

TEMPLE SINAI BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING – September 20, 2023

Present [meeting conducted in person and on Zoom]: Naomi Camper, Dora Chen, Glenn Engelmann, Larry Freedman, Cathy Goldwyn, Cara Jablon, Ken Jaffe, Dan Koch, Laura Kolton, Sam Lehman, Ariel Levinson-Waldman, Deborah Lewis, Myron Marlin, Anthony Murphy, Howard Oppenheim, Aaron Panner, Jonah Perlin, Dianne Rudo, Dolores Siegel, Marcie Solomon, Seth Speyer, Laura Steel, Michael Sussmann, D. Jean Veta, Senior Rabbi Jonathan Roos, Cantor Educator Rebecca Robins, and Executive Director Ellen Agler.

Call to order: With a quorum of the Board members present, the meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Temple Sinai President Ken Jaffe.

D’var Torah: Jonah Perlin delivered the D’var Torah.

BOARD OPERATIONS AND GENERAL BUSINESS:

- **Board Meeting minutes:** The July 2023 Board Meeting minutes were approved.
- **Membership report:** The July-August 2023 membership report was approved.
- **Financial report:** EVP and Chair of the Finance Committee, Glenn Engelmann, presented a summary of the written Year-to-Date Financial Summary (as of August 31, 2023) for the 2023-20234 Fiscal Year. Although we are early in the fiscal year, there are three positive trends: membership commitment is currently projected to exceed the annual budget; the Nursery School has received two grants in excess of \$300,000; and security fee revenue is ahead of budget. Glenn also reported that negotiations with several banks are progressing to finance the renovation and expansion project and secure a loan to the extent fundraising does not cover the full costs of the project. In addition, the Finance Committee is working on a 5-year forecast.
- **Parsonage Resolution for Cantor Rhodes:** The Resolution was approved.
- **CIESJ Expenditure Resolution:** The Donations Subcommittee of Committee on Israel Engagement & Social Justice (CIESJ) has undertaken the task of developing recommendations for the second round of contributions to Israeli civic and advocacy organizations that are engage in opposition to the actions of the State’s current extremist right-wing and ultra-Orthodox coalition government. As a result of its deliberations, the subcommittee recommended the approval of \$3,000 donations to each of the following three organizations (for a total of \$9,000): 1) aChord Center of Hebrew University, a leading academic center that is using social science research to promote shared society in education, employment, leadership, and media and its work is currently being used to develop issues and refine messaging to expand a pro-democracy commitment and to join the fight for democracy; 2) Forum for Regional

Thinking, an organization seeking to enrich Israeli discourse by offering fresh perspectives on the Middle East that diverge from the usual security “us vs. them” discourse that dominates current discussions in order to include a more complex view of Arab societies and Israel’s potential relationships with them; and 2) Terrestrial Jerusalem, an organization dedicated to preserving a shared Jewish and Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, to respecting the status and communal stability of Jerusalem, and to preventing violence and humanitarian crises in the city. Upon vote, the Board approved the Resolution.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:

- **Renovation and Expansion:** Ken Jaffe provided an update on the Temple’s renovation and expansion. Ken advises that significant progress has been made on the South Addition and the current schedule projects substantial completion by early November 2023. Tours of the new Addition have been ongoing and will be available on Yom Kippur. Exterior work (on storm management and on the boardwalk) will continue through Thanksgiving and the parking lot upgrades are mostly completed. Interior work will also continue and will be scheduled around the school breaks and vacations so as not to affect the use of the building. A Dedication Ceremony is scheduled for October 27, 2023 and future events in the new space are being planned to start in January 2024.
- **Capital Campaign:** Naomi Camper gave an updated report about fundraising, including recent and planned events for closing the Capital Campaign, upcoming celebrations, tours, and future efforts to engage congregants who have not yet participated in the Campaign. As of the closing quarter of 2023, the Campaign has so far raised over \$11.5 million. Laura Kolton outlined plans for a future on-line Silent Auction to be held from November 1-19, 2023, with all proceeds to benefit the Campaign. The Committee is in the process of soliciting ideas for auction items.
- **High Holiday Member Outreach:** Dan Koch summarized the Board’s membership outreach initiative that included telephone calls to certain members (with limited email access) and email outreach to the majority of the membership. Outreach is substantially underway and is expected to be completed on or before Yom Kippur.
- **URJ 150 in DC:** Ken Jaffe & Rabbi Roos discussed and encourage attendance at the Union of Reform Judaism’s upcoming 3-day event scheduled for December 15-17, 2023. According to the website, participants from across North America will convene for three days of reflection and reconnection with an itinerary filled with traditional and modern prayer experiences, uplifting music, inspiring speakers, communal meals, studying, and DC-centric activities. The URJ 150th Gathering will be held in downtown Washington, D.C. and there will be numerous presenters and break-out sessions on a variety of topics, including themes of the future of Reform Judaism, of building vibrant Jewish communities and of engaging diverse Jewish communities.

REPORTS:

- **President's Report** – Ken Jaffe provided an oral report, highlighting the following: the Board's High Holiday congregational outreach should be completed by Kol Nidre; a reminder that Board members should sign up to serve as the Board representatives at Shabbat services, which is an important outreach; and the upcoming Mahjong fundraiser to be held on October 8, 2023, sponsored by the Women of Reform Judaism and the Davis Center to raise money for three organizations that support abortion access. Ken also announced three new initiatives: a) to grow congregational membership and explore structural changes to enhance recruitment and retention (to be led by Jonah Perlin); b) to further advance stewardship as part of development and to continue to cultivate a "culture of philanthropy," including a reinvigoration of the development committee (to be led by Naomi Camper and Aaron Panner); and c) to consider ritual alternatives to the High Holy Day prayer book (to be led by Rabbi Roos and Laura Steel).
- **Senior Rabbi's Report** – as submitted. Rabbi Roos also discussed the feedback he has received about the High Holidays services to date and advised that Religious School enrollment is trending upward.
- **Executive Director's Report** – as submitted. Ellen also advised that participation and attendance at High Holiday services is significantly higher and that High Holiday fundraising is ahead of budget and is currently 35% higher than last year thanks to the continued generosity of our members. She also highlighted that the Temple has been fortunate to receive two grants: an \$8,000 grant from the Jewish Federation will support innovative programming for engaging families with young children in temple life; and a \$150,000 grant from Homeland Security to support adding safety fencing/gates in a couple of locations and to defray a portion of our contract security staff expenses.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Confidential and personnel matters were discussed in Executive Session with an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Steel, Secretary

**Temple Sinai Board of Trustees
Parsonage Resolution**

**Rachel Rhodes Parsonage Resolution
Board of Trustees Temple Sinai, Washington, D.C.**

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”) permits members of the clergy to exclude from gross income in calculating federal income tax an allowance known as the parsonage allowance;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD that, effective July 15, 2023, the compensation paid by Temple Sinai to Cantor Rachel Rhodes shall constitute a parsonage allowance, but only to the extent that the actual allowance claimed by each member of the clergy is calculated in the manner provided in the Code.