**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

**Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, New Mexico**

**MINUTES**

**January 17, 2019**

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| **Trustees Present**: Jeff Brown, Pearie Bruder, Dee Cook, Luke Duddridge, Jeff Lewis, Art Lorbeer, Ruth Rubin, Ned Rubin, Ellen Torres, Rabbi Larry Karol (ex-officio) **Trustees Absent:** Cheryl Decker, Diane Fleishman, Michael Mandel, Joanne Turnbull**Guest(s):** Jim Rosenthal |

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Ellen Torres at 7:05 p.m.

**Invocation:** Rabbi Karol led the Board in the invocation.

**Acceptance of Minutes:** Dee Cook noted that the December 13, 2018 draft minutes should be revised to state that the hearing loop experiment was to involve only two rows in the Sanctuary. Luke Duddridge moved to accept the amended minutes, and Ned Rubin seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

**Rabbi’s Report**. The Rabbi said that the Religious School will organize and host the Tu Bish’vat Seder at 11:30 am on Sunday, January 27. A tree will be planted. He met with Temple Members to record a YouTube video that was posted on the Women of the Wall Facebook page. He continues to meet with Robert French from the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso (JFGEP) and with Rabbis Ben Zeidman and Scott Rosenberg from El Paso. His report discussed the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis convention in Palm Springs. The Rabbi and Rose Jacobs have almost completed the TBE Directory, and can send the Board a list of TBE members who have not yet confirmed their addresses and contact information. The Rabbi will attend the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Cincinnati on March 31-April 4. He noted that Julie Silver’s performance at the Temple has been changed to Wednesday, May 15 due to changes in her schedule.

**President’s Report**. President Ellen Torres said that we will have to replace the security alarm pad at the parking lot door. The vendor said that other alarm pads are wearing down. She met with the Rabbi, Michael Mandel and Robert French and discussed grant proposals that JFGEP had funded. JFGEP offered to host the “After Pittsburgh” discussion at TBE on January 23, and Mark Saltman will follow up on Las Cruces Police Department security training after this discussion. Mark has noted that the security cameras placed in the TBE parking lot for two weeks detected no unusual activities. The Temple has received $1,280 for Irving Batkin Memorial Scholarships. She noted concerns about dues that will be discussed during the Treasurer’s report. Dee Cook suggested expanding the Dues Committee so it can review the situation. Board members discussed requesting special contributions to the Temple. Ellen said that she and Michael Mandel could draft a letter. Ellen encouraged Board members to attend the March 3 Leadership workshop.

**Treasurer’s Report**. Jeff Brown presented the report for Michael Mandel. Michael had reported that incoming dues and other revenues may not meet this year’s expenditures. Members asked for a full review and report from the Treasurer and book keeper about any overdue dues, slow payments of dues, anticipated expenditures and other financial matters before any decisions can be made. Luke Duddridge moved that a special Board meeting be scheduled for Wednesday, January 30 to review the Temple’s budget.

**Committee Reports:**

Written reports are attached to these minutes. Ned Rubin brought a report about his meeting with the Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso. It has been added to the Committee and Group reports section in these minutes. Dee Cook gave an update on A Night At The Auction. There are 77 adults and 6 children registered to attend at this time, and there are 80 items up for bids. A list will be e-mailed to congregants. President Ellen and Jeff Lewis said that there are 37 keys out at this time. Some people might return keys if requested.

**Old Business:**

Jerry Silverman has written a column about the Building and Grounds Committee’s functions and activities for the February Adelante, and Diane Fleishman has agreed to write a future column about the Membership and Cemetery Committees.

Jeff Brown discussed an offer by NMSU’s Archives and Special Collections to return to the Temple some boxes of historical records that had been given to the Archives during the 1990s. A past Rabbi asked for their return, but they had not been returned. Some members of the History Committee have suggested that the Temple does not have enough space or proper conditions to store all historical records, including records already held by the Committee in various locations, the NMSU-held records, and any records that we acquire in the future. Luke Duddridge moved to ask NMSU to keep what it has. The motion asked the History Committee or a representative to begin discussions with NMSU’s Archivist to accept most of the historical records that we have. During discussion, members suggested keeping scrapbooks at TBE, making electronic copies of key documents and developing a list of the materials that are donated if NMSU’s Archivist agrees to accept them. This motion passed 6-0 with 2 abstentions. Jeff also discussed the March 10 speaker, Richard Melzer.

Jeff Lewis moved to put the Strategic Planning Committee’s proposed strategic plan back on the table. Jeff Brown seconded the motion. It passed 7-1. The Board discussed the proposal by the Committee to adopt a new Temple mission statement. The following statement was developed by the Board from the report: “*Temple Beth-El invites you to connect with us, with your sense of self, and with Judaism.  Join us on a rewarding and challenging pathway to a richer and more meaningful life*.” Jeff Lewis moved adopting this mission statement, with Ned Rubin seconding the motion, and it passed unanimously. Jeff Lewis will contact Renee Frank to inform her and the committee. Other proposals in the plan may be considered by TBE committees.

