

United Jewish Federation  
February 12, 2025, 7:30PM  
UJF Office & Zoom  
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Beverly Stein, Michael Schlessinger, Diane Sloyer- CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Ellen Weber, David Gordon, Lee Soffer, Bob Abrams, Chris Maroc, Wendy Siegel, Alan Barr, Susan Kostin, Leslie Heyison, Greg Waldstreicher, Marty Donner, Robert Hoff, Adam Rafalowicz, Marguerite Felsenfeld, Stella Cohen

Absent: Jeremy Weisser, Robin Fischel, Stacy Ferber, Jessie Brand, Amanda Sherman, Joshua Esses, Tara Shapiro,

**Beverly called the meeting to order at 7:30PM**

Beverly introduced Marguerite Felsenfeld, new board member, to the rest of the board. Welcome Marguerite!

**Tu B'shvat – Rabbi Robert Abrams**

Rabbi Bob Abrams talked about Tu B'shvat, the new year of trees. He said a person is like a tree, and our roots run deep. We celebrate the potential of what we can give to each other and to the world. The holiday also celebrates many different fruits. Bob brought fruits to the meeting for members to enjoy. Bob ended his presentation with a blessing over the fruit.

**Consent Agenda- Beverly Stein**

Beverly moved that the board minutes, and minutes or reports of the following committees, affinity groups, task forces, programs, and meetings be approved. The motion was seconded by Lee Soffer.

- Minutes of the January 15<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting
- Minutes of the following:
  - FRD
  - JCRC
  - Israel Committee
  - Next Gen
  - PJ Library
  - Reading partners
  - Life and Legacy
  - Kuriansky Teen Leadership initiative.

Linda asked if the vice presidents that were announced at the January board meeting had specific titles or if they should be listed in the minutes as generic VP roles. Beverly said there were not specific roles for each VP. There being no further discussion, the minutes and reports were then approved as distributed.

**CEO Report- Diane Sloyer**

Diane reported that Jim Comstock will be at a community reception with his boss from CSI to meet Jewish leaders in the community. The reception will be on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Notices will be going out to board members. Jim has been visibly and immediately addressed incidents that

have occurred at recent events. People are on edge and do misinterpret some incidents, but they still need to be addressed.

An Assistant Marketing Director was hired. His name is Aaron Gaberman and he will revive the marketing committee. He comes with strong background and experience. He starts February 26<sup>th</sup>. The Upper Fairfield Federation is ready to start discussions as they work to replace their CEO who resigned several months ago. Talks for a mission to Greece is being planned for the end of October. Stay tuned.

### **Presidents Report and Presentation- Beverly Stein**

Beverly shared a power point presentation on her trip to Israel titled *Afula Gilboa Mission- January 19-23 2025*. Beverly went with SNEC to Afula and Gilboa with CEOs from other UJFs. Beverly was the only President who attended in the group. Beverly gave a powerful and emotional presentation about her trip which included talking to different organizations, leaders, residents, students and volunteers in a variety of programs in Afula and the Gilboa regions. UJF has a rich history with Afula and the people in the region and it was wonderful to hear first-hand from Beverly how, with our support and the hard work of the Israeli people, programs continue to thrive. The full presentation was emailed to the board for review and further reading. Thank you Beverly for an excellent report and for being our awesome representative on the mission.

### **Financials – 2024 Year End – Adam Rafalowicz**

Adam reported that the campaign was great this year. We raised \$427,277 over 2023 for the Annual Campaign. Total revenue minus the disaster relief of 2023 was still greater by considerable amount in 2024. We experienced a drop off in sponsorships and we had to take \$290,000 back to 2023 to make us even with the prior year. Disaster relief was down from 2023 understandably. Some expenses were up over last year and were understandable and previously approved by the board. In addition, some of the expenses are covered by JFN security grant, Lift Secure, and other grants. Adam pointed out that our campaign is 55% of total revenue and said that is a very healthy percentage. We are on par with where we thought we would be. Salary & JCRC & Security expenses are up. We expected that and some will be covered by grants and growth. Occupancy expense is up and we expected that since the move. Professional fees and printing and marketing and advertising are also up and expected. Offset expenses went to catering, missions, and programs that support themselves. Adam discussed the 2025 budget compared to the 2024 performance. Year-end cash is in a good position and we have good operating revenues and a good investment income. Adam's report is in board emails. Thank you Adam for a great job!.

### **Big Ideas Update– Rob Hoff**

Rob said the committee met several times and organized the first Jewish Festival of Fairfield County that was extremely successful. They would like to do it again in 2025 but this time involve all the Jewish leaders, clergy and lay leaders to get buy in. He'd like to see what they would like that would bring the community together. They had some interesting conversations and got valuable feedback. Rob will pursue in the coming weeks. April 27<sup>th</sup> is the day of the program being coordinated by UJF, Upper Fairfield Federation and the Stamford JCCA \$12,000 grant was secured to offset the singer for the event.

**Women's Philanthropy Update- Diane Sloyer on behalf of Tara Shapiro**

The theme this year for the women's philanthropy dinner is 'Empowered Women Empower the World'. The dinner will be held early this year on March 27<sup>th</sup> at Temple Beth El.

New Business:

There was no new business

Beverly moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM with a second by Rob.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

**Board meeting dates for 2025**

Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, May 14  
Wednesday, June 18  
Wednesday, July 23 (social evening at the Stein's home)  
Wednesday, September 10  
Wednesday, Oct 22  
Wednesday, Nov 12  
Wednesday, December 17, Annual Meeting