



Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors Meeting

Summary of Discussion for
the Community

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

In Attendance: Joelle Assaraf, SuYun Geithner, Jessica Greenberg, Evan Green, Josh Kardish, Jeff Laks, Elissa Lieff, Marina Milyavskaya, Karen Palayew, Gillian Presner, Samantha Sigler, Danya Vered, Gary Viner, Adam Zaret

Staff: Pauline Colwin, John Davis, Rena Garshowitz, Anne Read, Michael Reznick, Adam Silver

I: Welcome – Danya Vered & Adam Silver

Danya thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm.

Adam delivered an inspirational D'var Torah, tying the upcoming High Holidays to the critical work and leadership role of the Federation Board and staff.

Evan Green volunteered to deliver the D'var at the next Board meeting.

Danya thanked Adam for his meaningful words, and thanked Karen Palayew for her exceptional leadership during her term as chair. She took a few moments to welcome the new Board and articulated the leadership, ambassadorial, and fundraising role that each Board member plays on behalf of Federation. She then asked each Director and staff member to introduce themselves and share what makes them optimistic about the future of Ottawa's Jewish community, and what gives them pause.

II: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Danya Vered

Danya asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes from the June 10 or June 16, 2025 board meetings.

Danya called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2025 board meeting.

Moved: Joelle Assaraf

Second: Jeff Laks

Motion carried

Danya called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2025 board meeting.

Moved: Joelle Assaraf

Second: Jeff Laks

Motion carried

III: FY26 Budget Update – Adam Zaret

Danya invited Adam Zaret to present. Adam thanked Adam, John, and the Finance & Audit committee for the work done to both fine-tune and update the previous version of the budget. He offered the following notes:

- No material impacts to the overall conclusion of the budget
- Some line items have gone up based on a thorough review

The original budget was framed as the working budget for the first few months of the fiscal year. These slight revisions were incorporated into the updated budget document that will guide us through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Jeff requested that the complete final budget be circulated to the Board.

Danya asked for a motion to approve the FY26 budget with the updates as discussed.

Moved: Adam Zaret

Second: Gillian Presner

Motion carried

IV: Year 6 Evaluation & Year 1 Business Plan - Adam Silver

Danya invited Adam Silver to present. Adam focused his presentation on the Year 1 Business Plan that emerged from the new Strategic Plan. He offered the following clarifications and notes:

- The Year 1 Business Plan was modeled on the Years 1 and 2 work plan provided by the Strategic Planning consultants for the work articulated in the Strategic Plan, and reminded everyone that the Strategic Plan is a 5-year plan so we have 5 years to achieve the entirety of the plan.
- Adam then walked through the priorities, highlighting some of the key points and adjustments in planning how we will operate moving forward in service of the strategic objectives.
- There was some discussion in particular on what Federation's role should be in terms of community-wide events and gatherings (catalyst vs connector), and Adam indicated that when he is made aware of other organizations hosting functions, he will make the Board aware.

A fulsome discussion ensued and all additional questions were answered to the Board's satisfaction.

Danya called for a motion to approve the Year 1 Business Plan.

Moved: Samantha Sigler

Second: Marina Milyavskaya

Motion carried

Danya thanked Adam for his presentation.

V: President's Report – Adam Silver

Danya invited Adam to present the President's Report.

Adam updated the Board on one main item that was not included in the circulated written report.

VI: Annual Campaign Update – Leila Ages and Gary Viner

Danya invited Gary to present the Annual Campaign Update.

- Campaign is just getting underway; Top donor cards have been distributed, and the Top Donor event was hugely successful (and a significant number of pledges were made on site there)
- Gary then appealed to the Board to make their own pledges early, and asked them to help with the canvassing effort

Danya thanked Gary, Leila, and Michael for their work.

The meeting moved in camera.

VIII: In Camera

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.