

United Jewish Federation
January 15, 2025, 8:00PM
UJF Office & Zoom
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Beverly Stein, Michael Schlessinger, Diane Sloyer- CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Robin Fischel, , Stacy Ferber, Ellen Weber, David Gordon, Jessie Brand, Lee Soffer, Bob Abrams, Chris Maroc, Wendy Siegel, Alan Barr, Stella Cohen, Susan Kostin, Amanda Sherman, Joshua Esses, Leslie Heyison, Tara Shapiro, Greg Waldstreicher, Eric Ross- Deputy Director

Absent: Marty Donner, Robert Hoff, Adam Rafalowicz, Jeremy Weisser

Beverly called the meeting to order at 7:30PM

Ice Breaker

To start the meeting Beverly welcomed the new board members and introduced an ice braker. She asked each board member to introduce themselves along with something unique about them. If that uniqueness resonated with another board member, that board member would then share the characteristic and introduce something about themselves.

Executive Committee

As is directed from our bylaws Beverly as president, identified the members she has selected for the 2025 executive committee.

Beverly Stein – President
Adam Rafalowicz – Treasurer
Linda Hurwitz – Secretary
Jessie Brand – VP
Greg Waldstreicher -VP
Ellen Weber – Campaign chair
Stacy Ferber- VP
Michael Schlessinger – Immediate Past President

Beverly moved to approve the nominees for executive committee. Josh Esses seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Beverly then shared some of her objectives for the coming year.

- We want to become an active board.
- We should all serve on committees with others who may or may not be board members.
- A board manual is being developed to help us all understand roles.
- Beverly asked that each board member submit a bio that can be shared with the board to get to know each other better
- Beverly asked that all board members sign the confidentiality and conflict of interest forms.
- Upcoming events will be listed at the end of each agenda so board members will know what events are coming up.
- Beverly is leaving for Israel tomorrow and will visit Afula and Gilboa our sister cities , and learn more about their needs and issues since 10/7/23. This is considered an official trip.

Approval of Minutes of December 4th board meeting and the December 18th annual meeting - Linda Hurwitz

The minutes of the December board meeting were reviewed. Linda moved to approved the minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded by Ellen Weber. With no discussion the minutes were approved unanimously. Linda then moved to approve the minutes from the Annual Meeting on December 18th. The motion was seconded by Stella Cohen. With no discussion or corrections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

CEO update- Diane Sloyer

Diane reported that the Lion of Judah conference 2025 was excellent and surpassed her expectations. Many of the speakers and presentations were put on-line and Diane encouraged the board members to view them. Scholars were excellent. Hostage families were there and presented their stories. Dr. Mijal Bitton was an exceptional speaker. The theme was “Proud to Be”. One speaker has been documenting Hamas crimes against women and will continue to do so. The wife of the Israeli president was given an award.

Wendel Maxey, our marketing director, left a few months ago. We are currently down to 2 or 3 candidates to replace him. Jim (our new security director from CSI) has been with us for a few weeks now. Gary (JCRC) is working with him on updating all our security lists. Diane is working on our marketing language with CSI. Jim was at all our Chanukah celebrations making sure we had good security presence.

Financial Resource Development (FRD) and Campaign 2024 Review- Ellen Weber

Our final campaign total is a wonderful \$1,647,176.68. This is our best campaign outcome since 2021. We surpassed the number of donors by 55 over last year. We are going to do a deep dive into the data on January 29 at the FRD meeting. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend. 70.4% of the revenue came in the 4th quarter. The 3rd quarter picked up a bit but the big income came again in the last quarter. We need to continue our stewardship as that has helped donors connect. The donor pyramid is interesting to see where most of the donors fall in giving. Some notable data:

- 33.8% of donors increased their donation
- 18.4% are recovered donors
- 9% are new donors

Retention rate was 78.11% with higher giving categories having greater retention. What made people increase their gift and how to capitalize on it will be discussed on the 29th. The overall giving rat is 97.30%.

Ellen asked “how can we work together to make great things happen in 2025?” The meeting is 7:30PM on January 29.

In addition, please let Eric know how the stewardship worked for you this year. We need to continue our stewardship and improve it. Please review the campaign report that is in the portal.

Grants and Allocations presentation and vote – Jessie Brand

Jessie presented the work from the Grants and Allocations Committee from 2024. Jessie showed slides of what was asked for, what was raised through the campaign and what was ultimately granted to the agencies. To make each agency as whole as possible, the committee used 'where it's needed most' to reach their objective. During this processes there is conversation with each agency to make sure the money will support their proposed program. The left over money of \$50,000 was divided into community scholarships for each agency. Jessie reviewed the percentages of the total campaign that went to UJF infrastructure, local agencies, Israel and overseas, and community impact.

Reporting requirements for organizations accepting grants from UJF will go into effect in 2025

Jessie moved to approve the Allocations for 2024 to be distributed in 2025. Michael seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Consensus Agenda Discussion – Beverly Stein

Beverly proposed that to make our meetings more meaningful and use our time wisely that we try what is known as Consensus Agendas. It works by putting committee and other reports together and sending them out before the meetings so that board members can review all the reports ahead of time. The committee reports can be passed all together unless there are individual items that need separate votes. This way all reports get reflected in the minutes. Beverly hopes this will free up time to discuss strategic plan and how we are meeting our objectives. Sue Kostin and Leslie Heyison supported this idea as they have used it at both Temple Sinai and Beth El with good success. Greg agreed.

New Business

1. David Gordon discussed the JCRC and welcomes everyone to join. The JCRC is reconstituting itself. David has not heard from anyone since last board meeting. Please contact David if you wish to volunteer on working with the community or know someone who would. We need people. We need 10 people on each subcommittee.
 - o Working with elected officials
 - o Working with the non -Jewish Communities of Stamford.
2. Eden is working with the new Jewish Life director at the JCC. She'll be teaching Hebrew classes there and she will begin a pen pal family program with citizens from Afulah
3. Puppets made by Temple Sinai are going to Israel with Beverly for immigrants at the Beit Alpha Absorption Center

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

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Board meeting dates for 2025

Wednesday, February 12th

Wednesday, March 5th

Wednesday, April 9th

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