

Minutes
Annual Meeting of Congregation
Kona Beth Shalom
September 7, 2025
Zoom (on-line) meeting

MEMBERS LOGGED INTO MEETING (minimum of 13 members needed for quorum)

Barry & Gloria Blum, Sarah Kramer, Vic Greenspan, Alan & Nella Silverman, Joel Gimpel & Jan Rae, Aviva & Yehudah Plaut, Elaine Dobinson, Vivienne Aronowitz, Heather Friedman-Rivera, Stuart Liroff, Marilyn Anderson, Arnie Rabin, Craig Silverman and Courtney Meiselman. (Total members = 18)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

Heather wrote the opening prayer and read it: "May the spirit of beginnings inspire us to listen with open hearts, to speak with kindness, and to dream boldly for the future of Kona Beth Shalom. May our efforts today strengthen our bonds of community and bring blessing to those we serve."

MINUTES

Upon motion made by Joel and seconded, the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting were accepted.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Heather submitted her written remarks she read at the meeting:

"Shalom and welcome,

It has been my honor to serve as President of Kona Beth Shalom since June 1. Though my time in this role has been relatively short, I have been inspired every day by the commitment, creativity, and generosity of our members.

This past year, our congregation has continued to thrive as a vibrant Jewish presence here on Hawai'i Island. We have welcomed new members, deepened connections with long-time friends, and offered many opportunities to gather in prayer, learning, and community. I want to express a warm welcome to our newest members, Craig and Trish Silverman, Nathan Straus, Courtney Meiselman, Marvin and Seena Garavoy.

Highlights of the Year: Shabbat & Holiday Services: From heartfelt Kabbalat Shabbat gatherings to meaningful High Holy Day observances, our services continue to bring people together both in person and online.

Engaging Programs: We enjoyed hikes, a challah workshop, weekly Torah study on Zoom, snorkeling— with more in the works.

Community Care: We maintained our sacred responsibility for Beit HaShamayim, the island's only Jewish cemetery, ensuring it remains a place of dignity and peace. We also supported Jewish Community Services and collect for the Food Basket.

Expanded Communication: Through regular newsletters, social media, website updates, the Jewish Joy blog, and our new phone voicemail, we've worked to keep our community informed and connected.

Gratitude: None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers and Board members. Your time, energy, and passion keep this congregation thriving — often behind the scenes. Whether setting up for services at New Thought Center, streaming on Zoom and YouTube, baking challah, planning programs, or managing our finances, each contribution matters deeply.

Challenges & Opportunities: Like many small congregations, we face the ongoing challenge of engaging younger members, encouraging volunteer participation, and growing our membership. These are not obstacles to fear — they are opportunities to grow creatively and strengthen our foundation.

Looking Ahead: In the year ahead, we will continue building on our successes while exploring new ways to bring people together. Our Engagement Committee has exciting monthly activities planned, and we are preparing for meaningful High Holy Day experiences with visiting Rabbi Dan Fink. I encourage each of you to get involved — whether it's attending an event, lending a hand with a project, or simply welcoming someone new.

It is a privilege to serve this community, and I thank you for your trust and support. Together, we will ensure that Jewish life on the Big Island remains vibrant, welcoming, and strong for years to come."

CALENDAR FOR 2024-25 HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES

High Holidays at New Thought Center of Hawaii (NTCH)

See Addenda for chart of HH events

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mike sent the Budget for 2025 by email before the meeting. (See Addenda).

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FACILITIES

Alan reports: It's been a full year that KBS has been using New Thought Center Hawaii (NTCH) in Kealekekua as a location for services and other holiday celebrations. The management of NTCH has been responsive to our needs. The internet was unstable and not adequate for our Zoom participants. NTCH replaced it with a more robust system. At last year's Rosh Hashanah evening service, some of us had to bring out our phones to have enough light to read the prayers. NTCH replaced and improved all the lighting. They've usually been very accommodating for extra services that we occasionally add. This has meant that we have not needed to book other locations.