**New Business:**

President Ellen discussed timing in preparing election mailings to Temple members before the annual meeting. Jim Rosenthal determined that there will probably be 5 vacancies in the 2019 election. He asked Board members to each recommend individuals this month for consideration by the Nominating committee. The Rabbi noted that the next two years will be a period of transition for the Temple.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

**Date of Special Board Meeting**: Wednesday, January 30 @ 7:00 p.m. at Temple

**Date of Next Executive Committee Meeting**: **Monday, February 4** @ 6:00 p.m. at Temple.

**Date of Next Board of Trustees Meeting**: **Thursday, February 21** @ 7:00 p.m. at Temple.

**Future Dates: Executive Committee on Mondays**: March 4, April 8, May 6

**Future Dates: Board of Trustees on Thursdays**: March 21; April 18

**Date of Annual Meeting**: Thursday, May 9

Respectfully Submitted, Jeff Brown

**Committee and Group Reports:**

**Adult Education Committee**, Chair, Ned Rubin: Report combined with Social Action Committee report.

**Building and Grounds Committee**, Co-chairs Jerry Silverman, Norm Mazer, and Jeff Lewis: A new vacuum cleaner was purchased since the present one had failed. A request had been made to increase the number of handicap parking spaces.  Four additional parking spaces will be designated and implemented. Plans for January include annual testing of the Sewer Backflow system and annual testing of the Fire Alarm system.

**History Committee**, Co-Chairs Jeff Brown, Dee Cook, Linda Kruger, Susan Michelson, Nan Rubin: Dennis Daily, the director of NMSU’s Archives and Special Collections, sent a list of archival holdings to Jeff Brown. They met to discuss them. Separately, some historic materials were sent to Steve Haydu. The committee began to plan for March events.

**Israel Committee**, Chair, Phil Alkon: The committee met on January 14. The meeting topic was the program for the Public Forum on: “What We All Need to Know About Israel and Anti-Semitism.”  All participants had been sent a discussion draft outline of the proposed forum structure.  Frances Williams presented her alternative draft program outline for a forum to named “Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hate.”

 Considerable discussion was devoted to various aspects of anti-Semitism, and its current relation to Israel’s struggles in the Middle East.  The main purpose of the forum will be to make the local public more aware of the Jew-hatred dimensions of the considerable anti-Zionism misinformation to which our community, nation and the world are exposed.

 The group watched two videos that will be important components of the forum: Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks’ speech on “The Mutating Virus: Understanding Anti-Semitism”; and the choral performance by Holocaust survivors and their families in Israel sponsored by Koolulam. It was agreed that these videos will respectively serve as the opening and closing formal presentations of the forum Itself. Selected videos of Nikki Haley’s addresses to the UN will be included to illustrate the international dimensions of this challenge.

 The forum will emphasize the BDS movement and other U.S manifestations of this kind of anti-Semitism. The forum will include questions and comments from the audience. The important role of the moderator was noted, and the possibility of an IC panel to address audience comments was suggested.

 The forum is scheduled for 2:00 pm, Sunday, February 24, and will be held at Temple Beth-El.   The main event will take place in the Sanctuary, followed by refreshments and informal discussions in the Social Hall. It was suggested that there be coordination of forum planning and execution with other groups TBE (e.g., Adult Education Committee). The next meeting of the IC was tentatively scheduled for Monday, January 28. It will deal with (a) final approval of the forum program, (b) identification of tasks necessary to carry it out successfully; and (c) assignment of individual responsibilities for these tasks.

 Future meetings will be structured to assure a systematic and equal opportunity to every participant on each discussion topic.  Votes will be held on important decisions.

**Library Committee**, Chair Linda Kruger: Three large boxes of Young Adult and Juvenile books have been put in cartons and stored in a storeroom where a place was made for them by Dave Decker, president of the Mensch Club. Three shelves were thus vacated. There are 2 or 3 more to be vacated in the section between the corner workstation and the current end of the Dewey 296's. A small selection of books by well-known authors and/or illustrators of Judaic juvenile books has been retained in the Library including a handful of "E" books, targeted for the 18- month to 3 year old age group. (E meaning "easy").

 There are now approximately 2 shelves of adult Judaica (Dewey 296-296.8) works, newly cataloged, many somewhat recently published and by prominent authors, awaiting shelving from a cart on loan. We are anxious to return it.

 On January 2, 2019 congregant Jim Locatelli gave the Library a complete set of the Steinsaltz edition of the Talmud. This is the edition used by the Talmud class on Shabbat mornings before services. The Library's copy is incomplete. Individual volumes are very expensive (if they are available in the out-of-print market). This is a most welcome gift.

     Betsy Fuller, the Library's cataloger, has been away for several weeks. There is now a carton of duplicates ready for COAS.

**Mensch Club**, President Dave Decker: Funds were collected to purchase prayer books. Officers were elected: President David Decker, Vice President Luke Duddridge, Secretary Arthur Lorbeer, Treasurer David Zeemont. Members volunteered to provide security during Friday night services, and the Club reviewed their duties. The Club discussed a possible trip to the Alamogordo Space Museum on February 13. Dave Zeemont will discuss possible Deli Night dates with the Rabbi. Mike Lieberman and Art Lorbeer have mapped placement of the trial Loop System in the Sanctuary and have ordered supplies. The potential bake sale is on hold. The next meeting will be on February 17.

**Nominating Committee**, Chair Jim Rosenthal: The nominating committee won't meet again until January 28. In the meantime, Jim has requested an opportunity to meet with trustees at their next meeting to answer any questions they may have, and to also encourage trustees to recommend to our committee anyone they think may be potential candidates for election at the next annual meeting. As he has mentioned in the past, he thinks it is very important for the nominating process to be as broad and inclusive as possible and to be seen as a year-round endeavor.

**Security, Chair**: Mark Saltman: Through the Chanukah holiday, LCPD set up its surveillance trailer in our parking lot to monitor TBE. There were no reported incidents. Mark will be speaking with LCPD to gather more information about its active-shooting training and will report back.

**Sisterhood**, Representative, Dee Cook: The Sisterhood Council will meet in February.

**Social Action Committee**, Chair, Ned Rubin: The January 8 meeting was spent reviewing and finalizing plans for the program on **immigration. T**he committee decided to integrate a discussion of the poem and the history of Emma Lazarus into a fuller conversation about immigration, taking place over two successive weeks on **February 6 and February 13, 2019** from 6:30 to 9 pm on both evenings.

 The first evening will be spent discussing and evaluating the poem, *The New Colossus,* by Emma Lazarus, a presentation by Nan Rubin on Emma Lazarus, and an opportunity for participants to look at their own immigration histories in small group discussion.

 The second evening of the program will consist of a brief presentation of the history of immigration in the United States looking at how this impacted various ethnic groups to be presented by Andrea Orzoff. There will then be a panel presentation representing various aspects of the immigration system in the U.S.; a representative from Customs and Border Protection has been invited, but we’ve had no response so far; both a Federal prosecutor (Mark Saltman) and a Federal public defender (Barbara Mandel), and a local immigration judge (Judge Robert Brack), each looking at their various roles and responsibilities in this complex system. Finally, there will be another opportunity for participant discussion, addressing various issues surrounding this topic stimulated by discussion.

**Youth Committee**, Chair Leora Zeitlin: BETY and BEMY will resume meeting in February.

**JFFF**, Co-chairs Francine Feinberg and Rose Jacobs: There have been two full committee meetings and several individual meetings thus far. Since we are the new chairs of the JFFF, most of the discussions have revolved around our attempts to understand how the entire process gets done.

 All the committees have chairs and most have co-chairs assigned.

 Francine is working with Mike Mandel and Jennifer the accountant to develop an easy-to-use system to track the source of all revenue and expenses for 2019.  This will allow us to make decisions and adjustments for the future. This will not affect the system of accounting currently in place for the temple.

 Francine is also developing a manual with committee job descriptions, lists of purchases, vendors, sponsors, ads, etc.  This will help new chairs of JFFF, future committee chairs and someone taking over for a person no longer interested in or unable to provide the help that they contributed in the past.

 Mike Mandel, who functioned as the cashier last year, will be out of town.  Allen Blum has agreed to take his place.

**Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso**, TBE Representative Ned Rubin: Ned attended a recent meeting. Temple Mount Sinai has a social action project to providing a meal to Annunciation House every Sunday.  They asked Temple Beth-El to inform members about possible donations through PayPal. Monetary donations are needed more urgently than food or clothes.  It costs about $150,000/month to help immigrant families through Annunciation House.  They also urgently need Spanish speakers to help intake immigrants when they are dropped off by CBP.

The second agenda item was the El Paso Good Deeds Day, April 7. This is the same date as JFFF. The Council was quite open to TBE having our own Good Deeds Day on another Sunday in April or May if we want.  Some people from El Paso might come up to participate with us.  Ned requests that this become a Board agenda item.

The Council discussed a group called the Border Interfaith Group.  They are trying to reconstitute from a previous iteration and have asked the Federation whether would consider becoming a part.  Ned was told Muslims and other groups have also been invited. He told the Council about the Interfaith group with which the Rabbi is involved, and the strong and supportive relationships he seems developed among the participants.  Ned sees some strengths in having Jewish interfaith involvement at the border.  He does not know whether clergy from Mexico have been invited. The Council will have further discussions about potential interfaith involvement.

Ned noted that there is an organization called Avodah House.  <https://avodah.net/who-we-are/our-story/>. The Council had some possible interest in starting one in El Paso and this may be discussed in the future.