

# Board of Trustees Meeting April 25, 2018 Minutes - DRAFT

Chair: Lauren Schlezinger ♦ Minutes: Arlene Rosenberg ♦ Timekeeper: Matt Mandel

*To be part of a community, to shape it, to strengthen it is the most urgent... obligation facing the Jewish individual.*  
–Elie Wiesel

## **Attendees**

### **Board**

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson  
Julie Feuchtwang  
Jenna Fisher  
Lois Fried  
Jon Herstein  
Marilyn Hollinger  
Ware Kuschner  
Jeff Lerner  
Matt Mandel  
Andy Oliff  
Gene Podkaminer

Betsy Rosen  
Arlene Rosenberg  
Heidi Schell  
Lauren Schlezinger  
Sharon Silverman  
Yash Snider  
Adam Steinberger

### **Absent**

Scott Haber

### **Staff**

Rabbi Lisa Delson  
Rabbi Dan Feder  
Rabbi Molly Plotnik  
Allison Steckley  
Karen Wisialowski

### **Guests**

Gary Fishtrom  
Carla Koren  
Alison Poggi-Leon

## **Summary of General Trustee Action Items:**

1. Trustees should contact Nathaniel or Kathleen if they are interested in volunteering to be “spotters” during the Fund-A-Need at the May 5 event.
2. Trustees should complete their Cantor Barry scrapbook pages by the May 1 deadline.

## **Summary of Individual Action Items:**

1. Matt and Julie will meet with Karen and/or Ayelet to flesh out the Board’s congregant outreach plan.

President Lauren Schlezinger called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm.

1. Welcome, Blessing for Community Service, Warm-up Activity 10 min
  - Lauren led the Board in an activity to explore what makes a great conversation.
2. D’var Torah (*Jenna Fisher*) 5 min
3. Investment Manager Report (*Carla Koren*) 10-15 min Report
  - Carla reminded the Board that the purpose of the investment fund, which is to provide long-term stability and minimize the probability of loss of principal over time, dictates a conservative investment approach.

- Notes from the first quarter of 2018:
  - The investment fund's performance was very close to the benchmark.
  - The portfolio was recently rebalanced to remain in alignment with investment policy.
  - Not easy to assess the impact of engaging in socially responsible investing on our total return because some socially responsible funds have outperformed more traditional investments while others have not.
- All Board members are welcome to join the investment committee's monthly investment calls.
- Plan for the future: To determine whether some of the money in the Facilities Reserve Fund and the Operating Fund can be moved to the investment fund to increase returns without sacrificing needed liquidity.

4. Spring Congregant Outreach (*Lauren Schlezinger*) 25-35 min Discussion

- In preparation for our annual congregant outreach, Lauren reminded the Board that the goal of Board outreach is to strengthen connections with our congregants.
- The Board viewed and discussed a TED Talk by Celeste Headlee entitled "10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation." The 10 ways are:
  - Don't multitask (be fully present in the conversation)
  - Don't pontificate (assume that you have something to learn from the other person because everyone is an expert in something)
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Go with the flow (let thoughts flow in and out of your mind during the conversation without feeling the need to hang on to every one of them)
  - If you don't know, say that you don't know
  - Don't equate your experience with theirs
  - Try not to repeat yourself
  - Don't worry about the details
  - Listen with the intent to understand, not the intent to reply
  - Be brief
 Final advice: Be prepared to be amazed by everyone you meet!

- The Board identified the following things we hope to accomplish through our congregant conversations:
  - Learn what human assets/qualities individual people possess
  - Learn what individual people value
  - Do no harm – i.e., don't worry about a "perfect" dialogue. You can ensure a successful conversation by simply listening and avoiding controversial/critical comments.
  - Educate congregants about what is going on at the synagogue
- The Board decided to prioritize conversations with new members and emerging leaders.
- Lauren asked for volunteers to work with Karen and/or Ayelet to flesh out our congregant outreach plan, which will include selecting which congregants to talk to, crafting suggested questions, and holding Board members accountable for having the conversations. Matt and Julie volunteered to help.  
**Action item:** Matt and Julie will meet with Karen and/or Ayelet to flesh out the Board's congregant outreach plan.

5. Cantorial Transition Update (*Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson*) 15-20 min Report/Vote

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**Important Dates for Trustees**

Executive Committee Meeting—May 10, 7p ♦ Board Meeting—May 16, 6:15p  
 Cantor Barry Celebrations—May 5, June 1, June 3 ♦ Board Transition Reception—June 3, 5:30p  
 Board Meeting/Annual Meeting—June, 6 6p

- Transition updates:
  - May 5 event:
    - The event is sold out!
    - The planning committee needs eight volunteers to serve as “spotters” during the Fund-a-Need paddle raise, when attendees will pledge contributions to the Cantor Barry Reich Tribute Fund. **Action item:** Trustees should contact Nathaniel or Kathleen if they are interested in volunteering to be “spotters” at the May 5 event.
  - June celebration weekend:
    - The June 1 Shabbat service will be a musical review of Cantor Barry's 50 years at PTS.
    - The June 3 concert will feature several local cantors. We will present our congregational gift to the cantor at the June 3 event.
    - All congregants should have received pages to complete for Cantor Barry's scrapbook in the mail. **Action item:** Trustees should complete their scrapbook pages by the May 1 deadline.
  - Welcoming Cantor Fox:
    - Cantor Fox will begin on July 1. The second phase of the transition will be to welcome her, help her get adapted to PTS and the local community, and help the congregation through the transition.
    - Key volunteers:
      - Sherry Haber is compiling a list of resources for Cantor Fox
      - Keith Tandowsky and Andrea Sobel are working to identify stakeholders and establish a communications plan
      - Betsy Rosen and Andrea Cohn will lead the planning of welcome events
      - Sharon Silverman will lead the planning of Cantor Fox's installation service, the date of which is TBD
    - Role of the Board:
      - To participate in welcome events
      - To be ambassadors of the congregation in welcoming Cantor Fox
      - To stay attuned to congregant reactions
    - Rabbi Feder advised the Board to be mindful of Cantor Fox's happiness and to avoid asking her “How are things going?” A better way to express concern and interest is by asking “How are you?” He also reminded the Board that she prefers to be called “Cantor Fox.” Rabbi Delson suggested that we avoid asking inappropriate personal questions (e.g., about relationships).
      - The transition team will consider ways to educate the congregation on these issues
  - Communications:
    - A J Weekly story about the Cantor Barry celebrations is in process.
- Motion: To allocate up to \$10,000 from *All That Barry* proceeds for the congregational gift to Cantor Barry.

*Background: Cantor Barry is taking on a special project—recording original music with professional singers and instrumentalists. Recording time is quite expensive, so we thought paying for it (subject to \$10,000 cap) would be the perfect gift.*

Motion made by Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson. Seconded by Sharon Silverman. Motion passed.

6. Board Packet Q&A

10-15 min Discussion

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- Gary Fishtrom, Facilities Committee chair, updated the Board about seismic retrofitting and parking lot lighting.
- Lauren suggested that the Facilities Committee provide the Board with quarterly written updates.

7. Story of the Month (*Allison Steckley*) 5 min Personal Reflection

8. 2018-19 Budget (*Adam Steinberger*) 15-20 min Report/Vote

- Adjustments that have been made to the budget since the March Board meeting:
  - At Karen's request, the URJ has reduced our membership dues by \$11,700 per year for the next four years in light of our temporarily increased cantorial expenses.
  - We were notified this week that our workers compensation costs will be less than originally estimated by about \$3,700 because we are several years removed from a prior claim.
  - About \$2500 of these expense reductions will be applied to the cost of Cantor Fox's installation.
  - The remaining savings will be allocated to increase the salary offered to our next Director of Youth Engagement to allow it to be a full-time, 12-month position, and to have sufficient funds for medical costs associated with anticipated new administrative personnel.
- Motion: To approve the 2018-19 budget, as presented by the Finance Committee.

Motion made by Adam Steinberger. Seconded Marilyn Hollinger. Motion passed.

9. Consent Agenda 2 min Vote  
Includes last month's Board minutes and approval of new members.

Consent agenda was approved.

10. Restricted Fund Guidebook (*Gene Podkaminer*) 10 min Vote

Motion: To approve the revised and updated Guidebook for Restricted, Endowment and Board Designated Reserve Funds as shared in the board packet.

*Background: The PTS Guidebook for Restricted, Endowment and Board Designated Reserve Funds is updated periodically for new policy and to reflect the new and changed restricted funds. Significant changes recommended include:*

- *Increasing the threshold for board approval from \$2,500 to \$3,000*
- *Increasing the minimum amount for creating a named restricted fund to from \$2,500 to \$10,000.*
- *Addition of new funds, including the Cantor's Discretionary Fund.*
- *Revised descriptions of several funds.*

Gene Podkaminer made the motion. Matt Mandel seconded. Motion passed.

11. Rabbi Feder's Contract Renewal (*Heidi Schell*) 20-25 min Discussion//Vote  
Discussion to be held in Executive Session

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Motion: To authorize the Personnel Committee to negotiate a new five-year contract with Rabbi Daniel Feder, to begin July 1, 2019.

*Background: Rabbi Feder's current contract extends through June 30, 2019 and requires fifteen-months notice of the congregation's intention to renew (to which he's granted us a one-month extension). The Personnel Committee recommends renewal after reviewing congregant and Board feedback. A 2/3 vote of Trustees is required for the Motion to pass.*

*Bylaws Reference: Article XI, Section 2*

Heidi Schell made the motion. Jon Herstein seconded.

Lauren Schlezinger moved that the Board enter executive session. Sharon Silverman seconded. Board entered executive session at 8:38 pm. All non-Board members other than Karen Wisialowski were excused.

Lauren adjourned the executive session at 8:52 pm.

Motion passed.

## 12. Adjournment

Lauren adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.

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