

## Houston Hillel

### Board Meeting Minutes

01/04/21

Present: Kenny Weiss, Alyssa Silva, Rozanne Rubin, Lou Mizis, Daniel Pickelner, Jeff Berlat, Scott Friedman, Grant Beiner, Sandy Jackson, Lior Ashkenazy Dor, Ellie Rips, Rabbi Gideon Estes, Ronit Sherwin, Jonas Actor, Eric Cohn, Sean Kessel, Brian Cweren, Jason Fischer, Lena Lieb, Kendall Toarmina, Brian Hall, Jeff Levine, Sandy Jackson

Next meeting: Monday, February 22, 2021 on Zoom

#### **1. D'var Torah**

- Exodus 1 and commentary.
- Passages in the midrash remind us not to forget the past, to take the future in addition to the past. Regardless to what we think the order is, we need to mix it up and remember that all are equal. (Text at the end of the minutes.)
- Easy to get lost during COVID, so this week's Torah portion reminds us to

#### **2. Ice Breaker: Where I lay my hat**

- Random number generator picks random people to answer questions about themselves.

#### **3. Consent Agenda**

- Review of minutes from our last board meeting.
  - Rozanne moves to accept.
  - Rabbi Gideon Estes moves to accept and all-in favor, it passes.
- Questions and Comments on Dashboard sent out to board
  - Comments on 100% board giving goal this year

#### **4. State of the Union for Houston Hillel and Hillel International**

- Opening video from Hillel Global Leadership Conference Town Hall with Hillel International President Adam Lehman. You can view the video at <https://vimeo.com/491346430>.

- Hillel is constantly moving forward, including their moment for action position paper in support of racial justice.
- Hillel Winterfest includes group learning opportunities for students over winter break.
- Hillel Int'l Board Education series information shared.

#### **5. Hats off!**

- Sharing gratitude to staff!
- Kenny's 20<sup>th</sup> year!
- Success from Rice Alumni Event, Hillel International Virtual College Fair, despite pandemic our numbers are equal or greater than last year.
- Our Hillel is ahead of pace for the year in the Hillel Int'l survey on annual campaigns.
- \$200,000 in Donor Reserve Bank Account.
- Houston Hillel received \$5,000 from Federation in COVID relief.
- PPP loan is forgiven.
- Successful Giving Tuesday Campaign. Thanks Alyssa!
- Jewston has received almost \$80,000 in designated gifts.
- Hats off to our committees!

#### **6. Budget and Finance Committee - Kendall Toarmina Pang**

- Reviewing that we are going to be at or under budget.
- Zinn gift overview and a discussion about keeping it in the HJCF- the decision is to keep it there.
- Started to discuss next year's budget.

#### **7. Development Committee - Grant Beiner**

- Reviewing Rice alumni event and its success.
  - A little over \$3,000 raised from the Rice alumni event
  - Hopefully another event in person alumni event next year

#### **8. Governance - Lou Mizis**

- Reaching out to alumni and getting them more involved.
- Orientation for board members and reaching out to new board members.
- Many different perspectives and people interested in being on the board.
- Leadership succession and how our bylaws implement that.
- Revision of bylaws- possibly asking the lawyers to lead the process.
  - Volunteers for the bylaws committee: Gideon Estes, Eric Cohn, Grant Beiner, Scott Friedman, Daniel Pickelner

#### **9. Building Task Force - Eric Cohn**

- Review building usage: Where are we at in our building, Repairs, activities, and how we want to think about the building over the next few years.
- **Not a sell the building conversation.**
- This conversation should stay inside the board.
- Eric will be asking a couple people outside of the board who are well versed in building maintenance and real estate.
- Brian Cweren mentions that selling the building shouldn't be on the table. Fear of losing a permanent home for the organization.
- Sean shares that bringing the building closer to a campus would be beneficial.
- Kenny reiterates that we are not trying to sell the building, but there are some significant repairs that will be coming up soon.

#### **10. Staff News - Kenny, Alyssa, Ellie, Lior**

- Kenny shares a letter from a Rice undergrad who is graduating this Spring.
- Alyssa shared that Spring will look a lot like Fall semester, so plenty of to go Shabbats and seders, and a pilot program called Kol Y'Israel for grad students in Hillel.
- Ellie shared about the continuation of events over zoom for undergrads and the second cohort of JLF.
- Lior shared about the Israel Learning Fellowship coming to Houston Hillel. Planning a trip to Israel in the summer. Continuing Israeli activities for students. Continuation of Hebrew learning for students.

### **11. Old Business**

- No Comments

### **12. New Business**

- No Comments

### **13. Good and Welfare**

- Kenny Weiss: Eli Weiss graduated from UH and got into a Masters Program at UH!
- Gideon Estes: Zoom Funeral for Mel Bishop

#### Exodus chapter 1

1 And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each coming with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 The total number of persons that were of Jacob's issue came to seventy, Joseph being already in Egypt. 6 Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. 7 But the Israelites were fertile and prolific; they multiplied and increased very greatly, so that the land was filled with them.

8 A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph.

#### Exodus Rabbah 1:2

And these are the names. Rabbi Abahu said: Whenever the text states "these" it comes to contrast the preceding text. "And these" connotes addition to the preceding remarks.

#### Exodus Rabbah 1:6

Rabbi Joshua of Siknin said in the name of Rabbi Levi: Why are not the names of the tribes in the same order in all places, but sometimes one takes precedence and sometimes another? So that you should not think that the children of the wives come first, and those of the hand-maidens last, but to teach you that these were not greater than the others.

