
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

MINUTES
2023 Special Session

Friday, February 3, 2023
Conducted by video conference



PARTICIPANTS

CHAIRMAN

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

CHURCH OFFICERS (*EX OFFICIO*)

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *Chancellor*
Andrew Smith, *Treasurer*

Priest Alessandro Margheritino, *Secretary*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Justin Patterson
Archpriest Lawrence Margitich
Archpriest Christopher Foley

Lynnell Brunswig
Alexis Liberovsky

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Diocese of Alaska

Archpriest Maxim Isaac

Anthony Lekanof

Albanian Archdiocese

Donna Dimitri

Bulgarian Diocese

Deacon Bogdan Popescu

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Nicholas Solak

Danalisa Radu

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest John Baker

Robert Graban

Diocese of New England

Evelyn Kreta

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Mitchell VanDuyn

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino

Archdiocese of Washington

Deacon Matthew Prentice

Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

Archpriest Matthew Tate

David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Ray Steeb

ABSENT

Archpriest David Garretson (*Diocese of NY/NJ*)

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes (*Albanian Archdiocese*)

Priest John Parker (*Diocese of Western Pennsylvania*)

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

Joshua Godbold (*Diocese of the South*)

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky (*Member elected by the All-American Council*)

Mark Petasky (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

George Ralich (*Bulgarian Diocese*)

GUESTS

Archpriest Thomas Soroka (*Project Manager for the Departments*)

Judge E.R. Lanier (*OCA General Counsel*)

A. Call to Order

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the session with prayer at 2:05 PM and Archpriest Alexander Rentel then called the meeting to order.

B. Agenda, Introduction & Roll Call

Fr. Rentel reviewed the agenda for the Special Session and noted that it has been convened to consider allocation of Mission Planting Grants for 2023, to approve the engagement of a commercial real estate broker, proposed by the Property Committee for the sale of the Westwood property, and to discuss alternatives in distribution of bonus funds from the OCA Group Affiliation Program (GAP) Insurance Program. Fr. Rentel then conducted the roll call, indicating that Archpriest Thomas Soroka (Project Manager for the Departments) and Judge E.R. Lanier (OCA General Counsel) would be the guests attending today's meeting, He then introduced Metropolitan Tikhon for his opening remarks.

C. Metropolitan's Remarks

Metropolitan Tikhon presented his introductory remarks. He noted the recent falling asleep of Bishop Tikhon, retired ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the West, and Mr. Jonathan Russin, former OCA General Counsel. His Beatitude especially welcomed new members participating for the first time during today's Metropolitan Council meeting. He briefly highlighted his own archpastoral activities and travels, including attendance at the funeral of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

D. 2023 Mission Planting Grants (attached)

Fr. Rentel introduced Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Project Manager for the OCA Departments, who highlighted the attached evaluation of Mission Planting Grant applications. Extensive discussion ensued. A proposal was made and rejected to provide partial grants to several missions. Andrew Smith indicated that due to the generosity of a particular donor for mission grants, there is some surplus in funding for this purpose. Although Fr. Thomas recommended a first-year grant for one mission as that has been the norm in recent years, there was support within the Council for two first-year grants and a motion was proposed to that effect.

D.1. MOTION DIMITRI/GRABAN – To approve two first-year Mission Planting Grants for St. Ambrose of Milan Mission in Roanoke, VA and Archangel Gabriel Mission in Hickory, NC. CARRIED with fifteen (15) votes in favor and eight (8) votes opposed.

Metropolitan Tikhon indicated that he confirms the vote. It was agreed by consensus that an ad hoc working group be established to present recommendations to the Council regarding formulating policy in the awarding of Planting Grants going forward. Frs. Christopher Foley, Alessandro Margheritino, Thomas Soroka and Mr. Anthony Lekanof were designated as working group members.

D.2. MOTION POPESCU/PATTERSON – To accept the Evaluation of 2023 Mission Planting Grant Applications with amended grant proposals as approved in the previous motion. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Metropolitan Tikhon indicated that he confirms the vote.

E. Property Committee (attached)

Gregory Honshul, Committee co-chairman, presented the attached report highlighting the need to hire a commercial broker now to pursue the sale of the Westwood property. The Committee proposed the hiring of Mark Kaplan of RIPCO and outlined his unique qualifications. Gregory Honshul then summarized a draft Letter of Engagement. After extensive questions and discussion, the following motion was introduced.

E.1. MOTION DIMITRI/BRUNSWIG – To adopt the following resolution regarding retention of a commercial real estate broker for the sale of Westwood:

WHEREAS, the Property Committee, having completed a search for a commercial Real Estate firm to serve as our listing agent, has identified Mark Kaplan with RIPCO Real Estate, whose service areas include New York / Long Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Florida.

WHEREAS, the Property Committee by unanimous vote now recommends to the Metropolitan Council that the Orthodox Church in America engage the services of Mark Kaplan (and associates) and RIPCO Real Estate for a twelve-month contract. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America directs the Orthodox Church in America, by the Metropolitan or

his designee to engage Mark Kaplan and RIPCO Real Estate by executing the listing agreement, attached and incorporated as Exhibit A. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. OCA GAP Program Bonus

Priest Alessandro Margheritino initiated a discussion concerning the disbursement of bonus funds in the amount of \$37,186 received by the OCA from the Group Affiliation Program (GAP), underwritten by GuideOne Insurance Co, through Insurance Systems Group, Inc, which is sponsored by the OCA and in which 159 parishes are enrolled. As there is no restriction on the bonus funds, Insurance Systems Group suggested that these funds could be used for a Church-wide initiative, as is done in some other jurisdictions. The Office of Pastoral Life was proposed as a possible beneficiary. Alternatively, the funds would be reimbursed to each premium-paying parish. After comprehensive discussion, the consensus of the Council was that these funds should not be used for any church-wide program but should be returned to the parishes enrolled in GAP, as has been done in the past.

G. Adjournment

Fr. Rentel reminded the Council concerning scheduled dates of its regular sessions for this year. The Spring Session will take place virtually on March 14 and 16 at 1-4 PM. The Fall Session will be in a hybrid format with a virtual meeting on September 28 to be followed by an in-person gathering on October 11-12.

Metropolitan Tikhon thanked everyone for fruitful discussion at today's productive meeting, which allows us to move forward by the grace of God.

He declared the Special Session of the Metropolitan Council closed and adjourned the meeting with prayer at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary