

**KEHILLA COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

FINAL

Date: 2021-06-22

6:45-8:30

ZOOM LINK

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/193320289?pwd=STR5aHg4SUZINFpKd2dQVVVRR2EvUT09>

Email Catherine if unable to attend.

- **Attending:** Catherine Lyons, Karen Cohn, Rachael Reiley, Pamela Berkowitz, Nina Cohen, Lisa Korwin
- **Not attending:** Ori Tzvieli, Ali Cannon, Ruth Atkin, Dina Burg, Stephanie Hochman
- **Guests:** Jaime McGrath, Karen Friedman, Tree Gelb Stuber, Shoshkie Finacom, Michael Myers

Please review the following documents in Google Docs prior to the board meeting:

- **Kehilla Board Minutes Draft for approval at meeting**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I_MDCh3IUOuggqxmO8HkXieozhqiRbC5b0aJxKezT-s/edit
- **Letter to the community regarding redistribution of funds:**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/15nnu_Rp3_rKqD2EFuxw-JHJ_r4Vkkoc7AgT_ejznakAI/edit

AGENDA

Minutes taker: Nina Cohen, to be passed on at 8 p.m.

OPENING

1. **Group check-in (20):** *This month as opposed to other months...*
2. **Spiritual Opening (7)**
3. **Approval of May 2021 minutes (3):** Nina Cohen moves to approve, Rachael Reiley seconds; **APPROVED** unanimously

FIDUCIARY: BOARD STEWARDSHIP OF TANGIBLE ASSETS

- **Redistribution of funds** - Rachael
Ad hoc committee met at the end of May (Dev, Michael, Talya, Bobbi, Yael, Nina) to determine priorities for the redistribution of funds (read context for this decision here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15nnu_Rp3_rKqD2EFuxw-JHJ_r4VvkoC7AgT_ejznakAI/edit?ts=60d10632)

- Priorities identified: (1) pandemic-related needs (housing, food, health care), (2) a few substantial grants, (3) people of color-led organizations
 - Bobbi, Yael, Talya came with ideas and pretty quickly generated list of organizations including: CRC, EOC, SLHP, Essie, and The Village
 - Pretty amazing to see how quickly there was agreement on this
 - Catherine: amazing process and capacity to tap into members of our community with broader roots in community organization
 - Lisa: awesome selections; speaks to our hearts and values; lovely letter
 - Dev: one organization (APTP) was not approved by EJC - so follow up on why with that committee; Bobbi and Talya will check in with EJC on this
- **Subventions - MST**
Subventions = organizations that we support who also support us. (For example: JYCA and Midrasha - we support them financially, recognizing that they are helping to work with our teens). Annually, the Board revisits our current subventions and decides on whether to continue supporting the same organizations. The Board approved the 2021/22 budget last month which includes a set aside of \$9,300 for dues and subventions. The proposed subventions include:
 - **Faith in Action**, \$1000 (same as prior year)
 - **JYCA**, \$3000 (we have about 25 Kehilla Youth)
 - **Aleph** (nat'l umbrella org for Jewish Renewal - Shu and David ordained through them), \$2000 (increase from last year)
 - **Ohlone Tribes Fee** (Shuumi land tax), \$2000
 - **Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity**, \$1000
 - **Kavod, BATA** \$300

VOTE: Catherine moves to approve dues and subventions, Pamela seconds; all in favor APPROVED unanimously

- **For future consideration:**
Dev proposed considering adding Reconstructing Judaism to our subventions.
MORE INFORMATION AT:
www.reconstructingjudaism.org/article/programs-and-services-affiliates

Do we want to be dually affiliated with Reconstructing Judaism and Aleph?

- Advantages of affiliating with Reconstructing Judaism (RJ): It provides Kehilla with a wider network that we can lean on. RJ has provided advice in running our synagogue in the past which has been beneficial. Dev was

trained through them. We could use their support when considering and implementing our sabbatical policy. We share a commitment to creating a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging within the Jewish Community. An example of which is reflected in their hiring of the first Jewish Woman of Color to lead a major American rabbinical seminary. <https://www.rrc.edu/news/dynamic-hebrew-bible-scholar-lead-reconstructivist-rabbinical-college>

- Aleph doesn't provide the kind of support that we go to the Reconstructionists for. We support Aleph because it has been important in Kehilla's origin story→ this is NOT dues for Aleph (their dues structure is much higher).
- If we want to affiliate, we would add it to subventions - it may be an additional expenditure under this line item.
- It was agreed that this is not the time to make the decision, but can be the beginning of the conversation. (Board should know it's available and might be good to do sooner rather than later.)

Next Steps:

- Consider talking to both Aleph and Reconstructing Judaism regarding dual membership (possibly splitting our resources?)
 - Vet this idea with the Sabbatical Committee -- would it be helpful in sabbatical planning and support? (The Spiritual Leadership Team is on board for doing it, regardless of sabbatical).
 - Speak with SLPC (rather than sabbatical task force)? Karen will attend one of the SLPC meetings to discuss the prospect of dual joining and speaking with Reconstructing Judaism
 - The Board will revisit this decision once more information is known.
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- **Refinance of mortgage - MST/Finance**
Going forward with refi of mortgage; may be drawn out over a few weeks & numbers MAY change - looking for interest rate to be lower.
 - MST: Bank of the West (current mortgage holders) to reassess for refi to determine if we are qualified (should be!). Once deemed qualified they will come to us with an offer on interest rates/conditions of mortgage.
 - **Current mortgage:** 4.5% fixed, 6.5 years until ARM - new options
 - **Option 1:** Fixed rate, 10 years, amortized over 25-30 years (after 10 years is balloon) @ 3.69% [downside: you cannot prepay anything, ever - only monthly payment BUT is always fixed]
 - **Option 2:** 5 year @ 2.5%, then resets for another 5 years at whatever the rate is at that moment [benefit: lower interest rate and allows for prepayment without penalty.]
 - **FinComm recommends taking 75% of the loan with option 1 and 25% of loan with option 2 (\$280K). Current loan is \$1.1 million.**
This gives us the opportunity to prepay a portion of the loan - and provides

us with a target to pay down some of the mortgage (esp. principal). It also gives some flexibility without enormous risk.

- If rates come back as projected above, we would save \$7-8K a year over the current loan.
- Bank can come back to us at any time now, and we will need to act quickly, likely before another Board Meeting, thus the desire to vote now.
- Karen moved to approve Michael/FinComm to sign as long as the fixed rate remains at below 4%. The Board members did not approve the motion as they are interested in having access to more concrete information.)
 - Actual loan rates? Closing costs? Regardless of whether we get the loan, already on the hook for inspections, etc. These are fixed. About \$15K on points which could get folded into the loan (Lisa suggests analyzing whether using our reserves to pay the \$15K closing costs might be more financially beneficial than folding into a new loan and being subject to paying the interest rate, ultimately resulting in a higher cost for the duration of the loan.)
 - Catherine trusts FinComm but would like to see numbers.
 - Karen suggests applying savings from one loan to pay down the other loan.
- **ACTION:** FinComm will get proposal numbers to the Board to vote over Slack before 7/1

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE: BOARD PARTNERSHIP WITH MANAGEMENT

Re-opening - MST and Dev

- There is a committee that is setting the policy. MST in communication with other synagogues to figure out how to respond to changing circumstances esp. with the high rate of vaccine and low rate of infection in the East Bay. We need decisions b/c we can now start doing things that we couldn't do before.
- The Ad Hoc Committee (Dev, MST, Catherine, Karen, Ori) has been tracking this.

Different policies may be developed for different uses of the building:

- **Staff offices**
- **Renters** - they are not a Kehilla entity, they get to set requirements in private space, but have to follow our requirements in the building
- **Our groups and committees** - considering reopening to programs and are deciding about groups like committee meetings (not as public a program as services). They are a controlled group of people and are Kehilla-based; Will have to follow guidelines for the building
- **More public programs and services**

Moving to open the building to some degree in all areas. **Ad hoc committee will further refine and approve the policy after next Tuesday's meeting.** Whatever policies are established may and likely will change based on new information that arises.

Logistical pieces re: pace at instituting → access to building and building coverage (few custodial hours; need to increase staffing) is one of the topics to be determined b/c we don't have blanket evening coverage the way we did pre-Covid. Will begin to approve gatherings - need policy on masking, distance + timing/pace of when we can open - Will begin approving in-person committee and task force meetings. Can't say yes to anything quite yet.

Book Club meeting (7/12) would like to meet in the building. Tree has asked that communication regarding accessing the building be disseminated soon. (MST: will be communicating with the congregation sooner rather than later.)

People looking for at least report out on survey (over 200 respondents)

- **Clergy report + Dev's contribution to convo about reopening**

Dev: not looking for single point of convergence; multiple places of entry when people can be back in the building

- Saturday, July 17, 8 pm - Tisha B'Av observance in the Kehilla Courtyard (outdoors)
- Saturday, July 31, 10 am - Shabbat Morning Services (Sanctuary)
- Friday, August 6, 7 pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Services (Sanctuary)
- Sunday, August 8, 10 am-3 pm - A Journey of Opening: An open house and community ritual celebrating our return to the building (Indoors and Outdoors)
- Wednesday, August 25, 7:45 am- Morning Meditation 7:45 am (Fireside or Courtyard), continuing in person on Wednesdays, and online on Fridays
- Saturday, August 28, 8 pm - Selichot Services (Sanctuary)

Invite will be to open house and one other maybe

High Holidays online (largely online - but things might be different in September);

Taschlich outdoors for sure

Collaborative Simcha Torah at Urban Adamah

Biggest issue: don't have technology to make services online and want/need to do that b/c of accessibility (have made commitment to keeping accessibility) - this requires significant technology upgrade prior to 7/31

Need for communication to the community.

- **ED report**

- 1. Membership renewal:**

- Nina and Karen helped edit a letter that will go out tomorrow morning via email re-introducing the idea of sustaining dues.
- Personalized renewal forms will go out on July 1 to everyone, which will begin our renewal process.

- 2. New technology equipment:**

- By next month's meeting, we will have a report and will be under way with strategy in place.

- 3. Personnel**

- We hired Kavitha Prabhu as our new bookkeeper. She is being trained by

Molly, Elle, and Maya. She is learning very quickly, and we are already seeing the benefits of having a full-time bookkeeper. Molly will stay on as a consultant after training is completed for a few months.

- We hired Fred Williamson, who was working part-time, as a full-time custodian starting July 1. He will be doing much of the coverage as we start opening the building.
- Osborn (SP?) is still working on a plan on our future staffing needs in building maintenance. He will decide what to do and as to whether current custodial job changes are needed.

4. Building Repairs

- We completed the work sealing the front stairs and doing the mold abatement.
- We are waiting for the City of Piedmont to approve our steeple removal project, probably within the next few weeks. We are hoping to then have the steeple removed within the next month.

5. Office Hours Week of July 4

- The office will be closed the week of July 4.
- Most staff will be taking vacation.
- Some staff may still be working.
- We will have phone numbers available in case of emergencies.

GENERATIVE: SOURCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- Other Committee reports/updates

Technology:

1. Michael Myers brought up the issue of secondary internet access connection as a technology issue to center around as we go forward, since we will be more dependent on the internet. He offered to provide more details on what it will involve if needed.
2. Michael Sax Taller requested that Michael Myers write an initial proposal paragraph, and he will pass it along to Maggie.

AOB/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Board meetings moving forward: in person/zoom....
2. Catherine stated continuing board members will have to have the discussion on whether we will meet in person or Zoom.