

Congregation Beth David Board Meeting

MINUTES:

September 27, 2023

(Approved October 24, 2023)

PRESENT:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Nathan Handelsman, President | 8. Bonnie Slavitt, DaL | 14. Wendy J. Glasser,
Imm. Past President |
| 2. Art Singer, VP Education | 9. Cathy Beyda, DaL | 15. Barbara Biran, Dir Ops & Ritual |
| 3. Daniel Kahn, VP Admin | 10. Frank Yashar, DaL | 16. Rabbi Nathan Roller,
Rabbi Educator |
| 4. Bill Beyda, VP Finance | 11. Ginny Baird, DaL | 17. Rabbi David Kunin,
Senior Rabbi |
| 5. Hanna Firman, Treasurer | 12. Wendy Askenas, DaL | |
| 6. Rivka Shenhav, VP Ritual | 13. Howard Gannes,
Hazak Representative | |
| 7. Michael Bierman,
Secretary | | |

ABSENT:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Susan Greenberg-Englander,
VP Membership | 3. Bonnie Hirsh, DaL | 6. Leah Newman, DaL |
| 2. Stephen Schleimer, Financial
Secretary | 4. Irene Spector, DaL | 7. Neil Shapiro, DaL |
| | 5. Joseph Bendahan, DaL | |

GUESTS:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Dov Issacs | 2. Jacob Kahn |
|---------------|---------------|

1. Welcome & Announcements (Nathan Handelsman)

7:30

- Please sign up to bring snacks & drinks for a Board meeting
- Please sign up to be a Greeter on Shabbat. This opportunity is open to any Congregant.
- We received a letter from *Church of the Ascension*, our neighboring church, congratulating us on Beth David's 60th anniversary.
- Solar panels are done! Mazel Tov to all those who made this happen.

2. D'Var Torah (Rabbi David Kunin)

7:34

3. Receiving BSA Scout Eagle Project

7:35

Jacob Kahn completed his Eagle project: a new lectern for the youth congregation for Torah reading. Rabbis Roller and Kunin happily accepted on behalf of the Congregation and the Board joined in thanking Jacob for his for his hard work. Mazel Tov on completing your Eagle project, Jacob!



4. Good & Welfare (Nathan Handelsman)

7:38

Our Condolences to:

- Family of Grigory Vaystikh
- Family of Lou Dombro

Mazel Tov to:

- Walter & Irene Spector on their wedding anniversary
- Oren & Talia Dvir on their daughter Liat, becoming Bat Mitzvah
- Jacob Kahn on completion of his Eagle Project
- Rabbis and Barbara for conducting the High Holidays so beautifully

5. Adoption of Minutes from previous General Board Meeting (Nathan Handelsman) **7:42**

- The minutes from the August 22, 2023 General Board Meeting were approved as presented.

6. Priority Discussions (Nathan Handelsman) **None**

7. Q&A on Officer Reports & Announcements (Nathan Handelsman)

a. Administration (Dan Kahn) **7:43**

Admin Report (including Health, IT, Facilities, and Security) See Appendix A for the Admin Report.

Security/emergency drill update. The Security committee needs to put together a plan for a drill.

Update on Security Grant. Things are finally moving forward on the grant. We can proceed to the next steps.²

b. Membership (Nathan Handelsman) **7:54**

i) Membership Report & New Member Welcome

- Hittleman, Ryan
- Simons, Gail and Philip
- Stanton, Ethan and Annabelle (Sarah, Rachel)

Membership Report (Data for August 1-30, 2023)

Membership Units as of August 1, 2023 **396**

Increases (Welcomed in August) 3

Decreases 1

Membership Units as of August 30, 2023 398

Honorary 5

Friends of Beth David 29

Grand Total 432

August Losses

- Doina Smith (moved)

August Resignations

- None

Resignations are people who leave by choice;

Losses are people who leave as a result of circumstance (moved, death, etc.)

See Appendix B for Membership report.

c. Finance (Bill Beyda)

8:02

Bill gave the Finance report and an update on the increase to the requested Sustaining Dues.

See Appendix C for Finance Report and an update on the Annual Campaign

d. Education (Art Singer)

8:05

- Marketing Promotions were in place
- 10 kids enrolled in Religious school
- Adult Education (See the report about the Scholar in Residence)
- Rosh Hashanah Day 2 we had about 20 kids most 5 and under
- Pre-Fast program we had 18
- HoneyGram update we spent less and made more than expected.
- Rabbi Roller accepted to the Mahloket Matters Fellowship which asks, if we can we find the courage to productively engage those with whom we disagree? Our Jewish tradition upholds the principle that constructive disagreement for the sake of heaven *Mahloket L'Shem Shamayim*, is not only imperative but the holy work needed to repair what can feel like irreconcilable differences that permeate within our Jewish communities.

See Appendix D for Education Reports

e. Ritual (Rivka Shenhav)

8:14

High holidays were well attended both in person with over 400 tickets reserved and online including several hundred online streams on Zoom and YouTube (Erev RH 27, 42 RHD1, 17 RHD2, 36 Erev Yom Kippur 79 Yom Kippur.)

See Appendix E for Ritual Reports

f. Teen Report (Nathan Handelsman)

8:17

- There was a Rosh Hashanah brunch with about 15 teens in attendance.
- Stanford Hillel. Teens are planning a program at the Stanford Hillel to see what they can look forward to in terms of Jewish life on a college campus.

8. Old Business

8:21

a. Auxiliary reports are due in October.

b. We will review the slate for Board Election in the October meeting.

9. New Business

8:05

- a. Annual meeting - Department updates due by Oct 20th.
- b. Nominating Committee - October General Board meeting we will review the slate for the next election.

10. Closed Session

8:26

11. Adjourn

8:26

Board Meeting Summary

Action Items:

None.

Summary of Board Actions Taken at Meeting:

a. Summary of Motions Passed:

1. None.

b. Policies Adopted:

None.

c. Charters Adopted:

None.

Absent at September 27 Meeting

- Susan Greenberg-Englander, VP Membership
- Stephen Schleimer, Financial Secretary
- Bonnie Hirsh, DaL
- Irene Spector, DaL
- Joseph Bendahan, DaL
- Leah Newman, DaL
- Neil Shapiro, DaL

Absent at August 22 Meeting

- None

Absent at July 18 Meeting

- Neil Shapiro, DaL
- Rabbi Nathan Roller, Rabbi Educator

Absent at June 20 Meeting

- Susan Greenberg-Englander, VP Membership
- Wendy Askenas, DaL

Absent at May 18 Meeting

- Stephen Schleimer, Financial Secretary
- Joseph Bendahan, DaL
- Frank Yashar, DaL
- Leah Newman, DaL
- Rabbi Nathan Roller, Rabbi Educator
- Rabbi Jaymee Alpert, Senior Rabbi

Absent at April 27 Meeting

- Susan Greenberg-Englander, VP Membership
- Rivka Shenhav, VP Ritual
- Hanna Firman, Treasurer
- Cathy Beyda, DaL
- Leah Newman, DaL
- Frank Yashar, DaL
- Neil Shapiro, DaL
- Wendy J. Glasser, Imm. Past President
- Barbara Biran, Dir Ops & Ritual
- Rabbi Jaymee Alpert, Senior Rabbi

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Bierman
Recording Secretary

Appendix A

“Admin Report”

Congregation Beth David Administration Report to Board of Directors

September 2023

Dan Kahn, Administration VP

Health Committee

- Discussed uptick in COVID indicators in our area
- Discussions led to two recommendations
 - Stronger recommendation of mask wearing during HHDs
 - Improve or remove sneeze guards
 - This recommendation has been forwarded to the Facilities committee who will explore options and report back to the Board in the future

IT Committee

- No official meeting in August

Facility Operations

- Kitchen dishwasher is out of service – **Complete**
 - Waiting for parts from manufacturer (Hobart) – repaired just in time for Rosh Hashana
 - Repairman indicated repair delay may have cause additional damage, but we're going to make Hobart cover this cost
- New solar panel installation – **Complete**
 - Work has begun and is expected to go on for about 3 weeks - expect completion before Rosh Hashana
 - All work is on the roof and scaffolding is hidden behind the building, so no impact on anyone accessing the building
- Staff Bathroom Blockage – **Complete**
 - Fantastic Rooter had to snake the drain - \$307.00 on budget line 40/6011
- Annual fire inspection raised need for 5-Year Inspection – **In Progress**
 - Deeper inspection – scheduled on August 23 – unplanned \$1,938.38 expense – Endowment will reimburse
 - Uncovered a blockage in the fire-sprinkler system - **TBD**
- Several LED lighting strips in the sanctuary are out – **In Progress**
 - Mark Nagel has been contacted – will be fixed before RH
- Cause of Stains on Sanctuary Ceiling above Bima – **In Progress**
 - Root cause of stains identified
 - Plans are in place to test whether new roof addressed root cause
 - Need to assess impact of other water damage found

Facilities Committee

- No official meeting in August
- Bonnie Hirsch check the main first aid kit and AED
- Bonnie also attended county training on Narcan, which provided her with a dose to add to our first aid kit

NSGP Security Grant

- Current Status:
 - New FEMA representative assigned, same waiting for approval to proceed

- Next two pages show project roadmap and list of projects

Nonprofit Security Grant Program - Sequence of Events

No Change



Five separate projects over about 2 years

Prioritized Project List:

1. Install security cameras to cover two (2) existing gaps
 - Area to the left of front entrance
 - Garbage area behind the kitchen
2. Raise Height of Fence
 - Back of building near kitchen, facing Scully Ave
3. Install floodlights illuminate the field
 - East side of building, beyond Sukkah patio
 - Lights to be automatically switched based on exterior light levels
4. Install protective/obscuring film on windows and entry doors
 - Leaving lots of time for community input and to reconcile with security solutions
5. Install glass break sensors on the windows around the building
 - Cannot start this project until film project is complete

Appendix B

“Membership Report”

MEMBERSHIP

396	Regular Membership units as of August 1, 2023
	1 Losses/Resignations
	3 Regular membership units approved
398	Regular Membership units as of August 30, 2023
5	Honorary Memberships
29	Friends of Beth David

As of August 31, 2022:

423	Regular Membership units
5	Honorary Memberships
25	Friends of Beth David

NOTES

Memberships approved in August

- *Hittleman, Ryan*
- *Simons, Gail and Philip*
- *Stanton, Ethan and Annabelle (Sarah, Rachel)*

August LOSSES

- *Doina Smith (moved)*

August RESIGNATIONS

*Resignations are people who leave by choice;
Losses are people who leave as a result of circumstance (moved, death, etc.)*

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Data for August 1st – 31st 2023

(Prepared for Board Meeting September 27, 2023)

August 1st Total Member Units	.....	396
Increases	.....	3
Decreases	.....	1
August 31st Total Member Units	.....	398
Current Honorary	.....	5
Current Friends	.....	29

Program Committee Meeting - DRAFT

September 13, 2023

Attendees: Susan Greenberg-Englander (Chair), Cathy Beyda, Wendy Glasser, Barb Green, Nathan Handelsman, Bonnie Hirsch, Bonnie Slavitt

Debrief on BBQ & Barchu

The event was a success. Everyone seemed to have a good time. There were a few issues, however. For example, vegetarian and gluten-free dishes were not kept separate due to a miscommunication with Jeff. A couple of refunds were given because people did not receive their vegetarian meals. The shnitzel was cold and was not good. The mushrooms were chopped and looked like a side dish. A few people felt pushed aside because they did not fit in the Sukkah Patio.

Wendy spoke with Jeff. His people cannot police how much food people take. Barb suggested having more servers.

Members of the committee felt we should go back to having a BBQ, especially if the event is referred to as a BBQ, and that we should hold the event in the parking lot. We also need to have an earlier signup deadline. There were too many last-minute RSVPs.

Upcoming Events

- **September 25 - Break the Fast**
To date, 59 people have RSVP'd. The event costs \$25. Helaine has taken care of the details and has coordinated with Jeff. Jeff will take care of all of the food except the desserts. Barb has asked people to bake desserts. Nathan and Susan are attending. Helaine can use some help.
- **October 3 – Steak in the Sukkah** (Men's Club)
- **October 5 – Ladies Who Lunch in the Sukkah** (Beth David Women)
- **October 5 – Sukkah Schmooze with the Kunins**
- **October 29 – Whale Watching Cruise**
To date, 4 people have signed up.
- **November 18 – Installation of Rabbi Kunin**
- **November 19 – Mah Jongg Tournament**
- **December 3 – Latkes & Scotch** (Men's Club)
- **December 10 – Hazak Chanukah Extravaganza**
- **December 25 – Teen Spaghetti Night**
This is a fundraiser for the teens. Adults are invited. There may be a movie.
- **December 29 – Dim Sum Cooking Class with Rabbi Kunin**

Events Under Consideration

- **Second Balance and Stretch Class**

This class will be taught in the evening. The instructor (Bill) is only available Monday and Wednesday evenings. Because there is no staff member in the building on Monday evenings, the class will be held on Wednesday evenings. Note, Aaron's class also is offered on Wednesdays but in the morning. Susan will schedule a free trial class after she returns from her travels in mid to late October.

- **Movie Night**

The committee discussed having a movie night possibly in December. In the past, we have shown a movie that both adults and children would enjoy. We also have shown separate movies for adults and children. Consider planning the event for November as there is not a lot going on during the month.

- **Dirty Cello**

Susan hopes to bring Dirty Cello back sometime in December. She will contact the band to see when they are available.

- **Zip Code Dessert**

We should have another Zip Code Dessert event in January or February.

- **Comedian**

Bonnie Slavitt mentioned that her steering committee may bring in a comedian on March 3 for the final 60th celebration event. Barb noted that Hillel's L'Dor V'Dor event is being held the same day, from 4-6 pm. Wendy mentioned that Beth David Women also is considering a comedy night.

- **Volunteer Recognition**

We need to honor our volunteers. In the past, this has been done during Sukkot. Pins have been ordered. Iris, Nathan and Wendy are working on this.

Meeting Topics for Next Month – October 26, 7:30 pm

- **Purim.**

Need to decide what events to offer so that auxiliary groups can plan around them. Make sure to include the Ritual Committee in our plans. Discuss Mishloach Manot with Rabbi Roller.

- **Second Night Seder**

Do we want to offer one?

Appendix C “Finance Report”

	Aug 23	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jul - Aug 2:	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Income							
10 - Ritual	16,097	6,227	9,870	22,179	7,337	14,842	41,620
20 - Religious School	5,543	2,000	3,543	7,739	4,000	3,739	30,072
30 - Adult Ed	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,000
40 - Admin	2,170	1,500	670	78,185	3,000	75,185	18,000
50 - Youth Group	0	0	0	1,000	0	1,000	1,500
60 - Programs	2,708	3,640	(932)	6,093	4,540	1,553	30,640
70 - Finance	60,095	67,516	(7,421)	292,301	135,034	157,267	810,200
80 - Board of Directors	24,660	29,167	(4,507)	38,494	58,333	(19,839)	352,600
Total Income	111,273	110,050	1,223	445,991	212,244	233,747	1,289,632
Expense							
10 - Ritual	14,164	11,133	3,031	18,458	18,967	(509)	132,550
20 - Religious School	506	50	456	617	100	517	62,816
30 - Adult Ed	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,000
40 - Admin	235,979	12,266	223,713	251,187	29,698	221,489	178,942
50 - Youth Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,000
60 - Programs	1,025	1,849	(824)	1,993	3,456	(1,463)	38,940
70 - Finance	2,850	1,050	1,800	25,678	30,100	(4,422)	40,600
80 - Board of Directors	2,102	2,137	(35)	4,243	4,275	(32)	28,048
90 - Staff Costs	68,283	68,298	(15)	131,209	136,598	(5,389)	819,583
Total Expense	324,909	96,783	228,126	433,385	223,194	210,191	1,312,479
Net Income	(213,636)	13,267	(226,903)	12,606	(10,950)	23,556	(22,847)

	Aug 31, 23	Jul 31, 23	\$ Change	Aug 31, 22	\$ Change
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings					
1001 · Operation Ca Bank & Trust	221,566.25	432,709.06	-211,142.81	178,735.26	42,830.99
1002 · Market Affiliate	49,954.43	49,281.07	673.36	261,541.73	-211,587.30
1003 · PayPal Account	0.00	0.00	0.00	-72.00	72.00
1004 · Petty Cash - Admin	1,545.32	1,529.50	15.82	554.60	990.72
1006 · Smith Barney Parent Acct.	1,130,481.33	1,136,759.03	-6,277.70	1,029,784.27	100,697.06
Total Checking/Savings	1,403,547.33	1,620,278.66	-216,731.33	1,470,543.86	-66,996.53
Other Current Assets					
1200 · Due From Addison Penzack JCC	2,200.00	2,200.00	0.00	2,200.00	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	2,200.00	2,200.00	0.00	2,200.00	0.00
Total Current Assets	1,405,747.33	1,622,478.66	-216,731.33	1,472,743.86	-66,996.53
Fixed Assets	10,504,760.17	10,504,760.17	0.00	10,504,760.17	0.00
Other Assets	2,200,000.00	2,200,000.00	0.00		2,200,000.00
TOTAL ASSETS	14,110,507.50	14,327,238.83	-216,731.33	11,977,504.03	2,133,003.47
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	5,406.50	-1,126.00	6,532.50	6,974.87	-1,568.37
Credit Cards	5,586.91	0.00	5,586.91	9,580.27	-3,993.36
Other Current Liabilities					
Endowment Fund Loan	78,881.59	78,881.59	0.00	0.00	78,881.59
2210 · Payroll Liabilities	2,608.33	1,108.33	1,500.00	0.00	2,608.33
2400 · Prepayment on Account	69,460.85	80,175.79	-10,714.94	90,839.08	-21,378.23
Total Other Current Liabilities	150,950.77	160,165.71	-9,214.94	90,839.08	60,111.69
Total Current Liabilities	161,944.18	159,039.71	2,904.47	107,394.22	54,549.96
Total Liabilities	161,944.18	159,039.71	2,904.47	107,394.22	54,549.96
Equity					
3000 · Named Fund	509,496.61	510,168.89	-672.28	487,376.40	22,120.21
3100 · Organizational Restricted Funds	-1,983.46	-1,983.46	0.00	814.00	-2,797.46
3200 · Special Purpose Fund	45,863.58	42,740.71	3,122.87	46,821.74	-958.16
3300 · Restricted Funds Ritual	14,701.89	18,941.09	-4,239.20	69,399.78	-54,697.89
3400 · Unrealized Income	9,735.01	13,945.91	-4,210.90	-4,230.53	13,965.54
3500 · Unrestricted Net Assets	13,352,640.00	13,352,640.00	0.00	13,352,640.00	0.00
3600 · Retained Earnings	5,502.58	5,502.58	0.00	1,880.25	3,622.33
Net Income	12,607.11	226,243.40	-213,636.29	115,408.17	-102,801.06
Total Equity	13,948,563.32	14,168,199.12	-219,635.80	14,070,109.81	-121,546.49
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	14,110,507.50	14,327,238.83	-216,731.33	14,177,504.03	-66,996.53

Appendix D

“Education Reports”

Education Highlights September 2023

Religious School marketing and outreach has produced initial results in the form of additional families signing up for religious school and a marked increase in attendance at our family learning day events.

We had a great turnout for the family learning day religious school kickoff event, the magic and Judaism teaching session and the hour-long performance by the professional magician was very well received.

The Rosh Hashanah family learning sessions were also very well attended and received.

We are getting families with young children into the building and are working from a contacts and outreach database to follow up with each family from various people each on different events.

Teens had a very well attended Rosh Hashanah session with refreshments.

Adult Ed from July 20 (August not yet available) notes see attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

Art Singer
VP of Education

Appendix E

“Ritual Reports”

Ritual Committee Minutes, August 2, 2023

Attendees: The meeting took place online using Zoom. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m.

