

**Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday July 8th, 2021 7:00pm**

**In attendance:** Ann Kramer, Andy Goldberg, Barbara Miller, Carolyn Schwartz, Debbie Glass, Jake Steinmann, Jerry Kazin, Jim Billings, Jocylyn Bailin, Judy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Michelle Fineblum, Mike Joachim, Neil Frieband, Sabina Pestka, Steve Breit, Steve Probst, Beth Schine, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich  
Guests: Cat Kaner, Fern Chertok, Lisa Breit, Sarah Green-Vaswani, Liz David, John Harper, Mitch Rosenberg

**Welcome:** Jim Billings

Good to see everyone again – thanks for continuing to show up!

**Hebrew With Janet:** Listen up!

**June meeting minutes:** Jocylyn Bailin

Minutes approved with 2 amendments and one abstention

**Tikkun Olam:** Michelle Fineblum

The full Tikkun Olam report is attached. Michelle came to the Board to ask about moving the Inclusion Committee to be under the Tikkun Olam umbrella, instead of Tsibur where it currently lies. The IC has also requested that there be a Director of Inclusion on the Board. The request to move Inclusion to Tikkun Olam was well received. The discussion about the Director position will be taken up by Jim, Michelle, and Nom Com.

**Food at Beth El:** Jim Billings

Now that services have opened up to in-person participation, it's time to start thinking about food!

Proposal: That picnic-style eating be allowed inside the sanctuary in addition to outside (which was previously approved). People must bring their own food, although they can share informally with others. Beth El will set up tables and provide paper plates and paper cups and a garbage can only. The kitchen may not be used for anything other than food storage (put items in fridge or on the counter during services). All food must be taken back home. Josimar will do minimal cleanup up as needed.

Motion approved: unanimously

**Tsibur Update:** Jerry Kazin

There are currently two committees doing work that will impact what we see inside and outside the synagogue.

1: Inclusion Committee and the Anti-Racism committee are both working on banners. They have already placed the Black Lives Matter, the Asian Lives Matter, and the new LGBTQ+flag outside Beth El on/near the median strip. The Anti-Racism committee specifically are working to create a larger banner, which would replace the pre-made signs and be more

visible. Right now, they are deciding what the wording on the banner will be and investigating procurement of said banner, which will have some sort of permanent backing so that the front of the banner can be swapped out as desired). The banner group will report back to the Board before going forward with any purchase.

2: Appearance Committee: this group is working on the updating of Beth El's appearance. There has been plenty of feedback that we are starting to look a bit shabby around the edges. Those who have been in the building may have noticed that the Hannukat Banim and Siyyum photos through the ages have been removed. They are in the process of being digitized. The wall where they were will be patched and painted as part of the upcoming yearly painting process. The appearance group has recently been visiting other synagogues to check out how they look – exterior, common spaces, signage, classrooms, hallways, etc.

**Anti-Semitism group:** Andy Goldberg

Andy and others are facilitating a group of parents, both BE and otherwise, to address the disturbing increase in anti-Semitic acts in the Sudbury schools. Through meeting with town officials, school officials, the police and more, they are hoping to reinforce/strengthen Sudbury's hate crimes definition, statutes, laws, enforcement, etc.

**Vision Alignment Committee (VAC) presentation:** Fern Chertok, Jocelyn Bailin, Sarah Green-Vaswani, Mitch Rosenberg, Liz David, John Harper

Presentation PPT will be sent to all Board members who would like a copy.

Highlights of the 55-minute presentation: The VAC has worked diligently for the past 7 months. They met with congregants, with staff, with past presidents and past clergy, with outside organizations and more. They collected and reviewed data from many sources and spent dozens of hours discussing what this means for Beth El. The committee drafted the following Vision Statement, which they are honored to share with the Board:

*Congregation Beth El is joyful, participatory Judaism.*

*We sing, learn, laugh, and pray together, and*

*celebrate our varied backgrounds, identities, and experiences.*

*We connect with Jewish values and traditions as we*

*strive to create a more just future for ourselves, our children, and our world.*

A vision statement is only effective if it reflects the values of the place it is crafted for. A good vision statement stretches us within our natural constraints, it reflects what we honor and hold dear and challenges us to do better.

As part of the presentation, the Board split into breakout groups to reflect and brainstorm.

Jim's concluded by acknowledging and thanking the VAC for their work. He then charged the Board to honor the work of the VAC by stepping up to embrace the Vision and work together to actualize it for Beth El: **We as the Board have the privilege and the opportunity to make it come alive.** We must **champion** it. We must be **flexible** enough to try new things, to step outside our comfort zone. We must be **courageous** enough to commit to spending time and money on the necessary expertise and actions. And we must be **diligent** enough to keep showing up to do this work. Specifically Jim asked for three things:

1. To **officially adopt** the vision statement.
2. For all Board members to personally devote effort, attention and expertise to **marketing and publicity for Beth El**. It won't happen without us.
3. **For 2-3 Board members to step up and join the strategic planning committee**, which is following up on the work of the VAC.

*Motion:* To officially adopt the Beth El Vision Statement as presented.

*Motion approved:* 14 in favor, one abstention.

Meeting adjourned 8:56 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

Attached Reports:

Temple Administrator

Tikkun Olam

# Temple Administrator's Report

July 8, 2021

## Administrator's Report

- **Membership/finances**
  - no new numbers re: membership
  - dues forms have gone out - important to get as many as possible back as soon as possible to give us realistic understanding of our membership. This process almost always results in some resignations when people who have been largely disconnected receive forms. This year is unique in some ways as many people may have been disconnected due to COVID - e.g., because of isolation, financial problems, Zoom didn't work for them - so a lack of communication may not mean the same thing at all this year, and I am being conscious of that as I contact people, and as I start to hear back from them
- **Building issues/upcoming happenings**
  - Blood drive on Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup>
  - Annual cleaning will get underway in August
  - Planning for three b'nai mitzvah in October
- **Reopening**
  - In person services have restarted - means that we need to establish process for making sure door is attended at times when people are coming in. Working with Ritual (thank you, Carolyn!) to restart oneg/Kiddush hosts, initially as greeters/ushers even though we are not yet doing communal food.
  - Thursday morning minyan had their first in-person service last week. They are starting back gradually, meeting at Beth El on the first Thursday of the month for now.
  - Fobs will be reactivated gradually as things restart. Need to be sure that it's done in a way that doesn't result in someone being able to access building when alarm is activated.
  - Tech planning group is at work on identifying and prioritizing the needs for functioning in a hybrid remote/in-person environment and finding solutions for the immediate and short-term (Including HH), while we evaluate and assess for the longer term.

I will be away the week of July 18<sup>th</sup>, during that week, office hours will be 9:00am – 2:00pm, Monday through Thursday.

## Tikkun Olam update – July 2021

Please read about the ways our fellow congregants are engaged in Tikkun Olam, consider joining, and email [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com) if I've missed anything. *Thanks to all for your important and holy work!*

- **Blood Drive:** After what seems like an eternity, we are finally going to start hosting blood drives again!
  - The next ARC Blood Drive will be held at Beth El on Monday, July 26 from 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm. If you are able to help staff the drive, please sign up using this Google Doc: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/164HmOpO-6miUiujKn\\_SmfUQcdXOYqDYveeVBN6wSL0k/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/164HmOpO-6miUiujKn_SmfUQcdXOYqDYveeVBN6wSL0k/edit?usp=sharing)
  - Please note - at the present time Red Cross policies are now (aligned with CDC) – they are not taking temperatures upon entry, vaccinated individuals are not required to mask, unvaccinated folks are – on an honor system. They are practicing (somewhat more relaxed) social distancing.
  - For this drive, I am trying to recruit as many donors as possible as the need has never been higher. Please ask your family members, friends and colleagues to donate. Donors can sign up online by following this link: [Click here to make an appointment](#). If you are not able to make an appointment (we have lots of people already signed up!) and want to drop in, please try. If this date does not work for you, please consider giving at a different location.
  
- **Sanctuary Committee:**
  - We are currently working on a crisis involving the Ayala family: we asked the congregation for \$9000 for the rest of the year. We only got \$3000. That pretty much is exhausted at this point. We are having some serious conversations both with the Ayalas, with Diego Low from MISN; and as part of this we are also considering how and to what extent the Ayalas will have a path to becoming self-supporting. They have made a lot of progress, but as you might have guessed, everything was pretty static and on hold during the pandemic. So, we are actively pursuing this, although there really isn't much we can announce at this point. We may well have some communication with the congregation within a few weeks. And that's pretty much consuming our time and efforts right now.
  - The Sanctuary Committee together with the Anti-Racism Working Group is sponsoring a Bystander Intervention Training to be led by Beth El member Craig Ross on July 11 from 2-4 PM.
  - For info on the Ayala family, contact Judy Katz ([judy16k@gmail.com](mailto:judy16k@gmail.com)) or Judy Sletzinger ([jsletzinger@gmail.com](mailto:jsletzinger@gmail.com)). For info on legislative action, contact Kath Bean ([kathleencbean@gmail.com](mailto:kathleencbean@gmail.com)). For info on Friday afternoon standouts or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner ([carl.offner@comcast.net](mailto:carl.offner@comcast.net)).
  
- **Green Team:** Green Team continues to be active on many fronts:
  - In July, we are celebrating Judith Lytel as Beth El's latest *Climate Mensch of the Month!* With her third Prius (must be a record!), Judith is up to 425 mpg (that's got to be a record!). In her prior home, Judith installed insulation and energy efficient appliances (several for free, courtesy of Mass- Save energy audits), composted kitchen wastes, enjoyed an electric lawnmower, and subscribed for green electricity. She reports that she has had significant savings over time, a smaller carbon footprint, and the satisfaction of contributing to a healthier planet for future generations; she recommends all of these actions to members of Beth El. Read more at Beth El's Green Team webpage: <https://bethelsudbury.org/beth-el-green-team/>
  - Be like Judith! See Beth El's Green Challenge: <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN/>

- Check out actions you can take right now. And sign up for the Green Team list-serv (email [greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org](mailto:greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org)).
- July 8<sup>th</sup> EV webinar - Shopping for an EV? Wayland MassEnergize has a webinar on July 8<sup>th</sup> on the benefits of EVs and hybrid cars, current and future models, charging infrastructure, and incentives. Bring your questions! EV drivers will be there to help explain everything about driving electric. If you can't make it, check out the MassEnergize/JCAN website, or email Ellen Tohn at [ellentohn@gmail.com](mailto:ellentohn@gmail.com). If you have an EV, please share your testimonial as a member of the [Beth El team](#). 7:30 pm-8:30 pm. Register [here](#).
- Are you composting? It's really easy. You can do it yourself (talk to Sandy Coy!). Or subscribe to Black Earth Compost's composting service. <https://blackearthcompost.com/> If Beth El's composting its kitchen waste, you can too! Contact Linda Klein with your questions at [lindaklein840@gmail.com](mailto:lindaklein840@gmail.com).
- Have questions on solar, composting, heat pumps? Contact John Harper at [jpharper47@gmail.com](mailto:jpharper47@gmail.com).
- **Inclusion Committee:** The accessible doors are installed on the side of the building! A huge thank you to Jerry Kazin for installing them and to Beth and Jim for all their behind-the-scenes support. We are scheduling two mental health programs for the fall so stay tuned and we hope they will be in person. We continue to Zoom services and classes to maximize accessibility and will continue to discuss the benefits for everyone in doing this.
- **Support for Beth El members:** Phone buddies and light meals: With the onset of summer and a return to more normal patterns of interaction, it might seem that all is well. While things certainly are better for many of us, let's remain mindful that not everyone has the blessings of liberty and health. Some of our congregants cannot be vaccinated, and others face ongoing health or living situations that keep them isolated. If you or another congregant you know could benefit from a friendly call or a light meal, please reach out to Carol Sheingold at [csheingold@gmail.com](mailto:csheingold@gmail.com) or Jocelyn Bailin at [pi\\_joy@yahoo.com](mailto:pi_joy@yahoo.com). Wishing everyone a healthy and safe summer!
- **Anti-Racism Working Group:** This month, members of the Antiracism Working Group:
  - Met virtually with members of Roxbury United Neighborhoods to identify possible ways we might become 'co-conspirators' in their work.
  - Discussed *I'm Still Here* by Austin Channing Brown at the June Book Group meeting.
  - Are exploring the possibility of organizing:
    - an environmental justice program,
    - an Elul learning opportunity, and
    - a policy forum with elected officials.
  - Have committed to postcarding, calling and texting in connection with Black-led voter empowerment initiatives.
  - Contacts: Judy Goldberg and Karen Blumenfeld
- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Criminal Justice Reform has been waiting for Kimya's House (program for post-incarcerated women) to be ready to receive household gifts that congregants have found for it. We have received word that the house is ready, except for an outside repair, so we're working on setting a date and expect to deliver the many items by the end of the month. The person who runs the house, Stacey Borden, is a Trustee for several local (and one national) organizations working on reducing mass incarceration and especially that of women. We will follow up and update you when we find a pertinent bill to support or another effort to work on. For more info, please contact Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein at 978-443-8084 or [ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com).
- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** The Tzedek Scholarship Fund Committee is thrilled to congratulate our three new graduates, Nathalie Camargo Carter, Ann Sashell Thebeau, and Rayanne Silva, all who just completed their undergraduate work at FSU. To date we have funded seven students, all of whom will have graduated. We are about to start reviewing applications and plan to select a new scholarship recipient for the fall term.

- **MetroWest Free Medical Program:** The MWFMP is “seeing” patients remotely through a combination of video calls, phone conversations, and text messaging. We’re limited right now to patients we’ve seen before and hope to extend our services to new patients in the future and eventually start seeing patients in person as the Covid emergency abates. We’ve received some emergency grants from funders that are helping to make the transition to telemedicine. Visit our [website](#) to learn more and get involved. **We have some needs for volunteers and paid staff.** We’re especially looking for physicians in adult general medicine and Psychiatry to add to our volunteer staff. We’re also looking for nurses in adult medicine and Psychiatry for volunteer or paid part-time positions. For more information, please contact our Medical Director, Dr. Peter Dain at [pdain@mac.com](mailto:pdain@mac.com) . We also need someone to fill a communications position including maintaining our web site and sending out newsletters. Volunteer or possibly paid part time. Please contact Gary Hirsch at [GBHirsch@comcast.net](mailto:GBHirsch@comcast.net) if interested.
- **Tzedaka Hevra:** The Tzedaka Hevra has had a busy and productive year, giving away about \$28,000. 60% went to 3 organizations and the remaining 40% to 22 other organizations. The Hevra meets regularly and is open to any Beth El member. We hear from speakers representing organizations that we donate to, or that we may donate to. To learn more, contact Ira Silver [isilver@framingham.edu](mailto:isilver@framingham.edu)
- **Help for Congregants Who Need Food Assistance:** If there are any congregants who could use some food assistance, they should contact Deborah Oppenheimer directly at [deb\\_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu](mailto:deb_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu); all information will be kept confidential. If any need assistance getting pantry (or other) groceries delivered to them, they should contact Neighborhood Brigade (with whom Deborah has partnered). If they live in Lincoln or Sudbury they should contact Sudbury Neighborhood Brigade about home deliveries, at Sudbury MA Neighbor Brigade <[sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org](mailto:sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org)>.
- **COVID-19 Support Services From CJP:** If COVID-19 has affected someone you know financially, the [CJP WarmLine](#) (1-800-CJP-9500) may be able to assist. With one phone call or by filling out a simple online form, trained Warmline counselors can begin to help navigate available services across the Jewish community. JewishBoston.com also has additional information about community resources during the COVID-19 crisis. Anyone feeling overwhelmed with sadness, anxiety or stress, or who wants to harm themselves or others, can access the mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention program Call2Talk by dialing 2-1-1, calling 508-532-2255 or by texting C2T to 741741.
- **Kiddush donation opportunities:** In lieu of hosting Kiddush at the temple, consider joining a Beth El Kiddush group, which plans to donate funds to food pantries, including [Sudbury Food Pantry](#), Greater [Boston Food Bank](#) and [Feeding America](#).
- **Covid-19 volunteer opportunities:** Our community rises to the current Covid-19 challenge! The JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many volunteer opportunities. If you're able to help, please take a look at their websites: <https://www.jfcsboston.org/Volunteer/Volunteering-at-JF-CS> <https://www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/>

**Thanks to everyone for your holy work!** If I’ve missed anyone’s Tikkun Olam efforts at Beth El, please let me know. We’d like to share the news with the community! If something here interests you, and you don’t see contact information, let me know and I’m happy to connect you.

L’shalom,

Michelle Fineblum, VP, Tikkun Olam [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com) Beth El’s Tikkun Olam web page

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