

## **OZ Board Meeting**

**April 6, 2020**

### **Minutes**

**Present** (via Zoom): Adam Bluestein, Vivien Rabin Brown, Mindy Evnin, Jessica Schechter Kane, Josh Kernoff, Nat Lew, Bill Miller, Jeff Priest, Wayne Senville, Rebecca Stern, Becky Wasserman

Facilitator: Vivien Recorder: Jeff

**Started:** 5:30 pm

**Ended:** 7:05 pm

### **Preschool Tuition and Salaries**

Under Vermont's COVID-19 Child Care Stabilization program, the state will pay child care centers 50% of each enrolled child's tuition as long as the child remains enrolled in the program, parents pay the remaining 50%, and teachers continue to be paid. If a family cannot afford to pay 50% of tuition, the child can be disenrolled from the program and the state will pay 100% of tuition. There is no need for the Board to make any decisions about preschool salaries at this time, since the preschool will be made whole by this state program for the ongoing future.

The Finance Committee has submitted a recommendation to the Board for changing the ratio of splitting any surplus generated by the preschool with OZ. The Board must decide on the final allocation, not the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is working with Erika and the Preschool Committee on this issue.

### **Budget**

We have 3 options for a budget timeline: (a) the usual 12-month budget i.e., July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021), (b) a 6-month budget (i.e., from July 1 through December 31, which has been recommended by the Finance Committee), or (c) continue to work under the 2019-20 budget for 3 additional months (i.e. July 1 through September 30).

Nat attended a webinar about fiscal issues for non-profits. He heard about the possibility of a 3-month extension to a synagogue's budget. Based on his follow-up conversation with a non-profit lawyer, it does seem possible to extend our budget for three months and then develop a 9-month budget as of August 1.

OZ's bylaws state:

“4.1 There shall be semi-annual meetings of the Congregation, which typically take place in the Fall and in the Spring.

4.2 At the Spring meeting, the agenda shall include but not be limited to approval of the Synagogue budget for the following fiscal year.”

Many questions were posed. Can we extend the current budget for three additional months based on our bylaws? Will a 6-month budget be realistic to present to the congregation, since revenue tends to be front-loaded but expenses tend to be back-loaded? Is this budget discussion based on effects of COVID-19, our current fiscal situation, or both? Will fundraising be more difficult at this time? Will charity to OZ increase because people whose incomes have remained intact perhaps have not been spending as much in discretionary funds? Do we really need to balance the budget or just reduce the deficit?

A 6-month budget will give us more time to make decisions about staffing than a 12-month budget will likely allow us, giving staff a potentially greater chance of finding a new job if necessary by January 1 rather than July 1.

There is long term strategy at work here. Rabbi Amy wanted to hire a cantor four years ago, but she had to raise the money initially to pay his/her salary, which she did. We knew there would be long-term issues with OZ's budget if we couldn't raise more funds to cover the cantor's additional salary. Rabbi Amy and the Development Committee could seek additional support now to help with the deficit, rather than wait until later in the cantor's current 3-year contract. We might be able to convince some families to donate \$60K per year for 10 years, and have families rotate.

OZ's deficit will be \$100K next year, \$130K the following year, and \$160K in the following year. Rabbi Amy has raised \$250K thus far for a number of specific projects. Can she raise large funds for OZ's general operating budget? We could give her more time with a 12-month budget.

Rabbi Amy, Vivien, and Jason Lorber have meetings with large donors starting next Sunday.

If staff reductions will occur, is it better to lay off now or 12 months from now, based on unemployment benefits available during the current crisis?

We will decide on the length of the budget at our next meeting on April 23, before which we will get clarity on whether or not we are authorized to change our budget cycle to 3 or 6 months.

**Executive Session**

Mindy moves to enter executive session as of 6:40 pm. Jessica seconds. Board approves.

Jessica moves to end executive session at 6:45 pm. Adam seconds. Board approves.

### **Calls to Congregants**

Each Board member will receive a list of congregants to call in these challenging times. Rabbi Amy and Cantor Steve have already been speaking with OZ's elder members.

### **Salaried Staff**

We will continue to pay full-time staff salaries and seek assistance through the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which provides a forgivable loan if we continue to employ these staff. We will review this issue again at the end of April.

### **Hourly Staff**

At the last meeting, the Board decided to cut off pay for hourly workers as of April 15. Under the federal PPP, these staff are included in the organization's operation and thus need to remain employed or be rehired after layoffs. These staff are not eligible for unemployment insurance at this time. But OZ could pay into an unemployment insurance fund for future instances. Vivien has asked Sarah to explore this issue.

**Motion:** Nat moves to continue to pay hourly workers for the number of hours they would typically work, even though they are not working, beyond April 15, to be reevaluated at the same time as all other staff at the end of each month. Mindy seconds. Board approves.

Wayne moves to end meeting. Jessica seconds. Board approves.