

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday April 8th, 2021 7:30pm

In attendance: Andy Goldberg, Barbara Miller, Cynthia Meyersburg , Debbie Blicher, Debbie Glass, Jake Steinmann, Jerry Kazin, Jesse Wertheimer, Jim Billings, Jocylyn Bailin, Judy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Michelle Fineblum, Mike Joachim, Neil Frieband, Sabina Pestka, Steve Probst, Steve Breit, Rabbi Breindel, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich

Welcome: Jim Billings
Good to see everyone again!

Hebrew With Janet: KRB; to bring close

March meeting minutes: Jocylyn Bailin
Minutes approved unanimously

Rabbi's Report: Rabbi Breindel

Full report attached.

The Yom HaShoa celebration was truly amazing. At its peak there were 142 Zoom participants.

Education Program Update: Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich, Marla Lewitus

Full report attached.

Updates:

Scott: We are gearing up for the end of the school year. We may not know where we are going for next year but are confident that we can figure it out. We want the Board to be confident that we will step up to make next year work no matter what circumstances are thrown at us.

Shoni: We are gearing up for the end of the school year. Shoni is currently involved in intense negotiations and planning for the collaborative middle school program, as well as for the JLOFT program. The JLOFT celebration originally scheduled for this coming Sunday is being rescheduled to May due to rain. The program was so popular that they had to cut off additional registrations!

Marla: Planning for the middle school collaborative program is underway. The assumption is that classes will be in-person. Beth El's share of the cost for the collaboration is \$250 per student enrolled. In addition we provide teachers (Scott and Shoni) for the program. The Rabbi will teach occasionally, though not so much this coming year. This expenditure and our agreement to collaborate must be approved by the Board.

Discussion:

What is the budget impact? This is an additional \$2,000 of expenses that are not currently in our budget. Scott and Shoni will let Mike J. whether other school-related line items in the

budget can be reduced to make up the \$2,000. Mike J. noted that it would be best if expenses like this were brought to the Finance Committee during the budget development process.

Motion: RESOLVED, that the VP of Youth and Family Education is authorized to enter into a letter of understanding with the Jewish Learning Collaborative of Metrowest to include Congregation Beth El students in grades 6 and 7 in the Collaborative's program for the 2021-22 school year.

Motion Approved: unanimously

BlackLivesMatter/Stop Anti-Asian Hate: Judy Goldberg

The Beth El Anti-Racism Committee is coming to the Board to request that we publicly demonstrate our support for Black Lives Matter and Stop Anti-Asian Hate. They would like the synagogue to purchase signs or banners, preferably from a Black or Asian owned business. They are also requesting that we display the sign on our social media and web pages. They would like to use funds from the marketing/PR budget for this fiscal year that have not been spent.

Discussion:

Concern that after this we will be approached to support even more groups. There are too many issues – how many signs will we put up? We support many causes – is it possible to have too many signs displayed? We don't want it to look messy or haphazard. Is there a way to profess support for many groups and remain visually appealing, especially at a time when we are trying to attract new members?

Is there alternate wording available – if we put up the standard signs it looks pro forma. For example “Jews for Black Lives” or “Black Lives Matter is a Jewish Value”.

Is it possible to create one sign that professes support for multiple groups?

How can we show support in a way that expresses Jewish values?

Motion:

The Anti-Racism Committee will research options – wording, design, pricing, etc. and come back to the Board.

Motion approved.

Executive Session invoked 7:45pm

Meeting adjourned 8:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley



Tikkun Olam update – April 2021

We've just completed Passover, a holiday where G-d is defined in terms of freedom and social justice, stimulating us to think about how we can partner with G-d to make our world more just. Please read how our fellow congregants are engaged in a wide range of actions and studies to repair the world, consider joining in, and let me know if I've missed anything by emailing tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org. *Thanks to all involved for your important and holy work!*

- **Anti-Racism Working Group:** The Working Group has been active on many levels:
 - The Working Group issued a [statement of solidarity](#) with Americans of Asian descent following the horrific murders in Atlanta. A member of the Working Group followed up with a list of ways that congregants can take action to support Americans of Asian descent in our communities and our country. At the April Working Group meeting, we offered a learning opportunity on anti-Asian American racism.
 - We have begun work on a mission statement for the Working Group, as well as a congregational antiracism resolution.
 - This month's book group discussion will be on "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin.
 - In the coming months we will focus on programming and related action opportunities.

Contacts: Judy Goldberg and Karen Blumenfeld

- **Sanctuary Committee:** The Sanctuary Committee organized a Refugee Shabbat at Beth El on the weekend of March 19-21. The two Shabbat services featured aspects of our own history as immigrants and refugees, both in some explicit short remembrances and in songs, dvarim, and dedications. About 34 members of our Congregation contributed these remembrances, and they continue to be read on Shabbat morning services during the counting of the Omer -- through May 15. Both the Rabbi and Lorel were centrally involved in this, and were instrumental in both planning it and lending it a great deal of focus.

On Sunday, we had a Zoom panel consisting of Diego Low from CASA – the Metrowest Workers Center, State Senator Jamie Eldridge, and Naomi Steinberg (a vice-president of HIAS) who spoke, respectively, about local, state, and national issues -- in particular, the problem of wage theft, the Safe Communities Act, and the treatment of refugees at our borders; this was followed by on-line email writing in support of positive resolutions of these issues.

The whole idea of the Refugee Shabbat came from HIAS, and we plan to continue working with them. This month, we will be participating with them in contacting and meeting with our representatives in Congress to convey our support for Federal legislation leading to "a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and opportunity."

The Sanctuary Committee also continues work with the family of refugees we are supporting in Framingham. They are making progress in becoming self-sufficient, but still need some support, and we will almost certainly need to ask for contributions for this relatively soon.

We plan to have an open Sanctuary Committee meeting on Thursday, April 15 at 7 PM -- we'll be getting an announcement of this out soon. All these matters -- and others! -- will be taken up at that point. The meeting will be open to everyone in the Congregation.

For more info on the Ayala family, contact Judy Katz (judy16k@gmail.com) or Judy Sletzinger (jsletzinger@gmail.com). For info on legislative action, contact Kath Bean (kathleenbean@gmail.com).

For info on Friday afternoon stand-outs or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner (carl.offner@comcast.net).

- **Green Team:** April is another busy Green Team month!

- Do you drive a car? Is it an EV or hybrid electric? Hurray! If not, chances are your next car will be electric. On Tuesday, April 6th, Michael Gevelber leads an information webinar on electric vehicles. Register [here](#). If you can't join us, we'll post a link where you watch the recording. Or, check out the Green Energy Consumers Alliance EV page <https://www.greenenergyconsumers.org/drivegreen>
 - On March 17th, the Green Team held a webinar on heat pumps. Steve Breit explained why they make sense in our homes – save money, reduce your carbon emissions, improve your comfort. A cornucopia of green goodness! We're posting a link on the Beth El Green Team page – come check it out.
 - April 22nd marks the 51st anniversary of Earth Day. So, what can we do? Over 70 Beth El households are reducing their carbon emissions to repair the world. You can too! So many options: <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN>.
 - On April 27th, the Jewish Climate Action Network holds its 3rd annual conference – Everything is Connected. Come learn, come see possibilities, come get inspired to take action on carbon reduction, advocacy, spiritual resilience, soil and agriculture, raising up the voices of youth, and addressing environmental justice. The day-long event is geared toward action solutions and strengthening the national Jewish climate action network. Rabbi Josh will lead a meditation; Beth El congregants will describe actions you can take today. Click here for more information and to register: www.jewishclimate.org/3rd-jewish-climate-action-conference.html.
 - Check out the Green Team's web page <https://bethelsudbury.org/beth-el-green-team/> to see our Climate Mensch of the Month, learn more about MassEnergize, and more! Sign up for the GreenTeam list-serv (email greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org). Have questions on solar, composting, heat pumps? Questions about what else you can do to repair the world by reducing your carbon emissions? Contact John Harper at jpharper47@gmail.com.
- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** The Tzedek Scholarship Committee is proud to congratulate senior Ann Sashell Thebeau on completing her undergraduate studies and her acceptance to the Framingham State University Master's program in Human Resources.
We are grateful for the support of the Beth El community, the Tzedaka Chevra, and the MetroWest Women's Fund and welcome new donations so that we may continue to support talented and deserving immigrant students.
 - **Criminal Justice Reform:** We have successfully completed the drive for home goods for Kimya's House, the program for homeless women affected (or inflicted?) by the Criminal Justice system in the Boston area. The director of the House is delighted to hear about all the items that were pledged. She has asked that we wait until later this month to deliver them. We will need volunteers to transport items as large as a desk to Roxbury. If you're willing to help, or want more info, please contact Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein at 978-443-8084 or ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com.
 - **Support for Beth El members:**
Covid-19 still has us in its grasp. Some of us are sheltering in place with family, trying to be parents and teachers and athletic directors as well as work, while others are alone in our homes with nobody to talk to and no one to give us a hug. No matter what your situation is, these are trying and stressful times for everyone. This is a time for our community to step up and take care of one another. There are currently two community support initiatives underway:
 1. **Phone Buddies** Connect with other congregants who have also signed on to be a phone buddy - work out your own schedule, frequency and time . Please contact Carol Sheingold at 617-943-3977 or csheingold@gmail.com to find out more and become a phone buddy.
 2. **Soup Group!** This group of congregants make and deliver soup to other community members. Weekly soup deliveries are picking up! With winter upon us, warm vegetable and chicken soups have been much appreciated. Frequently the recipient gets a challah as well! As always, feel free to nominate

