



## AGENDA

### 176<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM

**Monday, November 28, 2022 at 7:00 PM**

**Julius Suss – Presiding**

1. Call to order – Julius Suss
2. D'var Torah – Rabbi Adam Scheier
3. Approval of minutes of 175th Annual General Meeting – Jonathan Schacter
4. Names of members who passed away last year – Jonathan Schacter, and the Memorial Prayer –Cantor Gideon Zelermyer
5. Treasurer's report – Michael Stern
6. Election of auditors – Michael Stern
7. Presentation of the Lynn Eltes Volunteer Award for Dedication to Mishloach Manot to Naomi Fayer
8. President's report – Julius Suss
9. Discharge of Officers and Board of Trustees (5782) – Rabbi Adam Scheier
10. Report on the Nomination Committee – Claire Berger
11. Installation of Officers and Board of Trustees (5783) – Rabbi Adam Scheier
12. Approval of proposed 2022 By-laws – Claire Berger/ Peter Jacobs/ Raphael Kertesz
13. Remarks from incoming President – Joseph Paperman
14. Good and welfare
15. Adjournment

*Dessert Reception*

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CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM

450 KENSINGTON AVENUE, WESTMOUNT, QUEBEC, CANADA H3Y 3A2  
TEL. 514 937 9471 FAX 514 937 2067 WWW.SHAARHASHOMAYIM.ORG

**CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM**

**OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES  
FOR THE YEAR 5783-84 (2022-2023)**

**The following members of the Congregation are Honorary Officers for life in accordance with the By-laws:**

Honorary Presidents:	Dr. Charles Solomon Nahum Gelber, C.M., Q.C. Ian R. Rudnikoff Michael Cape Dr. June Chaikelson Dr. Mel Hershenfield Jonathan Schneiderman Alvin Fagen, CPA, CA David J. Cape Joseph Paperman Michael Stern, CPA, CA Claire Berger
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Honorary Officers for a period of one year:**

Honorary Vice-President:	J. Stephen Lipper
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Officers for a period of one year:**

President:	Joseph Paperman *
Immediate Past President:	Julius Suss *
Vice-Presidents:	Sylvie Bismuth Mara Greenstone Agulnik * Peter Jacobs C.M Raphael Kertes Joshua Ostrega *
Treasurer:	Michael Stern, CPA, CA
Secretary:	Jonathan Schacter CPA, CA

**The following member is an Officer by virtue of his position in the By-laws:**

Parnass:	Ronald Mayers
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Trustees:**

Alexandre Abecassis *	France Brat
Rick Boretsky	Jeff Feifer *
Malvina Klag	Jonathan Mechanic
Stephen Greenberg	Inna Nekhim
Emily Shore *	

**The following are members of the Board of Trustees by virtue of their current office:**

President of Sisterhood:	Michaela Meltzer
President of Men's Association:	Irwin Zelniker
Cemetery Committee:	Geoffrey Gelber

\*Indicates change from last year

Current as of October 24, 2022

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## **ELECTIONS**

For your information, By-law IX C. (d) provides as follows:

“If ten or more members desire to nominate another candidate for office, they shall send to the Nominating Committee, at least one week prior to the Annual General Meeting, a written nomination of such member signed by each of them together with a consent in writing, signed by the candidate, that he/she will accept office if elected. In this event, a ballot will be taken at the Annual General Meeting. Otherwise, the persons nominated by the Nominating Committee will be declared elected.



**MINUTES OF THE 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021 by ZOOM**

**Members Present:**

Helen Adam	Stephen Greenberg	Joshua Ostrega
Sam Altman	Mara Greenstone	Joseph Paperman
Carl Backman	Peter Herscovitch	Richard Pedvis
Enid Backman	Dr. Mel Hershenfield	Carole Rocklin
Lainie Berger	Connie Isenberg	Arthur Roskies
Claire Berger	Peter Jacobs	Anthony Rubin
Ruth Berger	Roger Jay	Bea Schachter
Mark Bindman	Calvin Kalman	Hershie Schachter
Sylvie Bismuth	Steven Katkin	Jonathan Schacter
Eric Bissell	Raphael Kertesz	Rabbi Adam Scheier
Herbert Blumer	Malvina Klag	Jonathan Schneiderman
Rick Boretsky	Penni Kolb	Beverly Shaffer
Eileen Borsuk	Elsa Kotler	Emily Shore
France Brat	Harold Lehrer	Constance Solomon
K. David Brody	Miles Leutner	Henri Stein
Fred Carsley	Janis Levine	Janice Steinberg
Dr. June Chaikelson	Dr. Oro Librowicz	Michael Stern
Michael Chernick	J. Stephen Lipper	Susan Stern
Farla Cohen	Ralph Lipper	Susan Stromberg
Dr. Myriam Dahan	Monna Malkinson	Marvin Stutman
John Diamond	Peter Marcovitz	Julius Suss
Yosi Even-Hen	Esther Marovitch	Terry Suss
Alvin Fagen, C.A.	Sydney Marovitch	Angela Tietolman
Rabba Rachel Kohl Finegold	Ronald Mayers	Nicolas Topiol
William Gerstein	Jon Mechanic	Sylvain Uzan
David Glazer	Michaela Meltzer	Randa Wexler
Adam Gold	Stephen Miller	Marylee Wholey
Jacqueline Gold	Florence Mitmaker	Cantor Gideon Zelermyer
Lorne Gold	Inna Nekhim	Irwin Zelniker
Philip Greenberg	Ron Oboler	

Julius Suss called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Rabbi Adam Scheier offered a d'var Torah.

On a motion by Peter Jacobs and seconded by Claire Berger the minutes of the 174<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of December 7, 2020 were approved as presented, with one abstention.

Cantor Gideon Zelermyer chanted the Memorial Prayer in memory those who had passed away since the last Annual Meeting, as their names were displayed on the screen.

**Treasurer's Report**

Michael Stern delivered the following report:

I am pleased to report on our financial position as at June 30, 2021 and on our performance for the year then ended.

The audited financials have been reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee. They have been approved by the Board, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, and have been available on our web site.

This is our second year living with Covid and its financial consequences. Since the last quarter of fiscal 2020, we have had to deal with the temporary loss of our hall rental operations. We were forced to temporarily lay off many valued employees for whom we no longer had work. After six months this became permanent. We kept employed all for whom we had at least some work. We cut other costs where we could. Another concern of course is the untimely loss of members due to Covid, and some existing members no longer willing or able to pay full membership dues or seat rentals.

Despite the challenges, I am pleased to report that our financial position is better than it was at the end of last year and the year before that. With the benefit of good management, loyal members and government assistance, we more than covered our expenses for this year and last.

Our statement of operations indicates that we have an excess of revenues over expenses of \$415k. This is after government assistance of \$691k. We were eligible for the CEWS program whereby the federal government provides assistance to encourage employers to retain employees that they might otherwise have to dismiss. It is important to note that probably for the first time, we did not take an allocation of endowment revenue into operations. Since we did not need the \$360k approved allocation, the Board agreed to let it remain with the endowment funds to continue to grow, and reserves the right to use it in the future, if it is needed.

Our largest cost is salaries. This was reduced by approximately \$700k from the previous year, due to some staff changes, and layoffs in maintenance, housekeeping and kitchen.

Approximately 6% of seats were given up. However, in fiscal 2022, so far only 2% of seats were given up and overall collections on billings for membership and seats is running slightly ahead of last year.

Our balance sheet is healthy. For the first time in many years, we have an unrestricted accumulated surplus. We have cash in the bank and have not used any part of our \$1M line of credit this year.

Our investments have done exceptionally well this year. I was somewhat concerned previously, as for the 5 years ended June 30, 2020, the investments earned \$3.5M, but we allocated \$4M to operations. I am pleased to report that the investments earned 28% or \$4.8M for the year just ended, of which we only allocated \$463k to cemetery operations.

#### Future Challenges and Opportunities

Our short-term challenges are as a result of Covid:

1. Our budget this year calls for a break-even, with only a small amount of government assistance. We increased billings by 2%, the expected inflation rate. Subsequent events challenge this assumption, as there are inflationary pressures on our labour, services and supplies.
2. We recently restarted more extended religious services and events. Our members are coming back to shul, and we need this to continue.

Our medium-term challenges and opportunities are:

1. Shaar Family Campaign projects will cost significantly more than projected years ago. As a result, we will need further funding if we wish to complete all the projects.
2. To better serve our community and reach our members and potential new members, we will have to enhance our personnel with a junior Assistant Rabbi, and assistance in marketing and communications, which may be outsourced
3. We must improve our fund raising efforts and better steward our relations with donors. Our fund-raising volunteers have done amazing work for decades. Most of our efforts center around capital campaigns every 15 years when we require major work to our facilities. We require regular and annual fundraising initiatives. We must hire a full-time experienced fund-raising professional to work with our dedicated volunteers.

Our long-term challenge is to generate a significant increase in our endowment funds. Our existing funds of approximately \$11M generates \$400k of annual income needed to fund existing operations and programs. I believe we should plan to increase the funds to \$25M, so that the annual income

can help the Shaar overcome future possible challenges — pandemics, major repairs, and enhanced programs necessary to keep existing members and attract others.

We recently launched the Life and Legacy program to ask members to provide contributions when they are no longer here. I think that many members who are financially fortunate and who feel a strong attachment to the Shaar do not donate, simply because no one ever asked them. The hiring of the fund-raising professional would be of great assistance here.

I would like to thank the Rabbi who initiated the Shaar Cares program which was so well received by hundreds of members, and who, with a team of volunteers, generated donations to cover all the costs. Thanks also to Penni, Robyn, Tanya and all the staff and volunteer drivers who made this service happen.

I would like to thank Rabbi Scheier, Cantor Zelermyer (and the choir), Rabba Finegold and Ritual Director Yosi Even-Hen for their continuing efforts to support our needs and keeping us engaged in shul services and activities.

I would like to thank Penni, Nicole Abitan, our Director of Finance, and all in the accounting department for all assistance in my role as Treasurer, and for managing finance during these challenging and unpredictable times.

Thanks to the Finance Committee, and the Audit Committee, led by Michael Blumenstein, for their diligent review and advice.

I would like to thank our auditors, Richter, including partners Michael Corber and Shawn Rozansky for their excellent work and guidance.

Michael Stern proposed approval of the audited June 30, 2021 financial statements as presented. Raphael Kertesz seconded and the motion was carried.

### **Election of Auditors**

Michael Stern moved that the Shaar re-appoint Richter as Auditors for the year ending June 30, 2022, and that their remuneration be determined by the Audit Committee. Peter Jacobs seconded and the motion was carried.

### **President's Report**

Julius Suss presented the following report:

It has been a very busy and productive year at the Shaar, but not completely a satisfactory year.

The Officers met frequently to discuss pandemic related issues and decide on whether to open or close for services, kiddush or no, proof of vaccines, children, ventilation.

And much more.

The Architectural Committee met frequently to react and make changes to plans for the Chapel and the Cote St. Antoine lobby as we saw construction costs rise. When the estimated costs came in, we were forced to go back to the drawing board, given the huge inflation in the construction industry. The result has been to reduce the scope of the renovations to the areas and investments that will provide the best return from the point of view of comfort and safety and creating a spiritual and inspirational environment in which people will want to spend time. We are hoping to be able to move forward in the spring.

How best to do the High Holy Days was a continuous topic of discussion: scheduling, length and quantity of services, two halls or one, inside or outside, hire a rabbi and cantor for the Parallel Service, etc. All these decisions changed several times as Covid guidelines changed and as we received feedback from members which told us approximately how many will show up.

Shaar Cares continued until June when Covid restrictions began to loosen, and the world started to open up. Over 15 months of Shaar Cares there were 7,000 phone calls made, 1,900 holiday boxes delivered, 15,000 meals delivered and 140 grocery orders filled. And all of this was accomplished with the help of 125 terrific volunteers. We thank the many donors and volunteers who made it all possible.

During this time our clergy, staff and volunteers offered over 400 Zoom programs. A generous grant from the Morris and Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation allowed us to purchase the equipment and expertise to be able to offer these kinds of online programs, and will allow us to continue to offer high quality, professional-grade online and hybrid programs moving forward. This has become a whole new area of expertise and we are still learning.

Foundation School had a successful, but challenging year. Keeping the teachers and the children safe was a major preoccupation, which continues in full force. We are examining how best to continue to be viable in light of government regulations which have now put the 4 to 5-year-old Pre-K children back into elementary schools.

Tuesday Night Learning has continued to flourish with terrific lectures offered by some of the best and brightest teachers, intellectuals and thinkers.

Attendance was on average 200 people and hundreds more have viewed the recordings online. In case you have missed any of the past lectures you can watch them online by visiting the Shaar website.

Thank you to Lewis Dobrin and Mark Caplan, Co-Chairs of Tuesday Night Learning. The two of you created, branded, funded and organized our famous TNL. You were the brains and the brawn behind the program, and you leave an important legacy to the Shaar.

This past year has seen the development and growth of so many popular online courses and programs. Our clergy continue to offer online Torah classes and Shabbat inspiration videos. Our French programs, including cooking classes and Krav Maga, are booming, and a Night at the Opera is hugely popular. Sisterhood continues its book reviews and so much more.

Since the High Holy Days, we continue to open up gradually, small steps at a time. Weddings and B'nei Mitzvah are once again taking place at the Shaar, smaller guest lists perhaps, but to-go food boxes are being replaced with limited sit-down receptions. This past Shabbat we served party sandwiches and cholent at the kiddush!!

I am glad to report that these past few weeks our building was buzzing with Bar Mitzvah celebrations, Young Professional events, Netivot afternoon school, youth and tot programs, and Chanukah festivities! Every room was busy!

It was so nice to celebrate Chanukah, mostly in person: 60 adults in the courtyard listened to our SH'MA House Band, ate latkes and donuts and were warmed by our new firepits; over 100 young people lit up the night with our Youth and Youth Family event; 42 meal kits were distributed; 15 teens attended the NCSY event and 10 Bar Mitzvah families celebrated together; 25 parents and 20 babies celebrated Chanukah as part of a Parent and Tot program; Foundation School finally held a Parents' Night Out Chanukah party; and 75 people attended candle lighting at City Hall. It almost felt "normal".

We are still trying to make sense of some of the regulations that allowed big wedding receptions in restaurants, golf clubs and other venues, but rules for houses of worship remained at 25 people for indoor receptions. Our wedding business went elsewhere this past year but we are very optimistic and bookings have begun in earnest for the spring season.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer special thanks to a few of our members for their longstanding and long serving leadership:

- Judy Caplan, the backbone of our Meals on Wheels program for so many years. We closed the kitchen when Covid hit. Thank you for your unwavering leadership and support of this program.
- Naomi Kassie, who has spearheaded the Leisure Institute, Open Gate and Sundays at the Shaar for decades. Naomi, we can't wait to have you back organizing these important programs.
- Bruce Vineberg, Chair of our House Committee, who probably knows the building better than anyone, and is behind every repair and replacement. Thank you Bruce for always being there when we need you.

- Geoffrey Gelber, Chair of our Cemetery Committee, we thank you for all you have done for a long time and all you continue to do for the Shaar
- Marian Levy, you have been helping us with our communications for many long years. Your continuing efforts and contributions are much appreciated.
- Peter Jacobs, we owe you a debt of gratitude for chairing the Architectural Committee, now entering its sixth year. Your skill, expertise and patience are invaluable.
- Michael Stern and Claire Berger Fagen, two past Presidents who have stepped in and stepped up during these past two years while we needed to pivot, we depended on your experience and wisdom in so many different areas.

And to the many other volunteer leaders who are chairing a plethora of committees but haven't been at it as long, we thank you all. There are too many of you to mention by name, but please know that we could not do what we do without you.

Mazal tov to Rabbi Scheier for becoming a Canadian citizen. Canada is lucky to have you and of course the Shaar is lucky to have you. Rabbi Scheier, you were there throughout the challenges of the past almost two years, both answering the pastoral needs of our membership but also responding to the ever-changing environment. You even became a video maven!

Rabba Rachel Finegold, you were relentless in your ability and creativity to keep our young members engaged, including kids, teens, young families, young professionals. In fact, so much so, that 20 very young babies accompanied by 25 parents and grandparents are back, in person in Lande Hall every Friday morning for your Tot Shabbat.

Thanks to Cantor Gideon Zelermyer and Ritual Director Yosi Even-Hen for your continuing guidance and inspiration to us all. Our holiday and ongoing videos, programs and messages are so appreciated by our membership.

Mazal tov Penni Kolb for celebrating her 18<sup>th</sup> year as Executive Director of the Shaar. Penni, I would like to thank you so much for your dedication and hard work during the last two Covid years. You had made yourself available for all meetings, weekdays and weekend, daytime or evening. You tackled all topics and brought with you years of experience and good advice. Thank you!

We thank our membership for faithfully paying their dues and their seat reservations for the High Holy Days although they were not going to be used for the second year in a row. These funds keep us going for the year and keeps our building maintained.

But it was also not so satisfying a year. The energy, the warmth one gets from meeting as a community, face to face, was greatly missed. The schmoozing and exchange of ideas at kiddush or after lectures or other programs was greatly missed. Zoom arrived at just the right time regarding Covid, but it certainly cannot compete with the connectivity and warmth that in-person interactions make. Some Shaar committees could not be active. Others were active but in a much-reduced fashion — but all with the expectations that this too will eventually come back to normal.

It is my opinion that a primary goal for the Shaar leadership, along with all Shaar members, must be to maintain and even increase the Shaar membership over the next years and decades. The statistics for North American synagogues over the last many years have been progressively bleak, with decreased participation and membership along with continuously increasing disassociation of young Jews from Judaism. But, there have been exceptions, and we must learn from these exceptions and apply what we learn. These methods are not mysterious. They include:

- An even greater variety of programs to attract all kinds of Jews, especially the young demographic, into the building. These of course, include religious services, life cycle events, holiday events, community programs and more and more opportunities to learn Torah, customs, history, spirituality, and prayer. There must be much more personal engagement, by the clergy, by staff, by fellow members. After these last two years, we need volunteers to come back and help bring back community, of all ages, to the Shaar; we need more teens involved in social action, learning about Tikun Olam, about giving and helping.

- We want children to grow up in this building, as it has been for our current 60 year-old and plus members. We need to find new reasons that will entice them to be here.

In order to meet the above goals, we are starting to take actions, such as:

- We started a search committee for an assistant rabbi, with an expertise in Jewish learning.
- Men's association is planning to start a Shaar investment club for all stages of financial and investing know-how.
- We will do more Friday night programming around Shabbat services.
- We will need to supplement our budget for all this and we are investigating the feasibility of adding fundraising expertise to our personnel. And we must bring new expertise to our marketing methods; whether as part of our staff or sub-contracted. The message of what Judaism is and has for Jews and the messages of what the Shaar has to offer need to be sent out using all modern streams and techniques in very compelling ways.

And at the same time, we continue to ensure a solid foundation. Shortly we will be calling a congregational meeting to approve new By-laws, streamlining our governance in line with current day best practices. We are about to embark on a process of strategic thinking for the short, medium and long term and will report back to the congregation.

In the meantime we invite you to participate more, attend more, learn more, join a committee. Give us your ideas, suggestions and feedback. I wish you all a safe, healthy year full of joy. Thank you!

Julius also thanked the in-house technical team of Robyn Bennet and Susan Greenspoon-Zemel.

#### **Discharge of Officer and Board of Trustees (5781)**

Rabbi Scheier offered a prayer for the outgoing Officers and Trustees, and discharged them from their obligations.

#### **Report of the Nomination Committee**

Claire Berger, Chair of the Nomination Committee, presented the proposed slate of Officers and Trustees for the year 5782-5783, 2021-2022 (see attached) and cast a single vote to elect the slate as presented. Claire thanked her committee members: Janis Levine, Paul Levine, Michaela Meltzer, Joshua Ostrega, Jonathan Schacter, and Emily Shore.

#### **Installation of Officers and Board of Trustees (5782)**

Rabbi Scheier delivered a charge to the incoming Officers and Trustees.

#### **Good and Welfare**

Claire Berger described that work that she has done over the last ten months on the files belonging to Rabbis Wilfred Shuchat and Herman Abramowitz, helped by an archivist engaged with the aid of a Canada Youth Grant. She introduced a video which features many artifacts as well as the reading of the 1924 AGM address written by then president Lyon Cohen; the video will be posted on the Shaar website.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Epstein

**CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM  
OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES  
FOR THE YEAR 5782-83 (2021-2022)**

**The following members of the Congregation are Honorary Officers for life in accordance with the By-laws:**

Honorary Presidents:	Dr. Charles Solomon Nahum Gelber, C.M., Q.C. Ian R. Rudnikoff Michael Cape Dr. June Chaikelson Dr. Mel Hershenfield Jonathan Schneiderman Alvin Fagen, CPA, CA David J. Cape Joseph Paperman Michael Stern, CPA, CA Claire Berger
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Honorary Officers for a period of one year:**

Honorary Vice-President:	J. Stephen Lipper
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Officers for a period of one year:**

President:	Julius Suss
Vice-Presidents:	Sylvie Bismuth Dr. Myriam Dahan Raphael Kertesz Peter Jacobs C.M.*
Treasurer:	Michael Stern, CPA, CA
Secretary:	Jonathan Schacter CPA, CA*

**The following is an Officer by virtue of his position in the By-laws:**

Parnass:	Ronald Mayers
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**The following members of the Congregation have been nominated as Trustees:**

France Brat	Miles Leutner
Rick Boretsky*	Jonathan Mechanic
Mark Caplan	Inna Nekhim
Stephen Greenberg*	Joshua Ostrega*
Mara Greenstone	Laurence Paperman
Malvina Klag	

**The following are members of the Board of Trustees by virtue of their current office in affiliated societies:**

President of Sisterhood:	Michaela Meltzer
President of Men's Association:	Irwin Zelniker

**The following is a member of the Board of Trustees by virtue of his position within the organization:**

Cemetery Committee:	Geoffrey Gelber
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