

MINUTES
Temple Sinai Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, August 18, 2021
7:00 – 8:30pm

Board members present: Jon Braslaw, Liz Daoust, Melissa Heller, Neil Jacobson, Laurie Leiber, Jim Manheimer, Rebecca McEntee, Susan Rosenthal, Frances Rotolo, Bart Schenone, Sydney Schimmel, Anne Schmitz, Karen Tanner, Karen Tiedemann, Michelle van Tijen, Joan Waranoff, Phil Witte, Erik Zwerling

Clergy and Staff present: Rabbi Freedman, Cantor Keyes, Ellen Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mates-Muchin

Guests: Lori Waltzer

Absent: Laurel Ettinger, Calvin Gibbs, Richard Hart, Josh Kuluva, Andrew Shear, Terrie Goren, Rabbi Regev

1. Call to order 7:05pm
2. D'Var Torah presented by Rabbi Freedman
3. Approval of Minutes – June 16, 2021 Motion to approve: Karen Tanner Second: Frances
Unanimous board approval
4. Consent Calendar - Membership report (presented at meeting) - 11 new households.
These board members will call: Karen Tanner; Bart, Jon; Liz, Sydney, Susan, Melissa, Phil, Becky

Dayna Orange has joined the board as the new chair of the Ed Committee replacing Ann Gordon.

5. Bimah sign-up - Joan reminded board members that volunteers are needed for the remainder of services in August. Also opportunities are available through the end of the year. Link to sign up was posted in chat and is in the agenda.
6. Financial report – Sydney Firestone Schimmel
Short report for fiscal year end – waiting for JCF results to close books for last year.
Too soon for this year's first report.
Talking to outside reviewer to get finalized report in time for annual meeting in October.
Membership revenue over budget; significant legacy contributions. Result is \$475k uncommitted cash.
\$218k remains in the loan from the endowment. Mortgage has fallen below \$1 million
PPP loan will convert to income soon
SEI pension obligation is reduced to \$292

Change in accounting policy: \$1K threshold to be capitalized was raised to \$5K – consistent with current non-profit practices.

Frances - Emergency response manual is completed – there will be some expense for equipment and replacement of supplies.

Jon will bring recommendations from Barry Dubin and Gary Forman re financial policies

7. Hot Topics

- High Holy Day plans – Services will be live streamed without attendees due to COVID. OK to attend on zoom. Some opportunities to observe in an outdoor setting: Slichot, Tashlich, Childrens service, teen service. Perhaps some services at the end of Sukkot outdoors TBD. Considered booking outdoor services at Woodminster but did not because of fire risk. T Isaiah will use their parking lot for an outdoor service.

Jon has asked everyone to go on line and leave a tribute

Board will be invited to read as part of torah service.

Organize people into small groups. Rabbi Mates-Muchin would love leadership to take it on – staff is overwhelmed with preparations for the last minute changes.

Discussion about how to encourage people to gather in small groups and invite others who are not so well connected to join them. Michelle and Liz volunteered to work on this.

- Vaccination Policy

Anne, Terrie and Rabbi working on a policy for staff vaccination – work started before the outbreak in the preschool. Children are more at risk than they were a year ago. Mandatory for all staff with religious or medical exemptions. Preliminary roll out has been smooth - 2 staff are applying for exemptions – all others are vaccinated. Parents will assume that their children are safe when they come to T Sinai for school. Also we have many older members, or immune compromised members. Similarly all members must feel safe when they come. Applies to staff only, not members. Not realistic to ask parents or members to prove vaccination.

Mobile testing will be provided weekly at the temple.

Welcome forward TF (Becky MD, Howard Backer MD, Steve Shane, Jim Manheimer) have been advising on steps to manage risk.

Employment/personnel policies do not need board approval. Responsibility of Rabbi Mates-Muchin along with Educations Director, Preschool Director and Executive Director.

- Plans for religious school – Rabbi Freedman

TWTh Hebrew for grades 3-6 will be held remotely for one hour sessions. Grouped by level of Hebrew knowledge. Remote instruction will not be vulnerable if a pivot away from in person is needed during the school year.

Judaic program – virtual on Wed (no registrations so far for K-2, more for higher grades). In person will be on Friday for K-2 and Saturday for 3-6. Registration deadline is Friday. Large teacher shortage in all schools. Parents who register late may not get their first choice of session. 118 registered so far, budget is 190, last year there were 150. Similar to the experience at other schools with dropping enrollment

Considering moving classes outside. Might make it easier to keep teachers and prevent kids from dropping out. Search for outdoor spaces – eg private or public schools, parks – is proving to be a challenge. Any recommendations/connections from the board will be welcome.

It is an experiment to hold religious school in person on Shabbat. Hoping will it create a better feeling of connection to Shabbat but some parents don't like it.

Becky – recommends an information session with Welcome Forward TF presenting to parents, including medical and educational experts, to counter misinformation about COVID

Sept 18 teacher orientation. School starts Sept 24 Fri – Sept 25 Sat (Sukkot)

Feedback from families: parents like Friday K-2 program – more positive feedback than negative. Some 3-6 parents would prefer an in person weekday program. Weekend conflicts with sports. Switch from Sunday to Saturday – doesn't feel right to some people. Just an experiment for this year – can go back to Sunday next year. Separation of K-2 and 3-6 on different days is a problem for some families. Considering steps to unify 3-6 community across Wed and Sun groups.

Dayna – Ed committee is on board for experiment this year. Trying to ID additional parents with RS-age children to join the committee

Jon- ultimately we need to be responsive to the RS community. Please send people with questions directly to R Freedman. Now is a good time to experiment with the program with the “world turned upside down”. Thanks to Ed committee who called families last week that were not yet registered.

- Strategic Plan update
Working on a summary of findings from focus groups and survey. Jon will ask Richard for a report
- Nominating committee – Karen Tiedeman. Calvin Gibbs and Jim Manheimer will start second term. Six members terming out. Candidates to replace them are Bill Bonnet, Stephanie Eckhaus, John Ehrlich, Sean Sawyer, Aaron Sachs, Lori Waltzer. Will be voted in at the Oct annual meeting. Announcement will go out to members next week. Committee has an ongoing list for next year.

Jon is considering a board retreat in December that will include new board member orientation - date TBD

8. Clergy Updates

- Rabbi Mates-Muchin – everyone is focused in HHD. B’Nei mitzvah in person services have moved to the outdoor courtyard. Hoping air stays clear enough to continue. New mask mandates would not allow move indoor for the size groups who have been attending.

Hoping to do in person services twice a month this year.

9. Program Updates

- Preschool – Covid outbreak closed the school in the last week of camp. Everyone infected is ok. Staff comes back next week. Becky attended parent orientation to describe safety measures. Laura Rubinstein will replace Michelle as PPC president. People are anxious about the start of school. Parents were relieved about vaccination policy and weekly testing.

Thanks to Michelle from Ellen and Jon for participation in PPC and on the board. Michelle has enjoyed participation on the board. Thanks Ellen for her calm leadership.

10. Addendum to the Minutes - Parsonage amount for Rabbi Freedman for July-December 2021 will be \$14,000.

11. Executive Session – Reviewed the plan for Rabbi Mates-Muchin’s sabbatical in November.

12. Executive session adjourned – Bart: Motion to approve the hire of Rabbi Berlin for six months during the Rabbi’s sabbatical on the recommended terms and amend the budget accordingly. Second: Anne. Unanimous board approval.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm