



Temple Beth Abraham

25 Leroy Avenue
Tarrytown, NY 10591
Phone 914-631-1770
Fax 914-631-7872

David K. Holtz, *Rabbi*
Margot E.B. Goldberg, *Cantor*
Stuart P. Skolnick, *Director of Temple Operations*
Rabbi Allison Berlinger, *Director of Education*
Dr. Paul R. Siegel, *Rabbi Emeritus*

TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Attendees: Gayle Aaron, Jen Schwartz, Alan Berkson, Cantor Margot Goldberg, Liza Karsten, Mark Stein, Kimberly Marcus, Phyllis Leary, Herb Baer, Mel Savitch, Glen Markowitz, Stuart Skolnick, Julie Gur, Meredith Siegel, Marla Peers, Mark Polisar, Rick Misrok, Karen Filler, Jen Greenspoon, Allison Fine, Michael Karnes, Jen Povman, Jodie Lane

Meeting commenced at 7:36.

- I. Invocation: Rabbi is leading a Mussar class; Cantor invoked by comparing this week's double parasha, which follows last week's portion with the golden calf, a moment in our history where the Israelites are searching for something that helps them to "see" G-d. This week's portion repeats all the things necessary to build the Tabernacle. It is repeated to impress that it's all about accountability. We need to put our money where our mouth is to support TBA, through our budget, and in every way in which we support our values.
- II. Approval of Minutes – accepted with addition of Mel's name to the attendance.
- III. New Business
 - A. The board agreed to make a donation to the Dr. Joel Ratner Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Brentwood High School, in memory of Loren Ratner's brother.
 - B. Youth Group Report: Tess Nienaltow, president of Zeety came to speak to the board. She gave an explanation of the Northeast region (NAR) setup. Zeety is one of the largest in NFTY-NAR. They have events throughout the year, several of

which are open to the junior youth group. One of Zeety's main obstacles is an unengaged 9th-and 10th grade group. The 8th-graders are much more involved and several want to run for positions that they would assume in their 9th-grade year. Tess explained all of the board positions in Zeety. One of her main goals has been to develop both informal and formal relationships by reaching out to people proactively. Tess' presentation was followed by questions and lively discussion. Liza noted that several members of our youth group leadership are running for the NFTY-NAR regional board.

- C. Facility Setup form and Room Reservation form: Stuart has developed two forms and a schematic to reserve space for special events. It will be sent out with weekly schedule in Word doc form that can be filled out and returned. Stuart would like requests to be sent in at least two (2) weeks in advance. Once everyone starts to use it, suggestions to improve forms are welcome.

School events will be handled internally between the religious school and other staff.

The form is for special events, but not for usual committee meetings.

In response to a suggestion from Herb, Stuart will look into storing event requests in a dropbox so that it will be available to others.

- D. Fundraising Committee Events: Jennifer Schwartz
March 19th, California Pizza (Central Avenue, Scarsdale) event.
We get 20% of the proceeds but you must turn in a flyer.
There is also delivery service and takeout available.

IV. Old Business

- A. Capital Campaign Status Report: Gayle
Since our last meeting, much progress with marketing committee, led by Randi Schochet and Barbara Cohen, has been made. Their committee interviewed several graphic designers and chose Alan Brooks. The committee chose one

of his proposed designs this morning which Gayle shared with us. The campaign logo does not have the TBA logo, although the TBA the logo may also be on pieces of mail.

Other committees are finalizing their committee membership. Karen Filler is preparing educational programs for planned giving to present to our members.

Herb noted that we will have a meeting in the near future to ensure that our message is in line with Connected Congregations and other messages.

Gayle added that the building renovations committee is preparing an exciting proposal that Gayle will present next month.

B. Dues to Donations Open Items

- Finance Committee met to work on determining the “sustaining amount.” They considered what their expenses might be. Mel noted that he did not get all of the budgets (which were crucial to make this educated guess) and did his best to come up with a figure, basing that figure on last year’s committee budgets. The committee felt that the prior year’s dues would be a good amount to start with. This year’s expenses increased by 2.5-3% over the prior year; the committee added that increase to last year’s dues to arrive at the sustaining amount of \$3500. They realize that not everyone will be able to make that commitment; the hope is that people will pay what they did the prior year and perhaps be able to pay more. Additionally, the hope is that some will pay more than the sustaining amount.

The committee consisted of Jodie, Glen, Len Hyman, Mel and Michael. Michael added that the budget is also based on continued giving in all of the established forms (Ways and Means, HH pledges, etc.). If the budget committee can keep the expenses within that 3% increase, some of the

shortfall they anticipate (we will be paying credit card fees, which is expected to be at least \$10K; and some congregants will take the opportunity to reduce their pledges). If we can keep enough people at the \$1,000-\$1500 mark and get new people in, if everyone else gives what they have been giving, plus the 3%, it should balance. The work will take place in May when they add up all the pledges; if there is a deficit, they will have to make some decisions (i.e., about raises, religious school fees).

There was very active conversation about asking people to try to pay more than they had last year. Allison had also hoped that the sustaining amount would have been lower than \$3500 but hopes that we will be able to lower it in the future.

Name of program: Allison/Alan

There was active discussion about the name of our donations program. There were several suggestions, including Glen Markowitz's suggestions of "Our TBA" and "D2D (Dues to Donations)". The group spent a good deal of time discussing with the thought that we needed to arrive at a name this evening in order to get out our pledge literature ASAP.

Mark Stein made a motion, seconded by Jodie, that we table the discussion of a name and to strike from the letter the statement, "We are calling this..."

Fourteen in favor; two opposed; three abstentions; motion is accepted.

- Sustainer recognition: Herb brought to our attention the form that will be included with the packet. It brings us to the question of how we will recognize our sustaining members. Allison noted that recognizing donors is essential. Our use of language, as well as recognition of our

donors are critical in transitioning from dues to donations. We need to talk about what people are giving not what they are paying. We need to thank people for giving at or above the sustaining level because we have already told people that we need a big chunk of the congregation to give at the sustaining level. Recognition would be in the form of a letter and, if they want, recognition in the bulletin and HH handout.

Everyone, at all levels, should receive a thank-you letter.

Jodie noted that this program is in place to make people feel more comfortable about giving. Right now, the number is about the same as dues and listing everyone who pays at the sustaining level, by definition, lists everybody who doesn't. People on special needs previously are now called out for not giving at the sustaining level. Jodie is comfortable about listing people who give *above* the sustaining amount. Several others agreed while others did not. Glen motioned, seconded by Jodie, that #1 on the commitment pledge form be amended to state that acknowledgement will be made when they give *above* the sustainable amount, striking the words "at or."

Eleven in favor; opposed: four; two abstentions. Passes.

A second motion was made to recognize everyone who gives 10% more than they did last year (item #2).

Motion made by Liza, seconded by.

Six in favor, opposed: 11; abstentions: two

Glen motioned, Mark Polisar seconded, a change to item #2 to acknowledge anyone who gives 10% or \$100 more than they pledged last year.

In favor: 9; opposed: 5; abstentions: 2

Based on sentiments of several people around the table in response to vote, above, Jodie made a motion to revisit the item above (10% or \$100). Seconded by Gayle. Group voted to reconsider and vote.

In favor: 3; opposed: 10; abstentions: not recorded

We will have to address this carefully in our fall holiday literature.

- Pledge packages are being mailed to members in the next few days with the changes approved above.

- V. Financial Report: Mel has stated that we have been doing alright this year; at the end of January, things still looked good; income was over budget; expenses were under budget. However, we have 21 families and 8 singles who have not paid anything, coming to close to \$100,000 in arrears. We need to address this or we will be in a deficit situation. Mel plans to get in touch and follow through to determine if these families and individuals are still members and, if so, are planning to pay dues owed. Additionally, he did not receive alternative income lines (as from Ways and Means); no bar mitzvah fees, with other things missing. Ritual and alternate income information is forthcoming and Mel has asked for the information as soon as possible. He also suggested that we need an event from Ways and Means or we will be down another \$20,000. School registration collections are below budget (\$30k short). Additionally, we have never budgeted for Shabbaton; we have had a \$6800 deficit over the last two years. We need to budget for it; if we want to support it with temple funds, it will need to be reflected in the budget.

- VI. Director Report: Stuart

We've decided to stay with Church Mutual insurance company. New copy machine is up and running. Maggie Lissy will be leaving, having found a full-time position elsewhere. The finance committee is looking into the possibility of outsourcing the bookkeeper position.

VII. Comments/Announcements

Margot thanked everyone for their support of the shpielbill, the writers, and the cast members who managed to practice at home (snow caused the cancelation of most rehearsals). Special thanks Meredith and to "New Member Shabbat/prospective member Shabbat (three families showed up, one through Jessica Burriss, one through Pam, and one through Allison).

Margot thanked Herb and Melissa for their donation of their winnings from the Latkapalooza 50/50 raffle to sponsor dinner for all new members at the April family Shabbat dinner.

This Friday is Shabbat Across America and annual GS Shabbat. Please join us.

Meredith thanked Larry and Stuart for their tremendous assistance with last Friday's service.

We made over \$10k (net) from mishloach manot; proceeds go to the Pincus Fund.

Herb indicated that Alan is chairing the nominating committee. If anyone is interested in being nominated or has a recommendation for new nominees, please see him.

VIII. Good and Welfare:

-Tomorrow night is the 30th annual distinguished service award, TBA's Mike Marron is being honored. Great dessert reception.

-Ski day was great.

Two chavurah groups are going to Caramoor to see Eddie Aaron.

IX. Next Meeting – Tuesday April 7, 2015 @ 7:30 PM

X. Meeting adjourned at 11:09PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla A. Peers