

Board of Trustees Meeting

July 17, 2019

Minutes

Chair: Heidi Schell ♦ Minutes: Arlene Rosenberg ♦ Timekeeper: Andy Oliff

Attendees

Board

Julie Feuchtwang
Jenna Fisher
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Andy Oliff
Jason Pollard
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Lisa Rosenthal
Heidi Schell
Eric Schlezinger
Stuart Zussman

Absent

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson
Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Gene Podkaminer
Adam Steinberger
Mary Ann Waterman
Maria Yarmolinsky

Staff

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

Guests

Davina Chall
Dannielle Weil
Isabelle Friedman

General Action Items:

1. Trustees are encouraged to continue thinking about how we can structure and staff the tasks that are necessary to achieve our Board priorities.

Individual Trustee Action Items:

1. Nathaniel and the Executive Committee will digest the feedback on the Menu of Responsibilities from tonight's meeting and come back to the Board with recommendations about how we will proceed next.

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

1. Welcome
 2. Introductions – Getting to Know You
- Heidi welcomed new Trustees Jason Pollard, Lisa Rosenthal, and Stuart Zussman. Each Trustee, staff member, and guest introduced themselves to the group.

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

4. Blessing for Community Service

5. Board Brit/Promises (*Heidi Schell*)

Presentation/Action

- Heidi reviewed and distributed the Board Covenant and asked all Trustees and staff members, as well as the preschool PTO and PARTY presidents, to sign it.

6. Clergy update

Presentation

- The clergy previewed some new features for this year's High Holy Days services.
 - Cantor Fox announced her intention to place greater emphasis on the role of music in the services. Musical changes for this year will include adding more instruments and bringing the choir onto the bimah to create a more contemporary feel.
 - Rabbi Plotnik spoke about the clergy's desire to create more opportunities for the entire community to worship together. To achieve that goal, there will be only one service on Erev Rosh HaShanah. In addition, there will be no Teen Service on Rosh HaShanah, and the Yom Kippur Teen Service will take place during the afternoon rather than during morning services. The Teen Service will also be clergy- and staff-led this year rather than teen-led as in the past.
 - Rabbi Delson spoke about the clergy's decision to replace the traditional Yom Kippur Afternoon Service with a "Healing Service" that will incorporate prayers, songs, and poetry of healing in addition to the traditional chanting of the story of Jonah.
- Rabbi Feder reflected on his recent trip to Israel, which was sponsored by the American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF), AIPAC's charitable arm. He noted the following highlights:
 - A visit to a kibbutz on the Gaza border, where he met a resident who talked about "balloon season." Balloon season is the dry season in the Middle East, when Gazans take balloons and let them drop into Israel, creating a tremendous fire hazard. Rabbi Feder learned about mental and emotional toll that this practice takes on Israeli families near the border.
 - A visit to a "terror tunnel" in the northwest of Israel, near the Lebanese border, that the IDF discovered a few weeks before his trip. Rabbi Feder learned about the millions of dollars that are spent to create these enormous and sophisticated tunnels, and was overwhelmed by the amount of hate that they represent.

7. Menu of Responsibilities (*Heidi Schell*)

Presentation/Discussion/Activity

- Heidi distributed a chart showing what Trustees have signed up for on the Menu of Responsibilities.
- Heidi thanked Trustees for stepping up to take on new responsibilities, and thanked Nathaniel for inspiring and driving the signup process.

- Heidi guided Trustees through an exercise that encouraged them to consider where there are “gaps” in the signups (areas in which greater Trustee commitment is needed), why there might be gaps in certain areas, and how we can address those gaps.
- Next steps:
 - Recognizing that we can’t do everything at once, Nathaniel and the Executive Committee will digest the feedback from tonight’s meeting and come back to the Board with recommendations about how we will proceed next.
 - In the meantime, Heidi encouraged Trustees to continue thinking about how we can structure and staff the tasks that are necessary to achieve our Board priorities.

8. Contract Renewal Process (*Eric Schlezinger*)

Presentation

- The contracts of three members of our clergy/senior staff are up for renewal this year: Allison Steckley, Rabbi Lisa Delson, and Rabbi Molly Plotnik.
- Eric outlined the basic principles of PTS’ contract renewal process:
 - The renewal process must be thorough, credible and fair.
 - The process must honor all bylaws and contractual obligations.
 - All congregants must have the opportunity to provide feedback. The President — or his/her designate – will communicate directly with congregants, explaining the renewal process and inviting feedback.
 - All Trustees must have the opportunity to learn about the process and provide feedback so that they will both understand and support the process.
 - As elected representatives of the congregation, Trustees will have the opportunity to share feedback in writing or orally with members of the Personnel Committee (in person or by phone).
 - Past Presidents can also share feedback in writing or orally with members of the Personnel Committee (in person or by phone).
- Feedback on Allison, Rabbi Delson, and Rabbi Plotnik is being collected now through mid-August. The Personnel Committee (which consists of Eric, Scott Haber, Jon Herstein, and Heidi), together with Rabbi Feder, will review the feedback and make recommendations to the Board at the August meeting about whether the contracts should be renewed.
- The feedback and recommendations will be discussed in Executive Session, but the Board will vote on the renewals in open session.
- The renewal votes must take place at the August meeting because the employment contracts require us to give the employees notice of our intent to renew/not renew by September 1.

9. Board Packet Q&A

Discussion

- Trustees raised questions about the reasons for recent member resignations, the progress of membership renewals, and certain items on the financial statements.
- Karen reminded Trustees that beginning at 3:30pm on Wednesday, August 21 (the date of the August Board

meeting), Trustees are invited to come to PTS to make reminder calls to members who have not yet renewed.

10. Governance (*Heidi Schell*)

Vote

Motion: To approve the following slate of Officers for the 2019-20 term: Jon Herstein, Vice President; Adam Steinberger, Treasurer; Arlene Rosenberg, Secretary (*Ware Kuschner*)

Background

Per Bylaws Article VII, Section 2:

b) Selection of Other Officers. Immediately following the Annual Meeting, the President shall appoint a committee of three (3) Trustees who shall nominate a slate of Trustees to serve as officers. At the July meeting of the Trustees, the committee shall present their nominees. Other nominations may be made from the floor. The Trustees shall then elect the officers. The newly elected officers shall take office immediately. Officers shall serve until their successors have been elected. In the event that an office is vacated, the Trustees shall, no later than at their next regular meeting, elect a Trustee to fill the vacancy.

Trustees who were appointed to this committee are Ware Kuschner, Jenna Fisher, and Julie Feuchtwang.

- Ware made the motion. Jenna Fisher seconded. Motion passed.

Motion: To change the description of the PTS Camp and Israel Scholarship Fund in Honor of Sholom Women, 3140-09 as follows:
(*Marilyn Hollinger*)

Vote

This fund is used to subsidize ~~PTS youth students~~ who wish to attend a URJ summer camp (or another Jewish camp as approved by the Senior Rabbi), participate in a Reform movement teen Israel experience, or attend a NFTY national or regional event, and whose families are in need of financial assistance beyond that available from the URJ, Jewish Community Federation, and other community organizations. It is anticipated that Sholom Women will contribute to the fund annually. Use of this fund is based on the recommendation of the Senior Rabbi.

- Marilyn made the motion. Eric Schlezinger seconded.
- Marilyn noted that Mary Ann and Sholom Women support this change.

- Motion passed.

11. Consent Agenda

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

Vote

- Consent agenda was approved.

12. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.