

Minutes
Kona Beth Shalom (KBS)
Board of Trustees
May 4, 2025
Zoom (online) meeting

TRUSTEES LOGGED INTO MEETING

Alan Silverman, Nella Silverman, Elaine Dobinson, Barry Blum, Vic Greenspan, Heather Rivera, Vivienne Aronowitz, Stuart Liroff and Mike Bernstone

TRUSTEES ABSENT

R. Shari Berman, Joel Gimpel and Sarah Kramer

OTHERS PRESENT

Aviva Plaut

CALL TO ORDER

The board meeting began at 10:04 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

Aviva read the prayer for community from Mishkan T'filah and from Rabbi Sacks "Morality" reminding us of our ability to see others' perspectives as well as our own and use our moral agency to elevate the common good.

MI SHEBEIRACH

Prayer was said for those in our community in need of healing: Robert Blum, Joan Jackson, Marilyn Anderson, Jessica Liroff, Mike, Elaine, Sarah, Yehudah, Aviva

MINUTES

Upon motion made by Elaine and seconded, the minutes of the April 6, 2025, board meeting were approved.

MONTHLY MENTION

Heather thanked Mike for being an excellent treasurer, quietly and efficiently taking care of KBS funds.

SEDER LETTER

Heather wrote to the Board on April 25. "It has come to our attention that there were concerns raised about the Community Seder held on April 13, 2025. In light of the feedback we've received, we believe it is important to acknowledge the experience and send a letter of apology to attendees." An apology letter was drafted, edited and approved by the Board, and sent by email April 28. A copy of the apology letter is included in the Addenda to the minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial report was sent by email to the board prior to the meeting.

Mike said rent was sent to New Thought Center of Hawaii (NTCH). We collected enough from the \$10 tickets for the seder to cover costs.

Upon motion made by Alan and seconded, the financial report was approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FACILITIES

Before the community seder last month, Alan, Aviva and Vic worked with NTCH to improve lighting. New LED spot lights were paid for by NTCH.

At the last in-person shabbat, Alan used their new internet provider, T-Mobile, and was able to complete the service with no interruptions due to signal strength.

When Alan requested an added date for Shavuot service, NTCH was already booked. Other dates were offered that fell within the holiday, but none were decided as yet as appropriate for our service.

NTCH has a two room office space next door that could possibly be available for rent as soon as July. The rent is \$660/month. It would provide space for the aron, and other supplies that we now store nearby for approximately \$235/month. It was pointed out that the biggest issue is that it also does not have a complete kitchen. If it becomes available, the Board can further discuss the possibility.

Aviva made plans with Vic to find out if Joe Rosner, the artisan who built the aron, is back on island and can help with repairs. They will make plans with NTCH in the next week or two so that the aron can be worked to make it is easier to move in and out of the lanai for services.

A discussion about some issues that make NTCH physically difficult (lack of a stove, lack of storage, difficulty moving the aron) brought up the thought that we should not stop looking for other potential locations for our services. No facility we know of has all that we need, mostly a kitchen. NTCH has a lovely ambiance and it's close.

Mike offered to give KBS a 3 burner propane camp stove, if allowed at NTCH. An open flame was felt to be potentially a hazard especially since it would be unattended during services.

Alan said NTCH has plans to purchase a countertop oven which would be available for our use.

CEMETERY

Heather visited our cemetery, Beit Hashamayim (BH), and it looked fine.

Barry was approached by Kona Memorial Park salesman Mike Deroy about plots available for \$15K, which is way too high to consider. Chabad and Beit Aloha Elohim agree. There are still 5 or 6 plots available at BH.

WEBSITE

Calendar has been a challenge to keep up-to-date. Alan requested those with events provide the information so we can post it in a timely manner. Heather has posted some

items on the Jewish Community Services calendar and she offered to help put them the KBS calendar as well. Other website pages need updating.

Using the banner to highlight upcoming events has been a good communications tool for our congregation's activities.

BIKUR CHOLIM

It was suggested to remember Joan Jackson for outreach.
Viv will be away in June as her daughter is expecting to deliver her baby.

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE (EC)

Activities scheduled:

May 18 Challah making class at Silverman's home

June 8 hike at Spencer Beach, contact Heather or Vic

July: Board members encouraged to have outreach Kabbalat shabbat dinners at their homes (considering having one at NTCH is too difficult without having a full kitchen available)

August: tentative plans for a snorkel at Kahaluu and shabbat dinner, contact Marina Optiz and Stuart Liroff

Stuart is planning an outreach call to KBS's on-island mailing list to make them aware of our activities.

Heather has plans for a series of retreats for women.

It was suggested KBS consider outreach to NTCH and attending some of their Sunday services or other activities as friends of this community.

EC interested to work with Aviva and Judaism 101 events.

The committee's usual meeting time is the first Thursday of the month at 4 p.m. on Zoom.

HIGH HOLIDAYS (HH)

Aviva still reaching out and looking for someone to lead services. Big problem is attracting someone when we have less than a minyan at our last HH services, especially on Yom Kippur day. Outreach to Jews on island problematic with no newspaper on Kona side.

ADULT LEARNING/JUDAISM 101

Looking for members interested in learning Torah readings for the HH.
Aviva's lay leader program is coming to an end. She has been trained to conduct Friday evening, Saturday morning, havdalah and bereavement services for shiva.

SHABBAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI MAY 24, 2025 10:30 a.m.

Location: NTCH
Leaders: Aviva
Torah: TBD

Drash: Aviva
Challah: Will ask Courtney Meiselman
Security: Vic
9 a.m. setup: Plauts, Silvermans, Vic

Aviva will not be here for June in-person shabbat.

SHAVUOT JUNE 1-3, 2025

Aviva will work out details on email. Hoped for date to use NTCH not available. Shari not coming to Hawaii as was thought.

JEWS NEWS

This coming shabbat Rabbi Daniel Greyber along with Cantor Roz Barak will lead erev shabbat services. On May 23 R. Sydney Mintz will lead services with musician Isaac Zones. There will be no services in June. In July there will be a concert with C. Roz and students and faculty from Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. A week ago the mitzvah hui made 125 meals for the Friendly Fridge in Waimea. This Thursday BAE sponsoring and serving the Thursday community meal at St. James Church in Waimea. Chabad Hilo is giving free Kabbalah classes on Mondays.

OLD BUSINESS

We will have to table Sponsorships discussion again for next month.

NEW BUSINESS

Holly Blue Hawkins, representative of Jewish Association for Death Education (JADE) will be on the Big Island November 7, 8, and 9. She will need a place to stay. Heather thought she might speak to KBS. Barry was interested in the subject of Spiritual/Ethical Will. BAE has penciled her in to speak on Friday, November 7.

Heather wants to schedule a team building gathering in the near future. She will send out emails for good dates and place suggestions to the board.

There is a need to train people to lead services. Barry has volunteered to teach.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be held June 1, 2025, at 10 a.m. on Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nella Silverman,
Secretary

ADDENDUM

Copy of apology letter sent to those who attended the community seder at New Thought Center Hawaii on April 13, 2025.

Subject: Our Commitment to Meaningful and Inclusive Community Events

Dear _____,

Thank you for joining us at our recent Community Seder. We are deeply grateful to have shared this special evening of tradition, reflection, and togetherness with you. As you are no doubt aware, some aspects of the evening fell short of the expectations we hold for our communal gatherings. We understand that some of you felt uncomfortable with how the seder was facilitated, and we want to acknowledge those concerns openly and with care.

Please accept our sincere apologies. Our intention was to create a warm, welcoming, and inclusive space where everyone could engage meaningfully. We are disappointed that it was not fully realized, and we are already discussing ways to ensure future events reflect the spirit and values of our congregation.

We hope you will continue to share your feedback with us, and we welcome you to reach out if you'd like to discuss this experience further. Most of all, we want to reassure you that we are listening, learning, and committed to growing as a community.

With appreciation and care,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees
Vic Greenspan, President
Heather Friedman-Rivera, 1st Vice President
Elaine Dobinson, 2nd Vice President
Nella Silverman, Secretary

Your reply to this message is welcome at president@konabethshalom.org