

**Beth El Synagogue Center**  
**Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes**  
**May 17, 2023**

1. **Call to Order:** 8:12pm following Rabbi Shuck's teaching
2. **Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2022, Semi-Annual**
  - o Motion: Debbie Young
  - o Seconded: Jayne Peister
  - o All in Favor: Unanimous approval
3. **State of the Synagogue** - Robert Patchen, President
  - o Roof leak solved! Thank you to the major maintenance committee, Joe Wygoda, Marilyn Russell
  - o Transitions are a fact of synagogue life: over the last year—Alyssa Schwager joined the shul as the Director of Youth and Family Engagement. In January, Alise Liquori left causing us to shift staff around. Mia is leaving to spend time with her family; Lauren and Lori are leading the search. Julie Rockowitz is retiring; Rebecca Gorlick started as Assistant Director this past Monday. Rabbi Fisher is leaving after the High Holidays and Chaggim. We are sad to see her go, but very happy for her and grateful for her Rabbinic leadership. We don't have a 3 rabbi model, but a vision for how we want our community to be. The goal is to advance our mission, thus our clergy staffing is based on what best ensures that we can do the programming, chesed and spiritual work that we aim for. It has only been 2 weeks, so the audit and finance, HR and clergy team will figure out what to do.
    - It should be clear that each member of the clergy has a different role. They don't all do the same thing. Having a clergy team is critical to the shul and allows the clergy members to work at a less frenetic pace.
  - o Volunteers are key to the functioning of the shul. Please think about where you can provide your services.
  - o Fundraising is also key. We had hired a part time development person but that role is now open again. Sam Berger and Hila Reichman have been leading the B'yachad fundraising campaign. We continue to \_\_ targeted fundraising.
  - o Beth El is doing well:
    - Many young families
    - Sisterhood won a big award from the national organization
    - Clergy team builds opportunities to connect us to our families
    - Shoresh Ha'lev is providing wonderful events
    - Numerous adult learning opportunities
  - o Thank you to the officers that Rob has worked with, especially Lauren Freeman-Bosworth. Thank you to the past presidents, especially Sam Berger, who has been a mentor and frequently checks in with Rob. Thank you to the professional staff, maintenance staff. Thank you to the clergy team.

4. **Mia Mandel**

- o Thank you to Rob for being an excellent partner.
- o Working with officers and lay leaders has reminder her how integral synagogue life is to the Jewish people.
- o The clergy team is truly remarkable and will miss being part of Rabbi Shuck's vision for the community.

5. **Koach Awards for 28 Years of Membership** - Lauren Freeman-Bosworth  
28 years of membership embodies the definition of Koach

- o Marvin Dubin and Susan Solow Dubin
- o Mark and Lynn Hirsh
- o Gary and Helene Liebstein
- o Jeffrey and Wendy Schwartz
- o Steven and Shirin Stein
- o Robert Strauch

6. **Thank you to Rob**—Lauren Freeman-Bosworth

7. **Financial Report** - David Reifer, Treasurer

*The Board of Trustees' determinations as to tuition for Nursery School, Religious School and Summer Camp for the ensuing fiscal year can be reviewed.*

- o Membership: Compared to budget, we've had a good year, we think we'll over-perform. Since FY 21, we've lost over 80 members (net). We do seem have to stabilized the loss in this year.
  - In FY 22 we had about 40 resignations and 19 new members; this year we've had about 26 resignations and 25 new members.
- o Youth and Family Engagement: If you go back to FY 21, we had 71, this year we have 82
- o Nursery School: FY '21 had 71 but that included the kindergarten that we had because of COVID. Last year we had 66, this year we budgeted 72 and had 70
- o Day Camp: At the end of Fiscal 21, we had only 93 campers, due to COVID. Last year, we surpassed that with 213 campers.
- o Financials:
  - Dues Favorable by about \$46,000
  - B'Yachad: overperformed solidly. Fundraising and Donations are ahead by about \$110,000
  - Donations from Sisterhood, etc: slightly behind by about \$14,000
  - Day camp: slightly ahead
  - Nursery School: Slightly ahead because Ronnie got a NYS Grant for \$53,000. Slightly higher expenses because of increased staff salaries
  - Revenue: Slightly favorable
    - Interest Income: ahead because of increased interest rates and the extra money in the accounts because of PPP loans
    - We are about 5% ahead of budget

- Expenses
  - Youth and Family Engagement: favorable because of the timing of hiring of Alyssa and some of the teachers
  - Ritual: 1% variance
  - Programming: favorable because some programming didn't happen, for example, no Kallah
  - Building & Maintenance: unfavorable because the building is older and needs a lot of work to keep up
  - Security: collected more fees than we expected
  - Administration: slightly favorable because of salaries of people who were hired later than planned and/or resigned
  - Insurance: got new insurance and saved \$52,000
  - Kiddush:
  - Bad Debt: Seeing a lot less bad debt. Seeing a \$250,000 variance.
  - To review, with Revenue favorable by \$141K and Expense favorable by \$254K, our overall Net variance was \$395K. You can see from the handout that our budgeted Operating Surplus was \$142K and we finished with a total \$142K Operating Surplus.
- Other income
  - We did have an unfavorable variance related to our ERC (Employee Retention Credits). This is timing. We ended up getting these funds earlier than expected and recognized that income last year. This year we did receive additional funds related to the interest on the ERC which was recognized this year.
  - Financially, this was a good year. We still have some ongoing concerns. Although slowing, Membership is continuing to decline. Our 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, an unbelievable clergy team 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.
- Overall, \$312,000 favorable to the budget that was laid out. Our total projected surplus is about \$164,000.

8. **Vote on amendment to Article VII (Election of Trustees and Officers), Section 2 of the Beth El Constitution.** The amendment, which was approved by two-thirds vote of those attending the semi-annual meeting, if approved by two-thirds vote at this congregational meeting would add the bolded text below:

*The officers of the Congregation shall be a President, an Executive Vice-President, **at least two, but no more than three**, additional Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary and a Recording Secretary. The office of Executive Vice-President is separate and distinct from any other Vice Presidents serving as officers. Only those members of the Congregation who have served as members of the Board of Trustees for a minimum period of two (2) years, either currently or in the past, shall be eligible for nomination to*

*Congregational Office. Those so nominated, not currently members of the Board of Trustees, shall be simultaneously nominated to the Board, and only if elected to that Board, shall be eligible for election as an Officer of the Congregation. If the office becomes vacant for any reason, it shall be filled by the Board of Trustees by electing one of its eligible members for the balance of the remaining term.*

- o Vote passes by 2/3 of the members present*

**9. Annual Election of Officers and Trustees:**

*THE MEMBERSHIP WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, pursuant to Article VII, Section 4 of the Beth El Synagogue Center Constitution, that at the meeting of the Board of Trustees held March 8, 2023, the Nominating Committee duly presented to the Board its unanimous report, setting forth and nominating the following named members as candidates for the effective offices and for the terms indicated below.*

*SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR ONE (1) YEAR TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2024*

*President – Lauren Freeman-Bosworth*

*Executive VP – David Shechter*

*Vice President - Lori Schwartz*

*Vice President – Shayna Klopott*

*Vice President – Jonathan Glickman*

*Treasurer – David Reifer*

*Financial Secretary – Susan Groner*

*Recording Secretary – Marci Marcus*

*SLATE OF TRUSTEES PROPOSED FOR A THREE (3) YEAR TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2026*

*Ed Ackerman*

*Marvin Chinitz*

*Aaron Fleishaker*

*Lauren Freeman-Bosworth*

*Andy Katell*

*Allison Kellman*

*Shayna Klopott*

*Dara Less*

*Nancy Mayerfield*

*David Reifer*

*Lori Schwartz*

*Mark Silver*

*CONTINUING TRUSTEES FOR CLASS ENDING JUNE 30, 2025*

*Dan Feldman*

*Jonathan Glickman*

*Susan Groner*

*Michael Meisler*

*Hila Reichman*

*Annie Reis  
Howard Rosenstein  
Leslie Ruttenberg  
Zach Seiden  
David Shechter  
Tamar Tait  
Robyn Yairi*

*CONTINUING TRUSTEES OR CLASS ENDING JUNE 30, 2024*

*Barbara Cohen  
Sandy Gruenberg  
Samantha Katzenberg  
Shireen Lewis  
Larry Mandelker  
Marci Marcus  
Lawrence Orans  
Rob Patchen  
Mark Seidenfeld  
Carla Stein  
Talia Swartz  
Joe Wygoda*

*There have been no competing slates, so Shayna Klopott voted for the slate on behalf of the congregation. She also voted to make Shirin Lewis a permanent member of the officer class of 2025. Shirin replaced Matt Lewis in the fall until there could be a vote of the membership tonight.*

**10. Recognition of Outgoing Board of Trustees Members and Officers**

- o Sam Berger has termed out
- o Rachel Casanova has termed out
- o Ellen Barlis
- o Jessica Berman

**Motion to Adjourn: Elly Zaab; Seconded Hy Pliuk. Unanimous Approval at 9:15**