

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday August 13th, 2020 7:30pm

In attendance: Judy Goldberg, Rabbi Breindel, Jocylyn Bailin, Jim Billings, Mike Joachim, Debbie Glass, Steve Probst, Marla Lewitus, Neil Frieband, Lizza Sandoe, Barbara Miller, Andy Goldberg, Sabina Pestka, Michelle Fineblum, Debbie Blicher, Cynthia Myersburg, Jesse Wertheimer, Scott Newman

Hebrew with Janet: Janet Buchwald

Re'eh. To see and be seen.

L'hitraot: to see each other

Welcome: Jim Billings

Welcome back, and thanks to all those who joined us in the middle of summer!

Reminder: Between now and September 18 it's time to make the annual calls to our membership. You will be receiving shortly an updated call list. Please call your assigned members and check in with them – wish them L'shanana Tovah and extend new years' blessings on behalf of the congregation.

Shira Gaudet has declined her position on the Board for the duration of Covid-19. We need a replacement. Please forward any suggestions to Jim and the Nominating Committee (Judy Goldberg, Jocylyn Bailin, Debbie Glass, and Susan Tohn).

URJ Tent: Judy Goldberg

The URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) has an online platform called the Tent. It's a great resource for exchange of ideas and information with congregations all around the country. Additionally, it provides access to all the resources of the URJ. We can give everyone on the Board of Directors access to The Tent. If you do NOT want this access, please let Judy know by August 14th, otherwise you will be receiving a link and an invitation to join.

Rabbi's Report: Rabbi Breindel

It's all High Holidays all the time, folks.

Ritual

- Participated in Zoomed Tisha B'Av service (technical issues precluded in-person).
- We will host a community Selichot service at 7:30 PM on Sat., 9/12. I'm preparing an evening in which we will be joined by Beth Am, B'nai Torah and Shir Tikva.
- High Holidays – lots of new initiatives with Lorel:
 - Clergy meeting with congregants (outside, distanced, masked)
 - Seeking volunteer support for new High Holiday initiatives

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- Will officiate at a baby naming for Marty and Judy Cohen's granddaughter on 9/29 after services.
- Lorel and I are now offering in-person visits outside, socially distanced and masked. Will expand this and similar pastoral/community outreach. These have going well and have been very nice.

Community outreach/events

- Met with LimmudBoston organizing team planning the fall 2020 online program.
- Weekly meeting with MetroWest Reform rabbis – keeping each other in the loop about programming and High Holiday ideas.
- Continuing to offer weekly Chagigah spot and semi-weekly video address (both posted on our webpage). [QUERY: who has viewed either of these?](#)
- Recoding a spot for the Hebrew College Elul video teaching blog.

Programming and education

- I'm coordinating Frankie Snyder's third presentation at 10:00 AM on Sun., 8/30.
- Working closely with Green Team and Anti-racism Committee on new initiatives.

Administrative

- Coordinating with Shoni and Scott on new initiatives for middle and high school. There are seven communities collaborating together for a high school program. The details on this are nearly set. The middle school will also be collaborative.
- Designing lesson plans for new semester – Middle and High School.
- Reaching out to new members and prospective members. Also asking the Board to make their traditional pre-holiday calls and report anything unusual to clergy/staff/hevra mishpacha as needed.

Temple Administrators Report: Jim Billings for Beth Schine

- We have one new member and 3 resignations.
- There are three members that the Board needs to make a decision on membership. We have reached out to all three repeatedly over the past year or even longer, to no avail. Each of the three have received a 30-day notice at this point. At this point the Board needs to make a decision whether to terminate their membership. After much discussion, it was determined that a termination letter will be sent to two of the members (Brian Scheff and Joan Sherizen). Barbara Miller will reach out to the third, Lydia Hughes, and make contact with her personally. If successful we will continue to keep in touch with her and offer her a spiritual home.

Motion: That Brian Scheff and Joan Sherizen will no longer be considered members of Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley.

Motion approved: 12 in favor. 1 abstention. 0 opposed

- The termination letter is from the Board, sent out by the clerk. Jocylyn and Beth will coordinate to make this happen.

Mission and Vision working group: Jocylyn Bailin

Beth El is looking to create a Mission and Vision statement. This will be a covenanting document that helps us to understand ourselves and our place in the Jewish world. We hope that it will be something that can bring us together with a sense of unity and purpose, something that will help us to create a real and powerful track forward. With the profound changes to the world – and the congregation – due to Covid and the impending departure of Lorel, now is the time to undertake this process of self-evaluation and future covenanting. Fern Chertok, Jocelyn Bailin, and Rabbi Breindel are currently in the process of visioning and pulling together a working group to move forward on this.

Lorel Update: Jim Billings

This is a reminder that Lorel will be staying with Beth El through the High Holidays in 2021. We need to notify the congregation of this new arrangement. Jim will have a message sent out to the community.

There will be some sort of interim cantor arrangement starting after the high holidays end until June of 2022 (there are no specifics available on this yet as we have not yet made any decisions). Jordan will be meeting with the Finance committee to discuss the financial end of any potential hiring.

Covid-19 Committee update: Laurie Margolies

The task force has been busy reviewing proposals for programming and building usage. On the discussion docket:

Can High Holiday Torah readers read Torah outdoors? Is there any way possible for them to read indoors?

Can the annual Yom Kippur food drive happen in some different way this year? What would that look like?

Can we hold outdoor services like a drive-in – the “park and pray” option that some other congregations have been doing?

The committee is struggling with what decisions need to be brought to the Board for approval and which ones can be made by the committee and clergy/staff working together. It is unclear who has the power to make these types of decisions.

How can we allow the staff to have some discretion as to what does or does not happen in the building while also having the safety fallback option to say to requests “Sorry, the Board won’t allow us”.

The Board made a decision back in April to allow NO people in the building. Perhaps it is time to revisit that decision? Discussion ensued on how to allow for more flexible and timely decision making.

Motion: To allow the President of Congregation Beth El to make exceptions to the current Covid-19 building policy in consultation with the Covid-19 task force. The president will report these decisions to the Board at monthly Board meetings.

Motion approved: unanimous

Virtual Membership Proposal: Cynthis Meyersburg and Judy Goldberg

Motion: To create a virtual membership category for Congregation Beth El for 2020-2021. Virtual members must live more than 50 miles from Beth El and must not be members of Beth El or Friends of Beth El as of June 30, 2020. Virtual membership would cost \$360 and would confer all the privileges of membership at Beth El. This includes all virtual programming, high holidays, mailings of siddur and machzor, etc.

Discussion: Given that all Beth El members are currently accessing all Beth El programming virtually, what's the difference between this membership and the regular Beth El membership? This seems offensive to members who are currently paying 10x that amount for the same thing. Current Friends of Beth El pay \$500; this would be a reduction in their payment. Comment: All communities are allowing for free access to their High Holiday services. Instead of charging \$360 for a virtual membership that is identical to a full price membership and less than the current friends of Beth El membership, how about is we ask for a suggested donation for attending High Holiday services and possibly other programming? Additionally, let's keep exploring options for financial structures – this option isn't viable for many reasons but perhaps we can come up with other ideas that are.

Motion withdrawn.

Executive session convened 9:10pm

**Question for the Board from Rabbi Breindel:
What do we wish for our community in this coming year?**

Reminder that the next Board meeting will start at 7:00pm, with a presentation by CJP. After their presentation (on their Zoom) we will reconvene on Beth El's Zoom for our regular meeting.

Meeting adjourned 9:24pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jocelyn Bailin
Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley