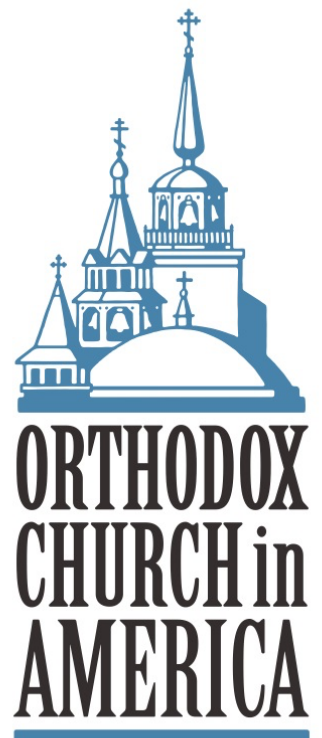

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

MINUTES
2025 Spring Session

Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Thursday, February 27, 2025
Conducted by video conference



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 Alessandro Margheritino, *Acting Chancellor & Secretary*
Andrew Smith, *Treasurer*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Justin Patterson	Elizabeth Mikhalevsky
Archpriest Lawrence Margitich	Lynnell McFarland
Archpriest Christopher Foley	Alexis Liberovsky

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Albanian Archdiocese

Hieromonk Danaks (Rhodes)	Donna Dimitri
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Bulgarian Diocese

Deacon Bogdan Popescu	Daniel Ralich
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Archdiocese of Canada

Archpriest Gregory Scratch	Jonathan Pageau (<i>Tuesday only</i>)
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Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Raymond Martin Browne	Danalisa Radu
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Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest John Baker	Basil Kochan
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Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archpriest David Garretson	Mitchell VanDuyn (<i>Thursday only</i>)
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Diocese of the South

Archpriest Peter Robichau	Joshua Godbold
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Archdiocese of Washington

Deacon Matthew Prentice

Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

Archpriest Andreas Blom

Kevin Duffy, Esq

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest John Parker

Rebecca Danchenko

ABSENT (for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)

Archpriest Maxim Isaac (*Diocese of Alaska*)

Deacon Anthony Lekanof (*Diocese of Alaska*)

Mitchell VanDuyn (*Diocese of New York/New Jersey*) - Tuesday

GUESTS (for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)

Archpriest Nicholas Solak (*OCA Office of Pastoral Life Chairperson*) – Thursday

Protodeacon Peter Ilchuk (*All-American Council Manager*) - Tuesday

Maha Adranly (*Auditing Committee member*) - Thursday

Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton (*OCA Pension Board Chairperson*) – Thursday

Igor Dabik (*OCA Chancery Feasibility Study Group consultant*) - Tuesday

Mark Hamilton (*OCA General Counsel*)

Matushka Sharon Hubiak (*Chairperson - Auditing Committee*) - Thursday

Melanie Ringa (*OCA Pension Board Trustee*) – Thursday

Michael Stieglitz (*Administrator, OCA Pension Plan*) – Thursday

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025

A. Opening Prayer

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon led the meeting participants in prayer at 1:07 PM to open the initial meeting of the 2025 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council, conducted by video conference.

B. Call to Order

With His Beatitude's blessing, Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino called the meeting to order.

C. Agenda (attached) Introduction & Roll Call

Fr. Margheritino reviewed the attached agenda for the meeting and conducted the roll call, indicating guests who would be in attendance at the 2025 Spring Session.

D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Fr. Margheritino presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the regular 2024 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council convened in person on October 9-11, 2024, which were approved by consensus as presented.

E. Metropolitan's Report (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon presented oral remarks and provided highlights from the attached log of his work as OCA Primate including travel and events since the Fall Session. He invited new members of the Council to briefly introduce themselves. He highlighted key events chronicled in the log of his activities. He asked for prayers for the ill Archbishops Benjamin and Alexander and the recently reposed Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, as well as clergy, clergy wives and monastics reposed since the Fall Session. He also spoke of presiding at the funeral of Aleksandra Ter and her daughter Olivia, at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington, DC, who tragically perished in the Potomac plane crash in January. His Beatitude noted the transition in the Office of the Chancellor and expressed gratitude to Fr. Alexander Rentel for his six years of service in the position. He congratulated Fr. Alessandro Margheritino on his appointment as Acting Chancellor and his reception of a Doctor of Ministry degree with a thesis on applied Sobornost in the work of the Metropolitan Council. His Beatitude provided some details on three significant events upcoming this year including the centennial of St. Tikhon's repose, the glorification of Matushka Olga and the 21st All-American Council. Discussion ensued.

F. Acting Chancellor & Secretary Report (attached)

Fr. Margheritino highlighted his attached report, summarizing his various activities, as both Acting Chancellor since January 1 and as OCA Secretary, the work of the Chancery, travel, personnel and related matters.

