

United Jewish Federation
Sept. 20, 2023, 7:30pm
Schoke JFS
Board Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Michael Schlessinger, David Gordon, Diane Sloyer, CEO, Edith Samers, Linda Hurwitz, Susan Kostin, Alan Barr, Stacy Ferber, Jessica Brand, Adam Rafalowicz, Bob Abrams, Robin Fischel, Chris Maroc, Kerrin Behrend, Caryn Halbrecht, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Greg Waldstreicher, Eric Ross-Deputy Director UJF

Absent: Ami Soifer, Rhonda Schaffer-Maron, Fran Ginsburg, Joshua Esses, Ellen Weber, Cathy Satz, Robert Hoff, Jill Kaplan, Rachel Klein

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM

Approval of Minutes of May 17, 2023 – Linda Hurwitz

Linda moved that the minutes of July 19th, 2023 be approved as distributed. The motion was seconded by Alan Barr and passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker – Matt Greenberg, President and CEO, Schoke JFS – A grantee's perspective

Matt thanked the board and UJF for their support over the years to help JFS bring services to families. Matt said historically JFS was an off shoot of UJF to provide support and counseling for the Jewish Community. Stamford JFS is one of 4 JFSs in CT and part of the international Child and Jewish Family Services organization. Matt shared impressive statistics about the services provided by Stamford JFS Counseling is provided on a sliding scale and with affirmative action. The Jaffa family emerging assistance program helps with job hunting, crisis needs, and other immediate essential services to help people get on their feet. Programs like Anachnu – Holocaust Survivor Services, Brain fitness, Case management, Kosher mobile Food Pantry, etc. were also discussed.

In the first six months of the year JFS has realized:

- 109,805 hours of home companion services provided
- 886 counseling sessions provided
- 3,820 Kosher prepared meals delivered
- \$76,005 of emergency assistance distributed
- 667 grocery bags distributed from the food pantry
- 71 Ukrainian refugees participating in the English care program
- 590 seniors received services
- \$44,400 distributed for camp scholarships and
- 1,629 weekly shabbat meals delivered.

In addition, 506 households received honey and apples for Rosh Hashana.

The help from UJF has made many of these accomplishments possible. These include money for Holocaust survivors, glasses and home care for those in need, camp scholarships, building support in the community, Navigator program for case management, Grow You- for financial help for those in need to help them become independent. JFS has significant interaction with non-Jewish agencies like people to

people , Laurel House and Shelters. Mike thanked Matt and asked if Matt had suggestions on how we can be supportive and continue to work together. Funds for the underfunded service is what is needed. Programs will never be new and shiny, but our helping programs are what is at the core of what JFS does.

Campaign – Ellen Weber/Diane Sloyer

The campaign brochure is still making its way to people's homes. There has been some issues with the post office. The Siegel group is handling our account but may change in the near future. We have raised \$380,000 so far this year, a bit down from last year. Tributes are up. There are \$17,000 in new revenue. Thirteen people delivered apple galettes and 15 made Rosh Hashana calls this year. We are identifying people who did not give last year but who have given in the past. We will ask from them again this year.

Gala Debrief – Kerrin Behrend

Sept. 7th was the Gala on a hot summer day. 260 attendees moved inside for the cocktail hour and a lovely evening was had by all. Aviva Mallar did a great job with pictures and decorations. Carl Rosen and Fred Springer did fabulous work for the video presentation and interviews. It was a very collegial atmosphere honoring Sheila Ramanowitz and Edith Samer for their many years of outstanding service. Next Gen video was inspiring and Mike spoke of the importance of finances. While the evening was not about solicitation, we ended with a profit of \$30,000.

Stewardship Best Practices- Stacy Ferber

Stacy shared her thoughtful perspective -- as a professional working with our large neighbor NYC UJA -- on stewardship. Stacy's presentation led to a rich discussion on the opportunities available to all of us to help enhance Federation's relationship with its donors. We discussed how these opportunities target different groups, from Next Gen families and singles new to our community or to Federation, to reliable major donors (however defined), to lapsed major donors (many of whom attended our recent gala). They also involve different skills/personality types, from writing handwritten notes to helping us review and improve our database to delivering baked goods to the dreaded direct solicitations (whether in person or by telephone). And finally, they involve different times of year -- we take no month or quarter off in staying connected to our community. Long time board members and volunteers have developed their own rhythms in volunteering, but we appreciate that the periodic calls for volunteers that go out by email can be a bit daunting without the context. Diane will be circulating, after the holidays, a framework that should help put all our stewardship and fundraising efforts into context, both to help each of us choose where and when we wish to participate and, we hope, to improve our overall coordination, prioritization and cumulative impact over time.

Some other key points:

Stewardship = the art of looking after your donors to make them happy they supported us.

Thank yous and acknowledgments help donors and volunteers have a meaningful experience with our organization.

Where do we take our donors and volunteers and what do we want to do with them. There are different levels of involvement based on giving.

Some areas to think about in cultivating the community-

- Programs
- Lapsed donors
- Matching gift donations by employers
- Matching gift donations by donor
- Intergenerational programing and giving
- Growing community like “the Jews of Shippan” hosted by Kerrin
- Giving time.
- Acknowledging:
 - A compliant is a gift!
 - Acknowledge gifts and include what that gift does.
 - Personal touches help donors feel seen.

Scholarship Opportunity – Michael Schlessinger

A community member came to Michael needing to find someone to administer a scholarship. A grateful deceased Holocaust survivor created a scholarship fund of \$100,000 to be administered in \$10,000 amounts over 4 years. We will charge a 20% fee for the administrative work. There are very little requirements other than the scholarship is financial need based and needs to be someone of the Jewish faith. The bio is in the portal for you to review. Board members will be needed to review applicants.

Tapestry 2.0 and affinity groups- Bob Abrams and Eric Ross

Tapestry is on schedule for November 18, 2023. The theme is Israel at 75. Bob and Eric have been working on the event. The event will be held at Beth El in the Social Hall and classrooms. Elementary and middle school teachers will lead projects to engage younger participants. Please spread the word. Local talent is being sought for speakers and 2 authors of books related to the founders of Israel will be on the program. Sponsorship is \$180, with incremental increases. Tickets are \$25 before November 5 and \$36 after that date. Brochure is being mailed and sessions will be listed in the The New Jewish Voice. Children’s tickets are \$10 and includes all materials needed for crafts.

Eric talked about the Affinity Groups. He’s taking a holistic view of the groups reestablishing goals, needs, and how to redesign them. Kick off event for networking for a new start will include all groups meeting together on October 23 at Workpoint on Harbor drive (where our next board meeting will be). Time is 6:30pm with Dr. Jeffrey Mensch from Hebrew University Professor of Economics as speaker. Tickets are \$25 per person and will include cocktails and light hors d’oeuvres.

NexGen Update – Robin Fischel

NexGen had a great turn out at the Gala with 3 full tables. This helped everyone see the younger groups coming up from the ranks. NexGen video was presented and showed what the Jewish community needs now.

‘Week day Wine Down’ on Oct 4, will be a smaller more intimate group with speaker Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld. November will be a bigger Casino night event with James Daniel as DJ at Temple Sinai. Robin is currently looking for corporate sponsors for the event. Get the word out to new comers.

New Business

- Oct 18th is a major gift event- 30 people have signed up so far and there will be a speaker.
- Remind volunteers for the weekend of the 'Big Give' (aka Super Sunday), Nov. 10 -12
- Oct 2nd UJF is moving across the hall and furniture shopping has begun.
- UJF was awarded a \$150,000 Security Grant. What this means is, we can spend up to 150k on security upgrades for our offices (new) and some for the building and be reimbursed up to 150k. Also, our security director, Mike Shanbrom, has been or will be at every community institution before the holiday.
- Check the portal for future minutes and agendas.

Adjournment

As there was no more new business, Alan moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Sue Kostin and passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 9:15

Respectfully submitted
Linda Hurwitz, Secretary

Upcoming board meetings:

Monday Oct 23rd, Workpoint, 290 Harbor Drive in Stamford @8PM

Wednesday Nov. 29

Monday, Dec. 11 (Annual Meeting)