

**TEMPLE SINAI BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING – February 21, 2024**

**Present [meeting conducted in person and on Zoom]:** Naomi Camper, Glenn Engelmann, Larry Freedman, Cathy Goldwyn, Cara Jablon, Ken Jaffe, Katie Joselow, Dan Koch, Sam Lehman, Deborah Lewis, Myron Marlin, Anthony Murphy, Howard Oppenheim, Aaron Panner, Jonah Perlin, Catherine Ribnick, Sara Rosenblum, Dianne Rudo, Dolores Siegel, Marcie Solomon, Seth Speyer, Laura Steel, Anita Stoll, Michael Sussmann, Senior Rabbi Jonathan Roos, Rabbi Hannah Goldstein, Senior Cantor Rachel Rhodes, Cantor Educator Rebecca Robins, Executive Director Ellen Agler, and Director of Early Childhood Education Ali Hurewitz.

**Call to order:** With a quorum of the Board members present, the meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. by Temple Sinai President Ken Jaffe.

**D’var Torah:** Ken Jaffe delivered the D’var Torah.

**BOARD OPERATIONS AND GENERAL BUSINESS:**

- **Board Meeting minutes:** The January 2024 Board Meeting minutes were approved. In addition, a Board briefing was held on January 29, 2024, and the written summary was made available in the Dropbox – however, no board approval is required because it was not a duly noticed Board meeting.
- **Membership report:** The January 2024 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 for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. While we still have structural deficit issues that must be addressed, there are positive variances on income from higher interest rates on investment income. In addition, per the report, membership commitment and security fee revenue are ahead of budget and projected to exceed the annual budget. The Nursery School has received grants that will likely eliminate the need for the budgeted investment. Social hall rentals, and High Holy Day-related fundraising are all ahead of budget. On the expense side, the delay in the construction and expansion project has resulted in some short-term savings. Moreover, health insurance costs, which were estimated during budget preparation, came in lower than projected, yielding savings.

Glenn also presented a general update regarding the 5-year financial forecast, which has been positively impacted by, and benefitted from, lower withdrawals from the Surplus Fund, better loan terms, lower interest rates, and additional Capital Campaign pledges payable over a longer period of time. These positive developments increase our confidence that the Temple has time to address the structural deficit, but it remains the

case that the current trajectory of expenses and revenues is not sustainable. A more specific forecast will be provided at the next Board meeting.

- **Security Fee Resolution:** After discussion and upon motion and vote, the Board voted to amend and adopt the Security Fee Resolution to approve the assessment at \$250 for 2024-25 for all member households and all non-member households with children in either the Religious School or Nursery School.

#### **UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:**

- **Nursery School Facilities and Licensure Update:** Executive Director Ellen Agler and Director of Early Childhood Education Ali Hurewitz provided an update regarding how the Nursery School (TSNS) has addressed and will continue to address issues related to the results of a recent Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) inspection. The Board previously received updates at its January 17, 2024 meeting and in a special briefing held on January 29, 2024, regarding certain maintenance and construction-related concerns that needed to be remedied. The issues identified by OSSE fell into the following categories: real-time construction issues related to work by Scott-Long; construction-related dirt, debris, and conditions; and general maintenance items. Within days, Scott-Long substantially remediated all issues associated with its activities and Temple staff have completed the maintenance-related issues. Two outstanding items require the hiring of outside specialized contractors (to repair floor tiles and ceramic wall tiles). In addition, though it was not noted by the inspector, Temple staff noted cracks in the exterior brick work and a contractor has been engaged to address the issue. All remaining remediation is expected to be completed within the required period. In addition, Temple staff have instituted updated procedures for reporting construction and maintenance issues to improve communications and have plans for further enhancements to processes and controls designed to prevent the recurrence of such issues.
- **Renovation and Expansion:** Ken Jaffe provided an update on the Temple's renovation and expansion. Sadly, the recent death of the Temple's owner representative, Adam Prill, has necessitated changes to the management of the project. Thanks to the hard work of Glenn Engelmann and Executive Director Ellen Agler, the Temple was able to quickly identify candidates to serve as Construction Manager for the R&E project and, after evaluating candidates and receiving references, enlisted the professional services of GreenBench Companies within one week. Suzanne Robertson is the Temple's Construction Manager to oversee and advocate for the synagogue's interests, and she has been getting up to speed on the project and helping us move forward. We will be exploring other avenues for filling the gap in facilities/engineering support that Adam had fulfilled for many years, largely on a volunteer basis. Additionally, Temple leadership has also continued to push the General Contractor, Scott-Long, to ensure that the interior space in the new South Addition is ready for occupancy. At present, there is still work to be done, but based on the current schedule, we expect completion for

occupancy by Spring Break 2024, with storm water management work expected to be done by May 2024.

- **Construction Financing:** Glenn Engelmann provided an update on the Finance Committee's work to secure long term loan terms for financing the renovation and expansion project. In accordance with the Board's previous authorization, the Temple's Financial Director executed a nonbinding Letter of Intent ("LOI") with Eagle Bank, dated January 15, 2024, for financing in accordance with the terms set out during the Board's January meeting. Glenn explained that that the process for drafting and finalizing the loan documents continues and we are awaiting receipt of the loan documents From Eagle Bank, to be followed by inspections. It is expected that additional updates will be provided both to the Board and the congregation in advance of the Annual Congregational Meeting in May 2024, at which time the proposal will likely be presented and voted upon.
- **Financial Options Implementation:** Ken Jaffe provided a brief update on the Financial Options Implementation Plan designed to close the gap between Temple revenues and expenses. Six committees/teams have been formed to begin working to develop options: the Finance Committee; Membership Commitments and Other Fees; Development/Philanthropy; Membership Growth & Retention; Education (for the Nursery and Religious Schools); and Operations. All the teams/committees have met in January and will be providing reports at the monthly officers' meetings with preliminary plans, estimates and timetables, with the goal of developing proposals for the Board's future consideration.
- **Strategic Plan:** Ken Jaffe summarized the status and timing of the Strategic Planning process, including the preparation of the Strategic Plan itself and the Nursery School Report, which are expected to be available for board review, discussion, and vote at the April Board meeting.

## **REPORTS:**

- **President's Report** – Ken Jaffe presented an oral report.
- **Senior Rabbi's Report** –Rabbi Roos provided an oral report, highlighting the following:
  - a) the status of the hiring of a student cantor, the costs thereof, and the options for conducting future services;
  - b) the recent inspection of our Torah scrolls by a sofer/scribe, recommendations about maintenance, and a request for an insurance appraisal;
  - c) the recent formation of a committee chaired by Laura Steel to consider future options for a High Holy Day Machzor to replace the Gates of Repentance;
  - d) Temple Sinai is a host site for NFTY's Spring Kallah for Teens in Washington D.C. during the weekend of April 5, 2024, and we are in need of volunteers to provide home hospitality and transportation for approximately 25 teenagers; and
  - e) Rabbi Hannah Goldstein is engaged in a 3-month project examining the stewardship of the Davis

Center and developing a strategic plan to discuss the work done and the vision for the future.

- **Executive Director's Report** – as submitted.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

- **Approval to Hire Student Cantor:** After discussion and upon motion, the Board voted to approve the hiring of a student cantor to assist in handling of services, ritual activities, and B'nai Mitzvah tutoring. The Board approved an anticipated expenditure of up to \$25,000 for FY 2024-2025, which consists of personnel costs (including taxes) for the student, travel and lodging, and a musical accompanist.
- **Multi-Racial Sinai Update:** After a discussion sparked by Cathy Goldwyn, Ken Jaffe provided an update regarding a continuing effort to advance racial equity at Temple Sinai, including the current plan to organize a discussion process among Temple leadership and members of the Multi-Racial Sinai (MRS) committee to identify challenges and continue the conversation about the experiences of Jews of Color, and further affirming and enhancing our identity as a multiracial Reform Jewish community committed to being an antiracist congregation.

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

After the Executive Session, the Board met in general session and approved a proposal to hire Robyn Helzner as an independent contractor to officiate at one Kehillat Shabbat service per month only for FY 2024-2025, to be paid on a per service basis.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Steel, Secretary