
**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**DRAFT MINUTES
2026 Spring Session**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026
Thursday, March 12, 2026
Conducted by video conference**



Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest John Parker

Rebecca Danchenko

ABSENT *(for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)*

Archpriest Patrick Burns *(Diocese of New England)*

Crystal (Anastasia) Dushkin *(Diocese of Alaska)*

Jonathan Pageau *(Archdiocese of Canada)*

GUESTS *(for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)*

Archpriest John Dresko *(OCA Pension Board Trustee) – Thursday*

Archpriest Justin Patterson *(Project Manager for the OCA Departments) – Thursday*

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

Maha Adranly *(Auditing Committee) – Tuesday*

Diane Dorogy *(Auditing Committee) – Tuesday*

Mark Hamilton *(OCA General Counsel) – Tuesday*

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

Alexis Liberovsky *(Recording Secretary)*

Melanie Ringa *(Pension Board Trustee) – Thursday*

Michael Stieglitz *(Pension Plan Administrator) - Thursday*

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

A. Opening Prayer

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon led the meeting participants in prayer at 1:04 PM to open the initial meeting of the 2026 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 which was approved by consensus with minor changes. He then conducted the roll call, indicating guests who would be in attendance at the 2026 Spring Session.

D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Fr. Margheritino presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the regular 2025 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council convened in person on October 8-9, 2025, as well as the draft minutes of the Special Sessions of the Council on November 24, 2025 and December 22, 2025, which were conducted by video conference. The minutes of all three sessions were approved by consensus as presented.

E. Metropolitan’s Report (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon presented his attached report. He welcomed new members of the Council and addressed various matters concerning the life of the Orthodox Church in America. His Beatitude reflected on his work overseeing the stavropegial institutions, the work of the Chancery, and his responsibilities in the Archdiocese of Washington. He also offered an overview of several recent

pastoral visits and travels. The Metropolitan further addressed the difficult situation within the wider Orthodox world, as well as the concerns and suffering of many people in light of the various conflicts affecting different parts of the world.

F. Chancellor’s Report (attached)

Fr. Margheritino summarized his attached report on the work of the Central Administration and highlighted several aspects of the Chancery’s work, including updates on personnel, ongoing projects, workflow developments, and the progress of the Chancery relocation.

G. Report of the Secretary (attached)

Priest David Bozeman delivered his attached report reflecting on his work during the past six months in his new role as OCA Secretary, including physical oversight of the current chancery facility, Westwood, operation of the OCA Archives, information technology, SMPAC, communication and publications as well as other matters.

In discussion of the reports of the Metropolitan, Chancellor and Secretary, the Metropolitan Council sought and received clarifications concerning the recent assignment of the Chancellor and Secretary to new pastoral roles at St. Nicolas Cathedral in Washington, DC and how that will be combined with their chancery work. Zoning challenges in the search for a new chancery property were also discussed.

H. Legal matters

H.1. MOTION MARGHERITINO/LANE – 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.

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

I. Property Committee

Gregory Honshul presented the attached report updating the Council on progress regarding the Westwood sale, particularly noting the delay in purchase closing that has been granted to the buyer by decision of the Metropolitan Council, allowing the buyer additional time to obtain zoning approvals. He detailed the agreed upon financial concessions to the OCA from the buyer as a result of the closing date delay. The closing is now anticipated to occur by July 31, 2026.

J. Treasurer’s Report (attached)

Andrew Smith highlighted the attached Treasurer’s report and appendices that provided an overview of the Church’s finances and investment for 2025, noting a surplus of \$53,000 from the All-American Council. He also reported on initial activity for 2026 and on a productive meeting with the Auditing Committee in Springfield in February. On behalf of the Finance and Investment Committee, he presented minor amendments to the previously adopted 2026 Budget.

J.1. MOTION BROWNE/SOTIR – To approve the amended budget of the Orthodox Church in America for 2026 as presented. CARRIED unanimously.

Metropolitan Tikhon indicated that he accepts the motion and delivered additional comments particularly on the Church's recent contacts with the other Orthodox Churches and the development of plans for future such contacts.

After a brief recess, the meeting resumed at 3:07 PM.

