

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation  
Board of Directors' Meeting  
Wednesday, June 15, 2022  
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Rabbi Rachel's backyard,  
703 Judson, Evanston Illinois

## Meeting Minutes Summary

I. Gather and "Get to Know You" activity

- Members arrived and joined a pair to get to know each other and prepare to give a 30 second introduction of each other. The introduction included name, role on the board, one hope for JRC's future and/or their board service, and one fun fact about themselves.

II. Blessing for community work &  
Covenant of Speech was recited

III. Hamotzi and Shehecheyanu was recited

*Dinner was served*

Everyone gave a one-minute introduction of their Hevruta partner

IV. D'var Torah / Text Study – Elliot Frolichstein-Appel

V. Yashar Koach to retiring board members- presentation by Emily:

- Marla Baker
- Carolyn Shapiro
- Jonathan Markowitz
- Lisa Servedio
- Elliot Frolichstein-Appel
- Kyra Auslander

VI. Team Building Activity – entitled "Zoom" led by Rabbi Weiss

VII. Looking toward next year –

- Governing Role of the Board vs. working role of volunteers (and wearing two hats) – we will be supporting the work of the congregation by oversight for governance but also moving the work along to grow and strengthen the organization. We are members of a "roll up your sleeves and help out/grab an oar to help row" synagogue.
- Fleshing out the strategic plan, Teams, Priorities – we will be working on this all summer and began tonight

VIII. The 2 Teams convened in separate spaces (Engagement and Programming and Sustainability and Growth)–

A. Facilitators: Hannah with Program and Engagement

Future meetings: Nancy Katz

- Secretary - Robin Byster and Nancy Katz (will convene/facilitate for future meetings)
- VP Membership – Hannah Shearn and Rick Kulp
- VP Program and Ritual – aka Ritual Practices – Marla Baker and Marie Davidson
- VP Tikkun Olam – Anne Wildman
- VP Education (**new**: focus on children grades 0 – 12) Robert Israelite and Robin Byster
- Member at Large (Congregational Calendar) Hanna Seltzer
- Member at Large (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) – N/A
- Member at Large (Volunteer Engagement) – Luke Adams and Andrew Segall
- Youth member – Katie Segall and Celia Osborn (out of town)
- Guest – Robin Trilling (absent)
- Staff – Rabbi Rachel Weiss, Cantor Howard Friedland

B. Emily with Sustainability/Growth

Future meetings: David Block

- Treasurer (convener/facilitator for future meetings) – David Block
- VP Financial Development – Gail Luxenberg
- VP Strategic Development – Becca Sperling
- VP Administration – David Tabak
- Member at Large (Competitive Position) – Irv Miller
- 2022 Members at large
  - Kyra Auslander
  - Elias Murciano (staying on for 2023)
  - Carolyn Shapiro
  - Lisa Servedio
  - Not currently assigned
    - Member at Large (Fundraising)
    - Member at Large (Marketing)
- Immediate Past President – Elliot Frolichstein-Appel
- Staff – Micky Baer

Each team was asked to discuss:

What do we need to do to move us toward SMART objectives and action steps by September?

- VPs report: what information you have gathered?
- What additional information should we gather this summer?

- What committees do we need to meet with? Or what do we need to do to recruit people to work with us if committees are dormant?
- How can we use Lakefront services and other summer activities to engage others?
- Recognize that everyone's job description includes building engagement and succession
- Leave with a plan to submit draft objectives and actions to Becca by August 17 so we can discuss compiled in September - e.g. are we meeting in subgroups? who is doing what when?

C. A Quick report from each team was given

**D. Minutes from May board meeting from 5.15.22**

Approved.

**E. Consent Agenda**

Approved.

**F. Yashar Koach –**

- o Katie Segall– for participating in and helping to support the 7<sup>th</sup> grade bathroom project
- o Micky said:
  - Monica Lasky – for creating such a great Family Kallah
  - Marla, Rachel Sherman, Miguel, Rabbi Rachel, Lou Weiss for the Shavuot celebration (Rabbi Rachel's dedication and experience with lots of ways to have an experience is great.
- o Marla said – Emily Goldin's art program
  - Micky's helping with Kallah
  - Abby Harris Ridker, Hannah Shearn, Rabbi David for activities at Kallah
- o Gala Committee – Elliot Frolichstein-Appel, David Block, Micky, Rebecca Spivack, Barbara and Jerry Israelite, Avram Eisen, Reese and Joel Gratch, Hannah Shearn

**Good and Welfare - items listed.**

*Dessert was provided by Emily*

Meeting Adjourned at 9:03

Respectfully submitted – Robin Byster

Notes from Break Out Groups:  
DRAFT 7/4/22

**JRC Board Retreat**  
**Engagement and Programming Team Notes**  
**June 15 , 2022**

Present: Robin Byster, Nancy Katz, Hannah Shearn (facilitator), Rick Kulp, Marla Baker, Marie Davidson, Anne Wildman, Robert Israelite, Hanna Seltzer, Luke Adams, Andrew Segall, Katie Segall, Rabbi Rachel Weiss

Hannah provided an overview of the Strategic Planning Process that resulted in the three-goals and areas of focus. Our Engagement and Programming Team focused on the first two goals:

Goal 1: Kehillah/Community – Within the next three years, JRC lay leaders and staff will nourish opportunities for members to connect with one another in order to have chaverim (friends), minyan (a spiritual and ritual collective), and achrayut (responsibility for and commitment to one another-a sense of community).

Goal 2: Chavayah/Jewish Experiences – Within the next three years, JRC lay leaders and staff will expand the tools that enable members to bring our talents, knowledge and creativity to co-create vibrant Jewish learning, ritual practice, tikkun olam, and celebratory community experiences that reflect our values.

Our task now is to develop concrete steps to get to these goals, utilizing the “SMART” objective approach.

Marie Davidson reported on the recent “Plan and Dream” meeting. There were many ideas collected in writing at that meeting. Some were specific, some were not fleshed out, and there was overlap from the subgroups that met. The next step is to cull through the ideas.

There was consensus in the discussion that:

- 1) too much has been asked of too few people in the past. We have tended to overwhelm volunteers with too much responsibility. We need to have more member involved in less overwhelming roles (i.e. “more people to do less.”) and to “work smarter, not harder” as we build;
- 2) One of our goals should be to end the “silos”; i.e., viewing programming, adult education, and ritual as separate.
- 3) We also should connect member with each other to share activities of mutual interest.

Rabbi Rachel encouraged us to look at programming with a “wide angle lens,” to identify what kinds of programming are our members leaning towards, and what do we see as trends. Along these lines, Marie stated that the process of identifying themes from the individual work group discussions at the recent Plan and Dream meeting has begun.

Team members suggested that to develop our objectives, this working group might want to meet with Ritual Practices, and Tikkun Olum committees.

Katie observed that we should not forget to look at what the young members and students want to do. If they are having fun, the adults will enjoy programming as well.

The goal of this team is not to create programming, but to look at process and develop objectives for our strategic plan. The objectives give us the roadmap for moving from ideas and concepts to specific programs, and processes for connecting people with like interests.

Anne reported on the work of the Tikkun Olum committee. She said that the committee has discussed creating programming on the issue of reparations in Evanston. Fifteen people came together to talk about reparations, and there are some individuals who may be able to spearhead programming. For example, there could be a Kehillah day focused on this. Another idea is to pair programming on reparations with the MLK Shabbat, bringing together Tikkun Olam and Ritual Practices committees in planning. Anne encouraged us to view programming with a multi-disciplinary lens.

Robin said that the Education Committee intends to build and become more involved in religious school and early childhood, and to connect with others in the community. The goal is to lead with our values.

Andrew observed that one of our goals is to retain the interest and engagement of parents, who had children in the religious school, after their children age out of school programs. Robert suggested that many parents feel out of their depth with “how to do Jewish” and one of our programming goals could be to connect with this group of members.

Robin recommended that we also look to the library as a source of programming. We could consider a “One Book One JRC,” type program utilizing library resources. The library also should be a “cool place to hang out,” and should have books that kids can identify with – books about LGBT families, multi-religion families and the like.

To define and state our objectives, Rabbi Rachel and Nancy Katz suggested thinking about where we want to be in 3 years. What does it look like and feel like? How do we get there?

How do we move from data to connection to reality? How do we make sure that everyone who offers something gets connected and contacted. As Anne and Becca observed, we have lots of ideas, and our task is to make them “SMART.”

Regarding next steps, Marie agreed to make the information generated by members who attended the May 25 Plan and Dream Meeting available to our team. We also may want to review the data about interests and talents from the membership form.

The team agreed to set a meeting in July to continue the work of developing SMART objectives.

Respectfully submitted

Nancy J Katz

6/15/22 Sustainability and Growth Team Notes

Participants: Emily, Elliot, David Block, Carolyn, David Tabak, Jonathan, Micky, Gail, Lisa, Becca (notetaker)

### **VP Reports/General Discussion Points**

David Block - Financial Development

- Review summary of our competition in the Chicagoland synagogue market - in Dropbox
- Need to think about JRC as a business in a competitive environment
  - What is JRC's place in this market?
  - How can we play up our strengths and differentiate ourselves?
- The biggest challenge is to get people in the door, and then JRC sells itself (clergy, etc) - like Taste of JRC, but bigger

Jonathan

- Need to continue to build community by offering many different ways to draw people in - services, events, Saturday RS Kehillah, community center vibe (frequent focus group comment)
- Tension in Reconstructionism between top-down and bottom-up leadership
- Critical to have a big sign on the building saying who we are

Kyra

- Internal engagement and external engagement - programming will be key to bringing people in from the outside

David Tabak

- Keep moving forward and innovating, like we did with High Holidays during Covid
- Invest in technology, which can help us reach communities outside of Evanston - both broader Chicago and nationwide (worldwide?)
- Importance of action - try something, have a deadline, learn from it, and move forward (Design Thinking approach)

Gail

- Capitalize on people's desire to re-enter the world
- How do we message who we are and why we are awesome to other people?
- More visibility/better signage at events in the community

Micky

- JRC does not have the money to hire staff to do all of the things we want/need to do in order to grow
- Important to not get stuck in process, to take action, be able to coordinate between members who have skills in marketing, members who have the knowledge about our market competition, and limitations of staff
- Be creative about other revenue streams - rentals, legacy giving, etc

Carolyn

- Outreach from board members to specific members to do small things - like greet people who don't have name tags at Lakefront services - breaking down the asks into very small chunks

### **Possible Objectives**

1. Raise the money/grow to a size where we can have the staff we need to do what we want
2. GET A SIGN - 2 months? Who?
3. Define our constituencies - challenge in marketing is how many constituencies we're trying to reach
4. Outreach - make everyone an ambassador - invite specifically, have a buddy, deputize ambassadors

5. Use technology to reach current members, and as a way to recruit new members
6. Cohesive branding and marketing message - Gail, Irv to work on writing this objective - what structures and people will get us there? What timeline?
7. Identify new-ish members and specifically do outreach to them to increase engagement
8. QR codes with different landing pages on JRC website - to be put on lawn signs, printed materials, etc

### **SMART Objective Drafts**

\*I realize we should probably be using board and staff positions, not names, in objectives. Not sure how to do that with people who are stepping off the board. Ideas appreciated.

1. By the end of June 2022, design lawn signs that can be used at Lakefront Shabbat and other events. Micky will provide specs for the signs, Kyra Auslander and Carolyn Shapiro will develop sign content, and Luke Adams will design graphics. Micky will order the signs once the content and graphics designs are finalized. **Task for next meeting - draft broader external marketing objective that includes building sign, lawn signs, other things TBD**
2. Becca, Gail, Irv and Kyra will work with the Communications Committee and Marketing workgroup and staff (Micky and Allison) to develop a marketing plan and messaging/branding to be implemented by **[need time frame]**.
3. David Tabak will work on an objective around budgeting for and implementing technology solutions to continue virtual options to engage people who are not physically at JRC, broadening our market

\*Elliot, Lisa and David Block volunteered to work on an objective re: budgeting projections

What needs to happen this summer

- VPs need to meet again to draft SMART objectives from the draft ideas above
- Start thinking about who we could ask to work on each objective with us - can't just be board members/VPs