

Board of Trustees Meeting March 27, 2019 Minutes

Chair: Heidi Schell ♦ Minutes: Julie Feuchtwang ♦ Timekeeper: Andy Oliff

Attendees

Board

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson
Julie Feuchtwang
Jenna Fisher
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Jeff Lerner
Andy Oliff
Betsy Rosen
Heidi Schell
Eric Schlezinger
Adam Steinberger
Mary Ann Waterman
Maria Yarmolinsky

Absent

Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Matt Mandel
Gene Podkaminer
Arlene Rosenberg
Sharon Silverman

Staff

Rabbi Lisa Delson
Rabbi Molly Plotnik
Cantor Alexandra Fox
Jonathan Harris
Ayelet Shapiro
Allison Steckley

General Trustee Action Items:

1. Trustees to email any feedback on the Mishloach Manot fundraiser to Ayelet.
2. Please sign up to attend a house meeting: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4ca8ae2ba02-social>

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

1. Welcome	5 min	
2. D'var Torah (<i>Jenna Fisher</i>)	5 min	
3. Blessing for Community Service	2 min	
4. Mishloach Manot Purim Project (<i>Betsy Rosen</i>)	20 min	Presentation/Discussion

Heidi expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board to Betsy for spearheading and organizing the Purim fundraiser, and to Ayelet and Jonathan for their invaluable help. Betsy shared highlights from the event. Over 700 baskets were distributed with nearly 300 baskets delivered to congregants' homes. All teachers and staff received baskets. Baskets went to a lot of new members/families who really appreciated them. From a community building perspective, it was extremely successful. Cross-generational effort in assembling and delivering the baskets. Kids loved delivering with parents. Connected with congregants who are older and aren't able to get to PTS. We grossed \$18K and netted just under \$12K. While we did not reach our

budgeted fundraising goal of \$21K, everyone wants to do it again next year. Now that congregants are familiar with the event, all are optimistic that we can raise significantly more money for PTS next year.

Lay and staff members who organized the event will meet in early April to debrief what worked and what didn't for next year. We welcome feedback from Trustees and staff. **Action Item:** Send Purim feedback to Ayelet.

5. Story of the Month (<i>Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson</i>)	5 min	Personal Reflection
6. Finance Update (<i>Adam Steinberger</i>)	15 min	Presentation

Timing of budget presentation: Adam noted that the next year's budget is normally presented in March and voted on by the Board in April. This year the 2019-20 budget will be presented to the Board in April and voted on in May (in plenty of time before the June 6 Annual Congregational meeting.)

Fiscal Year '19 Update: Adam noted that in the past few years PTS has had nice surpluses at the end of each year. These surpluses get transferred to the Operating Reserve Fund, which has grown to a significant number - \$600K-\$800K. The Finance Committee is actively thinking about what to do with these funds. For Fiscal year '19 we're not expecting a big surplus but also not expecting big deficit. Adam outlined several reasons for this:

- Preschool moved from three-hour day to four-hour day. This had the effect of cannibalizing some of the revenue from extended care. In addition, several families are no longer using extended care (e.g., some now have nannies instead.) Just 5-6 kids leaving extended care equates to \$78K less revenue.
- Budgeted for hiring an assistant preschool director and a part-time b'nai mitzvah coordinator. Didn't fill either position so we didn't spend money we anticipated spending.
- We anticipate being below budget on membership commitment. (See below for further explanation.)
- Anticipate breaking even or maybe \$10K-\$15K under budget at end of FY '19.
- Why did membership come in lower? Made some mistakes in several areas. Collections have been slow. In pre-Kesef (outside bookkeeping service) days, credit card info would roll-over even if the family did not actively authorize credit card use. If a credit card didn't go through PTS would call congregant. The legal requirement, for good security, is to get express authorization to use credit card before charging it. As a result, this year, if a congregant did not return their membership commitment form or did not complete the credit card authorization, Kesef did not charge credit cards. Unfortunately, the finance office did not understand this nuance, and, therefore, didn't notice for a couple months. In addition, we switched to email statements from Kesef. Many congregants did not receive their statements (went to spam, don't read emails, etc.) and accounts went unpaid. There was also a glitch with credit cards not being processed for Youth Ed registration and communications had to be made to every Youth Ed family. Plus, we finished our first full year cycle with Kesef, which naturally came with some transition challenges.
- What's being done to improve collections? Jonathan has made nearly 100 calls already to affected congregants. Adam, Karen, and Jonathan are actively monitoring aging receivables. We're evaluating our internal processes and making improvements and changes where needed. Apology letters went out to congregants, calls were made, and quarterly paper invoices are now being sent.
- Big takeaways – in periods of transition we have to step back and ensure we are evaluating the processes and resources along the way. Are we being efficient? Do we have enough accounting resources to manage preschool growth? Preschool has doubled in last five years. Main accounting office handles all the preschool transactions including registrations and HR for staff in addition to all the transactions for the temple. What membership renewal best practices can we learn from other congregations?

7. House Meetings (<i>Rabbi Delson</i>)	5 min	Presentation
<p>Rabbi Delson gave an update on the current house meeting campaign. Had five house meetings so far, which have engaged 50 people in the community. Goal is to have 120-150 congregants participate by end of campaign. People leave feeling more connected than when showed up. More house meetings are scheduled and will likely add more dates further on in April. Action item: Please sign up to attend a house meeting. Clergy and staff are welcome to sign up and it's fine for anyone who wants to attend more than one meeting. Ayelet hosted a meeting and from that has already set up a happy hour with young professionals.</p>		
8. Board Mid-Year Self-Evaluation Survey (<i>Heidi Schell</i>)	30 min	Presentation/Discussion
<p>Heidi presented highlights from the Board Self-Evaluation survey, which were overall positive. Heidi will make time at a future Board meeting for trustees to further discuss some of the suggestions and feedback shared in the survey. Heidi will post the Board survey presentation in the Board binder on box.</p>		
<p>9. Governance (<i>Heidi Schell</i>)</p> <p>Motion: To ratify the following action that the Board took in February 2019 by unanimous written consent (via email), pursuant to section 9211(b) of the California Corporations Code: To elect Lauren Schlezinger, Neil Heller, Marilyn Hollinger (Trustee), Lauren Miller, Gene Podkaminer (Trustee), Betsy Rosen (Trustee), and Irina Ruvinsky as members of the 2019-20 Trustee Nominating Committee. (<i>Heidi Schell</i>)</p> <p>Background: The members of the Nominating Committee were still being identified at the time of the February Board meeting, and the Nominating Committee was scheduled to meet before the March Board meeting. In order to comply with the Bylaws, we secured approval of the motion to elect the Nominating Committee by unanimous written consent via email. We are now seeking ratification of that action so that it will be memorialized in the Board minutes.</p> <p>Bylaws reference – Article XV, Section 1: “The Trustees shall no later than at its regular monthly meeting in March elect a Nominating Committee for the purpose of nominating Trustees. This committee shall consist of three (3) members of the Trustees and four (4) members of the congregation at large, as well as such alternates as the Trustees may determine. All these committee members must be members in good standing. It is the spirit and intention of these Bylaws that any nominating committee shall be composed of more members of the congregation at large than of Trustees. The Trustee who shall serve as President in the next fiscal year shall not serve on the Nominating Committee.”</p>	10 min	Vote
<p>Heidi Schell made the motion. Ware Kushner seconded. Motion passed.</p>		

<p>Motion: To approve spending of up to \$6,500 for additional security measures through the end of June 2019. Source of funds: Lorry Lokey Security Fund. Current balance is \$10,000. <i>(Maria Yarmolinsky)</i></p>		
<p>Maria Yarmolinsky made the motion. Nathaniel Berson-Michelson seconded. Motion passed.</p>		
<p>Motion: To approve spending of up to \$12,000 from the Christopher Fishtrom Landscaping Fund to upgrade the landscaping along the front of the building from the Tree of Life to the preschool entrance. Current balance in the fund is \$15,931 <i>(Jeff Lerner)</i>.</p> <p>Background: The landscaping in the front of the building is overdue for an upgrade. The requested funds will support new plantings, a river rock path, and artificial grass surrounding the statue near the preschool. The work will be done such that we can also install an opaque covering or additional plantings in front of the preschool playground fence; this latter item is not part of the funding of this motion.</p>		
<p>Jeff Lerner made the motion. Andy Oliff seconded. Motion passed.</p>		
<p>10. Board Packet Q&A</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Financial Freedom Campaign – started by April Glatt during her presidency to retire mortgage. At that time there was over \$1M left on the mortgage. Since then over 12 families have generously contributed. Have \$190K left to raise. Karen is coordinating a video with Rabbi Feder and Heidi to send to all congregants prior to Passover, tying in the theme of “freedom”. Video is inviting and encouraging everyone to help us cross the finish line. This will free up \$100K a year from budget. Number of board members have already contributed. Heidi encouraged all to contribute and be ambassadors for the campaign.</p> <p>Windows of Names Task Force – Heidi shared on behalf of Jon Herstein that the task force met the end of Feb. They had a lively discussion and agreed topic is challenging and important. Task force will work on recommendation(s) to bring to Board in the next month or two.</p> <p>Sholom Women Shabbat this Friday. 7 pm service. 57 women participating in the service. 106 for dinner. The most ever!</p> <p>Congrats to Rabbi Molly for great congregational retreat!</p> <p>Note new date for Annual Congregational Meeting: June 6 at 6:30 p.m.</p>		
<p>11. Consent Agenda Includes last month's Board minutes and approval of new members</p>	<p>2 min</p>	<p>Vote</p>
<p>Consent agenda approved.</p>		

12. Concluding Prayer		
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Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm