**

**Congregation Beth Shalom Annual Meeting**

**May 22, 2016**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by the President, Jeff Newman at 10:05 am. A quorum was established with 28 family units present (26% of members in good standing).

**D’var Torah:** The D’var Torah was given by Rabbi Torop.

**Approval of Minutes:** Michelle McCormick moved to approve the minutes from the 2015 annual meeting. Stephen Criden seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Religious School Administrator’s Report Given by Amy Weinstein:**

I am proud to report to you on the happenings of religious school this past year. This has been my 9th year as your religious school administrator. During this past year I have striven to ensure our school meets our congregational needs and is valued in the community. I attended the URJ Biannual last November. While attending the 3 day conference, I participated in breakout sessions focusing on youth education which included modifying instruction and inclusive opportunities to meet the needs of all types of learners in the same setting. As a key member of The Tampa Bay Jewish Educators’ Council, I attended monthly meetings, planned events and made certain that our “little temple out in Brandon” had a voice and our students participated equally in community wide learning opportunities. While our school’s enrollment fluctuates each year as our temple membership changes, I’m pleased that our school continues to meet the varying needs of our students. This year we had 65 students enrolled from kindergarten through 10th grade. We celebrated as 6 of our youngest students were consecrated and 3 and our oldest were confirmed.

We continue to utilize the Chai Curriculum for our Judaic lessons. This focuses on three pillars; Torah, Avodah (prayer) and G’milut Chasidim, or acts of loving kindness. We assess our students’ understanding of these concepts through activities, class discussions and projects. After reviewing with our teachers and Karen Blanchard, our curriculum coordinator, I can report that our students have an understanding of the concepts taught and can demonstrate their knowledge at an age appropriate manner. Recently, I had the opportunity to witness how our religious school has influenced some of our teens. A few weeks ago, the confirmation class led the congregation in prayer on Shabbat. Each teen was asked to reflect on different aspects of their Jewish beliefs. They all included an early experience they had in our religious school as an influencing factor of how they view their Jewish Identify. Members of our youth group very eloquently spoke at the last board meeting. They also reiterated how important their positive experiences at our school were in shaping the path of their Jewish life.

Our students work hard on learning Hebrew so they are comfortable participating and leading Shabbat services. Karen Blanchard is sharing that our students made gains and improvements have been seen across grade levels. I encourage you to acknowledge that students learn at different paces. Learning differences may be the result of learning style, cognitive abilities, motivation, effort and attendance. For us to recognize consistent improvements throughout the years is very rewarding. It is a confirmation that our curriculum in strong and presented to students with fidelity. This is certainly due to the very hard work of our current teachers; Melissa Villason, Adam Weinstein, Justin Shaw, Rebecca Smith, Lauren Weisman and Dan Weinstein. Our Curriculum Coordinator, Karen Blanchard, works with our teachers to both maintain instructional momentum and modify the content to keep our curriculum current and relevant to our students.

Our school runs smoothly in part due to the Parent Association- chaired by Michelle McCormick. Her leadership has led to a devoted committee that truly looks out for the best interest of the school. They have been instrumental in the holiday celebrations and fundraising this year. The Parent Association worked to include extra-curriculum activities hoping to strengthen our children’s connection to each other and to our temple. Recently the leadership of the Hillsborough County School District has been studying research indicating that a student’s connection to their school, school staff and peers has a direct influence on their level of success. Way to go Michelle and her committee for being a step ahead of the trend! Next year Michelle will be stepping down as chair of our Parent Association. I would like to thank Michelle. Her commitment to our students’ education, safety, and happiness is commendable. Although she is unable to chair the committee, I am certain she will be a strong member and voice for the Parent Association. Natasha Rieger and Leah Garbett will be our co-chairs next year. Please see either of them to learn how you can become involved in our school.

Please take a moment to thank our teachers today. They are very dedicated people who commit to spending most every Sunday during the school year with your children (Some on Wed nights as well). They all are either full time students or have full time jobs in addition to being here you see them for a few hours per week however, did you know that when they’re not at temple, they are developing lesson plans, creating supplemental activities for lessons and using their own money to reinforce positive behaviors and/or attendance? In addition to our wonderful teachers, we have equally devoted teens. Thanks to Jill Oppolo and Art after Dark for sponsoring our aide program this year. The kindness and support from the Art after Dark Committee, allows us to provide our aides with a proper thank you acknowledgment. Many congregants don’t realize that our aides are strictly volunteers. They receive no compensation and we are unable to provide them with service hours required by Bright Futures or other scholarship opportunities. Each year we have a group of dedicated teens that commit to being at our school weekly. They support our teacher by assisting with supplies, tutoring Hebrew, and acting as a positive role model in our classrooms. Our school is better because they are here. If anyone is interested in learning how they can sponsor this vital program next year, please see me.

I would like to thank Rabbi Torop. Through the years you have always been a huge supporter of our school. Thank you for the wisdom you share and the patience you bring each and every week. Our students learn to embrace traditions and are open to learning partly because we have such a hands on, approachable leader. This is evident from our youngest learners to our confirmation class. I know I have personal and professional benefited from working so closely with you these last nine years.

Finally, thank you to our parents. I understand the demands on a family’s time. Dan and I were religious school parents as well. (Funny, my son began as a 2nd grade student and today teaches 2nd grade) When you make the decision to include religious school in your busy schedule, you are making a commitment to your child’s Jewish learning. We do not take this commitment for granted. We are grateful for your confidence in our abilities to work with your children and pledge to make the time they have with us rewarding and as meaningful as possible.

It’s a short summer this year. Enjoy! We’ll see you in August.

**Rabbi’s Report:**

I. Life Cycle Events Since the Last Annual Meeting

A. 2 Baby naming & 1 bris

B. 6 B’nai Mitzvah + 2 adults

C. 3 Confirmands

D. 8 Bereavement notices – 1 of which involved a local Shiva service.

II. Highlight a few key events and highlights of the past year

• Thanks to the generosity of Peter and Diane Jacobson, we introduced our new High Holy Day prayer books Mishkan HaNefesh. The response to them was overwhelmingly positive and made an enormous impact on our High Holy Day worship

• We had three programs of outreach to young adults connected to our congregation, encouraging 20 somethings to drop by Stein and Vine to shmooze and mingle. The beginnings of this were very encouraging and these efforts will continue next year.

• We had a very successful Chanukah program for the growing Apollo Beach community that attracted both members and many visitors. I hope that additional programs will take place in the year to come.

• We have made arrangements for a Beth Shalom cemetery section in both Hillsborough Memorial Gardens and in Tampa Jewish Cemetery. This is an essential step in establishing our presence here for all Jewish needs; anyone interested please speak to Gerry Pliner.

• We hosted Rabbi Deborah Prinz as our Scholar-in -Residence in October for a weekend that was delicious, engaging and informative. The hard work of our Life Long Learning chair, Sheila Fishman and her committee continues to invigorate our learning opportunities and I am grateful for Sheila’s leadership.

• Under the leadership of Steve and Sheila Slavkin our annual retreat once again drew over 35 people from across the congregational demographic for an amazing day of learning, relaxation and bonding.

• We celebrated an Adult B’nai Mitzvah this year, adding to the ranks of our committed and knowledgeable lay leaders and inspiring others to embark on this journey.

• I was blessed with my final 8 weeks of Sabbatical where I had the wonderful opportunity for on-line and in person study and reading along with a very meaningful trip to Israel. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. I want to thank the many people – the ritual committee, the Lifelong Learning committee, the choir, the Religious School –all who helped lead services, plan programs, and provide the leadership that made my sabbatical possible.

III. A few things I’m thinking about for the future:

• I remained concerned about the efforts that we are making to ensure that those with physical, mental and emotional disabilities can participate fully. Thanks to Rob and Caren Katz we have replenished our supply of large print Shabbat prayer books. It is my hope that over the summer we will finally address the issue of the inaccessibility of the bimah. Live-streaming for those unable to attend services, High Holyday large print prayer books and support for those struggling with mental illness are all additional areas that have yet to be addressed.

• Reaching In – We must continue to make sure that families find connection in purpose in synagogue connection across the life cycle, and in particular once their children have left home. Reaching in and connecting to our existing members must be a key goal for the future. We are looking to develop some conversations around this goal so that we can partner with those in this group for the future.

• Reaching Out at the same time. We know that there are large numbers of unaffiliated Jews living in the greater Brandon and South Shore community. Growth is essential to our meeting our goals and becoming the community we envision and so we must find ways to reach these people and give them the opportunity for connection. This isn’t the job of one committee – each person is a member of the membership committee and finding ways to work together to this end must be a priority.

• New Models of Volunteerism. The number of people who have contributed in some way – Art after Dark, financial support, hosting an oneg, serving on a committee is large and varied. I am beyond grateful for these efforts. At the same time, we recognize that time is limited and you all want your contributions to be manageable and meaningful. The 21st synagogue is changing and finding new ways and models to channel volunteer efforts is part of that.

IV. Thanks

A few words of thanks to those whose partnership is essential to the work I do as your rabbi. They inspire and challenge me with their dedication and commitment and make CBS a stronger community.

• To Amy Weinstein and Karen Blanchard for their continued dedication and their ongoing efforts to ensure that the Religious School continues to evolve and flourish. Their concern for our children, Jewish education and Jewish community is unfailing and essential. I also acknowledge the wonderful work of our outgoing RS chair, Michelle McCormick whose hard work, passion and enthusiasm for our school was constantly evident and impactful.

• Keren Vergon – who continues to bring our young people to Torah as our tutor and works with our adult b’nai mitzvah and Confirmation program with commitment and zeal.

• To Cynthia Goldstein, our Ritual Chair whose love of Jewish tradition and desire to utilize the talents of gifts of our members to enhance our ritual life is bringing new possibilities to CBS.

• To Sandy Santucci who brings her great joy and love of music to the bima each week and to Joan Frankel whose passion and talent– and her boundless desire to grow our musical life with Kolot Shalom, and Shabbat Alive– is a true blessing.

• To Mags Oldman, our able Temple administrator (Not to mention her volunteer work with our youth group!) Mags continues to work above and beyond the call of duty; her depth of caring and her amazing creativity touches everything she does. All of us are influenced by her joyful and willing commitment.

• To Jeff Newman, our outgoing president. Jeff has been a true partner and his vision of a congregation filled with vitality and strength, optimism and respect has influenced everything he has done. He has built strong relationships and always seen the value in every individual’s contribution. On behalf of all of us, I thank him for his service to CBS and to the Jewish community.

The Rabbi then gave Jeff Newman a gift of a frame which had a UT 25 shirt, and other mementos.

**Ballot Process & Vote:** Mags Oldman, Congregation Beth Shalom Administrator explained the ballot process and the voting process.

A Nominating committee was formed, per the By-laws, with Hank Mart as the chairperson. The required 2 board members are Seth Dugan & Michelle McCormick. The 3 members from the general congregation are Kevin Frye, Janice Perelman, and Anita Clifford. . Thank you very much to the committee.

Some requirements for board members are:

• Demonstration of leadership qualities

• Volunteerism at CBS

• Committee membership and/ or chairperson of a committee

• Above all having a passion regarding the success and future of the Temple.

The slate was approved by the Board at its March meeting and was published to the congregation 30 days prior to the annual meeting. No other names were submitted after the slate was published.

The ballot is as follows:

Executive Board

President Dave Friedman

1ST VP Gerry Pliner

2nd VP Toby Koch

3rd VP Lauren Weisman

Members at Large

• Hank Mart

• Steve Slavkin

• Christine Stockelman

The following are in their 2nd year of a two year term

Treasurer: Michael Barnett

Secretary: Dan Weinstein

Members at Large

• Scott Hopkins

• Seth Dugan

• Steve Criden

The easiest way to approve the slate is to work backwards: by a show of hands is there anyone opposed to the slate? Are there any abstentions? All those in favor say aye.

**The new Board was voted on and approved unanimously.**

**Signing of the Covenant:** Jeff Newman asked the board members to come up and sign the covenant.

**Treasurers Report by Michael Barnett:**

• I am happy to report that we are on track to finish the year in the black.

• Our Balance sheet, a statement of the assets, liabilities, and capital of CBS has improved compared to last year.

• The CBS board and finance committee worked hard to monitor and make adjustments necessary during the year to achieve this outcome.

• I want to thank our congregants for paying their commitments and making High Holiday pledges, The Art After Dark Committee for all their hard work, and our special donors that give above and beyond.

• Without all of you, this outcome would not have occurred.

• I also feel it is important to point out, we did not put any funds into our building fund reserve this year.

We currently have 126 membership units

• 67 full paying family memberships

• 14 full paying single memberships

• 6 full paying Chai memberships.

• The remaining 39 units are on some type of dues reduction.

• We have the potential for between 40-44 students for Religious School this year.

• Congregational membership has decreased vs last year. As a result our Religious school membership has decreased.

2016-2017 Budget

• The 2016-2017 Budget has been approved by the CBS Board.

• Last year’s budget was used as a template for this year.

• Cuts were made in many categories.

• Close to $10,000 was cut from the budget with a majority coming from Religious school.

• I would like to thank the entire Religious School for working with the board and finance committee and those that have stepped up to volunteer as teachers to help reduce expenses.

• -0- increases were provided for the 2016-2017 budget.

• -0- have been slated to be put into the building fund reserve for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

• Projected income was reduced for various categories based on last year’s numbers.

• Your board and finance committee feel the budget presented today is solid.

• We will continue to monitor and make adjustments as necessary. As the case with last year, after High Holidays we will have a good picture on the state of our synagogues finance and will take appropriate action if necessary.

Representatives of the Finance committee and me are happy to answer any questions you might have.

**State of the Congregation was given by Jeff Newman:**

1. This year we had a solid year and the state of the congregation is solid. We ended up in the black for the budget year, we ended up with an improved balance sheet, and we still maintain the same quality religious school and programming that we have for the past 26 years. Take some time to be proud of what we accomplished.

But we need to change for the future.

We have some considerable headwinds in the future. We have not contributed to our building fund for the past two years and we need to broaden out our donor base to increase our revenues. We also need to find ways to increase our sliding membership in both the temple in general and religious school in specific. We need to embrace new technology and some demographic changes that are happening not just to office but to Judaism and organize religion in our country.

Membership is down and as opposed to my generation and my parents’ generation, younger generations do not feel the same poll of obligation towards their religion nor do they feel they must go to a bricks and mortar temple.

In the future we must reach out to our younger generation and to new technologies to ensure that we have the same strengthening congregation for the next 26 years that we have for the first 26 years. This will take a vision, hope, and everyone will need to chip in and do their fair share. If we do this, we truly will be what we can be as a congregation for many years to come. Thank you.

**Special Presentations:**

Andrew Pelk and Becca Smith gave a presentation of their overseas Tikkun Olam trip.

**Adjournment:** Kevin Frye moved to adjourn the meeting and Michelle McCormick seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously.