

Minutes of the Kol Shalom Congregational Meeting

June 17, 2021

The President called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
We have a quorum, with 34 Zoom screens.

There were no corrections to the minutes from the Jan. 10th congregational meeting. David Krimins moved to approve the minutes as disseminated, seconded by David Sheinhorn. Motion passed.

Officer's Reports

President: We're doing fantastically well given the challenges of the pandemic. Howard has attended several United Synagogue small congregation meetings and reported that we are far ahead of other synagogues in adapting. Some synagogues are not yet open for services, while we're approaching 1 year of hybrid Shabbat morning services, with in-person attendance of approximately 15 people plus Zoom participants. We hold 2 minyanim via Zoom on Monday evenings and Thursday mornings. Our 3 adult education classes are being held by Zoom, thanks to Rabbis Wohl and Pohl and Dawn Schulman for her Zentangle class. Kudos to our Education Director, Allison Charapp—TOL Preschool has been in-person the entire year, and DRRS has operated in a hybrid format the entire year.

A special thank you to our administrative assistant, Mary Fortin, who does everything for us and is there whenever we need her, day and night.

VP: Ira Snyder is not present; there is no report.

Treasurer: We are at the end of an interesting fiscal year. We started the year anticipating an enormous deficit of \$145,450.00, but instead ended with a surplus of \$72,793.00. This happy circumstance was due to taking in more than expected and spending less than budgeted. On the Income side, we got a \$31,000.00 boost in HH Appeal donations, and a \$12,000.00 increase in General donations. Additionally, the Small Business Association loan of \$71,839.00 under the COVID Payroll Protection Program was forgiven. On the Expense side we were able to spend \$104,413.00 less than anticipated. The biggest saving was in payroll, where we spent \$55,000.00 less than budgeted. The rest of the savings was spread across the different categories.

In creating the budget for the coming fiscal year, Elie used the previous year's data to predict the coming year. He based calculations on 130 member units in these categories:

- 6 associate members
- 21 school families
- 24 regular families
- 79 seniors

For DRRS and TOL Preschool, he used data furnished by Allison's predictions. Other income and expenses were estimated based on the current year, adjusted as needed. Total anticipated income is \$487,350.00. Total anticipated expenses are \$559,400.00, for an expected deficit of \$72,050.00.

Elie noted that we have received a second Payroll Protection Loan of \$45,705.00. He shows that number as a Liability on our Balance Sheet, in the event that the loan is not forgiven and we have to pay it back. If the loan is forgiven, our deficit will be reduced by that amount.

In response to a question, Elie explained that salaries were lower because of reduced preschool staffing due to the pandemic.

Kate Penn thanked Elie for the enormous amount of work he did to obtain both the PPP loan and the forgiveness of that loan.

Ben Weiner moved to approve the 2021-2022 budget; David Sheinhorn seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Rabbi: The pandemic has colored everything over the past 15-16 months. Zoom technology has influenced our synagogue, as it has synagogues and churches across the country. The drawbacks of relying so heavily on Zoom are loss of intimacy, and it's harder to maintain focus and spirituality at home. But the advantages are that we've been able to have participation from people across the country, including former members. People who could not otherwise attend Shabbat can join us. It has increased attendance, and has made reaching a minyan easier. Some rabbis have worried about online attendance when people can stream services from other synagogues, but our congregation enjoys our own services and each other. We had 30 people in-person on Memorial Day weekend and 23-24 people online. It's wonderful to have so many people join our services and activities. Thanks to Howard for inviting people every week the past year to attend in person. Thanks to Phil and Ari for their Zoom work. Ari has been a tremendous help working with our b'nai mitzvah families, making sure everything is running smoothly. However, it's not fair for him to do it all. Adults and teens who are comfortable with technology, please volunteer to lighten the load by coming once a month, or when Ari can't be there. We will train you. Email Ari or Rabbi if you or someone you know might be interested in volunteering. Thanks to the religious committee for their hard work, flexibility and dedication this past year as we've navigated through this pandemic: Ben (committee chair), Howard, Sharon, Elie and Helaine.

Zoom attendance at adult education classes is great. We are proud to have 130 member families. We have activities every day of the week. Allison is doing an amazing job with the schools. The congregation's decision to institute a preschool is one of the most important for this congregation—it has brought life and attracted Jewish families. It has a great reputation in the community. For DRRS, it's been a

difficult year—online learning is a challenge. But Allison developed an interesting curriculum; the teachers are prepared and enthusiastic; and our families are happy.

Thank you to all our committees. Cindy Weiner and Chris Erlewine do a great job with the Chesed committee, they help a lot of our congregants, taking them to appointments, services, etc. Thanks to Hannette for keeping us updated on Good & Welfare news. Gary Weinfeld has re-invigorated the Men's Club. Thank you to Steve and Janet Mirsky for arranging movie nights once a month and bringing people together. We have a new finance committee that we'll hear from, consisting of Susan Zevin, Kate Penn, Gary Weinfeld and Elie Pallia. Thanks to Gloria Markowitz, Edith Magruder, and the other leaders of Women's League. There has been a lot of discussion about when and how to reinstitute kiddush, although we are not ready yet. Howard added that the Chazak committee, headed by Helen Goren and Hannah Kaufman, is trying to get back to some of the activities that our seniors have enjoyed.

One area that the pandemic has hindered us is community involvement. Our activities with Gigi's Playhouse and Arundel House of Hope's Winter Relief had to stop. We donated a holiday dinner to Chrysalis House but were not able to engage with the residents there. Hopefully as the pandemic eases we can reignite that momentum, because our synagogue needs to be part of the local Annapolis community.

Good & Welfare: Hannette Goldberg had nothing new to report. She requested the names of any children or grandchildren who graduated this year, for inclusion in the July Good & Welfare report in the Shofar.

House: Phil Itzkowitz reported that the house is still standing. Nothing of significance has transpired, which is good news.

Oneg/Kiddush fund: Howard read a statement from Jamie Adkins, our oneg/kiddush coordinator. Jamie thanked everyone who continued their generous donations to the oneg/kiddush fund even though we haven't been able to have oneg and kiddush during the pandemic. We plan to get back to serving food and enjoying one another's company, but a date has not yet been determined. In the meantime, WL continues to send half of the funds collected to the Anne Arundel County Food Bank and the Anne Arundel Community College student food bank. The remainder is being held for the happy occasion of restocking the kitchen. Jamie will be emailing contributors in the past year to ask if they want to recognize the same occasions with donations again this year.

Howard thanked Jamie for managing the oneg/kiddush fund.

Men's Club: Gary Weinfeld reported that he, Ari and Stewart have formed a committee to plan new events and come up with new ideas. The committee is open to anyone interested in joining.

We have 2 upcoming events: 1) Local radio/TV sports personality Andy Pollin will speak, hopefully in person and via Zoom. We have a few possible dates for the fall, before or after Sunday school. Andy is in the DC Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, and hosts a show on ESPN. He is very knowledgeable about all our local sports teams. 2) The rabbi and Gary have organized a casual get-together of the Men's Club on June 24 at 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join us in the sukkah for beer and talking. We hope to revive the tour of Monument City Brewing Company as the pandemic allows. We look forward to resuming our annual Super Bowl event in February.

WL: Gloria Markowitz reported that WL continues to get members, which is wonderful, and we have lots of support from the women. We still have offices to fill, please contact Gloria if interested.

Youth Activities: Kate Penn reported that we modified our programs to stay engaged with teens during the pandemic. Thanks to Women's League, we were able to bring on a 2nd advisor, so our advisors are now Ariel Clarke for USY (high school) and Jacob Copley for Kadima (middle school). We've offered a variety of activities the past year, both in-person and online, and have had consistent, if somewhat diminished, participation from the kids. We hope to retain a base of kids to resume full activities when the pandemic eases. Contact Kate with any ideas, or if you know any teens who want to be involved.

Environmental Landscaping: Howard thanked Bobbie Kestenbaum for her very hard work helping us get a grant through the Anne Arundel County Watershed Steward's Academy. There have been all sorts of plantings and landscaping in the front and back of the building, supervised by Bobbie and WSA. Bobbie added that 3 of our neighbors behind us wrote letters of support for that grant. We are still waiting to hear if we have received the 2nd grant to fix the flow of water from our property across and along Hidden Meadow Lane and into our neighbor's yards and driveways. The grant comes from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the county restoration fund.

Security: Howard noted that anti-Semitism is on the rise. He thanked Kate Penn and Amy Bleich for their work applying for a state grant to enhance our building's security. The grant has been submitted and we hope to hear shortly.

TOL Preschool: Allison reported that we opened the school year with 14 students and 3 staff, and closed the year with 26 students and 5 staff. We even made a small profit. Our budget numbers are skewed this year because the last tuition installment was in June, so it won't show on the budget report until the next fiscal year.

We got a grant from a private family that enabled us to clean up the outdoor area to the left and back of the property; add landscape elements to help slow the flow of water down the hill; improve the nature trail; and add 2 outdoor classrooms. Although this was done through the preschool, it benefits DRSS as well. We are

prepping for an additional playspace area by the sheds. We have 35 applications turned in for next year—we've never come close to that number before! Nine of them are Jewish. Several Jewish families came to look at the nature school and were pleased that we offered Jewish tradition as our base, which is just what we planned for.

Our estimated income with all these new contracts is \$192,000. That's a conservative figure because Allison expects a few more contracts to come in; she hopes to break \$200K by September. There will be increased operating costs with that number of students; staffing is generally 80% of a school's budget. The school is licensed for a maximum of 39 children per day. Allison caps it at 30 per day because that's what we can handle comfortably, and it allows us to add families over the year, and allows parents to add days. But we may start with more than 30 per day this year. Allison always reserves spots for Jewish families through the synagogue so we can take care of our congregants.

DRRS: We are glad that the hybrid system is over, and that all our families made it through. We greatly appreciate how kind, generous and well-receiving our students and families were. We could not have done it without Rabbi Josh's insight and humor, and without the Education Committee standing behind us, letting us know we were on the right track, and helping solve some problems that came up over the year. And thank you to the faculty—everyone stepped up this year and bent over backwards.

All of our teachers and families are returning. We have 2 new students (siblings) starting and we have 3 families looking at the religious school.

We ended the school year with a mitzvah project. Approximately 60 people, both kids and adults, participated in cleaning up, weeding, edging, blowing leaves, planting grass, etc. It was a lovely way to bring people together to work on our home. We hope to make this a new tradition.

Finally, we need help this year with a new project: we want to make a connection with our alumni as far back as they go in the history of Kol Ami, Nevey Shalom and Kol Shalom. We want to keep them in our thoughts, and to connect them with our current students. Jacek and Elie Charapp are going to make the initial donation to the DRRS Alumni Mitzvah Fund, together committing \$360 a year for the next 5 years. We are asking every other alum to make a yearly donation of \$18. Please send Allison names or addresses of family members who are alumni. The fund will be used to help families in need and to do projects. It will show our kids that they are part of our living traditions.

Howard thanked Allison for making our schools so successful, and for the fantastic job she is doing for Kol Shalom.

Religious: Ben thanked the committee and Rabbi Wohl for their work. Ben presented the following plan to the Board, and it was approved, but he cautioned that everything could change as COVID evolves and local authorities change guidelines. We plan to continue Friday evening services only on Zoom through the summer, maybe resuming live services later in the summer. Starting this Saturday, Shabbat morning in-person attendance will no longer be on rotation—anyone can come. For those who are not vaccinated, masks will be required for ages 3 and up. Masks are optional for those who are fully vaccinated. Saturday services will still continue on Zoom as well. We have no recommendation at this time on when to resume oneg/kiddush.

