

A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Absent change, Beit Am will have growing deficits for the foreseeable future. Left uncorrected, these deficits mean that things we value about Beit Am will come to an end. To identify a sustainable future, a Financial Sustainability Committee (FSC) was given the charge “to develop and submit for Board approval a financial strategy for FY10-13 that details specific approaches for achieving a sustainable, balanced budget for Beit Am.” To guide the development of this strategy, the FSC conducted 14 community gatherings attended by 105 members.

The following recommendations reflect both the clear need for the community to meet our financial obligations and Beit Am’s strong cultural value that no member be turned away because of a lack of financial resources.

1. Beit Am must actively, clearly, and frequently communicate its financial status to all stakeholders
2. Total net expenditures in the 2009-2010 budget should be reduced by \$5000 and, to the extent practical, held at these levels through 2012-2013
3. While establishing a clear waiver policy for members experiencing financial hardship, Beit Am should increase income through the following mechanisms:
 - Expand and retain the number of dues-paying members
 - Increase the dues rate from 1.75% to 2% of members’ gross income
 - Set a minimum dues payment of 2% of gross income or \$360 per household, whichever is *greater*, with a waiver process for those that cannot pay the minimum
 - Establish a process consistent with Beit Am values to encourage pledges to be in line with ability to pay
 - Defer designating the first \$50 of each pledge for building maintenance fees
 - Establish a tuition fee that recovers a significant portion of VJCCS costs
 - Raise an additional \$1000 in net income by identifying fees that should be established or increased
 - Develop our fundraising capacity by raising \$2500 in 2009-2010 and increasing targets over time
4. Defer additional fundraising for a new building
5. Reorganize Beit Am’s financial and administrative practices

If fully implemented, this strategy is expected to annually raise or save a total of \$36,450, compared with expected deficits of \$31,000-\$46,000 between FY10 and FY12. However, there are large uncertainties in these numbers, especially with regards to members’ willingness to pay additional dues and fees, and so this strategy may need to be modified in response to actual conditions.