



Minutes of the January 8, 2017 Board of Trustees Meeting

- Present:** Seth Charatz, Rina Chessin, Leslie Crane, Allison Fogel, Abraham Glazer, Daniel Glowinsky, Debby Goldman, Bruce Green, Scott Green, Marc Haas, Paulina Kovalsky, Amy Libenson, Lisa Maas-Vangellow, Adrienne Markus, Merle Markus, Marcia Nabut, Martin Presberg, Sara Ressler, Gerald Russ, Aviva Schochat, Brett Shulman, Lisa Silverstein, Martin Spokony, Tammi Steinberg, Jeff Stolberg,
- Excused:** Debi Brenner, Jody Dietz, David Dworkin, Gerald Gamm, Howard Goldberg, Linda Kingsley, Emily Krohn, Jill Liberman, Lisa Pelta, Matthew Ryen, Lisa Tellem, Susan Rothenberg
- Staff:** Rabbi Leonardo Bitran, Deborah Zeger

Meeting called to order at 7:37 PM.

D'var Torah

Rabbi Bitran delivered the D'var Torah. He made the connection between the changes that are occurring in our congregation and this week's Torah portion. He spoke about the 4 times that G-d speaks to the people of Israel telling them he will get them out of Egypt. The words of G-d included:

I will free you

I will deliver you

I will redeem you

I will take you to be my people

Rabbi Bitran spoke of the different degrees of change. Whatever we attempt to change will encompass the 4 steps and the need to re-orient our values/visions. For example, TBE will be a place for people with all kinds of limitations and disabilities. He explained the Sulam program and how it will help us upgrade our level of commitment and the ability to change.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the December 11, 2017 Board Meeting was made by Marcia Nabut. Bruce Green seconded the motion.

Corrections: None

Motion passed.

Membership Report

There is 1 new member family:
Marvin and Eileen Fishman

There are 0 Complimentary Memberships.

There were 2 resignations:
Dawn Lipson
Neil Sheier

There were 4 members that moved out of the area:
Yeva Buzhor
Joseph Izraelevitz and Lauren Hosek
Jacob and Susan Kreiger
Elliott Zenilman and Karen Clark

There was 1 death:
Ida Smolyak

Scott Green moved to approved new members. Brett Shulman seconded.
Motion passed.

Clergy Search Update

Bruce Green gave an update on the Hazzan search. To date, 8 people have submitted resumes. One Skype interview has been held. The candidate was well-received by the committee. They will look to bring him in for a visit to TBE.

Seth Charatz spoke again about the difficulty in the timing and the available hazzanim right now. The officers are concerned that if we don't find a suitable hazzan, the Rabbi needs immediate help. The Officers recommend a simultaneous search for an Assistant Rabbi. An application will be completed and submitted to make this current search cycle. It is the Officers' belief that casting a wider net is needed to help our congregation and rabbi. Depending on interest and responses, these interviews would be held in February or March.

Questions and Answers:

Q. Why are we doing this?

The priority is to get a Hazzan, but if we don't find the right candidate we do not want to settle. In addition, it is important to have the proper level of support for the rabbi and our congregation.

Q. Why was this kind of strategic decision made by officers and not brought to the board for discussion?

This is a time sensitive process and now is the right time to search for an Assistant Rabbi. No final decision would be made without the board.

Q. Are we talking about hiring 3 new people? Hazzan, Asst. Rabbi, Education Director?

We are hoping to hire 2 of the 3 positions.

Q. Can we "rent a hazzan"?

Yes, for the high holidays. There are also interim Rabbi's available.

Q. What is the cost differential between the 3 positions

All about the same, although the Education Director may be less.

Q. What about using Eastman School students?

They are not ordained for pastoral work.

Rabbi Bitran added that it has been a privilege to have Hazzan Leubitz for as long as we have. The day to day spiritual and pastoral needs of a synagogue our size require the proper level of support from the clergy. In the short term, there is local talent that could assist us for Shabbats and holidays.

Seth reiterated that we are just trying to keep our options open at this time. And while we would love to find a hazzan, we want to ensure we hire an excellent candidate, which can take time.

We will be actively marketing to hazzanim in other communities that might not be looking but might be interested if they hear about us. We will send a mailing to Hazzanim who are part time or in a smaller community that might be interested.

The officers are aware that we need to be financially prudent through this process.

In addition, TBE is locked in with the Cantorial Assembly until the end of January, but marketing letters about TBE may go out to a group of Hazzanim in the next few weeks.

Education Director Search

Martin Spokony provided an update. They have had two additional applicants since the last meeting. Unfortunately, neither would be suitable to interview. They have completed three interviews and there is a fourth candidate they hope to interview. That would conclude the first round of interviews. The committee would like to bring in the candidate that is the closest to Rochester. The committee is comfortable with the candidates so far. They are excellent educators, all know trope and have worked with B'nai Mitzvah students.

Presidents Report

Rachel Rosner and Betsy Brugg met with the officers about a new initiative which is intended to create meaningful opportunities for people with disabilities in the Rochester area. The Federation is partnering with Autism Up to find opportunities that work for these people. The first initiative will be to help these people find paid work. The Inclusion Committee is working with them on this initiative. In addition, the officers asked if they could help TBE get some grants for inclusion education costs.

Dues Discussion – Seth introduced and started a discussion about TBE having a “No Dues” Model. He explained that we are pretty much running a no dues model currently since over 50% of our members are paying partial dues.

The No Dues Model would have members “contribute” instead of paying dues. People will be shown what a full-dues paying member pays, but will be told to pay what they can. The research and experience with this model is that members give more with this option. This model could create a new level of warmth in our congregation and advertise to the community that we are the first No Dues synagogue in Rochester.

A solicitation letter will go out reminding members of their past contribution and asked to increase by a percentage. Research has shown that there could be a 3-4% increase in membership, plus a 2% increase in dues with this model. It is anticipated this creates an opportunity for the Rabbi to have a closer relationship with congregants. The contributions would be reviewed annually. There are still some things that would require a fee or additional cost such as the school and B'nai mitzvah.

Some congregations using this model still do a High Holy Day appeal.

Seth asked that a committee of board members look at this idea and determine whether it would be feasible and asked for volunteers.

Martin Presberg made a motion to create an ad hoc committee. Rina Chesin seconded. Motion passed.

Good and Welfare

David Dworkin lost his father. The funeral is Wednesday and Shiva will be at TBE at 7p.m. on Wednesday.

Congratulations to Rina and Dan Chessin on the engagement of their daughter, Lauren.

Congratulations to Debbie and Mark Zeger on the engagement of their daughter, Emma.

Gerald Russ reported on upcoming Men's Club activities:

- Please join them for breakfast on Sunday with a presentation by Meredith Dragon reflecting on Israel's 70th birthday.
- There are several events on February 4th
 - 9:30 am at TBE is the World Wide Wrap teaching tefillin.
 - 6:00 pm at TBE is the Super Bowl Party in the Youth Lounge.
 - 6:00 pm at Orchard Community Church is the "Four Chaplains Sunday" which veterans groups commemorate

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Maas-Vangellow and Debi Brenner.