

The Executive
November 18, 2024
Hilton Hotel, Tel Aviv

Minutes

חבר הנאמנים
Board of Governors

Members: Doron Almog – Chair, Harvey Blitz, Kenneth Bob, Shoshana Dweck, Sam Grundwerg, Yaakov Hagoel, Yizhar Hess, Lori Klinghoffer, Bruce Leboff, Mark Leibler (zoom), Mark Levenson, Steven Lowy, Dror Morag, Julie Platt, Yaron Shavit, Jane Sherman (zoom), Bruce Sholk, Mark Wilf.

Associate Members: Yaakov Aharoni, Eric Fingerhut, Michael Hoffman, Josh Schwarcz, Yehuda Setton, Reuben Shalom.

Honorary Members: Daniel Liwerant, Richie Pearlstone, Michael Siegal.

Secretary of the Executive: Josh Schwarcz

Invitees: Rachel Abecassis, Amira Ahronoviz, Dani Alaluf, Diana Anderson, Sandy Antignas, Moshe Ashirie, Richard Bernstein, Rebecca Caspi, Bosmat Chelouche, Matan Dansker, Dan Elbaum, Yehuda Feinberg, Shay Felber, Jeff Finkelstein, Eric Goldstein, Shivi Greenfield, Andy Groveman, Evan Hochberg, Stav Herling, Shira Huss, Tzur Keren, Elad Mayer, Ruti Mor-Paz, Danyelle Neuman, Yigal Palmor, Gil Preuss, Erika Rudin-Luria, Inbar Ruimy, Jeff Schoenfeld, Nathan Shechter, Aviva Shetreet, Sondra Sokal, Steven Stav, Yair Szlak, Tzur Keren, Edna Weinstock-Gabay, Hagit Weiss.

Opening Remarks

Maj. Gen. Doron Almog opened the meeting by mentioning the names of two soldiers who fell in Gaza that night, Yogev Pazi who also served as our shinshin in Chicago in the past and Noam Eitan. He congratulated Yaron Shavit for his achievements for JAFI in financial negotiations with the JNF. He thanked Steven Lowy that this is his last meeting as Chair of KH, for his leadership and commitment. He wished Bruce Leboff much success and congratulated Julie Platt and the JFNA for a wonderful GA.

Doron Almog mentioned the remarkable number of shlichm this year and stressed that JAFI is working tirelessly in the area of Aliyah, which is the main growing engine for this country, while making every effort to strengthen both Israeli society and worldwide communities. Maj. Gen. Almog elaborated on the need to invest in rehabilitation of the North and South and of course rebuilding Jewish unity and strength.

Approval of Minutes

Josh Schwarcz presented the minutes of the June 24, 2024 zoom meeting.

The Executive unanimously approved the above-mentioned minutes.

Reports from the Partners

Keren Hayesod

Steven Lowy, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Keren Hayesod, congratulated Bruce Leboff, his successor, and also congratulated Yehuda Setton on assuming the position of CEO, saying that we are all committed to the mission of supporting the State of Israel. Mr. Lowy spoke about the importance of continuing Aliyah to Israel and claimed that this is one of the main goals of Keren Hayesod.

He spoke about the rising anti-Semitism and stressed that this is very disturbing and concerns all communities. He noted the communities' growing commitment to Israel, especially in light of the events of the October 7th, and this is reflected in the numbers. He said that Keren Hayesod raised \$170 million in emergency campaign, of which \$47 million went to JAFI. He stressed that KH would meet all its financial commitments. Mr. Lowy said that he has enormous respect for JAFI's team and took the opportunity to thank the very dedicated staff of KH.

JFNA-UIA

Ms. Julie Platt, JFNA Chair, congratulated Yehuda Setton for his first Executive meeting as CEO. Ms. Platt stressed that JFNA is committed to *Tzedek* and *Tzedakah* and therefore have

raised more than \$859M for the emergency campaign. More than \$149M were granted to JAFI. She thanked the professional staff of the Jewish Agency for their tireless commitment and work.

Ms. Platt elaborated on JFNA's activities in the area of rehabilitation, support to small businesses, and more. Through the annual campaign the federations raised funds for various purposes within the communities and for Israel; Ms. Platt stated that this year the non-designated budget has increased and will be \$64.5M.

Julie Platt concluded by stating that the Jewish people and Israel are facing unprecedented challenges and stressed that the federation system is ready to act and is determined to assist in any way possible.

World Zionist Organization

Yaakov Hagoel congratulated Steven Lowy and thanked him for the genuine partnership.

He reported on two major initiatives of the WZO, the first in building of seven neighborhoods for residents of Kibbutzim that cannot currently return to their origin Kibbutz. The other project is dealing with families of hostages and the families of return hostages – the WZO is part of the administration that gives services to this population.

Mr. Hagoel elaborated on the democratic process that is happening in various communities worldwide towards the upcoming Zionist Congress that will take place in October 2025. He invited everyone to take part in this democratic Zionist process.

He concluded with a prayer for the well-being of the soldiers.

Appointment of Deputy Director General for Marketing

Josh Schwarcz said that according to the By-Laws Deputy Directors General are appointed by the Executive upon recommendation of the Director General and the approval of the Chair of the Executive. Therefore, it is presented to appoint Ms. Fiana Drang as DDG for Marketing.

The Executive unanimously approved the appointment of Fiana Drang.

Six-Year Activity Summary

Amira Ahronoviz expressed her gratitude for the event held in her honor the previous evening. She stressed that everyone, on the Board and the Executive, will always remain close to her heart. Before leaving, Amira wanted to raise a number of issues which she believes the organization should address:

- The need for the state to physically rehabilitate part of its land. This will require significant investment and we must be part of it.
- The economic situation, especially the difficulties in the periphery and within small businesses.
- Aliyah – must be promoted to strengthen the country and the people.
- Providing an opportunity for every Jew to have a part in this great project.
- The geo-political situation.
- Jewish life in the FSU.
- Profound Dialogue with the GOI.
- Positioning the Jewish Agency within Israeli society.

She concluded by stating that we should do it all in cooperation and remain united in front of the common challenges and goals.

Director General's Update

Yehuda Setton spoke of the tireless work of Jewish Agency employees in light of the many challenges, including frequent rocket attacks. He raised the issue of the capital campaign, which is important for all of us as representatives of the Jewish people to agree on. Yehuda

presented the work plan for 2024-2025 and stressed that it is important to work together with the partners to implement the plan.

Yehuda reported that when assuming the position of Director General he dealt with three basic critical issues: technology (starting a process of replacing the ERP system as well as separating the position of CEO of the IT company and the position of CIO); marketing (appointment of DDG from the business sector); rearranging the FRD efforts.

The Jewish Agency Security Fund

Josh Schwarcz reminded the Executive that the Fund was established following the terror attack in Toulouse in 2012 at the request of the GOI. He went through the current threats against Jewish communities, that increased significantly since October 7th, and elaborated on the Fund's activities worldwide.

Josh went through the structure of the Fund's steering committee and its lay oversight authorities and stressed that so far, the Fund allocated some \$27M to more than 1000 Jewish institutions in 88 countries and elaborated on its emergency grants in light of the "Iron Swords" War. He concluded his report by stressing that the security division has mapped and identified \$25M in unmet security needs worldwide.

2024 – 2025 Budget

Bruce Sholk announced that we expect to deliver a balanced budget for 2024. He mentioned that one component will continue into 2025 - JAFI, together with JDC and Chabad, with the support of the federations, will continue to raise incremental funds for the benefit of the crisis in Russia and Ukraine.

He reminded that in February we approved a two-years budget because there were changes in priorities. He also reminded that we made a promise that we would come back with updates and changes as for 2025 budget, as necessary. Mr. Sholk presented the way that in 2025 the core budget will no longer be affected by our activities related to the Russia-Ukraine War. He pointed out that core budget for 2025 is NIS 30M higher than in what we approved in February because of incremental designated funds and thanks to additional increases and grants.

Bruce Sholk presented the proposed resolution for approving the 2025 budget. He said that following extensive discussions and close cooperation with our partners we are aligned on the critical need to keep core unrestricted funding at the levels in the 2023 budget and are projecting that unrestricted funds from JFNA and KH over this period will remain flat.

The Executive approved the proposed budget resolution.

Miscellaneous

Josh reported that when Yaakov Hagoel was acting Chair of the Executive, he worked with the Israeli government on the issue of recognizing Jewish victims in the Diaspora as Victims of Terror for the purpose of commemoration.

The government established a joint committee for commemoration, of the Agency, the WZO and the Ministry of Diaspora. The committee held its first meeting and after an initial mapping, we have already recognized dozens. We are publishing a press release calling on the public to send information on the subject and we will continue this important work.

Summary: Aviva Shetreet