

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Date: March 16, 2017

Trustees Present: Allen Blum, Sue Brown, Dee Cook, Diane Fleishman Renee Frank, Michael Lieberman, Susan Michelson, Ned Rubin, Ellen Torres, Rabbi Larry Karol (ex-officio)
Trustees Absent: Ann Berkson, Pearie Bruder, Jeff Lewis, Erich Zameret.
Guest(s): Jim Rosenthal

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by President Ellen Torres at 7:02 pm.

Invocation: Rabbi Karol gave the Invocation, reading a letter from Aaron Koller, Associate Professor of Near Eastern and Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University, to President Trump.

Acceptance of Minutes. Ellen asked for acceptance of the minutes of the February 16, 2017 meeting. Michael Lieberman raised a question about the previous correction of the minutes for the January 19 meeting. He believes that changing the door tension to the bathrooms will not address the problem. He requested a further correction to the minutes saying the only way to make the doors to the bathrooms easier to maneuver for wheelchair access is to automate the doors. He estimates it will cost \$1400 to automate each door. This item will be discussed at a future meeting. Ned Rubin moved to accept the minutes with these corrections, and Diane Fleishman seconded. Minutes were accepted as corrected.

Leadership / Board Reports

A. **Rabbi's Report.** (Highlights) Complete report is attached.

1. Rabbi Karol reported that nearly 50 people attended the Family Shabbat/Shabbat Across America service on March 3. The local chapter of Hadassah Sabbath led a Hadassah Shabbat on March 10. The Mensch Club has approached him wanting to take part in a Shabbat service soon.
2. The Purim Carnival and Dinner was successful, with a multi-generational crowd on March 11.
3. The series on the book WISE AGING concluded on March 8, and this year's series of Judaism: Roots and Rituals concluded on February 28.
4. The Rabbi was a participant in a discussion of anti-Semitism during the Las Cruces International Folk Festival on March 9, following the screening of the 1992 film, "School Ties."
5. His monthly article in the Bulletin focused on the American Values/Religious Voices campaign.

B. **President's Report.**

1. President Ellen Torres had sent out a survey questionnaire to Trustees prior to the board meeting asking questions about our thoughts on TBE relationships, meaning and impact. She had learned about this survey at the URJ's Scheidt Seminar for Temple Presidents, and felt this would be a very effective point of discussion. She urged each Trustee to turn them in to her.

2. She mentioned the URJ Board training on May 7, with Jim Cherney of the URJ facilitating. She will host a reception for Mr. Cherney at her home on May 6 at about 7:00 pm. All Trustees are invited to come.
3. Ellen is still looking for a replacement for TBE's open seat on the Jewish Federation Board, and encourages anyone interested to get in touch with her. Pearie Bruder has indicated that she is interested. She will also be calling for nominees for the Volunteer Recognition at the Federation's Annual Meeting in June.

C. Treasurer's Report.

1. Treasurer Allen Blum provided an extensive Statement of Activity for the period ending February 28, 2017. The main concern is that TBE may fall short of collecting member pledges that were budgeted for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. All other receipts and expenses are pretty much in line with expectations.
2. He reported that he has been working with Linda Kruger and Dave Zeemont (see Library Committee report below) to locate and restore missing funds that had been pledged to the Library. Approximately \$5,000 has been identified and is being restored to the Library fund.

Committee Reports: Only Committees with Reports Are Shown

- A. Sisterhood Report – Dee Cook, Sisterhood Representative. Dee Cook reported that there haven't been enough RSVPs yet for the Seder scheduled for April 11. They are in the process of making calls.
- B. Mensch Club Report – Jeff Lewis, Mensch Club Representative.
- C. Acquisitions, Specific Gifts, and Aesthetics Committee – Ann Berkson, Chair.
- D. Adult Education Committee – Rose Jacobs, Chair.
Andrea Orzoff lecture on "Music in Flight", March 5, 40 attendees
- E. Budget Committee – Allen Blum, Chair.
- F. Building and Grounds Committee – Jerry Silverman/Norm Mazer/Jeff Lewis, Co-Chairs.
- G. Cemetery Committee – Diane Fleishman, Chair.
Ron Roseman from Houston, TX, called Ellen to find out if his uncle, Jerome Alter who died in April 2012, was buried in the Masonic Cemetery, Jewish section. He wants to buy a plot for his aunt, Sarah Rita Alter, wife of Jerome, age 81, who is not doing well. Diane found out that Jerome Alter is buried in Masonic, and will call Mr. Roseman with the information he requested.
- H. Dues Committee – Michael Mandel, Chair.
- I. History Committee – Jeff Brown, Chair.
 - Jeff became chair of the TBE History Committee in March 2017, and has begun asking individuals to serve on the Committee. One person with experience involving the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the 2016 NMJHS conference panel about the Jews of Las Cruces has agreed to serve. Another person with very substantial TBE experience may serve on the Committee, but would like to wait until after the JFFF. A former TBE member with research interests involving Israel would like to serve on or assist the Committee, perhaps through guiding graduate student research about TBE or organizing papers/panels linking TBE and Temple Mount Sinai. There are inquiries out to two more persons with much research/archival experience, and he may ask another person.
 - Ellen has asked the Committee to develop a short statement about the Committee's roles and activities for the Temple By-Laws. I will draft a statement, circulate it among Committee members, and present our draft to the April TBE Board meeting.

