



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 30, 2025

In attendance: Robert Dorfman, Susan Dornstein, Neil Gordon, Steve Leventhal, Michael Leventhal, Joel Leventhal, David Nover, Sarah Silver, Bob Victor, Gail Androphy

- I. **WELCOME:** Steve welcomed everyone for our annual full Board meeting of the Israel Guide Dog Center. He reminded everyone that the Center was founded on the first night of Hanukkah 39 years ago. Then Steve thanked everyone for their support and leadership that helps continue this important work.
- II. **ISRAEL UPDATE:** The Center's Co-CEO, Carmel Reiss joined the call and convey gratitude from the entire Israel team for enabling the organization to continue the Center's work. She noted that it has been a difficult two years as a result of the War and the Iran missiles. But she said that the difficulty is gradually easing.

She noted that by the end of 2025 the Center expects to be back to creating partnerships at a normal pace. This year the Center expects to create 94 life-changing partnerships including 34 Guide Dog Partnerships, 17 PTSD Partnership, 35 Emotional Support Teams, and 9 new breeder dogs.

As a result of the war, there has been significant increase in demand for our PTSD Service Dogs. Israel's Ministry of Defense estimates that there are currently 7,000 IDF veterans with combat related PTSD but they are projecting that number to approach 20,000 in the coming years. Because of the Center's strong and trusted brand, our dogs are in high demand.

In order for the Center to try to accommodate the growing demand, they are continuing to pursue its ambitious 5-year forecast with the goal of providing 150 dogs annually by 2029. In 2026, the Center will focus on infrastructure, specifically staff: 2 new Guide Dog instructor apprentices will receive preliminary training in Australia, 3 Guide Dog Mobility Instructor apprentices will train at the Israel campus, 1 new puppy raising instructor, 1 new vet tech, and customer support staff. Carmel noted that each position is critical for growing the organization wisely and effectively. She also mentioned that the Center started receiving funding from Israel's National Insurance Institute in addition to the Ministry of Defense for PTSD Service Dogs.

Mike asked how Israel was doing with fundraising. Carmel said that the Center had a soft landing this year because they closed on a long-anticipated legacy gift.

III. BUSINESS AGENDA: Gail noted that there are a number of business items that the Board needs to discuss and vote on:

- Previous Board Minutes: Gail provided a copy of the previous minutes and since there were no questions or comments, Robert motioned to accept the December 2024 Board Minutes without change. It was seconded by Joel and the entire Board voted to approve.
- Reaffirm current Board Policies: Our Board has some extensive policies that were created by our non-profit attorney. These policies include: Conflict of Interest Policy, Document Retention Policy, Gift Acceptance Policy, Fair Market Value Policy, Grant Application Policy, Nondiscrimination Policy, Whistle Blowers Policy, and By-Laws. As there were no changes to the policies and there were no questions or comments, Mike motioned to accept these policies. It was seconded by Neil and the entire Board voted to approve.

IV. 2025 & 2026 BUDGET Gail sent significant information in advance of the meeting to help facilitate this conversation including the October Financials, projected 2026 budget, fundraising updates, Israel grant updates and grant requests from IGDC, Eliya, and Ofek Liyladenu.

- Investments: Gail noted that the investment committee met in August with Bank of America to reaffirm our commitment to diversifying our portfolio for long-term growth. In 2025, our investments continue to grow (specifics noted in the attached financial report).
- Income: Gail noted that as of November 24th, the Center has raised \$3,669,862 from 8,490 donors in comparison to approximately 7,000 for the same time period last year, and 5,000 for the same time period the year before. Gail also noted that nearly 30% of donations will be received in the last 6 weeks of 2025. She assured the Board she would provide full accounting of donations received after the 2025 books close on January 20th.

Moving Forward: In 2026 we expect to see an increase in funds raised as we continue to sell our Name a Puppy program, expand our monthly donor program, continue outreach for our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, and promote our legacy program. In addition, with 3 professionals we will be doing more travel, community outreach, and fundraising in Florida and 6 key US cities.

- Expenses: Gail noted that expenses have grown relative to our increased staff including a full-time Director of Development, a grant funded full-time Southeastern Fundraiser (who started in August), and a part-time person in the office to assist with community outreach, direct mail, and other tasks. Gail is satisfied that we are still spending reasonably while also using funds strategically.

One way the Center is strategic in its spending is using contractors who are experts in their field to accomplish various work. Mike moved that each contract be voted on

individually and seconded by Joel. Gail provided information on scope of work, cost, and satisfaction with each contract

- **Imageer:** Foundation & major donor fundraising counsel
- **Lautman Maska Neill & Co (LMN):** Direct Response Marketing
- **ABC Caging Company:** Direct mail donation collection and processing
- **Laura Solomon** - Legal Services (as needed)
- **Bee Bergvall:** Auditors financial statements and Form 990
- **Your Part-time Controller** - Bookkeeping/Controller Services
- **Achiya Klein** - Client Ambassador

Following the discussion of each contract a Board voted was held and unanimous full approval was given for each contract.

Moving Forward: Gail expects the expenses to reasonably increase in 2026 to reflect the full-year employment of the Southeastern Director, the increased travel, and expanded community outreach.

- **Grants-** Each year, the Israel Guide Dog Center makes a grant to three entities, the Israel Guide Dog Center, the Eliya School for Blind Children and Ofek Liyladenu. Both Eliya and Ofek have a direct link to our mission and whose participants may be our future clients.
 - a. **Eliyah:** We secured a grant proposal from Elijah which was sent to the Board in advance. Gail suggests making an allocation like last year of \$6,000 which will be matched by a generous anonymous donor totaling \$12,000. Since there were no questions, Joel moved to approve this grant, Mike seconded the motion, and the entire Board voted to approve.
 - b. **Ofek Liyladenu:** We secured a grant proposal from Ofek Liyladenu which was sent in advance to the Board. Gail suggested making a similar grant to last year of \$4,000 which will be matched by an anonymous donor, totaling \$8,000. Since there were no questions, David moved to approve this grant, Joel seconded the motion, and the entire Board voted to approve.
 - c. **Israel Guide Dog Center:** Gail presented a proposal from the Israel Guide Dog Center and is seeking permission to grant up to \$3.5 million to the Center in Israel as a direct grant. This 2026 increase reflects the deferred 2025 4th quarter grant and the 2026 grant that will enable the Center to focus on enhancing its infrastructure which is critical to realize the five year forecast to double the number of partnerships it created by 2029.

V. 2026 STRATEGY Gail

- **Focal Cities:** In 2026, we will be spending time and resources in the following cities: New York, Boston, Ohio, Baltimore/DC, Florida (east coast), Florida West Coast, Philadelphia, Atlanta/Savannah, Dallas
- **Programs:** We will continue to sell our Name a Puppy program, expand our monthly donor program, continue outreach for our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, and promote our

legacy program. In addition, we are exploring creating a Rainbow Bridge Campaign for people to memorialize their pets.

- Mailings & Outreach: We will be using a 12-month strategic calendar to plan out Acquisition, Solicitation, and Stewardship Mailing; Digital Fundraising & Cultivation campaigns, Community Outreach efforts, Legacy Society outreach, Quarterly TAILS emails, and more.
- Marketing: We will be creating a new General Brochure and Mitzvah Brochures, banners, profiles, partnership costs, and updated website which reflect our current efforts, the interest of our audience, and using donor centric language.

VI. CLOSING: Gail thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reiterated that she will send a full accounting of donations after the books close in January.