someone or yourself for a soup delivery! Please contact Jocelyn Bailin at pi_joy@yahoo.com.

- **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; 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>.
- **Tzedaka Hevra:** The Tzedaka Hevra has had a very busy and productive year, giving away roughly \$28,000. 60% went to 3 organizations and the remaining 40% to 22 other organizations. (See the list below.) We heard from speakers representing organizations that we donate to, or that we may donate to. The Hevra meets regularly and is open to any Beth El member. To learn more, contact Ira

Silver: isilver@framingham.edu

- The Tzedaka Hevra gave 20% of its funds to 3 organizations this year: HIAS, Join for Justice, Mazon
- The Hevra gave between \$164 and \$1119 to each of the following organizations:
 - Adam Teva V'din
 - American Jewish World Service
 - Anti-Defamation League
 - Association for Civil Rights in Israel
 - Be'chol Lashon
 - Beth El Tzedek Scholarship Fund
 - Dayenu
 - Good People Fund
 - Hotline for Migrants and Refugees
 - Jewish Climate Action Network
 - Jewish Community Relations Council
 - Jewish Family & Children's Service
 - Jewish Family Service Metrowest
 - Jewish Teen Foundation of Greater Boston
 - Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)
 - Keshet
 - Mayyim Hayyim
 - New Israel Fund
 - Religious Action Center (RAC)
 - T'ruah
 - Yad Chessed
 - Yad LaKashish
- **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 at in the future when we have more infrastructure in place to support telemedicine. We’ve received some emergency grants from funders that are helping to make the transition to telemedicine. We anticipate operating this way for the foreseeable future. Visit their [website](#) to learn more and get involved.

- **Blood Drive:** No blood drives are scheduled at this point, pending approval to resume from the board and COVID task force.
- **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! 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. The CJP, JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many opportunities. If you're able 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 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. CJP has launched the CJP [Coronavirus Emergency Fund](#) 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.

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 tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org [Beth El's Tikkun Olam web page](#)

Rabbi's Report March-April 2021

Ritual

- **2nd night Zoomed seder** garnered very positive feedback; +/-80 connections. Several requests to make this an ongoing part of our annual ritual cycle.

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- **Pastoral support** remains a major factor (none directly connected to COVID).

Community outreach/events

- **Concluded Hebrew College's Open Circle Jewish Learning program** class with Rabbi Katy Allen.
- Joined with Scott at the Goodnow Library for a **Passover childrens' event**.
- Will be present for **MetroWest Yom Ha-Shoah event** at 7:30 PM on 4/7.
- Will present at a **followthrough event with the Islamic Center** on Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives on forgiveness at 2:00 on 4/11
- Will be offering a **contemplative/meditation session at the JCAN climate action conference** on Sunday, 4/25.

Programming and education

- Our **2021-2022 Torah Class** is now underway.
- Lorel and I are planning a **congregational study to conclude Pesach** on 4/3.
- Offered two special sessions on **Passover through a Hasidic lens** and a one-session conversation on **social justice and the Omer period**.

Administrative

- Working with **Visioning team** for ongoing process.
- Meeting with **Sheila, Scott and Shoni** on education programs for next year.
- Coordinating with Jim, Jocelyn, Lizza, Rachel Goldner and Beth **around transition year/ritual coverage**.
- Working with members of the L'hitra'ot Committee and congregants on planning a spring/early summer series around "transition through a Jewish lens" with an emphasis on processing the emotional load of Lorel's retirement.

Personal

- Thank you for ongoing support as I've struggled with my leg; PT is very pleased with my progress.
- Will be taking off week of April vacation to be with family (Sat 4/17-Thurs 4/22).

TALMUD TORAH REPORT 2020-2021

FOSTERING COMMUNITY

This past year it was important for us to create opportunities for connection within our congregation and extended community. Coming together to learn has always been a priority at Beth El. This year we could not underestimate the importance of coming together. We were happy to offer community gatherings during this unusual year, along with our wonderful clergy and programs by Ritual and Tikkun Olam.

The Adult Ed Committee headed by Ira Silver is a dedicated, roll-up-their-sleeves committee with a wide variety of ideas and interests.

UPCOMING EVENT

Tuesday May 1, Harvard Economist Ben Friedman will join us to talk about the future of work.

If something fun we considered can be added later in April, we'll let you know.

5780-5781

During the summer of 5780 we offered the Adult Ed Variety Hour on some weeknights. Meditation, Writing Workshop, Trains and more. Just in time for staying at home.

As we headed into 5781 we offered a variety of engaging programs, often on Saturday evenings. These programs offered us a "night out" during the pandemic. A break from routine and a chance to see some familiar faces.

Lynne Avadenka

In early November we experienced a last minute postponement of our program with Artist Lynne Avadenka. She was scheduled the evening when Biden was scheduled to speak on short notice the same Saturday evening. She graciously rescheduled in early December.

Her artwork and presentation based on Jewish symbols and letters were engaging. She is from Detroit, works with other artists in Israel and internationally, including work on Climate related issues with other Jewish Artists that took place in Venice. As well, Lynne has a Brandeis affiliation. There is interest in bringing her back in person at some point for a weekend. (Perhaps it could work as a cosponsorship with another org.)

I think at this point we need to bring in scholars or speakers who haven't been at Beth El previously, or who haven't been with us recently.

"Just in case" Suggestion

I would suggest that we have someone on call for Shabbats that coincide with events, just in case a cancelation is necessary. This time it was more about getting the word out and dealing

with a guest via zoom and our host/program moderator. No house staff or additional volunteers were involved.

DovBer/Barry Marchette

During Chanukah I moderated a program with former member DovBer/Barry Marchette, creator of the Beth El Chanukah. We learned fascinating facts about the impetus and process of building the Chanukah. And, oh yeah, for those of us who weren't here then, the first night lighting in 1972 took place in the Sanctuary! Needless to say it was moved outdoors after that.

DovBer The Social Factor

Congregants turned out to hear about this piece of ritual art, but many were also there to reconnect with Barry. He still has very fond memories and is grateful for his 17 years at Beth El in the 1970s-80s. (I recall Larry telling that Barry started his Hommus Factory brand of Hommus in the Beth El kitchen.)

We had some wonderful impromptu community schmoozing in good humor before we started and folks still had a need to schmooze afterward. Before he and his wife became frum and moved to Boston, Aviva was the soloist here 1986-88, One couple reminisced about her singing at their wedding. A good time was had by all.

Poetry

A night of poetry with Bernie Horn. Always a favorite.

Scotch Tasting

The Scotch Tasting in February was a big hit. Steve Balzac persevered for months to make it happen. The original program and presenters he wanted to bring to us could not be available. He did not anticipate such

a high level of interest. We were thinking 20, maybe 30, and a nice little profit. Between the 75 sign ups, auction and purchases, \$7,000 came in.

Raj turned out to be a wonderful engaging presenter on all things Scotch. Arnie Z-K was quite the auctioneer. Sarah B did a great job escalating the bids.

Ruth Breindel Dura Europas Synagogue

Rabbi Josh has touted his mother as a teacher of classics and wonderful presenter. In March she did not disappoint with her two session presentation about this ancient synagogue. She is also a past president of the RI Jewish Historical Society, so it is likely she has more learning to offer us in the future.

In our meetings in April and May we plan to wrap up plans for programs between now and the end of June. We will continue planning and contacting speakers and scholars for the next year.

Moving forward, possibilities for 2021-2022

We will consider a variety of topics and presenters via zoom in-person or both. We are considering programs on interfaith topics, race relations, text, history, culture, Hebrew-beginner and advanced, Israel, etc. Some subjects may dovetail with possible high school programming.

We will continue with titles in the Jewish Book Group

- ● October: Hank Greenberg: The Hero Who Didn't Want to Be
- ● November: Albert Einstein
- ● February: Allan Ginsburg
- ● March: Nachman Bialik

Thank you for supporting us and attending our programs.

Best,

Barbara Miller VP Talmud Torah



PK-5 Youth and Family Education Report

For April 8, 2021 Board Meeting

1. 1) Planning for next year: The Youth and Family Education team is busy provisioning for all possible scenarios for the coming year. Since times are uncertain, we want the Beth El Leadership to feel confident that we are diligently working on flexible plans to handle what comes our way in the coming school year and beyond.
2. 2) Our goals of **meaningful Jewish education, community, and long-term sustainability** remain unchanged. We are keeping our eye on these goals and what accomplishes them, even if it looks different from what we all might have first imagined.
3. 3) We will likely (hopefully temporarily) reduce BE InSpirEd staff for the coming year given COVID fallout, with a clear path toward recovering and surpassing our previous enrollment numbers. To do our part, we will reduce expenses where possible, with caution not to impede our ability to grow. As always, appropriate mindfulness and care will be given to staff affected by this process – this is still in discussion.
4. 4) Next month I will share high-level detail on the projected path ahead for Youth and Family Education in our congregation. Sheila, Marla, Rabbi Josh, Shoni, our teachers, and our families will all be equitable partners in this process. I have also been in conversation with members of the visioning group, and plan to work closely in collaboration where appropriate. We have a great team on the task, (a supportive board in YOU) and we feel optimistic about our ability to build community and foster growth, with adjusting as often as necessary. Remember: it goes back to goals.
5. 5) In administrative news, the first pass of the calendar is almost finished. There will be 28 weeks of BE InSpirEd this year, roughly similar to previous years. Programming details are being solidified daily. Budgeting is in the works as always this time of year.
6. **6) We are determined to rise from this year with strength and knowledge, directed in our mission. We will reprise our stability as we embark upon this historic and holy year of changes for our congregation.**

Chazak, chazak v'nitchazeyk! May we go from strength to strength!

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Newman, Director of Youth and Family Education

(on behalf of the PK-5 Youth and Family Education Programs)

Teen Education and Engagement Report

April 2021 - Shoni

HIGH SCHOOL

Learned about and ran a simulation of the Israeli elections (the results were very, very different from the real ones). [See who you would vote for.](#)

For Pesach we had a cooking class where we made toffee and chocolate covered matzahs. Pictures on the next page.

The Jewish Peoplehood photography course had its second session (out of six). Gearing up to the end of the year - siyyum and looking back at this remote year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

A very successful cohort of STOP has concluded.

The three temples have put together a plan for the 4 spring sessions of the middle school focusing on the cultures of different Jewish communities from around the world.

We are looking forward to our pilot year as part of JCMW next year.

While Scott and I will continue to teach in the MS in tandem, I will administrating the program and our collaboration with JLCMW.

JLOFT

J-LOFT's first in-person event (ever!) will take place next Sunday, April 11, at Beth El's parking lot.

Extensive visioning and planning sessions for SY 2022 will take place this month. Future plans will be presented to lay leaders following.

As a conclusion of the different tracks, J-LOFT students will be facilitating sessions in the MW Shavuot event based on themes they have learned.

GENERAL

Facilitated March Shabbat Rinah and the virtual seder.

Attending a series of PD sessions about evaluating youth engagement, hosted by CJP's Teen Engagement Network.

Working with adult ed. on a lecture series for both teens and adults next year (gift from last year's siyyum class).

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