**Meeting Minutes – OZ Board of Directors**

**Date:** Thursday, December 19, 2019

**Present**: Naomi Barell, Adam Bluestein, Vivien Rabin Brown, Eric Corbman, Karen Corbman, Judy Danzig, Mindy Evnin, Erika Geremia, Sarah Glassman, Judy Hershberg, Jessica Schechter Kane, Joshua Kernoff, Harvey Kleinman, Deb Lashman, Bill Miller, Jeff Priest, Judy Rosenstreich, Wayne Senville, Lila Shapiro, Sergey Shpaner, Rabbi Amy Small, Rebecca Stern, Becky Wasserman, Cantor Steve Zeidenberg

**Absent:** Nat Lew

**Facilitato**r: Vivien **Meeting Recorder**: Jeff

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|  | **Topic/Outcome – Who** | **Discussion** | **Action Steps** |
| 5:30 – 5:45 | **1. Executive Session** | Executive session began at 5:35 pm. Wayne makes motion to enter session. Adam seconds. |  |
| 5:45 – 6:00 | **2. D’var Torah –Rabbi Amy** | Rabbi Amy describes a passage from the book *Here All Along* by Sarah Hurwitz, focusing on the former governor of TX who noticed Jews lobbying on behalf of others, different from most others. The Jewish concern for others is distinguishing. |  |
| 6:00 – 6:05 | **3. Approve minutes and review action items—Vivien** | Sergey revised minutes from previous meeting regarding Peace and Justice Center issues, summarizing what members stated without quoting specific statements by specific members. Jessica moves to approve minutes, Bill seconds. Minutes are shared through OZ’s website. We also keep minutes to document what board agrees to. |  |
| 6:05 - 6:10 | **4. Welcome to new board members** | Welcome to Rebecca and Josh. |  |
| 6:10 – 6:25 | **5. Sanctuary Redesign – Judy Danzig**  To learn the Religious Committee’s thoughts on sanctuary renovation | Judy presented. Religious Committee met this past Tuesday (Dec. 17) to discuss sanctuary renovations. Re-envisioning sanctuary space was initially raised in 1990s, but no changes were made. Judy stated the committee’s position statement: Supports re-envisioning of spiritual spaces, wants board to make it a priority. Did not discuss details, other than creating flexible seating. Deb L.: Consensus among Religious Committee members about pews being removed, bring objects from bimah to center of space. No consensus about what to do with small sanctuary. No decision to be made tonight. Will involve capital campaign. Need to have conversation with congregation before making decisions about small sanctuary.  Wayne raised concern about focusing on sanctuary renovations without discussing it within the broader issues of building renovations and other ideas raised by the congregation at the meeting this past Sunday (Dec. 15).  No one is specifically leading this effort. We received report from designer who provided ideas about renovations. Should find out about what other congregations have done. Should there be a board subcommittee to lead on this topic? Should this be a topic for the proposed board retreat? Judy D. would be interested in working with board to address this issue.  Rabbi spoke with others at USCJ about comparable issue and anecdotally believes a number of congregations are pulling up pews. | Organize working group to focus on this issue. |
| 6:25 – 6:30 | **6. Fern Hill report – Lila Shapero**  To inform board of updates at Fern Hill | Lila presented. She is the Chair of Fern Hill Board. Fern Hill is owned by Synagogue Corporation. Purpose is to provide low-income housing for elderly. Board needs to affirm Fern Hill directors. Eric Corbman, Jeff Albert, Deborah Kutzko are up for renewal. Lila endorses all three individuals. Rabbi Amy sits on Fern Hill board based on by-laws. Rabbi endorses these individuals as well. Judy R. moves approval of the three individuals. Bill seconds. Board approves. Wayne abstains. |  |
| 6:30 – 6:35 | **7. Vote for executive committee – Vivien**  To continue vote on executive committee | Jeff has been elected Secretary. Nat is nominated to be VP. Vivien is willing to be President for one more year. Jessica nominates Vivien and Nat. Wayne seconds. Board approves.  Treasurer position. Wayne’s review of by-laws indicates it is feasible to have co-treasurer. But it would be clearer for board to create the position of assistant treasurer, a position the Board can create according to the By-Laws. Wayne makes motion under section 7.1 to establish assistant treasurer position. Division of labor will be determined by Bill and Sergey, if Sergey is elected as Treasurer. Will asst. treasurer serve on executive committee? President determines members of exec committee. Also need to determine who will sign checks. Need two signatures on checks now. Will asst. treasurer have signing ability? Yes, but 2nd signature should be President or VP. Judy R. seconds motion. Board approves.  Wayne nominates Sergey as Treasurer. Bill seconds. Board approves. Sergey abstains.  Wayne nominates Bill to be asst. treasurer. Sergey seconds. Board approves. |  |
