**MINUTES**

**Ohavi Zedek Congregational Meeting**

**June 2, 2019, 9:00 am**

Moderator: Vivien Rabin Brown

Board members present: Vivien Rabin, Karen Corbman, Mindy Evnin, Bill Miller, Sergey Shpaner, Adam Bluestein, Jessica Schechter Kane, Judy Rosenstreich, Rabbi Amy, Grace Oedel

Recorder: Adam Bluestein

**Welcome/D’var Torah**

Rabbi and Vivien welcome the congregation. Rabbi discusses Shavuot, starting on Saturday, commemorating the journey in the wilderness from freedom to revelation. The wilderness is a hard place to be but it’s liberating because of the opportunity to figure out where we are going. But we must wake up to our task, our purpose. There will be a night of study this Saturday night. Poem: “Staying Up All Night to Study.”

**Security Training**

From approximately 9:15 to 10:45 a.m., representatives of the Burlington Police Dept. conducted a training on dealing with threats at the synagogue. “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol. Training/discussion was followed by a drill in the main sanctuary. (Details on security training will be available in a separate document.)

**Approval of Minutes**

Last Congregational Meeting Minutes are approved by vote.

**Finance Report & Proposed Budget**

Treasurer Bill Miller presents proposed new $1.3 million budget and discusses OZ “Finances at a Glance” documents, with a focus on “Key Challenges” section and noting significant variances in FY 2017-18. Dues are historically “flat” at approximately $380k. We are budgeting for $371k in coming year.

Question about use of endowment funds for current budget -- what do bylaws say about that? We withdraw up to 4% from the unrestricted funds. Last time we withdrew beyond that, says Bill, was recent ED who gave inaccurate description of budget, which was 3.5 years ago. There is nothing in bylaws, but the board recently passed policy to say we will not borrow any more than we are currently doing. Restricted funds are tracked and managed to maintain their growth; those balances are maintained separately.

Historically, we used $200k for the kitchen renovation, and borrowed $212k for operating expenses from the endowment. These are now being paid back at rate of 2% for kitchen, 0% for operating expenses. The finance committee and board approved a 10-year repayment at flat 2%. The Shuk pays about $10k per year to repay loans.

Our current budget deficit of about $59k is a little better than forecast $77k.

The projected budget hits breakeven with fundraising or cuts of about $42k. That is about two major fundraising events from breakeven. Vivien: We have lots of ideas for fundraising -- not just events. This is going to be a major priority.

Bill discusses key projected variances, which include money for having security onsite for all services.

Question about deferring cemetery expenses. There is a congregant working on new fundraising. Need to address security there and access if there is a locked gate.

Request to set aside some small amount of money for photos of Hebrew School grads and decide where to put these.

Judy Rosenstreich moves to accept the 2017-2018 finance report; Mindy seconds. Passes with no nay votes. Sergey moves to accept projected 2018-19 report; Mindy seconds. Passes with no nay votes. Mindy moves to approve the 2019-2020 report. Judy seconds.

David Pasackow points out that we are ending fiscal 2018-2019 with an expected shortfall of $59k, and projecting deficit spending. Two years ago, congregation moved and accepted motion to have a balanced budget. Now we are projecting a shortfall plus possible additional security needs that would put shortfall at around $60k. The projection is to double the following year. We are fortunate to have donors help offset new cantor and make revenue neutral. But deficit needs to be addressed.

Sue Schein: Everyone has worked hard on this. We asked the board to help us live within our means financially. We’re not doing that and have spent down the endowment. We’re accruing debt somehow. Board should be aware that for some of us, accumulating debt is not a happy situation. We don’t want very restrictive covenants, but it’s of great concern to all.

Congregant comment: The board knows we are running deficit. The congregation wants activities to satisfy diverse congregants and needs, necessary to get new people to come here. That’s a choice we need to make. It’s not ideal to run a deficit, but we can do it because we’re still functioning and doing what everyone wants.

Sergey: Long-run, we would like to be neutral. We need to look at specific programs and see if any potential cuts as part of that. Vivien: We can impact is through new kinds of fundraising.

We need a collective commitment to a balanced budget -- approximately $337 from each family would fill the budget hole.

Grace: We can grow the area of community participation. Board and committees need community input throughout the year. Is there a way we can imagine having productive community-wide discussions throughout the year?

Judy moves to approve budget, seconded. Motion passes with a vote of 32 member families; two opposed.

**Staff and Clergy Changes**

Vivien thanks Grace and Kochava, who are both leaving. Cantor Steve will be arriving July 1, the day after major event at his congregation. Next week, there will be an announcement about new Executive Director.

**Announcements**

* Rabbi asks that people to sign up for minyan dates they can be available for.
* We are close to required numbers for Israel trip. There are some scholarship funds, and price is cut a bit.
* June 21, there will be an interfaith event focused on refugees. Please make a reservation.
* Suzi Wizowaty has weeded books out from OZ library and is setting up a book sale.

Harvey moves, Jessica seconds to adjourn meeting. Motion is approved and meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 pm.