

United Jewish Federation
March 29, 2023, 7:30pm
Via Zoom
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Michael Schlessinger, David Gordon, Diane Sloyer, CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Rhonda Schaffer-Marion, Greg Waldstreicher, Robin Fischel, Susan Kostin, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Rachel Klein, Ami Soifer, Alan Barr, Stacy Ferber, Jessica Brand, Fran Ginsburg, Adam Rafalowicz, Chris Maroc, Joshua Esses, Cathy Satz, Caryn Halbrecht, Ellen Weber.

Absent: Robert Hoff, Bob Abrams, Kerrin Behrend, Jill Kaplan

Call to order: Michael called the meeting to order at 7:35PM

Approval of Minutes, Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Linda moved to approve the minutes of February 21st, 2023 with corrections of spelling and removal of dollar allocations mentioned under grants. The motion was seconded by David. The minutes were approved unanimously with corrections.

Mike Shanbrom, Regional Director, Secure Community Network

Mike could not make this meeting tonight but he will join us in April in person.

Committees, opportunities for engagement, Michael Schlessinger

Mike talked about ways for Board members to get involved. An engaged Board member can contribute in some or all of 4 general areas: 1) initiatives of choice (e.g., a passion or perceived need for improvement) 2) governance/administrative (e.g., committee work), 3) volunteering in response to a request (e.g., calls, deliveries, event set up) and 4) financial support. As we seek to fill the open Outreach and Engagement position (previously held by Sharon Franklin), there is increased opportunity and need for the Board to engage. As far as committees and opportunities see committee list for 2023. Mike and Diane will try to get more detail about the committees as several board members asked for that. Some need members and some need leaders. Some are standing committees that work well. Some are task forces that meet only a few times a year, and some are annual events that require input and volunteers. There is a broad range of interests reflected. We will continue to work on the strategic plan as well. Board members expressed interest in resurrecting the groups from the board retreat.

Linda mentioned since we identified our strengths in the Gallup survey it would help to know what strengths are needed for the committees and task forces. Fran Ginsburg and Caryn Halbrecht expressed their desire to continue the affinity group brainstorming from the retreat. There was discussion about connecting with the greater local Jewish community and having a meeting of the Presidents of each organization. Stacy asked about having a deadline for signing up to committees. Diane thought that was a good suggestion.

Mike informed the Board that Jessica Batkin had formally resigned her board position, and Chris Maroc will be filling the remainder of her 2-year term per the Board's previous vote.

Campaign report/update, Ellen Weber

Ellen mentioned that stewardship in phone calls is very important. She thanked everyone for their support in making calls and reaching out to our community. Ninety percent of board members made Passover calls this year for over 1,000 calls to donors. Ellen discussed the first FRD. (Financial Resource Development) meeting. It went very well and generated multiple new ideas for raising money throughout the year and not just at the annual campaign time. We discussed the opportunity to increase Tributes and Sponsorships. Some UJF supporters make one gift at the beginning of the year that is then allocated through the year as events occur. If this practice, which is a lovely reinforcement of community, becomes more widespread, we can develop simplified recordkeeping. We can use the Jewish Voice to place an ad for Tributes right next to the Bits and Pieces column in which many of the tribute events are listed. Robin Fischel and Wendy Siegel made the excellent suggestion that tributes be developed as an alternative or supplement to the existing “meal train” process by which the community supports younger families with new additions.

Sponsorships also have lots of opportunity. We can make individual sponsorships for programs. This year is a 50th anniversary for UJF and 75th anniversary for the State of Israel. We can offer many sponsor opportunities for any event through the ticketing process. Ellen asked that each board member think of 2 businesses that would like their logo on our events through ads.

Investment Update

When the Silicon Valley Bank collapsed, we accelerated our planned action to reduce cash held in any one institution below the FDIC limit. We now have spread our cash balance across fully insured deposits and short term US Treasury issues. A donor has further offered to help us with formalizing our investment policy, including diversification, cash strategies, life and legacy, etc. We do have a draft investment policy and are seeking volunteers to refine and implement it. Caryn volunteered to serve on the investment committee. Caryn also commented on making sure our investment policy incorporates our conflict of interest policy, as the two may interact.

Israel at 75, Dinah Miller Marlowe

Dinah reviewed all the events for Israel at 75. There is something for everyone and the schedules have been printed in the papers and sent out in the mail. Please volunteer. Over 3000 post cards are going out in addition to the Jewish Voice, etc.

There will be a teen program held at Temple Sinai where all the synagogues are coming together with their teens for the first time. Below are activities coming up.

Date	Event/Venue
Wednesday, April 19	Israeli Art Show/JCC Beyond the Dream: Finding a Place Within the Israeli Mosaic
Thursday, April 20	Israeli Dancing at Temple Beth El

Thursday, April 20	Teens Celebrate Israel@75
Friday April 21	Pre-Shabbat Tot Kabbalat Shabbat
Saturday, April 22	UJF Sponsored Israel@75 Cakes for Kiddush
Saturday, April 22	Next Gen Celebrates Israel@75
Sunday April 23	A Taste of Jerusalem: Baking Israeli Style Ruggelach/ Chabad of Stamford
Sunday April 23	Israeli Film and discussion with Breakfast: Wasserman the Rainman
Monday, April 24	Israeli Movie Streaming at home
Tuesday, April 25	Lunch & Learn: Israel @75 From a Torah Perspective/JCC
Tuesday, April 25	Yom HaZikaron Transition Ceremony/ CAS
Wednesday, April 26	Yom Ha'Atzmaut Festival/JCC

LIFE & LEGACY, Edith Samers

Edith talked about life and legacy. Eleven organizations are included in the three communities represented in our life and legacy area where 510 families have signed letters of intent. Once you sign a letter of intent you then need to formalize how their money will be obtained. It could be by check, by retirement plan, by investments. It all depends on what works for you and it can always be changed. Today we have 18 formalized. If you are on the board and have a letter of intent, make plans to formalize.

Presidents Council, Michael Schlessinger

We have taken steps to reconvene the council of presidents for our Jewish community. Rob Hoff is going to be the facilitator for this endeavor and will provide more insight as to the goals and format at the April meeting.

New Business

Linda asked if the JCC Spring Festival coming up was from our UJF grant to the JCC, i.e., JFEST or is this something different. The evening festival coming up is through the JCC and not part of the grant. It was also good to see that UJF was mentioned as a sponsor for Chabad program of learning for the children.

We briefly discussed the recent letter from a local realtor that suggested we may have shared donor information. Fran got a similar letter through the Stamford symphony. Our published response explained that, while we do not sell or otherwise make donor information available, our recognition of donors in the NJV makes it possible for those wishing to do so to compile their own mailing list.

Adjournment

Linda moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06. Ellen seconded the motion that was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Next meetings: April 19, 7:30PM, May 17, 7:30PM, June 14, 7:30PM