

**KEHILLA COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING **MINUTES** (FINAL)**

**Date:** 2023-01-24

**6:10 - 8:30 Regular Session**

**Attending:** Michael Myers, Rachael Reiley, Stephanie Hochman, Lisa Korwin, Dina Burg, Dan Alpert, Jaime Jenett, Ruth Atkin, Tadish Durbin, Pamela Berkowitz, Varya Simpson

**Staff:** Michael Saxe-Taller

**Not attending:** Ori Tzvieli, Nina Cohen

**Guest:**

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

- [Kehilla Board Minutes](#) from 2022-11-29 meeting
- [Kehilla Board Minutes](#) from special session 2023-01-10
- [Executive Director Report](#)

**AGENDA**

*Minutes taker: Pamela*

**I. OPENING**

- Group check-in
- Spiritual opening
- What the Heck
- Approval of Minutes

**VOTE:** Lisa motioned to approve the last meeting's (11/29/22) board minutes. Dan seconded. Motion passed – all were in favor except for Ruth, who abstained.

**II. STRATEGIC DIALOGUE: BOARD PARTNERSHIP WITH MANAGEMENT**

**Clergy Report (Shulamit)**

- Rabbi Dev is deeply missed by those who engage regularly, and at the same time staff feel very well-supported. There will be a rare Chai Shabbat service coming up on 2/4 - only a few per year. It's a great community-building opportunity, where we will: Welcome new members, honor Josh Cohen, whose employment is coming to an end, and recognize volunteers who brought the Community Connections newsletter into reality.
- Michael M, Rachael, and Lisa were at the Synagogues Rising gathering, a consortium of seven spiritual and justice-focused synagogues. It was a great kickoff to the leaders beginning to meet each other. They are hoping to create a listserv to connect with board members of other shuls.
- Arc of Change: The Spiritual Leaders Working Group is in the process of continuing the work in smaller pods. In support of our commitment to ensure BIPOC presence on the BIMA, Victoria Alcoset and Lev Fresh White will be meeting with spiritual leadership twice a month, continuing to build their spiritual leadership.

**Investment Committee:** (This item was moved up in the agenda to accommodate our guests from the Finance Committee)

- Dan provided a brief orientation to the Board on an upcoming proposal to form a new Board Investment Committee. The Board engaged in a brief discussion.
  - Lisa asked if staff will have the capacity to manage the investment funds effectively. Dan responded that they would. The Investment committee members plan to be in regular contact with Michael S-T as well as meet and report to the Board on a regular basis.
  - Another member commented that it would be helpful to show the relationship of the Board to FinCom and also which decisions would be made by which group. Dan explained that the proposal goes into detail on the responsibilities, though not the delineation between FinCom and the Board. The members indicated a preference to see oversight of the investment function be held by FinCom.
- Dan will send out a detailed Investment Committee policy document to Board members tomorrow for review. A special Zoom meeting to answer any board questions was scheduled for February 7th. The Finance Committee will request a vote to approve the formation of this new Committee at the next board meeting (February 28th). Board members are asked to review the document and be prepared to vote at that meeting.

### III. **FIDUCIARY: BOARD STEWARDSHIP OF TANGIBLE ASSETS**

#### **Generosity Committee (GenCo) (Jaime)**

- On behalf of GenCo, Jaime expressed appreciation to board members in making calls to donors as part of the Reciprocity Campaign. Staff and board members' calls, along with the campaign's promotional materials, brought us very close to the financial target of the Reciprocity Campaign.
- GenCo decided not to produce the big fundraising event this year, due to administrative capacity and bandwidth. Instead, GenCo and Board members will be casting a wider net by doing one-on-one donor solicitation of members who haven't historically received individual donor outreach in the past. The financial goal is to not only cover the \$17k projected to be raised through a fundraising event, but to exceed that and aim for \$25k.

#### **Finance Committee Report (Dan)**

- Dan oriented the Board to ERC Funds and Kehilla's anticipated receipt of \$259k in these funds. He brought a proposal from the Finance Committee for how best to use these funds. [See the proposal here.](#) After a discussion,  
**VOTE:** Lisa made a motion to use the \$259k received from ERC to pay down our smaller mortgage at the end of its 5-year low rate term as proposed by the Finance Committee. Jamie seconded. Passed unanimously.

### IV. **GENERATIVE: SOURCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

#### **Board Recruitment Committee (Dina)**

- Dina reported that there wasn't much effort on board recruitment this past month as had been hoped. Ori had planned to meet with Michael Saxe-Taller to discuss future board member prospects before the meeting, but they had not yet spoken. Dina and Ori will report on the status of Board recruitment at the next meeting.

## **Organizational Development (Lisa)**

- Lisa gave a summary on the OD Consultant process including that the committee has:
  - Developed a draft RFP after obtaining input from 50 people throughout Kehilla representing key stakeholders groups throughout the community (BIPOC, working class, spiritual committee, parents, disabled folks and others.) The committee continues to refine the RFP to reflect the feedback they're receiving. An updated version of the RFP will be sent back out to all the contributors, as well as the Board and institutional leaders when ready.
  - The committee plans to begin gathering names of consultants and hopefully disseminate the RFP in mid March. Interested consultants will be invited to an information session to come and ask questions.
  - It is hoped that the interview process will begin in April.
  - The Committee has drafted a letter to the whole Kehilla community introducing the OD process that is beginning. Once the RFP is finalized the letter will be sent out to the community including the most current information.

## **Initiative of Change (formerly Arc of Change)**

- Stephanie tied the work of the OD Committee and its efforts to create a process that is equitable and decenters whiteness to a discussion on the status of the IoC.
  - The IoC leadership convened a recent meeting in which each IoC group provided an update on their efforts to advance their plans. (It may be possible for us to access a video of that meeting.) Stephanie reminded the Board that we continue to have important work to do as members of the IoC's Institutional Leaders Group. One member commented that it feels as though we have not paid much attention to the IoC work in the Board meeting and expressed a desire to bring Belonging and Allyship back into our consciousness, as board members, to "rewarm" the conversation.
  - Rachael, Michael, and Stephanie will talk about it further.

## **Board Retreat (Rachael)**

- The Board retreat was canceled due to severe rain. Rachael opened up her home for an informal brunch gathering in which a handful of people were able to attend. The Board leadership will look to reschedule the retreat.

## **V. ED Report (Michael S-T)**

### **Budget update**

- Michael S-T walked Board members through a review of the [financial statement](#) that covers the first six months of this fiscal year (July - December 2022). High level findings include:
  - The Board passed a budget at the start of this fiscal year which included a \$47k deficit in response to increased operational expenses. Unfortunately, at the half-way point in our fiscal year, it looks like we are at risk of experiencing a deficit closer to \$83k. This is a result of lower than projected income (~\$41k) from school tuition and school member dues, HHD (original budget presumed in-person services at Scottish Rites and continued threat of Covid led to multi-access services which didn't generate as much income from non-Kehilla members), rental income, individual donations and fundraising compounded by increased expenses in personnel-related costs, and inflation related increases in costs for repairs and supplies.

- **Proposed actions to address deficit:**
  - **Deeper Financial Analysis:** Dan and MST will go over budget expenses, line by line.
  - **Tighten Spending Where Possible:** MST will talk to the staff about being attentive to pulling back on purchases where not needed.
  - **Seek Member Renewals:** MST will ask Board members to assist in reaching out to the 50 households that have not yet renewed. He will re-share the spreadsheet and ask Board members to contact more families than they were originally assigned.
  - **Increase Space Rentals:** MST is looking for a referral to someone who has experience in renting out facilities to advise Dee and MST on avenues for boosting our rentals.
  - **Increase Member Donations:** Invite our members to give. Make as many calls as we can and make connections. This is an area where there is always potential for growth. If there is a reason that precludes individual Board members from conducting donor outreach, they are encouraged to speak with MST about this. Otherwise, it is an expectation of being on the Board.
  - **Increase Kehilla's Legacy Campaign:** Michael M indicated that this is already integrated into Kehilla's longer-term fundraising strategy.

#### **School and B'Mitzvah Program**

- The school brought in less income, and expenses were a bit higher than projected. While we changed the suggested sliding scale for school tuition, families didn't end up increasing their contribution. Is there a way to encourage more families to increase their contribution? Perhaps treat similarly to Kehilla's sustaining dues messaging – calculate and share what sustaining tuition per student costs Kehilla and ask families to pay more if they can or less if they can't.

Important to remember that our school attracts many of our Kehilla members to Kehilla and that these families contribute to Kehilla's overall budget through their membership dues. Any cost benefit analysis should factor this into the equation. Interesting analysis: How much of Kehilla's membership dues are from our school families?

- B'Mitzvah program is closer to paying for itself. At the same time, it takes more time and costs from our staff to administer than the school – rabbi, cantor, the manager, custodian.

**Explore viability of seeking contributions from extended family members of b'mitzvah students**

#### **Staffing Proposal:**

- Rabbi Gray is currently responsible for overseeing both the School and B'Mitzvah programs. Historically, both programs have had different people overseeing them. Staff have learned that having one person overseeing both is too demanding and unsustainable. Staff recommend dividing this responsibility into two staff members: a full-time position to run the school, and a half-time position to run the B'Mitzvah program. (Board members discussed the possibility of reducing the school director position to 80% time to reduce administrative costs, however staff indicated that it impacts our ability to recruit candidates in this employment market.) Staff are requesting the Board's approval to make this structural change and begin recruiting for two positions in advance of our next fiscal year's approved budget and Rabbi Gray's departure.
  - **VOTE:** Michael M made a motion to support restructuring the school and B'Mitzvah programs into a two-position leadership model. Dan seconded. All voted in favor.

**Two additional finance related items to discuss next month:**

- Bequest from Richard Kaplan
- Rabbi Emeritus Fund resources are almost fully expended. The Board needs to discuss the implications of this at next month's meeting.