

From: Temple B'nai Chaim <tbc@templebnaichaim.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 4:40 PM
Subject: TBC Call to Congregation Meeting

Temple B'nai Chaim Congregational Meeting
November 28, 2018
7:30 pm

Agenda

Coffee, dessert, conversation

Opening D'var, Rabbi Bearman

Approval of Minutes

- Vote to approve minutes from the May 2017 Congregational Meeting
- Vote to approve minutes from the November 2017 Congregational Meeting
- Vote to approve minutes from the February 2018 Congregational Meeting
- Vote to approve minutes from the May 2018 Congregational Meeting

Business Meeting

- President's Report, Cindy Baulsir
- Treasurer's Report, Debra Case
- Security Plan updates - Cindy Baulsir
- Committee Reports, Committee Chairs

Discussion

Adjourn

Congregation Meeting
Temple B'Nai Chaim
5.23.2017
7:50

Presiding Officer: Cindy Baulsir (President)
Secretary: Kimberly Yonkers

Present: see attached.

Meeting called to order.

Rabbi Bearman addressed the congregations

Motion to approve minutes (Mara, Gumnis) Yea unanimous

President's Report:

Cindy Baulsir provided a review on all of the activities from this past year.
Membership exceeded expectations this year and we have 179 families.

Treasurer's Report:

Brad Marcus presented budget.

Last year we ended the year with about \$70,000 cash on hand.

Current year budget deficit projection is \$23,000. Deficit is lower than originally expected because we exceeded membership projections but we had fewer higher level members. Our student number was higher than anticipated. We had savings in most areas except house because we had a number of building issues. We hope to close the budget deficit through fundraising.

In the upcoming year, we assume a flat number of families. Dues and fees are the same as last year. We are reducing expenses this year by asking departments to cut their costs by 10%. We allocated \$7500 for strategic planning. We are anticipating a \$8500 deficit. Motion to approve budget (Brad, Abraham). Yea unanimous

Strategic Plan:

Dina Gumnis provided report. Survey: Survey 35% overall response rate which is 50% of households. Distribution mirrored membership.

Assessment of TBC activities: 1) membership likes experiential learning and engagement. We like services with music and other activities; 2) congregants want to connect; 3) we want to be represented in our towns and invite others to participate in our activities; 4) we value life-long learning and education with a focus on Jewish identities; 5) we want to engage in social action.

Volunteering: TBC mixed about volunteering. We like to help with special events and activities, education, caring for community members in need. We do not support fund raising and capital campaign. Compared to other communities our fundraising is 7% whereas many other congregations it is 15-20%.

Strategies and Initiatives:

-support core values

-Priorities

- strengthen our Jewish Identity

- governance and operational review

- increase engagement starting with new families

- evaluate long-term stability

-Initiatives

- program/even based

- accountable person for each program

- open programs to broader community

- donation/sponsorship opportunities

-Next Steps

- evaluate current programs against core values

- identify and select 2-3 initiatives to start fall 2017

- recruit congregants to "own" special programs

- create culture of engagement: time and financial support

- review and revise by-laws

President Baulsir encouraged people to volunteer.

Motion to adjourn. (Gumins) second (Yonkers). So moved. Unanimous.
Adjourned at 8:58

Signed



Congregation Meeting
Temple B'Nai Chaim
11.16.2017, 7:50

Presiding Officer: Cindy Baulsir (President)
Secretary: Kimberly Yonkers

Present: see attached.

Opening D'var, Rabbi Bearman

Meeting called to order.

Point of order but the meeting was not posted with sufficient time before the meeting. Notice was sent out in less than 14 days before the meeting was sent. This would preclude voting during this meeting.

We cannot vote on the minutes. But there was concern that the minutes did not reflect what was discussed at the meeting.

President's Report: The school is strong. We currently have 107 students vs 129 last year. We have 17 madrachim. Social action committee continues to be active. Mens club sponsored a well-attended barbecue. They are planning a beer tasting and mens club discussion group. Membership is 171 families compared to 179 from last year. 5 new members joined this year and 13 resigned. Ritual committee held a successful and blessed HHD and we had our first Slichot service. We have many exciting events forthcoming. Ritual is seeking new members. TBC task force continues to work on security. House has been adeptly run. We ended the year with \$315 surplus.

Treasurer's Report (Brad Marcus): We had budgeted an \$89,000 deficit yet finished with a \$315 surplus. This was in part due to delaying a transfer from operating to capital. Income \$22,000 better than expected (dues and tuition). We had better than expected facility rentals, lower abatements. Lowered expenses (\$32,000) in many areas. Audit from last year is still underway. Last years end of year cash on hand was about \$70,000. It is too early to project this year. Currently we have ~\$150,000 on hand. There was a question about the naming of funds and procedures. There was a question (Moses Alexander) about who controls Michael Heft fund (Rabbi and Bonnie Heft). Moses Alexander pointed out that there are procedures for naming endowment funds. There are higher thresholds for naming than some other funds.

House Committee (Steve West Rosenthal): we have had some challenges with ground and water. We must report water testing to the state. Administratively we need to keep an eye on test results. The phone system went out at one point. There have been some alarms going off. The House committee is looking at all of the annual contracts (snow removal; grounds; housekeeping) to determine if the costs of services can be lowered. We have a new oven. There was a question a plan to modify islands on the grounds (Barbara Dobbin). Richard Bloom asked a question about low energy lighting. Steve mentioned that incentives for using LED lighting have ended and it is expensive to change them.

Communications (Stephen Davis): Continues Chai-lites, web site, social media, Rabbi sermons. Website is hosted by URJ and they are transitioning all websites to WordPress and this is an opportunity to move over to a mobile friendly, easier to use website. Communications calls out for more assistance.

Membership (Kiki Kahn): Membership is lagging behind what we would like. We have had a great deal of families who are interested but have not joined. In the past it seems people are delayed joining but it has now changed to families with younger children joining. We have inquiries throughout the year. Question from Iris Busch about why people are leaving. Answer: some members moved from the area and some left after their children underwent B'Nai Mitzvah. Cindy clarified that we do exit interviews with families to understand why they left. Some left as a result of issues with the Cantor (~5); some families moved (~2); some aged out; one reconnected with family who belong to another temple. Question from Richard Bloom re the 2's program. Brad clarified that it was run by an outside program and there were some liability issues. Moses: 2's is different from a regular school environment and it should be a parent and child program. The children are younger than family services. Moses Alexander had a question about pro-rated fees for people who join in the Spring. There is a plan like that and we can defer capital funds payment until the fall. Susan Farber asked about activities to attract new members. The committee would love expertise in this area. We do attract a lot of members for membership from family services. Valerie Robbins: Do we have board members at family services. Membership tries to be at those services. Russ: there are few new members at regular Friday night services. We also offer HHD tickets to families interested in joining.

Education committee (Lorien Saumier): The Rabbi leads a creative service in the school. This weekend is lego morning T'Filah. We have D'Var Torah classes. We have emissaries come in, usually during the week. They have unique interactions with the children. The school encourages children to come to family services such as 7th grade Shabbat. Many of the families bonded by attending these services. 5th and 6th grade class are going on a field trip to NYC synagogues. We are bringing in an environmental and recycling program. We participated with social action in Stop Hunger Now and making sandwiches, bringing in mitzvah activities. This weekend is a book fair. Consecrations is Dec 1st for newest learners. Moses Alexander notes that we have had special program such as Relax and Renewal weekends. He noted that the pick up line is long and few parents were remaining in the Temple. He feels that is a big programs. Lorien admitted that parent engagement is a challenge. The education committee is aware. Ed committee has talked about the Chai Mitzvah to also be a parent program.

Mens Club (Jeff Spector): Had a fun fall that started with barbecue for religious school children and parents. The next event was the Sukkah. We had a new Sukkot that went up easily (in contrast to the old Sukkah). Upcoming event will be an event at a local brewery. It is open to all congregants. Several members suggested that be used to invite new and potential new congregants. Also planned is a mens discussion group.

Security Task Force (Russ Tartel): People have stepped up to watch the door on Sundays. There are several go to people that help with this but we can use more help. We strengthened procedures. We are updating procedures and signage in the parking lot. We need to address issues about keeping the door open during meetings.

Sisterhood Report (Cindy): Oct membership dinner was successful. They are currently sponsored the Judaica shop.

