

Board of Trustees Meeting

May 15, 2019

Minutes

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

Attendees

Board

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson
Julie Feuchtwang
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Jeff Lerner
Matt Mandel
Andy Oliff
Gene Podkaminer
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Heidi Schell

Eric Schlezinger
Mary Ann Waterman
Maria Yarmolinsky

Absent

Jenna Fisher
Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Sharon Silverman
Adam Steinberger

Staff

Rabbi Dan Feder
Rabbi Lisa Delson
Rabbi Molly Plotnik
Cantor Alexandra Fox
Karen Wisialowski
Jonathan Harris
Madeleine Steckley

Guest

Sophie Saddik
Lauren Schlezinger

Individual Action Item:

1. Rabbi Plotnik will provide Trustees with a written summary of the rationale behind the changes to the Youth Education program.

General Trustee Action Items:

1. Trustees to review the proposed 2019-20 Board priorities before the June 19 Board meeting and consider which one(s) they would like to work on in the coming year.
2. Trustees to think of a personal growth goal for 2019-20 for the June 19 Board meeting.

Heidi called the meeting to order at 6:16 pm.

1. Welcome
2. D'var Torah (*Gene Podkaminer*)
3. Blessing for Community Service
4. Nominating Committee (*Lauren Schlezinger*) Presentation

- Heidi thanked Lauren for chairing the Nominating Committee and thanked Gene, Betsy, and Marilyn for serving as the Committee's Trustee members.
- Lauren thanked the other Nominating Committee members -- Lauren Miller, Irina Ruvinsky, and Neil Heller -- and

- praised the Committee for modeling the culture of belonging and connection we are trying to cultivate at PTS.
- Lauren thanked the Board for giving the Nominating Committee very helpful guidance on the demographic characteristics, skills and expertise, and personal qualities we are seeking in our new Trustees. Lauren feels that the Committee succeeded in filling the Board's requests.
- The Nominating Committee's nominations to fill the three open positions on the Board are Jason Pollard, Lisa Rosenthal, and Stuart Zussman.

5. 2019-2020 Budget (*Karen Wisialowski*) Presentation/Vote

Motion: To approve the 2019-20 budget as presented on behalf of the Finance Committee.

- Karen reviewed the Finance Committee's proposed 2019-20 budget, which anticipates a \$42K excess of expenses over revenues to be covered by an allocation from the Operating Reserve Fund.
- Karen reviewed a cash flow projection for FY20-21, FY21-22, and FY22-23 that she and Adam prepared in response to a request made at the April Board meeting. Karen noted that the projection, which is based on relatively conservative assumptions on membership, fundraising, and other revenues, anticipates a modest surplus in FY20-21 and increasing surpluses in FY21-22 and FY22-23. The primary reasons for the anticipated surpluses are (1) elimination of mortgage costs after the first quarter of FY20-21; and (2) decreases each year in our cantorial transition obligation.

Arlene Rosenberg made the motion. Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson seconded. Motion passed.

6. Story of the Month (*Mary Ann Waterman*) Personal Reflection

7. Youth Education Update (*Rabbi Plotnik*) Presentation

- Rabbi Plotnik reviewed her process for collecting feedback on PTS' Youth Education program, which included conducting four parent "house meetings," meeting individually with some parents, and meeting with the ninth grade class to gain a student perspective.
- Rabbi Plotnik acknowledged and thanked the members of the Youth Education Task Force – Jill Engel, Jenna Fisher, Josh Friedman, Brian Greenblatt, Katie Herstein, Darryl Leon, Darci Rosenblum, Doug Ross, Nicole Salama, Stuart Zussman, Madeleine Steckley, and Rabbi Feder – who helped her process the feedback she received and acted as a sounding board and thought partner.
- Rabbi Plotnik and the Task Force identified the following recurring themes in the parent feedback they received:
 - A desire on the part of both parents and students to build relationships within PTS;
 - A concern for youth mental health;
 - The difficulty of fitting Youth Education and other synagogue programs into families' schedules;
 - The need to strike a balance between curriculum/content and relationship/identity building; and
 - Parents' desire for information about what their students are learning.
- Rabbi Plotnik discussed the highlights of PTS' new Youth Education program:
 - The program will be Shabbat-based:
 - K-5 students will meet on Friday afternoons, ending with a Kabbalat Shabbat experience and Shabbat dinner
 - Middle school students will meet on Shabbat mornings
 - High school students will meet on Shabbat afternoons, ending with Havdalah

- o Students in grades 3-5 will be able to choose each semester from among three different educational tracks.
 - o Middle school students will begin the year with a retreat to promote relationship building.
 - o The high school program will consist of electives and will emphasize project-based learning.
 - o Hebrew will continue to be taught in small groups on weekdays or possibly Sundays.
- Rabbi Plotnik emphasized the following goals we hope to achieve through the new Youth Education program:
 - o *Learning through authentic experience*: Youth Education will be combined with actual observance of Shabbat.
 - o *Promotion of youth mental health*: The model of Shabbat offers a lot of wisdom for how to maintain mental health.
 - o *Relationship building* (for both students and parents): Parents of elementary school students will be able to opt-in to the Shabbat experience with their students and other families and may find it easier to do so because Shabbat dinner will be provided.
 - o *Giving families more say in what their students learn*: Through the educational track options for grades 3-5 and high school electives.
- Rabbi Plotnik hopes to announce the revised Youth Education program to the congregation within the next two weeks and begin registration in mid-June.
- The Board can serve as ambassadors for the new Youth Education program by:
 - o Understanding and sharing the rationale behind the changes with congregants. **Action item**: Rabbi Plotnik will provide Trustees with a written summary of the rationale behind the changes to the Youth Education program;
 - o Listening to parent concerns respectfully and referring parents to Rabbi Plotnik when appropriate; and
 - o Reminding parents of the process Rabbi Plotnik used to collect parent feedback and noting that many of the changes arose from issues/concerns raised during the past 4 years and during the formal parent feedback meetings.
- Rabbi Delson noted that PTS will be making a powerful statement by making Shabbat the center of our education program.

8. Membership & Engagement Update (*Matt Mandel*) 10 min Presentation

- Matt explained that the structure of the membership and engagement team has been revised.
 - o To streamline and simplify the current structure, there will no longer be a “Kehillah Kedoshah Steering Committee” overseeing all aspects of membership and engagement.
 - o Membership and engagement responsibilities will be divided between two teams:
 - The Belonging and Engagement Team, which focuses on ensuring that new members become and remain engaged; and
 - A prospective member or membership development team (to be formed), which will focus on member recruitment and onboarding
 - Both teams will report directly to the Board, which will provide oversight and accountability.
 - Lauren Schlezinger will be the liaison between the teams and the Board.

9. Board Priorities for 2019-20 (*Heidi Schell*) 25 min Discussion

- Heidi reviewed the Board’s 2018-19 Priorities, noting the progress made and the tasks remaining on each of them.
- Heidi presented a proposed set of 2019-20 Board Priorities that address the areas of:
 - o Membership development
 - o Belonging & Engagement
 - o Tikkun Olam

- o Philanthropy
- o Financial sustainability
- o Leadership and volunteer development
- Heidi noted that the proposed 2019-20 Priorities build on the 2018-19 Priorities and reflect feedback received in the mid-year Board Self-Evaluation as well as PTS' Purpose/Mission, Vision, and Values.
- The Board expressed general agreement to the proposed 2019-20 Board Priorities.
- Next steps:
 - o June Board meeting: Trustees will choose from a "menu" of options for becoming engaged in the coming year, including selecting the work they will do to advance the Board's stated priorities.
 - o July-August: Trustees and others will begin working on plans to advance the Board's priorities.
 - o Board Retreat (date TBD): Trustees will engage in deep, substantive planning for the achievement of Board priorities.

10. LGBTQ Audacious Hospitality (*Marilyn Hollinger*) 5 min Presentation

- Marilyn met with Rabbi Feder, Rabbi Delson, Karen, and Heidi to talk about how PTS can be more welcoming to LGBTQ individuals. They discussed potential changes in many areas, including education, religious life, and use of language.
- Next steps:
 - o Marilyn will write an article for the next Voices magazine about LGBTQ concerns.
 - o The clergy will review URJ resources for improving LGBTQ hospitality.
 - o PTS will advertise its hospitality to LGBTQ individuals by again participating in the San Francisco Pride Parade, which will be held this year on June 30.

11. Outstanding Trustee of the Year & Volunteer Award Winners (*Heidi Schell*) 5 min Presentation

- Heidi announced the following award winners:
 - o Outstanding Trustee of the Year – Betsy Rosen
 - o Outstanding Volunteer of the Year – Tia Kelly
 - o Ner Tamid Award honoree – Yash Snider
- These awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting on June 6.

12. Board Packet Q&A 10-15 min Discussion

- Trustees expressed appreciation for Karen's informative and detailed CCO report.
- Heidi reminded Trustees that at Shabbat services on Friday, August 16, PTS will honor and celebrate Rabbi Feder's 25th year in the rabbinate and Rabbi Delson's 10th year in the rabbinate.

13. Governance (*Heidi Schell*) 10 min Vote

Motion: To approve continuation of use of security guards from June through October 2019, with funds coming from the Lokey Security Fund, which currently has a balance of \$10,000. The cost of security guards from April through October 2019 is expected to be approximately \$10,000, which will deplete the current balance of the fund. (*Jeff Lerner*)

Background: Board approval for security guards expires at the end of June. This proposal asks for continuation through October, at which time we will want to assess our resources, and make a decision regarding how to proceed. Meantime, congregants are being asked to contribute voluntarily to our security fund as part of the membership renewal process.

- Jeff Lerner made the motion. Matt Mandel seconded.
- Karen noted that after October, we hope to have realized some earnings on the Lokey Security Endowment, as well as received contributions from other donors, to help defray security expenses.
- Motion passed.

Motion: To move approximately \$1.6 million currently in the Wells Fargo Savings account to an account invested in CDs, Money Market funds, and other relatively liquid securities, according to anticipated needs as set forth in the Facility Reserve Study. The exact amount of the investment will equal the balance of the Operating Reserve Fund plus the Facility Reserve Fund. The Investment Committee is authorized to select the particular financial institution and investments. *(Gene Podkaminer)*

Background: Cash in our Wells Fargo Savings account earns 0.06% interest. The Investment Committee believes that we can earn substantially greater returns by actively investing those funds in other financial instruments, with potential increased interest income of \$20,000 per year (at current rates). We are currently receiving quotes on options from both Wells Fargo and Morgan Stanley, and the Investment Committee will make a final decision based on rates, customer service, and our ability to withdraw funds from the accounts as needed.

- Gene Podkaminer made the motion. Betsy Rosen seconded. Motion passed.

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

- Consent agenda was approved.

15. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.