JRC Board Communications Policy
Adopted February 13, 2013

The purpose of this document is to clarify the types of communication performed by the board of directors of JRC and the expectations of behavior regarding these communications as well as to recommend changes in communications policy.

Introduction

The results from the December 2011 JRC member survey showed that most members define it as their ideal synagogue. The lay leaders, staff and members work hard to create a respectful spiritual environment and to maintain our communal values even when difficult discussions cause emotions to flare. The desire to carry on respectful dialogues impacts all aspects of our community life, including communications between board members during and outside of meetings.

At the April 2012 board meeting, the following motion was passed:

JRC Board President shall appoint a task force to draft a policy regarding Board Communication, including but not limited to electronic communication.

The task force proposes the following policy.

Face-to-Face Communication

We request that members:

- Listen actively and respect others while they are talking at meetings, especially when ideas are unpleasant or difficult to accept. Do not interrupt a board member or guest, except to ask a question or request clarification.
- Respectfully challenge statements; focus on ideas and refrain from personal attacks.
- Raise your hand and let the president recognize you when you wish to speak at a meeting. The president can publicly acknowledge you and keep a list of people awaiting a turn to speak.
- Make statements and phrase questions concisely to keep meetings at reasonable length.
- Speak with good intentions and assume that whoever you’re listening to has good intentions, too.

Off-the-Record Discussions

When a board member wants to keep comments informational only and not recorded in the minutes, that member should address the president and request that the recording secretary abstain from recording the statement.
Follow-up to closed meetings
Following Executive Committee meetings or Executive Sessions, at the next full board meeting of the full Board, the president should inform Board members of the topics discussed at the meeting (e.g., “personnel issues,” “financial matters,” etc.) and, if appropriate, reveal to the Board any conclusions reached in the meetings.

Electronic Communication between Board Members

Rationale
Electronic communication (such as email) is appropriate medium when there is no problem with time delays between the message’s writing and all the responses from the recipients. Because not all recipients can read the message in the same timeframe, the chain of responses can become fragmented and viewed out of order.

Because there is always a chance that a potentially—even inadvertently—offensive email can be clearly traced back to its writer, Board or Executive Committee members may not feel comfortable expressing themselves freely in this medium. Social media comments are even more likely to be traced back to the writer.

As pertains to all electronic communication, board members:

- Should continue to communicate respectfully.
- Reply to all parties in an email communication without deleting specific parties.
- Do not forward email communication regarding executive session discussions to others not on the board.
- Do not forward email communication received from a fellow board member concerning JRC or board matters without the permission of the person who wrote the email.
- Do not “blind copy” third parties when emailing a fellow board member.

Should a member stray from these guidelines, the president or another Board member is encouraged to gently remind the speaker or writer of our desire for civil and peaceful discourse.

Limitations of email communication

- Lengthy discussions of topics in preparation for a vote should not be conducted via email.
- Discussions of potentially sensitive topics—anything we would not want the public to read—should not be conducted via email.
- Electronic voting can be allowed to continue, within the above limitations.
- To avoid asynchronous email discussions, the Executive Committee is encouraged to conduct short ad hoc meetings via teleconference when quick decisions are required.
Clarification of Privacy Expectations

This chart describes the types of meetings that elected board members might participate in and what expectations are for various types of communications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Board Meeting</th>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
<th>Executive Session</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting at JRC of at least a quorum of Board members</td>
<td>Meeting of the elected officers and possibly the senior staff</td>
<td>Confidential sessions of either the board or the Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Board of JRC</td>
<td>JRC officers as elected</td>
<td>Board or Executive Committee without staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in terms of motions, seconds, prepared remarks.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recorded minutes</td>
<td>The results of the discussions may be publicized after they are brought to the Board</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unless published in the minutes or in some other format, no discussion during any of these sessions is expected to be repeated outside the meeting to friends, congregants, spouses or other family members.
Communications Policy Document

- This is included in the information packets distributed to all Board members.
- At the start of each term of office, the board members will sign and return the attached form indicating that they have read the policy.
- Each board member should sign the confidentiality policy at the start of each term of office. Each board member is encouraged to regularly review this information.

I (print name)__________________________________________________________________

have received and reviewed the JRC Communication Policy.

Signature: ____________________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Please return this signature sheet to the president or executive director prior to the first board meeting that you attend.