Adult Education (Judson Scruton): Marvelous opening event for Scholars in Residence with Scholars from City Island and Williamstown. Mediation and contemplation is deep in historical Judaism. Chai Mitzvah program is in a holding pattern. A program on archeological discoveries in Israel.

Update on situation with Cantor Sobel from Cindy Baulsir. The Cantor is addressing family issues and we are in discussion with him about his continuing role. There have also been discussions with URJ, the Temple Board and the Executive Committee. There are still discussions between the Board and the Cantor. She invited discussions from the floor. Susan Kramer: please elaborate on 5 families who left the temple over Cantor situation. Cindy answered that some families left because we did not address questions satisfactorily about the Cantor but the board felt that the information was personal and did not feel they could provide more information. Some families did not feel comfortable praying with the Cantor. Barbara Dobbin voiced concerns that Cantor Sobel has been part of the community for a long time and that he has been charged and not found guilty. Susan Winters: the charges are public and they are not risky of injury to a child. She stated that Jon is a member of our family and she is uncomfortable with not supporting him. Cindy stated that everything has been done in consultation URJ and American College of Cantors. Gina ??wondered if the Board is making a decision and will tell the congregation what the decision is. Cindy explained that the Board is weighing the recommendations from the URJ and ACC. Iris Busch asked what the recommendations are and Cindy explained that they are confidential. Diane Brown asked the process that the Board uses. Barbara Dobbin asked if there is a reason that action must be taken now. Cindy explained that we are acting under advisement of the URJ. Susan Kramer asked why we are being asked to make a decision without the facts. Cindy stated that we are trying to be as transparent as possible but we are respecting the confidentiality of the process. Russ Tartel: Cantor Sobel has been around for a long time and has been instrumental to the Temple. He has dedicated years to the Temple. The charges are tragic and terrible. Given the publicity this has received, he wondered what is the risk to TBC? He wondered about procedural justice and stated he has faith in the board. Cindy stated that she and board members have been having discussions with Jon for months. Moses Alexander: was concerned about the lack of elections for the executive board and missing board members (not fully seated). Cindy stated that she would welcome additional members of the board. The lack of participation is not due to lack of trying to fill spots. The URJ feels that our Board is much larger than would be typical for a congregation of this size and reflects a time when our congregation was larger. June has been working on changing the governance structure. David Abraham stated that if there are vacant positions the president can fill the position and ask other

members of the board to ratify that person. Heather Borden Herve thanked Cindy for serving and noted it is difficult for board members at this time. She noted that there are many different people in the congregation who have concerns about the Cantor and we need to acknowledge that there are people that are not comfortable. Is there a middle ground. Stephen Davis stated that the Board has been trying to address this since April. He stated it is an organization, ethical, legal and ethical job of the Board and it has been difficult. Tom Dubin pointed out that there is no perfect answer to this. We have to keep in mind the congregation. Harvey Kulawitz stated that they have warm feelings toward Jon and acknowledges that it is a difficult situation. No one knows what will happen. Heather Borden Herve asked what the next steps are. Cindy stated that the executive committee would be respectfully and compassionately discuss these issues with Jon this weekend. She appreciated everyone's comments. Rabbi Bearman stated that all of this is painful for all members of the congregation and know that we are all working for all the other members of the community. Cindy thanked everyone for their comments.

Russ Tartell stated that we need to have a nominating slate. He says that there are ways to get people to serve and that we need a nominating committee to get people to serve. Cindy said she would present a slate at the next meeting. The nominating committee consists of board members and non-board meeting. Person in charge of governance is in charge of nominating committee. This has been June but she has stepped up to Vice president. Russ volunteered to convene a nominating committee.

Russ also asked about fundraising. Brad explained that the exec committee and Board has been very busy with the crisis at hand. Cindy also explained that fund-raising has not been totally neglected but there has been targeted efforts to raise funds.

Cindy had some closing comments. It is a difficult time in our community. She thanked the executive committee and Board of Trustees.

Steven West motion to adjourn, David Abraham second. So moved.

Adjourned at 8:58

Respectfully submitted



Temple B'nai Chaim Special Congregational Meeting

February 6, 2018

I. Call to order

Cindy Blausir called to order the regular meeting of the TBC Congregation at 1944 on 02/06/2018 at Temple B'nai Chaim.

II. Roll call

Scott Brown Reviewed attendee sign in sheet; confirmed a quorum. (see attached list)

III. New business

- a) Meeting/agenda slide deck attached electronically
- b) Rabbi Bearman-opening prayer
- c) Motion #1; EC/BoT recommendation to extend Rabbi Rachael Bearman's contract for 1 year through 2019, with option to extend for 1 year.

Cindy Blausir-presents motion/description (see slides)

Call for motion by David Abraham

Motion seconded by Steven Davis

Discussion:

Joe Bear: supports the renewal, has questions re: why not longer contract if we support our Rabbi? Cindy Blasir(CB) responds that this was a mutual agreement with the President/BoT/EC and the Rabbi.

Bonnie Heft: inquired re: prior contract discussions between the President and the Rabbi, CB commented that there were prior discussion, result as stated prior.

Ross Tartell: Requested information on how the one year renewal will be determined. CB: reviewed process for review and determination of contract renewal, disc how EC came to this decision. Dina Gummmins adds that there

needs to be some flexibility considering other pieces of our synagogues rebuild are yet in place and will factor into future decisions.

Stephen Davis: supports the BoT process and decisions, throws support behind Rabbi Bearman *and we'll encourage growth in certain areas.*
Klein

Pam Klein: Asks re process after Aug. 2018, CB: explains Rabbi application process

June Mara and Brad Marcus both speak to and support the EC/BoT process and decision.

Richard Bloom: asks for clarification on renewal dates.

Lew Bender: asks for further clarification on criteria for renewal, CB answers. *No set criteria will need feedback from the congregation.*

Lynn Schlesinger: asks about this and how it relates to growth of membership; CB responds that the stability of the clergy leadership will likely determine

future growth. Kim Yonkers concurs. *Until this year, since Rabbi Bearman's tenure, TBC added several new families with young children.*

Moses Alexander: Supports this proposal

Melinda Weber: Supports Renewal

2010p: Motion to Vote: David Levy, 2nd: John Gordon

Vote: Yes: 39 No: 0 Abstain: 1

(Adam Gold not present for this vote though appears on the attendance record, arrived soon after)

2012p: Motion Approved

d) Motion #2 BoT recommendation to hire a Director of Lifelong Learning

CB: Explains proposal and describes position in detail, see attached slides.

2022p: Motion to accept proposal: Bonnie Heft, 2nd: Gina Pulici

Discussion:

Barbara Dobbin asks for some clarification, CB answers

Mike Bonheim: fully supports this proposal and explains how this more than anything will be what attracts and retains congregants to TBC.

Lew Bender: asks about salary and how this fits into the budget and re: contract length; CB: salary is in a range, fits in current budget, explains that this is an investment in growth, and typical contract time is 3 years.

Richard Bloom and Bonnie Helt ask for clarification surrounding affordability, and how this plays into the hiring of cantorial support either FT, Limited vs ~~most~~ Student; CB responds that we ~~do not have~~ a congregation ^{of our size} do not have a ~~most~~ FT ^{of our size} Cantor, and currently the budget does not support hiring a "Limited Service" (ie PT) Cantor

Gina Pulici asked for clarification around the expectations of the DLL role and what we are looking for in who will fill this role. CB responded.

Barbara Dobbin questioned length (3y) contract, Mike Bonheim offered clarification of being able to allow the person to establish a curriculum, and give them enough time to assess their work, and 3 years seemed reasonable.

David Lewson-asks if we could have a combined Canotrial/educator role; CB explained that Canotrial Educator's ^{re} a few and far between and usually "exist" in much larger congregations, and it would be unlikely we could attract or afford one. But agrees it would be ideal.

Bonnie Heft-asks if prior RS "principals" at TBC were similarly qualified; CB states no.

Adam Gold-asked for clarification on how candidates are identified, CB explained process.

Moses Alexander-comments that "vision is wonderful" wanted clarification surrounding enrollment vs budget and if there would be an impact fiscally of a decline in school enrollment; CB feels this is an opportunity for growth as we would be seen as stronger in this aspect and attract more students/families.

Gina Pulici-discusses opportunity to volunteer in the search.