G. Proposed Statute Amendment (attached)

Fr. Margheritino presented the attached memo with the rationale and text for a proposed Statute amendment to provide essential clarity and standardization to the terms of office for Diocesan Representatives serving on the Metropolitan Council. After detailed discussion and revisions of the proposed amendment text, the following resolution was adopted.

- G.1. MOTION MIKHALEVSKY/MCFARLAND – To submit from the Metropolitan Council for further consideration by the Commission on Canons and Statute, in view of later presentation for adoption at the 21st All-American Council, a proposed amendment of Article V, Section 3(b) of the OCA Statute as follows: *“Diocesan Representatives to the Metropolitan Council are elected for a term of three (3) years. This term begins on January 1 of the year immediately following their election and concludes three years later, on December 31.”* CARRIED with 2 (two) votes opposed (Garretson, Prentice).**

H. All-American Council (attached)

Protodeacon Peter Ilchuk presented his attached report highlighting preparations for the upcoming 21st All-American Council scheduled to convene in Phoenix in July 2025. He indicated that all preparations are going well and in a timely manner.

Fr. Margheritino presented the draft agenda and schedule for the 21st All-American Council, noting significant aspects as well as changes from recent Councils.

H.1. MOTION DIMITRI/FOLEY – To accept the draft agenda and schedule for the upcoming 21st All-American Council as presented and to recommend their approval by the Holy Synod. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Fr. Margheritino and Protodeacon Peter Ilchuk then presented a resolution concerning the venue for the 22nd All-American Council in 2028. This scheduling of the 22nd AAC at the present time is necessitated by the earlier arrangements generally being made for conventions and other gatherings.

H.2. MOTION GODBOLD/POPESCU –

WHEREAS, according to Article III, Section 5.a. of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the Preconciliar Commission shall “Recommend to the Metropolitan Council and Holy Synod, for their approval and confirmation, the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council”; and

WHEREAS, on February 12, 2025, the Preconciliar Commission has unanimously recommended the Hyatt Regency Dallas as the site of the 22nd All-American Council to take place on July 24-28, 2028;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

The Metropolitan Council accepts the recommendation of the Preconciliar Commission, recorded in the Memorandum from the Acting Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon on February 24, 2025, that the 22nd All-American Council will be held on July 24-28, 2028, at the Hyatt Regency Dallas in Dallas, TX. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

I. Property Committee (attached)

Gregory Honshul presented the attached report updating the Council on progress regarding the sale of the Westwood property, noting that the approval processes leading to closing the sale are proceeding as expected. Barring any unforeseen complications, the closing is anticipated to occur in the spring of 2026. The report and related issues were discussed in detail.

J. Chancery Feasibility Study (attached)

Igor Dabik, a consultant, presented the attached feasibility study that he had compiled together with the OCA officers and Joshua Godbold to assess options for the purchase of a property in the greater Washington, DC area that would become the permanent location of the OCA Chancery. The report was extensively discussed. Andrew Smith provided clarification on financing to fund a property purchase. Details on a particular property were presented.

J.1. MOTION DIMITRI/ROBICHAU –

WHEREAS, the chancery property committee and the chancery feasibility study group have identified a seemingly suitable property available for sale at 4826 Maury Lane, Alexandria, VA, for the location of a permanent chancery; and

WHEREAS, investigations by the Executive and some staff of the Chancery have found the property suitable upon first inspection; and

WHEREAS, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon has formally requested the initiation of the potential acquisition of this property; and

WHEREAS, in the greater Washington, D.C. area real estate market, where inventory is limited and subsequently moves quickly off the market, it is necessary to empower an Executive Chancery Team to enter into a timely negotiation process that will result in a legally binding agreement to secure the purchase of the property.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

- 1. The Metropolitan Council delegates the authority to enter into a purchase agreement to purchase 4826 Maury Lane, Alexandria, Virginia to the following people acting jointly:**
 - a. His Beatitude Tikhon (Mollard), Archbishop of Washington DC, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, and**
 - b. Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor & Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America.**
 - c. Mr. Andrew Smith, Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America**
- 2. The Executive Chancery Team will work in consultation with the Property and the Finance and Investment Committees.**
- 3. The offer price shall be the asking price or less; negotiations shall not exceed**
- 4. The offer shall include the contingency that final approval of the purchase must be granted by the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops.**
- 5. The Executive Chancery Team shall identify a real estate broker of their choosing to represent the interest of the OCA.**
- 6. The Treasurer of the OCA shall investigate and identify options available to secure funding for the purchase.**
- 7. Because this resolution includes purchase information that may put the OCA at a disadvantage in pricing negotiations, members of the Metropolitan Council and Executive Chancery Committee will hold details of this purchase negotiation in confidence and such information is not to be made public until such time that a binding agreement is reached.**

8. During the due diligence period, the following shall be estimated: transition costs to the new property and ongoing operational expenses. CARRIED with 3 (three) votes opposed (Garretson, Duffy, Ralich).

