

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday June 11th, 2020 7:30pm

In attendance: Judy Goldberg, Rabbi Breindel, Jocylyn Bailin, Jim Billings, Mike Joachim, Marcos Szydlo, John Harper, Aaron Friedman, Debbie Glass, Steve Probst, Marla Lewitus, Laurie Margolies, Neil Frieband, Judy Sletzinger, Lizza Sandoe, Gabriel DeBrito, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich, Cynthia Meyersburg, Beth Schine, Barbara Miller, Andy Goldberg, Jerry Kazin, Justin Lewitus, Michael Brown, Sabina Pestka, Stephen Breit, Michelle Fineblum, Debbie Blicher, Cynthia Myersberg, Jesse Wertheimer

Welcome: Judy Goldberg

Here we are, the “old” Board and the “new” Board! I want to thank the outgoing Board for the lovely “retirement” gifts – the absolutely beautiful Yad, the sachet from YadL’Kashish, and the donation to AJWS. /you have touched my heart. And now, time for the passing of the reins to Jim Billings!

Welcome: Jim Billings

Hi everyone and thanks for being here together this evening. We are going to have a busy year! Thank you to Judy and the old Board, thank you to the new Board, whether you are continuing your service or just joining us, whether you volunteered or were asked.

Some things will remain the same, other things will change. I have instituted an Executive Committee, something that is allowed for in the bylaws. It will be comprised of 4-5 or so other Board members, the composition has not yet been finalized. Between now and the next Board meeting I also plan to reach out to every Board member for a “get-to-know-you” chat.

Hebrew with Janet: Janet Buchwald

“Or” raising up the light, both a noun and a verb!

To the incoming Board: may you raise your light to illuminate our way going forward, to the outgoing Board, thank you for the gift of your light that has guided our path these past years.

Approval of Minutes: Jocylyn Bailin

Motion: To approve minutes from 5/14/20 and 5/21/20 Board meetings. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Rabbi’s Report: Rabbi Breindel

A warm welcome to the members of the new Board! You reflect the strength of our community and I am delighted to work with you and grateful for your guidance.

Ritual

- Community Shavuot: The MetroWest Community Shavuot was a tremendous success! More than 600 people registered for the event; over 200 screens were on for the keynote speaker alone! Great appreciation to Lorel (beyond all) as well as to Shoni and Nicci Meadow.
- This weekend: Shalev bat mitzvah
- Ritual committee is coordinating Summer Speaker series with my engagement
- Great appreciation to Lizza for stepping up to chair the Ritual Committee.

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- COVID-19 cares and concerns. Both for sick congregants and for grief counseling. Nobody has yet reached out for financial support – if you know someone in need please direct them to RJB.

Community outreach/events

- Continuing to offer weekly appearances on Chagigah as a guest DJ (4th of July).
 - QUERY: do we want these clips on our website? Homepage? Clergy page? It was determined that links to the Chagigah and the videos that RJB has been making under the “about our Rabbi” section of the webpage. We will also post these on social media – FB, Insta, and such.
- MetroWest community Shavuot – as noted above, it was a grand success! There is clearly a desire in the MetroWest area for collaborative programming. B’nai Torah invited us and all the MetroWest synagogues be part of their evening with Rabbi Jonah Penzner.
 - Question: Should we invite the wider community to be part of our upcoming next session with Frankie Snyder? **Pros:** it is collegial, we are giving to and sharing with our wider Jewish Community. **Cons:** If all the congregations start doing this it could get confusing. **Decision:** to go ahead and extend invitation to other congregations to join us for the second presentation.
 - We are also already discussion the possibility of a winter (Chanukah) joint community event.
- Joined in demonstration in Sudbury Center last Friday afternoon protesting systemic racism in our country and society. Wrote and signed interfaith statement pledging to stand for racial justice.

Programming and education

- Frankie Snyder’s presentation (tiles of 2nd Temple period) was very well received. She’s returning at 10AM, Sun 6/28 for a virtual tour of the Temple mount.

