



**Jewish Federation of Ottawa
Board of Directors Meeting**

Summary of Discussion for
the community

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

In Attendance: Leila Ages, Joelle Assaraf, SuYun Geithner, Jessica Greenberg, Evan Green, Josh Kardish, Jeff Laks, Elissa Lieff, Marina Milyavskaya, Karen Palayew, Gillian Presner, Samantha Sigler, Danya Vered, Adam Zaret

Staff: Pauline Colwin, John Davis, Rena Garshowitz, Anne Read, Michael Reznick, Adam Silver

I: Welcome – Danya Vered

Danya Vered called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm and welcomed Board members.

Samantha Sigler delivered a d’var torah based on an [article](#) reflecting on the work of historian Arnold Toynbee. The teaching explored the idea that civilizations tend to decline due to internal factors rather than external threats, particularly when they fail to adapt.

In contrast, the Jewish people have demonstrated resilience through adaptability, with a “portable” sense of sacred space rooted in community rather than geography. The concept of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was highlighted as a symbol of this adaptability, allowing holiness to exist wherever the community gathers.

Board members expressed appreciation for the thoughtful reflection and noted its relevance to themes of resilience and community strength. Samantha offered to circulate the article following the meeting.

II: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Danya Vered

Danya asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes from the February 24, 2026 board meeting.

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 24, 2026

Moved: Jeff Laks

Second: Jessica Greenberg

Motion carried

III: Annual Business Plan & Strategic Plan Update - Adam Silver

Adam Silver, with support from the executive team, presented a comprehensive update on the Year 1 Business Plan and progress against the Strategic Plan (2025–2030).

He noted that the update reflects both progress to date and forward-looking work, with an emphasis on

aligning activities to the Federation's four strategic priorities.

Overview

- The Year 1 Business Plan is grounded in the broader five-year Strategic Plan.
- Progress is being tracked across key priority areas, with flexibility to adapt as new opportunities arise.
- Many initiatives are ongoing, with achievements representing foundational progress rather than completion.

General Discussion

Board members emphasized the importance of:

- Moving from foundational progress to measurable outcomes.
- Developing clearer metrics to assess success across initiatives.
- Continuing to build on momentum established in Year 1 of the Strategic Plan.

Danya thanked everyone for their participation in the lively discussion and thanked the staff for their role in animating the plan.

IV: Follow-up from Strategic Discussion at February Board meeting – Danya Vered

Danya noted the inclusion of the summary of discussion from the previous meeting in the Board package, and recommendations on moving forward. She indicated that she welcomes future feedback on how we can ensure we are making our meetings as efficient and effective as possible.

V: Domestic & Overseas Allocation (JFC-UIA, CIJA, JAFI, JDC) – Adam Silver

Adam provided some context and information on our Israel and overseas partnerships, including what each entity does and funds, and what our contribution is to each entity. He highlighted that Ottawa contributes a percentage of a budget that supports the work of JFC-UIA, CIJA, JAFI, and JDC, and provides access to signature programming, funding, and initiatives for the betterment of Canada's Jewish community, including local impact.

All questions were answered to the Board's satisfaction.

VII: Annual Campaign Update – Michael Reznick

Michael provided an update on the Annual Campaign, including current progress toward campaign goals and ongoing fundraising activities. He advised that the total funds raised as of that morning was \$4.47 million, from 1235 donors.

Michael also provided an update on the Dorot Legacy Reception, being held on May 28th, honouring Stephen Greenberg as Meyased HaDorot. The event has brought in over \$85,000 in sponsorship.

Danya thanked Michael for the update.

VIII: President's Report

Adam Silver reminded the Board of the Community Service Awards deadline and encouraged them to submit a nomination for a deserving candidate.

He also mentioned that the MOMentum Israel trip was now almost filled.

Linda Kerzner is being honoured for her lifetime contribution, and Sharon Appotive as a community pillar, for the Ottawa Distinguished Women Awards. They are the first two Jewish recipients of these awards.

The meeting then went in-camera.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm