

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Date: December 14, 2017

Trustees Present: Allen Blum, Jeff Brown, Pearie Bruder, Diane Fleishman, Jeff Lewis, Michael Lieberman, Michael Mandel, Ellen Torres, Rabbi Larry Karol (ex-officio)
Trustees Absent: Ann Berkson, Susan Brown, Dee Cook, Susan Michelson, Ned Rubin
Guest(s): Nicole Martinez, Leora Zeitlin, Amalia Zeitlin

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by President Ellen Torres at 7:03 pm.

Invocation: Rabbi Karol gave the invocation and discussed one-word responses about the meaning of Hanukkah. We lit menorah candles and said blessings for the third night of Hanukkah.

Acceptance of Minutes: Diane Fleishman moved that the November 16, 2017 meeting minutes be adopted. Mike Mandel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Leadership/Board Reports

A. Guest Comments. Presentations and discussions with Nicole Martinez, Leora Zeitlin and Amalia Zeitlin are discussed below in this report.

B. Rabbi's Report. (Highlights) The Rabbi's complete report was distributed at the meeting. He gave a Boston biennial report and noted that URJ.org has on-line videos about the meeting. The next biennial in 2019 will be in Chicago. Tina Wasserman told him that she really enjoyed meeting with our congregants. Forty people attended the annual Interfaith conversation at the Temple on November 19. There will be Havdalah and a minyan/service for Willie Pass at the Temple on December 16, 2017. The Rabbi signed a contract for Cantor Robyn Helzner's presentation on January 22, 2018. The Rabbi will publish a chapter in Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity (CCAR Press). He will attend the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis convention in Palm Springs on January 7-11, 2018. TBE will have four bar/bat mitzvahs through June 2018, including Joshua Rosenberg on December 30, 2017. Mike Lieberman moved that the Board approve \$19,000 for the Rabbi's annual parsonage, an amount identical to the 2017 amount. Pearie Bruder seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The Board concurred that Bill Soules and Joanne Ferrary could rent the social hall for a community forum that will probably be held on January 9, 2018.

C. President's Report. President Ellen Torres noted that Pearie Bruder has agreed to write a column in the January Adelante about her involvement in Judaism and how it has been affected by her Board membership. Mike Mandel will write the February column and Mike Lieberman will write the March column. Ellen discussed her experiences at the Boston biennial. Several of the sessions that she attended focused on volunteers and leadership. She attended huge and very moving religious services, met Alden Solovy and heard Elizabeth Warren speak. She discussed attending a learning session with futurist

Bob Johanssen who urged people to think ten years ahead of the present moment. Ellen noted that the Irving Batkin Memorial Fund has generated \$969 for scholarships that will be determined by the Rabbi, President and Treasurer. She read Ned Rubin's message that Temple Beth El/Social Action and the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces are sponsoring a community forum on electoral issues at TBE on January 30. The session may be broadcast and recorded by KTAL. Peter Ossorio will moderate; participants are Scott Krahling, Randy Harris, and Vicki Harris (NM Common Cause). Ellen noted that we will learn after December 20 about the fate of the grant proposals submitted to the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso.

D. Treasurer's Report. Jeff Brown acting in lieu of a Treasurer distributed the November financial reports prepared by Jennifer Blazer. Members raised questions about funds lent in advance of events such as the Renaissance Faire and Tina Wasserman's visit that will be repaid from Ren Faire profits and the Jewish Federation's Wasserman grant; the timing of telephone system repair invoices; a need for greater clarity about what payments to the Central Conference of American Rabbis covered; and other topics. Ellen asked members to send budget report questions so that Jennifer can provide more information. Budget reports will be distributed in advance of future Board meetings. Allen Blum asked that committee chairs be encouraged to submit their 2018-2019 budget requests well in advance of the next congregational meeting to facilitate the budget process.

Committee Reports. The written committee reports received before the meeting were distributed and are appended to this report. Some committee reports below are amended to reflect discussion at the Board about topics.

Old Business.

- A. The task force reviewing the Rabbi's administrative duties will discuss its proposals at the January Board meeting.
- B. Jeff Brown reported on the Leadership group's recent meetings. Members have suggested ways to involve Temple members in sacred leadership. The group will meet on Sunday, December 17 at Ellen's home for further discussion. The project will need to be implemented fairly soon in order to assist the Nomination Committee in its work. Mike Mandel suggested that there might be costs for Leadership meetings and that the Nominating Committee might want to submit a future budget request.
- C. Pearie Bruder reported about the shed. Materials have been placed in it. Jeff Lewis said that he has worked with Dave Decker to get five keys. Jeff noted that he and others had met with Sutherland's to discuss building a partial loft and shelves in the shed. Sutherland's offered a discount \$205.73 price to buy these materials. Mike Lieberman moved using remaining funds from the \$2,000 previously approved for the shed to carry this the purchase, and Diane Fleishman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The Board discussed whether the Building & Grounds Committee or the Mensch Club should take the lead in shed matters. No decision was reached.

- D. Jeff Brown and Jeff Lewis distributed a list of fund raising ideas from several sources. Mike Lieberman noted that the Temple may still have bingo materials. Board members were asked to provide additional ideas by January and to come to a conclusion by February about one or two new fund raising activities.
- E. The task force reviewing the Rabbi's administrative duties will discuss its proposals at the January Board meeting.
- F. The discussion about the location of the plaque honoring David Brandhorst was postponed to January.
- G. The boards of Temple Beth-El and Sonoma Springs Covenant Church will have a potluck dinner at 6:00 on January 28 at TBE so members will get to know each other.
- H. The Board slated the annual congregational Havdallah and dinner for 5:30 pm on Saturday, January 27. Jeff Brown moved that the dinner be renamed "Erev Simcha, Evening of Joy." Pearie Bruder seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed 7-1.
- I. Several members signed up to present Board announcements at services in 2018.

New Business

- A. The Board discussed the vacant Treasurer position. Ann Berkson had previously stated her decision to resign from the Board. Mike Lieberman moved that Stu Fleischman be added to the Board, and that Stu become Treasurer. Pearie Bruder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The discussion noted that the By-Laws are silent about whether two members from the same family may serve on the Board at the same time.
- B. As noted above, Robyn Helzner will give a presentation on January 22.
- C. The Board discussed whether TBE should have a menorah in the new downtown plaza or develop similar types of public displays. It was noted that the Sun News has given front page coverage to Hanukkah at the Temple. Some felt that all publicity for TBE was good, while others noted that Reform Judaism is not a proselytizing faith. The Board will review this topic further in the future.
- D. Members noted that the Temple alarm system has not been activated by persons leaving the building at times when no one remained present in the building. This is a security concern.

Guest Comments:

Allen Blum introduced Nicole Martinez from the Community of Hope. They were the Temple's partners in the golf tournament. We gave a \$615 check to the Community for its role. Nicole thanked the Temple for holding the tournament and caring about Camp Hope, which currently has 34 residents. She anticipated having 34 to 35 residents at the annual

Christmas breakfast. Jeff Lewis and Susan Fitzgerald have been organizing the Temple's assistance at Camp Hope.

Leora Zeitlin and Amalia Zeitlin discussed annual BETY/BEMY activities and the Youth Committee's finances. Leora noted that there had been a number of advisors over the years. Since there were 15 to 16 young advisees during many years, a professional BETY advisor was paid \$1,000 per year, plus an additional \$150 if the advisor supervised youth during a three-day meeting in Phoenix. The salary was increased by an additional \$500 when BEMY youth were added to the advisor's responsibilities. The Regional group covered the advisor's fee and airfare if at least five students went to Phoenix. Students raised their own Phoenix expense funds. The Temple has added \$700 from its budget for participation by students in other events, with any residue funds going back to the Temple budget. Students raised another \$100 for this past year's trip. Allen Blum asked Leora to provide more details in the next year budget request, and she agreed. There are currently seven BETY students and nine BEMY students.

Executive Session: There was no executive session.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Date of next Executive Committee Meeting: Tuesday, January 2, 2018 @ 6:30 pm

Date of next Board of Trustees Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2017 @ 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Brown

Committee Reports – December 14, 2017 Board Meeting

Acquisitions, Specific Gifts, Aesthetics: Ann Berkson, chair, written report. "The aesthetics committee is waiting to get our last framed piece so that we can hang all six in the social hall."

Biblical Garden & Brick Walkway: Alison Mann, chair, written report.

"Tina Wasserman weekend: Thanks to the wonderful committee chairs, the Wasserman weekend proved to be fun, informative, and a different type of event for the Temple. Even though this was not a fundraising event for TBE, we actually made some money from the ticket and book sales after all the expenses were paid.

As overall chair, I will share that I was disappointed in the turn out from Temple and Board members. Perhaps cooking just isn't a passion for people, though as Tina said, food has been a link to being Jewish for centuries. And perhaps because there was a cost to two events, Temple members felt they couldn't participate, though even when Tina spoke at the Friday night service which has no cost, attendance was sparse.

In evaluating this event for the future, I would say that the area of interest was too narrow, and that even minimum charges for non-holiday related events, are viewed negatively by the Temple membership.

Biblical Garden: As you know, the Biblical Garden is a long-term project which we hope will continue to bring revenue to the Temple for many years to come. In the meantime, the garden enhances the beauty of the Temple and the walkway provides a sense of continuity to previous events and people. We will continue to advertise the bricks in the Adelante... and we do have money now for a Holocaust plaque which was part of the original design of the Garden. We also will put small plaques by the plant material for the donors of those items. I plan a January meeting..... after the lengthy hiatus!"

Building and Grounds: Jerry Silverman, co-chair, written report. "The primary task this month has been installation of a new telephone system. The old system, approximately 20 years old, was destroyed by a power surge several weeks ago.

An activity related to the replacement of seven burned out parking lot lights is in progress. It appears that replacement of the old mercury lamps would not be cost-effective compared to replacement of all lamps with new technology LED lights. The initial cost assessment indicates the savings in electricity would recover the cost within three years."

History: Jeff Brown, chair, written report. "The History Committee rescheduled its December 10 oral history training to Sunday, January 21, 2018 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. in the temple social hall. Nan Rubin will conduct the training. The committee will also hold an oral history interviewing session on Sunday, January 28, 2018 from 1:00 to 4:00. This will also be in the temple social hall. Jeff has been in contact with Wil Kilroy from NMSU's Department of Theater Arts as well as oral history volunteers. He plans to conduct an interview in December with a temple pioneer."

Leadership/Nominating: Jim Rosenthal, chair, written report. "The leadership committee continues to deliberate. We meet later this month, after the URJ Conference in Boston, during which Ellen will attend a special session specifically about leadership training etc. So, I expect she will come back with some thoughts about our project. That's it for now. I have asked each of the leadership group members to submit a description of what the first leadership congregational meeting might look like and I am still awaiting these." Jeff Brown's oral supplement at the Board meeting has been discussed above.

Library: Linda Kruger, chair, written report. "The Temple's entire land line connections have been severed since sometime during week of T'giving. Rabbi said a work ticket was supposed to have been issued. As of Wed., 11/29, nothing yet fixed. Library copier not working for 3 weeks now. HP computer congregants use cannot be loaded with library catalog + Internet connectivity very erratic. Rabbi & Dave Zeemont tried to fix, can't. Must call Kosh Solutions to fix printer & computer systems, must have land line connectivity. Can't install library catalog link to Temple's website library link until all of the above is fixed. Reemphasize NEED IS URGENT." Jeff Brown provided a supplement from Dave Zeemont at the Board meeting. The Kosh firm has fixed the Library computer, although security systems need to be installed, and Kosh will give an estimate for providing a wireless router booster in the social hall.

Mensch: Mike Mandel, representative, written report. "Dave Zeemont has said that there is nothing to report yet." An oral supplement at the Board meeting noted that the Israel

Committee and Mensch Club are co-sponsoring the film “In Our Hands.” The groups have determined set-up and cleaning responsibilities, and the Rabbi will cover security needs from his discretionary fund.

Social Action: Ned Rubin, chair, verbal report by Ellen Torres. “The Social Action and League Women Voters January 30 community forum at TBE was discussed in the minutes above.”

Strategic Planning: Renee Frank, chair, written report. “The Strategic Planning Committee is forming and will begin operating in January 2018. So far committee members include Phil Alkon, Jeff Brown and Monika Kimball. One or two additional members are being sought.”