

OZ Board Meeting MINUTES

Date: Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020

Present: Adam Bluestein, Suzanne Brown, Eric and Karen Corbman, Ducky Donath, Mindy Evnin, Sarah Glassman, Zoe Hecht, Judy Hershberg, Jessica Schechter Kane, Josh Kernoff, Harvey Klein, Nat Lew, Bill Miller, David Pasackow, Jeff Potash, Jeff Priest, Judy Rosenstreich, Yoram Samets, Michael Schaal, Wayne Senville, Rabbi Amy Small, Becky Wasserman, Rick Wolfish

After Minyan: John Blatt, Barbara Brody, Judy Danzig, Frank Donath, Aaron Goldberg, Jade Kaplan, Barbara McGrew, Grace Oedel, Ingrid Pels

Facilitator: Nat

Meeting Recorder: Jeff

		Item	Discussion, Action Steps
1	5:30	Dvar Torah	According to Torah, Jacob should have been born before Esau. But it's unclear if it would play out this way. There is family drama around Jacob's birthright blessing, which leads Esau to pursue his brother to kill him. Competition between descendents of Jacob and Esau continued for years. We're in a moment like it now, competing for who gets to have a voice in this country, like the competition between the twins. We're such a divided country. It could become more painful if we don't deal with it now. How will we come to a healing between siblings?
2	5:40	Approve minutes and set date of Dec Board meeting	Delete portion of minutes from Josh's discussion of the Resilience campaign. 8 approve. Jeff abstains. MOTION: Josh motions to approve minutes. Jeff seconds. Board approves unanimously. December Board meeting: Board scheduled the next Board meeting on Dec. 27 at 5:30 pm.
3	5:45	Clergy reports	Rabbi Amy: Hebrew School is planning on in-person events, but we need to consult with Dr. Levine to find out what is possible. We're trying to plan engaging events while we're still in pandemic mode. Having weekly conversations with Rabbi Edelson. Discussing guest speaker series and combined adult education program from curriculum called "Making Prayer Real." Also contributing to JCVT visioning. The Social Action Committee and Adult Education Committee are very active. She's just not sure if the congregation is aware of everything that's going on. Can we include Lubavitch community in any of our events? Outreach has happened in the past but nothing has come together yet. ACTION: Rabbi Amy will talk with Rick W. about future events with the Lubavitch community.
4	5:55	Parsonage allowance report	Rabbi Amy is required by IRS rules to detail parsonage expenses once a year, and the Board has to receive it. OZ does not pay these expenses. MOTION: Bill moves to approve parsonage report. Jessica

			seconds. Board approves unanimously.
5	7:45	ED report	<p>Sarah: Martha Hornbostel has become a new member of OZ.</p> <p>MOTION: Becky moves to approve. Suzanne seconds. 9 approve, 1 abstains.</p> <p>There was a break-in at the Shuk. Some cash and jewelry were taken. A window will be repaired soon. The alarm worked as expected and police responded.</p> <p>Final interviews with candidates for the administrative position will conclude next week. Could have someone start after Thanksgiving.</p>
6	5:55	Queries about written reports	HR Committee wants to pro-rate health insurance for part-time employees. We cannot afford it now, but we hope to do so in the future.
7	6:00	Treasurer's report	<p>We have net ordinary income of \$174K. Once we have a budget, we'll be able to tell how we're doing compared to budget. There is a discrepancy in the total amount received in Resilience Campaign funds. Will be explored. Moved Resilience Campaign funds from Operating to Restricted. There are no surprises financially. We're short on pledges. Have budgeted for \$300K but we're not there yet. Net income has increased substantially because the market has improved dramatically for endowment funds.</p> <p>Why aren't liabilities from kitchen loan and endowment loan not included in the liabilities section of the budget? They should be.</p> <p>ACTION: Include liabilities from kitchen loan and endowment loan in the budget's liabilities section.</p>
8	6:10	Development Committee report	<p>Board members will be asked soon to make phone calls to about 70 members who have not pledged dues. Talking points will be developed for these phone calls. About 6-7 phone calls will be assigned to each Board member. These phone calls will represent the 5th attempt to reach these members, after email and direct mail. Will examine list to see if any Board members have connections to individuals that make it logical to assign a person to a specific Board member.</p> <p>Annual Appeal will be announced soon. Will have a matching program. Will launch on Giving Tuesday.</p>
9	6:15	<p>Approve budget for Congregational Meeting:</p> <p>Set income draw from Resilience Campaign funds</p>	<p>The ad hoc committee met with members of the Finance Committee, Board, and Sarah to craft a new budget. The ad hoc committee then met with the Finance Committee and Nat to finalize the budget that has been sent to us. Nat prepared the document comparing the original budget proposal to the new proposal (<i>see below</i>).</p> <p>The ad hoc committee agreed to a 5% salary cut for the</p>

		<p>Executive Director, Facilities Manager, and Director of Youth Education. The actual cut will be closer to 2.5% given the timing of this change in the fiscal year. There will be no cut in weekly hours of the DYE. In order to maintain a deficit no greater than \$60K for the rest of the year, as the Board decided previously, we will have to use about \$50K from the Resilience Campaign, rather than our original plan to use \$15K.</p> <p>Rabbi Amy objects to inclusion of reduction in clergy travel and dues in this discussion. This is a contractual issue.</p> <p>Why is such a large amount of Resilience Campaign funds being used this year? Do donors understand this amount will be used this year? Josh says it depends on how the Resilience Campaign unfolds across the year. This proposed use could be small enough to be feasible.</p> <p>Why was the decision made to maintain the DYE at 28.5 hours/week rather than our original plan of cutting hours to 20 hours/week? Cutting this position sends a signal to families that our pledge to educate our youth is diminishing. Savings from cutting the position could be offset by losing members. This decision requires more strategic planning.</p> <p>The big problem right now is loss of dues, which is greater than the cost of keeping the DYE at 28.5 hours/week. Our issue is revenue-based, not necessarily expense-based. What happens if revenue is worse than expected? Will we use more Resilience Campaign funds to keep the deficit at \$60K, or will we allow a deficit greater than \$60K?</p> <p>If we don't cut clergy travel and dues line, the amount of Campaign Resilience funds to be used will be even greater. We should present the budget to the congregation without Resilience Campaign funds so they know the actual deficit we're experiencing.</p> <p>Possible amendments: Amendment 1: To restore clergy travel and dues funds. Amendment 2: To zero out Resilience Campaign funds or keep it at \$15K. Amendment 3: Facilities contract work needs to be clarified.</p>
	7:00	MINYAN
	7:25	<p>MOTION: Wayne moves to accept new budget with 3 exceptions: (1) Use \$15K of Resilience Campaign funds and present budget to congregation with close to \$100K deficit; (2) Eliminate clergy travel as a line-item; and (3) President and Treasurer will adjust facilities contract work as needed.</p> <p>Jeff seconds. 7 approve, 2 oppose. Motion passes.</p>

			<p>We could acknowledge that we will try to keep the deficit at \$60K, but we might need to use more Resilience Campaign funds to close the deficit at the end of the fiscal year. Could include this language in the budget presented to the congregation.</p> <p>What do donors to Resilience Campaign want their money to be used for? Donors believe they are giving to a 10-year fund, but there is a realization that some funds will go toward offsetting this year's deficit. There is no specific amount that we can use for this year's budget.</p>
10	7:50	Report from Ad Hoc Values Group, discussions and plans for Strategic Planning Process	<p>Jeff Potash: The document shared with the Board (<i>see below</i>) comes from efforts of the ad hoc committee over the past 60 days. They spoke to 20 congregants initially, then reached out to an additional 25 congregants, including Nat and Josh. We began to find consensus around constructive changes. We need to ask questions to get to a better place. We need to engage with more members. We need to ask difficult questions about rethinking new opportunities. A concrete plan has been put forward in the document shared with the Board. It's based on four values raised through conversations to guide future action.</p> <p>Yoram S.: First value is joyful prayer. We need to expand on what joyful prayer means for our congregation.</p> <p>Ingrid P.: Second value is education, which is a true pillar of OZ. What can we learn from the preschool? How can we make use of other community resources to enhance the Hebrew School?</p> <p>Grace O.: Third value is family friendliness, a sense of "hamishness." What happens after the B'nai Mitzvah? What are the needs young families are trying to fill through their connection to OZ? Members of all ages are concerned with this issue.</p> <p>Jeff Potash: Fourth value is social programming. We have a foundation. We need to build on this foundation. Social action is important to our congregation. Where and how can we develop this work even more?</p> <p>Now we need a plan. Need to see future work as an investment in the congregation. Josh proposed an outline for how this process could work. Should appoint a small group to flesh out the details and develop a plan by the end of the year.</p> <p>How do fiscal considerations play into this process? What will hopefully come out of this process will be a deeper understanding of the resources we have and how will we use them in the future. Hopefully this process generates</p>

			<p>excitement that will lead to greater revenue.</p> <p>The four values were woven into the mission statement for OZ developed by the Board at a retreat more than a year ago. We need to focus on perhaps two of them and move forward with action.</p> <p>Tikvah 2020 included lots of congregants and pushed to get things done. We need to replicate this now.</p> <p>The book <i>The Relational Judaism Handbook</i> should guide our work. This book will be homework for the Board for the January meeting.</p> <p>How can we accommodate diversity?</p> <p>This process will generate conflict as well as agreement.</p> <p>Jeff Potash will work with Josh to move forward with this process. A working group should be formed, and a set of deliverables and timeline will be brought back to the Board. There needs to be a clear funnel for generating next steps and presenting specific plans to the Board.</p> <p>Initial group will be comprised of 7 people, including 2 Board members.</p> <p>MOTION: Wayne moves to adopt Step 1 of the report generated by the ad hoc committee (<i>see below</i>). Josh seconds. Board approves unanimously.</p> <p>ACTION: Implement Step 1 of the ad hoc committee's vision plan.</p>
11	8:40	New Board members	<p>Nominating Committee (Suzanne B. and John B.): Three OZ members are interested in joining the Board: Jeff Potash, Yoram Samets, and Brett Smith. The committee recommends acceptance of these three individuals' desire to join the Board as of January 1, 2021. Vote will occur at the December 6 congregational meeting. Will have a Board of 12 people if everyone actually joins the Board.</p> <p>MOTION: Present Jeff Potash, Yoram Samets, and Brett Smith to the congregation on Dec. 6 for a vote as Board members. Board passes unanimously.</p>
12	8:50	EXECUTIVE SESSION	<p>Wayne moves to go into Executive Session. Board approves unanimously.</p> <p>Mindy moves to exit Executive Session. Board approves unanimously.</p>
	9:20	Adjournment	<p>Mindy moves to adjourn. Jessica seconds. Board approves unanimously.</p>

OZ Budget notes December 2020

The changes from the budget proposed in September to one proposed today are listed below. Items in **boldface** represent positive changes to the bottom line.

	Sep 2020 proposal	Dec 2020 proposal	Variance
Green highlights – revised projections for donation income			
Annual dues, based on slow return of pledges and large number of non-renewing families	321,300	300,000	-21,300
Special donations (one-time, event-based)	42,500	25,000	-17,500
Facilities and Security Funds lowered, based on income so far	33,600	22,000	-11,600
Shalom Shuk income lowered, based on staffing interruptions	94,000	87,000	-7,000
Gift Shop budget zeroed out because building is closed	1000-800=200	-0-	-200
Yellow highlights – realized income and expenses for projects now closed			
HHD income	33,360	38,599	5,239
HHD expenses	-4,500	-7,500	-3,000
OZHS income	17,000	23,000	6,000
Orange highlights – Policy-based changes			
5% salary cuts to Executive Director, Facilities Manager, and Director of Youth Education will take effect January 1, 2021, with an effective cut of approx. 2.5% for the fiscal year. No change to hours of DYE position.			
Income applied to operating budget from Resilience Project donations	15,000	48,000	33,000
Office Salary and Benefits lowered, due to replacement of full-time Office Mgr with quarter-time temp-agency employee and ED salary cut.	-122,335	-98,852	23,483
Facilities Salary and Benefits lowered, due to reduction by \$5,000 of projection for contract work and FacMgr salary cut.	-87,377	-84,758	2,619
Hebrew School Salary and Benefits raised, due to preservation of 28.5-hour DYE position.	-63,309	-73,942	-10,633
Office Contract Labor reduced, due to zeroing out of assistance for Office Manager position.	-41,850	-44,950	-3,100
Clergy travel and dues/subscriptions reduced because of Covid travel restrictions. (This year only.)	-9,500	-5,000	4,500
Projected Deficit	-59,966	-59,278	688

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WHY WE CAN NO LONGER AVOID EMBRACING CHANGE?

SOME BIG QUESTIONS TO HELP US CONFRONT AND ADDRESS OUR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

In 1947, the Ohavi Zedek congregation reached out to a youthful Rabbi Max B. Wall to lead it into a new and modern era. Theirs was a conscious and courageous decision to set aside their 82-year Orthodox traditions (e.g., segregation of sexes, services all in Hebrew with Yiddish sermons) and embrace modern values and practices designed to be more inclusive of a more diverse and growing Jewish population. Those values were then installed within their new community center, built in 1952 on Prospect St, an expansive and modern structure housing both a large community sanctuary and a smaller and more intimate gathering place (for daily prayer, Men's and Women's religious organizations, etc). In addition, there was a fully integrated set of classrooms (with after-school classes for some ages on Mon-Wed-Sundays and others Tue-Thur-Sundays), a library, a large multipurpose social hall (for Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, weddings and social gatherings) that also functioned as a full-size basketball court (with showers) for youth, along with staff and clerical offices and a social lounge for informal conversation. This welcoming structure aligned with both Rabbi Wall's and the congregation's understanding that their future was no longer grounded in the traditional ways of their Orthodox past.

And now we must understand that it's our turn, not just to think big, but to "do big." While OZ's clergy and staff have continued to embrace change in religious and other practices, there persists across the larger community a wide spread perception that OZ is rigid and unchanging. What we've learned from the 15-20 individuals who were interested in working with us on an individual basis, together with the 20+ additional congregants and former congregants with whom they've spoken, ***is that it is once again time for the congregation to act decisively*** for purposes of once again realigning our values with our practices in securing our congregation's next 75 years.

What we've learned in our conversations is everyone doesn't agree on "the" issue that most concerns (or, more powerfully, antagonizes) them. That's because there isn't a single problem nor a single fix for what we all recognize has been an ongoing (and now accelerating) set of dynamic processes – for instance, diminishing numbers of congregants, growing disengagement and doubt in many who remain, and a recognition of the intensifying competitive environment wherein other synagogues are growing and succeeding by appearing more modern and accessible. Rather, what has come out of our conversations is our shared understanding that we must start by asking ourselves difficult questions, questions which our community have largely chosen to ignore in the hope that working harder to maintain traditional practices would sustain us. *And then, beyond talk, we must be prepared to take actions that communicate both to ourselves and to others the courage of our convictions.*

Before beginning the Board and full congregational conversation, there must be agreement on the following two fundamental points:

- I. A synagogue and its congregation must continue to serve:
 - as a center of communal prayer and practice;
 - the community's need to educate its youth;
 - as a social center, where people find community, build relationships, and find joy within a shared sense of a Jewish identity;
 - to foster Tikkun Olam and social justice (Ohavi Zedek stands for "Lovers of Justice"), at heart the foundation of what it means to be a Jew in the larger world; and, finally
 - to address the needs of the vulnerable, the ill, and, specific to our congregational demographics, the needs of our aging population.
- II. Operationally, any and all proposed discussion and actions must be evaluated on the basis for how well they meet the practical and very real needs of our community both in the present (that means, we cannot and do not strive to exclude any current members; nor should we assume our current use of facilities and/or staff is

optimal) AND in the years to come (we build a stronger foundation upon which sustainable community can and will flourish). Pure and simple, that means our conversation should NOT be framed nor constrained by a lens that focuses on our current facilities or our current staff as definers of the congregation's values. Rather, by striving to understand our shared and enduring values can and will we effectively (as the congregation did in 1947-52), determine what resources we want and need.

We focused our limited time on **identifying shared values, relating to the role of a synagogue as a vibrant, engaging, and meaningful modern Jewish community center that celebrates prayer, education, and social Jewish identity.** Out of our open (albeit not easy) discussions, we have surfaced four core areas, for discussion and action.

1. Can we do more to implement new forms of joyful and engaging Prayer, as has been the case in other modern synagogues, to broaden congregational participation, build community relationships, and/or foster a new vision for OZ? Obviously, there are many dimensions to this question:
 - Should our future remain as a traditional "Conservative" synagogue? What are our options?
 - Are there new forms of music and/or dance that could foster wider and more joyful engagement?
 - How and where would OZ's clerical configuration and workload be reimagined to efficiently and effectively address the community's needs.
 - What resources, currently available or not, could and would advance these objectives?
 - What time frame would be required to affect a new set of practices?
2. How (what forms and practices) should the congregation's understanding of EDUCATION take to address our members' needs and our congregation's values in promoting education as an instrument for building relationships, community, and Jewish identity both within and beyond our congregation? Again,
 - What is the relationship between the preschool and the congregation?
 - How could and should Hebrew School education (ages 5 to 13; and then beyond) be structured to our community's best advantage? Should we reach out to other modern Jewish synagogues to work together?
 - What forms could meaningful and engaging adult educational practices take?
 - How should our current resources, clerical and staff, as well as facilities, be used to most efficiently and effectively advance our stated objectives and long-term interests?
 - Where and what new resources could bolster our commitment to uphold our synagogue's educational values?
3. How can we be more "family-friendly?" There are multiple "disconnects" within our practices (e.g., prayer services) and our congregational behaviors that need to be addressed.
 - What are the needs that young families seek to fill through synagogue involvement?
 - What are the needs of families whose children no longer attend Hebrew School?
 - Are there changes OZ could make in the short term (low hanging fruit)?
 - Where and what should OZ do to be known as being family-friendly?
 - What longer-term practices and/or resources are needed?
4. How can we purposely develop social programming that celebrates Jewish identity, deepens connections within community, and fosters positive attitudes toward core Jewish cultural values?"
 - What are the cultural needs of our community?
 - What types of social/cultural programming does the community want to engage in?
 - How do demographics impact this?
 - How would enhanced programming be managed?
 - How could we incorporate the greater Chittenden County Jewish community in this?
 - Could this be a new revenue source?
 - What is the role of Tikkun Olam/Social Action within the OZ community?

Moving Forward

These four questions that we have outlined above, reflect value priorities from our small working group. They also align with key areas within Tikvah 2020 - <http://ohavizedek.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Tikvah-2020-Final-Report-for-Congregation-February-2013.pdf> .

It is our recommendation that the Tikvah 2020 strategic plan (last updated in 2013) be the foundation for an action plan of change, updating and modernization in support of the four values outlined above. This work will provide the opportunity for the community to weave together thinking and doing through greater alignment, integration and relationship:

- Joyful and engaging prayer
- Community wide education
- Family friendly
- Social programming

Planning to Action in 90 days.

Step 1:

- A team of 7 lay members plus the Rabbi will lead the effort. This leadership team will include 2 board members. The group commits to meeting weekly for the next 90 days, while taking on assignments/projects between weekly meetings.
- The leadership team will review the work of the ad-hoc effort above and Tikvah 2020 and gain alignment on the project.
- A community wide communications plan will be developed to keep the congregation aware of this effort and the progress being made.

Step 2:

- Board and committee chairs retreat to review and update Tikvah 2020 and align on their values going forward.

Step 3:

- Congregation wide focus groups will be undertaken to gain alignment on community needs and values, explore additional values beyond those above, and prioritize values.
- Focus group report with recommendations will be developed for board review.

Step 4:

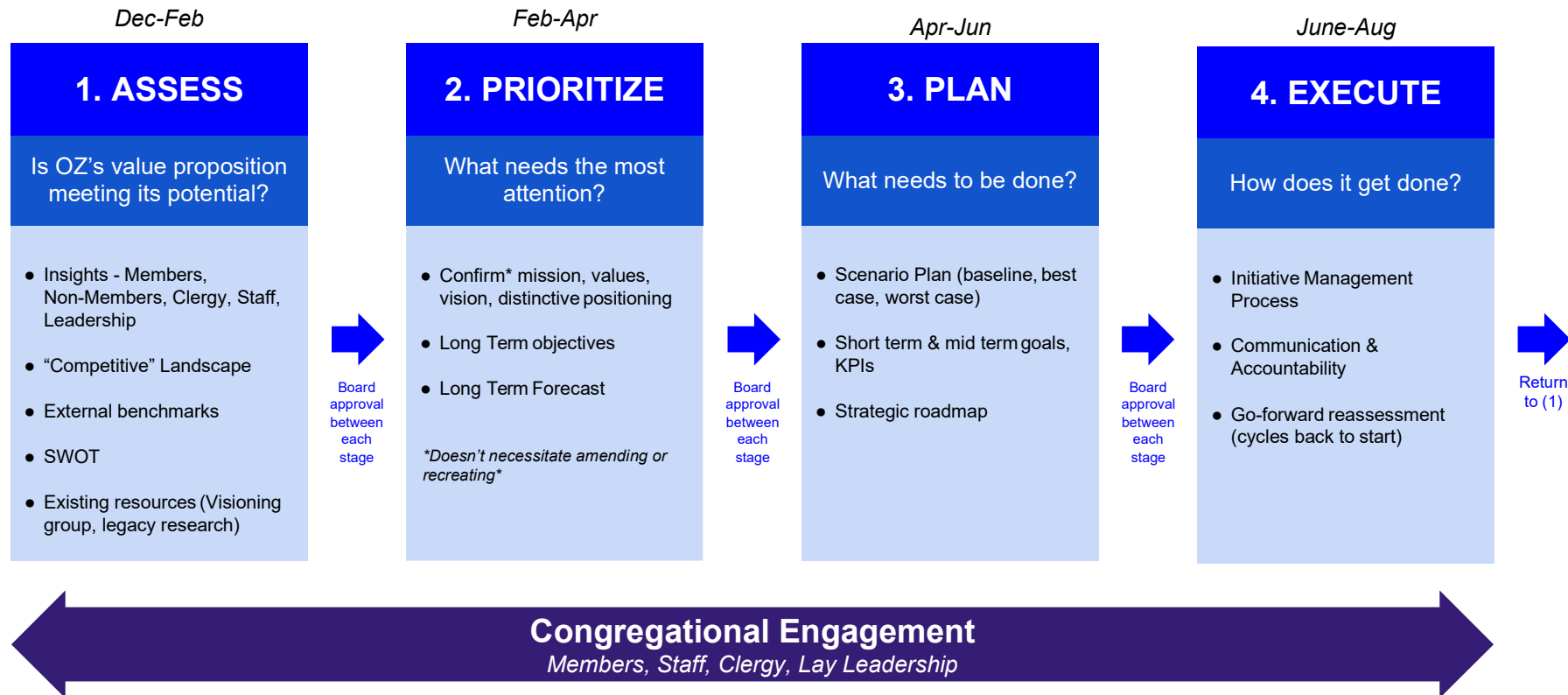
- An operational game plan, including objectives, strategy, tactics, timeline and budget will be developed to support each area of focus that the group and the board agree on moving forward.

Step 5:

- Put a management system in place that will be responsible for each area of focus.

Let's use Tikvah 2020 as the foundation for creating the energy, interest, and alignment for tomorrow. At this juncture, we can best serve OZ by starting with the known of Tikvah 2020 as a foundation for the future. A foundation grounded in practices that respect and honor cherished traditions while embracing opportunities to be more inclusive for today and tomorrow.

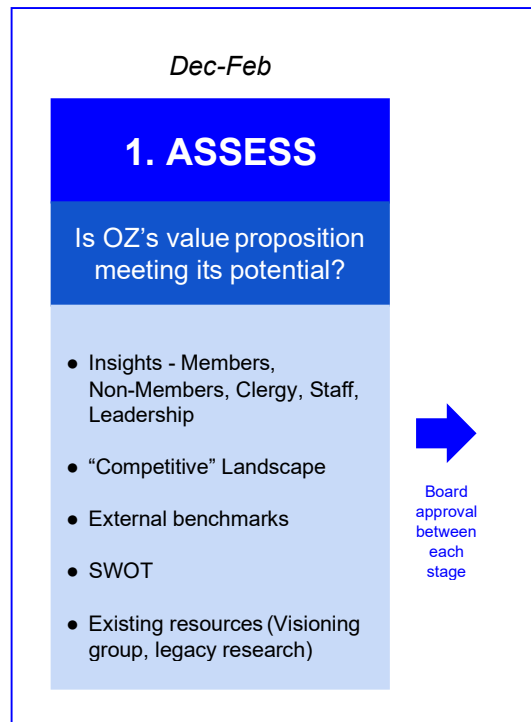
Hypothetical Strategic Planning Structure - Annual Process



Ownership, Roles, Responsibilities

Responsible	Small Working Group (1 lead, 2-4 additional team members)
Accountable	President & Board
Supporting	Committees, Board, Staff, Clergy, Volunteers
Consulting	Congregation, Staff, Clergy, Lay Leadership
Informed	Congregation, Staff, Clergy, Lay Leadership

Example - So what actually happens?



- Assign small working group (3-5 members) including one lead
- Working group aggregates and organizes
- Invite input from all stakeholders, congregation, staff, clergy, lay leadership
- Publish a summary report answering the question - ***Is OZ's value proposition meeting it's potential***
- Report shared with board as a pre-read a week before the February board meeting
- Board approves report (and if necessary, amends or assigns rework) before graduating to next stage
- Congregation informed and feedback invited at each stage. Confidential data, etc to be censored as necessary.
- Between each new stage, new team members or leads could, if necessary, cycle on/off
- At launch, inform support requirements ahead of time (e.g. long range financial forecast requires Finance Committee engagement)