

United Jewish Federation
January 17, 2024, 7:35PM
UJF Office
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Michael Schlessinger, David Gordon, Diane Sloyer, CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Susan Kostin, Alan Barr, Stacy Ferber, Adam Rafalowicz, Robin Fischel, Chris Maroc, Rhonda Schaffer-Maron, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Robert Hoff, Jill Kaplan, Cathy Satz, Jessie Brand, Joshua Esses, Jeremy Weiser, Eric Ross (Deputy Director), Marty Donner, Wendy Siegel, Stella Cohen, , Beverly Stein, Robin Fischel, Bob Abrams

Absent: Ellen Weber, Amanda Sherman, Lee Soffer

Following a dinner social hour to connect and meet new board members, Michael Schlessinger called the meeting to order at 7:35PM .

Approval of Minutes of Nov 29, 2023 and the Annual meeting Dec 11, 2023 – Linda Hurwitz

Linda moved to approve the November 29, 2023 minutes and the minutes from the annual meeting on December 11, 2023. Alan Barr seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Grants and Allocations Committee: Rhonda -Rhonda Schaffer- Maron and Jessie Brand

The allocations committee members are Rhonda Schaffer- Maron, Chair, Jessie Brand, Co-chair, Linda Hurwitz, Neal Behrend, Lee Soffer, Jeremy Weiser, Lisa Manheim, Diane Sloyer, staff

Jessie described the process for allocations used by the committee. The committee members reviewed all the grant submission proposals.

Dollars raised in 2023 to be distributed in 2024

Name	Amount
JCC (Arts and Entertainment)	\$45,400
Friendship Circle (Inclusion Fair)	\$8,500
Bi Cultural Hebrew Academy (Resource specialist)	\$60,000
Bi Cultural Hebrew Academy (community chesed)	\$45,536
Schoke JFS (making connections)	\$27,500
Schoke JFS (senior care navigator)	\$24,000
Schoke JFS (Mental Health for adolescents)	\$30,000
Schoke JFS (Holocaust Emergency Fund)	\$20,000
Congregation Agudath Sholom (Teen Israel)	\$10,000
Temple Sinai (Families with young children)	\$16,500
Young Israel (Summer Youth)	\$9,600
Temple Beth El (Mitzvah makers)	\$13,200
UCONN Hillel Shabbat	\$8,000
Communal scholarships	\$39,000

Israel and Global Jewry

\$110,430

Jessie moved to approve the plan presented by the Grants and Allocations Committee. David seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Mike thanked Rhonda, Jessie and the committee for their work.

Year End, Annual Campaign, and Israel -Diane Sloyer

The 2023 campaign raised a total of \$1,340,973 from 755 donors. This was an increase of \$126,676 from 2022. There was a decrease of 107 unique donors, an increase of 232 unique donors, 223 flat donors, 69 new donors, and 112 recovered donors. There was \$76,750 raised from new and recovered donors.

Operation Swords of Iron raised \$1,062,420 from 688 donors. Forty two percent of the donors to the emergency campaign also gave to the 2023 campaign. Fifty four percent of the emergency campaign donors had given to the annual campaign in the past 3 years while 46% were essentially new to UJF. Sixty nine percent gave between \$1-\$499, 11% gave between \$500 and \$999, and 20% gave \$1000 or more.

UJF Donor Stewardship: 2024 and Beyond: Stacy Ferber, Chris Maroc, and Eric Ross

UJF has a 68.9% retention rate for donors which is a very good. The industry has a 45% retention rate. That doesn't mean we can't do better and we should not be complacent. Eric asked, how do we keep donors and do we want to set goals for areas of new, maintained, and recovered donors. There are about 12,000 Jews in our catchment area. Stamford is about 10% Jewish and we are hitting about 20% of Jewish families in our area.

Stewardship strategies were discussed. Every board member can participate in stewardship. It can be writing thank yous, making calls, soliciting, working on events. There is something for everyone. The Force Multiplier Effect was shared by Eric. It is a tool that dramatically amplifies our effectiveness. It is a way of creating stewardship through select groups of 4-8 people teams. These small teams can work on making connections with donors and prospective donors through friendships and cultivating events.

Stewardship subset groups can

1. More easily and effectively execute fundraising efforts.
2. Make more connections that lead to more donations over time.
3. Help shape board member roles.
4. Be a measure of success through participation.

Stewardship subset groups will include

1. Meetings to discuss goals, tools, tips, etc.,
2. Share UJF updates,
3. Outreach reminders with content to share,
4. Empowering board members to create new relationships that can connect people to UJF,
5. Sharing of feedback.

Strategic Plan update – Beverly Stein

Beverly introduced the strategic plan and reinforced that it is a 3 year plan and that the update will only address the 1st year. She described the process of developing the plan that included the depth and scope of community input into the plan. The first year had a lot of success and we are grateful for that. The plan is a living document with the following priorities.

1. Expand and strengthen federation as an organization
2. Build strong name awareness and image
3. Raise funds to address UJF local and global communal priorities.
4. Work to ensure a safe and secure local Jewish community
5. Strengthen relationships with Israel and Global Jewry
6. Develop succession planning for UJF lay leaders, volunteers, and professional staff.

Beverly reviewed many of the accomplishments of the 1st year and mentioned some of goals for year 2 as well.

1. Community outreach and fundraising was exceptional.
2. Community support and “The Big Gift” campaign renaming occurred.
3. Our marketing plan has been implemented.
4. Life and Legacy is on track.
5. We had 100% board participation in stewardship in some form.
6. We continue working on spreading out campaign fund raising.
7. There is continued support for security programs.
8. We are building a strong JCRC. David Gordon will lead the effort with our government leaders. We can redirect JCRC to deal with efforts on the ground.
9. Shabbat across Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien is implemented.
10. Our Shaliach helps to improve relationships with Israel and Global Jewry. We need to recruit, hire and train a new Shaliach for the next 2 years.
11. Succession planning is a focus including NexGen.
12. Board retreat will be in a different form in 2024. We will create a mentor program for board members in 2024.

Mike mentioned that there will be a pre-meeting before the next board meeting. Board documents are available on the website on the portal.

Brief updates: Michael and Diane

1. We have a Lilly Reiser Student Scholarship that we are administering with Eric coordinating.
2. Charity Navigator awarded UJF 4 stars that we can put on our website.
3. Yoav will be returning to Israel after his 2nd year. We would love to have him for a 3rd year but he has to return to Israel in July to pursue new endeavors. We have been very fortunate to have him here.
4. We had an executive committee meeting related to the Billboards and a letter in the Stamford Advocate re Israel and Gaza. We submitted a letter in response to the editor but we have not yet seen our response published. The EC was unanimous about responding to the initial letter.
5. Civil rights mission is coming up. It's a 2 day advocacy day in Washington DC with training and lobbying Jan 30 & 31.

New Business

1. David suggested the conflict of Interest document be signed by all members at the beginning of the term. The form is on the website and easy to review.
2. Next board meeting is on February 21
3. Dinah shared that January 25 is Tu Bishvat at Chabad. 7:30PM 'The New Year for Trees!'
4. Solidarity Mission to Israel is Feb 4-8.
5. Addressing Antisemitism program is Jan 28.
6. If there is something in the bylaws that you feel needs to be addressed please call David.
7. Check the website for all events.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25PM

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Board meetings for 2024:

Wednesday, February 21, 6:30pm, dinner

Wednesday, March 13, 7:30pm

Wednesday, April 17, 7:30pm

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30pm

Wednesday, June 5, 7:30pm