

JEWISH CONGREGATION OF VENICE
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

JANUARY 25, 2026

The meeting was called to order by President Eli Rapaport at 10:03am

Motion to approve the minutes from the October 26, 2025, meeting was made by Alma Rogers seconded by Maxine Arkin Vote taken; minutes were approved.

New Business

Nominating committee- The committee consists of Chair Linda Cook, Maxine Arkin, Selma Bitz, Rod Margolis, Aaron Rosen, Sharon Scarlett, Richard Rinko.

Richard Rinko presented the proposed slate of officers and directors for the six open Board positions for the 2026-2027 term.

President: Linda Cook, Second Vice President: Marc Antine (agreed to serve additional term) , Treasurer: Victor Haran (agreed to serve additional term), Ways and Means Chair- Keith Usiskin, Membership Chair: Selma Bitz, Member at Large: Ed Lipman.

Richard Rinko asked for nominations from the floor, there were none. Election for these nominees will occur at the Congregational meeting on March 22, 2026.

Motion was made to close the nominations by Eli Rapaport, seconded by Ruth Bauers

By-Laws Committee-Annette Blum, Parliamentarian and Chair

The congregation received copies of the proposed changes to review, prior to today's meeting.

Eli stated that we cannot change anything that is proposed today. If the congregation feels that there should be changes, and they vote against the proposed changes, then it will go back to the committee to review and to the board before it is presented again to the congregation.

- Robin Williams stated that she thought a change she spoke of, at the congregational meeting last year, was going to be changed. She was reminded of the process, in the By-Laws, in order for change to be considered.

Annette thanked the By-Laws committee for all their work. This process took almost a year. The committee is Marc Antine, Barry Bye, Larry Levine, Marla Lien, and Barb Katzenstein.

Annette said she was not going article by article, she discussed the major changes in the proposed By-Laws : the Mission statement that was adopted a few years ago was added, changed the name of Ways and Means committee to Fundraising, added a standing committee for Communications; it was previously a non-standing committee, reduced the member at large position to one to keep the number of voting board positions to 14, changed the year of the terms for First Vice President to be in alignment with the President's term, folded in the Insurance committee to Budget and Finance committee. Made clear that the overall governance of the JCV is with the Board of Directors. Made a change in the language of Children and Family learning program, technology committee and retitled the events committee to events and social committee.

Annette made a motion on behalf of the committee and the Board of Directors that the proposed changes to the by-laws as reflected in the draft proposal presented to the congregation be accepted

Discussion

- Buck Isenberg stated his concern about article 5, adding the Parliamentarian as a non-voting member of the board. The members of the board are elected. He said that the Parliamentarian is appointed by the President. Annette responded that because the Parliamentarian stays in the room in Executive session she felt they should be a non-voting member of the board. Buck responded that putting the Parliamentarian on the board allows them to be part of the debate and they should be impartial and an advisor to the President and Board. Buck also asked how does this affect the vote and the quorum? If something needs a supermajority, how does that effect the vote?
- Article VI Section 3c
Buck also commented that in this proposed document non-budgeted items only need two signatures. He asked shouldn't this go to the board to change the budget. Why is the requirement different if it is out of the budget vs in the budget?
- Ira Spector asked about purchasing tickets for the High Holy days for adult children of full members and that it is not addressed in the By-Laws; that there is a generally accepted practice among synagogues to reciprocate. Annette said that if you feel it should be addressed in the By-Laws, send a letter to the By-Laws committee. Annette also stated there are policy and procedures that do not need to be in the By-Laws. Reciprocity agreements tend to be in affiliated congregations.

The question to accept the by-laws as proposed was called. Vote taken: It was decided that the majority passed the approval of the by-laws as presented.

Rabbi report-Rabbi-Cantor Marci Vitkus

Rabbi Marci reminded everyone of the Volunteer fair following the meeting. She reiterated that we are a Congregation run by volunteers.

Rabbi Marci also spoke of and named programs that the IJKL organization online programs are available to congregants. Rabbi Marci said that the cost to the congregants is zero as she paid for it out of the Rabbi's fund.

Spoke of VICCA and is hoping for a program in March. Rabbi Marci and Mila Liss are doing a free concert on March 22. The Women's group called Kol Isha is available and meets the last Tuesday of the month it is open to JCV Women. All are welcome.

President's report-Eli Rapaport

Eli spoke of the Food Festival on February 15 and asked anyone who hasn't already signed up to volunteer to please do so.

Treasurer report- Victor Haran

Victor discussed that at the end of the first 6 months of this year compared to last year our income is lower because of the Rabbi's installation and a grant from the state. We plan to have fund raising activities during the second half of this budget year. Our expenses this year are higher because we replaced the roof in the kitchen and air conditioners; these expenses are paid for by designated funds and/or endowment funds. The finance committee is working on next year's budget. The by-laws state that the board must approve the budget at the February meeting.

The approved budget and balances of designated funds are on the website.

Adult Learning-Keith Usiskin

Keith thanked the nominating committee for nominating him to be Fundraising chair. He talked about how he envisions increasing our Fundraising.

There are many programs in March. He thanked everyone for giving him ideas for programming. Keith said he needs a replacement for Adult Learning Chair, he asked for volunteers. He said we have a grant in to the Federation for a scholar-in residence program, hopefully in conjunction with repairing our Torah. Keith thanked everyone for attending the programs.

Sisterhood-Robin Schoenewald, President

Robin spoke about the JCV Blooms program. She is working with Judy Rapaport on the Pieter and Susan Kohnstam Holocaust Garden. Robin reported about the Sisterhood group called Finding my Mishpocha and that we are hosting a talk by Daniel Horowitz of My Heritage organization in conjunction with Adult Learning and a Tu B'Shevat program and a clothing drive for community service.

Men's Club-Ed Lipman

Ed highlighted events that are open to the entire congregation, he stated available information is in L'chaim and the calendar and participants can now pay on Zelle. Some of the events are; Sarasota Jewish Theatre shows followed by dinner at Wolfie's and Connors, Spring training game at Cool Today Park with a private box, a cruise out of Lemon Bay and Memorial Day picnic.

Strategic planning committee-Deborah Rosen, co-Chair

Deborah said there are many members of the committee who represent the congregation. She spoke of our Mission statement and Vision statements and that the interests and concerns of the congregants were considered when they were written. The elevator pitches that were handed out indicate who we are and ideas you can speak about when talking to people about the JCV. Synagogue membership is down country wide. We need to engage people to not only maintain our membership as well as grow. "One voice, your voice."

Volunteer committee- Jeffrey Chaitman, Chair

Committee: Rabbi Marci, Robin Schoenewald, Keith Usiskin, Jeff Weisenberg

Jeff spoke about our first Volunteer fair. Encouraged everyone to sign up and become involved in the JCV, to make a meaningful impact on our JCV family.

- Arlene Stolnitz asked about the Ritual Committee report. Eli responded that the report was sent to the Congregation in the report packet and that Ritual chose not to speak at this meeting.
- Judy Rapaport spoke about why we are honoring Kim with a gala and asked everyone to sign up to come.

Motion to adjourn was made by. Ruth Bauers Seconded by. Marc Antine Vote taken, motion passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ferris Forman Rinko, Board Secretary.