

**Kehillat Beth Israel
Board of Directors
May 27, 2021
Zoom Meeting
Minutes**

Present:

Ilana Albert-Novick
Jay Amdur
Yossi Bokhaut
Mordecai Brodt

Norm Ferkin
David Lyman
Victor Rabinovitch
Jeremy Rudin
Judah Silverman

Donna Strauss
Harland Tanner
Eric Weiner
Madelaine Werier
Helen Zipes

Secretary:

Jodi Gitter

Clergy Present:

Rabbi Eytan Kenter
Rabbi Deborah Zuker
Cantor Jason Green

Staff Present:

Elisheva Brantz

Regrets:

None

1.0 PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1 Call to Order and Welcome

Judah Silverman

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

1.2 Call for Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Judah Silverman

None of the members present declared a conflict of interest.

1.3 D'var Torah

Rabbi Eytan Kenter

1.4 Moment of Silence to Commemorate Those Congregants Who Have Passed Away Since the Last Board Meeting **Judah Silverman /**

Blanche (Bea) Aronson
Anne Brozovsky

1.5 Approval of the Agenda of May 27, 2021 **Judah Silverman**

A motion was made by Madelaine Werier and seconded by Jeremy Rudin to approve the agenda.

All were in favour. The motion was carried.

1.6 Approval of the Minutes of the Board of Directors held on April 29, 2021 **Judah Silverman**

A motion was made by Jodi Gitter and seconded by Jay Amdur to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors for the meeting held on April 29, 2021.

All were in favour. The motion was carried.

1.7 Business Arising from Previous Minutes **Judah Silverman**

None

2.0 REPORTING OPTIONS WITH DISCUSSION BUT WITHOUT VOTE

2.1 Inclusion Committee Update **Madelaine Werier**

- Madelaine met with Rabbi Zuker to discuss next steps for this new committee.
- Five individuals of differing backgrounds and perspectives have been recruited.
- Judah asked how the Board could help; Maddy replied that we need to look at everything KBI does and stands for, through a lens of Universal Design (UD).
- Madelaine committed to preparing a summary of what UD is for the Board to better understand its key concepts.

2.2 Israel chatter **Judah Silverman**

- Judah discussed two emails that were recently sent out; one by Tova Lynch to various Board and community members, and another by George Abonyi and Fred Litwin, which was addressed to Rabbi Kenter, Judah and the Board.
- Mr. Abonyi and Mr. Litwin's email echoed Ms Lynch's in that KBI should have a definitive and clear policy advocating strongly for the State of Israel's right to defend itself against the terrorist organization, Hamas.

- Mr. Abonyi and Mr. Litwin also called upon KBI to use its considerable “voice” to call attention to, and condemn, the anti-Semitic trends in our society and especially its new increasingly ugly face.
- The three main issues that the emails would like KBI to address, include:
 - The taking of a more public stance against the two aforementioned points
 - A fulsome debate regarding the Black Lives Matter movement and an examination of some of its anti-Semitic positions and actions
 - The examination of how decisions are made as a congregation and that there should be a process and a forum to discuss and debate issues of great concern to the wider KBI community
- Rabbi Kenter explained what KBI did do:
 - Support for Israel, from the pulpit, on April 23, the day after Hamas launched its first round of rockets
 - A special prayer service for Israel and Jerusalem, which included special psalms
 - On Sunday, April 25th, Rabbi Kenter led a discussion for interested congregants, and residents of Ashkelon, who now reside in Ottawa, were invited to provide their first-person perspectives
 - KBI signed on to the letter from the Simon Weisenthal Centre, CIJA’s letter, and Federation in Toronto’s letter, all which condemn the actions of Hamas
 - When the ceasefire was announced, prayers were made and liturgy was recited
 - KBI continues to support the State of Israel through various social media outlets
- Extensive discussion ensued about the two emails, their tones and their content.
- Jeremy stated that regardless of tone, it is healthy to hear and know what the undercurrents are in our kehillah.
- David questioned whether or not we should, like in the past, be raising the Israeli flag.
- Judah spoke about having met with a group of presidents of Conservative synagogues from across Ontario to discuss just how synagogues should proceed in terms of how they ought to show support for the State of Israel. Synagogues are not the political advocacy arms of our communities. How can we best link our members to those specific agencies?
- Judah shared his draft response to the two aforementioned emails and invited comments and suggestions.

2.3 Survey Update

Rabbi Kenter

- Rabbi Kenter reviewed the most up-to-date results from the KBI congregational survey.

2.4 Other Business raised By Any Director

- None

3.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Executive Director's Written Statement Respecting the Status of Staff Salaries and Remittances to Government

Elisheva Brantz

- Elisheva presented the statement for employee wages to the Board.

3.2 Monthly Financial Update – April 2021

Jay Amdur

- We are tracking as expected.
- Building costs remain 15% less than budgeted.
- Building occupancy costs continue to also be low.
- Programming costs are on-budget.
- There has been an increase in membership revenue due to several factors, including: members who passed away and whose families needed to renew the memberships in order to obtain burial rights; new members who have started or completed their conversion process; and a number of families whose children are becoming B'nei Mitzvah.

3.3 Budget 2021-22

Yossi Bokhaut

- Yossi presented the draft budget for fiscal year 2021-22. This was based on all of the input provided from committee chairs, clergy, and office staff.
- Yossi explained that the Finance and Audit Committee has budgeted for the same dues income as last year which, overall, is a very conservative budget.
- Regarding the CBSO Legacy Fund: Throughout next fiscal year, there will be opportunities to request funds to offset various programming costs.
- Madelaine asked whether or not security costs have been built into the budget for when we return to KBI in-person. She inquired about PPE costs as well.
- Yossi replied that sanitizer and wipes have been included in the budget, along with any PPE required for KBI staff.
- With the anticipated increase in foot traffic, we anticipate an increase in maintenance costs and repairs over last year, but likely not as much as we expensed prior to the pandemic.
- Overall, utility costs (heating, cooling, water, etc.) are expected to increase with the return to on-site activities.
- Additionally, the budget includes an increase in programming costs as a result of greater in-person activities.
- Judah asked for a general Board approval for a "No dues increase" position, as stipulated in the draft budget. The Board agreed with this approach.
- David suggested that we might ask for a \$36.00 membership fee for 18 year olds who are still living at home and whose family's are members.

4.0 REPORTING OPTIONS WITH DISCUSSION AND VOTE

4.1 Any other business raised by any Director requiring Board decision or authority

- None

5.0 REPORTING OPTIONS WITH DISCUSSION BUT WITHOUT VOTE

5.1 Update on the Committee on Committees' review

Jeremy Rudin

- The Review Committee continued its work and a main focus moving forward will be how to improve the interaction between the committees and the Board.

5.2 Other business raised by any Director

- Victor spoke about the community's concern regarding the spike in anti-Semitic messaging on social media and its target at kids in schools across the city.
- The Federation will communicate with Rabbis and senior members at the various school boards about the unprecedented targeting of Jewish students.

6.0 IN CAMERA

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 PM.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22 at 7:00 PM.