

Board of Trustees Meeting
August 19, 2020
6:15p via Zoom

Minutes

Chair: Jon Herstein ♦ Minutes: Arlene Rosenberg ♦ Timekeeper: Andy Oliff

Attendees

Board

Linda Citron
Julie Feuchtwang
Jenna Fisher
Laurie Friedman
Scott Haber
Jon Herstein
Marilyn Hollinger
Ware Kuschner
Andy Oliff
Gene Podkaminer

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

Absent

Roger Lazarus

Staff

Rabbi Liora Alban
Rabbi Lisa Delson
Ayelet Shapiro
Allison Steckley
Karen Wisialowski

Guests

Diane Koss

Jon called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.

1. Welcome (*Jon Herstein*)
 2. D'var Torah (*Jon Herstein*)
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah
 3. Blessing for Community Service
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu la'asok b'tzorchay tzibur
 4. High Holy Days Overview (*Rabbi Delson, Karen Wisialowski*) Inform
- Rabbi Delson acknowledged that the High Holy Days will be very different this year.
 - Everything will be virtual.
 - Most of the services will be streamed on YouTube Live and will include a combination of live and pre-recorded elements.
 - Some services and events, including Erev Rosh Hashanah, Neilah, Tots & Torah, and youth programs, will be on Zoom to allow more interaction and connection among participants.
 - During breaks between services, congregants will be able to log in to Zoom rooms hosted by PTS staff, where they will be able to socialize with one another.
 - Rather than a traditional service, Erev Rosh Hashanah will feature an experience based on the Sephardic tradition of a Rosh Hashanah Seder.
 - On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we hope to allow congregants to come into the synagogue, one household at a time, for private reflection in the sanctuary, in the chapel, or by the memorial wall.
 - There will be worship services, discussions, and meditations throughout the day on Yom Kippur.
 - Karen provided the following additional information about the High Holy Days:

- A mailing with High Holy Days information is on its way to congregants, and the HHD website is live at sholom.org/hhd2020.
- Congregants (and Trustees) are encouraged to do three things right now:
 - Sign up to receive a HHD kit and borrow High Holy Day prayer books, if desired;
 - Submit names for the Book of Remembrance; and
 - Sign up to join the HHD Hospitality Team, the members of which will deliver welcome messages at the start of each service.
- Congregants are also encouraged to bring food to donate JFCS when they come to PTS to collect their HHD kits and prayer books.
- Guests are complimentary this year. We will run an ad in JWeekly to promote our HHD programming to the community.
- The Board discussed the technology that will be used to ensure good video and sound quality for HHD programming.

5. High Holy Days Board Outreach (*Julie Feuchtwang, Stuart Zussman*) Inform/Discuss

- Julie and Stuart will be coordinating HHD Board Outreach this year. The goal will be for Trustees and other volunteer lay leaders to contact every member household by telephone, email, or text.
- The purposes of the outreach are:
 - To connect with congregants, which is particularly important during COVID-19;
 - To wish congregants "Shana Tovah";
 - To provide information about HHD services and kits and to answer any questions congregants may have; and
 - To provide gentle reminders to congregants who have not yet renewed their memberships.
- Around Labor Day, Julie and Stuart will send a packet to each volunteer containing names of congregants to contact and instructions. Depending on the number of volunteers, each volunteer will probably be asked to contact 20-25 households.
- Julie and Stuart will assume that all Trustees are participating unless they opt out.

6. Chief Community Officer Update (*Karen Wisialowski*) Inform

- Karen reported that Friday was Jonathan Harris's last day as PTS's Director of Finance. Karen has hired a part-time consultant who will take over some of Jonathan's work for the next 2-3 months. Karen has also taken over some of Jonathan's work herself.
- Membership renewals:
 - As of today, 425 families have actively renewed, which represents 66% of our membership goal for 2020-21 and is consistent with our membership renewal rate in prior years. Thus far, renewing families have pledged \$930K in membership commitment, which represents 94% of budgeted membership commitment for the year.
 - At this time, 219 families have not renewed. These families represent over \$400K in potential membership commitment. Karen outlined a detailed plan for contacting these families to encourage them to renew.
 - During the membership renewal process, we have received \$100K in donations to the COVID recovery fund.

