
TRANSCRIPTION OF THE
MINUTES OF THE BETH TZEDEC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MAY 30, 2019

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1 Dr. Sheldon Rotman, President of the Board and Chair of the
2 meeting, called the meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

3

4 DR. ROTMAN: I would like to welcome you to the
5 2019 Annual General meeting. In keeping with the 2019 holiday
6 theme of *Shlaymoot*, we're going to bless our Toronto Raptors
7 for a complete success in this round of the playoffs.

8 On that note, I would like to try to keep this
9 meeting short, so I am now going to call on Rabbi Baruch
10 Frydman-Kohl to give the D'var Torah.

11 RABBI FRYDMAN-KOHL: I'm teaching a course for
12 young adults as part of the Lishma program and one of the
13 things we've been looking at is the sense of well-being and
14 covenant and how they all come together in Jewish literature
15 and our traditions.

16 So, if you think about Genesis for a minute, when
17 God speaks to Noah and says this is my covenant with you, it's
18 absolute and Noah doesn't have to do much. When you look at
19 Abraham, he has to follow God but there are no specifics.

20 So, from youth to a more mature stage, it seems to
21 me that as you mature, you begin to realise that your
22 commitments have real consequences. And when parents talk to
23 their children as little children, it's simply an attitude of
24 love and acceptance.

25 As they grow older, they begin to get conditions; on
26 this condition, you'll get this money, on this condition,
27 you'll get this support. You have to understand that there

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1 are implications.

2 This figures as well when we try to understand what
3 does it mean to lead a life of well-being, because it seems to
4 suggest that for the people of Israel in the Torah, a life of
5 well-being, a life of fullness, a lot of that is related to
6 peace, tranquility, food and victory. It's very physical.

7 A good life is that the community has enough. But
8 if you go further in the Bible, if you go to Psalms or
9 Proverbs, you start to see a concern for individual character
10 development. It's not simply the community. It's the
11 individual.

12 So, in all of these, we begin to see that the idea
13 of covenant shifts, the idea of covenant remains secure, but
14 how it's expressed changes. It has plasticity. And the same
15 thing is true with the idea of well-being. It will change and
16 morph through the ages.

17 We are at a point of transition. There is going to
18 be a new Rabbi. I like him. He likes me. We may not agree
19 on everything, but we work well together for the growth of the
20 community. There may be things, as we go forward, that you'll
21 see change, morph, develop.

22 Keep in mind that the idea of the Rabbi as the
23 leader of the community remains secure. The way that
24 leadership is expressed, the direction that the Rabbi gives
25 may change, but we know from our tradition that we have the
26 ability to adjust to the new and to find in the new something
27 of the old and to recognize in the old that there was

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1 something that could lead to the new.

2 So, I tell you this because I really am looking
3 forward to shifting my responsibilities from full-time and a
4 half-time to part-time. I'm looking forward to spending more
5 time with my grandchildren. I'm looking forward to hopefully
6 doing mediation and dispute resolution, moving, as I like to
7 say, from the pulpit to the peacemaker.

8 And I think I'm leaving you in a strong
9 congregation, in a strong community. As Rabbi Steve said
10 yesterday, we have good DNA, and I'm looking forward to
11 watching as our community grows over the next couple of years
12 and we move into new areas where we begin to explore well-
13 being in a new and different way. Thank you.

14 DR. ROTMAN: Thank you, Rabbi. I would like to
15 now call on Rabbi Wernick to say a few words.

16 RABBI WERNICK: First of all, I just want to give
17 thanks to Rabbi Frydman-Kohl for the D'var Torah and the
18 message, especially about our friendship and professional
19 relationship. And really, we do like each other a lot.

20 This transition has been really smooth for a lot of
21 reasons, not least of which is the leadership that Rabbi
22 Baruch demonstrates day in and day out, which we just
23 witnessed a few moments ago.

24 I also want to thank Sheldon and Debbie and the
25 members of the Board, and really the entire congregation, for
26 what has been a wonderful welcome and transition into Toronto
27 and into Beth Tzedec.

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1 It's been a really wonderful to have these months of
2 start up until the formal transition of authority passes to
3 get to know so many people, which I have, and to see the great
4 work that has been done thus far to create a congregation that
5 is on sound footing with a great membership, great position in
6 the community and a real desire and passion to get to a future
7 of well-being, not only individually but collectively and
8 communally.