K. Internal Audit (attached)

Matushka Sharon Hubiak of the internal Auditing Committee presented highlights of the Committee's attached 2025 audit report, noting the satisfactory management of the Church's finances. Committee members, Maha Adranly and Diane Dorogy provided additional positive comments on the Committee's report and productive ongoing discussion with the Treasurer and other OCA Officers.

L. Adjournment

Metropolitan Tikhon thanked Council members and all who participated in this gathering for their work and adjourned the meeting with prayer at 3:22 PM.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

2-A. Opening Prayer

Metropolitan Tikhon led the meeting participants in prayer at 1:03 PM to open the second meeting of the 2026 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council, conducted by video conference.

2-B. Call to Order

With His Beatitude's blessing, Fr. 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.

2-J. Treasurer's Report

Andrew Smith provided clarification concerning receipts that were temporarily unavailable due to the transition between accounting systems and answered questions from Council members.

M. Pension Board (attached)

Fr. John Dresko (Pension Board chairman) highlighted the Board's extensive reports on the Pension Plan finances and additional comments on other aspects of the operation of the Pension Plan. He then presented a number of minor amendments to the Pension Plan. A motion was made and seconded to table the first amendment. After further discussion and clarifications from Fr. John, Melanie Ringa, and Michael Stieglitz, a motion was made and seconded, to amend the OCA Pension Plan by adopting all seven amendments presented to the meeting of the Metropolitan Council as follows:

M.1. MOTION LANE/MARGITICH – To amend the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan as follows:

Current Plan Provision: Section 1.12(a) was restated and sections (e), and (f) were added. The new section (e) and (f) memorialized administrative practices of the Plan; however, the change to section 1.12(a) materially changed the calculation of Compensation by having a Member forfeit his Member Contribution Account if he separated from the OCA before his Normal Retirement Date. This change to section 1.12(a) appears to have been unintentional. Accordingly, the sections are amended as proposed below to restore the express statement that Member Contributions are always vested.

RESTATEMENT

“(a) For purposes of determining Average Compensation and for determining the amount of Employer and Member contributions in accordance with Sections 3.1(a) and 3.2, Compensation shall include the following:

(i) Base Compensation

The cash salary paid to an Employee for services rendered to the Employer, excluding any living allowances, automobile allowances and all other forms of living expenses.

(ii) Housing Allowance Compensation

The cash salary or other form of monetary payment paid to a Member for housing or amount recognized as Housing Allowance under Code Section 107 and regulations thereunder.

Effective July 1, 2011, for Members (other than Clergy) who are required to accept housing provided by their Employer for its convenience, a Member's Housing Allowance Compensation is that amount excluded from their taxable income pursuant to Section 119(a)(2) of the Code.

(e) The determination of Compensation is made without regard to whether the employee is issued a Federal Form W-2, Federal Form 1099, or any other form of reporting or without reporting.

(f) Compensation includes any amount of a stipend that is not restricted, or used, to reimburse an Employee for expenses relating to services for the Church and no part of which may be used for other purposes by the Employee.”

Current Plan Provision: Section 1.16 of the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan (“Plan”) currently states:Section 1.16 (a) Any bishop or priest of the Church except as follows:

(i) Bishops and priests in the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska

(A) This exception does not include those who were already Members in the Plan as of April 2, 2024

(B) This exception does not include those who, along with the related parish, have executed an agreement of participation.

(ii) any person working at a mission or mission station who does not receive Compensation.

Section 1.16 (b) Any full-time lay person who performs services for the Church and receives compensation. A full-time employee is an Employee who customarily performs service for at least twenty (20) hours a week.

Section 1.16 (c) On or after January 1, 1987, the term "Employee" shall include any person, defined in (a) and (b) above, employed by the Church's Seminaries in a capacity other than solely as director.

Section 1.16 (d) Leased Employees and persons working for the Church shall be included as Employees unless

- (i) such individual is covered by a money purchase pension plan providing
 - (A) a nonintegrated employer contribution rate of at least 10 percent of compensation, as defined in Section 415(c)(3) of the Code, but including amounts contributed by the Employer pursuant to a salary reduction agreement which are excludable from the Leased Employee's gross income under Section 125, 402(e)(3), 403(h)(1)(B) or 403(b) of the Code;*
 - (B) immediate Membership; and*
 - (C) full and immediate vesting; and**
- (ii) Leased Employees do not constitute more than 20% of the Employer's Non-Highly Compensated Employee workforce.*

Proposed Change: The proposed change will conform the numbering of the section to that used throughout the Plan document. The proposed change will also remove a conflict between section 1.16(b) and 1.16(d) relating to the obligation of full-time lay persons who perform services for the Church to participate in the Plan. Further, the exception from participation for "persons working for the Church" introduces an ambiguity that could threaten the very existence of the Plan should creation of a money purchase plan by a parish for its clergy be used to escape participation in the Plan in disregard of the mandate to participate established by the All-American Council

RESTATEMENT:

Section 1.16(a) Any bishop or priest of the Church except as follows:

- (i) Bishops and priests in the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska
 - (A) This exception does not include those who were already Members in the Plan as of April 2, 2024.**
 - (B) This exception does not include those who, along with the related parish, have executed an agreement of participation.****
- (ii) any Bishop or priest working at a mission or mission station who does not receive Compensation.**

Section 1.16(b) Any full-time lay person who performs services for the Church and receives compensation except as follows

- (I) Lay persons working in the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska
 - (A) This exception does not include those who were already Members in the Plan as of April 2, 2024.**
 - (B) This exception does not include those who work in the Diocese of Sitka and/or Alaska, along with the related parish, that have executed an agreement of participation.****
- (ii) any lay person working at a mission or mission station who does not receive Compensation.**
- (iii) A full-time employee is an Employee who customarily performs service for at least twenty (20) hours a week.**

Section 1.16(c) On or after January 1, 1987, the term "Employee" shall include any persons, defined in (a) and (b) above, employed by the Church's Seminaries in a capacity other than solely as director.

Section 1.16(d) Leased Employees shall be included as Employees unless:

- (i) such individual is covered by a money purchase pension plan providing (A) a nonintegrated employer contribution rate of at least 10 percent of compensation, as defined in Section 415(c)(3) of the Code, but including amounts contributed by the Employer pursuant to a salary reduction agreement which are excludable from the Leased Employee's gross income under Section 125, 402(e)(3), 403(h)(1)(B) or 403(b) of the Code; (B) immediate Membership; and (C) full and immediate vesting; and**
- (ii) Leased Employees do not constitute more than 20% of the Employer's Non-Highly Compensated Employee workforce.” ”**

Current Plan Provision: Section 1.21(b) was previously restated and Section (e) and (f) were previously added, however, an effective date was not expressly stated. To address possible ambiguity (that the change is retroactive), the sections are amended as below.

RESTATEMENT

“Section 1.21(b):

"Inactive Member" - A person who is no longer an Active Member of the Plan because his basis of employment no longer meets the requirements set forth in Section 1.16 while he continues in the employ of the Employer. On and after April 2, 2024, an Inactive Member is a person, other than a person described in subsection (e), below, who is no longer an Active Member of the Plan because his basis of employment no longer meets the requirements set forth in Section 1.16 while he continues in the employ of the Employer.

....

Section 1.21(e): "Ineligible Member" - a person who on and after April 2, 2024, is described in Plan Section 2.1 (d).

Section 1.21(f): "Non-Compliant Eligible Member" - Any Employee who on and after April 2, 2024, is eligible to become a Member of the Plan who receives Compensation for services to the Church and who fails to participate in the Plan as an Active Member as required by Plan Section 2.1(b).”

Current Plan Provision: Section 2.1 was amended by restating Section 2.1(b), renumbering Section 2.1(f) as 2.1(g)(i) and adding a new Section 2.1(g)(ii) and Sections 2.1 (h)(1) and (h)(2). The Proposed Restatement below would address the numbering of these sections [designating 2.1(g)(1) and 2.1(g)(2) as 2.1(f)(i) and 2.1(f)(ii)], and replacing Sections 2.1 (h)(1) and (h)(2) with a new Section G that also addresses the failure of a terminating Member to remove his account, address non-compliance by a Member who has reached his Normal Retirement Date and identify the effective date of the new clauses.

RESTATEMENT

(f)(i) Membership shall be continued during a period while on leave of absence from service approved by the Pension Board, but no Membership Service shall be granted for such period, except as provided in Section 1.31 with respect to service in the Armed Forces of the United States. Effective January 1, 2009, a member of the Clergy shall be treated as on leave of absence while awaiting reassignment for a period not exceeding twenty-four months, at which time he shall be deemed terminated from employment.

For purposes of computing benefits under Article 4, the date of eligibility for Membership of a priest who enters the Armed Forces before he begins his service for the Church, shall be considered to be the first day of the month coincident with, or next following, the date he enters the Armed Forces.

(f)(ii) On and after April 2, 2024, a Member who while on an approved leave of absence terminates employment or is deemed to terminate employment shall only be entitled to a benefit upon retirement pursuant to Plan Section 5.1 if the Member had reached his Normal Retirement Date before his leave of absence began, otherwise the Member shall only be eligible for a benefit under Plan Section 5.2 or 5.3

(g) Non-Compliance; Forfeiture of Service and Related Contributions.

(i) A Member who fails to make required Member Contributions for a continuous period of one hundred twenty (120) days from the first day that a required contribution has not been remitted to the Plan, and after at least three (3) written notices of delinquency (including one notice designated as a final notice), shall be deemed a Non-Compliant Eligible Member.

(ii) Upon becoming Non-Compliant, the Member (if he has not yet reached his Normal Retirement Date) shall forfeit all Credited Service accrued prior to the date of Non-Compliance, and all benefits derived from Member contributions (including any right to his Member Contribution Account) and Employer contributions from such forfeited service shall likewise be forfeited to the Plan and remain Plan assets to fund benefits for other participants.

(iii) If the Non-Compliant Eligible Member who became a Non-Compliant Eligible Member before reaching his Normal Retirement Date later resumes participation by making required Member Contributions, the Member shall begin accruing Credited Service prospectively as a new Member, with no reinstatement of prior forfeited service or benefits.

(iv) A Member who after reaching his Normal Retirement Date becomes Non-Compliant shall remain vested in his Retirement benefit calculated as of the later of his Normal Retirement Date or the date he becomes a Non-Compliant Eligible Member but shall not accrue any additional benefit pursuant to Section 5.5 after becoming non-compliant nor any interest upon his Retirement benefit.

(v) This Section does not affect Accumulated Voluntary Contributions, which remain 100 percent vested and non-forfeitable. However, no interest shall accrue upon such Accumulated Voluntary Contribution Account from the first day that a required contribution resulting in Non-Compliance was not remitted to the Plan.

Current Plan Provision: Section 3.1(a) was amended to remove a clause that the Member would have a vested interest in his Member's contribution Account at all times. This appears to have been inadvertent. Consequently, a corrective amendment is offered to restore the Plan as it had been. We do recognize that federal tax law only requires a Church plan to provide for vesting upon retirement or plan termination and that the Plan had been more generous. However, a review of the absence of discussion of such a valuable provision from the Metropolitan Council suggests that the omission was not intended.

In restoring the provision that a Member remains vested in his Member Contribution Account, an exception for when a Member becomes non-compliant is expressly reserved.

RESTATEMENT

"5.3(a) Before April 2, 2024, Member shall have a 100% vested interest in his Accumulated Voluntary Contribution Account and his Member's Contribution Account. On and after April 2, 2024, a Member shall have a 100% vested interest only in his Accumulated Voluntary Contribution Account and subject to Section 2.1(g), a vested interest in his Member's Contribution Account at Retirement as provided in Section 5.1 or upon his other termination of employment in accordance with section 5.3."

Current Plan Provision: There is no current provision expressly providing for abandoned accounts.

AMENDMENT

“8.10 Terminated Non-Vested Members; Forfeiture of Unclaimed Benefits.
(a) If a Member terminates employment and is not vested in any benefit under the Plan, the Member shall be entitled only to payment of any amounts payable under Section 5.3.
(b) If, after written notice of eligibility for distribution, the terminated, non-vested Member fails to make a valid claim or distribution election within twenty-four (24) months following the date of termination of employment, the unclaimed benefit (including any related Member or Employer contributions) shall be forfeited to the Plan and applied to the general funding of benefits for remaining participants.
(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b), if the former Member or a beneficiary later establishes entitlement to the forfeited benefit within the applicable statute of limitations, the Plan shall restore the forfeited amount (without interest after the forfeiture date), in accordance with uniform administrative procedures adopted by the Pension Board.”

Current Plan Provision: Plan Section 13.2 provides for the construction of the Plan. It states: The Plan shall be construed according to the laws of the State in which the Employer named under Section 1.17 has its principal place of business, and all provisions hereof shall be administered according to, and its validity shall be determined under, the laws of such State, except where pre-empted by Federal law.

In accordance with this provision, the Plan has always been construed under the laws of the State of New York. As the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America (“OCA”) has relocated most of its business to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Plan document would now be construed under the laws of the Commonwealth. This could result in materially different construction of the terms of the Plan. As the Pension Board does not believe that it was the intent of the OCA to change the law governing the interpretation of the Plan, the Pension Board recommends amending section 13.2 to specify that the Plan will be construed under the laws of the State of New York. It is noted that the Trust Agreement, Section 20, already (and has always) provided that the Trust Agreement is/was to be construed under the laws of the State of New York.

RESTATEMENT

“13.2 Construction of Agreement

The Plan shall be construed according to the laws of the State of New York and all provisions hereof shall be administered according to, and its validity shall be determined under, the laws of such State, except where pre-empted by Federal law. This construction of the Plan shall be retroactive to the date that the Chancery began to relocate its operations to the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

CARRIED with one (1) abstention (Scratch).

His Beatitude indicated that he accepts the vote.

N. MC Liaison to Pension Board (attached)

David Lane, the MC Liaison to the Pension Board gave brief remarks in addition to the attached report and noted the continuing evolving productivity and positive spirit of the work of the Board and the Pension Office.

O. OCA Departments and Church Planting Grants Updates (attached)

Archpriest Justin Patterson presented an update on the Church Planting Grant program and reported on the work of an ad hoc committee currently developing a new parish revitalization initiative, which will be presented to the Council for further consideration in the coming months.

Following a brief recess, the meeting resumed at 2:25 PM.

P. Office of Pastoral Life (attached)

Archpriest Nicholas Solak, Director of the Office of Pastoral Life, presented his report and other documents on the various programs managed by the Office. He also spoke of the upcoming National Clergy Retreat and Clergy Wives Retreat later this year and noted some personnel changes in the Office. Discussion and questions ensued. Metropolitan Tikhon noted the importance of clergy health and their families for the life of the Church. He expressed gratitude to Fr. Nicholas and the Office of Pastoral Life for their work.

Q. Metropolitan Council Handbook and Committees

Archpriest Peter Robichau, Chair of the Governance Committee of the Metropolitan Council, presented an oral update on the work of the committee and reported on the progress of the Metropolitan Council Handbook, particularly drafting charters for each committee of the Council. He described the contents of an anonymous engagement survey to be conducted among current and former Council members. Comments and discussion ensued.

R. Open Discussion

Council members conducted a wide-ranging discussion on various matters of mutual interest. The discussion was largely focused on funding of the central administration and the possible purchase of a new chancery building.

S. Metropolitan's concluding remarks (attached) and adjournment

Fr. Margheritino reminded Council members that the Fall Session will take place on October 14 and 15. A possible additional meeting is being considered for the morning of October 16 for discussion of a specific topic or training for the Council.

Metropolitan Tikhon presented concluding remarks, which may be found at the end of His Beatitude's attached report. He expressed his gratitude to the members of the Metropolitan Council for their continued dedication and service to the Church and offered words of encouragement in light of the many challenges presently facing the world. He noted that it is understandable to have feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear but reminds the faithful that the Church has navigated many difficult periods throughout her history. His Beatitude also reflected on the rise of artificial intelligence and encouraged a dispassionate consideration of the topic. He noted that the teachings of Saint Gregory Palamas might be a key to facing these and other upcoming challenges.

S.1. MOTION BROWNE/BULETZA-BRETON – To adjourn the 2026 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Metropolitan Tikhon then closed the meeting and concluded the session with prayer at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary