



# Jewish Federation of Greater Orange County

Building Our Jewish Community Together

**Annual Meeting**  
**6/8/25**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Kol Yisrael, Newburgh**

**Rissa Cutler, President, opened meeting at 10:19am**

Rissa welcomed everyone to the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Jewish Federation of Greater Orange County.

She took a moment to acknowledge the ongoing war and tragedy that has become the ongoing reality of 2025. Israel continues to fight for survival and peace, Ukraine and its citizens deal with the reality of war each day, and here in the United States, we are facing regular and increasing incidents of antisemitism and other hate. She states that we must dedicate ourselves to continuing the mission of our Federation to support a strong Jewish community and open our hearts to our fellow citizens in need. May we continue to heal, educate, recover, and grow stronger together.

**Hatikvah & National Anthem led by Nava Herzog.**

**D'var Torah presented by Rabbi Doug Kohn**

Rissa acknowledged:

Nickie Ronsini from JFS and Amanda Pearl from the Newburgh JCC, thanking them for joining us.

Orange County clergy, members of our Klei Kodesh; Rabbi Kohn, Nava Herzog, and Rabbi Sislen. Many Past Federation Presidents who continue to dedicate their time and energy to our work. Thank you is not enough to express my gratitude for the time, support, and counsel you provide.

She thanked the sponsors for today's event:

Daryl	Bailin
Susan	Barone
Natalie Browne &	Eben Hill

Roslyn	D'Onofrio
Abbe & Joe	Distelburger
Jane	Friedland
Barbara & Robert	Fromowitz
Leslie & Glenn	Green
Sharon	Kelson
Doris	Kossover
Harriet & Abe	Lefkowitz
Steven & Robin	Licker
Hal	Marcus
Lester	Millman
Joan	Ostrer
Rosalyn	Portnoy
Diane	Rowe
Rabbi David	Sislen
Marjorie & Harry	Sweet
Lorraine	Wernow

Plus others who gave a gift at the door.

**Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes:**

Rissa asks for motion to dispense with reading of the minutes – copies available on each table and on our website.

Joel Weintraub motions to accept minutes as written.

Marjorie Sweet seconds motion.

All in favor of accepting minutes as written. No abstentions.

**President’s Report: Rissa Cutler, President**

Rissa thanked the Federation staff for their dedication to our work; Pam Mason, Georgia Mason (starting her 38<sup>th</sup> year with us!), Judy Ronay, and Wendy Cedar.

Teaching our young people about our history and connecting them to our Jewish community is an important responsibility for us. This year, we sponsored a NFTY event, hiking at Bear Mountain and apple picking. Loretta Trinco was instrumental in planning these events, and they gave our local teens opportunities to connect to each other and our community. Our community Purim Carnival at Temple Beth Shalom attracted more than 100 people and was a huge success this year. In addition, thanks to the leadership of Leslie Green, Shai Davidai came to the Hudson Valley to share his experiences on the Columbia University campus and led an important discussion for many community members from Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess Counties.

In addition, our microgrant program, chaired by Steve Rubinsky, continues to receive increased requests for funding. The goals of this program are Jewish community building, social justice and experiential education. Started in 2019, our first year funded 4 programs with a budget of \$2000. This successful program continues to grow. Only halfway through this year, with a budget of \$8,000, we have already funded ten programs, and we look forward to honoring our microgrant recipients shortly. Many of the programs in our local synagogues and partner organizations can only happen because of the hard work of Steve and his committee. Thank you, Steve, for your ongoing leadership.

Volunteers are key to the success of every nonprofit and our Federation is no exception. As such, we are always looking for board members who want to actively contribute to our work and support our mission. Even as we prepare to elect and install our new officers and board members in a few minutes, we have several vacancies on our Board of Trustees. We welcome your interest in helping us to maintain and sustain a strong Jewish community here in our own county so please reach out to me if you are interested in joining our team.

**Financial Report: Jeff Harmer, Treasurer**

Jeff thanked members present for participating in the 2024 activities for their donations. Our annual campaign has been declining for the past several years, BUT for the past 3 years we have been able to hold essentially steady, due to the concerted efforts of Rissa, Wendy, Georgia, Pam, and the group of volunteers that worked with them. He thanked them all.

Our volunteers of the year are community members who received microgrants from us for unique programming in the community. We are incredibly grateful, and happy to support those who are willing and able to make these unique programs come to life in our community. He thanked them.

He also thanked the families who donate to our Federation Endowment Funds. These endowment funds provide us with perpetual money from their income streams while the principal remains intact. Furthermore, despite the decline in our annual campaign, the funds we have received from these Endowments have increased, providing essential resources that enable us to continue our critical work.

In 2024, new Endowment Funds were established, and existing funds received further contributions. Our portfolio continues to grow, helping us stay solvent.

Jeff discussed Required Minimum Distributions, called RMD or MRD, from an IRA. Making donations directly with your RMD can be a double tax savings for you because of the tax law that makes your RMD non-taxable as a direct charitable contribution.

He encouraged attendees to speak with their tax advisor or talk to him after the meeting.

He asked that if anyone has any questions after the meeting, to put them in writing and send them to the office.

In summary, he stated that the Federation is financially sound ... thanks to giving from the community, but we could do more if we had more money!

The 2024 audit is in progress and will be available this summer.

A copy of the audited financial statements for previous years for the Jewish Federation of Greater Orange County, Inc are available at the office in the building across the parking lot.

### **Nominating Committee; Report & Vote**

Steve Rubinsky, Nominations Chair, explained that the committee had discussed and nominated the following:

For a 2 year term, ending June 2027, Debbie Metzner

For a 3 year term, ending June 2028, Abbe Distelburger and Leslie Green

The remainder of board members are completing terms for which they were previously elected.

He asked for any nominations from the floor. None were brought forth.

David Rider motioned to close nominations and vote on the 3 new Trustees above.

Joel Weintraub 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Motion passes with no abstentions or nay votes.

Rissa Cutler installs the new Trustees.

### **Tribute to Outstanding Volunteers of the Year – Presented by Wendy Cedar, Executive Director**

Volunteers recognized:

Congregation Agudas Israel	- Todd Kelson
Congregation Beth Hillel	- Anne Klingner
Congregation Eitz Chaim	- Michael Schack & Karen Fischer
Congregation Eitz Chaim Sisterhood	– Rita Wincott
Jewish Family Service	- Claire Caspe
Kol Yisrael	- Mark Lakritz

Monroe Hadassah	- Rochelle Marshall
Monroe Temple Beth-El	- Natalie Browne
Monroe Temple Beth-El Sisterhood	- Audrey Wolf
Newburgh JCC	- Mona Rieger
Temple Beth Jacob	- Ken Packer
Temple Beth Jacob Sisterhood	- Stacey Yerger
Temple Beth Shalom	- Melissa Kleinman
Temple Beth Shalom Men's Club	- Rich Schwartz
Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood	- Sharon Ball

*Jewish Federation honors microgrant recipients from 2024:*

Jerry Goldberg	- Monroe Temple
Ellen Levine	- Monroe Temple
Hannah Shinder	- Temple Beth Shalom
Rabbi Rebecca Shinder	- Temple Beth Shalom
Sharon Ball	- Temple Beth Shalom
Catherine Greenblatt	- Temple Beth Shalom
Tepper Saffren	- B'nai Torah Shul
Marjorie Sweet	- Congregation Beth Hillel/ Walden Jewish Community Center
Stacey Yerger	- Kol Yisrael

Rissa thanks everyone for coming.

Motion to close the meeting by Elizabeth Frederick

2<sup>nd</sup> by Mona Rieger

All in favor, no abstentions.

Meeting adjourned by Rissa at 11:15am.