

**Synagogue Life Council Meeting  
Minutes January 10, 2011**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ed Berger, Barbara Brodie, Leah Cotton, Madeline Friedman, Anna Greenberg, Kathy Hays, Barry Hirsch, Renee Hulsey, Mark Levine, Mary Marcus, Dawn Moriarty, Joy Peskin-Owens, Jane Poliakoff, Ann Rush, Howard Schwartz, Evelyn Sigafus

**STAFF:** Rabbi Robert Eisen, Lynne Falkow-Strauss, Linda Roy

The meeting was called to order by chair, Dr. Mary Marcus at 7:15 PM.

The motion to accept the Dec. 2010 minutes passed unanimously.

**New Business: “Visioning to meet education and cantorial needs”**

- Rabbi Eisen explained seven models for the two positions (Dollar signs represent the weighted cost to the congregation):
  1. \$\$\$\$ A professional cantor and a separate professional Judaica educator
  2. \$\$ A professional Educator with cantorial needs met by volunteer congregants
  3. \$\$\$ Professional Cantor with part-time lay administrator
  4. \$\$\$ A paid Cantorial Soloist who leads services plus a full-time educator
  5. \$ Cantor and educator are both lay people and volunteers with possibly hiring someone for the High Holy Days. This model is generally found in small congregations where the needs can be met by volunteers.
  6. \$\$ Cantor/Educator where the time spent on cantorial duties is greater than as an educator, possibly with use of a head teacher in the religious school.
  7. \$\$ Education Director/Cantor - The division of time here might be as much as 80% education/20% cantor, other percentages possible. The cantorial part might be to lead or coordinate leading of services as necessary. The education is for both adults and children where the person not only might teach, but would be in charge of administering these educational programs.
  
- These models are based on congregational needs and priorities for the future.
  
- The following are discussion notes contributed by SLC members who were present. We kept in mind that our main objective was not finance-based, although it was a consideration. At this time, the most preferred model around the country is education director/cantor. Many cantors coming out of school today have an education background first. There are no diminished services in this model. Also, it was felt that models #6 and #7 were the most financially feasible.
  1. Is the synagogue too big for two half-time positions? Finding a part-time educator might be possible, but not likely to find a part-time cantor plus one person who would integrate the two aspects.
  2. It was mentioned that although there would be no assistant rabbi, an executive director would relieve the rabbi of the time and stresses of daily management.
  3. It was felt that one person doing both education and cantorial needs would better build community.
  4. In general, it was felt that some current teachers need more direction which a professional educator could provide and that we need to look to more teachers who are professional teachers. A balance between young inexperienced and professional teachers is important. Often the children relate well to the young teachers.
  5. The disadvantage to some of the models is an overdependence on lay volunteers to cover ritual needs. People want a cantor, not just lay leaders.

6. Some services (such as family and children services) would lack clergy leadership. It has been mentioned that in many congregations this happens and people like it. This is not necessarily a "bad thing."
7. Under any model, choirs can be developed separately. It was felt that there is a need for a children's choir, as well as adult choirs for both recreational and liturgical needs. Choirs are meant to inspire in a service and are not there for a performance. A cantor/educator or educator/cantor may have a better understanding of these needs.
8. It was generally felt that a Cantorial Soloist is not a congregation/community builder.
9. The question was asked if, in the future, would we grow with an educator/cantor? Yes, since the educator would have the expertise and would spend more time building programming. The cantor would lead services, HHD services, overseeing those which the person cannot attend, as well as reading Torah or overseeing the Torah and Haftarat readings. The role this person would perform would better work with B'nai Mitzvah students. It was felt that any new cantor needs *ruach* and as such might be better met by a cantor who can and will relate well to children.
10. It was also generally felt that this congregation is too big and that we must build this congregation with well-educated professional leadership. We need true integration and participation. The person hired might prefer to be called cantor/educator rather than educator/cantor even though more time is spent with educational needs.

- A vote was held. Listed by model number and votes received: #1, 1; #2-5, 0; #6, 1 and #7, 11.

#### **Event Reports:**

##### **Membership Committee**

- Zip Code Parties 3/27: family-oriented parties and for adults, no children. The Jan. 7 service in the NW had fewer attendees, 26.

##### **Affiliate Reports**

- Affiliate reports were made by Men's Club and Women's League and concerns were expressed by Seniors for their continuation of programming and attendance. Social Action reminded us of one more hospitality night. Anna Greenberg expressed concerns about young adult programming. Rabbi Eisen asked to meet with her and with Seniors to address their concerns.

##### **Young Family Initiative Task Force Reports**

- A Religious School Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Jan. 30 at 9:30 AM. Family Programming had no report.

##### **Good and Welfare**

- During Good and Welfare, a reminder of upcoming events: SIR and 80th Anniversary celebration.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM. Next meeting is Feb. 14.

Respectfully submitted,  
Evelyn Sigafus