

**Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday January 9th, 2020 7:30pm**

**In attendance:** Judy Goldberg, Andy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Debbie Glass, Justin Lewitus, Jocylyn Bailin, Beth Schine, Neil Frieband, Rabbi Breindel, Gabriel DeBrito, Scott Newman, Jim Billings, Aaron Friedman, Marcos Szydlo, Jesse Wertheimer, Michael Joachim

**Impromptu D'var:** Rabbi Breindel

Joseph's forgiveness – may we continue to recognize the holiness in one another and go forth in strength.

**Welcome:** Judy Goldberg

Same group, new decade!

**Approval of Minutes:** Jocylyn Bailin

**Motion:** To approve minutes from 12/19/19 Board meeting. *Motion passed unanimously.* Will formally attach the education proposal to the meeting minutes.

**Rabbi Report:** Rabbi Breindel

**Ritual**

- Zoe Yale will be called to the Torah on Jan. 25 – please join in this *simcha*.

**Community outreach/events**

- Visited Sudbury library for Chanukah story time. Roughly 12 families (including one member family) attended. One prospective family came to Tot Shabbat.
- Partnering with Scott to schedule new appearances in Sudbury and Natick.
- Will record a spot for Chagigah on Tu B'Shevat to be eyed on Sun., 2/9.
- Will teach two sessions on *chesed* at Shillman House. Two other rabbis will be teaching two other sessions; this is a follow-through to last year's successful event.

**Programming and education**

- Community Chanukah party was a success – roughly 90 people joined. Thank you to Cynthia for coordinating and the many volunteers who helped make it happen.
- Great Jewish Stories class has been started in its new time and format.
- Partnering with Rev. Tom at Memorial Congregational Church for an interfaith MLK commemoration at Beth El at 3:00 on Sun 1/19. Please join in this musical experience honoring Dr. King's legacy.
- Will lead an adult education movie night on Sat., 2/1 on the movie *Pi*.

**Administrative**

- New leadership candidate cohort initiative continues – scheduling meetings.
- Will participate in IJS clergy leadership retreat. Will be away 1/12-18. Thank you to Jocylyn for her help in finding coverage for Shabbat (Friday 1/17 and Sat. 1/18).
- Joining Hibur for our Israel trip (2/12-2/23)! Return to work on 2/26. Working on finding time to make it up to my family for having been away for February break.

**Temple Administrator's report:** Beth Schine

No report. Membership numbers same as last month. Fobs are being handed out “at a good clip”.

### **Security Fee Update – Mike Joachim**

In a nutshell the Finance Committee came to a soft consensus that a security fee would be a good idea but reached no strong consensus on how best to implement such a fee. They came up with essentially three options:

1. Simply add the fee to the budget. The pros are that this is easy to do. The cons are that it doesn't highlight the issue.
2. We implement a small fee that raises the exact amount of money that we need to cover our current costs, approximately \$36/member unit if we have no additional costs this year. The pros are that it a) raises exactly what we need, which seems fiscally responsible, and b) highlights the issue to the congregation. The cons are that it would be a bit of a hassle to do, and given the small nature of the fee might be more nuisance than benefit.
3. We implement a larger fee, more on the order of \$100 per member unit (from their research the average fee was around \$125). This will raise more money than we currently project that we need. We can cover our expenses and deposit the rest into a Security Fund or something of the sort that could be used at Board discretion for security-related costs. The pros: this shows that we are serious about security. It also gives us funds in case of unexpected/unanticipated expenses. Cons: it's a larger fee, will require more governance and explanations.

It is unclear as to whether or not this would be a one-time fee, a temporary fee, or a permanent fee.

**Discussion:** There has been some resistance to security measures in the past. Less so now, since Pittsburgh. Congregants want to know what we are doing about security. Other congregations have more visible security measures than we do – buzzers, security guards, frosted glass, etc. Having funds in reserve is a good idea – we don't know what our needs are going to be in the future and this gives us the cushion we need. **Decision made** that Mike will recommend to the Finance Committee option #3; the implementation of a security fee in the range of \$100-\$125 (exact amount to be decided upon by the Finance Committee).

### **Security Policy at Beth El: Judy Goldberg**

Judy Goldberg gave a summary of our actions related to security:

- After Pittsburgh we created a Security Committee, which rather quickly fell apart.
- Tom Rose undertook an independent security-related project, researching synagogue security and meeting with the police and other organizations. He has put together the three-part training that was presented to the Board a couple of months ago. We are poised to offer this to the congregation; the first session will be on Sunday January 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 am.
- At this point the de facto security team is Judy, Beth Schine, Jim Billings and Rabbi Breindel. However, they are addressing security on an ad hoc basis. We do not have anyone who is responsible for creating any sort of security policy for Beth El. When questions arise we don't have any way to answer them or make decisions or policies regarding security.
- At the current time we have bits and pieces of a security system and policy. For example, we now have a fob reader at the side door and fobs are being distributed to

congregants. However we have no policy regarding when the doors will be locked and when they will be open. Even if all congregants have a fob, and even if they never forget to bring it with them (!) there are times when we still want the door to be open or have someone sitting in the office to let people in. For example, many who come to Tot Shabbat are not (yet!) community members. The STOP program is open to teens and mentors from across the Sudbury community. We have shul-seekers and guests coming to services and/or programs. What is going to be our policy as to how they are going to access the building? Do we leave the door open – if so who monitors who is entering? Do we leave the doors locked? If so, how do our visitors and guests get in? This is an example of the types of policies we need to put in place. Right now security is happening on the fly and is inconsistent. We need both triage (immediate) decisions and long-term plans.

- *The staff is asking for policy and leadership on this issue.*

**Judy asked the Board to create a Security Committee** and task someone with the responsibility for creating security policy. Aaron Friedman volunteered to initiate this process. The goal would be by June of this year to have a comprehensive security policy in place. The group would be able to make recommendations to the community, and would also be responsible for applying for security-related grants and funding. There was concern expressed that the recommendations of the security committee might not be accepted; all promised to work together to create a unified policy.

Discussion ensued as to what to do regarding locked/unlocked doors and security for the immediate future. After some debate it was decided:

- 1) That Beth and Judy would assist Scott in hiring somebody to sit in the office and buzz people in (whether guests/visitors or folks who had forgotten their fobs) during BEInSpirED hours on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings. Jesse volunteered to monitor the door this coming Sunday 1/11 and Jim volunteered to do so for this coming Monday 1/12, giving Scott time to hire someone.
- 2) Access to the building needs to be controlled.

***Security Motion: We the Board propose the following:***

1. Access to the building needs to be controlled
2. The Board authorizes the staff to hire necessary personnel to oversee controlled access to the building.
3. The Board authorizes the creation of a temporary Security Committee to manage all security-related needs and make security policy in tandem with clergy and staff. The Committee will bring additional security-related policy recommendations to the Board.

***Motion approved unanimously***

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

Neil presented and reviewed the half-year budget report (July 1-December 30 2019). In addition he presented information regarding all available Congregation Beth El Funds and reviewed the current quarterly fund reconciliation schedule. Neil made sure that the Board understood the difference between the responsibilities of the VP Finance (membership and budget) and the Treasurer (financial operations, including bookkeeping, check-writing and such). Neil also briefly related the recent history of our bookkeeping; In October 2018 the congregation was hit by a ransomware attack. We did not pay the ransom; as it turns out nearly everything was backed up, *except* our financial records. The reconstruction and

reconciliation of our financial records took us from October 2018 to December 2019, and was just finished approximately two weeks ago.

Neil urged all VP's to review their budgets carefully to make sure that everything looks correct. He also asked VP's to remind the committee chairs to pay attention to costs and budget as they plan their activities.

Neil also reminded VP's that nevertheless, funding for programs and activities is available through the restricted funds – The Beth El Fund and the Fund For the Future. He urged VP's and Board members – if there is a program that you think will help with membership and publicity for Beth El and there are no funds in the budget, do not hesitate to have people approach Neil; he will help to secure funding.

### **Rainbow Flag Update: Judy G. (for Michael B)**

A large rainbow flag emblazoned with the Mogen David has been procured. Decisions pending on where and how to display.

**Meeting adjourned 9:55pm**

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