| 6:35 – 6:50 | **8. Rabbi’s report – Rabbi Amy**  To continue to engage the board in the work of the Rabbi | Rabbi Amy mentions letter she sent to Rachel Siegel of the Peace and Justice Center (PJC). Shared with Mindy. Not shared with Board yet, but it will be. Rachel responded. She has been advised by her board there isn’t time for individual meetings, just one large meeting. Rachel sent email to prospective group attendees about conducting a meeting with a mediator, without discussing PJC’s position on BDS. Rabbi recommends not accepting the invitation.  Presentation on trip to Israel last night (Wed., Dec. 18). Lesson learned: Question arose about who would clean up after meal. People cleaned up after themselves. Generally we do not expect people to clean up after themselves. But we need to expect more of ourselves. Vivien noted that caterers are usually responsible for cleaning up – that is part of what they are paid for.  Rabbi will lead iEngage program about Israelis and Palestinians in the coming year. Will include video lectures from scholars of Hartman Institute.  Initiated conversation with Temple Sinai about other collaborations, including Havdalah sing-along and pre-Passover sing-along.  Religious committee has decided community seder will be held the second night of Pesach.  Working with Cantor Steve on G’Mach visits to people. Need for pastoral care is great. But other demands make it difficult to provide as much pastoral care as needed. Started pastoral care team. Board is invited to request more information in the future.  IRS has rules regarding parsonage allowance and taxes. Rabbi has shared accounting of parsonage allowance. Mindy moves we received numbers. Bill seconds. Rabbi states numbers have been produced by QuickBooks. Board approves.  Motion by Sergey to approve receipt of parsonage allowance numbers from Cantor Steve when they are sent. Wayne seconds. Board approves. | Share letter from Rabbi to Rachel Siegel with Board members |
| 6:50 – 6:55 | **9. Cantor’s report – Cantor Steve** | On Friday, Dec. 19, at 10 am at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Cantor Steve will lead Hanukkah sing-along with Full Circle. On Sunday morning there will be a band for Hanukkah singing medley.  On March 7, 2020, Cantor Steve will be formally installed at OZ. The installation will occur at Minchah and Ma’ariv, followed by concert. Cantor Nancy Abramson (mentor of Steve and Director of JTS Cantorial School) will come from NY to participate in ceremony.  Has been leading class on Tuesday nights about Shabbat morning service, unpacking structure of service. Will continue through March 2020. |  |
| 6:55 – 7:00 | **10. Liaison to Lost Mural committee** | Karen C. serves as the liaison to Lost Mural Committee. Had charrette of experts in November from the New England Regional Museum Association. Priorities identified were defining the audience they want to view the mural at OZ, how to become part of the new VT curriculum for schools, and opening grant application to NEH. Working with Rick Kerschner, chief conservator, about purchasing humidifier for OZ’s foyer. Want doors of foyer to be kept closed. |  |
| 7:00 – 7:25 | **11. Minyan** |  |  |
| 7:25 – 7:55 | **12. Treasurer’s report—Bill**  To update the board on budget issues | October and November Treasurer’s reports shared with Board. Still early in the year. Revenue could be $128K in red. Have some salary savings but preschool salary expenses. Need to focus on low hanging fruit, such as contacting members who have not paid dues. Dues have already increased by $5K. Once December financials completed, will start budget process, based on 6 months of actuals and 6 months of projections. Have weekly meetings with Finance Committee starting in March. In March and April board plays role. Present budget to congregation in June.  There has been a bequest of $23K with no restrictions. Finance Committee recommends applying this sum to reduce outstanding loan for kitchen. Another option is to deposit into endowment, which will produce 4% income (about $1K per year).  Bill motions to use bequest for kitchen loan. Mindy seconds.  What about using money for specific need, like roof repair? Is this a capital campaign issue?  If we use for kitchen loan, will this set a precedent for future bequests? Not necessarily.  Loan interest is 2%. But loan is internal, with pay back to endowment. Currently pay $7K per year to kitchen loan. Accounting exercise since kitchen loan goes into endowment anyway.  Board votes on Bill’s motion. 5 in favor, 4 against. Passes. |  |
| 7:55 – 8:00 | **13. Preschool report - Erika**  To continue to inform the board about Preschool activities | Celebrating 3rd Hanukkah at OZ!  Act 166 news: Erika in contact with Linda Greenwood. Might hire a retired teacher with license. Have to have licensed teacher for 10 hours per week to get Act 166 approval. Exploring options to meet requirements. Applies to families with children 3 years and older, not infants and toddlers.  Two Nadav interns have started working at the preschool, both from Temple Sinai.  Revamping Preschool Committee. Rebecca is chair. Working on fundraising effort. Kindness committee works on setting up meal trains for those in need. Engaged in food drives. |  |
| 8:00 – 8:15 | **14. Executive Director’s report - Sarah**  To continue to engage the board in the work of the Executive Director | Sarah has been in contact with Christine Graham of CPG Enterprises, Burlington. The company assists non-profits with capital campaigns. They have discussed conducting a feasibility study about OZ’s capacity to raise funds for renovation. Sarah will receive more information tomorrow (Friday, Dec. 20).  All employees have been switched over to MVP health plan, saving $8K this year.  Sarah attended meeting re Homeland Security funds. The funds will be distributed as reimbursement after grantee expends monies initially. Must work with Security Committee to detail key card access issues and procedures. No need to deal with shatter-proofing windows until spring or later.  Annual appeal letter sent today. Email follow-up will go out next Tuesday (Dec. 24). Different letters sent out to members 45 and younger vs. members older than 45. Remittance envelopes are different too. Board follow-up (phone calls) in January if necessary. 35 families gave gifts last year ($17K). If more than 35 families donate this year, it will be considered successful. Budgeted to raise $25K.  Humidifier in lobby for mural. Concern about size of foyer to maintain appropriate humidity level. To do so, we were told that all doors to lobby would have to remain closed. Will be change to physical space. Is this acceptable? OZ staff provide labor 10 hours per month to maintain ($200/month payment from Lost Mural Committee). Would be Raul’s responsibility partly. The committee has access to an electronic monitor of humidity level. Is there another alternative to maintain humidity levels than closing doors? If doors are not closed, what is the timeline for damage to the mural? Doors could be closed at night, after minyan or last event of the evening, until the following morning. We cannot promise doors will be closed during the day. | Sarah to share additional information from Christine Graham. |
| 8:15 - 8:20 | **15. Hebrew School report – Naomi**  To continue to engage board in Hebrew School activities | In Boston last week at USCJ conference. Award received for NADAV program. Over 150 submissions for award and only 6 congregations won.  Ending first semester on Sunday.  Just hired new teacher, Talia Harris Rom, an Israeli.  Mitzvah day (Jan. 26) Imam coming. Reading book in Arabic, Hebrew and English. Soccer clinic. Used sports equipment will be gathered to be donated. Day of presentations by B’nai Mitzvah students on their mitzvot. |  |
| 8:20 – 8:30 | **16. More about annual appeal and other fundraising – Sarah/Vivien**  To discuss future fundraising plans | Will start on fundraising plan in January. Sharon P. is stepping down as chair of Development Committee. | Vivien and Sarah to report on fundraising action. |
| 8:30 – 8:40 | **17. 2020 Board goals – Vivien**  To begin to plan board orientation and board goals for 2020 | Email ideas to Vivien for board orientation. |  |
| 8:40 – 8:50 | **18. Potential meeting/retreat to strengthen board group dynamics – Wayne**  To decide about topic and time for board retreat | Should retreat focus on board processes/skills or substantive topic (future planning)? Retreats have generally been 4-6 hours. Timing is also an open question. Last month’s meeting generated preference for board processes/training.  Any budget for retreat? Perhaps rely on OZ member as facilitator who would do it for free. Andy Robinson is potential facilitator. Endorsed by Wayne and Vivien. Jeff has initiated contact with Andy.  Wayne and Jeff will develop proposal for board retreat for next meeting. |  |
| 8:50 – 9:35 | **19. Executive Session** | Would be nice to know general topic for executive sessions before board meetings. Will add titles for executive sessions to agenda.  Adam moves to enter executive session. Mindy seconds. Board approves.  Mindy moves to end session. Board approves. Meeting ended at 9:35 pm. |  |

**A. Ongoing action items**

* Organize working group to focus on this issue sanctuary redesign.
* Share letter from Rabbi to Rachel Siegel with Board members. **Vivien to send.**
* Vivien & Sarah (& Josh) to report on fundraising activities.
* “Big Think” group to review ideas/proposals with board. **Will be raised when we discuss sanctuary renovations**
* *The Voice:* Include information in an upcoming issue about ways to give and what different funds are for. **Bill and others, ongoing**
* Presentation on pros/cons of an ethical investing approach for endowment. **Publish an article in the *Voice* about pros and cons. Why not invest 100%?**
* Where do OZ policies “live”? **Vivien/Sarah reviewing**
* Sarah to get quotes for services to do an analysis of capital campaign “capacity and share information received from Christine Graham. **Ongoing**
* Communicate to synagogue community that Nadav is donor supported program, as way to encourage others to contribute.