Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 5, 2019  
Temple Beth Israel

The meeting began at 7:05.

Executive Director, Nina Korican.  
Rabbi, Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein.  
Guests, Julie Wiese, Stefan Ostrach, Debby Laimon.

Teaching. Rabbi Ruhi made a teaching that reminds us that choosing between difficult options does not mean that the options not chosen are wrong. There is legitimacy in a multitude of perspectives.

Announcements. Johanna reminded the Board to see the Cabaret performance on Saturday night. Stefan Ostrach introduced himself to the Board as the next Board treasurer. Mindy reminded the current Board members of her Board Hanukkah party. Jeff announced that January 9 will be the next Board meeting. Jeff also thanked outgoing Board members Amy, Bella and Pearl.

Minutes approval. November Board minutes were approved.

Preschool report and discussion. Debby Laimon highlighted the Preschool parent and teacher meetings. Debby said that most or all participants in the meetings had strong feelings about what was happening and might be happening. The teacher meeting was presented with a “full day plus add on” type schedule format; adding 3-5 pm care for some families. Teacher concerns are that the priority remain 9-3 preschool care. Another concern is the fatigue inherent in an 8-5 program for both teachers and kids. Staff burnout will be worse. Teachers think that expanding available space could really help the Preschool program if the hours are expanded because existing space is small for full day school; a change of scenery and a place for gross motor activities helps. The parent meeting also had strong emotions. Concerns include cost, changed hours, losing drop-in care from 8-9 a.m., prioritizing, waiting list.

Debby acknowledged that the full day Preschool option is better for some families and worse for others. She believes that both parents and teachers will be willing to try an expanded hours program, though it’s not the first choice for all. Debby also stated that the Preschool may find itself turning into a daycare center, evolving from its current position as a preschool. Nina believes that TBI should do a full day preschool as a trial. Nina likes that TBI Preschool could offer better service to working families. She believes that the excellent Preschool staff will be able to mitigate some of the challenges of expanding hours. Nina suggested that there are outside consultants who can help TBI Preschool with the changes inherent in a longer day preschool. Nina echoed Debby’s emphasis on maintaining high quality preschool. Mindy agreed that TBI should make resources such as consultants available to the Preschool. Mindy reminded the Board that there will be bumps and compromises required by the larger TBI community to accommodate expanded Preschool hours. Diane is also in favor of expanding the Preschool program. Diane cited her previous experience at a preschool that expanded its model to accommodate extended care and said that the preschool did not suffer for the change. Diane also suggested to the Board that a positive, enthusiastic attitude can increase the chances of success for an expanded preschool program. Reisa recounted her experience and the experience of many people that she knows to help her lean toward the idea of expanding the TBI Preschool. Julee feels that there is more to lose for families who can’t participate in the Preschool without extended care than for families who are worried
about loss of quality in an extended hours program. Tracy verbalized her weighing of values to conclude that she is torn. Geraldine recounted her family’s experience shuffling children to a second day care to make it work for her family. Johanna said that partial day families will still be well served if the Preschool expands and that families that already need or utilize full day care will be able to choose TBI as an option. She also pointed out the great need for quality full day preschool programs in Eugene. Johanna asked how many families are currently ready to use full day Preschool and Nina answered that it’s impossible to know right now, there is only anecdotal information.

Jeff reminded the Board that the expanded program will be a trial program and suggested that two years might be a good length trial. Aura said three years makes more sense to her. Debby said changing the Preschool model, hours and cost all in one year might be too much. She suggested that the Preschool be allowed to grow organically, whether it is five families or ten that utilize the expanded hours. Debby suggested that tuition increases be implemented over two years, rather than one. Jeff said that some minimum number of extended day students will be needed to offset longer hours and higher payroll of teachers. Diane reminded the Board that tuition at the Preschool needs to be reconsidered and raised irrespective of the expanded day consideration. Jeff and Nina discussed Preschool admission prioritizing. Bella asked if the 8:00 start time will still be available in a new schedule model. Jeff asked if 5:00 or 5:30 is a better end time. Debby said that TBI Preschool parents that she has talked to have said that 5:00 would suffice. She also believes that the downside of teacher and student burnout increase with a later end time. Five o’clock to six o’clock can be a “witching hour” for many children because children need to go home and decompress. Stefan and Elliott made arguments for a 5:30 end time. Reisa made a motion: the TBI Preschool will offer an extended day option for a minimum number of children to be determined by the Preschool Director and Executive Director of TBI, to a maximum of ten children, for a trial period of two years, beginning in the fall of 2020, with the extended day option running five days per week from 8:00 am to, at least 5:00 pm; with the program to be modified during its trial period, as needed. The motion was seconded, but discussion followed. Diane expressed distaste for the “trial” name of a new program. Rabbi Ruhi responded that trial language is helpful and important to insulate leaders from the growing pains of a new program. Elliott proposed an amendment to the motion to expand the hours to 5:30. Mindy suggested that the end time decision go back to the Preschool director. Jeff said that his concern in choosing between 5 or 5:30 end time depends on the ability to fill a minimum number of extended day slots. A motion was made to change Reisa’s motion to list 5:30 as the Preschool trial program’s end time. Elliott’s motion failed with only two votes in favor. Mindy offered a new amendment to make the trial program’s end time 5:00 or later, but open to the Preschool Director’s discretion. Mindy’s motion was seconded. Mindy’s motion passed with only one vote opposing. Reisa’s motion passed with only one opposing vote.

Rabbi’s report. Rabbi Ruhi reported that she is now officially working full time again and thanked the Board for the scheduling flexibility that she had. Rabbi Ruhi asked about participating in some greater Eugene community events quarterly. Tracy volunteered to represent TBI in the meetings. Rabbi Ruhi also asked about planning a May, 2021 shabbaton in Portland. She asked if there is a lay leader to help plan the shabbaton and attend the event and Elliott volunteered to do this.

Executive Director’s report. Nina’s report was submitted electronically.

Financials. Amy’s report was submitted electronically. Johanna asked one question about a money transfer and Amy clarified.

Executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10.
Recorded and submitted by Bruce Kreitzberg.