

Congregational Meeting Minutes
Congregation Kol Shalom
January 10, 2021

The President called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

We have a quorum.

No corrections to the minutes from the last congregational meeting.

Fred Sussman moved, Tylar Hecht seconded, to accept the minutes as disseminated.

Motion passed with David Friedman abstaining as always, but this time not in absentia.

Officers Reports

President: We are doing very, very well as a congregation in these challenging times. For Saturday morning services, we average about 15 people in the synagogue (socially distanced and masked) and about 30 screens on Zoom—a very good showing. Our Friday evening services and all classes are by Zoom. The religious school is operating in a hybrid fashion, with some students in the building and some on Zoom. The preschool is operating in person in the building with one class. One of these days we'll be able to be fully back in our building; everyone needs to get vaccinated!

Treasurer: The first half of this fiscal year has been a little bit challenging. We have lost some members. At this time we have 127 member units, consisting of:

6 associate members

21 school families

22 regular families

78 seniors

The preschool has been busy but due to uncertainty, we operate on a month-to-month basis. The congregation has been very generous—our High Holiday Appeal brought in double what we expected. So far, we have collected more than half of our budgeted income and spent half of what we anticipated for the year after 6 months. Income is \$299,765.00, Expenses are \$269,949.00, for a modest positive of \$29,816.00. The lean months are ahead. Even if we collect all the income budgeted, Elie anticipates a deficit of more than \$140,000.00.

We have received \$71,839.00 from the Paycheck Protection Program loan. Elie is not comfortable reporting this as income until we know whether the loan will be forgiven. So currently it shows as a liability on our balance sheet. Elie has withdrawn \$130,000.00 from our savings account to cover our deficit.

In response to questions, Elie reported that the PPP funds were spent on salaries and utilities, so it should be forgiven, but the application for loan forgiveness has to

be filed through our bank, Wells Fargo, which has not yet posted the link for that. Tylar Hecht noted that most businesses are handling the PPP loan the way Elie is, until the bank puts the papers through to the government, which is anticipated to happen in the first 3 months of this year. Allison Charapp urged Elie to apply for the next cycle of PPP. Elie is not sure that we would be eligible because we do have income, but Allison pointed out that our income is greatly reduced because of COVID restrictions on preschool attendance, and a small forgivable loan is better than nothing. Elie will look into it.

Addendum to the Treasurer's report from Howard: We redeemed 100% of all the High Holiday pledges made.

Committee Reports

Good & Welfare: Condolences to Doug Mann and his family on the loss of his father; and to Ira Rifkin and Ruth Berlin on the loss of their son, Brady Rifkin. A founding member of Kol Ami and a member of Kol Shalom, Marty Litsky, passed away Thursday evening. Condolences to the Litsky family. Jim Gottesman, a former member of Nevey Shalom and Kol Shalom, passed away a few days ago. Condolences to the Gottesman family.

HH Advertising: Nothing to report.

Rabbi: Thanks everyone for joining us. The last 10 months has been a difficult time for our country and our shul. We're not able to come together in person as a community. Thank you to Howard for his leadership over this time. We are trying to make the best of it. It was a strange HH season. Thanks to Les Pizarz and Ari Tannenbaum for doing a wonderful job streaming our services. TBS took a different approach, pre-recording and splicing things in. There are benefits to that kind of production, but it's not our ethos at Kol Shalom. If we have to do something similar again for the next HH season, we have more experience now and can reflect how to make it better. Rabbi Wohl received feedback from congregants that while it wasn't the same, it wasn't so bad—there were advantages for some people watching from home.

For a small congregation, it is impressive that we have something going on almost every day of the week. A nice core of at least 12 people attend our adult ed classes, whereas many synagogues struggle with adult ed. We have a Monday evening minyan; Tuesday morning Rabbi Pohl leads a scholarly siddur class; Wednesday is the Zentangle class with Dawn Schulman; Thursday we have a new morning minyan with people who weren't previously part of our community now regularly attending.

Last Sat. morning we had 34 screens and 16-17 people in the building. That's a tremendous turnout—many synagogues our size are struggling to get a minyan on Saturdays. We have things going on every day of the week. Our leadership has been amazing.

Judy Salob has organized a Nefesh Mountain concert, a wonderful band, for a Purim program on Feb. 27. Chesed and Chazak are meeting next week, WL and Men's Club each have an event coming up, USY is doing amazing stuff.

Thank you to Steve Mirsky for starting a new monthly movie night which was well-attended.

Bobbie Kestenbaum has been working with the Watershed Stewards Academy and gotten a number of grants which have allowed us to do work on the back of the property.

In 2 weeks, Greg King from Levinson Funeral Home, which now has an Annapolis office, will do a lunch and learn on end-of-life issues especially during COVID.

Allison has been amazing during the most difficult year to start as a new DRRS director. She has re-done the curriculum and the Hanukkah program was wonderful. She has been able to blend in-person and online instruction and make it both educational and interesting, which is very tough to do; many educators are struggling. In talking with other Conservative synagogues, 30-40% have lost their Hebrew schools because families don't want to pay for online learning. We've stayed relatively stable, largely due to Allison.

In terms of Social Action, Winter Relief was our main action, and we've put a lot into it. This year we couldn't do it due to COVID. Instead, Janice Krasnow, Susan Zevin, Marian Figlio and especially Estee Summers helped put together a Christmas dinner for Chrysalis House which helps women in recovery. Loren Weisman joined us a few weeks ago to tell us about Chrysalis House. We had an amazing response from the congregation—the donations that poured in enabled us not only to sponsor the dinner but to give a monetary donation to Chrysalis House as well as to Arundel House of Hope, which helps the homeless; and the local food bank. Thank you to the congregation for all you do. Please email or call Rabbi Wohl if you have any ideas for other social action programs we can do.

As we get vaccinated, will be interesting to see how we transition back to normal, what aspects of Zoom and streaming we might want to retain.

While there are many things we could be negative about these days, Rabbi Wohl chooses to celebrate the participation of our members and lay leaders in this difficult times.

House: Phil is delighted to report that the house is still standing. We had some dead or dying trees taken down, including one that was right in front of shul entrance.

Environmental Landscaping: Bobbie Kestenbaum reported that the Watershed Stewards Academy funded and hired a contractor for the project on our slope in back to direct stormwater into a rain garden. At least 25 KS members showed up on planting day on Nov. 8 to help. Many thanks to Mike Penn, who rented an auger to dig holes for 80 shrubs. They seem to be surviving! Flags are in the ground for placement of 20 free trees from WSA. The Stewards don't have time and manpower to apply for a grant to remediate the "ravine" that runs down the side of Hidden Meadow Lane, but they're guiding Bobbie in applying for a grant from the Anne Arundel Watershed Restoration program and the Chesapeake Bay Trust to create a step pool to slow the water and make another rain garden at the bottom. We won't

know if we get that until after March. A site visit is required before Feb. 16, Howard agreed to be there to represent the owner of our property.

Steve Mirsky led an effort to install a rain garden at a previous synagogue and offered his assistance.

GAIN: Helaine had no report.

Religious: Ben reiterated that our Zoom attendance is great, especially since one screen can be for multiple people in a household, and we should congratulate ourselves.

Men's Club: Gary Weinfeld reported that the Super Bowl party had to be cancelled. In lieu of that, we will host KS's first ever bourbon tasting on Thurs. Feb. 11. A notice will be in the Shofar this week. TBS members Tom Jones and his wife are bourbon stewards who will discuss the history of bourbon, Jews and bourbon, and answer questions. We will select 3-4 bourbons to sample which can be picked up at the synagogue office the week before. We already have 15-20 people signed up, email Gary if you're interested.

Howard, Rabbi Wohl and Gary are working on a winter/spring event and a fall event.

Women's League: Carol Ann reported that on Jan 19, we will have an informal chat with author Ellyn Bache, about her experiences as a writer, mother, and grandmother. A flyer will go out this week. One of her books was optioned by Steven Spielberg and made into a movie starring Susan Sarandon.

Jamie Adkins thanked everyone for their generosity in continuing to donate to the oneg/kiddush fund and celebrating or memorializing family members and members of our community in this way. Since we are not able to have oneg or kiddush at this time, Women's League is using the funds to make donations to local food banks and shelters. Linda Rosenberg Julie Applebaum and Gloria Markowitz have been working on membership drive, we've done well. We welcome your membership dues, which are still \$36. The dues also help support the regional and national Women's League.

TOL Preschool: Allison Charapp reported that TOL is ready to open a 2nd classroom, we hired a new teacher. We've been looking at current trends in schools around us, talking to other schools, and trying to have conversations with the Office of Child Care but they have not been helpful. We've discovered that many preschools have closed, and parents are concerned about lack of socialization prior to kindergarten in the fall, so we're looking at opening a kindergarten program. We will see where that goes. Allison will meet with some people at KS once she has all the information and we'll make the decision from there. A kindergarten class may

help us retain some of our current students, bringing us to full capacity, which we've never been.

Right now we have 16-17 families, a teacher, and an assistant. 6-7 kids are looking to start in the next few weeks, which would fill up our 2nd classroom pretty quickly, and the new teacher starting.

We are closing at 4:00, so our late day costs are down. Both income and expenses are down due to fewer students and fewer staff.

TOL was asked to participate in an outdoor learning task force in Baltimore with CJE (Center for Jewish Education). Allison will speak at a symposium about what TOL is doing and how other schools can get started. We want TOL and KS to be seen as a leader in this cutting edge area. Thanks to Julie Wohl for facilitating the invitation from CJE.

Allison is trying to figure out how to bring back Rosendorff challah. Rosendorff's is not taking single loaf orders anymore, at least through COVID, so we have to order by the case.

DRRS: We have a hybrid program. All the faculty come to the synagogue on Sundays, several students in each class attend in person, we have laptops or monitors in each classroom so the rest of the students join via Zoom. It's working well, we're getting nice feedback, our teachers have been amazing—patient, kind, and coping with the Zoom and wi-fi glitches.

In Wednesday classes, we are doing a series of 3-4 weeks of tutoring, then 3-4 weeks of programming. The kids seem to be responding well to the programs we're bringing. Allison will reach out to congregants for input on how to connect the kids with the rest of the synagogue and vice versa, to keep our congregation connected to our children.

Hanukkah program was great, we took branches from the oak tree that was taken down and made hanukkiah's. 14 of our 24 families were here, socially distant.

We are working with Rabbi Wohl on something special for the Megillah reading. Some religious school families began a tuition assistance fund, started with a very substantial donation. DRRS runs at a deficit, even when all tuition is paid. We are so grateful for the congregation's support, but it's really important that our families are helping to take care of each other as well.

In response to a question about TBS and KI, Allison reported that she thinks KI just has preschool open; TBS's religious school is entirely virtual, and their preschool closed for this year.

Howard thanked Allison for making both schools shine.

USY/Kadima: Jamie reported that they've had some outdoor events—a fire pit with smores; a hike; and ice skating next week. The events are well-attended, and our youth advisers Ariel Clark and Jacob Copley have good energy. The kids are excited

to be there and reluctant to leave. They've been doing an amazing job under the circumstances.

Rabbi Wohl reported that the youth groups bought slippers and bathroom for Chrysalis House. Howard thanked WL for funding the youth adviser salaries.

Unfinished Business: none

Announcements: Judy Salob is excited that on Feb. 27, we will have a Zoom concert by Nefesh Mountain, a Jewish couple that sings bluegrass and country songs mixed with Jewish and Hebrew traditions. The Salobs have heard them on several Zoom programs and they are wonderful, so mark your calendars! The program has been underwritten by a very generous congregant, whom we thank.

Howard welcomed someone we haven't seen in a long time—David Friedman, past-president of Nevey Shalom and the only past president that Howard speaks to every week. David hasn't been in the synagogue in a long time, and we have missed him, his jokes and his (in)famous Board meeting vote abstentions.

David thanked Howard and reported that he has enjoyed attending this very exciting meeting. In addition to some of the duties he performs as immediate past president, he noted that it's almost a shame for us to keep putting up with Howard all these years when we could have used him. Now at an advanced age, David says he will have to be satisfied with being immediate past president.

Motion to adjourn by Carol Ann Hecht, seconded by Elie Pallia. Motion passed with David F. abstaining. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Howard noted that we had the same number of screens as the June meeting, 58, and thanked all for participating.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Janice Krasnow.