- I will seek to learn before the April Board meeting what research materials may already be at the Temple, and will assess TBE-related documents (letters, oral history tapes or transcripts, and photos) at NMSU's Library collections. I will contact a UTEP Inter-American Jewish Studies Program or ask the former TBE member listed above to see if the program has Las Cruces materials. I will ask Sisterhood if it still has a scrapbook of newspaper articles and minutes.
- In addition to e-circulating a draft By-Laws paragraph among the Committee, I will develop an agenda prior to its first Committee meeting. I had considered a late-March or early-April first meeting, but it may be best to wait until after JFF. I will ask Ellen to attend the meeting.
- Some agenda items might include: General goals for the Committee ranging from learning more about research materials that have already been collected to asking TBE members to help start new collections of TBE bulletins, letters, photos, and tapes; encouraging more research; encouraging writing about TBE history or developing media presentations; encouraging presentations about TBE's history to TBE members, potential members and the public; encouraging collaborations with NMSU; encouraging a TBE History Day for new interviews and collections; discussing the possibility of asking BEMY/BETY, Sisterhood, the Mensch Club or NMSU Hillel to participate; seeking more NMJHS sessions about TBE; recommending sites to the Board to store research materials; and developing a budget request (for example, for filing cabinets). Perhaps we could ask the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso for funds.
- The Committee would be delighted to receive feedback and ideas from the Board!

J. Library Committee – Linda Kruger, Chair.

An inquiry was sent by Linda Kruger and Dave Zeemont about what they believed to be a discrepancy in balance of library account. Allen Blum, Treasurer, reviewed the accounts going back to before the transition to Rakefet, and has found that there should have been a balance of approximately \$5,000. It appears in the change-over to Rakefet, the funds had been inadvertently placed in the general fund. Steps are being taken to restore the balance to the library account.

K. Marketing and Public Relations Committee – Aggie Saltman, Chair.

L. Membership and Outreach Committee – Diane Fleishman, Chair.

We are collecting information on new people to Las Cruces who have attended services and events. We are following up with them to see if they are interested in becoming members.

M. Nominating Committee – Jim Rosenthal, Chair.

The Nominating Committee has held a couple of meetings and is continuing to meet. Jim attended the meeting tonight and presented a proposal regarding a change in the wording of Article 2, Duties of Committees, Section 11, Article 2 of the Bylaws: "The Nominating Committee will present a single slate of nominees consisting of at least two (2) names in excess of the number of vacancies on the Board of Trustees for the annual Congregational meeting." The proposal is to not include two names in excess.

N. Social Action Committee - Ned Rubin, Chair.

Briefly discussed the potential for a panel or round-table or some other format for a presentation on some aspects of the Jewish ethical perspective on various medical decisions. Next meeting, for anyone interested, is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21 at 1:30 pm at TBE. Also, a new Havurah meeting will be held on March 25th at the Lapid's home.

O. Technology Committee – Dave Zeemont, Chair.

P. Ways and Mean Committee – Lionel Jacobs, Chair.

- A flurry of work is underway to prepare for the Jewish Food and Folk Festival, which will be on April 23. Depending on volunteers is the only way that JFFF can happen! Please let Rose Jacob at arejay11@icloud know that you can volunteer for a shift that day. Sue Mazer is collecting nice items for the Silent Auction. Her contact info is on the sheet as well. We could always use more sponsorships and ads in the program book. We would like to ask Board members to recruit any sponsors and contact Terri Sugarman to coordinate. You can buy a one-line message in the program book for \$18. You can contact Emile Elias to have one included in the book. We need people to bake the desserts that will be sold. We are adding rugelach this year. If you would like to help, contact Dia Taylor. Tickets will be sent to the printer soon and we will be asking Board members to sell tickets to the event.

- The committee was planning a Nibbles & Wine event for Sunday, October 15 at 7:00 pm at TBE. The charge is \$25 per person, which includes a wine glass and 10 tastes. Proceeds will go to TBE Religious School. Donations are being solicited from local wineries and restaurants. There will be raffle prizes and an auction item. A committee has been formed to work on this event—Rose Jacobs, Marianne Rosenthal, Monika Kimball, Sue Mazer, Lionel Jacobs, Alison Mann, and Francine Feinberg. The October 15th date has been relinquished in favor of the Matzo Ball Open: now looking to be held at the end of February. Allen Blum is meeting with Red Hawk on Wednesday 15th regarding the Matzo Ball Open.

Q. Youth Activities Committee: Leora Zeitlin, Chair.

Three students are registered to attend the NFTY Social Action Weekend (SAW) in April. We are looking for scholarship support for them to attend.

- Andrea and Leora will be added as signatories to the BETY account at Citizens Bank –as soon as we are all available to meet together.
- Other activities that are being considered include the Las Cruces Clean Up Day in April, asking upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah families if the youth can support in any way, and coordinating with the JFFF organizers for support.
- Because of her travel schedule, Julie Seton has had to resign as Co-Chair of the Youth Activities Committee. Leora Zeitlin will be stepping back in as the Chair.

Old Business

- A. URJ Leadership Training Update & Reception Plans—May 6 evening reception at Ellen’s home; May 7 all-day Board Training
- B. Jewish Federation Grant Update—Scholars in Residence, Dates, & Volunteers Needed—Work on the events will take place after the JFFF
- C. Mike Batkin Feb 26 Meeting Update. On February 26, Mike Batkin met with the President, Treasurer, and the Rabbi (these 3 individuals comprise the Trustees of the Batkin Fund. Currently the Irving Batkin fund balance is almost \$20,000. Mike Batkin announced he will match any contributions to the Batkin fund up to a total of \$1800 this year.
- D. Sign-ups for Board Announcements.

New Business

- A. Actions resulting from Committee Reports. Jim Rosenthal, Chair of the Nominating Committee, brought a recommendation to the Board stating that the time for having two names in excess of the number of vacancies on the Board is passed. There are many reasons to eliminate this language, none the least of which is that it has been exceedingly difficult to find candidates for the actual vacancies, much less 2 additional. And having names in excess of the number of vacancies means that there will be winners and losers, and that doesn’t seem to be in the spirit of honoring our volunteers who have shown a willingness to serve. The congregation will still be able to nominate additional names from the floor at the Congregational Meeting. Renee Frank moved to change the By-Laws under Article 2, Section 11 to say: “The Nominating Committee will present a single slate of nominees corresponding to the number of vacancies on the Board of Trustees for the annual Congregational meeting.” Ned seconded; the motion carried.
- B. Debit Card Inquiry and URJ financial recommendations for treasurers and boards. Ellen brought back recommendations from the URJ Scheidt Conference on how Treasurers

should operate. Within the Board, a question had been raised about the Treasurer being able to have a TBE debit card to use for paying for expenses in lieu of having to write checks for everything. The primary concern was that the Board was not informed of the initiation of a debit card until recently. It was discussed that the card actually makes it easier to process payments, and there is a detailed paper trail supporting each expenditure. All expenditures are entered into Rakefet, so nothing is unaccounted for. Allen said that he uses the debit card limitedly. There was also discussion about requiring two signatures rather than one for any check over \$1,000. Allen proposed a change to the Bylaws that would clarify that payments in an amount over \$1,000 would require signatures from two persons authorized to sign checks. The Board disagreed that the Bylaws should be used to include these details, but rather that a policy could be written explaining these financial stipulations. Allen agreed to write a policy including these details.

C. Annual Congregational Meeting.

1. Date tentatively set for Tuesday, May 16

2. Trustees to review the TBE Constitution and Bylaws and determine if amendments should be brought to the Congregation. Since there wasn't time to bring all ideas and recommendations forward, all Trustees are encouraged to read through the Constitution and By-Laws and make recommendations for appropriate changes. These can be sent in by email prior to the next meeting.

D. Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso Yom Ha'Atzmaut event on May 7 -- Includes Art & Video contest for students and youth on the theme "How Israel Changes the World." They want all member organizations to consider hosting a booth at the event that includes a children's activity. Ellen contacted Phil Alkon, chair of our Israel Committee, to represent TBE at the Federation event. Phil said he would attend.

Guest Comments. See New Business, Agenda Item A.

Executive Session: There was no executive session.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Date of next Executive Board Meeting: Monday, April 3, 2017 @ 5:30 pm

Date of next Board of Trustees Meeting: Thursday, April 20, 2017 @ 7:00pm, 3rd Thursday