

Board of Trustees Meeting

April 21, 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
Lisa Rosenthal
Eric Schlezinger
Maria Yarmolinsky
Stuart Zussman

Staff

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

Jon called the meeting to order at 6:19pm.

1. Welcome (*Jon Herstein*)
2. D'var Torah (*Arlene Rosenberg*)
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. COVID-19 Task Force Update (*Laurie Friedman*) Inform
 - We are in a period of rapid change in COVID-related guidelines and restrictions.
 - In response to the loosening of restrictions in San Mateo County, PTS has increased to 20 the number of guests B'nai Mitzvah families can have onsite during their services. This change has been very well-received. We have also set Friday, June 11 as the date for PTS's first outdoor, in-person Shabbat service. We are planning to have other outdoor Shabbat services this summer, but the dates for those have not yet been set. The congregation was notified of these changes in a letter to the community that was sent last week.
 - PTS is considering what other outdoor events we can schedule this summer. Decisions regarding what events to add back and when are complicated because government guidelines are rarely clear about what is and is not permitted. Instead, they typically give options and discuss varying levels of risks. The challenge, therefore, is to assess how much risk is acceptable.
 - At its upcoming meeting, which will be held next week, the COVID Task Force will discuss risk tolerance, as well as plans for the High Holy Days and questions about serving and eating food on site.
5. Investment Committee Report (*Gene Podkaminer*) Inform/Discuss

- Stock markets were up sharply in the first quarter of 2021 due to optimism about vaccinations. Bond markets were lower, however, because of a rise in interest rates. PTS's portfolio is evenly balanced between stocks and bonds, so it was basically flat last quarter. The Lokey Security Fund, which is invested more aggressively, had modest returns.
- We are close to the rebalancing range for both portfolios, but the Investment Committee has opted not to rebalance just yet.
- Gene is optimistic as we enter the second quarter of 2021.

6. Bylaws Task Force Update (*Scott Haber, Arlene Rosenberg*)

Inform/Discuss

- Scott and Arlene informed Trustees that since their last Board update on the bylaws, they have solicited input from Past Presidents, continued to review and revise the bylaws document, and met again with the Bylaws Task Force.
- Scott and Arlene summarized the feedback they received from Past Presidents, which related primarily to the rights of non-Jewish Members, the authority of the Board to act without a congregational vote, and the length of clergy contracts.
- The next steps in the bylaws revision process will be: (1) to distribute a summary of the Proposed Bylaws to congregants during the week of April 26; (2) to conduct congregational Town Hall meetings on May 6 and May 10 to receive feedback and answer questions about the bylaws; (3) to present the final bylaws at the May Board meeting on May 19; (4) to submit the revised bylaws for a Board vote at the June Board meeting on June 16; and (5) to submit the revised bylaws for a congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on June 27.

7. Clergy Report

Inform/Discuss

- Rabbi Feder: Rabbi Feder described how PTS is celebrating s'machot such as Confirmation and adult B'nai Mitzvah during the pandemic. He noted that we have been able to maintain a feeling of holiness and specialness for these events even during these unusual times.
- Cantor Zhar: Cantor Zhar discussed the importance of personal relationships in any community. She noted that the inability to meet congregants in person has been hard for her, but expressed joy that she has been able to create relationships over Zoom.
- Rabbi Delson: Rabbi Delson described her role as Social Action and Advocacy Vice President for the Women's Rabbinic Network ("WRN"), an organization of Reform woman rabbis. The WRN provides support and advocacy for female rabbis and rabbinic students in the Reform movement, who continue to face bias, harassment, and abuse. The WRN has worked with the Task Force on the Experience of Women in the Rabbinate, created by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to develop an anti-bias training program. In addition, in her capacity as WRN's Social Action and Advocacy VP, Rabbi Delson has been working on pay equity for female rabbis, a guide to parental leave policies, and a reckoning with Hebrew Union College over sexual harassment of students over the years. Rabbi Delson invited Trustees to attend a public online celebration entitled "Jubilee Inaugural: WRN Celebrates 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate" on June 6, which will celebrate how women in the rabbinate have enriched Jewish life over the 49 years since the ordination of the first female Reform rabbi in 1972.
- Rabbi Alban:
 - Rabbi Alban is wrapping up the current year in Youth Education, which has only five sessions remaining. She feels proud of what she and her staff have accomplished and looks forward to getting feedback from teachers about what their students have learned.
 - One innovation introduced this year is a series of B'nai Mitzvah "boot camps" to help students struggling with Hebrew get up to speed.
 - Rabbi Alban will be meeting with groups of parents over the next few weeks to get feedback and input as she looks ahead toward planning for next year. One question she will be asking is whether there are any aspects of this year's virtual programming we want to keep as we return to in-person instruction.
 - Rabbi Alban is considering moving the Youth Education program from Fridays and Saturdays back to Sundays, with K-7 students attending in the morning and teens attending in the early afternoon. The

reasons include: (1) parents and teachers have reported that it is hard for students to focus at the end of a long school week; (2) the school feels disjointed because students come on different days of the week, making it difficult to build community; and (3) it is hard for clergy other than Rabbi Alban to be part of the program on Saturday mornings because they are busy leading B'nai Mitzvah services. To compensate for losing the ability to celebrate Shabbat together each week, Rabbi Alban is thinking about new ways to bring Shabbat into the program, such as quarterly Shabbat celebrations.

- o In addition to her work with the Youth Education program, Rabbi Alban is also working with Betsy Rosen to launch an Adult Learning committee, and with Cantor Anna to launch a Rosh Chodesh group for Sholom Women.

8. High Holy Days Update (*Karen Wisialowski*)

Inform/Discuss

- Karen reported that the clergy and staff have been planning since January for this year's High Holy Days. They know that this year will be different than any prior year, including last year.
- The two main objectives in High Holy Days planning are: (1) to be nimble because circumstances can change; and (2) to offer opportunities for congregants to worship in different ways that work for them.
- Our High Holy Days planning will be guided by our values, which include serving our community, trying new things, and prioritizing safety and health.
- One thing that we know for certain is that there will be some remote or virtual element to the High Holy Days. PTS has already hired the same production team we used last year to create video and push it to YouTube Live.
- There are many unknowns at time, including state and county requirements and congregant preferences.
- Due to the uncertainty, the staff is simultaneously planning for many possible scenarios.
- As decisions are made, we will communicate with the Board and the congregation. In addition to our regular July and August High Holy Day informational mailers, the staff will launch a congregational survey in May and will share other updates as appropriate.
- Karen will create a Google form to collect feedback from Trustees.

9. Budget Presentation (*Jason Pollard*)

Inform/Discuss/Vote

Motion: To approve the 2021-22 Fiscal Year Budget as presented by the Finance Committee.

- Jason noted that our current FY21 forecast indicates that we will perform better than budgeted, due largely to the PPP loans.
- Jason presented the budget for FY22 and noted the following:
 - o The FY22 budget includes a \$25K Board fundraiser and reflects \$25K in expense cuts.
 - o The budget has a large operating deficit, but the PPP loans will be well more than sufficient to cover it.
 - o The budget assumes that the preschool will be at 80% capacity next year. We are hopeful that we can exceed that enrollment, however, because we have received approval to open an additional classroom.
 - o The budget reflects pessimistic expectations about summer camp attendance.
- Although we project surpluses for FY23 and FY24, that performance cannot be sustained under our current operating model, so need to plan for long-term sustainability.
- Jason made the motion. Roger Lazarus seconded. Motion passed.

10. Governance

Inform/Vote

Motion: To accept changes to the PTS Staff-At-Large Handbook as presented last month and shared again in the Board packet. After approval, comparable changes will be made to the PTS Preschool Handbook. (*Eric Schlezinger*)

- Eric noted that because we must constantly keep up with changing law, updating the employee handbook is a never-ending process. He praised Karen for working diligently with our lawyers to bring the handbook up to date.
- Eric made the motion. Lisa Rosenthal seconded. Motion passed.

Motion: To accept the Reserve Study as prepared by John Beatty & Company and attached to the Board packet, with the intention that the Board of Trustees will endeavor to build annual budgets that enable PTS to contribute recommended amounts to the Reserve Study Fund each fiscal year. *(Jason Pollard)*

Background:

Approximately every five years, PTS commissions a reserve study to understand the funds that it should set aside for ongoing maintenance of the facility and related equipment. In addition, it is our practice that the Facilities Committee together with the Chief Community Officer review the needs of the facility using the Reserve Study as one guide to determine where maintenance and replacement is required.

- Jason made the motion. Eric Schlezinger seconded.
- During the discussion, Karen discovered a possible error in the study and requested time to review it.
- Jason moved to table the motion. Ware Kushner seconded. Motion to table passed.
- The Reserve Study will be presented for a vote at next month's Board meeting.

11. Trustee of the Year Vote *(Jon Herstein)* Inform

- Trustees voted via Google form for Trustee of the Year.

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 passed.

14. Concluding Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.