Minutes for the 8-26-19 Board Meeting at the JFed Office

Members present: Stephanie Calvo, Cesar Carrasco, Shari Ehrlich, Martha Eisenberg, Hal Ettinger, Deb Kanof, Ben Kaufman, Monika Kimball, Wendy Lanski, Eitan Lavi, Ophra Leyser-Whalen, Melissa Silverstein, Dan Sonnen, Bill Stein, Peter Svarzbein, Janet Wechter

Staff: Sue Bendalin, Robert Pinon, Robert French

Guests: Ali Panko, Rene Pena,

Not present: Leslie Beckoff, Robin Furman

6:00 Robert French begins (points out emergency exit location)

Welcome by Janet Wechter

Welcome new board members. We are trying to be a professional board.

Scott Stevens is taking a leave of absence from the board. Shane Wagman moved and resigned. Neal Rosendorf resigned from board and JCRC.

Please read all materials before meeting, print if you want to.

6:03-6:09 D’var Torah by Wendy Lanski

Raah” discusses sight. Moses gives direction. Tzedakah—“do not harden your heart or recoil your hand.” Hard to give if you cannot feel others pain.

Minutes have been corrected to state “Stuart Shiloff” instead of “Stuart Schwartz.” Minutes unanimously approved.

6:12- 6:24

Rene Peña and Ali Panko, our accountants, present financial picture over the last 5 years. We’ve had slight financial growth. Assets have grown and liabilities have lessened over last 2 years. Variable interest entities—control over 2 entities—need to keep a distinction between the Foundation and the Federation boards.

Vote to approve the auditor’s report- Bill Stein motions, Peter Svarzbein seconds. Unanimous approval.

6:25-Robert Piñon- Comptroller report

An overview of our overhead; what percentage we spend on grants, administration, etc between 2016-2018. It shows that admin costs stayed the same, programming is more (we spend more on programming), and fundraising increased as well. We project less fundraising (percent, not dollar amount) for 2019. Dollar amount is actually higher.

We had unpaid grant money that got put back into our budget from people not using grant money (mostly from Jewish Studies program at UTEP when Ezra Cappell was out sick and then moved to another university). Granting has changed now that grants get fully funded or receive nothing so hopefully organizations can now run their grants (rather than not touch 40% because they couldn’t afford the other 60%).

6:32-6:58 JCRC

The CEO of JCPA (Jewish Council of Public Affairs), David Bernstein, talked with us in video chat.

Neal Rosendorf resigned.

125 JCRCs in nation, only 15 are not part of Federations. They have large staff and budgets.

David Bernstein—we are living in a polarized time, we should be aware of that in our interactions and words with each other. But it’s ok to take risks, but need to think of donors. Thinks we cannot be an independent JCRC with the size of our community.

Peter was at the JCRC meeting yesterday. He asked how many times has David talked to Janet or Robert? David said one time and some email exchanges.

Peter: Never had issues with protocol in 6 years with David Kern. It was brought up with Neal Rosendorf. The autonomy/policies haven’t been problematic. Peter is concerned that we are talking about policy change when maybe those weren’t the issue. Why change JCRC then?

David: based on knowledge of JCRCs around the country, he doesn’t think that our urge for JCRC for autonomy is a good idea.

Robert: we were already talking about changing JCRC (e.g. in Robert’s report), and what happened this summer drove it to the forefront. Debra will look to the JCPA for guidance.

Peter: donors concerns shouldn’t be part of JCRC changes

Robert: nothing to do with donors

Janet: already planning for fewer words and more action. We will keep talking about this and make sure we are community driven and not political.

Janet Wechter wants to make a recommendation and a vote for Deb Kanof to be new chair of JCRC.

Deb: wants to not just make statements. She wants to build external relationships with members of the community. She met with Adriana Garcia with Border Interfaith community. Have an advisory and an action committee for the JCRC. We should vote to see if we want to be members of El Paso Border Interfaith. They are exploring the idea.

Janet recommends, Hal seconds. Discussion: Peter is leery of changing a lot. JCPA has social justice. Social justice offended people in the past (desegregation, e.g.). Peter understands the need for more action, such as HIAS and issues in our borderland area. JCRC shouldn’t be put on the back burner.

Janet- it’s not on the back burner, they tried …people couldn’t put work into it. Tells Peter to not just criticize and to have confidence in her.

Unanimous vote to place Debra Kanof as chair.

6:58- Robert French’s update will be put off until next time.

Janet- please sign the conflict of interest forms. All meetings are confidential. If there is a problem, let’s talk about it rather than gossip to other people.

Janet- will give out a meeting assessment for every meeting.

Took a picture of the new board. 7:03 meeting is adjourned.