The following Ritual committee members were in attendance:

Rivka Shenhav, chair, Rabbi David Kunin, Rabbi Nathan Roller, Norm Abramovitz, Barbara Biran, Howard Gannes, Wendy J. Glasser, Barb Green, Kristin Gustavson, Dov Isaacs, Madelyn Isaacs, Roland King, Michael Leitner, Charlie Marr, Marty Newman, Margie Pomerantz, Sheryl Rattner

The following guests were also in attendance:

Rachel Abramovitz, Bob & Ginny Baird, Iris Bendahan, Bill & Cathy Beyda, Jerry & Roberta Bloom, Jerry Daniel, Karen Fihn, Lance Glasser, Susan Greenberg-Englander, Nathan Handelsman, Bonnie Hirsch, Lynne & Stephen Kinsey, Natalie Schriger, Neil & Sandy Shapiro, Bonnie Slavitt, Barbara & Chuck Taubman, Alice Wald & Paul Overmyer, Joe & Linda Weiss

D'var Torah: Rabbi Kunin gave a D'var Torah.

Minutes: Minutes from the July 19 meeting were approved as published.

New Business: Online Streaming for Shabbat and Yom Tov services:

Digital Streaming for Disabled Access: The Conservative movement allows one-way electronic streaming of services, year round, according to the CJLS responsum, "[*The Use of a Remote Audio and Video Monitor on Shabbat and Yom Tov*](#)," (Rabbi Gordon Tucker, 1989). This is true, irrespective of any pandemic or 'perilous times.' In the case of Shabbat/Yom Tov, one-way digital streaming can be 100% automated in such a way that no manual adjustments of electronic equipment by synagogue staff would be needed during the service. In the spirit of inclusion, one-way streaming is a way to give the disabled and homebound members of our community full access to Shabbat services. It is comparable to the use of an audio loop for the hearing impaired.

Interactive Zoom in response to Covid pandemic: In contrast to one-way streaming, the agenda of tonight's meeting will be to review Beth David's use of interactive Zoom on Shabbat and Yom Tov, which due to the COVID-19 pandemic had been implemented in 2020, by Rabbi Jaymee Alpert, as Mara D'Atra, according to the principle of *hora'at sha'ah*, or 'perilous times.' The measures implemented at that time were intended to be temporary. (See "[*Streaming Services on Shabbat and Yom Tov*](#)", Rabbi Joshua Heller, 2020). It is up to Rabbi David Kunin, as Mara D'Atra, to decide when the perilous times have passed, and to decide which aspects of interactive Zoom should be discontinued, and when.

Rabbi Kunin's recommendation: Rabbi Kunin said that the time has come to move toward more normalcy, that is to move away from full interactivity on Shabbat/Yom Tov, and toward one-way streaming. The Rabbi emphasized that in so doing, it's important first to listen to as many voices in the community as possible, and make sure everyone feels heard, and no one feels forgotten or overlooked. It's important that any changes from full interactivity (which have been firmly in place for three and a half years) not be implemented *too* abruptly. If full Zoom interactivity is to be phased out, it should be done very gradually, to allow folks time to adjust.

The main implications of the Rabbi's recommendations (moving away from Zoom for services, and towards one-way streaming only) are:

- The removal of the Zoom Screen from the Bimah
- Discontinuation of online participation in services (Torah / Haftarah readers, honorees)
- Discontinuation of offering the Torah Cam stream
- Discontinuation of online participants being allowed to say a name for Refuah Schleimah
- Discontinuation of online participants being allowed to unmute for mourner's kaddish
- Discontinuation of chat feature whereby online participants can type personal messages to one another
- If we decide to use one-way streaming only, do away with the need for a zoom moderator.

Voices in favor: The Committee has heard from many congregants who favor getting rid of Zoom interactivity to bring the congregation more in alignment with Halachah. They don't want to appear callous, but it is felt that the needs of the disabled/homebound can be satisfactorily addressed with one-way streaming, as described above. While interactive Zoom had been welcome and a lifesaver for many people during the Covid pandemic, with over a hundred congregants relying on interactive Zoom every Shabbat, since that time, online participation has fallen off considerably. In recent months, the number of congregants who use interactive Zoom on a typical Shabbat is usually 16 or fewer, with the number turning on their cameras typically only 4 or 5 individuals. The number of online participants who unmute their microphones to say a name for Refuah Schleimah, the prayer for healing, is typically only 1 or 2. The number who unmute for mourner's kaddish on Shabbat is typically 0 or 1.

Rabbi Kunin says for congregants who favor getting rid of Zoom interactivity, the Zoom monitor on the bimah seems to be the biggest downside. Rabbi has heard from many congregants for whom seeing the monitor on the bimah is a disruption, counter to the spirit of Shabbat.

Voices opposed: Several congregants who participated in the discussion voiced their wish that Beth David retain Zoom interactivity. They feel that it provides them benefits that one-way streaming cannot provide, such as the sense of belonging, or the online access for their homebound elderly parents. Although not all these folks use online access every week, they appreciate knowing they have the option in case they cannot physically get to synagogue on occasion. Although they may not speak a name for Refuah Schleimah every week, they appreciate knowing they have that option. Although they may not unmute for mourner's kaddish, they value the fact that mourners have that option. The "Torah cam" is something else which people value.

The thing which some value the most is the ability to see the faces on their screens of others in the "online community," giving them a sense of belonging. What was repeated over and over was that one-way streaming tends to be not very different from watching a movie online – it is a 'cold' medium – whereas seeing each other's faces on their screens made them feel they were part of a live gathering. They valued the ability to chat with each other in real time using the Zoom chat feature, and type "Shabbat Shalom" to congregants they otherwise might not see.

It is noteworthy that no one mentioned in their top five values the ability to have their own faces visible on the TV screen by in-person congregants in the sanctuary.

Rabbi Kunin's recommendation: Having heard the comments by all participants, Rabbi Kunin thanked everyone for their input and expressed appreciation for the respectful way in which people spoke tonight. He emphasized the difficulty of the decision, and pointed out how important it is while adhering to Halachah for congregants to connect to the synagogue community with ease. When one form of access is reduced, we will need to think of alternative ways for people to connect. When changes are made, we need to make sure people are not forgotten. Rabbi Kunin is especially mindful of the hearing-impaired and their reliance upon the closed captioning. [Note: closed captioning is always provided, whether interactive or one-way].

Rabbi Kunin's recommendation at this time is to remove the Zoom monitor from the bimah on Shabbat and Yom Tov, starting September 1. The Zoom screen on the bimah seemed to be the one item which is the most negative for the traditionalist group, and for the online group, it seemed to be the one item which would be the least missed. We are going in baby steps, and will see how it goes.

In conclusion, the rabbi added, "As we move away from Zoom we must remember the lessons learned over Covid, which reminded us of the importance of connection. We therefore must redouble our efforts to connect with all members, ensuring that everyone, whether able to attend in person, or only able to watch the stream, will feel an essential and important part of our community."

Motion: Approval of the Ritual committee is not required for Rabbi Kunin's decision. Nevertheless, a motion was made for an advisory vote to adopt the recommendation of the Rabbi to remove the Zoom screen from the bimah on Shabbat and Yom Tov, starting September 1. The motion passed, with 9 in favor, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention.

There will be an announcement via email going to the whole congregation in the next few days explaining the new policy.

Announcements – Zoom Security Report:

Last weekend, our Shabbat services were Zoom-bombed by an anonymous malicious disruptor from outside, despite the Zoom security features always in place, such as the "waiting room." Although the offending entity was expelled from the session promptly, with no long-lasting harm, we will have to do something to prevent this from happening again. The next step will be up to the I.T. committee. Most likely Beth David will go to a pre-registration-required protocol for all online events, including Shabbat services, weekday minyanim, committee meetings, board meetings, and general programming.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Next Ritual Committee meeting: September 6 at 7:30 p.m. – please note that most likely the existing zoom link for ritual committee meetings will be replaced by a pre-registration required protocol, for this and all subsequent online meetings.

Submitted by Sheryl Rattner