

Board of Trustees Meeting

July 15, 2020

6:15p via Zoom

Minutes

Chair: Jon Herstein/Arlene Rosenberg ♦ Minutes: Julie Feuchtwang ♦ Timekeeper: Andy Oliff

Attendees

Board

Linda Citron
Julie Feuchtwang
Laurie Friedman
Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Andy Oliff
Gene Podkaminer
Jason Pollard
Roger Lazarus

Alison Poggi León
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Lisa Rosenthal
Eric Schlezinger
Maria Yarmolinsky
Stuart Zussman

Absent

Jenna Fisher

Staff

Rabbi Liora Alban
Rabbi Lisa Delson
Rabbi Dan Feder
Ayelet Shapiro
Allison Steckley
Karen Wisialowski
Cantor Anna Zhar

Guests

Erica Carmel
Diane Goldman
Diane Koss

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

1. Welcome and Introductions (*Jon Herstein*)

- Jon opened the meeting by recognizing PTS's new lay leaders and reading the poem "A Call to Service" by Rabbi Karyn Kedar. He then turned presiding officer duties over to Arlene Rosenberg.

2. Blessing for Community Service

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tsivanu la'asok b'tzorchay tzibur*

3. Getting to know our new clergy (*Rabbi Feder*)

- Rabbi Feder welcomed Cantor Anna Zhar and Rabbi Liora Alban to our congregation and invited each of them to say a few words to introduce themselves.
- Cantor Anna spoke about her lifelong love of music, particularly choral music and singing. She also spoke about her journey from the former Soviet Union to Israel to San Francisco to New York, and expressed her happiness to be back in the Bay Area. She compared the troubled times we are experiencing now to a storm and expressed hope that we will see a rainbow soon.
- Rabbi Alban shared that she has dreamed of becoming a rabbi since she was a teenager. She described her upbringing at a Reform temple in Los Angeles and her education at UC Berkeley and HUC-JIR in LA, where she was ordained this past May. Rabbi Alban expressed gratitude for the warm welcome she has received at PTS.

4. Clergy Welcome Committee update (*Diane Goldman*)

Inform

- Diane noted that we are limited in what we can do to welcome our new clergy since we cannot have in-person gatherings due to COVID-19.
- Prior to their official start dates, the Welcome Committee asked both Rabbi Alban and Cantor Anna to create videos to introduce themselves to the congregation. The videos were very well-received.
- The committee gave Rabbi Alban a Shabbat welcome basket when she arrived in the Bay Area and will do the same for Cantor Anna when she arrives.
- Future plans: The committee is working to arrange Zoom meetings to allow Rabbi Alban and Cantor Anna to meet groups of congregants, including both social or demographic groups such as seniors, and organized groups such as the Sholom Women Board and the League of Extraordinary Mensches. The committee will work with Rabbi Alban and Cantor Anna to determine how many meetings to conduct and how often to have them.

5. Budget update (*Karen Wisialowski, Jason Pollard*)

Inform/Consult/Vote

- Jason reminded the Board that our budget is very fluid this year due to the pandemic. He noted that the Finance Committee will be meeting frequently to review the budget and that he will likely be coming to the Board on a monthly basis to describe budget changes and to seek approval when needed.
- Jason informed the Board that since the budget was approved in May, we already have learned of significant changes in expected revenues and expenses, some of which will be better than expected and some of which will be worse:
 - Better than expected: We were able to open our summer camp on a limited basis; we have received contributions to our COVID-19 Recovery Fund; and due to recent changes in the law, we will likely be able to obtain forgiveness of our entire PPP loan rather than only a portion of it.
 - Worse than expected: Our fall preschool revenue will be lower than expected due to health department restrictions on the number of children we can admit; we will need to hire additional preschool teachers in order to comply with required teacher-student ratios; and we would like to hire a video producer to help us create a professional-looking HHD video stream.

Motion: To acknowledge and ratify the following changes in revenue expectations and proposed expenses which were not anticipated when the 2020-21 Budget was approved in May 2020.

(\$000)	Better	Worse
PRESCHOOL		
Summer camp tuition	\$121	
Fall preschool tuition		\$250
Summer camp teachers/other expenses		70
Fall preschool teachers(1)		98
Net Impact Preschool		297
OTHER		
HHD Video Production		15
COVID-19 Recovery Fund	50	
Additional loan forgiveness	115	
Net Impact Other	150	
Net Impact		\$147

(1) If we are not able to open a 12th classroom with 2 new teachers, the lost revenue would be approximately \$200k in addition to figures above.

- Jason made the motion. Gene Podkaminer seconded.
- Discussion:
 - Jason and Karen clarified that donations to the COVID-19 Recovery Fund will be used to decrease the amount we need to withdraw from the Operating Reserve Fund to cover COVID-19-related expenses.
 - Karen updated Trustees on the current status of membership renewals.
 - Trustees discussed what types of budget changes will require Board approval and what types will require only that the Board be informed. The Executive Committee will attempt to develop standards for determining when Board approval will be required.
- Motion passed.

6. *Preschool update (Allison Steckley)* Inform

- The preschool reopening task force has been meeting once a week to plan for the upcoming school year.
- Allison identified some of the changes being made for the upcoming year:
 - There will be no toddler classes.
 - Only a five days/week option will be offered.
 - The new preschool handbook contains COVID-19 information and a liability waiver.
 - Health regulations will limit enrollment to 144 children (down from the usual 188). Currently, 136 students are registered; we are reaching out to families on our wait list to fill the remaining slots.
- Allison reported that the preschool summer camp, which consists of 38 campers in four classes, is going well. Feedback has been positive and the kids are happy to be together again. Allison described some of the safety protocols that are being followed in the summer camp and discussed possible modifications that might be made to these protocols when school resumes in the fall.

7. *COVID-19 Task Force update (Laurie Friedman, Rabbi Feder, Karen Wisialowski, Rabbi Alban)* Inform

- Rabbi Feder noted that reopening decisions are being made by staff and lay leaders acting in partnership.
- Rabbi Feder identified key philosophical questions that the reopening task force is considering, including how the community and clergy can connect with one another and how PTS can continue to create and sanctify Jewish life during the pandemic.
- Laurie acknowledged the difficulty of managing and accomplishing a safe reopening of our building. She identified some of the logistical issues that must be addressed, such as signage and possible retrofitting of the facility.
- Laurie stated that the first area of synagogue life the task force is examining is the B'nai Mitzvah process. Laurie thanked Andy Oliff, a task force member, for creating a draft description of Zoom b'nai mitzvah.
- Karen outlined other possibilities that the task force is considering for allowing limited access to the PTS building to small, select groups of people.
- Laurie emphasized that in making its recommendations, the task force will be guided by the medical and legal expertise of task force members and by County health orders. Laurie expressed gratitude for the expertise of task force members, as well as for Karen's guidance and direction.
- Karen noted that clear communication with congregants will be key to the reopening process. Karen thanked task force member Marilyn Hollinger for leading the communication efforts.
- Trustees asked about the budgetary impact of preparing the building for reopening. Karen responded that so far, only minor additional expenses, such as the cost of more cleaning supplies, have been identified. She noted, however, that we may incur expenses for new technology in the future. She will provide the Board with more information on budgetary impacts next month.

- Trustees asked about plans for Youth Education. Rabbi Alban responded that we are planning for a virtual Youth Education program in the fall that will build on what we did beginning last March. It remains uncertain whether Youth Education will be on-site or virtual in the spring.

8. Social Action/Social Justice update (*Rabbi Delson*) Inform

- Social justice:
 - Since May, we have increased our racial justice work in response to the national conversation on race that has emerged since the killings of George Floyd and others. This work has included:
 - A series of Zoom discussions based on videos about white privilege, anti-racism, and the experience of Jews of Color; and
 - Co-sponsorship (with other north Peninsula Jewish congregations and organizations) of a multi-part implicit bias training program.
 - As we did two years ago, we will be participating this year in the RAC's voter engagement campaign. Our work will focus on three areas:
 - Combating voter suppression by sending postcards to voters in high voter suppression states;
 - Educational programming on California ballot measures, including Proposition 15 ("Schools and Communities First"); and
 - Student voter engagement, in which PTS teens will (i) participate in the work to fight voter suppression and (ii) reach out to PTS congregants aged 18-26, urging them to register and vote.
 - The social justice team has settled on affordable housing as the issue area in which to organize a social justice campaign. We have not yet determined what specific issue the campaign will address, but there are sure to be issues in this area as we emerge from COVID-19.
- Social Action:
 - PTS recently hosted a successful blood drive, collecting 30 units of blood which will save up to 108 lives. Rabbi Delson thanked Betsy Rosen for her help organizing the drive.
 - We recently organized PTS congregants to purchase meals for delivery to the LifeMoves shelter in San Mateo. We plan to continue providing meals to LifeMoves on an ongoing, regular basis. When pandemic conditions permit, this relationship will involve recruiting volunteers to cook and serve the meals at the shelter facility rather than purchasing meals for delivery. Rabbi Delson thanked Debra Ruben and Katie Herstein for heading up our work with LifeMoves.
 - We are collecting pasta and peanut butter for CALL Primrose through collection bins that are available outside PTS all the time.

9. Investment Committee report (*Gene Podkaminer*) Inform

- Gene reported that the stock market gained approximately 20% in the second quarter of 2020, recovering most of the losses sustained during the first quarter of the year. As a result, PTS's portfolio is essentially flat on the year.
- The Lokay Security Fund, which is invested more aggressively than PTS's other funds per the benefactor's instructions, has not performed quite as well.
- The Investment Committee is pleased with our investment performance this year. They are meeting regularly but do not feel that any changes need to be made in our portfolio at this time.

10. Employee Handbook (*Eric Schlezinger*) Inform/Vote

Motion: To make changes to the PTS Staff-At-Large Handbook as recommended by the Personnel Committee. After approval, comparable changes will be made to the PTS Preschool Handbook.

- Eric made the motion. Ware Kushner seconded.
- Discussion:
 - Eric noted that it has been two years since the employee handbook was updated.
 - Eric explained that the changes to the handbook fell into three categories:
 - Changes needed to conform the handbook to current state or federal law;
 - Changes needed to conform the handbook to current practice; and
 - Changes needed to make the handbook more inclusive (e.g. use of inclusive language such as non-gendered pronouns). Eric thanked Marilyn Hollinger and the Inclusivity Committee for their help in identifying inclusivity changes.
 - The next step will be to make parallel changes to the preschool employee handbook.
 - Trustees discussed whether there should be a code of conduct for PTS employees and/or the PTS Board.
- Motion passed.

11. Introduction to ShulCloud Calendar (*Ayelet Shapiro*) Inform

- Ayelet showed Trustees how congregants can access and download the PTS calendar through ShulCloud.

12. Board Packet Q&A Discuss

- No questions.

13. Governance Inform/Vote

Motion: To approve the following slate of Officers for the 2019-20 term: Jason Pollard, Treasurer; Arlene Rosenberg, Secretary; Vice President, Open.

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.

- Andy Oliff made the motion. Maria Yarmolinsky seconded. Motion passed.

Motion: To allocate up to \$8,000 from the Layton Fund for creating a High Holy Day Kit for PTS families, either to be picked up or delivered to PTS congregants. The current balance of the Layton Fund is \$22,357. The Layton Fund is used to provide seed money for new temple programs or initiatives in their first year.

- Karen explained that the staff and clergy are thinking about ways to make the High Holy Days special. One idea is to create High Holy Day kits that will give congregants something tangible from the synagogue while they cannot gather at our site. The kits may contain prayer packets or prayer books; fun things for kids; food items (if permitted), and messages from the clergy. Betsy Rosen and Lauren Schlezinger have agreed to spearhead the creation of these kits. Karen hopes to get the Mensches involved as well.
- Roger Lazarus made the motion. Jason Pollard seconded. Motion passed.

14. Consent Agenda

Vote

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

- Consent agenda passed.

15. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.