K. Legal matters

- K.1. MOTION MARGHERITINO/MIKHALEVSKY – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

In executive session, Mark Hamilton, OCA General Counsel, presented his report to the Metropolitan Council regarding current and pending legal matters affecting the Church. Questions and discussion ensued.

- K.2. MOTION MARGHERITINO/BROWNE - To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

L. Closing

Fr. Margheritino reminded the Council that the Spring Session would continue on Thursday afternoon by video conference. Metropolitan Tikhon thanked the Council for its deliberations and closed the meeting with prayer at 5:11 PM.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025

2-A. Opening Prayer

Metropolitan Tikhon led the meeting participants in prayer at 1:05 PM to open the second meeting of the 2025 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council, conducted by video conference.

2-B. Call to Order

With His Beatitude's blessing, Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino called the second meeting of the Spring Session to order.

2-C. Agenda (attached) Introduction & Roll Call

Fr. Margheritino reviewed the attached agenda, conducted the roll call, and indicated guests who would be present during the meeting.

M. Internal Audit (attached)

Maha Adranly and Matushka Sharon Hubiak of the internal Auditing Committee presented highlights of the Committee's attached 2025 audit report. Discussion and questions followed with clarifications provided by Andrew Smith and Maha Adranly

M.1. MOTION RHODES/DANCHENKO – To receive the report of the Auditing Committee. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

N. Pension Board (attached)

Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton and Melanie Ringa presented the Pension Board's extensive reports on the Pension Plan with attachments. Extensive discussion ensued with questions answered by the Pension Board members in attendance and Michael Stieglitz.

O. Pension Committee (attached)

Joshua Godbold presented the Pension Committee report and a resolution concerning public release of financial data on the Pension Plan. After extensive deliberation, it was decided by consensus that for the time being the resolution should be considered in a straw vote. In the straw vote, the resolution was defeated. The resolution and two others on this issue were withdrawn pending further discussion and editing.

P. Treasurer's Report (attached)

Andrew Smith highlighted the attached Treasurer's report and appendices that provided an overview of the Church's finances and investments. He indicated that amending the annual OCA budget would not be necessary at this time, as no revisions have been made to the budget as adopted last fall. He answered questions and provided clarifications on his report and appendices. The report was acknowledged with appreciation for Andrew Smith's work.

P.1. MOTION DIMITRI/BROWNE – To accept the Treasurer's report as presented. CARRIED with 1 (one) abstention (Smith)

Andrew Smith then presented the following resolution.

P.2. MOTION POPESCU/MCFARLAND -

WHEREAS, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America resolved at its November 2023 session to canonize Matushka Olga of Alaska; and,
WHEREAS, the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska has, since then, been preparing for the liturgical celebration of her canonization scheduled for June 2025; and,
WHEREAS, the financial situation in the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska is such that the additional expense associated with the glorification poses a significant burden to the diocese; and,

WHEREAS, His Grace Bishop Alexei of the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska has requested a contribution from the Orthodox Church in America to help defray the costs of the events surrounding the glorification,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Orthodox Church in America will contribute \$15,000 (fifteen thousand) from its unrestricted reserves to the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska for the events surrounding the glorification of Matushka Olga. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Q. Human Resources and Ethics

Lisa Mikhalevsky, Committee chairperson, provided a brief oral report stating that the committee and a consultant are just beginning work to analyze the compensation of all OCA Chancery officers and staff.

R. Office of Pastoral Life (attached)

Archpriest Nicholas Solak, Chairperson of the Office of Pastoral Life, presented his report regarding the expanding work of the Office. He noted his own transition to a full-time role and the continuing development of programs managed by the Office. He acknowledged several grants. Metropolitan Tikhon expressed gratitude to Fr. Nicholas and the important work of the Office.

S. Adjournment

Fr. Margheritino noted that Fr. Thomas Soroka is unwell and could not participate in today's meeting to present his report on the work of OCA Departments. Any questions on this attached report may be sent to Fr. Soroka in writing or addressed by phone. Fr. Margheritino reviewed arrangements for the Fall Session to be convened in-person in Springfield, VA.

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon noted his careful considerations in selecting a new chancellor. He noted his appreciation for straightforward discussion on pension matters and the possible purchase of a new chancery property. In conjunction with the coming of Great Lent, he asked for forgiveness and exhorted everyone towards silence as stated in his Lenten message.

S.1. MOTION BAKER/POPESCU – To adjourn the 2025 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Metropolitan Tikhon closed the meeting with prayer at 4:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary