

Beth El Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes September 6, 2018

Members Present: Abby Steele, President; Neal Goldman, Immediate Past President; Karen Toker, Vice President; Sherill Herzfeld, Vice President; Rachel Marcus-Hendry Mitchell, Secretary; Tracy Aquilla, Stuart Rosenthal, Ron Van, Judy DeArman, Donne Ordile, Ed Mercel, Grace Belkin, David Marco, Ron Rapaport, MG Orender, Vickie Kennedy.

Rabbi Matuson was in attendance.

A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Abby Steele, President.

Approval of August 2018 Minutes: August 1, 2018 minutes were approved and accepted.

D'var Torah: Rabbi Matuson addressed the Board: "Nitzavim the 51st weekly Torah portion is about Moses speaking to the people of Israel. As they stood before him, he asked, wasn't there one that needed to sit? Pain does not take precedent over prayer. We are not allowed to stand when in pain. Since was a young Rabbi, I didn't want people to stand for long periods of time." When he waves the collective hand motion for standing, he wants people to do what they feel they can do.

"This week's Torah portion may not apply solely to physical pain, such as how painful one feels or where the pain is. Basically, people do the best they can. Until you walk in someone else's shoes, you can't pass judgement on another person's pain."

"The things to stand-up for are things you believe are worthy of standing up for, such as trying to express gratitude to a congregation." The Rabbi thanked the Board for their willingness to stand up for all of us. "I am deeply grateful to be here at Beth-El. L'Shona Tovah. I love you guys. May you have a good year and all your loved ones too."

President's Message: Abby Steele, President of the Board. Abby had a warm welcome for the Board and looking forward to a wonderful High Holiday season.

Treasurer: Abby reported on Chip's behalf. She discussed prepaying the mortgage, which is aligned with the letter from the Rabbi we received in the last couple of days. The finance Committee recommends that we move \$18,000 from last year's budget to the Building Fund. It has not been moved yet, but has been set-aside in a separate account. Donne asked "When is the campaign going to launch where we look to match the Rabbi's contribution to the mortgage." Sheryll announced that she sent out all the Rabbi's letters to our congregants.

As Chip was not present, passed out the financial Budget vs Actuals: FY 2017-2018, July-August 2018. Neal wondered why salaries this year shows a variance a little less than \$7,000 from last year.

Business:

Vice President, Sherill Herzfeld reported- She will incorporate Celebrate the Seasons and our Hanukkah Party plans in the next Press Release.

Sound System Improvements- Karen reported that the Sisterhood has some money that would like to contribute to fix the sound system. Bruce Schwartz, who has a professional background in sound systems, has assessed, at no cost, our system and has made some very small recommendations to fix, replace, clean and protect it as well as install the audio equipment so that people who are hearing impaired could download a special app on their phone and better hear the services. The microphone will have to be used. The Sisterhood has agreed to pay for the entire system. Bobby Adler reached out to Abby and Charlie re this.

A motion was made by Karen “That we improve the sound system in the sanctuary, including the shelf in the cleaning closet, as proposed by Sisterhood who will pay for the entire project. This will occur after Yom Kippur.” Ron seconded the motion. There was some discussion and questions about Bruce. He has assessed many churches and synagogues over the years for effective audio systems.

The Board discussed approaching another vendor and asking Paula Klausner if her company would also bid on the project. Vickie took this as an action item.

The motion is tabled till the next Board meeting, and Vickie will take this back to the Sisterhood. Once the better bid is determined, it will go back to the Board for approval.

Building Fund Income- Karen presented the Motion that “All the Building fund monies that come in after 7/1/18, should be applied to the Building Fund, which means pay down the mortgage.” The motion was withdrawn until the Treasurer can weigh in on it. Abby will talk to Chip about this.

Candidates for an Administrator- Abby informed the Board that Jacquie has resigned effective 9/15/18. She is amenable to work from home and is looking forward to her new job in the medical field. “We have a couple of great candidates and will be interviewing them shortly.” Kudos to Sherill for the great ad on Face Book. She then described some candidate’s experiences.

Neal made a motion that we offer Jacquie a two-year family membership, to thank her for all that she’s done for us. It was unanimously approved.

Pay down the Mortgage Commitment – Abby reiterated that MG and David Marco are matching the Rabbi’s commitment of \$30,000 for three years to pay down the mortgage. David and MG also approached her to see if members of the Board would consider being a part of this campaign. “Perhaps we can think of those things that speak to our heart and see if we can collectively or individually contribute to this campaign, that would be fantastic.”

Board Committee Chair Reports:

Membership Committee- Sherill expressed that we think there are underserved sectors in north eastern Florida that we can hone-in on to recruit new members. One is, future leaders under 40 and the other is the Nocatee seniors and the Nocatee area, which is the fastest growing area in St Johns County. See attached proposal submitted by the Membership Committee. She proposed that we accept the “Welcome to Beth-El” dues

structures. Neal asked if this was run by the Finance Committee with an analysis of revenue potential loss or gained. Grace talked and checked the URJ, "Everybody is facing the same situation, congregations are not growing." She obtained a list of all the unaffiliated in the Beaches, Nocatee area. "There are 2400 unaffiliated Jewish 'units' in Jacksonville, 400 of which are from the Beaches and Nocatee area." She wants to focus on this area. "That yields 400 units, of those, approx. 10% are 30 families, 40 and under; of the remaining number, 250 are in their 60-80's; and approx. 100 are 40-60." There ensued some discussion about the budget impact, pro/con. Sherill said with all this feedback, she, Grace, and Ron will contact Chip to review and analyze the proposal. She then said they will only focus on the Future Leaders and Senior population for a "Welcome to Beth-El" dues structure. It will be tabled and then addressed at a future meeting. MG compared this to his club's memberships. He suggested "this be a special offer, for a defined period of time, 30-90 day offer". The membership committee is considering many new ideas and programs. They will also evaluate whether this "Welcome" dues structure is offered to all new members or targeted members.

Grace presented the New Member letter to the Board (Shalom Letter). She thanked Ron and Danny Cohen for their participation on the committee. With regards to Exit Interviews she conducted a couple of interviews with former members. From this she asked that "each Board member please be an "Ambassador" and greet people at the door, whenever you are here. Please sit with new people." She wants to create a "buddy system". "We want to put a sign-in book at the table and have an open house to greet them. Yammer is the arm to URJ, and I encourage everyone to look at it." It was also brought up that we should be hosting a young professional get-together. Tri-fold was created, updated and passed around.

Communications- Sherill requested that if you need anything publicized she needs it the first of the month. She inquired as to whether we want to start the campaign and press release this month of October. After some discussion, it was decided that we will first put the letter in an email blast to the congregation and then emphasize the Mortgage Reduction Campaign in November, with Press Releases to multiple media venues. There was some additional discussion about how some people interpreted the Rabbi's letter. MG suggested that "we write something explaining that the Rabbi is not retiring, and that his intent is to help pay down the mortgage once his Social Security kicks in". Abby indicated that this topic will be part of her High Holiday Yom Kippur speech.

Adult Education- See attached from Judy De Arman.

Library- See attached from Bobby Adler.

Social Action- See attached from Tammy Shumer.

Archive – See attached from Karen Toker. The goal is to digitize from 2018 moving forward

Community of Caring – We don't have someone now for outreach, will look at that.

Sisterhood – Vickie reports that they sponsored the mulch around the Synagogue, purchasing a freezer, sponsoring Selichot and the Break Fast. Game day is 10/9; art walk is 10/10; packing up things for the college students; Fashion Show is 11/1.

Brotherhood – Reported by Ron Van, dinner with the Rabbi. Discussed perhaps offering time on a Sunday morning, looking to expand the membership. Ron R. commented that they will try to expand the membership and expand the group to attract younger guys.

Education -Donne reported that school is “amazing”. They are starting a walking group one time a month, beginning next week.

New Business:

Grace asked if Ritual has any problem with new members lighting the candles. Neal suggested she just ask the Rabbi. Grace also asked that we as Board members “once a month be highlighted once a month in the eblast”. She also asked for some help with creating baskets for new members.

High Holidays. Neal reported that “Cantor Butensky told us he will not be there for the second day of Rosh Hashana. Laurie Simmons will be part of the service that second day, although she does not know the whole service, we will do our best. If you have an honor and can’t make it please let us know as soon as possible. Wear your badges, be our best when you meet new and old members. Please walk the new members into the Sanctuary. Thank you everybody for all your help.” Buzzy will be reaching out to the ushers and assigning their positions. Ron Van will be assisting him.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting of the Board will be, October 11, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Marcus-Hendry Mitchell

Rachel Marcus-Hendry Mitchell, Secretary