

Board of Trustees Meeting

November 18, 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
Roger Lazarus
Andy Oliff
Gene Podkaminer

Jason Pollard
Alison Poggi León
Betsy Rosen
Arlene Rosenberg
Eric Schlezinger
Stuart Zussman

Absent

Lisa Rosenthal
Maria Yarmolinsky

Staff

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

Guests

Diane Koss

Jon called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm.

1. Welcome (*Jon Herstein*)

2. D'var Torah (*Marilyn Hollinger*)

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. Budget Update (*Jason Pollard*)

Inform/Discuss

- There have been no major changes to the financial forecast in the past month.
- The Finance Committee will meet next week to begin discussing the budget process for next year. Budget planning will begin earlier than usual this year, and the committee will need to give careful consideration to the assumptions on which next year's budget will be based.
- The Finance Committee will also continue to monitor the current and projected financial results.

5. COVID-19 Task Force Update (*Laurie Friedman*)

Inform/Discuss

- Laurie noted that San Mateo County has recently moved into a more restrictive tier (from "orange" to "red") in the state's four-tier COVID classification system. This change does not impact PTS's current operations. However, the county may move further backward into the "purple" tier in the next week or two, which might require PTS to revisit its current B'nai Mitzvah guidelines
- At its next meeting, the COVID task force will begin to draft guidelines for small in-person gatherings so that PTS will be ready to host such gatherings when they are permitted.

- Karen announced that the synagogue will soon send out another congregation-wide communication to update congregants on our COVID response and remind them to stay safe.
- Allison reported that the preschool has received its first report of a COVID-positive family. All of the protocols that were put in place at the beginning of the school year were followed and everything went smoothly. The “pod” containing the affected student will be closed for 14 days, and the teachers have transitioned to virtual lessons. Allison, Rabbi Feder, and Rabbi Delson all noted that the preschool parents with whom they have spoken have been supportive and feel good about the way the school has handled the situation.

6. Board Engagement (*Rabbi Feder, Jon Herstein*) Inform/Discuss

- Jon noted that he and Rabbi Feder have observed that over the past year, there has been a lower level of participation and engagement at Board meetings than we have seen in prior years. Rabbi Feder added that the clergy and staff look to Trustees to be their thought partners and rely on Trustee feedback to help them evaluate where they are doing well and where they could improve.
- Trustees discussed ways to promote more interactivity, conversation, discussion, and questioning at Board meetings. Suggestions included better orientation for new Trustees and basic training on how to read and evaluate financial reports.
- Trustees agreed that meeting over Zoom makes interaction and participation more difficult.

7. Living Our Values: Creating a Welcoming Congregation (*Rabbi Delson, Arlene Rosenberg*) Inform/Discuss

- To help Trustees understand the concept of microaggressions against Jews of Color, Rabbi Delson and Arlene led the Board through a survey on Ashkenazi white privilege. Trustees reported that the survey helped them realize how much they take for granted and opened their eyes to some of the assumptions they make about their fellow congregants.
- Rabbi Delson and Arlene will conduct more training on microaggressions in the spring to help ensure that PTS is as welcoming as possible.

8. Strategic Financial Planning Task Force (*Jon Herstein, Jason Pollard, Stuart Zussman*) Discuss

- Jon, Jason, and Karen reminded Trustees that we will be creating a task force to plan for PTS's ongoing financial health. They noted that before we can engage in long-term financial planning, we need to have conversations about who and what we want to be so that we can create a financial model to support that vision.
- Stuart divided the Board into small breakout groups for discussions about what we value at PTS and the functions we want PTS to serve. The feedback from these discussion groups will help inform the work of the financial planning task force.
- Jon encouraged Trustees to volunteer to serve on the financial planning task force.

9. Governance (*Jon Herstein*) Vote

Motion: To approve a new Board of Trustees Appreciation Fund to be used to support gifts and/or events of appreciation for the staff or volunteers of Peninsula Temple Shalom. Use of this fund is at the discretion of the President of the Board of Trustees together with the Executive Director.

Background: There is no stable source of funds for the board to use to show appreciation to staff and volunteers. This fund will be seeded with a

gift and, it is hoped, will be replenished with gifts from congregants going forward.

- Jason Pollard made the motion. Betsy Rosen seconded.
- The Trustees engaged in discussion about the purpose of the proposed fund, how it will be funded, and how expenditures will be approved.
- Trustees agreed that the plan to create an appreciation fund needs further clarification.
- Jason moved to table the motion until our next meeting. Arlene seconded. Motion to table passed.

Motion: To designate a parsonage amount for Cantor Anna Zhar equal to 57.4% of her current bi-monthly salary beginning in the November 30, 2020 payroll period through calendar year 2021.

Background: In June 2020, the Board approved a parsonage for Cantor Zhar of 52.3%. Based on her current cost of living, Cantor Zhar has requested that this amount be adjusted.

- Ware Kushner made the motion. Eric Schlezinger seconded.
- Karen explained what parsonage is and how it works.
- Motion passed.

10. Board Packet Q&A

Discuss

- Ware reminded Trustees that he, Jenna, and Marilyn are coordinating a Board-led Shabbat service that will be held on Friday evening, March 5. He asked that Trustees let him know whether they plan to attend and participate. Ware also encouraged Trustees to sign up to give the Board welcome at Kabbalat Shabbat services.
- Trustees asked Karen for an update on families who had not yet renewed their memberships as of the date of the last Board meeting. Karen responded that many of those families have renewed. Karen further stated that she plans to give a more complete membership report next month, and asked for 2-3 Trustees to volunteer to work with her, preferably as a membership committee on an ongoing basis, to determine the best way to present membership data to the Board and to determine appropriate action. Betsy Rosen volunteered to help.

11. Consent Agenda

Vote

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

- Consent agenda approved.

12. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.