Richard Bloom-suggests looking for grant op's to alay costs; CB agrees to explore; Mike Bonheim offers a contact in this regard

Barbara Dobbin-Any local congregations have a similar role? is there competition; CB to explore

Mike Bonheim would like the congregation to look at this as an investment

Jeannie ^{Goldberg}-asked for clarification re start date and how this would affect current interim school director; CB states for the summer and Karen is eligible to apply but CB not sure she is looking to seek the role.

Adam Gold-Hoping this person would have strategies to retain students post B'nai Mitz/conformation; all agree

Moses Alexander motions for vote/Mike Bonheim 2nd's

Vote passes 43/0/0 Motion approved.

e) Motion #3 BoT recommends Hiring a Student Cantor

CB explains the motion, see attached slides

Motion to approve: Kiki Cahn, second: Pam Klein-SM

Discussion

Adam Gold: will we find someone who plays an instrument or just sings; CB states pref is an instrument, eg guitar

Stacey Barenberg-comments on current song leader

Iris Bösch-concerned that we will not be able to see how student will interact w congregation prior; Richard Bloom states this wouldnt be much different than any job interview process.

Karen Tartell-asks if this will be short term; CB states this will be readressed year to year.

Motion to approve: Moses Alexander Second: Dina Gummims

Motion passes 43/0/0

IV. Adjournment

Cindy Blausir adjourned the meeting at 0908.

Minutes submitted by: Scott Brown, EC Secretary

Temple B'nai Chaim

TBC Congregational Meeting

22 May 2018 / 7:30 PM

Minutes

- Pam Klem made a motion to call the meeting to order at 7:48pm. Jeff Spector seconded

Rabbi Bearman did the d'var

Cindy Reviewed the Agenda

Minutes

- June Mara made a motion to vote on the minutes from the May 2017 and November 2017 congregational meeting; Jeff Spector seconded.
- Moses Alexander noted that the May 2017 minutes needed corrections and that we also need to approve the minutes from the February 2018 special congregational meeting.
- Moses Alexander made a motion to defer the vote on the previous meetings minutes, and make the corrections needed. Russ Robbins seconded.
- We have one week (according to the by-laws) to get votes if we do not have a quorum present

President's Report (Cindy Baulsir)

- Cindy provided an overview of the past year, the hurdles we faced and the work of many congregants to address the challenges and plan for the future
- She thanked all those involved for their help with:
 - Interim Cantor
 - Interim Education Director
 - Student Cantor
 - New Office Administrator
 - Full-time Director of Lifelong Learning

Treasurer's Report (Brad Marcus)

- Karin Beitel accepted position as Director of Life Long Learning (DOLL) but at significantly more money than we had forecasted; leaving TBC with a \$30K deficit in the proposed budget for 2018/2019
- Reason for deficit is
 - Higher cost for Director of Life Long Learning
 - Fewer members; fewer students

- Proposed budget is based on flat membership (165 families)
- Rabbi made calls to high donor families and asked for donations to pay for DOLL
 - Rabbi was able to raise a significant amount; not only for 2018/2019 but also for 2019/2020
 - Sisterhood, Men's Club and Heft Fund also made contributions
- Some savings due to student cantor and new office administrator
- Will raise dues – all levels will increase by \$100
 - Haven't raised dues in three years
 - We will not increase tuition this year
- Cut expenses, where possible
- Presenting a balanced budget to the congregation
- This year's budget was projected to have a deficit of \$12 to \$13K and that's where it looks like we will be
- We lost members midyear but also had donations above amount projected
- Cindy will send letter to congregation requesting a small donation from each family to close the gap
- Discussion/questions followed, including
 - An explanation of the difference between the Chesed and Kesher funds
 - Difference between fundraising and donations accounts
 - What money was in transfer to operating account
 - Using money in youth group accounts to close budget deficit
 - How much money TBC gets from Amazon Smile
- Brad announced that this was his last congregational meeting as Treasurer
- Susan Farber made a motion to approve the proposed 2018/2019 budget. Stephen Davis seconded. Vote was unanimously in favor.

Director of Lifelong Learning (Karin Beitel)

- Karin was introduced to the Congregation – she had not formal report but spoke for a few minutes about how excited she is about her role and joining the TBC community

Slate (Ross Tartell)

- Ross thanked everyone involved on the nominating committee

- Moses Alexander asked about the terms of each member; we should not have all terms expiring at the same time. He also asked why Jeff Spector as chair of Men's Club was on the Board. Jeff is on the Board because he is also a trustee.

