

Congregation Beth David Board Meeting

MINUTES:

October 24, 2023

(Approved Nov 14, 2023)

PRESENT:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Nathan Handelsman, President | 8. Bonnie Hirsh, DaL | 17. Howard Gannes, Hazak Representative |
| 2. Daniel Kahn, VP Admin | 9. Bonnie Slavitt, DaL | 18. Wendy J. Glasser, Imm. Past President |
| 3. Bill Beyda, VP Finance | 10. Frank Yashar, DaL | 19. Barbara Biran, Dir Ops & Ritual |
| 4. Rivka Shenhav, VP Ritual | 11. Ginny Baird, DaL | 20. Rabbi Nathan Roller, Rabbi Educator |
| 5. Susan Greenberg-Englander, VP Membership | 12. Irene Spector, DaL | |
| 6. Stephen Schleimer, Financial Secretary | 13. Joseph Bendahan, DaL | |
| 7. Michael Bierman, Secretary | 14. Leah Newman, DaL | |
| | 15. Neil Shapiro, DaL | |
| | 16. Wendy Askenas, DaL | |

ABSENT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Art Singer, VP Education | 3. Cathy Beyda, DaL |
| 2. Hanna Firman, Treasurer | 4. Rabbi David Kunin, Senior Rabbi |

GUESTS:

1. Dov Issacs

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.

2. D'Var Torah & Prayer for Israel (Rabbi David Kunin) 7:34

3. Assistance for the Conflict in Israel 7:38

There are a number of ways to support the conflict in Israel. The consensus was that the best way to get help there as quickly as possible is to donate directly to some of the many efforts that have been put together. A link to a guide for some of these programs is available at

<https://www.jvalley.org/israel-resources/>

4. Good & Welfare (Nathan Handelsman) 7:52

Speedy Recoveries to:

- Ann Tavan

Our Condolences to:

- All those affected by the events in Israel.

Mazel Tov to:

- Susan & Gary Nankin on the birth of their granddaughter, Zoe Shoshana Trang
- Svitlana & Leonid Veksler on their son, Michael becoming Bar Mitzvah
- Ramona Hawkins and his whole family (Steve Schleimer & Cyndi Sherman’s Granddaughter)

5. Adoption of Minutes from previous General Board Meeting (Nathan Handelsman) 7:54

- The minutes from the September 27, 2023 General Board Meeting were approved as amended.

6. Priority Discussions (Nathan Handelsman) None

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

a. Administration (Dan Kahn) 7:55

See Appendix A for Admin report

Motion: Motion to Spend Reimbursable Security Grant Money

Background

In September 2022, Congregation Beth David was awarded a Non-profit Security Grant Program (NSGP) grant from the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for an amount not to exceed \$132,737. This money can be spent on the 5 specific security-related facility projects at Congregation Beth David that were defined in the grant application. This is a “spend-and-reimburse” grant, which means Beth David pays for the projects and the grant reimburses us for those exact expenditures.

The process has reached the step where FEMA and CalOES approve the specific project definitions. FEMA approved the individual projects nearly 11 months after the data was first submitted. Now waiting on CalOES individual project approval, which may come quickly or slowly.

This motion is to permit Beth David to spend the money up-front as soon as the CalOES project approvals are given, with the understanding that reimbursement may come several months after the outlays and may even span more than one fiscal year.

This matter has been pre-coordinated with the Finance VP who envisions several options to draw the money from until the reimbursement comes in. This motion only covers approval to spend the money, how the money is moved around until the reimbursement comes is subject to Finance Committee discretion.

Motion

Once both FEMA and CalOES project approvals are obtained, the Board of Directors of Congregation Beth David approves amending the 2023-24 budget to pay up-front the costs of 2022 NSGP grant projects, not to exceed the amount of the grant (\$132,737), with the understanding that the grant will reimburse Beth David for these costs.

Motion by: **Dan Kahn** Second by: **Wendy J. Glasser**

17 Yes **0** No **0** Abstain

The motion passed.

b. Membership (Nathan Handelsman)

8:05

i) Membership Report & New Member Welcome

- Lipman, Corinne
- Mashhadian, Ora (Arielle)

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

| | |
|--|------------|
| Membership Units as of September 1, 2023 | 398 |
| Increases (Welcomed in August) | 2 |
| Decreases | 3 |
| Membership Units as of September 30, 2023 | 397 |
| Honorary | 5 |
| Friends of Beth David | 29 |
| Grand Total | 431 |

September Losses

- Lou Dombro (deceased)
- Grigoriy Vaystikh (deceased)

September Resignations

- Michael and Diane Rock (personal)

Resignations are people who leave by choice;

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

See Appendix B for full Membership report.

c. Finance (Bill Beyda)

8:11

Bill gave the Finance report and an update on the Annual Campaign.

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

d. Education (Art Singer) 8:20

See Appendix D for Education Reports

e. Ritual (Rivka Shenhav) 8:21

i. Motion: Cantor for 2024 High Holy Days

Background

We need to work on for next year HHDs is the hiring of a Cantor. That process has to start now as the posting of available candidates and their selection takes place in December – January.

To that end we request that the board vote on the budget that the Congregation is willing to allocate to the hiring of a HHD cantor for next year's budget and authorize the formation of the search committee and hiring of the Cantor. The motion proposes a \$25,000 budget to cover the hiring and the travel expenses for the candidate. The last time that we hired a cantor from outside the area (cantor Weiss in 2018) we paid a total of \$13,000. The proposed budget is based on best estimate + margin of safety to allow us to complete the process without having to come back to the board for additional funds.

Motion

Resolved that the Board of Directors authorizes the Ritual VP to negotiate a contract with a Cantorial candidate and authorizes the Ritual VP to form a search committee and hire a High Holy Day Cantor, subject to the approval of the Finance Committee and our Senior Rabbi and the requirements of our Professional Services Agreement form.

Motion by: **Rivka Shenhav** Second by: **Wendy Askenas**

17 Yes **0** No **0** Abstain

The motion passed.

See Appendix E for Ritual Reports

8. Old Business 8:30

a. Auxiliary reports are due in October.

b. Nominating Committee Proposed Slate

The nominating committee has presented the following slate for the 2023 election to the Board of Directors.

Candidates for new terms beginning Feb 1, 2024

Executive Vice-President, Irene Spector TE 02/01/2025 (partial term)
Administrative Vice-President, Neil Shapiro TE 02/01/2026 (First Full term)
Ritual Vice-President, Marty Newman TE 02/01/2026 (First Full Term)
Education Vice-President, Art Singer TE 02/01/2026 (Second Full Term)
Treasurer, Eric Lewis TE 02/01/2026 (First Full Term)
Financial Secretary, Stephen Schleimer TE 02/01/2026 (Second Full Term)
Director at Large (A), Ginny Baird TE 02/21/2026 (Second Full Term)
Director at Large (D), Jennifer Blostein TE 02/01/2025 (First Partial Term)
Director at Large (H), Dov Isaacs TE 02/01/2026 (First Full Term)
Director at Large (I), Frank Yashar TE 02/01/2026 (Second Full Term)
Director at Large (J), Kristin Gustavson TE 02/01/2026 (First Full Term)

Board Members continuing in the second year of their term (ending Feb 1, 2025)

President Nathan Handelsman TE 02/01/2025 (First Full Term)
Finance Vice-President Bill Beyda TE 02/01/2025 (First Full Term)
Membership Vice-President Susan Greenberg-Englander TE 02/01/2025 (First Full Term)
Secretary Michael Bierman TE 02/01/2025
Director at Large Joseph Bendahan (B) TE 02/01/2025
Director at Large Bonnie Slavitt (C) TE 02/01/2025
Director at Large Bonnie Hirsch (E) TE 02/01/2025
Director at Large Leah Newman (F) TE 02/01/2025
Director at Large Wendy Askenas (G) TE 02/01/2025

9. New Business

8:35

- a. Website adjustment the names of the elected officers have been moved behind the are that requires a member login for security concerns.

10. Closed Session

8:36

11. Adjourn

8:36

Board Meeting Summary

Action Items:

None.

Summary of Board Actions Taken at Meeting:

a. Summary of Motions Passed:

1. Motion to Spend Reimbursable Security Grant Money
2. Cantor for 2024 High Holy Days

b. Policies Adopted:

None.

c. Charters Adopted:

None.

Absent at October 24 Meeting

- Art Singer, VP Education
- Hanna Firman, Treasurer
- Cathy Beyda, DaL
- Rabbi David Kunin, Senior Rabbi

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Bierman
Recording Secretary

Appendix A

“Admin Report”

Congregation Beth David Administration Report to Board of Directors

October 2023

Dan Kahn, Administration VP

Health Committee

- No official meeting in September
- No reports of COVID have been reported following HHD

IT Committee

- No official meeting in September

Facility Operations

- Several LED lighting strips in the sanctuary are out – **Complete**
 - 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 full committee meeting in August
- Security subcommittee met on October 12
 - Per regional security experts, vigilance is warranted, but no specific threats
 - Sheriff's department has displayed a presence at Beth David
 - Barbara has been **communication** with the Sheriff and personally thanked deputies who parked at Beth David
 - Emergency response bookmarks will be printed and placed in siddurim
 - Emergency response drill will be scheduled

NSGP Security Grant

- Current Status:
 - FEMA individual project approval obtained
 - Now waiting on Cal OES individual project approval
 - In anticipation of Cal OES approval, would like to approve project expenses that will be reimbursed
 - [Jump to motion](#)
- Next two pages show project roadmap and list of projects

Nonprofit Security Grant Program - Sequence of Events

✓ Receive NSGP Grant Notification [Sep. 2022]

✓ Receive Required Project Documents List [Oct. 2022]

✓ Submit Required Project Documents to Cal OES [Nov. 2022]

Receive Project Approvals from ✗ Cal OES [In progress] and ✓ FEMA [Sep. 2023]

Prepare and Issue RFPs

Select Project Proposals and Sign Contracts

Perform Contract Work

Pay for Completed Project Work

Submit Project Expenses to NSGP for Reimbursement

2022 NSGP Grant Closes - May 2025

Includes FEMA
Environmental Planning &
Historic Preservation (EAP)
Screening (i.e. delays)

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

| | |
|-----|---|
| 398 | Regular Membership units as of September 1, 2023 |
| | 3 Losses/Resignations |
| | 2 Regular membership units approved |
| 397 | Regular Membership units as of September 30, 2023 |
| 5 | Honorary Memberships |
| 29 | Friends of Beth David |

As of September 30, 2022:

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 417 | Regular Membership units |
| 5 | Honorary Memberships |
| 26 | Friends of Beth David |

NOTES

Memberships approved in August

- *Lipman, Corinne*
- *Mashhadian, Ora (Arielle)*

September LOSSES

- *Lou Dombro (deceased)*
- *Grigoriy Vaystikh (deceased)*

September RESIGNATIONS

- *Michael and Diane Rock (personal)*

Resignations are people who leave by choice;

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

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Data for September 1st – 30th 2023

(Prepared for Board Meeting October 24, 2023)

| | | |
|---|-------|------------|
| September 1st Total Member Units | | 398 |
| Increases | | 2 |
| Decreases | | 3 |
| September 30th Total Member Units | | 397 |
| Current Honorary | | 5 |
| Current Friends | | 29 |



Appendix C “Finance Report”

CONGREGATION BETH DAVID
Statement of Financial Position
As of September 30, 2023

| | Sep 23 | Budget | \$ Over Budget | Jul - Sep 23 | YTD Budget | \$ Over Budget | Annual Budget |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Income | | | | | | | |
| 10 - Ritual | 7,586 | 8,727 | (1,141) | 29,765 | 16,063 | 13,702 | 41,620 |
| 20 - Religious School | 385 | 2,250 | (1,865) | 8,123 | 6,250 | 1,873 | 30,072 |
| 30 - Adult Ed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,000 |
| 40 - Admin | 1,500 | 1,500 | 0 | 79,685 | 4,500 | 75,185 | 18,000 |
| 50 - Youth Group | 0 | 500 | (500) | 1,000 | 500 | 500 | 1,500 |
| 60 - Programs | 225 | 3,525 | (3,300) | 6,318 | 8,065 | (1,747) | 30,640 |
| 70 - Finance | 52,204 | 67,516 | (15,312) | 342,707 | 202,550 | 140,157 | 810,200 |
| 80 - Board of Directors | 41,065 | 31,767 | 9,298 | 79,558 | 90,100 | (10,542) | 352,600 |
| Total Income | 102,965 | 115,785 | (12,820) | 547,156 | 328,028 | 219,128 | 1,289,632 |
| Expense | | | | | | | |
| 10 - Ritual | 11,550 | 13,133 | (1,583) | 30,867 | 32,100 | (1,233) | 132,550 |
| 20 - Religious School | 158 | 6,990 | (6,832) | 775 | 7,090 | (6,315) | 62,816 |
| 30 - Adult Ed | 800 | 1,250 | (450) | 800 | 1,250 | (450) | 9,000 |
| 40 - Admin | 54,493 | 13,635 | 40,858 | 306,290 | 43,333 | 262,957 | 178,942 |
| 50 - Youth Group | 0 | 500 | (500) | 0 | 500 | (500) | 2,000 |
| 60 - Programs | 4,952 | 6,409 | (1,457) | 6,945 | 9,865 | (2,920) | 38,940 |
| 70 - Finance | 1,372 | 1,050 | 322 | 27,052 | 31,150 | (4,098) | 40,600 |
| 80 - Board of Directors | 2,485 | 2,737 | (252) | 6,728 | 7,012 | (284) | 28,048 |
| 90 - Staff Costs | 68,109 | 68,298 | (189) | 199,319 | 204,897 | (5,578) | 819,583 |
| Total Expense | 143,919 | 114,002 | 29,917 | 578,776 | 337,197 | 241,579 | 1,312,479 |
| Net Income | (40,954) | 1,783 | (42,737) | (31,620) | (9,169) | (22,451) | (22,847) |

CONGREGATION BETH DAVID
Statement of Financial Position
As of September 30, 2023

| | Sep 30, 23 | Aug 31, 23 | \$ Change | Sep 30, 22 | \$ Change |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| ASSETS | | | | | |
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Checking/Savings | | | | | |
| 1001 · Operation Ca Bank & Trust | 202,369.93 | 221,283.68 | -18,913.75 | 157,767.06 | 44,602.87 |
| 1002 · Market Affiliate | 50,401.95 | 49,954.43 | 447.52 | 261,541.73 | -211,139.78 |
| 1004 · Petty Cash - Admin | 1,620.32 | 1,545.32 | 75.00 | 554.60 | 1,065.72 |
| 1006 · Smith Barney Parent Acct. | 1,114,471.83 | 1,130,481.33 | -16,009.50 | 1,001,974.24 | 112,497.59 |
| Total Checking/Savings | 1,368,864.03 | 1,403,264.76 | -34,400.73 | 1,421,837.63 | -52,973.60 |
| 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 | 1,371,064.03 | 1,405,464.76 | -34,400.73 | 1,424,037.63 | -52,973.60 |
| Fixed Assets | | | | | |
| 1601 · Building Cost | 10,298,935.40 | 10,298,935.40 | 0.00 | 10,298,935.40 | 0.00 |
| 1602 · Office Equipment / Furniture | 149,179.82 | 149,179.82 | 0.00 | 149,179.82 | 0.00 |
| 1603 · Signage | 28,131.65 | 28,131.65 | 0.00 | 28,131.65 | 0.00 |
| 1604 · Sound Equipment | 28,513.30 | 28,513.30 | 0.00 | 28,513.30 | 0.00 |
| Total Fixed Assets | 10,504,760.17 | 10,504,760.17 | 0.00 | 10,504,760.17 | 0.00 |
| Other Assets | | | | | |
| 1605 · Property Value | 2,200,000.00 | 2,200,000.00 | 0.00 | 2,200,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Other Assets | 2,200,000.00 | 2,200,000.00 | 0.00 | 2,200,000.00 | 0.00 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 14,075,824.20 | 14,110,224.93 | -34,400.73 | 14,128,797.80 | -52,973.60 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | | | | |
| Liabilities | | | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Accounts Payable | -243.00 | 6,906.50 | -7,149.50 | 439.08 | -682.08 |
| Credit Cards | 8,917.44 | 7,298.39 | 1,619.05 | 5,916.88 | 3,000.56 |
| Other Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Endowment Fund Loan | 78,881.59 | 78,881.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 78,881.59 |
| 2210 · Payroll Liabilities | 16.67 | 2,625.00 | -2,608.33 | 0.00 | 16.67 |
| 2400 · Prepayment on Account | 84,108.56 | 69,460.85 | 14,647.71 | 98,089.08 | -13,980.52 |
| Total Other Current Liabilities | 163,006.82 | 150,967.44 | 12,039.38 | 98,089.08 | 64,917.74 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 171,681.26 | 165,172.33 | 6,508.93 | 104,445.04 | 67,236.22 |
| Total Liabilities | 171,681.26 | 165,172.33 | 6,508.93 | 104,445.04 | 67,236.22 |
| Equity | | | | | |
| 3000 · Named Fund | 505,557.21 | 509,496.61 | -3,939.40 | 471,263.19 | 34,294.02 |
| 3100 · Organizational Restricted Funds | -1,983.46 | -1,983.46 | 0.00 | 814.00 | -2,797.46 |
| 3200 · Special Purpose Fund | 56,325.58 | 44,863.58 | 11,462.00 | 44,154.74 | 12,170.84 |
| 3300 · Restricted Funds Ritual | 17,336.62 | 15,374.62 | 1,962.00 | 72,007.71 | -54,671.09 |
| 3400 · Unrealized Income | 785.14 | 9,735.01 | -8,949.87 | -18,859.83 | 19,644.97 |
| 3500 · Unrestricted Net Assets | 13,358,142.58 | 13,358,142.58 | 0.00 | 13,352,640.00 | 5,502.58 |
| 3600 · Retained Earnings | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,880.25 | -1,880.25 |
| Net Income | -32,020.73 | 9,423.66 | -41,444.39 | 100,452.70 | -132,473.43 |
| Total Equity | 13,904,142.94 | 13,945,052.60 | -40,909.66 | 14,024,352.76 | -120,209.82 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | 14,075,824.20 | 14,110,224.93 | -34,400.73 | 14,128,797.80 | -52,973.60 |

Appendix D

“Education Reports”

Adult Ed Zoom Meeting
September 21, 2023, at 2:09 p.m.

Attendees: Ginny Baird, Harry Cornbleet, Paul Freudenthal, Dori Jaroslow, Ruth Kohan, and Miriam Marr, and Sheryl Rattner.

Minutes: The minutes from August 17, 2023 were approved.

Old Business

Rabbi Roller, Modern Musical Midrash: He has not replied about upcoming series on Theater as An approach to prayer. Start on Tuesday Oct 17, 7:30 p.m. Hopefully twice/month. In person.

Book Group: Miriam reported that we had an interesting discussion on August 12 on *The Women of Rothschild: The Untold Story of the World's Most Famous Dynasty* by Natalie Livingstone, led by Rachel Abramovitz. Last month *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and led by Shmuel Shottan. Next one *Night* led by Harry Cornbleet.

Carol Salus: Carol Salus will present a Zoom talk on *Degas and the Dreyfus Affair* on October 22, 7:30 p.m.

Sigalit Ur: Miriam December dates not good for her. Sigalit Ur discussion about *Conversations between Jews and Gentiles in the Talmud*. How about later in 2024.

Rabbi Berkowitz: Rabbi Berkowitz will discuss his new book, *the Psalms: A Guide for, the Heart and Soul*, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on October 29 (in the Social Hall).

Israel Hike Slide Show: Michal preferred in-person and Zoom. January 21st. 10:30 .a.m.to 12:00.

Rabbi Kunin's class on *Undiscovered Jewish Sects Throughout History*, possibly Tuesday or Wednesdays, twice monthly, depending on the BD calendar evenings at 7:30 p.m. In person. *such as Essenes and Karaites*

Talmud study at starting Oct 13, led by Rabbi Kunin

Torah Study with Rabbi Kunin, Starbucks on Prospect Road, Tuesday mornings Oct 17th. 10:00 Weekly. Conflich about going to public place such as Starbucks.

Whale watching – conflict with Program committee. We can't change the Rabbi's talk. Paul will call her.

CBD Board Update: Ginny explained that Beth David will require pre-registration for Zoom events. For recurring events, such as Shabbat services and minyan, a one-time registration is required. For other online events, this will be at the discretion of the organizer.

Budget: Have new budget. 5000 for our programs and 4000 for SIR.

Daniel Gordis: Paul contacted JCC to see if interested. Too expensive for them also. Consider coordinating with other synagogues. Drop the consideration.

Alix Wall: Ruth reported that Alix Wall, writer for the *J News* and *New York Times*, will speak in person on Sunday evening, November 12, 7:00 p.m. Her topic is *A Career in Jewish Journalism*. Sheryl will send Ruth the paper for payment. Ginny will get the refreshments.

Antisemitism Talk: Hasn't heard from Joseph concerning what program they are doing. On hold for now.

Scholar in Residence (SIR): Nothing new to report. What other responsibilities? What about shabbat dinner? Talk to Barbara about it? Miriam will deal with it. How people register and so on.

The topics are as follows:

- Friday Night – What Does God Have to do with it?
- Saturday Torah teaching, relating to the Torah portion.
- Saturday afternoon – Red Scroll, Blue Scroll.
- Sunday morning – How to Make Ethical Decisions in Contemporary Times.

Jewish Cookbook Series: Nothing new to report.

Oscar Israelowitz: Dori reported that Oscar prefers to do Zoom presentation in the morning. We will look for a date in January or February. Dori question – nothing going on for Sunday's in Jan and Feb. Games Day Hazak Feb25th. Oscar for Jews in Calif. Or February, not 18th.

New Business

Architectural Look on Noah's Ark: Noah's Arc coming up in Torah portion – Paul has drawings and willing to show them after services. Oct 21st. 12:45. An Architectural Work on Noah's Ark. In doors.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 19 at 2:00. p.m.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:35 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by Ginny Baird

Appendix E

“Ritual Reports”

Ritual Committee Minutes, October 4, 2023

Attendees: The online meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

The following were in attendance: Rivka Shenhav, chair, Rabbi David Kunin, Rabbi Nathan Roller, Barbara Biran, Howard Gannes, Wendy J. Glasser, Barb Green, Kristin Gustavson, Nathan Handelsman, Dov Isaacs, Madelyn Isaacs, Roland King, Michael Leitner, Charlie Marr, Marty Newman, and Sheryl Rattner.

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

Minutes: Minutes from the September 6 meeting were approved as published.

Business: Post-High Holy Day review and critique

This year was Rabbi Kunin's first High Holy Days with Congregation Beth David. Overall we succeeded in implementing various aspects according to plan. We got mostly positive feedback. Traffic in and out of the sanctuary was well-managed. Rabbi Ohriner leading RH1, Kol Nidre and YK services helped make things go smoothly. We owe big thanks to all service leaders, all volunteers on the committee and sub-committees, and office staff.

Given that things were mostly positive, some issues were mentioned which could be improved upon. These issues will be discussed in greater detail at future Ritual Committee meetings.

Ne'ilah / Final Shofar Blowing - The one thing we didn't like this year was the commotion following the final shofar blowing during Ne'ilah. The chatter was disruptive to those trying to stay and hear the Ma'ariv and Havdalah service. This has been a perennial problem.

The committee entertained possible solutions to the commotion problem.

- Quickly ushering the crowds out of the sanctuary following Ne'ilah has been proven in past years to be unworkable.
- Conveying the Ma'ariv/Havdalah participants to another room (Beit Tefillah) also has its downside.
- Instead of doing shofar blowing immediately at nightfall, we could do Ma'ariv at nightfall first, and delay the shofar blowing until after Ma'ariv/Havdalah. However, since Ma'ariv cannot be prayed before nightfall on Shabbat/Yom Tov, doing shofar blowing after Ma'ariv would result in the delaying of the conclusion of Ne'ilah by about 10 minutes.
- Should we do Ma'ariv/Havdalah at all? (Rabbi Kunin clarified that Ma'ariv is not required. The idea of doing Ma'ariv/Havdalah at this time is to rush to do one's first mitzvah immediately following Yom Kippur.)

Rabbi Roller has done research on this issue, and reports that according to an informal survey of 101 Conservative rabbis, 61% choose to do shofar blowing after Ma'ariv/Havdalah, 21% blow the shofar before Ma'ariv/Havdalah, while another 16% eliminate Ma'ariv altogether.

Our committee consensus seems to be if we do Ma'ariv/Havdalah at all, then they both ought to be *before* shofar blowing. Shofar blowing seems to be a signal to people that services are over.

We can revisit this issue later in the year, before the next HHDs.

Service timings - Dov Isaacs provided for us the final edition of measured service times to the nearest 5 min. The actual times this year turned out to be very close to the estimated times based upon year 5780 (year 2019), despite the fact that RH1 was Shabbat this year, with a slightly different liturgy, compared with a weekday.

However, it was pointed out that Shacharit was finished 15 earlier than predicted on RH1 and 10 minutes earlier on RH2. We couldn't begin the Torah service yet for another 10-15 min because not all honorees for the Torah service were present.

Barbara Biran noted that hardly anyone shows up at 8:30 a.m. The room is nearly empty at 8:30. (The honors committee doesn't assign ark openings during Shacharit for this reason.)

It was suggested that we move the start time of services on RH1 and RH2 to 9:00 a.m.

We discussed the pros and cons of starting at 9:00 a.m. The consensus of the group seems to be that starting later would not solve anything; rather it would result in services ending later.

People tend to leave Rosh Hashanah services by around 12:45, regardless of the point in the service, (lunch plans with friends/ family, perhaps). Therefore, if services were extended beyond 12:45 you'd get empty seats at the end of the service. It seems that, to most people, ending RH1, RH2 promptly by 1:00 is important. We can revisit this issue later in the year.

Note: In future years, if we decide to keep the 8:30 a.m. start time, we need to make sure that Torah service honorees arrive at least ½ an hour before the predicted start of Torah Service.

Honors – Madelyn Isaacs reported that services went faster this year, partly because the honors committee didn't assign two different honors to open and close the ark. Instead the same person both opens and closes the ark. This eliminated the "do-si-do" dance, saved time.

Regarding skilled honors such as hagbahah (scroll lifting), prior to making the usual individual phone calls for honors this year, the honors committee did an "inventory," specifically to identify all the possible scroll lifters (Magbihim), scroll carriers, and scroll holders. It was very informative. We identified a couple of new scroll lifters we had previously not known about.

In summary, the honors committee had 119 slots to fill and filled all of them. Out of 145 phone calls, 26 individuals declined an honor, for various reasons, usually because they did not plan to be present in-person this year: (illness, travel, preferring to Zoom from home, attending other local shul, or family conflict, were the top five reasons). Thus overall the committee had to make approx. 1.2 phone calls for each honor slot we filled.

Ushers – We are no longer preventing congregants from entering the sanctuary through the front doors; instead, congregants can enter from either door now. Marty Newman reported that for this reason, ushers positioned at the rear sanctuary doors were not needed as early in the service as they used to be. Giving ushers in the rear station a somewhat later start time worked well. As the room fills up, and people do start entering from the rear, we will want more tallitot and prayer books located near the rear entrance.

Experience this year indicates the handicap seating configuration for High Holy Days at Beth David might need some re-thinking. For several decades, on the High Holy Days we have had two full rows of handicap seating, at the front of the second seating section, behind the front door aisle.

The handicap section has consisted of several open slots for parking a wheelchair, each alongside a single regular seat for a handicap companion. This configuration has worked well for some. But this year we discovered a number of reasons why this configuration is not workable for some families:

- The person in a wheelchair may be part of a group of more than one companion that might want to sit together, and they might not think to ask for the ushers to scoot several chairs together; instead they often opt to sit in a regular (non-handicap) row.
- Many disabled congregants have walkers, rather than wheelchairs, so the open-slot-adjacent-to-a-single-chair isn't suitable for them. They would like to sit in regular seats, further forward, near an aisle, and have a place to park their walker.
- The companion may not wish to sit in a section lacking seats in front of them to rest their prayer book on, so they may opt for a regular row.

We need to think of ways to accommodate the disabled in regular rows rather than a dedicated handicap section. One idea is to remove one aisle seat from a row, and designate the two seats adjacent to it as reserved for disabled. We could do this for several different spots, staggered throughout the sanctuary, but never in consecutive rows on the same side.

This issue should be revisited at a later time.

Tickets – There was some confusion resulting from member tickets being mailed in the same envelope with Fall Event guide. A few people didn't realize their tickets were enclosed in the same envelope, and failed to find their tickets and bring them. Next year, we will send the tickets and Fall Event guide in separate mailings.

Programs - Sheryl Rattner reported that the Netivot session with Shifra Elman on Rosh Hashanah Day 1, attracted 24 individuals, and we got very positive feedback from them regarding the instructor; whereas, from the approx. 36 individuals who attended Ms. Elman's session on Yom Kippur, we got mixed feedback. For some of them, the material was too heavy and exhausting. However, for others, the instructor's content and delivery were excellent, but the pacing was poor, in that she got only 35% of the way through the material in the first 1½ hours. People began leaving at 1:15, and only a handful remained until 1:30.

From congregants who would have liked to attend, we had complaints that the session was concurrent with services, requiring them to choose. Having the session concurrent with services is the whole point of Netivot, but is this something we are willing to rethink? Is there truly a market for alternatives to services? Does this kind of study session meet that need? Or should it be less intellectual and more informal?

As in past years we offered a study session with the rabbis during the break on Yom Kippur. However, the format and topic weren't decided until shortly before YK, and thus, as Sheryl pointed out, the publicity didn't make it into this year's printed program guide, or any of the seasonal or weekly emails to the congregation, or even into the Shabbat bulletin. Most people didn't know about it, unless they happened to hear the oral announcement from the bimah on YK morning, or unless they regularly attended these sessions in the past. In the future, we agreed this program should be included in all seasonal publicity, even if the topic is said to be "TBA."

Yizkor Book - Dov Isaacs reported the Yizkor books were under-utilized this year. Because only a limited number were printed (only 250 printed this year), the books were not placed on chairs, instead they were offered to congregants at the door as they entered the sanctuary. In the end, however, hardly any Yizkor books were noticed/taken. Of the 250 books printed, fewer than a third of them were distributed. It is not clear whether congregants declined to take one, or simply didn't know they were available. It is not clear whether people without Yizkor books missed them. During the pandemic, people may have gotten out of the habit of using Yizkor books.

In recent years, the utility of these books has diminished compared to what it used to be. People aren't referring to the books during the Yizkor service to remind them of their loved ones. They are not necessarily keeping the books to refer to throughout the year. We need to think about whether printing these books is worth it.

Decorum on High Holy Days – We are delighted at the newfound presence of children at Beth David, thanks to recruitment efforts by Rabbi and Lindsay Roller. We saw evidence of the strong presence of young families during the shofar service on Rosh Hashanah, at the end of Ne'ilah on Yom Kippur, and during the lulav procession on Sukkot this past Sunday. In an effort to help children to love the synagogue and Judaism, on Shabbat during the year we have allowed children to feel comfortable on the bimah. However, the committee feels that certain solemn times during the High Holy Days require a higher level of decorum. This year there were multiple complaints about small children in the sanctuary disturbing the sanctity of the Holy Day, especially during the Kol Nidrei prayer. Rabbi Kunin emphasized that children are the future of the synagogue and we want them and their parents to feel welcome. Whatever is said on the subject must be gentle and keep focus on making parents and their children feel valued and welcome. Nevertheless the Ritual committee feels that on the High Holy Days, the bimah needs to be respected as a holy space, and certain intervals during the service, such as Kol Nidrei, and the silent Amidah, need to be respected as holy times. We need to offer families Shabbat/Yomtov-friendly quiet activities whenever Tot programs are not in session, such as picture books, beads, foam blocks, etc. There need to be some clear guidelines for the Gabbaim and Ushers to help families as needed. In addition, we should use our Tot programs to instruct the young and their families about proper Sanctuary decorum.

High Holy Day Cantor: As previously announced, Rabbi Ohriner will no longer be available to lead High Holy Days at Beth David. Therefore, we need to decide whether Beth David wants a cantor for the High Holy Days, and if so, we will need to get the board to initiate a search. The next Ritual Committee meeting on November 1 will be devoted to this issue.

New Business: Online Access on Shabbat – For quite a while, even prior to the Zoombombing incident this past July, the number of Zoom participants on Shabbat has been consistently very low, compared with streaming on YouTube. Few Zoom participants were keeping their cameras on, and few, if any, were using the chat feature for greeting one another. Furthermore, since August 9, for security reasons, we have been requiring pre-registration, and there is no longer any technician to moderate. Therefore, we have been using Zoom's webinar format, without cameras enabled, and without unmuting enabled.

At this point, in terms of interactivity, there is no practical difference between Zoom webinar access and YouTube streaming access. Barbara Biran announced that, the Rabbis have discussed the matter, and have determined that starting January 1, 2024, Zoom will no longer be offered as a viewing option for Shabbat/Yom Tov services, leaving YouTube streaming the only available remote viewing option.

Next Meeting: The next Ritual committee meeting will be November 1. A question was posed regarding the possibility of changing the regular time for Ritual committee meetings from 7:30 p.m. to mid-day. Rivka will poll the committee members by email as to their preference.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Submitted by Sheryl Rattner