



**Jewish Federation of Ottawa
Board of Directors Meeting
Summary of Discussion as a Report to the Community
Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at 5:00 pm**

In Attendance: Stuart Ages, David Appotive, Lauren Bronstein, Debbie Halton-Weiss, Jennifer Kardash, Linda Kerzner, Steven Kimmel, Jason Shinder, Arlene Wortsman, Neil Zaret, Lenora Zelikovitz

Staff: Bram Bregman, Andrea Freedman, Leslie Kaufman, Arieh Rosenblum

Observers: Leiba Krantzberg, Lynne Oreck-Wener

Recorder: Rachel Abenhaim

The meeting was called to order by Steven Kimmel at 5:05pm.

I. Welcome

Steven Kimmel welcomed the board and thanked everyone for attending the Federation board meeting. He introduced Linda Kislowicz, CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada – United Israel Appeal (JFC- UIA). Linda explained they are the national arm of all Canadian Federations and identified four major areas of focus:

- 1) Israel & Oversees
- 2) Jewish Identity & Canada Israel Experience
- 3) Regional Jewish Communities in Canada
- 4) National Collective Responsibility

Linda thanked the board for welcoming her and encouraged them to participate in the census presentation she would be giving at the Members' meeting.

Jason Shinder **moved** to accept the summary of discussions from the May 21, 2014 board meeting. Lauren Bronstein **seconded. Carried.**

II. President's Report

Andrea Freedman provided updates to the circulated Presidents' report.

- 1) The Archivist, Emily Leonoff, is taking a leave of absence for a 6 month period. Three candidates were interviewed for the temporary position. A candidate will be selected in the coming days.
- 2) MPP Lisa MacLeod & MP Mauril Belanger recently returned from a trip to Israel. Andrea explained that she reached out to meet with them; they have both agreed to meet with her.
- 3) A committee has been formed to conduct a review of the Grants and Allocations process.
- 4) Campaign Kick-off sold 681 tickets. The community response overall was positive with some constructive criticism, particularly concerning the speaker and the lack of Jewish response. Further discussion is



required to determine the role of the speaker; is it to help sell tickets and/or deliver a campaign/community message?

III. Finance Report

Jason Shinder reviewed the circulated financial report with the board. He explained that the finance department provided the board with the financials for the previous month, this would always occur because the board meetings take place mid-month. As a result, reports to the board will always be a month behind.

Jason explained that all of July's statements were on budget and that no agencies were in arrears. He noted there was a commitment in place to reduce campus costs by 5%. Leslie and Charles have been reviewing campus expenses to fulfill this commitment.

The board inquired on the funds loaned to the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS). They asked about the school's plans for repayment to the Federation from funds raised through the School Campaign and if there was any negative impact on Federation's scope of campus work due to lack of funds. Obviously, with more funds, more work could be accomplished; however there does not appear to be any significant immediate risk.

IV. Campus Update

Neil Zaret provided the board with a Campus update.

He began by explaining that repairs to the stairs at building 11 came in under budget. He added the roof repairs that had been approved by the board for 2014 would be put off until 2015. Neil noted that this was within the recommendations outlined in the property assessment report provided by Cleland Jardine.

He briefly explained that buildings 31 & 10 do not require repairs at this time.

Finally, a brief discussion took place around the condition of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, building 21. The building has hidden issues that will require investigation and eventual repair.

The board requested that the topic be discussed at a future board meeting.

V. Campaign Update

Leiba Krantzberg provided the 2015 Campaign update:

- To date Federation had received approximately \$984,000 in pledged gifts from 222 donors
- All the Canvasser cards had been distributed
- Leiba announced the incoming Women's Campaign chair would be Sharon Appotive



Events:

- Super week was scheduled from Sept 28-30th. Approximately 30 canvasser slots were available. Leiba encouraged the board to participate and build awareness.
- Lion of Judah Dinner would take place Sept 29th, at the home of Debbie Weinstein. Planned keynote speaker is Jane Weitzman and special guest Laureen Harper.
- October 28th, Federation's Choices event with keynote speaker Lynda Fishman. Leiba asked the board to encourage ticket sales.

VI. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Andrea Freedman reviewed the KPI document with the board. She highlighted the following:

- The challenge of combining Foundation and Federation KPIs was noted. The challenge exists because the organizations have different fiscal cycles; the result is a full year of data represented for the Federation, and half a year's data presented for the Foundation. They will be separated moving forward.
- In addition to the Annual Campaign, the KPIs show growth around social media as well as March of the Living.
- The Federation found that its community focus group initiative was a challenge and that the Foundation's fundraising has been a challenge this year.

Going forward, KPIs will be revisited by Leslie Kaufman, who will make adjustments based on what was learned from the past year and the goals outlined in the Federation's Strategic plan.

The board was surveyed for suggestions that may assist improving the community focus group initiative. The following suggestions were made:

- The Federation could provide small projects as an activity for the focus groups. This suggestion was made based on the understanding that people generally prefer to be asked to do something rather than being asked for feedback. A task provides a feeling of accomplishment and contribution.
- The Federation was encouraged to continue to engage program participants (e.g.: Shalom Baby and March of the Living).

VII. Strategic Plan Update

Andrea Freedman provided the board with an update to the strategic plan and work plan.

She explained that Federation took the feedback it received from the board at the September retreat and was revising the work plan. A new version will be circulated to the board in the coming weeks.

Some of the revisions include: incorporating "quick wins" and putting an earlier emphasis on the following goals:

- Corporate sponsorship
- Pipeline concept of engagement in Jewish life.
- Family philanthropy

The vision for the work plan is to create a short concise document that clearly defines how we will accomplish our goals and what the outcomes will be.



VIII. Sponsorship & Ads

Andrea Freedman explained how Federation receives requests to sponsor & advertise at agency and community events. The Federation feels a policy should be put into place as to whether Federation ought to be a sponsor of events. The board offered the following suggestions and best practices from their experiences:

- Budget a certain amount for yearly sponsorship and advertisement purchases
- Ask agencies to donate seats/tables or advertising space, especially funded agencies
- Ask donors to sponsor Federation's participation at events
- Outline a clear policy stating that Federation would not sponsor or advertise at any events

The decision was made to no longer sponsor events, although some discretion will be allowed.

IX. School Update

Neil Zaret provided the board with an update on the Ottawa Jewish Community School.

- 192 students are enrolled in grades K-8 and 24 students in the high school. This is below the targeted amount and less than last year's enrollment. However, it is also the first time since 2001/02 that enrollment in the elementary school increased.
- New Principal, Marlene Wolinsky has made an effort to engage the community and is committed to outreach.

Neil concluded by explaining that since the school has been challenged with meeting its goals, the oversight committee has been working on alternative ways for the school to sustain itself. They will be meeting with the Hebrew Free Loan society in the near future and will approach the Federation board to discuss plans moving forward.

X. Advocacy

Andrea Freedman explained that following the conflict in Israel this summer, the Federation was challenged to meet advocacy needs as Federation does not have a full-time advocacy professional.

The board discussed the need to allocate more resources to advocacy in Ottawa. It discussed best practices from other communities in North America, considering community size.

Federation strongly supports Israel; however, its focus, determined during the strategic planning process, is on the Ottawa community. Federation feels simple yet effective strategies, like advocacy training seminars, are the best means for the organization to promote and encourage advocacy.

The Board agreed that Federation should not shift its focus from community building to advocacy. It recommended a sub group of the Communications and Community Relations committee or a volunteer based committee be formed to address the community's need for greater advocacy. It also suggested that a system be put into place to address crises as they arise.



XI. Rallies: Indoor vs Outdoor

Andrea Freedman introduced the discussion around Indoor vs Outdoor rallies. She explained that over the summer, due to the war in Israel, debates took place on the matter at the National level. There was pressure from the Toronto community and a grassroots group in Ottawa to rally outdoors, while CIJA promoted indoor rallies explaining that they had a greater strategic value.

The board discussed the advantages and disadvantages to both types of rallies.

Whenever this type of issue arises, the board felt staff should provide clear communication to the board with regards to Federation's message and actions. If a community member were to approach a board member, the board should be prepared to discuss the steps in place by the Federation.

It was decided that in the future, "talking points" would be provided.

Debbie Halton-Weiss **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 pm. Neil Zaret **seconded. Carried**