



Jewish Federation of Ottawa
Board of Directors Meeting
Summary of Discussion as a Report for the Community

Tuesday, December 7, 2021
Board Meeting

In Attendance: Kevin Barwin, Harold Feder, Stacy Goldstein, Jeff Laks, Karen Palayew, Gillian Presner, Alice Retik, Jacob Shabinsky, Nikki Shapiro, Ian Sherman, Danya Vered

Staff: Andrea Freedman, Mark Gruner, Leslie Kaufman

Recorder: Rebeca Palacios

I: Welcome – Ian Sherman

Ian welcomed the board members and called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Ian congratulated Andrea Freedman and the Federation team on a wonderful Hanukah week and being able to tie it into returning to the office. It was well received by the team.

II: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Ian Sherman

Ian called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the November 17, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting.

The board requested follow-up from the Employee Engagement Survey results presented by Shari Cooper, HR Manager which will be provided in advance of the next board meeting.

Moved: Kevin Barwin

Second: Karen Palayew

Motion carried

III: Jewish Superhighway On Ramps – Andrea Freedman

Ian invited Andrea Freedman to present on the Jewish Superhighway On Ramps. As the document was sent to the board in advance of the meeting, Andrea framed the issue and added context. This included:

- There is no crystal ball as to what the future will look like.
- This proposed direction will intersect with the strategic priorities committee in that the committee will shift from evaluating campaign kick-off, to evaluating the shift away from kick-off.
- Some of the recommendations are not new discussions. For example, the utility of campaign kick-off has been debated for years and the use of micro-communities is an existing strategy.
- The relatively modest advocacy programming done to date has been well received and low cost.
- COVID has changed our world and now is the time to make any needed, tough organizational changes.

This is a 2-year pilot program that will be evaluated. The next step will be to discuss with Federation staff and committees as it will be at their discretion to determine what the Jewish Superhighway will look like.

The board was supportive of the new strategic direction and offered valuable feedback, including:

- Develop clear metrics for evaluating the pilot, with reporting back to the Board. Consider hiring a consultant to assist with this.

- When it comes to microgrants and what Federation funds, be very clear about how this activity was powered by Federation.
- Give creative thought as to how best to transition brand name recognition events like mitzvah day.
- Ensure that all demographics, including mid level donors, are included in this new model.

Ian called for a motion to approve the Jewish Superhighway On Ramps as a 2-year pilot project, endorse the direction that Federation shift focus from large-scale community wide programming, to community-wide advocacy programming, with the understanding that engagement happens best 1:1 and in micro-communities. Individual leaders (e.g. campaign chairs and EG steering committee) can determine how best to implement this new strategic direction. There will be clear metrics and reporting back to the board.

Moved: Harold Feder

Second: Gillian Presner

Motion carried

IV: Emergency Funding for Torah Day School of Ottawa – Kevin Barwin

Ian invited Kevin Barwin to present the Emergency Funding request for Torah Day School of Ottawa. As the document was sent to the board in advance of the meeting, Kevin answered questions to the board's satisfaction and asked for a motion to approve the Emergency Funding for Torah Day School of Ottawa as presented.

Moved: Kevin Barwin

Second: Jeff Laks

Motion carried with 1 abstention due to a conflict of interest.

V: Board Feedback from 1:1 Meeting – Ian Sherman

Ian invited the board to break into small groups to discuss some common themes that emerged during his 1:1 meetings with board members. Themes included improving Federation's role with other agencies, furthering board engagement, and improving its connection with the community.

Group A Federation's role with other agencies or organizations:

- Is there a financial relationship?
- Is there a reputational risk?
- Objectively is there a community good or a value being impacted by the actions of an organization that is struggling?

Federation needs to invest in relationship building & having open/honest conversations with partner organizations. It may be beneficial to offer advice/expertise to all agencies to help foster good will & help prevent difficult situations.

Group B Furthering Board engagement:

The board is a safe space and members feel open to bring up various topics. Fewer agenda items is better, and appreciate that strategic items are prioritized.

It was suggested that all committee reports and smaller items be addressed first, with questions being asked prior to the meeting so there is more time for strategic discussions. Regarding "open mic", a suggestion is for

all topics to be submitted to the Chair ahead of time so he can curate proposed topics. The goal would be to have the open mic sessions take place every second or third meeting.

Group C was tasked with coming up with strategies/suggestions to make Federation's unique value better understood in the community – e.g., the “Humble Brag”.

- Story telling is key.
- Utilize periodic Shabbat messages from board members or community members with stories of how they have been helped by Federation.
- Leverage global events by inviting someone to share how they've been helped by Federation.
- There needs to be a strong Federation board presence at events.

VI: President's Report – Andrea Freedman

Ian asked Andrea to provide updates to the report previously circulated to the board.

Andrea highlighted the following items:

- A new CEO has been introduced by JFC-UIA through a process that lacked appropriate governance. The state of the national system will merit further discussion at an upcoming meeting;
- Unfortunately, the Lion of Judah event scheduled for December 8th has been re-scheduled as the individual giving the tour tested positive for Covid-19;
- The annual campaign is currently at \$4.35 million from 1,332 donors, on a gift- by-gift basis. This represents a 4% increase over last year, or +\$177, 000. There are 465 dollar cards remaining to close, representing just under \$600,000.; and
- We continue to wait for the administration at the University of Ottawa on next steps resulting from the meeting held November 17th.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09pm