

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces, New Mexico

MINUTES

November 15, 2018

Trustees Present: Jeff Brown, Sue Brown, Dee Cook, Cheryl Decker, Luke Duddridge, Diane Fleishman, Jeff Lewis, Ruth Rubin, Ellen Torres, Joanne Turnbull, Rabbi Larry Karol (ex-officio)
Trustees Absent: Pearie Bruder, Michael Mandel, Ned Rubin,
Guest(s): Phil Alkon, Lilah Berkson, Rebecca Berkson, Renee Frank, Steve Haydu, Bob Kimball, Monika Kimball, Norm Mazer, Mark Saltman

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: Luke Duddridge moved accepting the October 18, 2018 Board Minutes, and Sue Brown seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Leadership/Board Reports

Rabbi's Report. The Rabbi distributed a report about his activities. It will be printed in the Adelante. He is working with the Social Action Committee to prepare for the November 18 interfaith activities, and will write a column about our interfaith activities for the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's Legacy newsletter. We have had guest presenters at Religious School. The Rabbi learned many new songs at Shabbat Shira in Wisconsin. He attended a celebration of life for Sherlyn Shervanick. He met with Robert French (Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso, Rabbi Ben Zeidman (Temple Mount Sinai) and Rabbi Scott Rosenberg (Congregation B'nai Zion) to discuss our mutual work. The Rabbi is working with Rose Jacobs to update the directory. He will attend the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis convention on January 6-10 in California. He discussed our very moving October 28 memorial/vigil after the attack in Pittsburgh.

President's Report. President Ellen Torres distributed the Treasurer's Report. She gave an update on Matzo Ball Open finances. Our net profit may be between \$6,000 and \$7,000, of which we will donate \$1,000 to Mesilla Valley Hospice at the December Board meeting. She thanked everyone who had led or contributed to activities that made MBO a success. Ellen discussed the Renaissance Faire. Although we do not have final totals, we will probably earn close to \$2,500, with a 20% share of that going to our Center for Spiritual Living partners. She discussed sending thanks to Wil Kilroy for his many roles in making the October 7 play possible, and read a thanks letter to Professor Kilroy's Dean. We distributed a card for Professor Kilroy. Ellen discussed the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso's questions about our two grant requests for 2019. We should learn the results of our requests by December. Ellen discussed

the December 16 leadership meeting, and noted that we may change the dates for the February leadership meeting. She noted that our Web site has largely been restored and that the communications meeting involving Steve Haydu and Aggie Saltman among others was very productive.

Committee Reports: Written reports are attached to these minutes.

Old Business:

Steve Haydu took photographs of Board members before we began our business meeting. We discussed the Center for Spiritual Living's participation this year in the Renaissance Faire. The potential Deli Dinner has been postponed. President Ellen noted that our Board biographies for the next months are set up. She urged all Board members to attend the December 16 leadership workshop.

Dee Cook and Cheryl Decker gave a report about A Night at the Auction. 16 events or services have been pledged so far, and an E-Blast will remind congregants about the auction. Ellen asked all Board members to provide at least one service or event, and several noted that they will provide two services or events.

We discussed clearing more space in the very crowded storage room near the Bimah for excess Library books. The Rabbi will ask other temples what they have done regarding prayer books that are no longer in use. Jeff Lewis will ask the Mensch Club options for clearing space, and a board member suggested adding taller shelves in Temple classrooms.

President Ellen reminded Board members that they should participate in the November 16 Installation Service.

The discussion about posting live streams or videotapes of worship services and Board meetings is postponed until December.

New Business:

Mark Saltman provided an extensive report and discussion about security considerations. We have six security cameras on the periphery, and a portable device that amplifies the doorbell ringing when the doors are locked. We have many deadbolted rooms. LCPD can provide a temporary camera trailer, and is prepared for fast response when we send alerts from our three alert buttons. LCPD can do security training in early 2019. Luke Duddridge said that the Mensch Club can be asked to provide additional people to assist in welcoming people and keeping an eye out for threatening situations. The Board discussed the costs of hiring additional security personnel. We do not have a budget line item yet for this. We thanked Mark for his dedicated work.

Renee Frank gave a presentation about the Strategic Planning Committee report. She discussed steps taken by the committee to explore why Jews participate in Temple. The committee suggested a new mission statement focusing on connectedness. The report included a number

of potential new activities or steps. Renee asked that the Board send the report to committees to ask whether there are activities that they wish to implement. President Ellen suggested that the committee contact Amy Asin to review their draft mission statement. She noted that a Board member should have been part of the committee as a liaison back to the Board. Guests and Board members discussed some committee recommendations as reviving a telephone tree. Ellen noted that the Board would review the document and get back to the committee. We thanked committee members for their work.

Joanne Turnbull subsequently moved adding a Board member to the Strategic Planning Committee. Sue Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Ellen will inform Renee about this.

The Board concurred that we should add a taller recycle basket to the social hall. Details about purchasing it were not discussed.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Date of Next Executive Board Meeting: **Monday, December 3 @ 6:00 p.m.** at Temple

Date of Next Board of Trustees Meeting: **Thursday, December 13 @ 7:00 p.m.** at Temple.

Respectfully Submitted, Jeff Brown

Committee and Group Reports:

Acquisitions, Specific Gifts, Aesthetics, Ann Berkson, Chair: Nothing new to report.

Adult Education Committee, Ned Rubin, Chair: Nothing new to report.

Building and Grounds Committee: Chairs, Jerry Silverman, Norm Mazer, Jeff Lewis: 1. Painted parking spaces in the handicapped area. 2. Cleaned accumulated sand washed in by rains. 3. Installed solar lights by driveway and sign. 4. Repaired flat tires on handcart. 5. Mowed grass in playground. 6. Installed Plexiglass on sign at dumpster doors. Dave will continue to paint new handicapped spaces and will finish painting white lines. He is also planning to build a small wall by the dumpster to keep sand from washing onto the parking lot.

Cemetery Committee, Diane Fleishman, Chair: Two cemetery plots have been purchased.

History Committee, Jeff Brown, Chair: The October 30 oral history panel at TBE went well. Jeff thanked Dee Cook and Cheryl Decker for assisting with refreshments. Steve Haydu posted two earlier Adelante issues on the TBE Web site. The History Committee met on November 8. Jeff said that he would be stepping down as chair in December. The Committee asked that Jeff determine whether Ellen Torres has an alternate chair in mind, and Jeff later sent out a

suggestion from his wife that the Committee adopt a Council form of leadership. We learned that the video from the October 7 play was shot on an angle and that the sound quality from the tape was poor. We discussed posting interviews and releases on the Temple's Web site after they are reviewed for errors, and that copies be sent to interviewees. We will seek the final play script as well. When this process is complete, we may seek to send electronic copies to the American Jewish Archives, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, and others. We discussed holding a potential History Day when scrapbook photos could be shown and TBE members be informed about the Temple's history efforts. We discussed seeking an unused space in a classroom where a carrel could be installed and members could scan documents for the history project, using the machine fed scanner funded by Sisterhood and perhaps using a wand scanner that Susan Michelson has. We discussed placing photos in a safe locked metal container that could be placed in the Library. We discussed Richard Melzer's March 10 presentation at TBE about The Swastika in New Mexico's History and Culture. Two Committee members attended the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society Meeting in Albuquerque. The next NMJHS meetings will be in Taos (2019) and Las Cruces (2020).

Israel Committee, Phil Alkon, Chair: The committee met on October 29. Rabbi Larry and Phil offered brief comments on the recent attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, including responses of friends, colleagues and other faith communities. The group discussed the nature and state of Jew Hatred locally, in the U.S., and world-wide.

The main focus of the meeting was a report by Frances Williams on her attendance at a recent service of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Las Cruces where a film lauding the BDS movement was shown, followed by approving comments by congregants. Frances expressed her objections to acquaintances at the service, and later informed Rabbi Larry and Phil of her experiences and concerns. Jerry Nachison and Dan Townsend also spoke out. Frances' report provided the impetus for an Israel Committee meeting to assess local attitudes towards Israel and to address possible responses by the Israel Committee and Temple Beth-El.

A wide-ranging discussion involving all attendees covered the history of Jews in Las Cruces and New Mexico, experiences and assessments of individuals regarding Jewish identity and expression, and instances of individual, group and organizational attitudes toward Israel in our area. Previous TBE public initiatives dealing with Jewish and Israel-related issues were discussed. Our consensus is that Las Cruces has proved to be an outstandingly welcoming community for Jews in general, and has not exhibited any overly anti-Israel activities. In comparison with other university communities for example, NMSU has not recently experienced overt anti-Israel actions to our knowledge.

The IC did agree, however, that our community is not immune to anti-Israel developments in the guise of either political or hate-based agendas, and that the IC should lead a pro-active TBE effort to inform the community at large of our concerns regarding Israel's future and the dangers of on-going hate-based efforts to undermine Israel's security, and delegitimize its standing and character in the Community of Nations. We agreed that an initial step in this effort will be a well-advertised public showing of two outstanding videos: a) Rabbi Sir Jeffrey

Sack's speech to the European community on the anti-Israel face of contemporary Anti-Semitism world-wide; and b) an amalgam of U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley's addresses at the United Nations challenging the International campaign to degrade and weaken Israel. This public presentation effort will be coordinated by Phil Alkon, Frances Williams and Rabbi Larry Karol, and will harness the efforts of the entire IC membership. The coordinators will meet within the week, and a full IC meeting will be announced when they have developed a program plan that will be presented in a timely manner to the full Committee at its next meeting.

Library Committee, Linda Kruger, Chair: Nothing has changed since October. Additionally, two cartons of Young Adult books that were not re-cataloged in electronic format were placed in cartons and placed under a table in a classroom. Renaissance Faire preparations took precedence over Library projects. Thus the removal of non-circulating books in a particular category will continue in December, per the Board's March 2018 request to de-accession.

Membership, Diane Fleishman: Diane will follow up with a potential new member who wants to move here.

Mensch Club, Luke Duddridge, Representative: The Mensch Club held a meeting on October 31 to discuss the Ren Faire setup and labor distribution, among other items. The club sliced pastrami, set up the site, operated sales with support from the Sisterhood, and took down the equipment. All equipment has been stored for future use. Dave Zeemont and Michael Mandel provided Luke with preliminary accounting. Luke has not been advised when the final accounting will be made available.

Nominating Committee, Jim Rosenthal, Chair: Jim wanted to share a note that he had sent to committee members after the first leadership presentation by Rabbi Larry Karol:

Dear Nominating Committee colleagues:

Just a note to thank each of you, but especially Rabbi Larry, for your role in making our first-ever leadership training presentation/workshop yesterday so successful.

I don't have to describe to any of you the extraordinary and difficult emotional circumstances that confronted each of us individually and the entire community yesterday.

By choosing to go ahead with our leadership program yesterday, I truly felt that we, in our own small way, made a statement about perseverance and defiance in the face of evil.

By taking an hour in the midst of the day's turmoil to sit and share our thoughts with each other about the meaning of a word and our faith was, to me, the very essence of spirituality. To hear Rabbi Larry play a song he wrote and explain its origin was to me spiritual. To search a prayer for words that matter, was to me spiritual. It became clear to me, in that hour, that, indeed, my own sense of spirituality, about which I had not given much thought, is, in fact, what helps define me as a human being, whether I'm a leader or not.

That moment of that day, as we all shared ideas in a corner of the Temple Beth-El social hall in Las Cruces, New Mexico, was, for me, deeply spiritual - in ways I never expected and for which I am very grateful.

Sisterhood, Dee Cook, Representative: The Sisterhood Council last met October 25, 2018 with five Council members in attendance. The Treasurer's Report was read. Ruth Rubin sent three sympathy/get well cards to members. There will be a dedication on November 16 of the Creation Needlepoint Project largely completed by Sisterhood members. Michelle Blum, Caretaker of TBE Judaica Shop is gearing up for Chanukah sales. A discussion of the Ways and Means Committee's new fund raiser, A Night At The Auction to be held on January 26, 2019 was held. Rabbi Karol briefly joined the meeting to discuss the future of the Friday evening Onegs and what can be done to encourage TBE members to host an Oneg. We were advised that Ellen Torres, President of TBE is working on grants from the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso. Next meeting will be held on November 29, 2018 and any Sisterhood member is invited and encouraged to attend.

Social Action Committee, Ned Rubin, Chair: Nothing new to report.

Strategic Planning Report, Renee Frank, Chair: A report was sent to the Board for review.

Ways and Means Committee, Dee Cook, Cheryl Decker, Sue Brown, Joanne Turnbull, Co-Chairs: The committee met multiple times to bring A Night At The Auction to the congregation. It is designing the letter and form for the donation of goods, events and services. It will be sent to members soon.

Youth Committee, Leora Zeitlin, Chair: BETY and BEMY hosted a dessert and game night on Saturday, October 27 for the TBE community. The evening began with Havdalah and prayers for the attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh that had taken place earlier that day. About 30 people showed up for a relaxed and fun evening of camaraderie and games. The groups are planning a joint Hanukkah party for themselves with the youth groups from Temple Mt. Sinai in El Paso.

Jewish Folk and Food Festival, Rose Jacobs and Francine Feinberg, Chairs. Nothing new to report.

Wednesday Breakfast Group, Phil Alkon, Chair: Future breakfast topics include: November 7, Valerie Stiles, "Your Senior Amigos Center;" November 14, Peter Martin, "Traffic Management: Science, Politics, and Economics;" November 21, Chris Garcia, "Humana Home Care Help;" November 28, John Harris, "What's Inside These Walls?; and Where Do We Go From Here?;" and December 5, Herb Wimberly, "My Life in Golf and Movies at NMSU." For details, contact Phil Alkon, at 524-6945 or philipalkon@gmail.com.