

Beth Israel Congregation of Lexington Park, MD
Constitution
Passed by the Congregation, 1978
Amended, 1983, 1988 and 1997, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2012, 2022

Preamble

The objective of the Beth Israel Congregation is to be the community center of Conservative Jewish worship, Jewish study, thought, education, comradeship, charity, and community relationships. It shall be the responsibility of the members and officer who compose the Congregation to provide for these needs of the Jewish community at large. This constitution shall provide the governing rules and regulations to expedite the accomplishment of these objectives, and shall be amended when needed to best achieve the spirit of these objectives.

Article I, Membership

Section 1. Membership shall be open to any person of the Jewish faith.

Section 2. There shall be two types of full membership: (see Board Resolution on Membership 5/27/97)

- A. **Family Membership.** Such membership shall be extended to married couples and shall entitle husbands and wives to all membership privileges. Each couple shall be entitled to two votes in Congregation meetings. If one member is not present at a Congregation meeting, the attending member may cast two votes.
- B. **Individual Membership.** Such membership shall be extended to individual men and women, and shall entitle the member to one vote in Congregation meetings.

Section 3. There shall be **complimentary memberships** that shall be extended to the following:

- A. Jewish college students.
- B. Jewish citizens of foreign countries.
- C. Jews serving in the U.S. armed forces with a rank of E5 or lower.
- D. New Jewish residents during the first three months of their residence in the community.
- E. **Honorary members.** Such membership shall be conferred on deserving persons who have left the community by the Executive Board, and shall entitle the honorary member to all complimentary membership privileges (passed 6/5/88)

Section 4. Privileges of Membership:

- A. **Full members** in good standing shall enjoy the following privileges:
 - 1. To attend all meetings of the Congregation.
 - 2. To have a voice and a vote at all Congregation meetings.
 - 3. To hold office in the Congregation.
 - 4. To participate in all religious services in the synagogue.
 - 5. To participate in all educational, social, and cultural activities of the Congregation.
 - 6. To enroll their children in the Religious School of the Congregation.
- B. **Complimentary membership** shall entitle the complimentary member to all the privileges of membership except that the complimentary member may not vote in Congregation meetings or hold office in the Congregation.

Section 5. Membership becomes effective with the payment of the member's first quarterly dues. The privileges of membership may be suspended by the Executive Board of the Congregation.

Section 6. No person of the Jewish faith or his/ her spouse shall have their children denied attendance in the Religious School merely for the reason of non-membership in the Congregation.

Article II, Officers

Section 1. **The officers** of the Congregation shall be:

- A. President
- B. Vice President
- C. Recording Secretary
- D. Corresponding Secretary
- E. Treasurer
- F. Parliamentarian

Section 2. **Duties.** The officers of the Congregation shall perform the duties prescribed by this constitution and by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

- A. **The President** shall preside over Congregation and Executive Board meetings and shall represent the Congregation to the community at large.
- B. **The Vice President** shall assume the duties of the President in his/her absence. He/ she shall coordinate the activities of all committees and is an ex-officio member of all standing committees.
- C. **The Recording Secretary** shall call the roll and record the minutes of Congregation and Executive Board meetings.
- D. **The Corresponding Secretary** shall communicate all minutes and official notices to the members of the Congregation and, when necessary, to the Jewish community at large, and shall be responsible for the official correspondence of the Congregation.
- E. **The Treasurer** shall collect all Congregation dues, fees, assessments, and donations, and pay all Congregation expenses from these monies as authorized by the Congregation or the Executive Board.
- F. **The Parliamentarian** shall advise the President on Robert's Rules of Order and act as the Historian for the Congregation.

Section 3. **The Nominating Committee**, comprised of the Past President as chairperson and one other member appointed by the Executive Board, shall select a slate of candidates for their respective offices. The Congregation shall be notified of the slate in writing or by electronic means at least ten days before the election meeting.

(passed 9/30/2005)(passed 6/10/2012)

Section 4. At the regular **spring quarterly meeting** of the Congregation to be held in May or June, the slate of candidates shall be put before the Congregation by the Nominating Committee. Before the election of each officer, additional nominations from the floor shall be permitted.(passed 9/30/2005)

Section 5. Officers shall be selected for a **one-year term** that shall begin July 1.

Article III, Standing Committees

Section 1. The chairpersons of all standing committees shall be appointed by the President.

Section 2. The standing committees of the Congregation and their duties shall be as follows:

- A. **Religious Services Committee.** This committee shall be in charge of all religious services of the Congregation, subject to the approval of the Executive Board, and will assure that religious services are held on Jewish holidays and on occasions of special observance, and will advise the Executive Board on matters of religious ritual.
- B. **Talmud Torah Committee.** This committee shall supervise the Religious School of the Congregation and shall determine policy and formulate rules for the Religious School subject to the approval of the Executive Board
 - 1. The Talmud Torah Committee will ensure that the Religious School provides for the teaching of Jewish history, philosophy, culture, and thought to the school-aged Jewish children of the community.
 - 2. In addition, the school shall provide for the teaching of the Hebrew language and the requirements of Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- C. **Ways and Means Committee.** This committee shall plan and execute special fund-raising events and projects for the Congregation, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
- D. **Membership Committee.** This committee shall have the responsibility for the keeping in touch with Jewish persons in the community, particularly new residents, with the view of inviting them to become members of the Congregation.
- E. **House Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for maintaining the synagogue and for supervising the use of the synagogue or other Congregational property, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
- F. **Building, Planning and Funding Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for the long range planning of building improvements and expansions for the synagogue, and for the acquisition of funds for the purpose of implementing those plans, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
- G. **Publicity Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for the publicizing all functions and activities of the synagogue to the outside [activities of the synagogue to the outside]¹ community through the use of the media subject to the approval of the Executive Board. (passed 6/19/83)
- H. **Newsletter Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for publicizing all functions and activities of the Congregation to its members and those who might consider joining the Congregation by publishing a newsletter. The content of the newsletter is subject to the approval of the Executive Board. (passed 8/25/02)
- I. **Security Committee.** This committee shall evaluate and recommend physical security needs and protocols to the Executive Board to ensure the safety and security of the synagogue building and those using it. The Committee shall ensure, assess and periodically evaluate existing procedures and processes for access control; emergency response planning; and security training of the congregation. The committee shall coordinate with the Technology Committee and with county law enforcement as appropriate. (passed 6/16/2022)
- J. **Technology Committee.** This committee shall evaluate, maintain, and keep current existing technology used by the synagogue for security and other purposes; assure full compliance with manufacturers' warranties and operational guidance; and coordinate with technology vendors, as required. As directed by the Executive Board, the committee shall recommend and procure technology acquisitions and/or upgrades for the synagogue. (passed 6/16/2022)

Article IV, Executive Board

Section 1. The Executive Board of the Congregation shall be composed of the elected officers of the Congregation, the chairpersons of the standing committees, a representative of the Sisterhood of the Congregation, and the Immediate Past President of the Congregation.

¹ Redundancy error (noted 9/16/2013).

Section 2. The Executive Board shall have regular monthly meetings. The dates and times of the meetings shall be set by the President. A quorum for an Executive meeting shall consist of a majority of its members. A majority of the Board may also call Board meetings.

Section 3. Duties of the Executive Board

- A. The Executive Board shall plan and coordinate the overall program of the Congregation. No Congregation function may be scheduled or held without the approval of the Executive Board. Religious functions will take precedence over all other functions.
- B. The Executive Board or its representative shall interview all potential employees of the Congregation. Such employees may be hired by the President upon the candidate's approval by the Executive Board.
- C. The Executive Board shall be the authority for the interpretation of the Constitution.

Article V, Congregation Meetings

Section 1. In addition to the spring meeting of the Congregation held in May or June to elect officers, regular meetings of Beth Israel Congregation shall be held as needed. The meeting for the purpose of approving the yearly budget shall be held after the installment of officers and will take place between July 1 and August 31st. (passed 9/30/2005)

Section 2. A **special meeting** of Beth Israel Congregation shall be called under any one of the following circumstances:

- A. When the President deems it necessary.
- B. By a majority vote of the Executive Board.
- C. Within two weeks after receiving a petition signed by at least 25% of the membership, excluding honorary and complimentary members.

Section 3. A **quorum** for a Congregation meeting shall consist of representation from one-fourth of the membership, excluding honorary members and complimentary members, and including at least one officer. On all questions except constitutional changes the majority shall rule and *Robert's Rule of Order* will be followed. (passed 9/30/2005)

Article VI, Budget and Dues

Section 1. The **fiscal year** of the Congregation shall run from July 1 through June 30.

Section 2. It is the responsibility of the President to present to the Board, at its regular July meeting, a **proposed budget** for the following fiscal year. The proposed budget, as approved by the Executive Board, shall be presented to the Congregation for approval at its regular summer meeting. A copy of the proposed budget shall be sent in writing or by electronic means to all Congregation members at least ten days prior to the Congregational budget meeting. (passed 6/10/2012)

Section 3. **Special expenditures** may be approved by the Congregation upon a request from the Executive Board. To obtain such approval, the Board must notify the Congregation in writing at least ten days prior to the Congregation meeting.

Section 4. The **Executive Board** may, on its own authority by a two-thirds vote, authorize a **special expenditure** if such an expenditure is required on an emergency basis and there is not time to request authorization from the Congregation. If such a step is taken, the Board will explain the reasons for the expenditure at the next regular meeting of the Congregation.

Section 5. The **yearly dues** of the Congregation shall be proposed as part of the yearly budget.

- A. Dues shall be set so as to cover the "normal" operating expenses of the synagogue.

B. Dues for individual memberships shall be one-half those for family memberships. No dues are assessed honorary and complimentary members.

Section 6. Fees for attending the Congregation **Religious School** shall be proposed as part of the yearly budget, specifying both member and non-member tuition.

Section 7. A **special committee** composed of the President, Vice President, and Treasurer shall have the right to waive any dues, fees or assessments against any Congregation member or persons seeking full membership, for reasons of financial hardship. These proceedings shall be held in strict confidence.

Section 8. Fees for participation of **non-members** in synagogue affairs may be set by the Board.

Article VII, Religious Participation

Section 1. All members have the right and responsibility to participate in all aspects of religious worship, including:

- A. Participation in services.
- B. Counting toward *minyans*.
- C. Torah reading.

Section 2. In those circumstances such as memorial services where the interest of an individual is stronger than that of the Congregation as a whole, the desires of the individual congregant shall be honored.

Article VIII, Parliamentary Practice

Robert's Rules of Order shall be standard for parliamentary procedure at all Congregation and Executive Board meetings when they do not conflict with the Constitution of Beth Israel Congregation.

Article IX, Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1. This constitution may be amended at any Congregation meeting.

Section 2. The Congregation must be notified in writing or by electronic means of any **proposed amendments** at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Only amendments closely related to the subject and meaning of the proposed change or addition may be adopted. (passed 6/10/2012)

Section 3. A **quorum to act upon a constitutional amendment** at a Congregation meeting shall consist of representation from at least one-half of the membership (the number of family members plus individual members), excluding honorary members and complimentary members, and including one officer. A simple majority of the votes cast is required to amend the constitution. (passed 9/30/2005)

Section 4. If after the Congregation meets to enact a Constitutional amendment or amendments and discussion ensues, but a quorum is not met, the Congregation may request a **mail ballot** under the following conditions:

A. The **amendment is sent** to all the voting members of the Congregation in writing via e-mail and/or standard mail with an enclosed return ballot allowing at least two (2) weeks for ballots to be returned. The mailing shall include a due date after which ballots will not be considered valid.

B. **Ballots** are returned to the Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary will count the ballots with at least two (2) other members of the Executive Board as witnesses to verify and validate the count.

C. No less than **50% of the voting Congregation** must return completed ballots to act upon the amendment. If less than 50% is received by the due date, the amendment may be reintroduced.

D. The **majority** of the verified and validated ballots will determine the outcome of the amendment. (passed 9/30/2005)

Article X, Dissolution of the Congregation

Upon dissolution of the Congregation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. The distribution may include, but not be limited to, *Mazon*, the Jewish National Fund, or to the federal government, the state of Maryland, or St. Mary's County for a public purpose.
(Passed on January 16, 1998.)

Board Resolution 5/27/97

Resolve a **Family Membership** is considered to be any married couple with at least one spouse of the Jewish faith. Each family shall be entitled to two votes, cast only by the Jewish spouse. Only Jewish members shall be elected to Officers of the Congregation and/or Chairpersons of the following standing committees: Religious Services, Talmud Torah and Membership.