7. Youth Education Update (*Rabbi Alban*) Inform

- There are currently 87 students registered for Youth Education. This figure is quite a bit behind last year's enrollment, which is not surprising because enrollment figures are lagging at other religious schools as well. Rabbi

Alban has been calling families whose students are not yet enrolled and reminding them of the importance during these uncertain times of helping students feel connected to community and to something larger than themselves.

- Rabbi Alban shared some of her plans for this year's virtual Youth Education:
 - We are adding Zoom electives this year that students can opt into as often as they want. Electives will be offered both before and after class time and also throughout the week.
 - We will offer families take-home Shabbat kits, probably monthly.
 - To provide flexibility, class materials will be available to families outside of class time and classes will be recorded so that families can watch when it is convenient for them.
- In teen news, Rabbi Alban announced that the Rosh Chodesh program for teens will continue and that 10 students will serve on the PARTY Board this year.

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

Inform/Consult

- Jason compared the budget approved in May to a current working forecast based on the information we have at this time. The current projection is that revenue will be \$570K below the May budget and expenses will be \$39K below the May budget, resulting in a budget deficit that is \$531K greater than projected in May. In addition, without fundraising or other interventions, this would result in an end-of-year Operating Reserve balance of \$504K, compared with the \$920K ending balance projected in May.
- Current preschool enrollment is 115 students, well short of the 144 maximum permitted under pandemic health requirements. (Some of this enrollment consists of families who are paying tuition to hold spots but are opting not to send their students to school until pandemic conditions improve.) The enrollment drop-off is due almost entirely to families' concerns about sending their children to preschool during COVID. If enrollment dips to 95 students or fewer, the preschool will become a net user of funds rather than a net contributor.
- Preschool enrollment will be finalized on September 8. At that time, we will be able to conduct a better budget analysis and can begin to have conversations about how to address the growing deficit.

9. Inclusivity Task Force Update/Inclusivity Statement (*Marilyn Hollinger*)

Inform/Vote

- The LGBTQ Inclusivity Task Force has been looking at two issues: (1) how PTS can be more inclusive and welcoming to the LGBTQ community; and (2) how PTS can let members of the LGBTQ community know how inclusive and welcoming we already are.
- To address the first issue, the task force has been working with Keshet, a group that helps Jewish organizations acquire the skills and knowledge to build LGBTQ-affirming communities, to assess our current practices and identify ways we can improve.
- To address the second issue, the task force is creating an Inclusivity page for the PTS website. This page, which will be accessible from many different parts of the website, will describe PTS's inclusive practices and provide a list of resources for our diverse community.
- The task force is seeking Board approval of an Inclusivity Statement to be posted on the Inclusivity page.

Motion: To approve the following PTS Inclusivity Statement, as proposed by the Inclusivity Task Force:

Peninsula Temple Shalom is an inclusive Jewish community where everyone can find peace, inspiration, and their own connection to Judaism.

We value diversity, and strive to be a safe space for the full spectrum of the Jewish experience, including interfaith and multi-faith families. We welcome and encourage all people, regardless of age, race, background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, health status, citizenship status, or financial means, to participate in our sacred

community.

- Marilyn made the motion. Jason Pollard seconded.
- Motion passed.

10. COVID-19 Task Force update (*Laurie Friedman, Karen Wisialowski*) Inform

- The task force's priority has been developing guidelines for B'nai Mitzvah. The first on-site Zoom Bar Mitzvah will be on August 29. The Bar Mitzvah and his family will be in the chapel while the clergy is on-site in other spaces.
- The task force's next task will be to examine PTS's facility and determine what protocols will be needed to bring people back into the building. They also will be working on developing communications to congregants about COVID-19 protocols and restrictions.
- Karen is eager to have the task force begin meeting more frequently so that the synagogue will be ready for any circumstances that might arise.

11. Annual Investment Policy Review (*Gene Podkaminer*) Inform

- The Investment Committee examines PTS's Investment Policy Statement every August to decide whether it needs to be updated.
- Gene noted that a crisis situation such as the current pandemic is a good time to examine whether the policies we have put in place are the right ones.
- Gene reported that the investment parameters in PTS's Investment Policy Statement are still appropriate. The policy statement has served us well during this time and has done exactly what it was designed to do.
- Gene reported that the Investment Committee has been meeting each month and has been keeping a close eye on the portfolio.

12. Board Packet Q&A Discuss

- No questions.

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

- Consent agenda approved.

14. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.