

Beth El Semi-Annual Meeting
December 14, 2022

Call to Order: 7:48 with teaching from Rabbi Schuck

Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2022 Congregational Meeting

Motion: Aaron Fleishaker

Seconded: Steve Young

Vote: Unanimous Approval

President's Report—Rob Patchen

Review of Year

1. Mia Mandel has been COO for a year and it is going very well. One of her tasks was to review the staffing plan of the shul.
2. Full Time Program Director—Stephanie Lederman. Working hard to plan events, work with volunteers and help people
3. Full Time Youth and Family Engagement—Hired Alyssa Schwager. She is working to revamp RS curriculum and to spearhead Mini Minyan for early elementary age kids—led by Rabbis Sitkin and Fisher
4. Full Time Administrative Coordinator—Abby Prager. Lends support to all parts of the shul
5. Part-Time Director of Development—Still searching
6. High Holidays—Efforts to get people to come back in person—offered cookies and coffee; breakout discussion groups; 2-tiered dues system
 - a. Rosh Hashanah
 - i. 575 people in sanctuary
 - ii. 320 in tent
 - iii. 145 in family
 - iv. 80 in tots
 - v. 42 teens
 - vi. 487 unique devices connected to livestream
 - b. Survey provided good feedback and mostly positive
7. Shoresh HaLev is going very well.
 - a. Shirei N'shama are songs commissioned by Beth El's Shoresh HaLev Center to celebrate various holidays
8. Boundaries and Belonging facilitated by Hartman institute—Co-sponsored by 6 conservative synagogues in Westchester to explore barriers to entry to synagogues, tensions people feel between their identities and desire to belong to a synagogue community
9. Other Programming—Israel 360, Open Bet Midrash, Child Safety Committee,
10. Held Annual Gala on June 2nd—nearly 300 people attended
11. Held Cantor Gaby's Installation on June 10th

12. Chesed Projects

- a. Communal Freezer—volunteers cook meals for any congregant to take
- b. Overhauling Bikkur Cholim to track those in need of visits
- c. Daily Minyan—efforts to reinvigorate daily minyan. Subcommunities have been enlisted to attend on particular days. Sign up for the app
- d. Unity Service at Generations Church; hope to host them here.
- e. HOPE Community Services—cooking meals, serving Sunday breakfast, collecting items they need; BE staff went to pack holiday gifts

13. Funding

- a. Finding funds to maintain programs as well as maintaining the physical plant
- b. We are attracting new members, but still need to raise more funds
- c. B'Yachad Campaign was once again a success

14. Thank you to all the staff, especially the Clergy

Questions:

1. *What's with the bucket on the upper level? We have found a leak from a hole in the ductwork from the A/C System. Initially tried to patch it. When it rained, it leaked again, so now they have to make a new duct. The tin fabricator is coming as soon as the weather permits.*

Treasurer's Report—David Reifer

Membership Numbers

FY 21/22

At the end of FY 21, we had 526 Full Members. This was a drop of 32 members from the year before. For FY 22, we had projected a loss of more than 10% to 468 members. But we only experienced net drop of 31 members, leaving us with 495.

FY 23

This FY, we budgeted the membership to drop slightly less than the previous two years, from 495 down to 468, a drop of 27 members. At this point, we are seeing a small increase in Full Members, up 6 to 501 full members. Through November, we already had 19 new members, which exceeded the resignations. It's likely we'll still see some resignations by January after we reach out to members that have not yet paid dues, nor declared their intent to resign. We have 39 Full Members that have paid \$0 dues. (Was 36 the year before at this same time.) We'll probably lose another 10-12 members, leaving us with about 490 members.

Youth & Family Engagement

FY 21/22

At the end of FY 21 we had 72 students, a pretty low number because of virtual classes. For FY 22, we budgeted a significant increase to 88, but only had 82 students.

FY 23

We budgeted a decrease of students to 75. As of now, we've exceeded that number and we're at 77.

Nursery School & Kindergarten

FY 21/22

At the end of FY21 we had 71 students, which included 19 kindergarteners. In FY 22 we did not have the kindergarten. We budgeted for 62 and had 66. Our overall number of students declined to 62 last year. However, our Nursery School numbers were up, from 52 to 66.

FY 23

This current year, we budgeted an increase from 66 to 72 students. As of now, we're at 69, but we may still hit that number, as we often get students joining us mid-year.

Day Camp

The camp has historically been one of our biggest contributors.

Fiscal 21/22

FY 21 we had only 93 campers, due to COVID. In FY22 we budgeted a bit of a return to normalcy, with the numbers budgeted at 205. We surpassed that with 213 campers.

Fiscal 23

This current year, we budgeted an increase from 213 to 235 campers. We actually had 238 campers, exceeding our budget but far less than our peak of 273 in the summer of 2019.

REVENUE

Dues: As we saw in the metrics, our membership numbers were higher than budget. The result was that Dues were \$95K higher than budget

Extra Seats: Countering that increase was a shortfall in Extra Seats and Guest Passes. We budgeted \$100K, but only recognized \$21K. The budget was finalized in May/June 2021. At that time, COVID was trending down and we expected a resurgence here, but COVID began rising again over the summer and much of the HH was attended via livestream. As an FYI, *this* year we budgeted Extra Seats more modestly at \$50K and we did hit that number.

B'Yachad Campaign: This fundraiser was one of our bigger hits this year. Kudos to Sam and Hila! We budgeted \$325K and exceeded this by a wide margin, raising almost \$490K.

Affiliates' Contributions: Contributions from other parts of the synagogue (eg Men's Club, Sisterhood, Nursery School). Down, but we didn't need them so they stayed where they were, for example in the nursery school.

Siddur Fundraiser: Fell short of budget, but this is timing since this Fundraiser began quite a bit later than expected.

Day Camp: The Day Camp exceeded expectations last year a net of \$83K. As we saw in the metrics, enrollment was slightly higher than expected, but we were able to save money in staff salaries and other expenses. But it is hard to keep staff, particularly young staff, which had a financial benefit, but wasn't good for programming.

Nursery School: Favorable to budget by \$27K. Here too we had greater enrollment. Ronnie was also able to secure a \$54K state grant which was used to help offset greater staff costs.

Cemetery Fees: Unfortunately, Fiscal 2022 saw a much greater need from our community for cemetery plots. We had budgeted a modest \$35K but ended up recording \$100K.

Interest Income: Higher than budget, due to the presence of PPP funds

Endowment Interest: Unfavorable by \$45K. Essentially, we did not need to pull interest, as we usually do, from the endowment fund because of other income we realized through government programs. In effect, we were able to leave these funds in the Endowment and they'll continue to create additional interest for us going forward.

In total, Revenue was \$297K higher than budget. A satisfying result. As everyone knows, we tend to budget conservatively, so keep in mind, this is a favorable variance against a budget, where we projected a significant drop in membership.

Questions

- 1. Was the nursery school grant part of the revenue? Yes. But we should not necessarily assume we can get it every year. It may not be available and even if it is, we may not be able to get it*

EXPENSE

Youth & Family Engagement: Favorable \$20K because the RS Director was hired later than expected.

Ritual Costs: Clergy funds for hospitality, professional development & conferences remained unspent so favorable variance.

Programming: Unfavorable by \$18K. Primarily due to our two clergy installations which were unbudgeted. The clergy installations were approved by board after we made the budget. Spent a little more than expected because the events were so well attended.

Building & Maintenance and Security: Increased at an accelerated rate as people return to the building. Security and utilities have increased dramatically. The more events we have, the more people we have, the more security we need. Utilities are more expensive everywhere.

Insurance: Unfavorable by \$17K. Largely out of our control, but happy to report that our broker did make a change this year, which resulted in a large savings of about \$60K, without changing the quality of our insurance.

Other Expenses: Mostly related to technology, such as cables, etc.

Total Expenses were unfavorable to budget by \$17K. This is unfavorable variance of less than 1%.

To review, with Revenue favorable by \$297K and Expense unfavorable by \$17K, our overall Net variance was \$280K. You can see from the handout that our budgeted Operating Deficit was \$141K and we finished with a \$139K Operating Surplus.

OTHER REVENUE

Now we should talk about some “below the line” items. As many of you know, Beth El took advantage of the federal government’s “PPP Programs”. We were able to draw two loans totaling \$928K. We followed all required guidelines and both loans were forgiven. In addition, we applied for another program called the Employee Retention Tax Credit. This was not budgeted because we didn’t have enough details at that time on the program to properly budget an estimate. We were successful here as well and our participation yielded \$242K in FY 22 (and \$105K in FY 23).

The end result was an influx of almost \$1.3M in “one time only” Income. So, bottom line, total Net Balance was a positive \$1.4M.

Fiscal 2022 was a very odd year because of the large influx of PPP and ERTC funds. Overall, however, we still have much to be concerned about going forward. Membership is declining, the Camp is facing increased competition and higher staffing costs and inflation is raising our overhead costs. On the other hand, we have a tremendous staff here, and volunteers that are working hard to address ongoing financial questions. We also have a generous congregation illustrated by the ongoing success of our B’Yachad Campaign.

Questions:

1. *What are we going to do with extra funds? The general fund was getting pretty low before PPP/ERTC. The general fund is usually kept in cash. With some of the extra money we are looking at treasury bonds, etc, low risk investments.*

All of the numbers were approved by independent auditors and are in conformity with GAAP – generally accepted accounting principles.

Presentation of Chai Awards for 18 Years of Membership—Lauren Freeman-Bosworth

1. Gail and Steven Goldman
2. Esther and Mark Mildner
3. Arthur and Janet Jakoby
4. Nina Luban and Scott Bonci
5. Ella and Samuel Shteingart
6. Pearl and Thomas Sullivan
7. Lori and Robert Weber
8. Naomi Adler Schiller

Nominating Committee Elections

Nominating committee is made up of 4 trustees + 1 alternate and 3-non-trustees + 1 alternate. The 4 trustees +1 alternate were elected at the November meeting. Tonight need to choose 3 non-trustees + 1 alternate

Nominations:

Debbie Young
Rob Weber
Meri Jane Rochelsoen--alternate
Brenda Corwin
Lisa Mandelleker

Debbie Young, Rob Weber and Lisa Mandelleker were chosen with Meri Jane Rochelsoen as the alternate.

Amendment to Beth El Constitution

Need to have 2 consecutive votes in congregational meetings. Right now, constitution requires that we have 3 vice presidents. Feedback that Rob and past presidents have received is that it is often very hard to get that 3rd VP. The amendment allows the nominating committee to only choose 2 VPs.

Motion: Lawrence Orans moves to adopt amendment allowing the nominating committee to choose only 2 VPs

Seconded: Sam Berger seconds

Questions

1. *Does this mean that there isn't a need for 3 to cover the portfolio of committees?
Answer, it can be worked out in the way the executive committee is currently structured.*
2. *Sam Berger reminds us that this officer structure was designed for a board of trustees with 72 trustees and now we have 36.*

Vote: *Measure carries*

Rob thanks everyone for coming, it shows a commitment to the congregation.

Motion to Adjourn: Sam Berger

Seconded: Mark Silver

Vote: *Unanimously approved*

Meeting Adjourned: 9:22