

Board of Trustees Meeting

February 12, 2020

Minutes

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

Attendees

Board

Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson
Jenna Fisher
Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Jason Pollard
Andy Oliff
Gene Podkaminer
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Lisa Rosenthal
Heidi Schell
Eric Schlezinger
Mary Ann Waterman

Maria Yarmolinsky

Stuart Zussman

Absent

Julie Feuchtwang

Adam Steinberger

Staff

Rabbi Dan Feder

Cantor Alexandra Fox

Rabbi Molly Plotnik

Ayelet Shapiro

Allison Steckley

Madeleine Steckley

Karen Wisialowski

Guests

Rebekah Coleman

Isabelle Friedman

Julie Kraus

Ella Raffin

Joel Silk

Journey Steinberg

Jacob Wolin

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

1. Welcome (*Heidi Schell*)
2. D'var Torah (*Scott Haber*)
3. Blessing for Community Service
4. PARTY Board Presentation

Presentation

- Several members of the PARTY Board -- Rebekah Coleman, Isabelle Friedman, Ella Raffin, Journey Steinberg, and Jacob Wolin – reported on the group's mission, goals, and recent activities.
- PARTY, which stands for Peninsula Area Reform Temple Youth, is PTS' youth group for high school students. It is

affiliated with the National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), the URJ's teen youth organization. PARTY is youth-led, with guidance and assistance from Director of Youth Engagement Madeleine Steckley.

- At a retreat earlier this year, the PARTY Board learned about PTS' vision, mission, and values; reflected on PARTY's role within the PTS community, and adopted the following PARTY mission statement: "PARTY is a safe and inclusive space that embraces the spirit of Shabbat and thrives off of connections among Jewish youth, the exploration of their Jewish identities, and the creation of an accepting and caring community."
- The PARTY Board also set goals for the year, including:
 - Planning events that provide a balance of religious connection, social action, and non-structured social time;
 - Creating events that include relevant and engaging connections to Judaism;
 - Increasing attendance at events; and
 - Building a strong PTS PARTY community in which everyone feels supported and accepted.
- Already this year, PARTY has adapted to new challenges and has planned a variety of new and different events. More new teens have been coming to PARTY events than ever before. PARTY is still struggling, however, to bring in new members, particularly younger members.
- How can the PTS Board support PARTY?
 - Share ideas on how to increase attendance and bring in new people
 - Share ideas on how to improve outreach

5. Search Committees

Presentation

- Director of Education Search Committee
 - Co-chairs Joel Silk and Julie Kraus reported on the committee's progress.
 - The committee consists of 14 people, including Rabbi Feder, Rabbi Delson, and two teens.
 - Timeline:
 - Under HUC recruiting rules, any offer to a current HUC rabbinic student must be extended on March 3. Because the committee is considering current HUC students, and rabbis and non-rabbi educators in the field for our Director of Education position, the search is currently proceeding on the accelerated HUC timeline for students.
 - If the Director of Education position is not filled by March 3, the committee can continue to consider applications from rabbis in the field and/or non-rabbi educators on a rolling timeline.
 - After conducting initial video interviews, the committee has invited three candidates to visit PTS for more in-person interviews.
- Cantor Search Committee
 - Committee co-chair Lisa Rosenthal reported on the committee's progress on behalf of her co-chair April Glatt.
 - The committee has 15 members, including Rabbi Feder, Rabbi Delson, Allison Steckley, and two teens.
 - The cantorial search is being conducted in coordination with Cantor Kay Greenwald, Director of Placement for the American Conference of Cantors (ACC).
 - To date, the committee has reviewed a number of applications, has conducted initial video interviews, and plans to invite two candidates for on-site visits. Each on-site visit will include a mock Shabbat service which Board members will be encouraged to attend.
 - Cantorial hiring proceeds on a rolling timeline.
- Heidi thanked the chairs of both committees for their hard work and informed the Board that:
 - Both search committees will provide the Board with updates each month until they complete their searches.
 - Search expenses will be paid from PTS' Search Fund. As part of our operating budget each year, we transfer approximately \$5000 to the Search Fund to finance future searches. We currently have approximately \$15,000 in the Search Fund.
 - On May 29, we will have a special Shabbat service to honor and say good-bye to Rabbi Plotnik and Cantor Fox.
- Rabbi Feder praised both search committees for the level of interview questions they have devised. Rabbi Feder

also reminded the Board that the search process is uncertain and may not yield the result we want.

6. Story of the Month (*Eric Schlezinger*) Personal Reflection

7. Purim Mishloach Manot (*Betsy Rosen*) Presentation

- Betsy reported that the Mishloach Manot project has generated \$15,600 in revenue so far, \$10,000 of which has come from sponsorships. We are on pace to improve on last year's revenue total, which was approximately \$18,000. In addition, our expenses will be lower this year than they were last year.
- Betsy further reported that many people have signed up to help assemble baskets, but we still need people to help hand out baskets to students after Youth Ed on Friday, March 6.
- Betsy thanked Ayelet for creating a link to allow Board members and others to purchase sponsorships.

8. Accounting for Restricted Funds (*Karen Wisialowski*) Presentation

- Karen reported that PTS has recently changed the way in which contributions to and pay-outs from the 47 different restricted funds used to support projects and programming are reflected on PTS' profit/loss statements. The change is meant to provide increased visibility for the Board; improved access to information for management; and increased ease of tracking.
- Previous method of accounting:
 - For a restricted fund expenditure that was part of PTS' annual operating budget, the amount of the expenditure was both recognized as revenue and charged as an expense in the period in which the expenditure was made.
 - Expenditures from restricted funds that were not part of the annual operating budget were not reflected in PTS' profit/loss statements at all.
- New method of accounting:
 - Money paid into a restricted fund is recognized as income and money paid out of a fund is charged as an expense during the period in which the money is received or paid out.
 - Profit/loss statements can be created for individual restricted funds.
 - Exception: This accounting method is NOT used for funds that PTS holds for use by others, such as the Rabbis' Discretionary Fund, the Brotherhood Community Fund, the Sephardic Minyan Fund, and permanently restricted funds.

9. Bylaws Task Force (*Scott Haber, Arlene Rosenberg*) Presentation

- Task force organization and methodology:
 - The full bylaws task force has been meeting to consider substantive or policy issues raised by the bylaws.
 - A smaller subset of the task force, consisting of Scott, Arlene, Karen, and David Levitt, has been meeting to go through the bylaws line-by-line and do the actual drafting.
 - The redrafted bylaws will reflect substantive/policy recommendations made by the task force, as well as changes intended to conform the bylaws to California law; reflect best practices; and make the language as clean, clear, and consistent as possible.
- Progress and timing:
 - The full task force has met twice and has one more meeting scheduled. Additional meetings will be scheduled if needed.
 - The line-by-line review/redrafting of the bylaws is about 2/3 complete.
 - The task force hopes to complete a solid draft of its proposed revision by the end of March. The revision

will then be presented to the Board, past presidents, and other key constituencies for reactions and comments.

- o Because our current bylaws outline a three-month process leading up to congregational approval of any bylaws revisions, the revised bylaws will not be ready in time for a congregational vote at this year's Annual Meeting. The task force hopes to have the revised bylaws ready for approval at a special meeting to be held during fall 2020.

10. World Zionist Congress Elections (*Rabbi Feder*)

Presentation

- Rabbi Feder discussed the importance of voting in the World Zionist Congress elections.
- Rabbi Plotnik reminded the Board that Anat Hoffman, director of Women of the Wall and the Israel Religious Action Center, will be at PTS on March 6-7. Ms. Hoffman's work in Israel is the type of work that is funded by the World Zionist Congress.

11. Board Packet Q&A

Discussion

- Trustees expressed pleasure that during the past month, the congregation gained four new families and experienced no resignations.
- Karen directed Trustees' attention to the LGBTQ Inclusivity Task Force report in this month's Board packet and thanked Marilyn for her leadership of that task force.
- Heidi congratulated Allison on the PTS preschool being voted "Best of Burlingame" in the preschool category.

12. Governance (*Heidi Schell*)

Vote

(a) Motion: To elect Jon Herstein as President of Peninsula Temple Sholom for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. (*Maria Yarmolinsky*)

Background: Per Bylaws Article VII, Section 2(a): "*Selection of President. At the January meeting of the Trustees, the Trustees shall elect a committee of three (3) Trustees who shall nominate a Trustee for the position of President. At the February meeting of the Trustees, the committee shall present their nominee. Other nominations may be made from the floor. The Trustees shall then elect a President. The newly elected President shall take office at the beginning of the ensuing fiscal year.*"

At last month's meeting, Andy Oliff, Adam Steinberger, and Maria Yarmolinsky were elected as Nominating Committee for President.

- Maria Yarmolinsky made the motion. Ware Kushner seconded.
- Jon was excused from the meeting while the motion was discussed.
- Motion passed.
- Jon returned to the meeting and shared some thoughts about his experience at the Scheidt seminar for synagogue presidents that he attended last weekend.

(b) Motion: To authorize Rabbi Feder to extend, on behalf of PTS, an offer of employment to one or more candidates recommended by the Director of Education Search Committee for the position of Director of Education, provided that if the candidate is not a rabbi, the offer has been

approved by the Personnel Committee. Once we have a candidate who accepts the offer, the Board will be asked to vote to elect the candidate and authorize the Personnel Committee to enter into contract negotiations with that candidate. (*Scott Haber*)

Background: Due to the particular circumstances and timing of the recruitment process driven by Hebrew Union College, and the likelihood that an offer will need to be made before the March Board meeting, there is no meaningful way for the Board to discuss and vote on the finalist(s) before we make an offer -- and, if necessary, repeat for each subsequent candidate. Also, because Board votes are on the record, out of respect for the confidentiality of the candidates, we hesitate including candidate names in official motions until we know that a new Director of Education is on board. Thus, the non-specific pre-authorization vote to Rabbi Feder and a second, more specific vote afterwards. Once an offer is accepted, the candidate will be presented for approval by the Board. The Bylaws require that a two-thirds vote of the entire Trustees shall be required for the election of an associate/assistant rabbi.

- Scott Haber made the motion. Stuart Zussman seconded.
- Heidi explained that this motion is needed because of the short timeline for making offers.
- Motion passed.

(c) Motion: To authorize Rabbi Feder to extend, on behalf of PTS, an offer of employment to one or more candidates recommended by the Cantor Search Committee for the position of Cantor. Once we have a candidate who accepts the offer, the Board will be asked to vote to elect the candidate and authorize the Personnel Committee to enter into contract negotiations with that candidate. (*Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson*)

Background: In the event that an offer needs to be made before the March Board meeting, there is no meaningful way for the Board to discuss and vote on the finalist(s) before we make an offer. Hence the need to pre-authorize Rabbi Feder to make an offer. Once an offer is accepted, the candidate will be presented for approval by the Board. The Bylaws require that a two-thirds vote of the entire Trustees shall be required for the election of an associate/assistant rabbi.

- Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson made the motion. Marilyn Hollinger seconded.
- Motion passed.

(d) Motion: To designate a parsonage amount equal to 26% of total current salary, as requested by Cantor Barry Reich, for the tax year 2020.

- Jon Herstein made the motion. Eric Schlezinger seconded.
- Motion passed.

(e) Motion: To purchase a new folding machine for up to \$6,100 (plus tax and shipping) + \$960 per year with upfront funds coming from the Reserve Study Fund and ongoing expenses coming from operations.

(Jason Pollard)

Background: Our current folding machine, used for mailing projects, weekly Shabbat leaflets, event programs, etc., works intermittently. We have delayed replacement for the past five years, and can wait no longer. The bonus with a new machine is that it can handle more paper and additional folding options.

- Jason Pollard made the motion. Nathaniel Bergson-Michelson seconded.
- Karen addressed why the Reserve Study Fund is the appropriate source to use for these funds.
- Motion passed.

(f) Motion: To set the lifecycle fees for future b'nai mitzvah as follows: The fees are payable in three installments, beginning on the date that the bar/bat mitzvah is scheduled and ending 1 year before the bar/bat mitzvah date.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date	
2022-23	\$2,040
2023-24	\$2,145
2024-25	\$2,250

Background: B'nai mitzvah fees are currently set at \$1,725 for 2020-21 b'nai mitzvah students and \$1,950 for 2021-22 b'nai mitzvah students. The above rates represent roughly 5% increases, rounded for easy divisibility by three. Rates need to be set 3 years in advance because of advanced planning and invoicing. My suggestion is that each year in January, we revisit the forward calendar so that the Board will have an opportunity to make adjustments on rates that are currently more than 3 years in the future.

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Description of lifecycle fee shared with families:

Bar/bat mitzvah families are charged a lifecycle fee, which enables PTS to offer customized attention for your family's bar/bat mitzvah experience. The fee includes some/all of the following: semi-private lessons with b'nai mitzvah tutors, private lessons with our cantor, private family study time with our rabbis, oneg Shabbat sponsorship, bimah flowers, Shabbat challah and wine, bar/bat mitzvah leaflet, event planning assistance, live streaming of the service, and access to video download of the streamed service, if available.

The lifecycle fee is due in full 12 months before your child's bar/bat mitzvah. Appointments with our clergy and with our event planning assistant may be delayed if the lifecycle fee is not paid one year before the date of your child's bar/bat mitzvah. Please know that if the lifecycle fee presents a hardship, we are happy to work with you to make alternative plans.

- Gene Podkaminer made the motion. Maria Yarmolinsky seconded.

- Karen provided additional background.
- Motion passed.

13. Consent Agenda

Includes last month's Board minutes, approval of new members, and approval of any administrative resignations.

Vote

- Consent agenda was approved.

14. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.