

United Jewish Federation
October 9, 2024, 7:30PM
UJF Office & Zoom
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Michael Schlessinger, Diane Sloyer- CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Robin Fischel, Rhonda Schaffer-Maroon, Wendy Siegel, Alan Barr, Jill Kaplan, Bob Abrams, Marty Donner, Stacy Ferber, Cathy Satz, Stella Cohen, Ellen Weber, David Gordon, Adam Rafalowicz, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Jessie Brand, Susan Kostin, Robert Hoff, Beverly Stein, Amanda Sherman, Eric Ross- Deputy Director,

Absent: Joshua Esses, Chris Maroc, Lee Soffer, Jeremy Weisser,

Michael Schlessinger called the meeting to order at 7:30PM

Michael began the meeting saying he had feedback on his remarks from the Oct 7th memorial at the JCC and he wanted to apologize that his remarks had not been as unifying as he had hoped.

Approval of Minutes of July 17, 2024 - Linda Hurwitz

The minutes of the July 17th and the September 11th board meetings were reviewed. The motions to approved the minutes as distributed were seconded by Dinah and Alan respectively. With no discussion or further corrections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Campaign – Ellen Weber

Ellen shared slides and talked about the campaign year to date. We have \$460,532.00 so far which is ahead of last year and previous years. She noted that we have 27 new- never given donors as well. We currently have 619 open donors from 2023. Ellen discussed all the opportunities we still have before the end of the year. We've had good nonprofit growth and that is a win. Please participate on November 3rd for the Big Give. We also need 11 more volunteers for our "As One..." Marketing initiative. Eric circulated a sign-up sheet and several board members signed up to write an "As One..." quote.

Chanukah calls are coming up. Please volunteer to make calls. This year Chanukah starts on December 25th. A sign-up sheet was also circulated for shifts for the Big Give.

The Big Give – Wendy Siegel and Robin Fischel

Formerly known as Super Sunday. The schools will be involved with a variety of activities and prizes for classes that raise money. The events will take place at the UJF offices and will include Dignity Grows plus all kinds of family and communal activities. JFS truck will be here to receive donations for Thanksgiving. Please come and participate.

The Big Idea- Where things are headed – Rob Hoff

Rob thanked everyone for Sept 29th The Jewish Festival. He wants to build on the unity of the community and bringing everyone together with all the different organizations. We will reach out

to all the organizations' leaders to get their buy in and participation. Since everyone is so busy we don't want to step on peoples toes. Marty added that this is a multiyear process not just an annual event. The goal being about maximizing the number of Jews showing up, not just on the holidays, etc. We want it to be meaningful for each organization and all the participants. 'Numbers are the end in itself'. Rob hopes this will reduce some of the territoriality we experience.

Fairfield Federation Development – Michael Schlessinger

The CEO of the Fairfield Federation left abruptly. Diane and Michael reached out to be supportive. We are hoping to explore a more collaborative relationship and there is currently a facilitation process to help. Diane will meet with them on Monday.

Staffing Update- Diane Sloyer

Wendel gave his notice 2 weeks ago effective tomorrow. He will stay on in a limited capacity. He'll be writing for a sports agency and doing some freelance work. Rhonda and Stacy will be assessing the operations and what are next steps should be as part of the organizational assessment.

James Comstock will be our new Security person from CSI. He has been the head of the Stamford Police Bomb Squad and we know him and have good working relationships with him. This appointment is good because James knows a lot of people in Stamford even before he starts and he is highly respected in the police department. He will be going around and meeting our Jewish organizations. He will initially be splitting his time with UJF and the Police Department and is currently being onboarded by CSI. He will be in Stamford 4 days a week and Greenwich 1 day,

Wendy asked how we are to introduce James to the community. Diane said that he'll be in the December edition of the New Jewish Voice. In addition, Michael and Diane have sent letters to the Jewish organizations to do an initial and brief introduction.

Nominations Committee – David Gordon

Nominations committee met. It will meet again tomorrow. Of 7 nominations selected for positions we have 3 who have said yes. One individual said no. We are waiting to hear from the rest. We will need to approve the slate of nominees at the November board meeting before it is presented for a vote at the annual Meeting in December.

UJF Upcoming Events and New Business [Link to Calendar](#)

1. Tapestry will be held 11/16/24. Rediscovering Joy in Judaism, the theme, will be held at Beth El. Check website for events and activities.
2. Gary and Diane went to Darien Public Schools. A teacher there was put on leave for antisemitic behavior and because the case is now closed the leadership can now talk about

it. It was a positive response and a very inspiring meeting. UJF(we) introduced ourselves. The school is taking corrective actions. The Middle School Principal was at the meeting too. Diane talked to them about what we have been doing in Stamford to educate staff and improve the comfort and safety of the students and their families in our schools.

3. Edith thought Monday night was magnificent but feels we are missing the Christian community in regard to antisemitism. David is working with Gary and JCRC on goals for the next 14 months and to do outreach to diverse communities.
4. Eden has been here for 2 months and carrying on what Yoav started at BCHA and Temple Sinai, Anachnu with JFS, the Jewish Festival, Oct 7th and several affinity groups. She will be doing her first in a series of classes Dec 3, 16, Jan 9, 21.
5. Israel Committee has 2 events planned – one with Ilan Troen on Dec 10th and one with Rabbi David Seth Kushner on Jan 14th. In addition, Alon Levy will be on Nov 6th @ Chabad of Greenwich.

Michael Schlessinger adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Board meetings for 2024:

November 13, 2024

December 4, 2024

Annual Meeting- December 18, 2024