



Jewish Federation of Ottawa
Board of Directors Meeting
Summary of Discussion for the Community

Wednesday, January 20th, 2021
Board Meeting

In Attendance: Kevin Barwin, Josh Engel, Harold Feder, Stacy Goldstein, Jessica Greenberg, Jeff Laks, Karen Palayew, Michael Polowin, Victor Rabinovitch, Jacob Shabinsky, Nikki Shapiro, Ian Sherman, Hartley Stern, Danya Vered.

Staff: Sarah Beutel, Andrea Freedman, Susan Lee.

Guests: Allan Shefrin, Barry Sohn.

Recorder: Cibebe Rosa

I: Welcome – Michael Polowin

Michael welcomed Board members and specifically Josh Engel, attending his first meeting as Federation's Campaign Co-Chair and an ad hoc member of the board. He called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

II: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Michael Polowin

Michael called for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16th, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

Moved: Hartley Stern

Second: Kevin Barwin

Motion carried

III: Soloway Jewish Community Center – Allan Shefrin and Barry Sohn

Michael introduced Barry Sohn, President and COO of the Soloway Jewish Community Center (SJCC), and Allan Shefrin, SJCC Board Chair. As the documents were circulated in advance of the meeting, Barry presented a high-level overview and answered questions.

Due to the Pandemic, the SJCC had to fully close its doors for almost 5 months in 2020. Last summer, a few activities were allowed to return, with a reduced capacity and following provincial guidelines. With the unfortunate rise in infections in Ottawa and Ontario, fitness classes/centres were forced to close on two subsequent occasions, including the latest shutdown in December. Programs are being held virtually, including some fitness classes to keep the community and members engaged.

Despite the efforts of the administration, and the austere measures implemented, the SJCC has lost significant income during the pandemic, only partially offset by cost savings. Today, it is able to maintain a positive cash flow, thanks to government subsidies, Federation Emergency Funds and austerity measures.

Board members had the opportunity to ask questions and highlight concerns.

- The business model of the SJCC may be forever changed by the pandemic. Their board and staff need to adjust for this reality (e.g. some people have purchased home exercise equipment and may not return as members). This requires creative thinking and pro-active planning.
- Particularly in tough times, it is essential that the SJCC's customer service, communication, and virtual programming be excellent.

Michael introduced Jeff Laks as Federation's Board representative to the SJCC Board, and he thanked Barry and Allan for the update and their leadership during these challenging times.

IV: Annual Business Plan Update – Andrea Freedman

Michael invited Andrea to present the Year 2 Business Plan update. As the document was sent in advance of the meeting, Andrea presented an overview and answered questions.

- Transitioning the original intent of Jewish Ottawa Helps Facebook page back to volunteerism remains an on-going topic of discussion.
- The Generations Trust Campaign for Jewish Education has been delayed due to the pandemic. It is anticipated that the first asks will not be made before January 2022.
- "I am Jewish: Honouring Black Jewish Experiences" will be held on February 24th, and is a coalition program between Jewish Federations across Canada, the Israel Embassy, CIJA, and other partners, and led by the Ottawa Federation.

Michael thanked Andrea for her presentation and her team for their work during this period.

V: Financial Report – Susan Lee

Susan presented the financial report for the five months ending November 30th, 2020. For the most part, variances are due to timing, and Federation is forecasted to be on budget. This may change, as the forecast is updated throughout the year.

- Events and meetings are happening virtually and modest savings in this category are expected.
- Expenses were increased on the Campus portion, due to cleaning and infection control.
- As the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin closed on December 31st, 2020, subscription refunds are being processed.

Michael thanked Susan for the report and the finance team for their work.

VI: President's Report – Andrea Freedman

Andrea noted the following updates to her written report:

- 2.4% of pledges were not paid at the end of 2020, a slightly higher rate compared to the 2% forecasted in the budget and higher than Federation typically experiences. A letter will be sent to donors who have not yet paid their pledge, and past campaign leadership has been engaged to help with collections.
- The BGS event was postponed to March, following the new government emergency orders.
- The board nominating committee, chaired by Hartley Stern, will commence meeting at the beginning of February.
- The new E-Bulletin will be launched on January 25th, and a briefing note will be circulated to the Board shortly. To date, more than 800 people had subscribed to the e-Bulletin.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm.