

**Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday May 14th, 2020 7:30pm**

**In attendance:** Judy Goldberg, Rabbi Breindel, Susan Tohn, Jocylyn Bailin, Jim Billings, Mike Joachim, Marcos Szydlo, John Harper, Aaron Friedman, Debbie Glass, Steve Probst, Marla Lewitus, Justin Lewitus, Laurie Margolies, Neil Frieband, Judy Sletzinger, Jesse Wertheimer, Lizza Sandoe, Michael Brown, Gabriel DeBrito, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich, Cynthia Myersburg

**Welcome:** Judy Goldberg

We are zooming again! Or still!

**Hebrew with Janet:** by video!

Don't stop believing – Shin Bet Tav. As a verb it means to cease or stop. A Sh'vitah is a work stoppage or a strike. Chushbat is to cease working or to be laid off from work, which is happening to many people right now. A sabbatical year – Shabbaton - is a time to cease from usual activities, to refresh and renew. And, of course, saving the best for last, is Shabbat!

**Approval of Minutes:** Jocylyn Bailin

**Motion:** To approve minutes from 4/16/20 Board meeting. *Motion passed unanimously.*

**Rabbi's Report:** Rabbi Breindel

We have had amazing experiences together over the past month! I am impressed and deeply touched at how we are managing to uphold our values and traditions even during these challenging times. We are continuing to learn from our experiences even as we look towards future worship opportunities, including the upcoming (!) High Holidays.

**Ritual**

- Special services over the past month include: community Yom Ha-Shoah commemoration; Yom Ha-Atzma'ut celebration
- Siyyum graduation celebration. *We had approximately 240 people join us!*
- Maintaining Omer Speaker Series on Friday nights. Roberta Unger this week!

**Lifecycle/Pastoral**

- Essentially, every congregational interaction has some element of pastoral care. People are nervous, scared, really fatigued and worried. They are EXTREMELY grateful for the gifts of community and support from us all!
- Very few requests for financial assistance. PLEASE send people to the Rabbi and/or Lorel if you hear of any need.

**Community outreach/events**

- Continuing to offer weekly appearances on Chagigah as a guest DJ.
- Recording (more-or-less) weekly video address to community for our homepage.
- Offered one-shot presentation on Judaism to middle school in Dalton, MA.
- Coordinating with Lorel on MetroWest community Shavuot event.

### **Programming and education**

- Launched new series: Hasidic Tales. I've been very pleased with the response!
- Great Jewish Stories has been gaining new members.
- Coordinating with Scott for end of year school commemoration.
- Coordinating with Scott and Shoni about summer community programming.
- Coordinating with Adult Ed to Zoom-host my friend, Frankie Snyder, for class at 10:00 AM on Sunday, 5/24 on archaeology of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple period.

### **Administrative**

- Ongoing coordination with staff (including Hevreh Mishpachah and Hevreh Kadisha) on supporting our community with ongoing COVID-19 developments.
- Scheduled final meeting with the Leadership cohort for early June. Coordinating with Judy around next steps to integrate them into existing/new temple leadership slots.

### **Personal**

- FYI: I worked half-time during the four days I took as personal time last month. A challenge that all clergy are facing...
- IJS retreat is going to happen via Zoom for a week in July. Will share details as they become available.

### **Treasurer's Report: Neil Frieband**

- *Good News!* We received \$102,000 loan through the PPP program on May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- In order for the loan to be forgiven we must spend 75% of it on salaries, healthcare, and pension expenses by July 8<sup>th</sup>. The rest of it can be used for other costs such as utilities.
- The paperwork to meet the requirements is confusing as the rules keep changing.
- The issue for us to figure out is the teachers, as they usually stop working in May. Scott, Shoni, Marla and the Education Committee are working with the teachers on this.

**Judy:** Neil did a tremendous amount of work to get us this loan. The rules changed constantly; we were rejected once and applied again. Thank you Neil!

### **VOTES TAKEN:**

#### **Annual Meeting: Judy Goldberg**

**Motion:** To hold the 2020 Congregation Beth El Annual Meeting via Zoom

*Motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Congregation Beth El 2020-2021 Budget: Michael Joachim**

**Motion:** To approve the proposed operating budget for FY '20-'21. The Board recommends no dues increase and no salary increases for any staff. The building manager salary will be reduced to 10,500.

*Motion Approved* by a 68%/32% split

**Executive Session invoked 8:15pm.**

**Other reports:** Temple Administrator, Ritual, Tikkun Olam, Education Director included as attachments.

Meeting adjourned 9:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

## Administrator's Report May 14, 2020

Membership unchanged; no report on dues as Mike will be covering that in your budget discussion.

Since last month's Board meeting, things have settled into a "new normal" – we've continued to have some kind of programming almost every day of the week, covering quite a wide range of topics/themes: Qigong practice, Hasidic stories, Kabbalistic perspective on dreamwork, support/discussion group for parents during pandemic, spiritual direction, to name but a few.

Plans are now underway for an Adult Ed "Variety Hour" – kicks off next Tuesday with Shoni's session entitled "Meir who?" – what if Bob Dylan had been raised on a kibbutz?

We're getting more and more adept at Zoom, and refining how we use it in more and more ways that are truly Beth El – this week will be our second "Shabbat Rinah-ish" service, we've had several weeks now of "live-remote" Torah readings, and tonight will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> shiva via Zoom.

The building is largely quiet, I'm in 2-3 days/week to at least check mail, make sure it's still standing, occasionally tweak the technology for services.

In other relevant activities:

- The sidewalk leading up to the office entrance is in the midst of being repaired. Weather permitting, the cement will be poured next Tuesday or Wednesday. Until then, it is not advised to use that entrance.
- I'm taking advantage of the building's not being in use to get bids on the summer cleaning.

Last, but not least – here's one of the little known perks of leaving the building at just the right time – the view across the parking lot as I walked out the door!



## Ritual Report

For meeting May 14, 2020

Beth El continues to be quite an amazing community! ... to no one's surprise. At this point, we are holding zoom sessions with a feed of the session broadcasting in real time on the website. We are working how to balance privacy with being available to the community and are working on having it concurrently playing on our Facebook page.

Toby and I had a productive meeting to finalize the transition of VP.

### 1. Shabbat

Shabbat services continue to happen on Friday and Saturday at normal times. Fridays are now including the Omer speaker series. Services are taking place on zoom, and thus are able to have live reading of Torah portions. We are also having regular Havdalah services on zoom (not streamed) led by members of the congregation.

### 2. B'nai Mitzvah

Last month we had the second adult b'nai mitzvah and four members of the group (out of six for that week) read their portions. We have our first potentially online bat mitzvah for one of our teens.

### 3. Siyyum

Last Friday we had a wonderful Kabbalat Shabbat service and Siyyum celebration. There were ten students who presented parts of their essays on pieces of their Jewish Journeys. It was an amazing evening and there is a wonderful, touching video highlighting their journey together.

### 4. High Holidays

While it seems more and more likely that we will be, at least in large part online for High Holidays we will continue to talk about how to accommodate for safety in case we have some people (aside from the rabbi and Lorel) in the building.

### 5. Shavuot

Planning is well underway for an online Tikkun Shavuot on Thursday, May 28. While it won't be quite the same, it will be a wonderful gathering.

### 6. Limnot Yameinu

Getting bored after finishing transliterating Vitaher Libenu, Carolyn Schwartz has taken on transliteration for Limnot Yameinu, our prayer book for shiva services. Not only have we been running short of copies of the original version, but transliteration is being added to ensure that people have as much access as possible to the liturgy. Members of Heverah Kadishah are discussing a few small adjustments to the order of readings to aid in the flow of the services, but will not be changing content.

## Tikkun Olam Report 5/14/20

Our community rises to the current Covid-19 challenge! The world needs a lot of repairing right now. Many Tikkun Olam efforts are already underway in support of Beth El members and the broader community. More opportunities arrive in our inboxes every day. Just a sampling – please spread the word about additional opportunities as you see them, or let me know ([jpharper47@gmail.com](mailto:jpharper47@gmail.com)).

- **Support for housebound Beth El members:** Our Beth El community has stepped up to take care of one another! Some Beth El members have been all but housebound during the Covid-19 shelter-in-place rules and have needs with even basic tasks such as getting grocery items, pharmaceuticals, and such. Please email Jocelyn Bailin at [pi\\_joy@yahoo.com](mailto:pi_joy@yahoo.com) if you know of a Beth El member in need of assistance, and she will connect them with a willing volunteer.
- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** Beth El's Tzedek Scholars are continuing their studies at Framingham State. Orlando will graduate this month! Sashell will be back this fall, and Nathalie is on track to resume classes and hopefully finish next year, or the December after that. Thanks to your generosity, Beth El has been able to award another scholarship to a young woman named Rayanne Silva. She will be a senior next fall. And, the MetroWest Women's Fund has donated almost \$11,000 to the Tzedek Scholarship Fund to support women candidates this year. Please consider contributing to the fund by writing a check to Congregation Beth El, with "Beth El Tzedek Scholarship Fund" written in the memo line, or donating on-line [here](#).
- **Sanctuary Project Fund:** The pandemic has hit the local immigrant and asylum-seeker communities hard. Last month, the Sanctuary Project Fund contributed money to support the emergency food distribution effort organized by the MetroWest Immigrant Solidarity Network (MISN) & the Metrowest Worker Center. See <http://www.mwc-casa.org/> for details. The Ayalas are very thankful for the continuing logistical, emotional, and financial support by multiple Beth El members and from the Sanctuary Project Fund as they weather the pandemic. Salvador is fully recovered from a non-Covid-19 illness and working again at Stop and Shop, albeit at irregular hours. Several members have donated grocery gift cards directly to the family. Deb Oppenheimer set them up to use the Sudbury Community food pantry, and they also have received groceries from the MISN program. Shirley Hui provided masks. Judy Katz is a lifeline in helping them navigate this world. The Sanctuary Project fund is providing partial financial support for certain fixed expenses. Please consider helping the fund support the local immigrant community by donating on-line [here](#). If you want to donate a Market Basket grocery card gift card, please contact Judy Katz ([judy16k@gmail.com](mailto:judy16k@gmail.com)) or Judy Sletzinger ([jsletzinger@gmail.com](mailto:jsletzinger@gmail.com)).
- **Sanctuary Committee social justice updates:** The Sanctuary Committee continues working on public policy issues helping immigrants and criminal justice reform. Beth El members have signed an ACLU petition to reduce numbers in detention in prisons and jails during the coronavirus crisis ([aclu.org/covid19releaseprisons](https://www.aclu.org/covid19releaseprisons)), and sent emails to support immigrant hunger strikers in Rhode Island. For more information, see this link for information on the *Safe Communities Act* bill before the Massachusetts legislature. Contact Kath Bean ([kathleencbean@gmail.com](mailto:kathleencbean@gmail.com)) for details.
- **MetroWest Free Medical Clinic:** The clinic remains closed due to the pandemic. The program will open again only when it is determined to be safe. In the meantime, the MWFMP website offers information on Covid-19 in multiple languages for the local community <https://metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org/>

- **Green Team:** Lots is going on! The GreenTeam has found a way for Beth El and members to sign-up for off-site composting with Black Earth Compost ([www.blackearthcompost.com](http://www.blackearthcompost.com)). Plans are in place to start a pilot composting program at Beth El next January. If 20 members sign up for residential service, Beth El will get a discount! Contact Linda Klein for details ([lindaklein840@gmail.com](mailto:lindaklein840@gmail.com)). We are looking to raise the level of renewable power in the temple's electricity supply to 100%; Beth El is enrolled in Sudbury's Community Choice Aggregation program, which will roll out a new multi-year contract this summer. A GreenTeam team is calculating the temple's carbon footprint benchmark in collaboration with the Jewish Climate Action Network so that we can track our progress. The MassEnergize community sustainability software platform is coming! MassEnergize already is working with several regional towns to adopt the platform (Framingham, Newton, Concord, Lincoln, and Winchester so far). GreenTeam members are receiving initial orientation from JCAN and MassEnergize to bring it to Beth El. See [www.massenergize.org/](http://www.massenergize.org/) if you want an advance look-see. It's really exciting! Last week, the GreenTeam sent a letter of support for JCAN's application to CJP for an environmental initiative grant to support the MassEnergize roll-out and to bring an environmental film series to MetroWest congregations. The GreenTeam welcomes more volunteers; contact Phil Posner for information ([land.law@verizon.net](mailto:land.law@verizon.net)).
- **Sudbury Community Food Pantry - Help Needed Opportunity:** The Pantry has struggled to remain open (as an "essential service"), with only a few volunteers. The Pantry is serving many new clients. Between clients needing the pantry and the strain on the food supply chain, the Pantry could really use community support to collect and donate food items to help keep shelves filled. If you're grocery shopping at Sudbury Farms or Shaw's on Route 20, consider buying an extra item or two (see the attached list, and putting donations into the SCFP's donations bin inside Sudbury Farms, to the left of their exit door. There's a smaller bin inside Shaws. Contact [www.Sudburyfoodpantry.org](http://www.Sudburyfoodpantry.org) or Deb Oppenheimer [deb\\_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu](mailto:deb_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu).
- Additional volunteer opportunities: The CJP, JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many opportunities. If you've time and ability to help, please take a look at their websites. <https://www.jfcsboston.org/About/COVID-19-Update>  
<https://www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/>
- <https://www.cjp.org/get-involved>
- **COVID-19 Support Services From CJP:** If the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has impacted someone you know financially, the [CJP Warmline](https://www.cjp.org/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](http://JewishBoston.com) also has additional information about community resources during the COVID-19 crisis. CJP has launched the [CJP Coronavirus Emergency Fund](https://www.cjp.org/emergencyfund) in order to extend greater support to numerous Jewish social service agencies providing critical services during this time. 100% of the money raised will help community members who are facing hardship as a result of this pandemic. 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.



## **Education Director's Board Report: May 14, 2020**

- - Official school year is ending year this Sunday. Teacher appreciation will take a different form than previous years
- - Feedback: In general, people are screen-fatigued AND grateful for what we have done this year.
- - Sunday at 9, We will have Kehila and a slideshow, including video messages from Rabbi, Cantor, and students thanking teachers. Students recorded saying what they appreciate about each teacher. 30-45 minutes maximum. Please join us. Your presence is important to us.
- - Following, students will attend their last classes for a few minutes each – for closure.

### **With an eye to summer:**

We are exploring if there is a need and desire for some sort of summer programming or communing. It seems at this time that it would be virtual – but we are imagining things that can be flipped back and forth as we see fit through whatever the current situation is. Ideas: candle lighting, Havdalah, talent shows, game nights etc.

### **The plan for the fall:**

- Expand our Shalom Learning resource (online) usage. Materials can be used virtually or in person, and this gives us the flexibility to switch between them easily and seamlessly. It is likely that this will be the case for some time.
- Teacher contracts will reflect this need to adjust and they will continue doing what they have for a couple of months now.
- Teachers will attend professional development over the summer to hone their skills with online and in- person engagement.

### **Thank you**

As always, thank you all for your support and encouragement in these very unusual times.