9 *Shlaymoot* is not just about all the pieces of the
10 jigsaw puzzle fitting together. It's an image more like a
11 mosaic, of individual tiles that stand in relationship to each
12 other and when you get the ability and the perspective to step
13 back from those tiles, to see the picture that is formed by
14 them, it's the ability to form disparate parts of our lives
15 together at the same time and to find the inner ability to
16 seek *brakha* at those moments.

17 It's when we experience the rough passages in life
18 that we learn to appreciate the blessings that are ours. And
19 perhaps, it's as other philosophers have said, it's only
20 because of the existence of evil that we necessarily know what
21 good. And so, it's only because life is hard that we
22 sometimes can understand what blessing is.

23 What I've learned from all of us is that this
24 message of Jewish life is one that resonates, especially with
25 our children and our grandchildren that we all understand in
26 some way, shape or form that we're living in an exciting part
27 of Jewish history. Not just transition for Beth Tzedec but

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1 really the transition of the entire Jewish experience,
2 certainly in North America and that what the future requires
3 is an approach that builds upon the success of our history,
4 but doesn't see itself constrained by that history, but is
5 willing to explore *shlaymoot* in new ways, building on that
6 tradition.

7 So, I look forward to walking that pathway with all
8 of us together, to exploring those opportunities to finding
9 comfort, providing comfort in moments of sadness and
10 trepidation but even more importantly celebrating those
11 moments of *brakha*, those moments of joy, celebration in the
12 years ahead. Thank you.

13 DR. ROTMAN: Thank you, Rabbi. Before we get into
14 the business of the meeting, I would like to thank the
15 following members who are leaving the Board, Marnie Burke,
16 Maureen Tanz, Ellen Rosenbluth, Dina Libman and Larry Wallach,
17 for their years of service and their deep connection to Beth
18 Tzedec.

19 I'd like to also thank the new Directors by
20 acclamation, Jamie Golombek, Earl Schwebel, Mitch Max and
21 Brian Segal. I look forward to working alongside of you at
22 the Board of Directors.

23 I will hold my remarks to end of the meeting so we
24 can now proceed with the business of the meeting. The Minutes
25 of last year's meeting were circulated in the mailing and we
26 have not heard from anyone as to any corrections or errors.
27 If there are no questions, I would ask for a motion to approve

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1 the minutes of the 2018 AGM.

2

3 **MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the 2018 Annual
4 General Meeting.

5 **Moved by:** Mr. Don Smith

6 **Seconded by:** Ms. Cecile Zaifman

7 **Motion carried.**

8

9 DR. ROTMAN: The second item is the new Board, whom
10 I have already welcomed.

11 I will now turn it over to Cecile Zaifman to address
12 the financial position.

13 MS. ZAIFMAN: Good evening. I am presenting the
14 Audited Financial Statements for both Beth Tzedec Congregation
15 and Beth Tzedec Foundation of Toronto for the year ended June
16 30, 2018. These statements were available to all members
17 prior to the meeting and copies were also available this
18 evening.

19 We will begin with the congregation's Financial
20 Statement. The Statement of Operations, or the income
21 statement of the congregation is on page three. This
22 statement shows the four funds for accounting purposes that
23 comprise all of the synagogue's operations.

24 The two main operating funds are the general fund
25 and the cemetery fund, which are in the two columns at the
26 left of the schedule. I will focus my comments this evening
27 on these two funds.

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1 First, looking at the general fund for 2018, as
2 projected last year, membership contributions remain stable
3 over the prior year. Membership projections for the current
4 fiscal year are projected to remain relatively stable.

5 Investment income in the general fund decreased. In
6 2017, investments were sold to fund the improvements of this
7 room and the gain on the sale of these investments increased
8 investment income in 2018. The actual realized investment
9 income decreased in 2018 from 4.8 per cent to 3.4 per cent.
10 This affects all funds as investment income is pooled and then
11 allocated across the funds.

12 Fundraising income in 2018 was up from the previous
13 year due to the lottery and a more successful High Holiday
14 campaign. Program and event revenue is marginally higher than
15 the previous year. Catering and hall rentals increased in
16 2018. Rental from Robbin's Hebrew Academy increased. Also
17 included in this line is an insurance recovery from a water
18 main break at the synagogue.

19 Revenue from the congregational school decreased due
20 to low enrolment and will be marginally offset by lower
21 operating expenses. In total, revenue in the general fund was
22 \$4.75 million, which is a net increase of approximately 1 per
23 cent over the prior year.

24 Looking at expenses, ritual and educational expenses
25 increased 3 per cent over the previous year. Expenses
26 included fees for the senior rabbi search consultant, rabbinic
27 coverage for the Associate Rabbi position and some additional

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1 program expenses.

2 Building maintenance expenses increased 3 per cent.
3 One of the largest contributing factors was the water main
4 repair of approximately \$90,000, which was partially offset by
5 the insurance recovery, included in the income.

6 General and administration costs remained relatively
7 consistent, increasing just over 1 per cent. Fundraising
8 expenses increased due to engagement of a consultant for
9 fundraising feasibility study.

10 Congregational school expenses decreased marginally
11 as there were fewer students. Dues and grants expenses
12 remained the same as the prior year. Overall, expenses in the
13 general fund increased approximately 3 per cent. The general
14 fund operated at a deficit this year as it did the previous
15 year.

16 The cemetery operations continue to remain strong
17 with an excess of revenues over expenses with a 1.3 per cent
18 increase over the previous year. Investment income decreased,
19 consistent with the overall decrease in investment income.
20 Income from sales of interment rights and plantings is up
21 during fiscal 2018 and we continued to develop another section
22 of the cemetery to service the future needs.

23 Looking at total operations for 2018, we show an
24 excess of revenue over expenditures. If we roughly normalize
25 income for the decrease in investment income during fiscal
26 2018, our excess of revenue over expenditures is consistent
27 with the previous year.

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1 Looking at the statement of financial position, most
2 balances are consistent with 2017. The current loan
3 receivable in last year's operating fund of \$300,000 was
4 repaid during this fiscal year. At the year end, as in the
5 prior year, the financial statement shows a bank indebtedness
6 in the general fund. The congregation has intentionally used
7 its demand operating facility instead of liquidating
8 investments.

9 Accounts payable were higher last year as there were
10 still renovation payables outstanding at the year's end.
11 Overall, our financial position at the end of 2018 remains
12 strong.

13 The total fund balances increased to \$22.3 million
14 from \$21 million in 2017, with the major portion of the
15 balance represented by the cemetery fund. The endowment fund
16 was up from 2017 and the capital fund has increased
17 marginally.

18 The capital fund maintains a healthy balance
19 following the renovations, allowing us to continue to make
20 targeted annual budgeted improvements for the current and
21 ongoing needs of maintaining the building, infrastructure and
22 houses as required. Fundraising will be undertake to fund any
23 future renovations.

24 During fiscal '19, the Avenal house renovations were
25 completed, which will be reflected in next year's financial
26 statements.

27 The total investments across all funds have a market

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1 value of \$16.5 million and a cost of \$14.2 million at end of
2 year. Approximate \$7 million out of \$22 million of our fund
3 balances are restricted for specific purposes. As well, \$8.4
4 million is invested in capital assets. The cemetery fund
5 showed a large increase in 2018 under investments and capital
6 assets, reflecting the work done to service the new section of
7 the cemetery.

8 The capital fund is restricted to capital
9 expenditure and the entire amount of the endowment fund is
10 externally restricted, leaving approximately \$6.8 million of
11 unrestricted funds in the congregation.

12 The Foundation statements show an additional \$4.2
13 million of investments in marketable securities with a cost of
14 \$3.6 million. The full amount of the funds in the Foundation
15 are restricted for endowments or specific purposes.

16 Overall, total operations for 2018 ended with a
17 total excess of revenue over expenses, maintaining relatively
18 strong fund balances. However, we have many financial
19 challenges ahead, including identifying and realizing
20 alternative revenue streams.

21 In 2019, we launched the Centre for Spiritual Well-
22 Being, supported by the Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl Endowment
23 Fund. This endowment will fund new programs for members and
24 the community.

25 The budgeting process continues to be refined,
26 maximizing revenue and looking for ways to consolidate and
27 reduce expenditures, while maintaining excellence in

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1 programming that our members expect.

2 The staff and Budget and Finance Committee continue
3 to work hard to balance current financial needs against the
4 long-term financial stability for the shul. We have
5 incorporated the strategic plan as well as new initiatives
6 from the Centre for Spiritual Well-Being into the budget
7 process to ensure programs meet the strategic objectives.

8 We are in the midst of significant changes in *Klei*
9 *Kodesh* that have impacted the ability to budget some items
10 with certainty. Staff and lay leadership both understand that
11 we will incur additional costs during the transitions which
12 will affect our budgets, are investments in the future.

13 Challenging but exciting times are ahead for the
14 shul as we build a new spiritual team to lead us into the
15 future, recognizing the changing landscape of the community
16 and their needs. From a financial point of view, we will
17 continue to work diligently to find new and alternative
18 revenue sources, monitor expenses and preserve fund balanced
19 to encourage and engage future and current generations of our
20 community in a vibrant and meaningful Jewish life.

21 I would like to thank our Director of Finance,
22 Hadassah Bernstein for her assistance and support. Her
23 competency, efficiency and attention to detail have made my
24 job so much easier, enabling us to bring timely and accurate
25 financial reporting to the Board of Governors on a regular
26 basis, as well as continuing to refine the budgeting process.

27 It continues to be a pleasure to work with Randy

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1 Spiegel. Randy works tirelessly to institutionalize financial
2 controls and strategic processes, to improve financial
3 oversight and the day to day operations of the congregation.
4 Also thanks to Ronnie Faust, Chair of the Investment
5 Committee, and Lorne Schillinger, Chair of the Audit Committee
6 for their time and effort on behalf of our shul. Both
7 committees are key components of the overall governance
8 structure and are important to the ongoing financial stability
9 and reporting. The volunteer members of both these
10 committees, as well as the Budget and Finance Committee, have
11 contributed many hours, much expertise and wise counsel to our
12 shul.

13 I would now like to call on representative of our
14 auditor, Deloitte, Scott Finkle.

15 MR. FINKLE: I am just going to give a brief
16 comment on the audit that was conducted in accordance with
17 Canadian Auditing standards. The audits are designed to
18 express an opinion in the fairness of the presentation in all
19 material respects of the Foundation and the congregation
20 financial annual statement prepared in accordance with the
21 Canadian Auditing standards for not-for-profit organizations.

22 No restrictions were placed on the scope of the
23 audit. In performing the audit, we were given complete and
24 full access to the accounting records, supporting
25 documentation and other material we requested. We issued our
26 unmodified audit opinion dated December 13, 2018 on the
27 financial statements of both entities for the year ended June

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1 30, 2018.

2 MS. ZAIFMAN: Right now, I would call for a motion
3 to re-appoint Deloitte LLP as the auditors for the 2019 fiscal
4 year.

5

6 **MOTION:** To appoint Deloitte LLP as the auditors
7 for the 2019 fiscal year.

8 **Moved by:** Mr. Allen Schacht

9 **Seconded by:** Ms. Karen Hersh

10 **Motion carried.**

11

12 DR. ROTMAN: Are there any questions on the
13 financial statements?

14

15 Q. Does the congregation still invest in Israel
16 bonds?

17 A. They are included in the investments.

18

19 Q. Do you know how much is invested?

20 A. I do not have the information right now, but we
21 can find out and pass that along.

22

23 Q. Page 18 of the financial statements, what is
24 represented by administrative salaries?

25 A. That is salaries of the employees.

26

27 Q. How many rabbinic positions are there?

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1 A. At the present time, we have four Rabbis. We're
2 looking at our position for the fall and bringing on a new
3 Associate Rabbi. Rabbi Gorman and Rabbi Schachter together
4 constitute one full time rabbinic position.

5
6 DR. ROTMAN: Tonight marks the end of my five year
7 tenure as your Board Chair and President. While it can be
8 challenging, it has been remarkably fulfilling and rewarding,
9 working with so many wonderful people and engaging so many
10 members in support of an institution that is central to our
11 community's life and history.

12 The past five years been all about change and how we
13 can engage more members in the life of our shul, particularly
14 young families. To lead this effort, we are fortunate to have
15 Rabbi Steven Wernick as our next Senior Rabbi. He has a track
16 record of accomplishment, a deep understanding of Jewish
17 thought and brings unique insights as a former leader of the
18 Conservative movement. We are indeed fortunate to have Rav
19 Steve as our next senior Rabbi.

20 Rav Steve will be joined by Rabbi Robin Fryer Bodzin
21 as she returns to Toronto with ideas of reaching out to a
22 broad cross-section of the community. Rav Robin represents
23 the face of change at Beth Tzedec and we look forward as she
24 works to bring her Jewish insights into our lives.

25 We are also pleased that Rav Baruch has agreed to a
26 part-time role in support of Rav Steve and Rav Robin in our
27 efforts to stay connected with almost 2,300 family units.

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1 In honour of Rav Baruch's retirement as our Senior
2 Rabbi, the Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl Endowment will fund our
3 new Centre for Spiritual Well-Being. This centre will seek to
4 engage our members in new ways beyond prayer and study.

5 We set a goal of raising \$6 million and I am pleased
6 to announce that we have already raised almost \$2 million.
7 Thank you to Endowment Committee Co-Chairs, Harold Wolfe and
8 Paul Rothstein and their entire team. Only \$4 million left to
9 go and we hope everyone will participate in some way.

10 Also, thank you to Joey and Elaine Steiner for co-
11 chairing this amazing year of celebrations, honouring Rabbi
12 Frydman-Kohl's 26 years leading our congregation. It will
13 culminate in this weekend's events and the gala dinner next
14 Thursday night.

15 Over the past five years, I have worked with many
16 fine people who deserve thanks; Rabbis Schachter and Gorman,
17 Hazzan Ezer, Lorne, Jacob, Daniel. Randy Spiegel, our
18 Executive Director, oversees a large organization of people
19 and I never quite know how Randy does it all with such an
20 adept and wise touch. Thank you to Brian Dias and the team
21 who keeps this place running 24 hours a day.

22 I have been fortunate to serve with some remarkable,
23 talented volunteers. They put in countless hours on a range
24 of committees, bringing their skills and perspectives. Thank
25 you to every one for your support and advice.

26 To my shul wife, Debbie Rothstein, it has been a
27 pleasure working with you. Even when we did not agree, we

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1 always found a way to move forward together. I know I've been
2 fortunate to have your support. The future for Beth Tzedec is
3 very bright with you at the helm of a talented Board of
4 Directors.

5 Finally, to my wife, Patti, you spent so many hours
6 working on Beth Tzedec events, serving on our Board and its
7 committees and making the shul life part of our family life.
8 Thank you for your endless support over the last almost 38
9 years of marriage as we raised a wonderful and ever-growing
10 family. I love you more than Mickey loves Minnie.

11 When Rabbi Frydman-Kohl and Josette walked into our
12 lives, we didn't know what we were getting, other than someone
13 with an easy smile, engaging personality and a certain
14 attachment to the Chicago Cubs.

15 It's fair to say that over past 26 years, Rav Baruch
16 has touched all of us in very personal ways. He made a large
17 shul small and a diverse community connected. His was a
18 Judaism that brought meaning to our lives and a rabbi that
19 cared.

20 Beth Tzedec was once again central to issues
21 affecting Israel and Canada. Rav Baruch reached out beyond
22 the walls of our shul to engage the larger Canadian community.
23 On behalf of our Board and our membership, thank you Rav
24 Baruch and we hope we can honour all that you have done for us
25 by building on your legacy of Jewish leadership and
26 engagement. Judaism is a gift and you are the one who brought
27 that gift into our lives.

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1 Thank you to everyone, and goodnight.

2 MS. ROTHSTEIN: On behalf of the congregation and
3 the Board of Directors, Beth Tzedec Congregation recognizes
4 and thanks Dr. Sheldon Rotman for his years of dedication and
5 service as he completes his term as President.

6 DR. ROTMAN: Thank you. May I have a motion to
7 adjourn?

8

9 **MOTION:** That the meeting adjourned

10 **Moved by:** Mr. Gary Elman

11 **Seconded by:** Mr. Larry Wallach

12 **Motion carried.**

13

14 --- THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:17 P.M.

* * * * *