

Beth Israel Center
Board Meeting of April 11, 1978.

Present were R. Duker, R. Rosenberg, E. Weingart, F. Horvitz, Mrs. J. Markowitz, J. Markowitz, H. Lang, G. Tessler, S. Glickstein, S. Schultz, R. Berman; B. Regal presided.

Minutes were read and approved, and correspondence reviewed. A letter from E. Rubin, for the confirmation parents, asked why the Rabbi could not attend a rehearsal of the confirmation. It appeared from discussion that the Rabbi would rather address the students than involve himself with details of the confirmation ceremony. However, an arrangement may ~~be~~ be made, involving the trading of dates. E. Weingart stated that he would meet with the Rabbi about this matter. B. Regal requested to attend the meeting.

R. Duker reported that the March 1 balance of the checking account was \$1357.67, and , after deposits of \$3277.55 and ~~disbursements~~ disbursements of \$3436.94, the April 1 balance was \$1198.28. It was concluded that the Center's financial affairs should be manageable for the remainder of the year, barring unexpected problems. There remains a balance of \$172.88 outstanding in the Hebrew Free Loan matter.

G. Tessler reported that there were 6 members in arrears more than 3 months, but on the whole, dues were current.

The report of the Rabbi Evaluation Committee, which is attached, was next introduced. It was ~~voted~~ moved that copies of the report of the Rabbi Evaluation Committee will be made available in the office to all members of the congregation prior to the May 15 meeting, and that the members be so informed in the letter announcing the meeting. 7 were in favor, with one abstention.

The gist of the report, and the concomitant discussion, is that the membership, according to the phone poll, showed no particular, consistent animus against the Rabbi. However, the congregation is approximately evenly divided as to whether he, or any other rabbi, should be rehired. There was strong sentiment against any dues increase to pay additional salary to the Rabbi, or to retain him. The aspect of his pastoral duties that seemed most appreciated were his sermons. There was strong sentiment, both among the membership and on the board, that we cannot afford a rabbi. Accordingly, the Rabbi's salary was deleted from the proposed budget to be submitted to the Membership.

The Board passed a resolution that the Board room be sanctified as the Ely Grossman Memorial Sanctuary at a date to be announced.

A letter is to be sent to Maxine Horvitz thanking her for her efforts in renting the house. There was discussion of the possibility of selling the house, both to obtain ~~income and~~ operating ~~expenses and to eliminate~~ funds and to eliminate expenses associated with it. However, it was pointed out that the house was quite easily rented, is a reliable source of income, and is appreciating in value. No action was taken.

It was again urged that the secretary be instructed to submit publicity about the Center to the Jewish Chronicle.

The Education Committee reported that, on the basis of projected school enrollment, classes in the future would be started only every other year; by 1984, it was expected that the number of classes in the religious school will be reduced to six.

The House Committee reported that ~~the~~ a Dumpster can be had, with a weekly pickup contract, at \$22 per month, with the contract lasting 10 months of the year.

The Men's Club has held ~~a~~ two successful meetings in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings, during Sunday School.

Rental of the house was ~~xx~~ estimated at \$3500 per year, as income.

Respectfully submitted

E. Weingart, R. Berman

5-2-78

Corrections:

House: 1) I no lease "reliability"

2) proceeds =, cash flow decrease.

Report of the Rabbi Evaluation Committee

Beth Israel Center

April 11, 1978

Pittsburgh, Pa.

This committee was formed at the request of R. Barack, president of Beth Israel Center, during March, 1978, with the object of ascertaining the attitude of the members of Beth Israel Center toward the rehiring of Rabbi Philip Sigal as spiritual leader, and toward the idea of a Rabbi for Beth Israel Center in general, for the purpose of guiding the Board of Directors in its decisions. Methods to be used were left to the committee.

The committee met on March 23, 1978, and elected to use the method of telephone interviews, contacting every member possible and interviewing husbands and wives separately. A series of five questions was formulated, and a set of interviewing rules was adopted, with the objects of making the interviews as uniform as possible, and retaining objectivity. The questions and rules are appended.

It was anticipated that there would be some dissatisfaction with those questions which impinged on the financial status of the center, but there seemed no way to avoid this, inasmuch as financial considerations are important to this decision, and the budget is far too complex to discuss with each respondent in this survey even if this committee were competent to do so. The phraseology of the questions was carefully selected so as to require the respondents to focus on the financial aspect but leave its effect to their judgement.

... The results of the survey are appended in detail and constitute a split decision, slightly in favor of rehiring Rabbi Sigal, but strongly opposed to a dues increase or assessment if such should prove necessary. Even among those who favor rehiring Rabbi Sigal, the dues increase was split fairly evenly between the yeses and noes. There is no strong bias against Rabbi Sigal as an individual; the profile on the question of rehiring Rabbi Sigal looks very like the profile on the question of hiring another Rabbi. The aspect of Rabbi Sigal's contributions that will unquestionably be missed

most should he fail to ~~to~~ return in his sermons, followed at some distance by Religious Leadership, Conduct of Services and Study Group activities. Least missed aspects would be his pastoral duties and High Holy day duties (although the lack of importance attached to pastoral duties may reflect the fact that, fortunately, there has been little need). The most frequently voiced comment was that we should retain Rabbi Sigal's services if it can be done with financial prudence. Other frequent comments remarked on Rabbi Sigal's likable characteristics - understanding, tolerance, scholarship, and his being remote from the community, ^{his} lack of interest in us as a congregation. Comments on the importance of a rabbi to Beth Israel Center were almost exactly balanced by comments to the effect that we cannot afford a Rabbi. All in all, this congregation is about evenly divided on this question, and for that reason this report is bound to be of little help in guiding the Board toward a decision. The only strong factor that developed is the general reluctance to support a dues increase.

Barbara Regal
Harvey Rosenberg
George Jessler
Estelle Weissburg

Respectfully Submitted

Joseph M. Markowitz, Chmn.

Appendix I

Rules for Interviewing

1. Speak to both husband and wife (separately).
2. Assure each person of anonymity
3. Assure each person that (a) You represent a committee of the Center; (b) All members of the committee are asking absolutely identical questions; and (c) the interview is in lieu of a questionnaire.
4. Read all questions exactly as written.
5. Don't be drawn into a discussion.
6. Allow changes in answer at any time.

Appendix II

Questions and Answers

(Not percentages. Note: There were 111 respondents, not all of whom answered all questions)

1. As a matter of your personal choice, given your understanding of the religious and financial needs of Beth Israel Center, do you think that Rabbi Sigal should be rehired for the coming year (1978-9)?

- a. I feel very strongly that we should rehire him. 13
- b. I would be pleased to see him rehired 32 } 45
- c. I don't care one way or the other 22
- d. I would rather not see him rehired 21 } 38
- e. I strongly object to our rehiring him. 17

* 2. Would you be willing to support a dues increase or assessment if it became necessary in order to rehire ... Rabbi Sigal?

	<u>a,b,c,d,e</u>	<u>a,b</u>
yes	14	25
no	46	19

3. If for any reason we cannot hire Rabbi Sigal, should we try to hire another Rabbi?

- a. I feel very strongly that we should 22
- b. I would be pleased if we did 33 } 55
- c. I don't care one way or the other 15
- d. I would rather we did not 19 } 33
- e. I feel strongly that we should not 14

* Because of a misunderstanding, for which the chairman accepts all responsibility, two of the committee members asked Question 2 only of those who answered a or b to Question 1. Thus, the column headed a,b,c,d,e, contains data from only 3 of the committee members, 3/5 of the respondents. The column a,b, contains data from all committee members on those who answered a or b to Question 1.

Appendix II (Continued)

4. What services does Rabbi Segal perform that you would miss the most if we were unable to rehire him?

* None	60
Sermons	24
Religious Leadership	13
Conducting Services	10
Study Group	9
Pastoral (visiting sick, etc.)	6
High Holidays	7

* An astonishingly high number of people chose not to record any single service, but many recorded several. This number of "none's" is inexplicable on any rational basis; many of those voting c, d or e on question #1 chose to list at least one service, in spite of their negative inclination.