**Meeting Minutes - Ohavi Zedek Board of Directors**

**Date:** June 20, 2019

**Present**: Vivien Rabin, Rabbi Amy, Sarah Glassman, Wayne Senville, Karen Corbman, Eric Corbman, Deb Lashman, Sergey Shpaner, Becky Wasserman, Jeff Priest, Mindy Evnin, Sarah Glassman, Judy Rosenstreich, Naomi Barell, Nat Lew, Adam Bluestein, Erika Geremia, Deb Lashman, Lila Shapero

**Absent:** Jessica Schechter Kane, Bill Miller, Harvey Klein

**Trustees:** Judy Hershberg

**Facilitato**r: Vivien **Meeting Recorder**: Adam

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|  | **Topic/Outcome – Who** | | | **Discussion** | **Action Steps** | |
| 5:30 – 5:35 | **D’var Torah –Rabbi Amy** | The Levites, assistant to the priests, were instructed that they should retire at 50 and serve no more, but assist “brotherly life” in different ways. Rashi redefines what it means to retire, to do different tasks. As we think about life stages, we can also think about stages of organizations and communities. We just dedicated Fern Hill’s new public spaces, in a ceremony filled with joy. That signifies a new life stage; having a bright space for people there is emotionally powerful. What does it mean for us at OZ to enter a new life stage? | | |  | |
| 5:35 – 5:45 | **Approve minutes and review action items—Vivien** | Nat, Wayne move and second to approve; vote to approve.  Action items updated (see BOLD in list, below). | | |  | |
| 5:45 – 5:50 | **Ratify three decisions made by President following an email poll of board members – Vivien**  Budget items and Executive Director | We previously polled board members on three time-sensitive matters over email. Rules say that non-unanimous board decisions must be made in a format where all board members present can hear each other.  Matters are:  1. Ratify spending $2,500 on new report for Treasurer this year. Mindy moves to ratify this decision made by President with advisory vote by email of board members; Sergey seconds; approved by majority vote.  2. Ratify the increase the Religious Committee budget next year by $2100 for programming and supplies. Sergey moves to ratify; Wayne seconds; majority vote to approve.  3. Ratify Sarah Glassman hire as ED. (Sarah leaves room.) Sergey moves; Nat seconds; majority vote to approve. | | |  | |
| 5:50 – 6:40 | **OZ Gun Policy – Deb Lashman**  Outcome: To discuss and vote on a new gun policy for OZ\* | OZ does not have a formal policy on guns, but it important that we do. Deb presents proposed language:  “No one shall bring firearms into the buildings or onto the grounds of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue except for certified law enforcement personnel acting in their official capacity.”  After discussion, Judy R. moves to adopt Deb’s wording as presented as OZ policy. Mindy seconds. Further discussion of amendments to make policy acceptable. Judy R. has to leave meeting. Karen moves to remove “acting in official capacity” and Nat seconds. Wayne makes friendly amendments to indicate “buildings and grounds of Ohavi Zedek on N. Prospect St.” and to include “dangerous or deadly weapons;” Karen accepts.  Nat calls question to accept amendment. Vote is all in favor; Sergey abstains. Mindy makes motion to adopt the just amended language as policy for OZ . Nat seconds. Vote with no abstentions to accept the proposed policy:  “No one shall bring firearms or other dangerous or deadly weapons into the buildings or onto the grounds of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue on North Prospect St. except for certified law enforcement personnel.” | | |  | |
| 6:40 – 6:45 | **Rabbi’s report – Rabbi Amy**  Outcome: To continue to engage board in work of the Rabbi | Tomorrow night is Interfaith Shabbat. Expect turnout of around 75 people -- important to show board participation. Islamic community is in a bit of turmoil now, there will be New Americans recruited into interfaith initiative.  Rabbi working with Cantor Steve for his July 1 arrival, arranging potluck dinner/catered meal on his first Shabbat. Important wkd. Please show up if you can!  Rabbi will be going to Hartman in Israel July 7. She is making sure Cantor has instructions for emergencies and will check in daily. day with him. Next, we should think about High Holiday planning.  The DC clergy action, Moral Witness Wednesday, was truly interfaith, with 400-500 clergy from around country. Rabbi says it was meaningful to share, especially with local interfaith community members who also went. There was civil disobedience training, but they were blocked from getting anyplace near the White House. Rabbi thanks board for support for her going. | | | Start thinking about High Holiday planning. | |
| 6:45 – 6:50 | **Preschool report – Erika**  Outcome: To continue to engage board in Preschool activities | Erika will now come to monthly board meetings. This week, the preschool had scheduled visit from licensor, and they will open a 5th classroom soon. That will be capacity for the building -- will focus now on improving what we have. Erika has hired new asst. teacher, Alison Mott.  Licensing visit went well, except playground can’t be used. Jeff Potash agreed to pay half of fencing and wood chips; Erica doing fundraising, and there will be a photo project fundraiser. Fencing will go in in July, hopefully. May have to move some benches in outdoor sanctuary area. Rabbi and Erika to discuss plan.    To make sure we can have childcare be affordable, we need to make sure we have all documentation parents need to apply for aid programs. Question of how new childcare center opening in Burlington will impact need at OZ. A: It probably won’t. | | | Rabbi and Erika to review plan for moving benches in outdoor sanctuary area, if necessary to accommodate new play area. | |
| 6:50 – 6:53 | **Big Picture Project – Rabbi Amy/ Vivien**  Outcome: To keep the board updated on new discussion group about big picture issues at OZ | A bunch of people are putting together a group to work on big-picture projects. Jeff Potash helping bring it all together. There’s been one really good meeting but not ready to announce anything yet. Proposals coming out will take into account “visioning” done at board retreat. | | |  | |
| 6:53 – 6:55 | **Sanctuary redesign update – Nat/Rabbi Amy**  Outcome: To share information received about sanctuary redesign possibilities | Nat’s friend did tour and came up with series of suggestions that were really helpful. Shared these with big picture group, and happy to share with board. Not quite time yet to discuss yet. For now, there are no more two-together memorial plaques in small sanctuary. Rabbi says it’s premature to add anything to walls given design recommendations now on table. | | | Come back to full board with specific proposals? | |
| 6:55 - 7:00 | **Budget review/discussion – Vivien (in Bill’s absence)**  Outcome: To discuss budget information | | Bill (not here) sent budget. David Passakow would like to talk to board about a few budget issues (at future meeting); Sergey has a few big-picture ideas. Will put on agenda for July meeting.  Discussion re budget and confusion re YTD vs budget.  Becky: When will income increase show from Grace’s not having preschool tuition? | | |
| 7:00 - 7:25 | **Minyan** |  | | |  | |
| 7:25- 7:30 | **Misc. - Rabbi Amy** | Severe problems with having minyan. Minyan leaders need board to participate. Israel trip -- enough people have signed up and Rabbi will be hosting an orientation. | | |  | |
| 7:30 - 7:35 | **Hebrew School report – Naomi**  Outcome: To continue to engage board in Hebrew School activities | Registration opens July 1. Will go through new billing system, wich Naomi spent a bunch of time figuring out. Enrollment numbers look good. Should have eight kids in Kitah Gan/Alef for next year. But small 7th grade, which will start a new curriculum in coordination with Temple Sinai, with experiential approach to Jewish religion around region.  USY informed Naomi they no longer have regional director in Berkshires. Leaves us high and dry. Naomi trying to foster interest especially with 4th graders, which is a big group. Need a new teacher for 4/5 grade on Sundays, to take over for Sarah. If think of anyone, please tell Naomi. Nadav wrapped up -- all but one teen successfully completed program, and kids already signed up for next year. Donor willing to cover half of cost for next year, now looking for additional funding. | | | Need 4/5 grade Hebrew School teacher. | |
| 7:35 -37 | **Introductions** | Jeff, Sarah. | | |  | |
| 7:40 – 8:00 | **Fundraising – Vivien**  Outcome: Further discussion on plans for board involvement in fundraising | Vivian shares fundraising notes from “Train Your Board.” She looks forward to working with Sarah and others moving forward. Should we take some time, an hour, in a meeting to review approach to annual appeal and other fundraising by board?  Agreement that we should do some training, but think about what we want to accomplish and what we’re training for.  Adam: It would be helpful to have a decision tree to think about fundraising strategically -- i.e., if people ask how then help with X, board members can guide them to a specific fund or person to facilitate.  Sarah is excited to work with Vivien on a strategic plan around fundraising and has lots of ideas.  Nat: Can we use actual board meetings to do some calling together? Also, following up with the same people you spoke with in last appeal builds relationship -- there is value in checking in, staying connected. | | |  | |
| 8:00 – 8:15 | **Mid-year outreach to members - Wayne**  Outcome: Board member calls to annual appeal list – for outreach – not fundraising | Seems likes good practice but needs to be commitment to do 2 dozen or so calls. Is there a general theme that we want to convey beyond just checking in? Do we want to keep same people we’ve called before?  Wayne says August seems close to November appeal for doing this followup; Nat says may not be a bad time.  Adam: We should make sure to get information about fundraising into some kind of usable shared database for easy reference. Sarah: Yes, there is a tracking system that exists but need to fix it. Also, Sarah says: Phone calls are a thing of the past. We can continue with people who enjoy that, but combine with email campaign, other calls to action, perhaps a mailing with an appealing image? Karen: In next calls, can we have a card with specific new talking points? Sarah can provide that.  Sergey mentions idea of High Holiday fundraising “pitches” by members. Vivien says we haven’t done this and lots of pros and cons. Rabbi and Vivien say it’s worth further conversation.  If doing calls in Aug need to work fast. Wayne and Nat work to pull something together? | | | Wayne, Nat: Make plan to do mid-year outreach calls in August?  Sarah to put together “scripts” for board members when making calls. | |
| 8:15 – 8:25 | **Hebrew School families who are not OZ members – Adam**  Outcome: Update from Adam about survey | Adam shares results from survey of Hebrew school parents about OZ membership. Wayne: What bring classes together as a group? Do families attend? Naomi: People do attend things like bagel brunches and Tot Shabbatot. Kids come from all different communities, so can be hard to connect families. Families that come in knowing each other stay connected.  Wayne: Is there more cohesion among preschool families? Becky: Group of families moved from Gan and stayed together.  Naomi: Results suggest it’s the synagogue community, not the Hebrew School community, that people don’t feel connected to. “Synagogue” is s loaded term.  Becky says that programs such as one at Fern Hill, connecting kids with people there are great idea but only a few families show up.  Adam: Can we do more cross-programming of activities with synagogue and Hebrew School? Rabbi: Insisted on having parallel service on Shabbat geared toward families, and they didn’t come. Some of that could be related to how facility looks? Naomi: Congregation members need to participate in Hebrew School, too.  Overarching issue is decision about whether to require specific length of membership for scheduling b’nai mitzvot. Rabbi: More than $, it’s setting dates for people who haven’t really said they are committing to the community. We’ve had no set policy about it.  Nat: Community can be scary to some people. Understanding what it takes to get over the hurdle for these people having a hard time committing.  Naomi: Need be careful re self-flagellation. Not always about specific choice to not come here, but to do something else with your time. It’s question of priorities.  Rabbi: Need to improve online presence. Sarah: Excited to work on this. Adam: We should update Mission Statement on site, too?  Jeff: Are we uncomfortable with people using Hebrew School as a service, let go of idea that they’re going to be members?  Rabbi: Should be a policy proposal that comes out of this.  Naomi: We Know that our bnai mitzvah fee doesn’t cover costs nearly. Maybe that’s a place to make a differential.  Naomi: Sinai makes Hebrew School tuition part of membership, so there are no non-members.  Adam: Re next steps, there can be short and long-term -- do proposal for “2-year rule” next time? Then figure next steps? | | | Make policy proposal re membership and Hebrew School/b’nai mitzvah scheduling.  Approve updated mission statement and post on OZ website. | |
| 8:25 – 8:46 | **15. Committee updates – Vivien**  Outcome: To latest committee information and to update on where we are concerning board liaisons with committees (see attachment A) | Social Action: Eric and Karen trying to create email list for certain things they want to get done. Karen hands out example cards asking people to sign up for specific “asks.” Can we send out via email to congregation? Yes. Karen will create with links to sign up, etc.  Religious: Nat says there’s been lively debate re conservatism and various kinds of innovation, sense of things coming to a head. Good discussion. Vivien: sharing liaison handouts …. Need to update, please review and email Viv. | | | Board members, please review board liaison document and email Vivien with concerns/changes. | |
| 8:46 |  | Sergey moves, Mindy seconds to adjourn meeting. | | |  | |

**A. Ongoing Action Items**

* **Review social action policy document again with any additional board (esp. lawyer) comments and vote to approve. (ADDED)**
* Invite new Kehillah Manager to visit OZ. **Vivien. To do.**
* UC membership. **Not going to pay requested renewal amount. Vivien to follow up re options.**
* Succession planning: **Wayne, Judy, and someone to form subcommittee to work on.**
* Add to *The Voice* more info about ways to give and funds you can donate to. **Vivien, Bill, Judy H. have list of endowments; figuring out best way to explain for congregants -- not just give a long list.**
* Continue hunt for new Treasurer. **Question: Do we need to refigure role of Treasurer in coordination with work of executive director?**
* Have presentation, when possible, on pros/cons of an ethical investing approach for endowment. If we decide to pursue an ethical investment portfolio for endowment, make sure to publicize among members and broader community. **To do.**
* Big picture issues

**B. For Future Discussion**

* Consider audit, budget meetings ahead of Congregational Meeting to help others learn more.
* Review endowment being paid back over 30 years and contribute surplus to this, reducing term.
* USCJ affiliation and interfaith marriage
* Staffing models—program designs/ core program areas/ hopes for growth
* Organizational and facility models (JCC, multiplex)
* Development /engagement/relationship building
* Other long-ranging questions: buildings, growth