correspondence. All of the feedback Judah has received is very positive and very supportive of KBI's decision to suspend building operations for the time being.

## **3.0 OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

- Rena provide the following updates:
  - There had been a staff meeting (using the Zoom multimedia platform) earlier this morning. The staff got to know how to use the new platform and were able to discuss the upcoming action plan.
  - The building is essentially closed. There will be intermittent office staffing (a few hours a day) for the foreseeable future but no services or events will be held.
  - We will be advising congregants through an eblast that the office will have partial hours so that people can come in and collect tallit and/or tefillin.
  - Office staff have all been assigned projects that they will do from home.
  - Custodial staff will be in the building and cleaning will be done / maintained.
  - There are no simchas scheduled until early May.
- Judah then provided some context and background on “how we got to where we are today” since late last week and how the decision-making to shut the building before Shabbat occurred.
- Rabbi Kenter then provided the following additional information:
  - The language that we are using is that the “shul” is never closed. The building may be closed, the office may be closed, but the shul is never closed.
  - The Rabbi and clergy continue to provide (remote) pastoral care.
  - Programmatically and educationally the idea is to offer as much as we were planning to offer but to do so virtually. In fact, we are hoping to do even more virtual programming in the coming weeks.
  - Adjustments are already being planned for programming that is scheduled for the coming months. The upcoming Yossi Klein Halevi weekend, for example, has been cancelled.
  - We will be looking at things in two-week blocks.
- Donna then provided an overview of the current situation with the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank:
  - A decision has been made to suspend normal procedures and not distribute food products for the time being.
  - Instead, we will (only) be distributing gift cards in a drive-by manner so as to minimize the risk of contact.
  - This will create a larger financial draw in the short term on the OKFB fund but there are plans to go to the community for extra fundraising.

- The Federation has set up “Jewish Ottawa Helps” and Dahlia – OKFB Manager – will be seeking financial assistance from the community through that platform.
- Additionally, the OKFB Committee volunteers are also planning to elicit donations from various sources over the coming weeks.

#### **4.0 HOW CAN WE HELP**

- Rabbi Kenter outlined the following ways that the shul, the Clergy and the Board will and could assist over the coming weeks:
  - The clergy will divide up the list of all congregants over 70 years of age and they will be contacted to ensure that they are faring well at this time.
  - While that will address a large portion of the membership, it is hoped that the Board will help to contact the remainder of the membership. Rabbi Kenter will create a script and the office will be reaching out to Board members who are able to provide their time to help with this endeavour.
  - In the immediate term, we will be providing a list of congregations offering virtual services. As well, for the next few days, our clergy we will be offering online Facebook services as often as possible.
  - Shiva is going to be addressed on a case by case basis.

#### **5.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

- A very extensive email will be going out to the congregation tomorrow detailing what is happening and what is planned for the foreseeable future.
- The Board meeting scheduled for this coming Thursday is cancelled but Judah is asking all Board members to hold the time slot in case the Board needs to reconvene to address the current situation before Shabbat.

#### **6.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM**

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 6:30pm