Thanks to the Plauts for opening their home for other events, such as the Shavuot gathering with visiting Rabbi Kerry Chaplin. And to our President Heather, who has been vigilant about security and is working to establish emergency procedures for our health and protection. We'll be talking more about that later in the meeting.

Arnie Rabin, who is a realtor, would like to offer his help in finding a place of our own for our congregation.

WEBSITE

Alan and his committee have gradually made improvements in the website, updating pages and refreshing the look, trying to make sure all the information is correct, and providing timely notice of congregation events. The scrolling banner across the top, which has been used to announce new programs, schedule updates and other late-breaking details, seems to be very popular. The online forms for memberships and donations have been refined, making it easier and faster to gather that information.

The site in general is still in need of an overhaul, and while the piecemeal improvements help, the committee looks forward to making that update in the year ahead. It really takes a lot of time to get down to the bare bones and then rebuild it, but we want to do as much as we can to keep it fresh while also providing information that's usable and useful to people.

The Zoom connection that was begun during the pandemic has become a regular feature of services and other activities. We have been live-streaming services and other activities on Facebook and this year made some software changes so we can also live-stream on the KBS YouTube channel. While only a few seem to access these streams while they're happening, the archived recordings have attracted a following.

The Zoom account enabled us to set up our own phone number. Right now, calls to it go directly to voicemail, and notice of that, along with a transcript of the voicemail go immediately to the KBS email, so we've been able to respond to

calls very quickly. And you'll see the phone number listed along with the mailing address at the bottom of KBS emails.

CEMETERY REPORT - BEIT HASHAMAYIM LOCATED IN HOMELANI MEMORIAL PARK, HILO

Heather submitted her written notes that she read at the meeting:

"As Shomer of Beit HaShamayim, I've continued my weekly checks of the cemetery, and I'm happy to report that everything has remained in good order this past year.

This summer, we completed two important improvements: we replaced the mechitza, or fence, around our section. We also added a planter filled with pebbles, providing a simple and meaningful way for visitors to place stones on their loved ones' markers in keeping with Jewish tradition.

At present, we have six plots remaining, available to members at \$4,323 each. This price reflects only the average of what KBS originally paid to acquire them — we do not make any profit. For comparison, Homelani Memorial Park's standard price is about \$8,900.

We recently completed a full revision of the cemetery booklet, which is available for members. In addition, the committee has been researching casket prices at several providers to offer the congregation more affordable and kosher-appropriate options.

Looking ahead, we will continue exploring additional casket options and remain committed to maintaining Beit HaShamayim with dignity and care."

Barry brought up concerns about the lack of appropriate caskets being available. Homelani's prices range from \$110 for a cardboard casket to \$3000 for a wooden one.

A question was asked of how many plots are in Beit Hashamayim. There are 6 plots available for sale in the 20-plot estate. There are now 8 people buried in Beit Hashamayim.

BIKUR CHOLIM/SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Nella submitted her written notes that she read at the meeting:

"On the upcoming High Holidays, KBS will be placing a large box to hold non-perishable food items for donations to the The Food Basket. It will be placed at the doorway to our sanctuary before the evening services and taken to the food bank after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We thank you for your donations.

For those in our congregation in need of prayers for healing or social services, mi shebeirach prayers are said every board meeting, torah study and in-person services.

Remember you can always make the Board aware of individual needs, problems or assistance needed by contacting KBS through the website under the pull-down "About" menu and then selecting 'Contact Us.' Our phone number is 808-217-9418. These messages are picked up and responded to by our President, Heather, as well as our web manager, Alan Silverman.

We are fortunate here in Hawaii to have a statewide social service agency, Jewish Community Services. Their website is jcs-hi.org. I encourage you to sign up for their quarterly newsletters. Their website has a calendar of Jewish events across the islands (Heather makes sure our KBS events are on that list). JCS can help with care management issues, senior services, financial assistance and support groups. Our JCS representative on Hawaii Island is Jen Schwarz. This coming Wednesday, Sept. 10 from 10-11 a.m. will be the first Kona Kupuna Connecting support group meeting. You'll need to RSVP to jen@jcs-hi.org for information and meeting location. Flyer can be found in Congregation Kona Beth Shalom email from Sept. 2nd (subject: Torah Study Ki Teitzei).

Next year we hope to get an easier way to find 'Contact Us' on the website."

Vivienne brought up that on the 16th of November, JCS will have their annual fundraising event. They are looking for valuable silent auction items. You can contact Mimi Lind at JCS directly, or you can contact Viv.

Barry brought us up-to-date on Roz Cohen. Jen Schwarz has become her social worker and Roz is now covered by Medicaid and will be able to move to a long term care facility, when available. Prayers are asked for her continued care.

Mi shebeirach was said for Elliot Reiner, Sarah Kramer and her friend Lee in Oahu and Sarah bat Chaya; Marilyn Anderson; Barry's wife, Gloria, his daughter, Katie, and her daughter, Patricia; Yehudah Plaut, Aviva and Yehudah's friend, Dan; Viv Aronowitz, Jan Rae, Heather Rivera, Marilyn Klein, and for all those in need of healing. A cousin of Vivienne's, Sydney Kahn, passed away this last week in South Africa and his funeral is today.

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Elaine explained that last January the Engagement Committee was created and originally called the membership committee, It evolved into a mission more aligned with engaging the community rather than increasing membership. Mission Statement: The Engagement Committee builds a welcoming and connected Jewish community by fostering relationships with prospective, new, and longtime members of Kona Beth Shalom. We create opportunities for meaningful involvement, ensure everyone feels valued and included, and help deepen each individual's connection to Jewish life.

Key activities this year were two Friday night Shabbat dinners, community Passover Seder, Challah Making Class, two hikes and a beach snorkel/party at Kahalu'u.

Challenges were staffing and that's because we do have a very low number of people that are around to help us. We have more members now, who hopefully will pitch in and do some of the work, and maybe will get inspired to lead one of the activities that we have planned for next year.

The next upcoming event is a book club. It's going to meet on September 14th at 10 a.m. on Zoom. Heather has suggested a wonderful book by Sarah Hurwitz, "Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life—in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)."

Eliane's suggestions for future events will be found in the Addenda. She is resigning her leadership role as 2nd Vice-President and Chair of the Engagement Committee.

HIGH HOLIDAYS

Aviva noted that it turns out that we are not unique in our situation of having to find a clergy for the high holidays. Our decision, as it was last year, was to focus more on retired clergy. The financial compensation we offer is not in line with rabbis who support themselves by being private rabbis. Aviva met Rabbi Daniel Fink during one of his last services in Boise, Idaho, and he has decided to accept our High Holiday rabbi offer.

The calendar of services, noted in these minutes and on the website in the Newsletter, shows most of the dates and times of services. Tashlich will be Sunday, September 28, at 10:30 a.m. at Old Airport Beach Pavilion #1. There will be a short service by Rabbi Fink with no potluck.

Still to be determined is an informal evening with the rabbi. The date will be posted on the website, and it most probably will be Friday night of shabbat shuvah and/or a time during the week before Kol Nidre. Topics could include the rabbi's interest in the connection between enjoying nature and religion or perhaps what is going on in Israel. The rabbi basically left it up to us. Aviva will be in touch with him.

The communication has been terrific with regard to what the service will be. Alan has all the pages from the machzor and readings. At our last Shabbat service the rabbi gave a preview and suggested some spiritual preparation for the High Holy Days since it was the first day of Elul.

JEWS NEWS AROUND THE ISLAND

Chabad of Hilo has posted their high holiday schedule, They do have a challah bake this coming Monday evening in Hilo.

Beit Aloha Elohim (BAE) in Waimea will have complete High Holiday services. This coming Friday, they are going to have a congregation-led service with an awesome student folk music band.

Rabbi Jessica Kate Meyer is coming again to Hawaii Island and may be available to be at KBS Thursday, January 22, 2026, or the previous weekend. Viv will keep us informed.

NEW BUSINESS

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

According to the bylaws, eighteen is the maximum number of trustees, excluding the past-president.

Vivienne Aronowitz has resigned as Trustee this year.

R. Shari Berman, Michael Bernstone, Barry Blum, Alan Silverman and Nella Silverman have agreed to be up for reelection. Heather asked if there are any additional nominations for trustees. Trustee terms of office are for 3 years.

Elaine nominated Arnie Rabin, since he may be interested in being on the board, making official his activities for trying to find us a home. Arnie said he would like to pursue this. He said, "It's kind of a tradition with my family of having a space. My parents started a synagogue in Skokie, Illinois, in the 60's. Since I'm in real estate, I think I could be helpful." Marilyn Anderson seconded the nomination. Joel noted that we don't need a second for nomination, just an acceptance by the nominee.

Alan Silverman nominated Craig Silverman because of his contributions, during the Torah studies and at our services, Craig has shown an interest in what we do in the congregation and participating in the planning that we do at the board. Craig said he would accept the nomination as Trustee.

Elaine said, "Not to put you on the spot, Courtney. I would like to nominate you to be on the board. We need younger people and, I think, you'd be an excellent contributor to the board." Courtney Meiselman, after asking questions of what a trustee does, agreed to be on the Board.

Heather, hearing no further nominations, closed the nominations. Heather proposed the Board elect this slate of 5 renewing and 3 new trustees by acclamation. There were no objections. Members of the congregation raised their hands, approving this slate of trustees. Congratulations to our new and renewing trustees!

The following are the Board of Trustees and the Hebrew and English years through which their terms run:

1. Shari Berman 5788 (2028)
2. Michael Bernstone 5788 (2028)
3. Barry Blum 5788 (2028)
4. Elaine Dobinson 5787 (2027)
5. Joel Gimpel 5786 (2026)
6. Victor Greenspan 5787 (2027)

7. Sarah Kramer 5786 (2026)
8. Stuart Liroff 5787 (2027)
9. Courtney Meiselman 5788 (2028)
10. Arnold Rabin 5788 (2028)
11. Heather Friedman Rivera 5787 (2027)
12. Alan Silverman 5788 (2028)
13. Craig Silverman 5788 (2028)
14. Nella Silverman 5788 (2028)

Election of the officers followed, each for a one-year term. The nominating slate was:

President, Heather Friedman-Rivera

First Vice President, Vic Greenspan (past-president)

Second Vice-President and Engagement Chair, Stuart Liroff

Secretary, Nella Silverman

Treasurer, Mike Bernstone.

Heather asked for any other additional nominations for these offices. Hearing no further nominations, Heather proposed electing this slate of officers by acclamation. There were no objections. Members of the Board raised their hands, approving this slate of officers.

Heather thanked the Board saying, "The preparation that you went into today's meeting really showed, and I'm grateful for your teamwork that makes Kona Beth Shalom thrive. Each of you brings a unique strength, whether it's planning programs, managing finances, caring for the cemetery, keeping us connected through technology, or just showing up to help out ...in small but important ways. I also wanted to give a special thank you to Elaine, who has served as our second vice president. Her energy and commitment, especially in leading our engagement work, have made a lasting impact, and we're grateful for all she's given. I feel very fortunate to serve alongside you, and I look forward to what we accomplish together in the year ahead."

Aviva thanked Vivienne who, for years, has been a stalwart member of KBS, brought us the understanding that all the Jews on the island and all Jews everywhere are one family, and that organizing takes courage. Aviva said, "I've learned from you, and I want to thank you for everything you've done for me, personally, and for our community." Vivienne thanked Aviva and said she felt good about stepping down

from the Board with 3 new members and strong leadership from Heather as President. Viv will continue to be a KBS member.

ADJOURNMENT

The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. A short Board meeting will follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nella Silverman, Secretary

ADDENDA

Erev Rosh HaShanah NTCH Kealakekua <i>followed by Kiddush with apples & honey</i>	MON evening	Sep 22	6 pm
Rosh HaShanah Day NTCH Kealakekua <i>followed by Kiddush and potluck*</i>	TUE morning	Sep 23	10 am
Kabbalat Shabbat <i>Location to be announced</i>	FRI evening	Sep 26	6 pm
Shabbat Shuva NTCH Kealakekua <i>followed by Kiddush and potluck*</i>	SAT morning	Sep 27	10:30 am
Tashlich <i>Kona Old Airport Park, Beach Pavilion #1</i>	SUN morning	Sep 28	10:30AM
Discussions with Rabbi Fink <i>Location & topics will be announced.</i>	(TBA)	(TBA)	(TBA)
Kol Nidre NTCH Kealakekua	WED evening	Oct 1	6 pm
Yom Kippur NTCH Kealakekua	THUR all day	Oct 2	10 am
Shacharit (morning service)			10 am - 1 pm
Mid-afternoon discussion			~2 - 3 pm
Minchah Torah Service			3:30 pm
Yizkor			4:00 pm
Neilah			5:50 pm
Havdalah <i>followed by break-the-fast w/ lox & bagels + potluck</i>			*Sunset at 6:12 pm
* Potlucks: if you are able, bring a dish to share But NO meat or shellfish, please.			

Engagement Committee future events suggestions:

October 2025

Kids/Teens Art & Snacks: “What Judaism Means to Me” – Creative expression & community for our youth. Found these [Make your own Mezuzah Kit | Wooden Mezuzah Cases for Decoration | The "Jewish School Supply Company"](#) and non kosher scrolls [Amazon.com: My Daily Styles 4 \(Four Sheets\) Mezuzah Non-Kosher Klaf Printed Paper Parchment Hebrew Mezuzah 4" x 4" Count 4 \(Four\) Klafs Included : Home & Kitchen](#)

November 2025

Israeli Dancing – Learn simple, joyful dances. No experience needed. (Need to find someone to teach it)

December 2025

Latke & Sufganiyot Cooking– Cook, taste, and celebrate Hanukkah with community and creativity.

January 2026

Tu BiShvat Hike & Fruit Tasting – A nature walk and picnic to honor our connection to the Earth.

February 2026

Kabbalat Shabbat – Sharing Shabbat together.

March 2026

Hamantaschen Baking & Costume Contest – Sweet treats and silly fun for Purim prep.

April 2026

Passover Prep & Recipe Share – Learn, teach, and taste new ideas for your seder.

May 2026

Lag BaOmer Bonfire or Picnic – Sunset celebration with song, snacks, and s'mores.

June 2026

Shavuot Cheesecake Tasting & Texts – Explore Jewish wisdom and dessert traditions.

July 2026

Reverse Tashlich / Beach Clean-Up – Honor our Earth through service and shared purpose

**Congregation Kona Beth Shalom
Budget 2025-2026**

Income	
Contributions Income	
Unrestricted	7,500.00
Total Contributions Income	<u>7,500.00</u>
Membership Dues	10,000.00
Miscellaneous Income	500.00
Program Fees	500.00
Total Income	<u>18,500.00</u>
Gross Profit	18,500.00
Expense	
Adult Education	500.00
Contributions	500.00
Credit Card Fees	200.00
Insurance	
Directors & Officers Insurance	925.00
Liability Insurance	625.00
Total Insurance	<u>1,550.00</u>
Miscellaneous	25.00
Postage and Supplies	100.00
Printing and Reproduction	300.00
Program Expense	
Holidays	7,000.00
Sabbath services	2,500.00
Total Program Expense	<u>9,500.00</u>
Rent	7,000.00
Repairs	250.00
Travel & Ent	
Meals	250.00
Travel	200.00
Total Travel & Ent	<u>450.00</u>
Website maintenance	750.00
Total Expense	<u>21,125.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	(2,625.00)
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
Interest Income	3,000.00
NET INCOME	<u><u>375.00</u></u>