- David Abraham made a motion to approve the following slate in its entirety; Russ Robbins seconded. Vote was unanimously in favor.

Cindy Baulsir, President

Elise Serby, 1st VP

June Mara, 2nd VP

Jamie Kapel, 3rd VP

Secretary - Open (Scott Brown will be moving to Trustee)

Debra Case, Treasurer

Dina Guminis, Past President

By Laws Revisions

Cindy introduced by laws revisions.

Susan Farber asked whether with these changes we lose a sense of community.

Voted on each change individually.

Change to give the Executive Committee the authority to place staff or clergy on leave in the event of an emergency

June Mara made a motion to revise Article VI, Section 8 of the bylaws by adding the following: "The Executive Committee would have the ability to place on leave, staff and/or clergy in the event of an "emergency" defined as a situation that is potentially harmful to the congregation, if immediate action is not taken. Any further action taken must be communicated and approved as necessary by the Board and the congregation." Stephen Davis seconded.

There was some discussion about the wording.

Moses Alexander made a motion to amend the language before voting. David Abraham seconded.

The wording was amended to read, "The Executive Committee would have the ability to place on leave, staff and/or clergy in the event of an "emergency" defined as a situation that is potentially harmful to the congregation, if immediate action is not taken. Any further action taken must be in accordance with the bylaws."

The motion passed with one abstention.

The next was to change the number of Trustees at Large. Cindy noted that the congregation is smaller now and that we no longer need seven trustees to represent the different constituencies; five trustees would be sufficient.

Moses Alexander made a motion to amend Article VII, Section 1 to read, "Five members of the congregation elected by the Congregation to serve for two (2), two-year terms as Trustees-at-Large. Three (3) of these terms will expire in even years and two (2) of these terms shall expire in odd years." Barbara Dobbin seconded the motion.

The motion passed with one abstention.

Cindy proposed a revision in the by laws that impact the section on removal of the rabbi or cantor prior to the end of the contract term. There was much discussion and concern about the suggested revisions. Ultimately, Cindy withdrew the amendment.

The next amendment was on Article 8, Section 3, which addresses the renewal of the Rabbi's contract. The proposed change eliminated the need for a congregational vote to renew the Rabbi's contract. There was much discussion. Jeff Spector made a motion to change Article VIII, Section 3 to read as follows, "Upon the completion of the initial term of service by the Rabbi and/or at the expiration of a subsequent complete contract term, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee shall devise and oversee and agreement into which its recommendations have been included, including term of service, salary and other perquisites during any renewal period. This recommendation shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees and will require a 2/3 vote for approval" Russ Robbins seconded the motion.

A vote was taken. The motion did not pass.

The next by laws revision was to make the Social Action Chair a board position. Russ Robbins made a motion, which was seconded by Jeff Spector.

Discussion followed, with some changes to the suggested language. David Abraham made a motion to amend Article IX, Section 1 and Article VIII, Section 1 as follows:

Article IX, Section 1: "It shall be the duty of the Social Action Committee to focus on fulfilling our social and ethical responsibility to the greater local, national and worldwide community. Social Action shall be a permanent Operational Committee on the Board of Trustees and as such will follow committee guidelines." "Permanent Operational Committees: Adult Education, Communication, Education, Finance, Development, Governance, House, Membership, Ritual and Social Action."

Article VIII, Section 1: "Committee Chairpersons (10). The chairpersons of each Permanent Operational Committee, as set forth in Article IX."

Susan Farber seconded.

The motion passed with one (1) opposed and two (2) abstentions.

The final proposed revision was to Article IX, Section 2 and was to add social media to the responsibilities of the Communications Committee.

June Mara made a motion to revise Article IX, Section 2 to, "It shall be the duty of the Communications Committee to oversee the publicity and publications of the Congregation, including the Congregation's regular newsletters, social media, public media relations and overall website content." Russ Robbins seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Bloom asked that the revised by laws be published.

Barbara Dobbin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, June Mara seconded. All agreed.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:58pm

Respectfully submitted by

June Mara