



**MINUTES
2020 Spring Meeting of
the Metropolitan Council
of the Orthodox Church in America**

**Wednesday, February 5 – Thursday, February 6, 2020
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY**

These draft minutes are subject to approval at a subsequent meeting of the Metropolitan Council

PARTICIPANTS

CHAIRMAN

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

CHURCH OFFICERS (*EX OFFICIO*)

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *Chancellor*

Andrew Smith, *Treasurer*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Thomas Moore
Archpriest Kirill Sokolov

Katherine Vitko
Lynnell Brunswig
Mark Linnehan

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Albanian Archdiocese

Donna Dimitri

Bulgarian Diocese

Bogdan Popescu

Archdiocese of Canada

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

Sharon Shingara

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest Elijah Mueller

Robert Graban

Diocese of New England

Priest Theophan Whitfield

Michael Danchak

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman)

James P. Kornafel

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino Christopher Lewis

Archdiocese of Washington

Archpriest Valery Shemchuk Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

Archpriest Michael Anderson David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge Ray Steeb

ABSENT

Archpriest David Askoak (*Diocese of Alaska*)
Archpriest Antonio Perdomo (*Member elected by the All-American Council*)
Archpriest Dennis Rhodes (*Albanian Archdiocese*)
Priest Gabriel Bilas (*Bulgarian Diocese*)
Dorothy Chaney (*Diocese of Alaska*)
Judge E.R. Lanier (*OCA General Counsel*)
Mark Petasky (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

GUESTS (*for all sessions unless otherwise indicated*)

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky (*Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations*
- Thursday morning)

Archpriest Matthew Tate (*Pension Board Trustee – Thursday afternoon*)
Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak (*Secretary to the Metropolitan & Director, Stewards of the OCA*)
Deacon Peter Ilchuk (*All-American Council Manager – Wednesday morning*)
Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton (*Pension Board Trustee – Thursday afternoon*)
Steven Christoforou (*Director, Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*
- Wednesday afternoon)

Alexis Liberovsky (*Recording Secretary*)
Barry Migyanko (*staff*)
Dimitrios Rentel (*Youth Project coordinator – Wednesday*)
Michael Stieglitz (*Administrator, OCA Pension Plan - Thursday afternoon*)
John Thetford (*staff - Wednesday*)
Susan Wisnewski (*Accounting Manager - Thursday afternoons*)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

A. Call to Order

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, Metropolitan Tikhon opened the morning session with prayer at 11:02 AM.

B. Agenda: Introduction (attached)

Father Alexander Rentel introduced details of the agenda for the meeting. The latest distributed draft agenda (attached) was approved by consensus.

C. Roll Call/Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)

Father Rentel then conducted the roll call, announced guests who would be present at various points during this meeting (see participants list), and noted the absence of several members. He then presented for approval

the attached draft minutes of the previous regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council on September 18-19, 2019. The minutes were approved by consensus.

D. Metropolitan's Report

Metropolitan Tikhon presented an oral report. He welcomed new members of the Council (Archpriests Michael Anderson and Elijah Mueller). He noted that the Standing Synod would no longer routinely participate in meetings of the Metropolitan Council, unless special circumstances warrant a joint meeting. He reported on his work as locum-tenens of the Albanian Archdiocese and the Diocese of New England. He summarized his other archpastoral labors and visitations within his own Archdiocese of Washington and elsewhere for special celebrations, including Mexico. He highlighted the two episcopal ordinations that had taken place during the previous two weekends. He commended the work of Fr. Alexander Rentel who has begun his second year of service as chancellor. Introducing the presentation on preparations for the 20th All-American Council, he announced that he has begun to work on volume 2 of the "*Apostolic Work of the Church*" which will align with the theme chosen for this council: "*Hope in an Age of Despair*".

E. 20th All-American Council (attached)

Deacon Peter Ilchuk, Council Manager, presented the attached report on preparations for the 20th All-American Council (AAC), which is scheduled for July 26-31, 2021 in Baltimore, MD. Deacon Peter displayed images of draft logos for the 20th AAC. Andrew Smith spoke of the projected moderate increase in AAC assessments necessary to fund the Council. A variety of financial and other issues concerning the AAC and its preparation were discussed.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:35 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:30 PM.

F. Youth Project

Father Alexander Rentel introduced Dimitrios Rentel, Youth Project coordinator, who presented his report, which was a more detailed follow-up to the brief preliminary report delivered last September. He highlighted his travels in summer 2019 to camps and youth gatherings in order to conduct a survey on the scope of OCA Youth and Young Adult Ministry going forward. He provided details of survey methodology and analysis of results. Also providing some perspective was Steven Christoforou, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, who assisted in devising and analyzing the OCA survey. He additionally presented a reflection on Youth Ministry. Wide-ranging discussion concerning Youth and Young Adult Ministry ensued.

Following a short recess at 3:29 PM, the session resumed at 3:49 PM.

Discussion concerning Youth and Young Adult Ministry continued. The need to present concrete, achievable ideas from discussions and survey results was stressed.

G. Internal Governance Committee

Father Kirill Sokolov reviewed the decisions concerning Metropolitan Council committees made at the previous Council meeting last September. Fr. Rentel indicated that committees would meet in the evening after dinner. Further discussion concerning the committee structure of the Metropolitan Council took place.

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 5:15 PM.

After dinner, meetings of the various committees of the Council took place and orientation for new Council members was conducted by David Lane.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:08 AM.

Father Rentel introduced the day's schedule and noted the need to elect a new member of the Auditing Committee.

H. Chancellor's Report

Father Rentel presented an oral report. He reported his involvement in various areas of Church activity described in other reports for this meeting as well as administrative tasks at the chancery and day-to-day oversight of personnel. He summarized his participation in several diocesan assemblies and his work as a trustee of St. Tikhon's Seminary and of St. Vladimir's Seminary, where he also continues to teach a course. He additionally recounted participating in the 25th anniversary celebrations of the OCA Representation Church in Moscow. He provided updates on the search for a new OCA Secretary (Chancery Administrator) and the status of reorganizing the structure of OCA departments, commissions, committees, offices, and boards.

I. Catechism Project (attached)

Father Rentel introduced the attached report from Father Thomas Soroka concerning the methodology and timelines of a project being undertaken to create adult catechetical materials.

J. Stewards of the OCA (attached)

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA), presented the attached report highlighting ongoing fundraising efforts to support the work of OCA Departments.

K. Thriving in Ministry Presentation (attached)

Father Theophan Whitfield presented the attached PowerPoint on the Thriving in Ministry Program that provides peer-learning support for clergy and clergy wives. The presentation included several videos with further information on the program. A discussion on clergy health ensued.

Following a short recess at 10:30 AM, the session resumed at 10:42 AM.

L. External Affairs Report (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon reported on his activities in external affairs, including discussions with several prominent hierarchs visiting the Chancery over the last several months. He also recounted impressions of his visit to Moscow in December for the 25th anniversary of the OCA Representation Church there. He noted a most productive meeting with Patriarch Kirill during this visit.

Father Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, provided further comments on Metropolitan Tikhon's visit to Moscow and delivered an oral report on OCA relations with other Orthodox Churches and involvement in ecumenical organizations. He highlighted the participation of hierarchs from other Orthodox Churches in the recent episcopal ordinations of Bishops Alexis and Andrei. He shared insights on various current events occurring in world Orthodoxy.

M. Chancery Location presentation (attached)

Christopher Lewis presented the attached PowerPoint with an overview of the present chancery location, including property value, maintenance costs, as well as travel logistics of the current venue and other possible locations. Various aspects of the location issue were extensively discussed. It was stated that unless the

current location can still be a feasible venue, the chancery and Metropolitan's residence should be moved to Washington, DC

Following a recess for lunch at 12:32 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:12 PM.

Discussion on chancery location continued.

- M.1. MOTION LANE/STEEB – Whereas: 1) It is not financially feasible for the necessary repairs and maintenance to be made to the current OCA Chancery building; and, 2) It is not possible for the OCA Archives to be properly preserved for the long-term if they remain in this building; Therefore, be it resolved that:**
- 1) Efforts shall be made immediately towards the sale of the Chancery property;**
 - 2) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location to house the offices of the OCA Chancery administration;**
 - 3) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location for the residence of the Metropolitan; and**
 - 4) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location to house the OCA Archives. CARRIED.**

N. 50th Anniversary Committee

Father Rentel presented a brief report outlining preparation for events taking place this year throughout the Church to mark the 50th anniversaries of OCA autocephaly and the glorification of saint Herman of Alaska. He noted the proclamation for the 50th anniversary year that was issued by the Holy Synod in November.

O. Pension Board Report (attached)

Pension Board Trustees Father Matthew Tate, Matushka Mary Bulezta-Breton and Michael Stieglitz, Pension Plan Administrator, presented the attached report on the present status of the Pension Plan from Father Gleb McFatter, Pension Board Chairperson. They then introduced for adoption an amendment to the Plan proposed by the Board, which was extensively discussed. The Board Trustees indicated that an increase in employer contribution level is necessary to ensure the long-term solvency of the Plan.

- O.1. MOTION BRECKENRIDGE/POPESCU – To table the proposed amendment of the OCA Pension Plan. DEFEATED with nine (9) in favor, twelve (12) opposed, and two (2) abstentions.**
- O.2. MOTION STEEB/VITKO – To amend Section 3.1(a) of the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan to increase employer contribution level. CARRIED with three (3) opposed and three (3) abstentions.**

Plan Section 3.1(a) is restated as follows:

- 3.1(a) It is the intention of the Church to continue the Plan and have regular contributions made to the Trustees each year by each Employer in such amounts as are necessary in addition to the contributions of Members to maintain the Plan on a sound actuarial basis. Every month, the Employer shall contribute to the Plan six percent (6%) of the Member's Compensation. Effective as of January 1, 2014, with respect to contributions for work performed after that date, the Employer shall contribute to the Plan eight percent (8%) of the Member's Compensation. Effective as of January 1, 2021, with respect to contributions for work performed after that date, the Employer**

shall contribute to the Plan ten percent (10%) of the Member's Compensation. The Employer shall transmit its contributions to the Trustees or their designate.

Extensive discussion took place concerning enforcement of compliance with the mandate for eligible clergy to be enrolled in the Plan. It was indicated that, in addition to benefiting members of the Plan, larger enrollment would ensure greater financial viability of the Plan.

- O.3. MOTION SOKOLOV/LANE – To petition the Holy Synod to create a joint commission composed of Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council members to enforce compliance with the mandate of the OCA Statute and All-American Council decisions that all eligible clergy are to be enrolled in the OCA Pension Plan. CARRIED with one (1) abstention.**

Following a short recess at 3:00 PM, the session resumed at 3:13 PM.

P. Treasurer's Report (attached)

Andrew Smith, OCA Treasurer, highlighted his attached report to the Metropolitan Council. He presented the external audit reports for 2017 and 2018 with a letter from D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP.

- P.1. MOTION SMITH/LANE – To accept as presented the external audit reports for 2017 and 2018 and cover letter from D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP. CARRIED.**

He then presented a preliminary financial report for 2019. As it is advisable to change the external audit firm every few years, he recommended that Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C. be engaged as external auditor. In discussion, he indicated selection methodology and reasons for this recommendation. Council members stated that it has been the purview of the Internal Governance Committee to submit a recommendation for the engagement of an external auditor.

- P.2. MOTION GRABAN/DANCHAK – To engage Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C. as external auditor for a period of three years. CARRIED.**

As a candidate has not yet been found to fill a vacancy on the internal Auditing Committee, it was agreed that this selection process would continue and the election would take place by conference call or email before the Committee is scheduled to conduct its tasks in the summer. Andrew Smith presented amendments to the previously adopted 2020 OCA budget that are included in the attached Treasurer's Report

- P.3. MOTION POPESCU/HOJNICKI – To adopt amendments to the 2020 budget as presented. CARRIED.**

Andrew Smith presented for adoption the following corporate resolution necessary for management of a Fidelity Survivor Benefits account (W314469-19JAN20).

- P.4. MOTION LINNEHAN/SHINGARA - WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has determined it to be in the best interest of the Corporation to establish a resolution with Fidelity Investments, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the following officers and/or representatives shall be authorized representatives to said account: V. Rev. Alexander Rentel, he is the duly elected, qualified and acting secretary of the Orthodox Church in America ("The Company") or Susan Wisnewski. CARRIED.**

Q. Legal matters (attached)

- Q.1. MOTION VITKO/GRABAN – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

In executive session, David Lane, Legal Committee Chairman, presented confidential aspects on a variety of current and potential legal issues. A confidential update from the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA) was also presented. Discussion ensued.

Q.2. MOTION MOORE/MUELLER – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.

R. Human Resources (attached)

Susan Wisnewski presented the attached brief update on issues pertaining to Human Resources.

S. New Business

Fr. Rentel confirmed September 16-17, 2020 as the previously scheduled dates for the fall meeting of the Metropolitan Council. Sharon Shingara presented the attached PowerPoint on Youth Engagement Strategy, summarizing the previous evening's discussion during a committee meeting. Further questions and deliberations ensued.

T. Adjournment

In conclusion, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked everyone for fruitful work during the meeting.

T.1 MOTION HOJNICKI/SOKOLOV – To adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary