

Board of Trustees Meeting

July 18, 2018

Minutes

Chair: Heidi Schell ♦ Minutes: Arlene Rosenberg ♦ Timekeeper: Jeff Lerner

It is not upon you to complete the work; neither are you free to desist from it.
— Pirkei Avot 2:21

Attendees

Board

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson
Julie Feuchtwang
Jenna Fisher
Jon Herstein
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Jeff Lerner
Andy Oliff
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Heidi Schell
Eric Schlezinger
Sharon Silverman
Mary Ann Waterman

Absent

Scott Haber
Matt Mandel
Gene Podkaminer
Adam Steinberger
Maria Yarmolinsky

Staff

Rabbi Dan Feder
Rabbi Molly Plotnik
Karen Wisialowski
Ayelet Shapiro
Allison Steckley
Madeleine Steckley

Guests

Davina Chall

Summary of General Trustee Action Items:

1. Trustees will contact Ayelet if they are interested in helping her develop a closed PTS Facebook group.

President Heidi Schell called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

1. Welcome, Blessing for Community Service 5 min
2. Introductions – Getting to Know You 20 min

Trustees, staff members, and guests introduced themselves and shared interesting facts about themselves.

3. D'var Torah (*Heidi Schell*) 5 min

Heidi spoke about the importance of approaching the coming year at PTS and our role as Trustees with a sense of awe.

4. Cantorial Transition Update (*Julie Feuchtwang*) 10 min Report/Discussion

- Julie Feuchtwang and Scott Haber have agreed to oversee Cantor Fox's transition.
- Committees involved in the transition:
 - Communications – Directed by Andi Sobel. This committee plans to:
 - Put together a calendar of various events occurring throughout PTS to ensure that Cantor Fox will have an opportunity to meet and connect with all stakeholders and demographic groups within the congregation.
 - Use various communication channels to keep the congregation informed about the transition.
 - Maintain contact with Cantor Barry and keep him in touch with the congregation.
 - Welcome Events – Directed by Betsy Rosen and Andrea Cohn.
 - Installation – Directed by Sharon Silverman. Cantor Fox's installation is scheduled for December 14.
- Next steps: Julie and Scott will begin meeting with committees in August to ensure that there aren't any gaps. They also will meet with clergy to get their feedback and make sure that clergy have all the support they need.
- Julie and Scott seek feedback from the Board on what they are hearing in the congregation.

5. 2018-19 Board Priorities (*Heidi Schell*) 60 min Discussion

- Heidi led the Board in a discussion of what the Board's top areas of focus should be for the coming year.
- The Board agreed that the following will be its top four high-level priorities for 2018-19:
 - Support musical leadership transition and the creation of an inspiring and spiritually-uplifting musical experience.
 - Sustain a healthy membership level and increase engagement by fostering connections with and among potential, new and existing members.
 - Meet current philanthropy and fiscal planning targets.
 - Ensure that social action/social justice remain a pillar of PTS' mission.
- Next steps:
 - Articulate measurable and achievable objectives in support of each of these priorities
 - Assign responsibilities to Trustees

6. Social Action Update (*Arlene Rosenberg*) 15 min Report/Discussion

Arlene informed the Board about the congregation's upcoming Civic Engagement Campaign, which will be undertaken in conjunction with the Religious Action Center. The campaign will focus on:

- Educating congregants about the importance of voting
- Promoting Jewish values-based conversations about the key measures that will appear on California's November ballot
- Working toward 100% registration and turnout among eligible voters within the congregation

The campaign may also include working for the passage of a \$4 billion affordable housing bond measure that will face voters in November.

There was discussion about the campaign goals and tactics.

7. Website and Community Engagement Update (*Ayelet*) 3 min Presentation

Ayelet updated the Board on progress toward establishing the new PTS website.

Ayelet also solicited Board assistance in developing a closed PTS Facebook group that will allow members to connect with one another more easily. **Trustee Action Item:** Trustees will contact Ayelet if they are interested in helping her develop a closed PTS Facebook group.

8. Governance

5 min Vote

Motion: To approve the following slate of Officers for the 2018-19 term:

Scott Haber, First VP; Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson, Second VP;
Adam Steinberger, Treasurer; Arlene Rosenberg, Secretary
(Ware Kuschner)

Ware made the motion. Marilyn Hollinger seconded. Motion passed.

Motion: To ratify the parsonage amount of 43.5% of current salary for Cantor

Alexandra Fox for the period from July 1 through December 31, 2018 as requested by Cantor Fox and as acknowledged by the Personnel Committee on July 11, 2018. (Jon Herstein)

Background

The guiding principle behind parsonage is that clergy do not pay Federal income tax on income that is used to cover the cost of housing, broadly defined. Its genesis was the commonplace tradition that clergy live in homes owned by their employers/religious institutions. In the 1950s, the IRS codified the tax-free status of this benefit, which also applies to the cost of housing regardless of whether the clergy lives in the property owned by the employer or pays for housing independently.

For purposes of a board vote, parsonage refers to the amount a clergyperson pays to maintain his/her home (e.g., rent, mortgage, utilities, repairs) when housing or a housing allowance is not provided directly. The clergyperson is solely responsible for calculating the parsonage amount each year, and to defend it in the event of an IRS audit. By offering a parsonage benefit (which is stipulated in clergy contracts at Peninsula Temple Sholom), PTS agrees to designate the stated amount as a housing allowance before paying it to the clergyperson each year. The requested amount has been reviewed and acknowledged by the Personnel Committee.

Jon made the motion. Ware seconded. Cantor Fox was excused from the room during the vote. Motion passed.

9. Board Packet Q&A

10 min Discussion

The Board discussed whether there are ways we can identify at-risk members (i.e. members who are not responding to our membership renewal communications and are not otherwise connecting with the congregation) so that we can reach out to them and help them reconnect. Karen will consider how to accomplish this objective without compromising congregant privacy.

Heidi called Trustees' attention to a report from the High Holy Days hospitality committee that was not included in the Board packet. This report will be posted in the Board Resource Binder on Box.

10. Consent Agenda

2 min Vote

Includes last month's Board minutes and approval of new members.

Heidi encouraged Trustees to spend time reviewing information about new members to promote connection with them. It was decided that in the future, Karen will share photos of and information about new members each month.

Consent agenda was approved.

11. Concluding Prayer

Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.