

United Jewish Federation
February 21, 2024, 7:30PM
UJF Office & Zoom
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Michael Schlessinger, David Gordon, Diane Sloyer, CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Adam Rafalowicz, Robin Fischel, Rhonda Schaffer-Maron, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Jill Kaplan, Bob Abrams, Amanda Sherman, Jeremy Weiser, Marty Donner, Wendy Siegel, Stella Cohen, Lee Soffer, Ellen Weber, Eric Ross, Deputy Director

Absent: Susan Kostin, Alan Barr, Stacy Ferber, Chris Maroc, Robert Hoff, Cathy Satz, Jessie Brand, Joshua Esses, Beverly Stein,

Following a dinner work hour to brainstorm stewardship ideas, Michael Schlessinger called the meeting to order at 7:30PM .

Approval of Minutes of January 17, 2024 - Linda Hurwitz

Linda moved to approve the January 17 2024 minutes. The motion was duly seconded. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2023 Financial Year End Review - Adam Rafalowicz

Revenue:

Our campaign 2023 beat 2022 by \$41,539. This was a great accomplishment given the Israel Emergency Campaign happening at the same time as our annual campaign. Congratulations to everyone!

Sponsorships are up from last year. The Gala and other sponsorships were the reason for the increase. Investment income was also a big win this year. Tributes increased over 100%. Special allocations were \$1,167,576. We also brought in more donors in 2023.

Expenses:

Expenses were significantly over budget but there were good reasons for the overage.

1. Strategic growth plan – We had increased events, increase in staff, and emergency campaign costs.
2. Credit card fees
3. Events including printing, catering, speakers were up but were also offset by covers.

While we were over budget we currently have an increase in our cash balance. Rhonda asked if we could estimate the costs of the emergency campaign. Diane said we could. Is there a number that is approved for us to go overbudget? There is no such number in the bylaws. David asked about the mission expenses. Missions were moved below the line as an offset. There was no budget item for that in 2023. The conversation will continue.

Edith mentioned that it is OK to have expenses as long as you keep revenues up. If you cut expenses you cut your business.

Dashboard:

Cash growth was \$582,535. Preliminarily, we generated additional surplus in 2023 of \$265,954. We are doing our audits now as well. We have a healthy dashboard of investments and pledge receivables. Our Charity Navigator Score is 100%. Thank you to Hildy and the Finance Committee! Please refer to our financial documents for more detail.

Federation Name Change – Michael Schlessinger

Michael proposed a name change for our federation for the following reasons.

- 1) Our current name is 74 characters with spaces(64 characters without spaces), which is more than Venmo's 60 character limit
- 2) Venmo won't take a name change without it being a legal name change.

David mentioned that you can still do business under our old name as well.

Michael proposed to change our name from United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, Inc. to *United Jewish Federation of Stamford New Canaan & Darien*, a reduction of 18 characters to below the 60 character limit. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Solidarity Mission recap and next steps- Wendy Siegel, Robin Fischel, Rhonda Schaffer-Maron, Diane Sloyer, Eric Ross

From February 4-8, 15 members of our community traveled with UJF on a 4 day solidarity mission to Israel. If you haven't read Rhonda's post about the meaning of the visit to her, it is worth a read. Rhonda, Robin and Wendy talked about volunteering and support activities for families and organizations that did donations and collections for distribution. They talked to survivors and learned of the hostages. They participated in volunteer efforts. They visited hostage square and saw all of the displays that are being weathered and beginning to disappear with time. Time is of essence! Our federation representatives met with hostages and the missing families forum. They visited the Marcus blood center that also had a breast milk donation center. They are 3 floors underground to make sure they are protected. The group visited kids at risk and communities in the south. Our team helped pick eggplants and produce at a moshav. They also met with displaced Ukrainian refugees. Many evacuees were still in the hotels. Robin talked about the meeting she had with the soldiers. She had brought 90 wool hats and dolls for the kids. Cards and bracelets were delivered from our Bicultural children. They were all very much appreciated. Rhonda talked about the new memorial and its architecture.

DC fly-in and JCRC update. Eric Ross

Eric mentioned that they met with Rep. Himes and others and continued to lobby for Israel and Ukraine funding and the Antisemitism Act.

Bridgeport, Groton, Hamden etc. have resolutions popping up for a cease fire. UJF has let them all know where we stand on those events and activities.

Upcoming events

- Hen Mazzig Event – February 28th 7:30PM, CAS
- Addressing Antisemitism- March 10th, 7:00PM, ZOOM
- Cinema Sabaya – March 31st, 7:00PM, Cinema Sabaya
- Interfaith Seder- April 11th , 6:30PM UCONN Stamford

Check UJF website for other offerings and events

New business:

1. Scholarship administration for Lily Riser Scholarships is underway. Applications opened Feb 15 and 46 people have already started applications. One is completed. The application process stays open until March 15.
2. Finance Resource Development Meeting is scheduled for March 19th. We need everyone's ideas and help.
3. Happy Passover calls are coming. Please volunteer.
4. Please call Eric Ross to make an appointment to talk about your stewardship activities.

Michael Schlessinger adjourned the meeting at 8:40PM

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Board meetings for 2024:

Wednesday, March 13, 7:30pm

Wednesday, April 17, 7:30pm

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30pm

Wednesday, June 5 , 7:30pm