Administrative

- Held final meeting with the Leadership cohort. Thank you to Judy and Jocelyn.
- Ongoing meetings with the Leadership Innovation Team on our ongoing process.
- Meeting with CCAR rabbi group about High Holiday planning/visioning
- Meeting with Green Team with Scott on summer engagement of young families
- Meeting with subcommittee of social action team on responses to the social movement following George Floyd’s death.
- Interfaith clergy group conversation with Sudbury Social Worker on local responses to racial injustice
- A man approached old Mr. Katz in a town he was visiting. "What's the quickest way to New York?" Mr. Katz scratched his head. "Are you walking or driving?" he asked the stranger. "I'm driving." The man replied. "Good!" Responded Mr. Katz, "That's the quickest way."

Personal

- Took off Wed. and will take off Mon. to recharge and connect with family
- IJS retreat (via Zoom) currently scheduled for 7/12-17
- Vacation time scheduled immediate after: 7/18-27
- I’m taking off MONDAY instead of TUESDAY for July and August

Temple Administrators Report: Beth Schine

- The office is in the process of pulling together the 2020-2021 FY financial commitment forms. They will be sent out by the end of June. We expect that this process will clarify once and for all the small number of dubious memberships. It will also bring out those who are facing financial difficulties.
- We received the \$5K security grant from CJP. That money has been removed from the capital budget.
- Busy working on technology and building details that need to get done. With the building empty it's easier to get quotes! The HVAC has been serviced.

Treasurer's Report: Neil Frieband

PPP update: We have received the \$102K grant. It is currently scheduled as a 1% loan, will turn into a grant if we follow the rules, which continue to change daily. We are still waiting to hear from Middlesex Bank on how to satisfy their guidelines.

Education Program Update – Marla Lewitus

BeInSPireD! Is actively collaborating with the larger local Jewish community!

The High school program will now be for graders 8-12 so that the post b'nei mitzvah students are studying with the older kids. The 6th/7th grade program will be operated in conjunction with Or Atid and Temple Beth Shalom in Framingham. All three rabbis plus Scott will be actively teaching this cohort. The program will meet at both Or Atid (Wednesdays) and the Beth El kids will also meet some Mondays at Beth El. Kudos to Scott and Shoni for making this all happen! On another positive note, all the education program teachers are coming back next year.

Question: Will classes be in person in the fall?

Answer: We will wait for a recommendation from the Covid-19 task force and the public authorities. No synagogue has yet made any decision about classes in the fall. We expect that at least the first semester will be online only.

Question: What are we doing to assist our teachers in learning to teach online?

Answer : Our teachers are required to do online professional development over the summer. Scott and others will assist them as needed in finding resources.

Rabbi Breindel: I am personally excited to be participating in this collaboration! This is the path of future Jewish education. Our kids need a strong Jewish community to thrive. With this model they get both that and retain their connection to Beth El's unique community.

Question for Covid-19 Task Force: Can we still hold Red Cross blood drives?

Judy will investigate and report back to the Board.

Wisdom from retiring Board to Incoming Board: Two questions:

1. What have you learned from being on the Board?

- It takes time to start developing relationships with fellow Board members and to learn to work together as a group. Give yourself time to find your feet,
- It's difficult and expensive to run a synagogue
- It's a huge responsibility to run a synagogue

- It's not only okay to disagree with one another, it's holy
- Be joyful in approaching your work here

2. What should the new Board take up that you think is ripe for accomplishment at Beth El?

- Make sure that we have good transitions models. Incoming VP's should meet with outgoing VP's and make sure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. The President should meet with all incoming new folks and explain what it means to be on the Board, what the expectations are, and answer any questions
- We need to explore how we can remain a vibrant congregation. Ask everyone you know: What are you looking for? What do you need? Ask not only Beth El members but anyone else you encounter
- We should be increasing our collaboration with other synagogues
- We should create a Membership Committee. It is surprising that we don't have one. We need a concrete plan to bring in new members
- If you're asked to do something, just do it. Don't put it off until later because later might not happen

Rabbinic Blessing: Rabbi Breindel

"It is not your duty to see the work completed. It is your responsibility to engage in the work". We as Jews have a treasure to offer the world as a whole. We at Beth El have treasure to offer our own community. L'dor Va'dor – let us continue to pass along our wisdom and tradition through the generations. May we go forward together in strength, with courage, and with joy.

Meeting adjourned 8:52pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley