



Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors Meeting

Summary of Discussion for
the community

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

In Attendance: Leila Ages, Joelle Assaraf, Kevin Barwin, Jeff Laks, Marina Milyavskaya, Karen Palayew, Gillian Presner, Alice Retik, Tal Scher, Ian Sherman, Marci Surkes, Danya Vered, Adam Zaret

Staff: Pauline Colwin, Jodi Green, Mark Gruner, Lindsay Newman, Michael Reznick, Adam Silver

I: Welcome – Karen Palayew

Karen Palayew thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

Karen welcomed Lindsay Newman to the meeting and acknowledged her return to Federation in the role of Development and Operations Associate.

II: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Karen Palayew

Karen asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes from the February 11, 2025 board meeting.

Adam Silver asked if the motion as presented in regard to OJCS was accurate. This was confirmed.

Karen called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 11, 2025 Board of Directors meeting.

Moved: Tal Scher

Second: Kevin Barwin

Motion carried

III: Community Engagement Advisory Committee (CEAC) and Interfaith Update – Jodi Green

Karen invited Jodi Green to provide information regarding the Community Engagement Advisory Committee (CEAC) and interfaith work.

Jodi provided a slide presentation describing the genesis and history of CEAC, including the committee's terms of reference, the parlour meeting model for non-Jewish allies, interfaith clergy outreach, and a booklet that has been produced entitled Jewish People and Antisemitism, which will be distributed to members of the board. The booklet is available on Federation's website, and the next printing will include a QR code that will direct readers to the website as well.

A discussion ensued and all questions were answered to the Board's satisfaction.

Karen thanked Jodi for her work and praised the interfaith events Jodi has organized.

IV: National Forum on Combatting Antisemitism Update – Marci Surkes

Karen invited Marci to present an update on the National Forum on Combatting Antisemitism, which Danya Vered attended as well.

Marci provided a summary of the action-oriented conversation that took place on March 6, during which the federal government demonstrated its partnerships. Largely driven by Minister Rachel Bendayan, Associate Minister of Public Safety, in concert with the current Ambassador on Combatting Antisemitism Deborah Lyons, the summit convened 250 participants, half representatives of Jewish communities across the country, half representatives from federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, along with law enforcement agencies and other sectors of public life including academia.

Key takeaways:

- There is consensus among law enforcement officials from all orders of government that they are prepared to work in closer concert on these matters including better training, identification, keeping and publication of statistics, and embedding these topics in the annual meeting of public safety and justice ministers.
- The main message from many speakers was an understanding that the Jewish community cannot solve antisemitism on its own. They are prepared to stand up, stand together, be vocal and be transparent.
- While Ontario and municipalities such as Ottawa and Vaughan have shown strong support, other provinces are far less represented.
- The forum was a productive and useful exercise, briefing notes should be available, and the work is ongoing.

Danya added:

- The morning closed-door sessions were quite impactful for civil servants, including according to Mayor Sutcliffe.
- Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario, remained the entire day.

A discussion ensued and all questions were answered to the Board's satisfaction.

Karen thanked Marci for her update and Danya for her additions.

V: Tamir Centre Update – Karen Palayew

Karen provided an update to the board, noting that in 2016 the Federation board approved a gift of land from campus to Tamir for an Integrated Living Centre (ILC). At the time Tamir had received funding from

the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services with the objective to build a 34-unit residential centre providing supportive housing and other services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Private donors had made pledges, however with the change of government, funding was withdrawn from the program. In 2023 the federal government launched a housing accelerator fund of \$4 million designated for affordable housing, with 90% of funding intended for non-profit housing providers.

The city of Ottawa allocated funds through the housing accelerator program to support a multi-generational centre including long term care and affordable housing. Tamir submitted a new, different plan.

Tamir is eligible for pre-development funding from the City of Ottawa conditional upon legal documentation needed by the end of March for a lease from campus for a minimum of 55 years. Federation is seeking input from the board.

A discussion ensued and will be continued pending new information.

VI: January Financial Update – Mark Gruner

Karen invited Mark to present the financial update from January.

Mark compared the fiscal year to date with the budget year to date and shared that Federation is ahead of budget.

There is a revenue variance in which the actual is lower than the budget. This is attributed to flow-through revenues and expenses from agencies, which are equal, opposite, and highly fluctuating. Taking into account this variance, over which we have no control, we are right on target.

Overall this is a good result. The reason we have such a high surplus now whereas at the end of the year we are forecasting a lower surplus, is that pledge revenue comes in all in advance and it doesn't come in during the second half of the year. This is only the second time in a twenty year history we have forecasted a surplus. The first time was last year in which a surplus was forecasted, and this was right on target.

No questions were posed for discussion.

Karen thanked Mark and his Finance team.

VII: President's Report – Adam Silver

Karen invited Adam to present the President's report. There were no questions from the board regarding the report itself, and Adam thanked the team: those in the room and those not, for powering Jewish Ottawa.

Adam shared updates including:

- The CIJA CEO search is underway
- There was a new leadership appointment with the Liberals and a meeting was held with Mark Carney
- A delegation visited the P2G partnership region

Karen thanked Adam for his report.

VIII: Annual Campaign Update – Leila Ages

Karen invited Leila Ages to present the annual campaign update.

Leila shared that as of March 10, the campaign was at \$4,703,000, edging closer to the goal of \$4.75M.

- Gifts have been received from 1,704 donors, of whom 101 are new donors
- The Young Adults Campaign has been the best ever by a wide margin
- All canvassers are being asked to close their cards by April 6
- A reminder that all on the board are invited to attend the Dorot Legacy Reception for top donors of all ages and community leaders on May 7, for which sponsorship recommendations are welcome

Adam thanked Leila, Gary Viner, Michael Reznick, Yudit Simmons, and everyone who has played a role in the success of the campaign.

Karen thanked Leila for her update.

VIII – Strategic Planning Update – Danya Vered

Danya Vered asked to provide an update on strategic planning and shared that that individual interviews and focus groups have been completed.

Danya asked the board to share the community survey through their networks, as this is critical for gathering ideas and data. To date there has been a 10% response rate.

There is a community survey targeting community agencies as well as non-Jewish allies. There will be a second site visit with a community-wide town hall and four targeted ideation workshops March 31-April 3. The board will be invited to participate in an ideation workshop on April 1 from 5-7 PM. The town hall is on March 31 and the board is asked to encourage their networks to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 pm.