

# PENINSULA TEMPLE SHOLOM

Annual Meeting | June 6, 2019

## Minutes

### **Welcome**

Opening Remarks

Heidi Schell, Board President

Heidi noted that the annual meeting is a time to reflect on the past year and celebrate our community. She recognized the strength of our clergy team, as well as our professional and support staff. She also acknowledged and thanked current and past Trustees; current and past Sholom Women board members, current and past PARTY board members, and current and past preschool PTO board members who were present.

Heidi stated that PTS is healthy and thriving. She noted the attention being given to creating and maintaining a culture of belonging and engagement while also ensuring the synagogue's safety and security and its financial stability.

Heidi presented a slide show based on statements she collected from Trustees and staff members describing their proudest moments and achievements from the past year.

D'var Torah

Rabbi Lisa Delson

### **Reflections on 2018-19**

Senior Rabbi's Remarks

Rabbi Dan Feder

Rabbi Feder expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve our congregation.

Rabbi Feder reflected on how successfully the congregation welcomed Cantor Fox to our community. He celebrated the congregation's commitment to fostering connections between people and building community, and noted ways in which we weave those values into everything we do.

Looking ahead, Rabbi Feder expressed enthusiasm for the new Youth Education program, which will increase the congregation's commitment to making Shabbat special.

Remembering Congregants

Rabbi Dan Feder

Rabbi Feder read the names of congregants who died during the past year.

### **Spotlight on Music and Youth Education**

How Music Inspires Life at PTS

Cantor Alexandra Fox

Cantor Fox led attendees in song and noted that when people sing together, their heartbeats become synchronized. She dreams that when people enter the PTS building, they will leave behind the stresses of daily life, come together as a community, and let their voices become one.

Cantor Fox's hopes and plans for music at PTS include:

- Taking the accessible and relatable sounds of the summer camp dining hall and making them more vast and full for our sanctuary;
- Bringing more new music into the synagogue while building on the music already here;

- Introducing more instrumental music to Shabbat services;
- Using music as an educational tool in Youth Education, preschool, and adult learning, in the hope that the music will migrate from the classroom throughout the rest of the congregation;
- Bringing music to the synagogue from throughout Jewish musical history, from cantorial chants to classical Reform choir and organ music to the modern Jewish music created by Debbie Friedman and her successors;
- Teaching classes about High Holy Day liturgy and music in advance of the holidays; and
- Using music to get our youth excited about being Jewish.

Shabbat-based Youth Education Program

Rabbi Molly Plotnik

Rabbi Molly gave an overview of PTS' new Shabbat-based Youth Education program, which will result in our synagogue being filled with youth from Friday afternoon through Havdalah.

Rabbi Molly described the process she used to redesign the Youth Education program, which included:

- Conducting "House of Worship" Meetings at PTS, where parents were invited to share their feedback about what was and was not working in Youth Education;
- Meeting privately with parents who were not able to attend the parent feedback sessions;
- Meeting with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class to gain students' perspectives; and
- Working with a Youth Education Task Force to evaluate parent feedback and draw out themes. The Youth Education Task Force, which was designed to represent a diverse population of people interested in Youth Education at PTS, consisted of Jill Engel, Jenna Fisher, Josh Friedman, Brian Greenblatt, Katie Herstein, Darryl Leon, Darci Rosenblum, Doug Ross, Nicole Salama, Stuart Zussman, Director of Youth Engagement Madeleine Steckley, and Rabbi Feder.

Rabbi Molly described the goals of Youth Education at PTS as giving students (1) a love of Judaism; (2) a basic, core knowledge of Judaism; and (3) the tools to learn more.

Key factors that influenced to the design of the new Youth Education program included:

- A strong desire expressed by both students and parents to build relationships and community at PTS;
- A belief that students learn best by doing, and therefore can learn to live Jewishly by celebrating Shabbat;
- A concern for youth mental health and the belief that Judaism in general, and Shabbat in particular, have wisdom to offer on how to live an emotionally healthy life; and
- A desire expressed by many families to give students more choices about where they focus their Jewish studies.

Rabbi Molly will be working over the summer with Madeleine and members of the Youth

Education faculty to continue planning the details of the new program.

## **Budget**

2019/20 Budget

Adam Steinberger, Treasurer

Adam acknowledged the hard work of PTS' clergy, senior staff, and lay leaders in building the budget each year and maintaining fiscal discipline. Adam also acknowledged and thanked the members of the Finance Committee -- Judy Bornstein, Gary Fishtrom, Roger Lazarus, David Monasch, Jeff Savitz, and Nick Zeitlin -- for their hard work.

Adam highlighted the following aspects of the 2019/20 budget:

- PTS' primary sources of revenue continue to be membership commitment and preschool tuition. The synagogue's largest expenses are personnel and building costs.
- Thanks to the success of the Financial Freedom Campaign initiated by past president April Glatt, our mortgage should be fully paid off by September 2020, thereby freeing approximately \$103K per year.
- Although a reexamination of our security measures prompted by recent events will likely cause us to increase security spending, we have been fortunate to receive generous donations earmarked for security purposes, including a \$500K endowment from Lorry Lokey and a \$50K gift by Mel and Bonnie Goldman. These gifts will allow us to maintain current security expenditures without impacting our budget.
- After a 2-year search, we have filled the position of Assistant Director for the preschool. The salary for this position is included in the 2019/20 budget.
- During each of the past two fiscal years, PTS had net surpluses of revenue over expenses, which we set aside in an Operating Reserve fund. For the 2019/20 fiscal year, we are anticipating a slight revenue shortfall. The Board has approved allocating funds from the Operating Reserve to cover this shortfall. Although this was a difficult decision for the Board to make, the Board was reassured by conservative budget projections indicating that the payoff of our mortgage and other anticipated expense reductions will result in budget surpluses in the following three fiscal years.

Adam noted that to ensure PTS' long-term financial health, we will need to secure revenue from legacy and endowment giving. The Board has made the building of legacy and endowment giving one of its priorities for the coming year.

## **Saying Goodbye, Saying Hello**

Acknowledgment of Retiring Trustees | Jeff Lerner, Matt Mandel, Sharon Silverman, and outgoing PARTY President Sophie Saddik

Heidi Schell

Heidi thanked outgoing Trustees Jeff Lerner, Matt Mandel, and Sharon Silverman for their excellent contributions to the Board and synagogue. Heidi also thanked outgoing PARTY president Sophie Saddik for her service.

## **Honoring Outstanding Volunteers**

Trustee of the Year—Betsy Rosen. Presented by Heidi Schell.

Volunteer of the Year—Tia Kelly Mandel. Presented by Rabbi Delson.

Ner Tamid —Yash Snider. Presented by Rabbi Feder.

## **Conducting Business**

Approve 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes

Arlene Rosenberg, Board  
Secretary

Arlene Rosenberg moved for approval of the 2018 annual meeting minutes. Matt Mandel seconded. Michael Battat raised a point of order, noting that because some people had left the meeting, we no longer had the required quorum of 50 members.

Believing that under California law governing Non-profit Religious Corporations, we could continue to conduct business after losing a quorum as long as any action taken were approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for the meeting (i.e. 26 or more votes), Heidi called for a vote on the motion. The motion received 41 votes in favor, no votes opposed, and one abstention.

Introduction of New Trustees and Election of Slate

Lauren Schlezinger,  
Nominating Committee  
Chair and Immediate Past  
President

Lauren acknowledged and thanked the members of the Nominating Committee: Neil Heller, Marilyn Hollinger, Lauren Miller, Gene Podkaminer, Betsy Rosen, and Irina Ruvinsky.

Lauren presented the following slate of congregants to serve as Trustees beginning on July 1, 2019:

**Current Trustees Nominated for Two-Year Terms:** Julie Feuchtwang, Jenna Fisher, Andrew Oliff (second term); Scott Haber, Jonathan Herstein (third term); Ware Kuschner (fourth term, with one remaining year of eligibility)

**New Trustees Nominated for Two-Year Terms:** Jason Pollard, Lisa Rosenthal, and Stuart Zussman

Lauren moved for approval of the proposed slate of Trustees. Eric Schlezinger seconded.

Again, a point of order was raised regarding the absence of a quorum. Heidi called for a vote on the motion, and the motion received 44 votes in favor, no votes opposed, and 2 abstentions.

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Upon further reflection and consultation among Board officers and clergy, it was decided that to ensure strict adherence to our governance requirements, a Special Meeting would be called under Article VI, Section 2 of our bylaws for the purpose of voting on approval of last year's annual meeting minutes and the Nominating Committee's proposed slate of Trustees.

## **Q&A and Closing**

Congregational Questions and Comments

Heidi Schell

A congregant asked how, in light of the new Shabbat-based Youth Education program, our building will be used on Sundays. The clergy and staff responded that the building will be available for programming, but no decision on how it will be used has been made at this time.

Closing Song

Cantor Alexandra Fox

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Rosenberg, Board Secretary