

Congregation Shir Shalom  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
Minutes  
September 17, 2013  
7:00 PM

In attendance: Chris Cohan, Cantor Sharon Colbert, Bruce Corris, Rella Corris, Marina Finkelstein, Michael Frisch, Joe Glickman, Marlene Glickman, Jill Hamilton, Sharon Jacobs, Elaine Kellick, Dan Kester, Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein, Mike Millman, Robin Raphael, Shari Jo Reich, Joanne Rekoon, Michael Rosenberg, Blaine Schwartz, Marc Slonim, Todd Sugarman, Brian Schepart, Mindy Weinman, Sid Weiss, Rebecca Utech

- D'Var Torah: Rabbi Alex
  
- Approval of Board Of Trustees Meeting Minutes –August 20, 2013. Motion by Robin Raphael to accept and file the August 20 minutes as amended. Seconded by Rella Corris. Unanimously approved.
  
- President's report: *Jill Hamilton*
  - CSS board member Liz Messer recently resigned from the Board. Jill Hamilton is appointing Joe Glickman to complete the term. Motion to approve Joe Glickman was made by Bruce Corris and seconded by Shari Jo Reich. The term will be over in June 2014. Unanimously approved.
  - Joni Milgram-Luterman has just resigned from the CSS Board of Trustees and will be replaced.
  - Dan Ferber has resigned as co-chair of the Men's Club.
  - Cemetery: the CSS section of White Chapel cemetery is currently overgrown and needs to be groomed. This may be a Men's Club Project, but no decisions were made.
  - The Board of Trustees resolved that the President of Shir Shalom or the Chair of the Cemetery Committee are authorized to close the Temple Sinai Cemetery Fund and to transfer the proceeds to the Shir Shalom Cemetery Fund by September 30, 2013. Unanimously approved with one abstention.
  - Additionally, Joe Glickman made the motion that the Temple Sinai Cemetery records should be transferred to Joanne Rekoon for purposes of administration by September 30, 2013. Todd Sugarman seconded. Unanimously approved with one abstention.
  - Mark Finkelstein will be appointed as the CSS Cemetery Committee Chairman by Jill Hamilton.

- A problem has been identified with the terms of office for the Board of Trustees. It appears that it will be necessary to realign terms of office of Board members. While the Board members elected in the May 2013 Congregational Meeting have terms ending in 2016, all other board members have terms ending in 2014. This occurred because all members whose terms expired in 2012 were released from the board, in order to create the new combined board of CSS. Blaine Schwartz suggested *the nominating committee be directed to prepare two slates at the end of the program year: one would end in 2017 and the other slate would end in 2015*. No action will be taken tonight because more time is needed to arrive at a solution. Our attorney, Barry Radlin, will attend the October Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees meetings. The Board will need to approve this plan.
- Jill thanked Mike Millman for his work as chair of the annual giving campaign.
- She also thanked Marina for decorating the Bimah for Sukkot.
- Board retreat: possible dates –October 20 or October 27. This will be about 4 hours. Please contact Jill if you have a conflict with either date.

#### VP Reports

- Administration: *Todd Sugarman*: no report—all staff and clergy are doing well.
- Membership: *Bruce Corris*
  - In the past month, there have been 8 resignations and 3 new members. (To date, there have been a total of 25 resignations since July and 7 new members since July.) The motion to approve the new members (Anthony and Shoshanah Freundel , Judy and Paul Jacobson, Mark and Anita Kleiner) was made by Bruce Corris and seconded by Rebecca Utech : all approved .
  - Shalom passes and High Holiday ticket sales yielded \$10,330. This is less than budgeted.
  - October 4 Apple cook-off
  - There will be a cookie-off in December.
  - Name tags for all congregants will be purchased as per earlier discussions.
  - The membership committee proposed posting pictures of congregants in the building.
- Later on in the meeting (during the Finance report), a conversation took place about the number of congregants who did not submit 25% of their dues before High Holidays. It is likely that these congregants will not be persuaded to renew their memberships. As a result, these points were made.

- Myra Falk reaches out to new residents in Amherst by sending postcards introducing Shir Shalom (based on the house sales in the Buffalo News).
  - How can we reach out to people coming into the community or currently unaffiliated?
  - Are we reaching out to Hillel?
  - The point was made that many of the local realtors are members of another synagogue and do not mention us or the other synagogues when working with newcomers to town. Should we reach out to realtors to entice them to join CSS?
  - How do we achieve a physical presence?
- **Worship:** In *David Berghash's* absence, Jill reported: David will give his High Holiday report at the October Board meeting. There will be a Rit/Lit meeting will take place in several weeks. Dave encouraged a huge round of applause to staff and clergy for a great job during the High Holidays.
- **Education:** see written report (September 2013) submitted by *Sharon Jacobs*. *Shari Jo Reich* also contributed to this report.
    - Opening day of religious school was Sunday. The book sale with Talking Leaves was successful.
    - Enrollment in the religious school this year is less than expected.
    - The Kindergarten class is very small.
    - 6 children are enrolled for Ganainu (age 3 and 4) who will be moving up to kindergarten next year.
    - There are new first grade and fifth grade teachers.
    - A joint subcommittee should be brought together comprised of Worship and Education to develop policy related to participation/attendance in the religious school and bar/bat mitzvah.
    - A suggestion was made to consider relaxing the mandatory belonging policy to encourage unaffiliated Jews to send their children to religious school. The conclusion was that this could create other problems for the synagogue.
    - Sharon called those 6 families who missed the opening day of religious school classes. The question was raised as to whether these were also the people who did not pay dues.
    - Pinwheels and Popsicles: awesome feedback. Consideration given to continuing this program in the fall.
- **Finance**—includes Treasurer's Report. *Sid Weiss and Joe Glickman*
    - Differences between the September budget statements of 2012 and 2013 may reflect the timing of the high holidays and need to commit earlier.
    - We are currently running ahead on income.
    - Bingo income is up!
    - 103 kids in the religious school and we budgeted for 130.

- Expenses seem to be normal to date.
- We did not count on the loss of membership or the loss of religious school income.
- We will need fund raisers to compensate for this.
- Question was asked why dues are collected so close to the annual giving campaign? Could we maximize the contributions from members if we adopted a variation in the collection cycles? It appeared that the answer would be “no”. The momentum comes when people get ready for the High Holidays.
- 25 % of dues need to be paid before high holidays in order to get a ticket. This is a new policy.
- Is the real issue is the shrinking population in the Buffalo area or a question about our “product” needing refinement.

Sisterhood Report: *Marina Finkelstein*

- Donated \$2000 to Religious School!
- Paid up brunch October 13.
- Carrabba lunch October 23. (\$18)
- Apples with Alex in the Sukkah on Saturday at 4 pm.
- Julia Cohan will make calls for Bubbe’s kitchen
- Need volunteers for Bubbe’s kitchen
- October 29: need kids and students: Spirit Night. The participants will decorate kippot to wear to the next service. The event starts at 6 pm directly after Religious School is over. Pizza and soft drinks will be served. A nominal fee will be charged to cover the cost of the kippot.
- Volunteers are needed to be in the gift shop on Tuesdays and Sundays.

Men’s Club Report: *Dan Kester*

- Sukkah building last Sunday. Three teams built 6 Sukkahs.
- Family picnic will be on Sunday, Sept. 22.
- Bubbe’s kitchen—October 6.
- Julia is organizing cooked food.
- Need volunteers to work on October 6. Contact Dan Kester.
- The monthly meeting will be October 20. CSS member Barry Weinstein will speak.
- The Men’s group is sending out condolence cards and get well notes.

New/Old Business:

Annual Giving: *Mike Millman*

- To date, there have been 148 pledges, \$34, 000? Last year at this time, there were 7 pledges. There will be thank you notes sent to all who contributed as well as a request for those who haven’t yet contributed to do so.
- Suggestions:
  - Approach the larger donors and thank them (above \$1000),

*Our mission is to be a welcoming community and to enhance all aspects of Jewish life.*

- Meet individually with higher dues payers and donors.
- Sharon Jacobs volunteers to host a thank you dinner for the “major donors” at her house.
- Conduct a Phonathon to follow up with every congregant who has not already pledged to participate in the annual giving campaign. This would need to be completed by mid October.
- 20 out of 27 members of the CSS board have currently made a contribution to the annual giving campaign.—The goal is 100%. This is doable as 100% of the board contributed 100% in the past

Communication: *Rebecca Utech and Marc Slonim*

- Facebook page: submission need to be sent to Rebecca Utech as people cannot directly post to Facebook. Also, they need to be in ready to cut and paste. She cannot do any editing or revising.
- Newsletter submissions to Laura Yellen
- The communication committee is developing a form that will eliminate confusion. The committee will then decide if publicity/news get published on the website, newsletter, facebook, twitter or Jewish Review.
- We have 352 likes on our Facebook page.

New business:

- What is the status of the suggestion to redo the Bimah or to redo the Ark? This was first proposed as part of the merger and was suggested in the building subcommittee of the merger. The house committee and worship committees would be the committees to further study this. If it’s feasible, some of the costs could come from a fund raising campaign.
- Bingo volunteers: Todd made a request every board member volunteer at bingo. Last night there were an enormous amount of volunteers and this facilitated increasing the income for bingo.

Upcoming Events:

- Dedication of the new Sukkah --Sunday, September 21
- The Trolley will leave for the Sukkah Hop at 12:15 pm.
- Flu shots will be available during Bubbe’s kitchen on October 6.
- The Rummage sale will be in November. The Pod will be delivered on October 4.
- Adult education (Ed ventures) has prepared a brochure that will be mailed within the next week.

Good and Welfare:

- Religious School teacher, Michael Horowitz, is moving to Plattsburgh.

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- Phil Herzbrun's parents are celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and were featured in last week's Amherst Bee.
- Thanks to Sisterhood for their generous support of the religious school.
- Thanks to Joanne Rekon for chairing the Religious School book fair.

Motion to adjourn: made by all.

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Raphael  
CSS Secretary

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE: Tuesday, **October 15, 2013**

Greeter Schedule:

September 20, 7:30 pm Julia Cohan, Chris Cohan  
 September 21, 10 am Marc Slonim, Joe Glickman  
 September 27, 7:30 pm Robin Raphael, Sean Lesser  
 September 28, 10:30 am Dan Kester, Marilyn Toth  
 October 4, 7 PM Jill Hamilton, Shari Jo Reich  
 October 5, 10:30 am Marlene Glickman, Marina Finkelstein  
 October 11, 7:3 pm Scott Weinstein, Craig Small