

Shir Libeynu Annual General Meeting

December 4, 2016

Meeting called to order at 1:15 p.m.

Quorum met. There were 18 members (voting) and one non-member (non-voting) attending the meeting.

1. Greetings by Rabbi Aviva Goldberg

Rabbi Goldberg is in charge of liturgical duties.

Rabbi Goldberg reported that High Holy Days were extremely successful. People were engaged, we had excellent sermons and choir was wonderful.

Shir Libeynu is all grown up but we still should reflect on the past while looking to the future.

Torah Readings: We now have eight volunteer Torah readers. We have/will be promoting options for learning to read. Two of our newest readers will be reading at April service.

Support of our community during a loss: Five people have learned the basics of leading a shiva. Rabbi Goldberg is putting together a shiva prayer book specific to Shir Libeynu. We sent out a request for those who wanted to learn to be part of our chevra kadisha; for those willing to do shiva visits, those wishing to learn to perform tahara on the dead. We have five people who have volunteered to learn the tahara process and we hope to partner with other unaffiliated groups to hold a class to learn. There is a fee to get this training from Benjamins. We hope to have classes in February.

B'nei Mitzvah Program: We have eight students in our B'nei Mitzvah program. There are eight sessions in total, four in class and four to connect to what they have learned. The children are expected to come to shul and we have outlined specific Shabbatot that they should attend.

Services and events: Contemplatives are continuing, as are chanting groups. We hope to incorporate more chanting and contemplative methods into the regular Shabbat services.

Family Programming: We had a Sukkot event and will be having Chanukah and Purim events. Presently, we don't have junior services. Rabbi Goldberg is working on a template for kids 8-11 to reflect our services that can be used to conduct a junior service.

Grant Applications: We need to work on getting volunteers to assist in grant applications so that we can continue doing what we are doing and expand on the existing programming.

2. Review of 2015 AGM Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes.

It was commented that the minutes should include how many attended the meeting. Going forward the minutes will reflect the attendance. There were 38 people who signed in at the 2015 AGM.

Section 7 should be corrected to reflect that Eden Nameri's report was about Shir Libeynu programming for children and not about her child.

Corrections were made in the official minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes with corrections/additions by Yona Frishman.

Seconded by Harriet Eisenkraft.

Passed unanimously.

3. By-law change: Proposal to change Section 4.1 from seven to eleven Directors to five to nine Directors

We had about 20 people running the congregation on an informal basis before we had a formal board. When our board was formalized, it was established that we would have seven to eleven board members.

There was an explanation of the need to have a smaller number due to those willing to join the board and to have an effectively run board. Continuity will be maintained as, in addition to four new board members, Laurie Goodman will be staying on the board and Eden Nameri, Harriet Eisenkraft, and Jamie Flagal will be assisting on an ex-officio basis but will not vote. Rabbi Goldberg will also continue to advise and consult with the board.

Discussion on proposal to change from current seven to eleven now in by-laws to five to nine Directors:

It was noted that people can participate in the running of the shul without being

on the board. We have lots of energy in our community and we want to tap all of it. Some people are stepping forward to help on various committees, some of which are established and some of which are working on getting organized. For good reasons, people decide not come on the board. Much of the shul is run by a small group, so a small board is reflective of how we have been functioning. Further, many larger community organizations run on a board that is small.

It was suggested that the range be five to seven. However, this brought up the issue of whether half of the board would be enough for a quorum. An explanation of the decision process was given.

It was also suggested the minimum should be maintained at seven. It was explained that this was not feasible or advisable.

It was suggested a spot be left to be filled after the AGM. It was noted that board members can already be added after the AGM, so a formal resolution for this is not necessary

The original motion was amended to read: **Section 4.1 of the Shir Libeynu by-laws shall read:**

The affairs of the Congregation shall be managed by a Board of five to seven Directors, each of whom at the time of her/his election and throughout her/his term of office shall be a member of the Congregation. Any ex officio Directors are not counted in relation to the number of Directors.

Motion to change number of Directors from “seven to eleven” to “five to seven” passed by large majority vote.

Change subject to review of corporate law, although we do not anticipate an issue with current law.

A motion was brought forward to make the quorum four instead of simple majority. The motion was defeated.

4. New Board Elections

The following are running for the board:

Jonathan Barrentine
Shlomo Gleibman
Terry Maiden
Roman Konoplev-Esgenburg

Jonathan, Sholomo, and Terry spoke about themselves and what they want to do for Shir Libeynu as board members. Roman was unable to attend. Jamie spoke about him and read a note Roman sent in on his behalf. All running for election provided copies of their comments which have been put in our files.

Laurie Goodman will be continuing on the board. Laurie is currently serving as our vice-president. Laurie thanked Jamie, Eden and Harriet for all their ongoing hard work.

Motion to approve slate of new candidates: Jonathan, Terry, Shlomo, and Roman

All voted in by unanimous approval.

5. Presentation of Finance Report and Financials

Members were directed to look at their AGM packet to review the Income Statements and Balance Sheets for the past two fiscal periods.

Report was given by Jamie as our treasurer, Barry Benigson, could not be at the meeting

Jamie Introduced Zev Frishman, our former treasurer, who will be acting as a financial advisor as needed but not as a board member.

A discussion of our current financial situation and future revenue stream ensued.

It was noted that we will continue to be cognizant of needs of our limited income congregants.

Shuls need to have other sources of income other than tickets and membership fees and Shir Libeynu is no different. Need fundraising. Grants are only one time (not operational), so we will also have to do more fundraising.

Increases to fees were also put in place to help with the reserves as we need to replace our Torah.

There was a question about whether we need an auditor. This is not legally required. The cost for auditor would be a real burden but board oversight in place. Granting agencies may require an audit.

Motion brought by Laurie Goodman to approve report and statements.

Seconded by David Orenstein

Unanimous approval to accept statements and report.

6. Shabbat Services and Communication by Harriet Eisenkraft

Shabbat:

Our fiscal year runs from July to June but for purpose of this report, Harriet conveyed information from late December 2015 to December 3, 2016.

Harriet provided a full copy of her [report](#) which has put in our files.

We held 15 services. Most were Shabbat morning, two Friday night services (Chanukah and Shabbat Hagadol), our Annual Pride service, which was a Saturday night Havdallah service, and our annual Holocaust Education Week service. Clergy was present at most services.

We commemorated various milestones including a birthday, an adult bat mitzvah, an aufruf, and a one-year yahrzeit of a beloved mother's death.

We had several adult education sessions led by Rabbi Goldberg and by academics from local universities on various topics.

Our Shabbat services and kiddushes are the cornerstone of our shul. Many High Holy Days congregants don't attend during the year, but about 100 regulars fill our chapel most months. They worship, talk, hear news, eat and catch up. The venue, food, and other costs are substantial. We have some kiddushes that are sponsored.

Last year, we had five contemplative chanting circles sponsored by the shul. These are less costly than our Shabbat services but still require venue rental and supplies.

Also, we had a family Sukkot event as part of our new programming for 2016/17. The events are more modest with no service and a call-out for snack foods to be brought by those attending.

Communications:

We continue to send out monthly and other newsletters to announce upcoming services, kiddishes, adult and children's education programs and milestones including bereavements news, and events with community partners (MNJCC and Heart to Heart).

Harriet writes notices of death of members, which are sent to all.

We are trying to encourage members to add their names to email lists for various milestones (death of members' loved ones, etc.). We will continue to promote this, as we believe in the importance of staying connected.

Our website is a good source of history and legacy. Our blog-like home page changes almost monthly, upcoming events and pictures from the past on a rotation are used to illustrate where we have been and where we are going.

Our Facebook page continues to attract more people. Many post information on outside events and matters of interest. Harriet updates the page regularly with Shir Libeynu news.

We are considering a Twitter account.

We are putting together hard-copy promotional materials, business and promo cards and the like. We are looking for anyone with expertise in designing to volunteer to help Harriet on this project.

Harriet thanked Natalie for her work on the various communications items.

7. President's Report – Jamie Flagal

Jamie began his report by speaking about the Shir Libeynu Visioning Exercise

The Visioning Exercise was a dialogue facilitated by our member, Danny Nashman.

It consisted of three stages:

1. Interviews of attendees conducted at Annual General Meeting 2015
2. Interviews conducted outside of the Annual General Meeting of people who volunteered to be interviewed and then a meeting at the Wolfond Centre to discuss
3. A meeting in March to finalize our mission statement and set out our objectives to completed by September 2017

The mission statement reads:

Shir Libeynu is a liberal, egalitarian congregation, unaffiliated with any particular stream of Judaism. Our goals are to joyfully celebrate and experience all aspects of Jewish life and spirituality within an environment of inclusiveness, innovation, and intellectual challenge. We welcome new rituals and liturgy while recognizing and affirming the many paths our tradition offers.

We identified three strategic focus areas and we are working on all of them:

1. Engage Our Members as Partners to Nurture and Expand the Shir Libeynu Experience

2. Grow and Partner to Create Increased Programs and Offerings across the Lifespan and Throughout the Year
3. Ensure Our Long Term Vitality

Jamie outlined our efforts to accomplish the three areas and these have been noted in our files.

After his review of the strategic objectives and our efforts to achieve them, Jamie expressed thanks to everyone who served on the board this year: Barry Benigson, Brian Smith, Barbara Center, j wallace skelton, Eden Nameri and Laurie Goodman, who is continuing.

Jamie also thanked our administrator, Natalie Wallach, and our Shabbat coordinator and communications director, Harriet Eisenkraft.

Earlier in the meeting Elizabeth Abraham noted Jamie should be recognized for his leadership and his work on work on World Pride.

7. Children's Programming Report and Thank-you to Jamie Flagal – Eden Nameri

Information about children's programming was covered by Rabbi Goldberg and Harriet Eisenkraft's reports.

A big huge thank you to Jamie. He is always happy and welcoming - shows everyone that shul is happy place to be. He still shows joy to be part of the community even with all the logistics he is involved in and will still be a very active part of our community.

Laurie has big shoes to fill but will continue the spirit and provide continuity.

All reports approved.

8. Minutes Distribution

It was suggested that the minutes be distributed right away as opposed to waiting until just before the next AGM. Natalie pointed out that they contain some information we may not want to share with the general community. The new board will take up the suggestion once it meets.

Motion to adjourn by Eden. Meeting ended at 3:09 p.m.