We decided to limit HH in-person attendance to 1/3 of our membership. Our normal seating capacity is about 300 people, so we will cap attendance at 120 people (including those who are running the service). There will be 4 in-person services (and on Zoom): Kol Nidre night, Yom Kippur day, and the first 2 days of Rosh Hashanah. We can park about 60 cars on site so we may not need shuttle service. We will have police patrol. There will be no charge again this year for HH tickets because we are not fully open. We would like people to sign up electronically a few weeks before the HH for which service they would like to attend.. Since seating is limited, don't sign up for all 4 services—leave space for others to attend. For those who can't sign up electronically, call the office. The priority for seating will be our members; if we have space after the initial sign-up period, members can add guests and we can invite nonmembers like military personnel. Look for sign-up information in August.

The content of services is still being determined. We will continue Saturday Shabbat Torah readings as they are now. We will discuss at a later date whether to add more aliyahs, etc. Rabbi Wohl added that we are looking at resuming more traditional Shabbat services in mid-August, if the pandemic permits. Erev Rosh Hashanah service will not have a sign up because we've never had more than 120 people attend. He asked that congregants choose between 1st and 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah, and between Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur day. He reiterated that services will still be streamed on Zoom. The Board will review this plan again at our August meeting to determine whether the cap at 120 people is still appropriate as pandemic circumstances shift; that number is not final. It was based in part on the shuttle, which costs the synagogue \$3,000—at 120 in-person attendees, we don't need the shuttle. If we decide to raise the cap, we may need the shuttle.

Steve Mirsky pointed out that since the High Holidays fall on weekdays, there will be shofar blowing at all the services.
Tashlich with DRRS is open to all.

Finance Committee: Kate Penn reported on the origins of this newly formed committee. At a pre-pandemic congregational meeting, we had talked about possibly increasing membership fees, which have not been raised in a very long time. The Board has continued to discuss this regularly but it has not been brought

up again to the congregation. The Board has not wanted to consider raising dues during the pandemic. The Rabbi had recommended a book about unique ways synagogues of different sizes across the country raise funds besides through membership fees. The Board discussed looking at how our considerable investment holdings are working for us. To that end, Gary Weinfeld, Susan Zevin, and Kate Penn looked at our investment strategies and looked at bringing in a professional adviser to work with us to manage our portfolio. Our investments actually have been doing very well, but they are not being managed so we believe they could be doing better. We have met with advisers from 3 different investment houses. They have provided proposals which we are currently reviewing. We will soon bring a proposal recommendation to the Board. We've been meeting a couple times a week for the past month. We have 3 very different and very good possibilities based on strategy, experience, and general outlook. That's our current status; we look forward to providing more information in the future.

Chazak: Hannah Kaufman thanked everyone for their hard work. We are going to form a committee to work on putting together a year's plan for our programs. One idea we had for a fun program was An Evening in Chelm, about the wise men and women of Chelm. If you enjoy acting, let Hannah know, we have a part for you!

Unfinished Business: Janice reported no unfinished business.

New Business:

Elections: Phil Itzkowitz reminded us that every June we elect half of our Board. We asked in the Shofar for volunteers to run for election to replace outgoing Board members Helaine Betnun and Maxine Silber (who moved out of state). We thank Helaine and Maxine for their service. Scott Intner and Ari Tannenbaum stepped forward and are on the ballot. In addition, up for re-election are Howard Salob (President), Elie Pallia (Treasurer), Bill Katcef, David Sheinhorn, Ben Weiner, and Susan Zevin. There were no new nominations from the floor. Phil requested that we vote by acclamation since we have just enough people running to fill the Board. The ballot was approved by acclamation, with David Friedman abstaining in absentia as always. Welcome new Board members, Scott Intner and Ari Tannenbaum!

Hello to Seymour Alloy, joining us from Ellicott City!

Steve Mirsky moved to adjourn, Allison seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.