

Minutes - Approved

Chair: Lauren Schlezinger ♦ Minutes: Heidi Schell ♦ Timekeeper: Gene Podkaminer

Attendees

Board

Nathaniel Bergson-
 Michelson
 Lois Fried
 Scott Haber
 Jon Herstein
 Marilyn Hollinger
 Ware Kuschner
 Jeff Lerner
 Matt Mandel

Gene Podkaminer

Betsy Rosen

Arlene Rosenberg

Heidi Schell

Lauren Schlezinger

David Silberman

Yash Snider

Adam Steinberger

Staff

Rabbi Lisa Delson

Rabbi Dan Feder

Rabbi Molly Plotnik

Max Ruzi

Guests

Alison Poggi-Leon (PTO)

Bambi Feinberg

Summary of General Trustee Action Items

1. Provide names to Matt of members who might be interested in working on the Membership Engagement effort.
2. Advise Lauren ASAP if you plan to continue on the Board or not if your term is ending this year.
3. RSVP for Preschool Gala on Feb 25. Board presence and support are strongly encouraged.
4. Sign up for a Breaking Bread dinner in January/February.
5. Consider joining the three-session Emerging Leaders series. Contact Lauren and/or Alan Zeichick if you're interested.

Summary of Specific Committee/Individual Action Items

1. Heidi to circulate copy of By-Laws electronically with each Board packet and/or link to page on box.
2. Lauren to digest feedback provided through the mid-year Board survey and think about ways to address the areas for improvement. Lauren invited Board and staff to provide more specific feedback to her or Arlene.
3. Lauren to choose one Board goal on which to focus at each meeting and take 5-10 minutes to discuss and reflect on it.

Meeting called to order by President Lauren Schlezinger at 6:15PM.

Cultivating Sacred Space

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| 1. Welcome & Blessing for Community Service | 2 min | |
| 2. D'var Torah (<i>Lois Fried</i>) | 5 min | |
| 3. Board Activity | 5 min | Partner Discussion |

Living our Mission and Values

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| 4. Mid-Year Check In (<i>Lauren Schlezinger & Arlene Rosenberg</i>) | 20-30 min | Discussion |
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Important Dates for Trustees

Panim el Panim Multifaith Day of Learning—January 22, 2pm
 Breaking Bread Board Dinners—January 26, February 1 and February 8
 Executive Committee Meeting—February 2, 7pm ♦ Board Meeting—February 15, 6:15pm

- Self-evaluation results
- Board goals and agreements

Arlene reported on the Board self-eval results (15 Board, 6 staff responded):

- Board meetings are engaging and productive
- Extremely strong agreement that Lauren provides effective leadership as President
- Board knows and understands PVMV (Purpose/Vision/Mission/Values)
- Board values informed discussions and diverse viewpoints
- Mixed response regarding receiving adequate reports from committees
- Mixed response regarding sufficient opportunity and information to monitor financial status
- Mixed response regarding understanding By-Laws and operating procedures
- Mixed response regarding whether trustees are doing a good job of participating in programs and services – trustees think they do; staff do not think they do
- **Action:** Circulate copy of By-Laws electronically with each Board packet and/or link to page on box
- **Action:** Lauren to digest feedback and think about ways to address the areas for improvement. Lauren invited Board and staff to more provide specific feedback to her or Arlene.
- **Action:** focus on one goal at each meeting and take 5-10 minutes to discuss and reflect on it.
- Focusing on Goal #1: *Use quantitative and qualitative measures of success when planning, experiencing and evaluating PTS programs, events and services. Increase congregant participation and volunteering in events, services, social justice and social action.*
 - + Kolot Shabbat/social action – attendees felt very well connected
 - + Congregational retreat – Rabbi Molly incorporated our PVMV and measurements of success in the survey at the end of the retreat – good model for evaluating future events
 - + New member event in December created with these goals in mind (this is one example of how we are revamping the new member experience)
 - + Simchat Torah celebration
 - + 2nd day of RH services led by Rabbi Feder – engaged congregants in service, very inspirational and spiritual service, good energy, opportunity for people to interact
 - +/- Sholom Women sponsored Hanukkah event for kids – beautiful service and lots of adults but no kids (suggestion to be clearer about target audience or appropriate age group when promoting events in future)
- Consider using the same set of questions to evaluate different events so we can compare responses
- Consider evaluating ourselves on how well we're doing on these goals (consider addressing in weekly staff meetings)
- Look back over events – have we included every demographic at some point? Where are the gaps?
- Get a formal member engagement group up and running (Matt Mandel to lead this)

Board promises – Lauren engaged Board in interactive live poll on how we're doing on our Board promises. With only one or two exceptions, the group indicated that we're consistently honoring the following: promises: Be Respectful; Maintain Confidentiality, Support Decisions Publically, Honor Individual Observance of Shabbat.

Two promises that we're not consistently keeping:

- Be present – work on better self-monitoring to not be distracted or be distracting to others (especially with smart phones, etc.)
- Preparation – continue to look at ways to help Board members be prepared for meetings. Board members expected to read the Board packet.

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5. Clergy Report (*Rabbi Feder*) 20-30 min Discussion

Rabbi Feder

- **Clergy as Teachers.** Rabbis are grappling with how to communicate their beliefs about political and social issues without pressing partisan affiliations. The framework they adopt is to focus on why an issue matters to them as a Jew, rather than from a specific political perspective, when speaking from the pulpit on relevant and often divisive issues of today. There was discussion on how clergy/congregation can act as ambassadors and educate people about Israel without being too political. Interest in more discussion/classes on this topic. Genuine concern about anti-Semitism (case in point bomb threats to JCC's across the country today)
- **"Celebrate and innovate":** Rabbi Feder wanted to provide a sense of stability to congregants when he became the new senior rabbi and assure congregants that he valued the history of PTS; also important to innovate to best serve all of our members. We have raised over \$600,000 towards retiring the \$1.2M mortgage. Highlights of innovation: new era of Life Long Learning for adult and youth education under Rabbi Molly; Kolot, Caring Community, Sholom in the Home, Panim el Panim, PVMV

Rabbi Delson

- Aware of need for people to be known and to be seen – focusing on creating touch points for people across the educational spectrum
- Build a community who care about the rest of the world and want to use their Jewish values to make a difference
- Engaging 9th grade program including Moving Traditions Rosh Chodesh program - engage in meaningful discussions
- Very involved in Caring Community and Panim el Panim; hosted a Sholom in the Home style gathering for people who have lost a parent in the last two years
- Building relationships outside of PTS especially through Panim el Panim and our focus on teen/young adult mental health; we are trailblazing by making this a priority at PTS

Rabbi Molly

- A la Stephen Covey: Focus on important and urgent things (e.g., pastoral care); does a lot of pastoral care with youth
- Focus on important but not urgent things – e.g. learning for its own sake (Torah L'Shema) and setting example for our congregants
- Everything that happens in the synagogue is important to the whole self
- Appreciate and hold history of PTS while continuing to evolve and innovate – unique and exciting

6. Member Engagement (*Matt Mandel*) 10 min Discussion

- Matt is new VP of Member Engagement
- Look at restructuring membership commitment so members really see value in the community and their commitment to it
- Actively engaged in listening to congregants – open to input as to how to better engage our members
- Considering doing a community survey
- Next steps: take stock, set priorities and achieve them
- **Action:** Board members are invited to share ideas with Matt for members who might be willing to be part of this effort

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7. Budget Preview (*Adam Steinberger*) 10-15 min Report
- The Budget process includes 4 meetings with Finance Committee and different department heads present to FC. (Note: All Trustees are welcome to attend any/all meetings). Based on this input, FC will create preliminary budget and address ways to balance. Adam will present preliminary budget to Board in February and solicit input from Board
 - This year Karen asked clergy, staff and committees for a wish list which resulted in \$70K worth of possible new items; security is not included in this wish list but needs to be discussed by Board
8. Updates 8-10 min Report
- Panim el Panim (*Arlene Rosenberg*)
 - Preschool Gala (*Bambi Feinberg*)
 - Social Action (*Rabbi Delson*)
 - Bambi gave an update on the Preschool Gala on Feb 25 - 20's theme. Would like to see Board presence. **Action:** please RSVP for the Gala. Fundraising goals: New water structure in playground; new tables for outside classroom area; awnings for outside 2yo classrooms and in playground; tables for clay materials; light tables; projectors
 - Arlene gave an update on the upcoming Multifaith Day of Learning on Teen and Young Adult Mental Health from 2-5pm Sunday Jan 22; currently have close to 100 registrations
 - Rabbi Delson gave an update on the social action gathering and conversation last week – 13 congregants participated and discussed "What keeps you up at night? What energizes you in the morning?" Three main ideas for cultivation: 1) political activism (how do we react as a congregation to current events); 2) economic disparity (hunger, homelessness, immigrants); 3) rise in anti-Semitism and how to talk about Israel. Working groups formed to begin exploring these issues. Discussed creating a calendar with short-term action oriented items to engage congregants by leveraging off of existing events (rather than always having to create our own.)

Governance

9. 2017-2018 Board of Trustees (*Lauren Schlezinger*) 10 min Report
- Nominating Committee for President Appointment
 - Nominating Committee / Process for Trustees
 - Trustees – common practice is to have immediate Past President chair the Nominating Committee including 3 trustees and 4 non-trustee congregants. April Glatt will chair the committee. **Action:** advise Lauren if you plan to continue or retire if your term is ending this year. Lauren asked for trustees who have not yet served on the NC to consider volunteering. Marilyn Hollinger volunteered.
 - President – need 3 trustees to meet to nominate President for 2017-18 (need to vote in next meeting) – Ware Kushner, Arlene Rosenberg, Jeff Lerner
 - Scott Haber moved and Matt Mandel seconded the motion to elect Jeff, Arlene and Ware as Nominating Committee for President. Motion passed.
10. Packet Q&A 5 min Discussion
- **Action.** Lauren encouraged Trustees to join a Breaking Bread dinner over the next month; an opportunity to get to know each other and Rabbi Feder out of the Boardroom.

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- **Action.** Consider joining the three-session Emerging Leaders series. Contact Lauren and/or Alan Zeichick if you're interested

11. Consent Agenda

2 min Vote

Consent agenda approved; one abstention.

Executive Session

Postponed to next month.

Concluding Prayer

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm

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