



## **Board of Directors Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

**7:00 PM via Zoom**

### **Minutes**

**Attendance:** Bob Barkin, Ira Bartfield, Ellen Blalock, Michele 'Cookie' Hymer Blitz, Albert Bloomfield, Bob Budoff, AJ Campbell, Benham Dayanim, Judith Fogel, Michael Friedman, Stephen N. Gell, Marion Goldberg, Rick Goldstein, Galia Messika Greenberg, Erwin Groner, Susan Jerison, Fran Kritz, Saradona Lefkowitz, Stefanie Sanders Levy, Matthew Mandel, Ron Paul, Thorn Pozen, Harvey Reiter, Thomas Riesenber, Janis Schiff, Marla Schulman, Marcy Schwab, Robert Shapiro, Johnny Shuchart, Bobbi Shulman, James Sturim, June Trone, David L. Weiss, Jerry Weiss, Tal Widdes, Marilyn Wind **Staff:** Ron Halber, Guila Franklin Siegel, Vicki Fishman, Nirma Medrano, Deb Miller, Tanya Nguyen, Lisa Silverman, Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky **Consultant:** Julie Greenwald

- I. Welcome Ronald A. Paul, MD, President
- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM
  - b. Attendance was taken by Lisa Silverman
  - c. Approval of January Board meeting minutes: There were no changes requested to the January minutes. A motion was made by Johnny Shuchart to accept the minutes from the January meeting as presented. A

second motion was made by Jerry Weiss. The motion passed unanimously.

d. President's Report

I thought I was going to go down in history as the only JCRC President to never make a public appearance, but I am happy to report that our plan, assuming public health conditions remain on a positive trajectory, is to hold our annual meeting on Wednesday, June 15 in-person. We will welcome our new president, executive committee, and board. An application for new board members will be made available soon.

We have hired Janice Rosenblatt, in the temporary, part-time position of Community Organizer/Program Associate. She will begin next week when she returns from Israel. Her responsibilities will include spearheading Jewish communal engagement with Afghan resettlement efforts – both Jewish organizational involvement and volunteerism – and supporting some additional JCRC programmatic efforts.

JCRC's gala will be held on either September 15 or 20. We have already selected our Lessans Community Leadership and Distinguished Service Award winners and are now evaluating potential candidates for our Breslau Goldman Award.

I want to highlight the extraordinary productivity, accomplishment, and engagement of our organization. Since January of this year, we have held at least 20 online events for our community, with over 2,000 people in attendance, featuring an enormous array of programs on topics such as: legislative priorities and local advocacy, social justice, Israel, human rights, and security briefings for our Jewish community. The specific list of events includes our several Maryland and Virginia Advocacy Day programs, meetings with Maryland gubernatorial candidates- 3 more are scheduled before the end of April, security briefings in each of our jurisdictions following the hostage-taking in Colleyville, Texas, a national book event with Congressman Jamie Raskin, and educational programs on climate change, the Uyghur genocide, disability rights, the Israeli judicial system and the legal status of minority populations, and the war in Ukraine.

I want to thank the board for reviewing the 990 form. It has been submitted.

As you know Hamas has been holding the remains of Israeli soldier Lt Hadar Goldin since he was killed in action in Gaza 8 years ago. Hadar's mother addressed the board several years ago, and we voted to make the return of his remains and that of his fellow soldier Sgt. Oron Shaul and two Israeli citizens a priority. Two weeks ago, William Daroff, executive director of the Conference of Presidents, Ron, and Adam met with Hadar Goldin's mother and father by zoom. We think with US economic assistance heading to Gaza, along with aid from Turkey, Egypt, and Qatar, we are in a position to use financial pressure to help secure the return of the remains of the Israeli soldiers. We have written a letter to Senator Cardin asking him to meet with Lt. Goldin's parents.

As mentioned earlier, we have held security forums for the Jewish communities in Montgomery County, DC, and Fairfax County. After anti-Semitic flyers were distributed

in Bowie, we will now be holding one with the Prince George's County Jewish community as well.

Thank you.

## II. Financial Report

Tanya Nguyen, Controller

Behnam Dayanim, Treasurer

Behnam spoke about financials for July 2021 - January 2022, about 58% of the fiscal year. The overall financial position of the JCRC is very stable. Revenues are trending consistently with our budget. Actual expenditure is slightly under budget. Tax return form 990 has been filed.

Tanya shared documents via the share screen function on Zoom. She noted that the Development/Fundraising Consultant position was incorrectly budgeted to G & A when it should have been charged to Fundraising.

There was a question about revenue from Gala 21 being recorded in FY22. Tanya and Ron explained that since the pandemic the annual Gala has moved from the spring to the fall. Gala21 was held in Oct 2021 and that is FY22 since the JCRC fiscal year starts on July 1st every year. Gala21 revenue was recognized as pledges came in both before and after July 1st, 2021, and therefore about 35% were recorded in FY21 and 65% were recorded in FY22.

## III. Housing Policy

Rick Goldstein

Rick thanked everyone on the Board of Directors, and the JCRC staff, as well as outside experts who assisted in developing and drafting a new policy statement on

affordable housing. He summarized their process and the content of the proposed policy, and then opened the discussion for questions and answers. A Director suggested adding to the document information about specific actions that the JCRC can take to further the goals contained in the policy. Rick explained that the policy was meant to be general in order to maximally empower the JCRC staff and leadership. Another Director asked if there are currently any items of legislation that prompted the writing of this policy paper. Rick answered that he is not aware of any.

A motion was made by Marilyn Wind to accept the Affordable Housing Policy as written. A second motion was made by Cookie Blitz. The motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. The New Cold War

Professor Stephen Berk, Union  
College

Professor Berk spoke in depth about Vladimir Putin and the situation in Ukraine.

#### V. Federation Ukraine Appeal

Michael Friedman

Michael, who is co-chairing the Federation's Ukraine Emergency Campaign with Liza Levy, appealed to all members of the JCRC Board of Directors to donate to this critical fund, which has already received more than 2200 gifts totaling nearly \$1.1M.

At this point in the meeting, it was nearly 9:00 PM ET (Eastern Time). It was decided to forgo the presentation of Commission Reports in favor of emailing the board reports at a later time.

#### VI. Commission Reports

## **a. Holocaust**

Ira Bartfield

The JCRC's Holocaust Commission just held its third meeting last week in preparation for the upcoming virtual Yom Ha'Shoah Commemoration on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. Plans for the commemoration have been finalized, with roles for candle lighters, presenters, student readers, and musicians all being assigned. Our co-sponsors this year are Shaare Torah in Gaithersburg and Shaare Shalom in Leesburg. We are thrilled to partner with synagogues that did not have adequate facilities or parking to host our in-person commemorations. Rabbis Annie Lewis and Yosef Goldman from Shaare Torah and Rabbi Neil Tow from Shaare Shalom are very honored to be involved and lend their voices and support to this event. Our keynote speaker will be survivor Josie Traum.

We will be receiving Yom Hashoah proclamations from Montgomery, Fairfax, Loudon, and Arlington Counties, and from the DC Council. As of now, the Montgomery County proclamation will be in person on April 26<sup>th</sup>. The DC proclamation will be presented by Councilmember Brianne Nadeau at the 3GDC Yom Ha'Shoah program at Sixth & I on April 27<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful for local governments' acknowledgement of Yom Ha'Shoah and their recognition of our local survivors and their families.

We are also grateful to our local JCC's for partnering with us to distribute Yellow Candles. When our program was held in-person, the candles were given to attendees. As our program is now virtual, we have developed alternate ways to get these candles, and their message, out to community member.

The Dor L'Dor program, which brings together Holocaust survivors and teens throughout our community, is taking shape as survivors are being contacted and sessions are being scheduled.

Please visit the JCRC website to lend your support to the JCRC's sacred mission of Holocaust remembrance and education.

## **b. Education**

Marcy Schwab

### **▪ Calendar Advocacy**

At the end of January, the Fairfax County School Board voted to adopt a 2022-2023 academic calendar that includes a school closure on Yom Kippur and a professional day on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. This is an extraordinary development! FCPS now joins the other school districts in Northern Virginia as well as Montgomery County,

Prince George's County, and Fredrick County - in giving off for some or all of these holidays.

▪ **Educating about Judaism and Antisemitism in School**

In February, the JCRC and ADL teamed once again to train over 100 educators at Holton Arms school in Bethesda. Teachers engaged with our teen Student to Student leaders and deepened their understanding of Jewish identity, antisemitism, and Israel.

We have been responding to a variety of antisemitic incidents and providing professional development on issues of importance to Jewish students and employees. This past month we have worked on issues in the Loudoun, Arlington, and Montgomery County school systems.

▪ **Holocaust Speakers**

- Holocaust survivor speakers are gearing up for opportunities to speak in classrooms – and workplaces. Many thanks to Sheila Budoff for reaching out to us to have one of our survivors speak to Arlington County municipal employees.
- Our pilot Maggid; Generations of the Shoah program, which trained 14 adult children of Holocaust survivors to share their parents' Holocaust experiences, successfully concluded. We are now offering JCRC board members an opportunity to host a Yom Hashoah Zikron B'salon event featuring one of our newly trained speakers. For those of you unfamiliar with Zikaron B'Salon, it is an Israeli-created program that allows people to observe Yom Hashoah in a more personal way, in their homes, and with their own friends, family and colleagues. With antisemitism on the rise, commemorating and educating about the Holocaust is more important than ever. Please reach out to Adam Odesser if you are interested in participating in this program.
- Ellen Blalock has worked tirelessly with Claude Kaczer to create a video of him sharing his family's Holocaust experience.

▪ **Student to Student**

- Student to Student Presentations have continued in Loudoun, Fairfax, and Montgomery County Schools
- We presented in December at Burke School and this week at West Potomac HS in Arlington.
- The Student to Student Interfaith group will visit the Sikh temple in Rockville on Sunday March 13. The afternoon will include packing good for Afghan refugees, a tour, an interfaith dialogue, and dinner.

c. **Maryland**

Bobbi Shulman

The Maryland Commission has been incredibly busy since our last board meeting because the Maryland General Assembly is in full swing, and we have been moderating multiple virtual advocacy nights. We are grateful that many of you participated in these meaningful Q&A discussions with our state elected officials. We were able to advocate on behalf of policies and budget items that are critical to us and hear what issues the delegation is focusing on in Annapolis.

We are more than half-way through the 90-day legislative session. In fact, yesterday was the last day new bills could be introduced without rules suspension, so we expect to see a bit of a slowdown. So far, we have submitted written testimony on more than three dozen bills. This includes advocating for close to a million dollars for our agencies - JSSA, ElderSAFE, Holocaust Survivors, and the Maryland Israel Development Center. We also submitted testimony for \$10 million dollars for the BOOST program to help families pay for day school, and \$7 million for security needs for schools, synagogues, and daycare centers. Thus far in the legislative process, we are grateful there have been no recommended funding cuts.

On the policy front, we gave oral testimony in support of Senator Kramer's Hate Crimes Civil Remedy legislation. This year, the bill finally got traction and passed on the Senate floor 47-0. Hopefully the same will happen in the House. We also are watching the Ban on Ghost Guns, which we supported and has a lot of leadership backing. And, we have submitted testimony to address climate change, support people with disabilities, provide funding for childcare, ensure access to abortion, support victims of domestic violence, and provide legal representation for both immigrants and tenants in eviction hearings.

On the county level, we, along with a dozen agency and school heads, had a 75-minute sit down last month with County Executive, Marc Elrich. It was a productive meeting in that we had an opportunity to thank him for the \$700,000 security program of which Jewish synagogues, schools and organizations received roughly two-thirds of the funding. We discussed increasing that program to over a million dollars. We also asked the county executive about funding for a pedestrian bridge for Kemp Mill residents as well as supporting our capital requests for the JCRC's special needs camp and Revitz House's infrastructure improvements.

Finally, as many of you know, primaries in Maryland will be held this coming July. To strengthen our relationships with the candidates running for Congressional District 4, Governor, and County Executive, we continue to hold virtual gatherings. Already we have spoken with David Blair and Wes Moore, and earlier this week we met with gubernatorial candidate Tom Perez. Over the next 4 weeks we have also lined up

Rushern Baker, Peter Franchot and John King. We hope you will attend these community-wide meetings as it is always valuable and essential to voice our community priorities and stay engaged in our advocacy efforts.

**d. Virginia**

Bob Budoff

The 2022 General Assembly is well underway and will be wrapping up its General Session in the next couple of weeks. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> we joined the Tidewater, Richmond and Virginia Peninsula regions to bring together approximately 300 community members to hear from the new administration – Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears, Attorney General Jason Miyares and Governor Glenn Youngkin. We also held small, virtual lobbying meetings with members of our local delegation.

We are pleased to report that the JCRC's three primary budget priorities were included in the Governor's budget and survived the first round of amendments in both the House of Delegates and the Senate. These include \$1.5 million in annual funding to continue the Hate Crimes Security Grant that we helped establish last session, \$200,000 annually for JSSA's program caring for aging Holocaust survivors, and \$89,000 annually for JFGH's MOST program in Loudoun County. We also are advocating for \$4 million in annual funding that would go towards Afghan refugee relief and resettlement efforts.

Our other advocacy includes opposing legislation that would have rolled back voting rights, gun safety regulations and full access to reproductive health care. We continue to support legislation that would create wildlife corridors and encourage the use of alternative energy sources. We testified in favor of legislation that would have limited the use of solitary confinement in Virginia's prison system. That legislation has been turned into a study of the issue, so it likely will remain on our agenda for at least another year.

In addition to our legislative advocacy, we were asked to submit names to serve on the commission established by Governor Youngkin to Combat Antisemitism and attended a meeting with Attorney General Miyares to discuss ways in which his office can combat antisemitism.



e. DC

Thorn Pozen

The Hate Crimes Communications Network of FBI and associated security and law enforcement agencies with minority communities, officially launched last month with a webinar featuring a discussion of hate crimes based on religious bias with Vicki Fishman from JCRC, as well as representatives from the Muslim and Sikh communities. The Network has grown since then and is actively sharing information about hate crimes and incidents with diverse community advocates around DC and metro-New York.

We also participated in several calls with the FBI and Homeland Security's community partners focusing on the recent spate of bomb threats to HBCUs and other historically Black institutions in the region and around the country.

Working with Adas Israel Congregation's robust Social Action team, on February 17 we hosted a virtual "Teach-in" about the Uyghur genocide to coincide with the Olympics. More than 300 people nationwide registered for the event, which included firsthand survivor testimony as well as advocacy and activist reports. If you did not get a chance to join the webinar, the recording can be found on our YouTube channel, or Vicki will be happy to send you a link.

Finally, on the legislative front, we joined ADL and AJC in working with Councilmember Brianne Nadeau on a Resolution Condemning Antisemitism that was presented for the Council's agenda last week. We also continue to support Tzedek DC's work promoting legislation that would protect debtors from predatory collection practices.

f. **Dr. Stuart Lessans Israel Action Center**

Matt Mandel

- **Developments in Arab Society in Israel - Part II / February 15, 2022**

After hosting part 1 in the series, on February 15th we co-sponsored part II of Developments in Arab Society in Israel, as we explored the unprecedented developments in Israel over the past year and the impact of the first Arab party to play a critical role in the governing coalition, leading to a historic 30 billion Shekel commitment to Arab society in Israel. This program

featured Yael Mevorach, Former Director General at Israel's Ministry for Social Equality and Mudar Yunis, Mayor of Arara-Ara, and Chair of Israel's National Council of Arab Mayors, for a conversation on the Government's plan to close socio-economic gaps within the Arab sector, and what it means for the everyday lives of Arab citizens of Israel.

- **Brown Bag Lunch – Understanding Israel’s Judicial System and Its Impact on Minorities / February 22, 2022**

On February 22nd, the JCRC hosted a brown bag lunch with Professor Mohammed Wattad, Dean of Law at Tzfat Academic College, for an in-depth conversation on Israel’s Judicial System, examining Israel’s lack of a constitution versus the US constitutional system, its impact on minority populations and differences in legal education in Israel as opposed to the US.

- **Russia and Ukraine at War / March 1, 2022**

Lastly, The JCRC hosted an emergency briefing on recent events and developments in Ukraine, featuring Dr. Anna Borshchevskaya, Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute and Sam Sokol, journalist for the Israeli daily Ha’aretz, moderated by our own Ron Halber. The webinar focused on recent developments in Ukraine, reasons behind Russia’s invasion, geo-political ramifications, and implications on the local Jewish community in Ukraine. Zach Briton, Development Officer for the Federation, joined the call to provide information on ways to support the Ukrainian Jewish community. Over 250 attended the call and following the program many people donated to Federation’s Ukrainian Emergency Fund.

g. **Intergroup**

Janis Shiff

- **Brown Bag Lawyers Lunch program**

February’s Brown Bag Lawyers Lunch program, co-sponsored by JCRC, Tzedek DC, AJC, and Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, focused on interfaith efforts to address climate change. Rabbi Sharofsky and JCRC board member Harvey Reiter moderated a discussion with Rabbi Daniel Swartz, executive director of COEJL and Joelle Novey, executive director of Interfaith Power and Light, DMV, exploring ways faith communities can address climate change, including legislative advocacy.

- **US Dept of Health and Human Services/Office of Civil Rights - Antisemitism presentation**

As incidents of antisemitism increase, more organizations, companies, and government agencies are looking for ways to discuss antisemitism within the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion work. JCRC regularly receives requests for speakers and presentations on antisemitism in schools and now, in the workplace. Rabbi Sharofsky was a featured speaker, alongside an international expert on the history of antisemitism, at a program for over 100 employees in US Dept of Health and Human Services/Office of Civil Rights throughout the country.

- **IFC Inaugural Meeting of Interfaith Organizations in the DMV**

JCRC participated in the inaugural Meeting of Interfaith Organizations in the DMV, hosted by the Interfaith Council of Metro Washington. This gathering included professional and lay leadership from interfaith organizations and groups throughout the region, bringing together staff and volunteers, representatives from county governments, educators, and clergy. JCRC is a proud partner of IFC and supported this important initiative.

- **MCPS and JCRC Town Hall on the Antiracism Audit**

JCRC hosted a Town Hall for the Jewish community to learn and ask questions about the Antiracism System Audit taking place in Montgomery County Public Schools. Jewish families in MCPS and Jewish community members heard a presentation on the audit from John Landesman, the executive director for the Office of Strategic Initiatives at MCPS and had the opportunity to speak with MCPS staff in small groups, talking about ways to address antisemitism through this audit and after. Thank you to JCRC board member Marla Schulman for helping facilitate conversations during this program.

- **Prince George's County Office of Human Rights – Featured Panelist**

Rabbi Sharofsky participated in a panel discussion with faith and community leaders from the Christian and Muslim communities, hosted by Prince George's County Office of Human Rights and broadcast through the Prince George's County Public Library. The discussion focused on the role of faith in navigating a divided society. Participation in this panel is a big step for JCRC, as we continue to build relationships with community leaders in Prince George's County.

- **Loudoun County School Board Equity Committee**

JCRC appointed a new representative to the Equity Committee of the Loudoun County School Board, Erica Harris. Ms. Harris is the congregational president of Sha'are Shalom in Leesburg, VA, a proud LCPS parent, and educator. We are looking forward to working with Ms. Harris as she represents JCRC. The appointment was previously held by Rabbi Sharofsky, who served on the committee for the past year. JCRC was asked to nominate a Loudoun County resident for this seat, a change from previous years, and engaged in a thorough application and interview process before nominating Ms. Harris.

- **Interfaith Dialogue with Teens from American Turkish Friendship Association and Student to Student**

A group of Student to Student participants who expressed interest in interfaith dialogue met with teens from the American Turkish Friendship Association (ATFA) for an afternoon of dialogue. The teens had open and honest conversations about their faith and experiences as Jews and Muslims in the U.S. JCRC board member Jim Sturim has been instrumental in building the connection between JCRC and ATFA and will be helping organize future programs between our two communities.

VII. Executive Director's Report  
Director

Ron Halber, Executive

Ron's report was very short: "I hope you enjoyed the meeting."

VIII. Welfare

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stefanie Sanders Levy

Secretary