

BHBE Board Meeting Minutes 2025.06.25

Present: Dan Chodrow, Jon Clemons, Ken Cohen, Tim Comar, Fran Diamond, Laurie Feinstein, Adam Goldfarb, Andrea Graham, David Greenstein, Allison Kamen, Rochelle Leff, Cynthia Lerner, Joan Kripke, Jessica Littmann, Joan Meyers, Stewart Miller, Harris Miller, Shoshanna Reynolds, Fred Rosenwasser, Elly Rousso, Gail Schneiderman, Gail Swerdlik, Irv Zagorin

Staff: Michael Kahn, Sam Bolen

Clergy: Cantor Roytman

Congregants: Lia Niederberger

Meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM

Motion to approve the April Meeting Minutes and the May Budget Meeting Minutes by Gail Swerdlik

Dan Chodrow Seconded

The minutes passed unanimously

The June 2025 Consent Agenda was approved - Please see the Consent Agenda

Sam Bolen: Youth Advisor (Part Time) - Delivered the Mission Touch, Introduced himself and Provided a Youth Review - Annual Presentation as part of the Constitution.

Sam explained the youth group's youth programs/events throughout 2024-2025. The Madrichim set up some of the events and showed pictures. A more casual year.

In 2025-2026: There will be a kick off meeting in September, 2 field trips per semester and an Academy based event per month. They will run the Purim Carnival booths again. Promote participation within USY and CHUSY.

Mel Siedenberg Fund: Carter Greene called them. This year, we will also help kids with the antisemitism situation and resume/college application and volunteering (leadership/clergy that we trust). Hedva and Sam will work together and create an outline including leadership skills. There are on average **40-45** kids involved. We are a USY chapter. Currently just our synagogue, but we promote larger events in our newsletters. The youth group fell apart during Covid. We're in a rebuilding phase. Keep kids in the community following their B'nai Mitzvahs. Attendance has slowly declined in CHUSY over the last 4-5 years. Gradually getting into the larger community. We hope they'll join Hillel and Jewish groups in college. It's mandatory that

we send someone to overnight events. Will work on how we charge families for attending. Try to make them free unless it's a special event - will work with Michael Kahn. A video was created by Sam Bolen, Allison Kamen and her daughter Molly. Suggestion to include Chicago area women's teams.

The Siedenberg family agreed to loosen the usage of the fund. It can be used more liberally, which is greatly appreciated. His salary as youth advisor is covered by it. Academy and Madrichim are in the group. It'll stay within the overall youth program.

President's Report - Jessica Littmann: Thanked everyone who worked on the 2025 Gala between our volunteers, staff and clergy. Lots of money was put into it. It was a nice evening. Had a celebratory lunch with the staff to say thank you. Would like feedback/suggestions on improvements, did well on and what not to do in 2026. The staff see this executed each year. Have a template of how it's set up. We currently don't have a programming person. Gail Swerdlik thanked the office for the easier to read directory with names and email addresses.

Irv Zagorin stated: No paper on who does the catering as a thank you to them. Should be on display.

Executive Board Update: Fran/Eric Diamond and [Dan Chodrow](#) are working on a rebranding and marketing campaign for BHBE. They will talk about it with the clergy during the week of June 30th, 2025. It'll come to the board at the July 2025 meeting.

Please remember to renew your 2025-2026 membership. [Michael Kahn](#) will discuss this in his report. We'll always work with those who need payment plans.

Executive Director's Report - Michael Kahn: Thanked the group for their hard work on the gala and those working on our rebranding/marketing. The Elssa Strom Fund's heirs contacted [Michael Kahn](#) and Jessica (fund to send children to Israel) - people no longer apply to this - one kid in the SKIP fund building money - most have not used their money - can refund the money as requested by the family through the JUF - money must be given back to BHBE and the family - anyone Jewish can attend Birthright at no cost - people can still ask - (Strom and SKIP are two separate funds) including the Seidenberg fund. The Next Generation Fund covers camps and trips to Israel. Proposal to Neil and Carey of the Strom Fund family on how to support BHBE while still respecting its original intent. Has \$158,000 in it. We continue to tackle each fund at a time. Most are restricted funds as designated by the owner. Some have legal requirements and no longer have someone living attached to it. Must go through a separate legal process and is very time consuming. Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg - New Trier Township Supervisor knows someone at the State level who's familiar with non-profits. Can go through the State to free up the fund, which requires an attorney and is currently on hold. Please renew your membership and help cover our security costs. Michael will turn in our paperwork for the \$150,000 security grant (last one). Can apply again at our new address. We approved the budget with the Kiddish Fund with \$10K below budget on May 20th, 2025. About \$250,000 between Strom and Seidenberg funds.

Michael suggested Adam Goldfarb do a financial presentation on our funds that were moved from Byline to Chase. Likely will be in September 2025. Please review the balance sheets.

Other Requested Reports and Discussions:

Jon Clemons - Building Committee Report:

5250 Old Orchard Road location is off the table because Skokie cannot zone the property for a house of worship. The new Mayor is willing to work with zoning in other parts of Skokie and they notified us of a building to look at without a zoning issue (purchase property on June 26th, 2025.) Will look at lease properties. Also, lease extensions in splitting the property with the Park District, Village of Wilmette/police department for now. Must negotiate utilities and the building in the lease. Looking at properties in the same parking lot as needed within under a mile from BHBE. Potential "roommate" arrangements. The property we may purchase is a yes or no. Our goal is to stay at our current property in June 2026 after the B'nai Mitzvahs and the academy year so we have time to finish our year and move. Will meet with B'nai Mitzvah families.

Purchase option is the Evanshore Church at 4555 W. Church Street, Skokie. They will visit for 30 minutes with a pre-written offer letter.

Lease - Doubletree, Office Building and the North Shore Center for Performing Arts. Looking to rent space in the office building - do everything except pray. High holidays, B'nai Mitzvahs - Double Tree interested in renting our space - asked us to make our proposal. Allow us to keep Shabbat food there. North Shore Center for the Performing Arts is interested in having us look at the Northlight Theater (the smaller theater). Also, in discussion with Temple Jeremiah. Please read the weekly update and review the map that includes a vacant land tab. Thank you to [Jon Clemons](#) and Steve Kolmin for their help. It's much appreciated! Built a model as to where congregants live. It's great that we're working with the Village of Skokie. Good sense working with them. They're willing to work with us on parking. The head of the Planning Commission Johanna handed Jessica a zoning map. Adam Goldfarb involved in mapping expenses. Also, a thank you to Jessica for meeting with Skokie Mayor Tennes. We continue to work with Rabbi Crane and Cantor Roytman in this process. Rabbi Crane willing to drive if needed.

Must be ready to move on something if we find anything good due to competitive bidding.

Parsonage conversation is tabled due to a complicated situation. Working with the Rabbi on this. No decision can be made until we have a property.

Old Business:

Fran Diamond - Friendraisers were launched and will be covered by the hosts. Funds will go to BHBE and be outside the building. A link will be sent to the congregation through Eventbrite.

No New Business

Allison Kamen motions to adjourn at 8:57 PM

Dan Chodrow seconds

The motion passed unanimously