



**MINUTES  
of the Joint Meeting of the Standing Synod  
and the 2019 Spring Session of  
the Metropolitan Council**

**Wednesday, February 13 – Friday, February 15, 2019  
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY**

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

**PARTICIPANTS**

**STANDING SYNOD**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon  
His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin (*except  
Wednesday*)

His Eminence, Archbishop Irénée (*Thursday  
afternoon & Friday*)  
His Eminence, Archbishop Michael

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *Chancellor  
(except Wednesday afternoon)*  
Melanie Ringa, Treasurer (*Thursday only*)

Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary

**MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL**

Archpriest Antonio Perdomo  
Archpriest Thomas Moore  
Archpriest Kirill Sokolov

Katherine Vitko  
Lynnell Brunswig  
Mark Linnehan

**DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES**

**Diocese of Alaska**

Archpriest Mikel Bock

Dorothy Chaney

**Albanian Archdiocese**

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes

Donna Dimitri

**Bulgarian Diocese**

Bogdan Popescu

**Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

**Diocese of the Midwest**

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs (*except Wednesday*)

Robert Graban

**Diocese of New England**

Michael Danchak

**Diocese of New York/New Jersey**

Igumen Joseph (Hoffman)

James P. Kornafel

**Diocese of the South**

Priest Joseph Ciarciaglino

Christopher Lewis

**Archdiocese of Washington**

Archpriest Valery Shemchuk

**Diocese of the West**

David Lane, Esq.

**Diocese of Western Pennsylvania**

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

**ABSENT**

Archpriest John Dresko (*Diocese of the West*)

Priest Gabriel Bilas (*Bulgarian Diocese*)

Priest James Parnell (*Diocese of New England*)

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

Mark Petasky (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

Sharon Shingara (*Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania*)

Ray Steeb (*Diocese of Western Pennsylvania*)

Michael Thompson (*Archdiocese of Washington*)

**GUESTS** (*for all sessions unless otherwise indicated*)

His Grace, Bishop David of Alaska (*except Friday*)

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

- Wednesday afternoon)

Archpriest Nicholas Solak (*"Thriving in Ministry" Clergy Peer Learning Program Director*)

- Thursday afternoon)

Archpriest Matthew Tate (*Pension Board Trustee - Thursday morning*)

Priest Theophan Whitfield (*"Thriving in Ministry" Clergy Peer Learning Program - Thursday afternoon*)

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak (*Secretary to the Metropolitan & Director, Stewards of the OCA*)

- Wednesday afternoon)

Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton (*Pension Board Trustee - Thursday morning*)

Cindy Heise (*Coordinator for the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations - Thursday afternoon*)

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

Alexis Liberovsky (*Recording Secretary*)

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010**

**A. Opening Prayer**

Metropolitan Tikhon celebrated a prayer service at 9:01 AM on Wednesday morning at the Immaculate Conception Seminary to open the meeting.

**B. Agenda: Introduction (attached)**

The meeting was then called to order at 9:23 AM. Father Alexander Rentel introduced the agenda for the meeting, which was approved by acclamation.

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

Father Eric Tosi 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 due to illness in their families. He requested approval of Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary for the meeting, which was accepted without objection. Father Tosi then presented the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Metropolitan Council on September 19-21, 2018 for approval.

**C.1. MOTION HOFFMAN/LANE -- To accept the previous meeting minutes of September 19-21, 2018 as presented. CARRIED.**

**D. Welcome**

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed the members of the Metropolitan Council present for the meeting and noted that a key role of the Council is to implement the decisions of the All-American Council. He extended a particular welcome to the members of the Standing Synod and to the new members of the Metropolitan Council, especially Father Alexander Rentel, the new Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America.

**E. Metropolitan's Report (attached)**

In his attached report, Metropolitan Tikhon focused particularly on the chancery restructuring which is still ongoing. He reported that a study guide (attached to these minutes) has been prepared for his "*Four Pillars*" booklet, which is being widely discussed and announced that he has begun drafting a Strategic Action Plan to address more specifically the broad issues indicated in the "*Four Pillars*" booklet. He noted the upcoming appointment of a committee to study the possible relocation of the OCA Chancery. He also highlighted the Church's work in external relations, thanked the Chancery staff members for their hard work and presented some action items and themes for church-wide reflection in the next few years in conjunction with the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the granting of autocephaly and the glorification of St. Herman of Alaska. Discussion and questions ensued.

Following a short recess at 10:49 AM, the session resumed at 11:00 AM.

**F. Secretary's report (attached)**

Father Eric Tosi summarized his attached written report with attachments. He particularly noted the deferred maintenance issues, including the long postponed removal of the swimming pool on the property that will need to be addressed. He then introduced for approval a *PERSONNEL FILE POLICY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA*. After extensive discussion, the following motion to table discussion of the issue was adopted.

**F.1. MOTION BRECKENRIDGE/HOFFMAN – To defer discussion of the *PERSONNEL FILE POLICY* until further clarification is received from the Legal Committee. CARRIED.**

Father Tosi highlighted the attached technology report, noting that database and website refurbishment is expected to be completed by Pascha. Regarding the proposed renovations of the chancery building and the OCA Archives, Father Tosi presented the architect's attached letter as well as bid analysis. He outlined the most important areas of the needed work, including critical upgrading of electricity and the prevention of water

leakage. He indicated that approximately \$100,000 remains from the proceeds of the McGuire Family Charitable Remainder Trust, which are being used for this project, and that additional funds would have to be raised to complete all the work. The bids from contractors were much higher than expected. Various considerations were discussed in terms of possible relocation of the chancery and available funding. A motion was proposed and later withdrawn to deny further expenditures for the project until a Relocation Committee report is received.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:10 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:08 PM.

After further discussion, the following revised motion was adopted.

- F.3. MOTION LANE/LINNEHAN – To deny expenditure of funds for the chancery/archives repairs and improvements beyond \$79,609 “Deferred Maintenance” indicated in the letter from the architect. This funding may be disbursed from the proceeds of the McGuire Family Charitable Remainder Trust as previously authorized for this project by the Metropolitan Council. Consideration of additional funding is referred to the Finance Committee and the projected Relocation Committee and is to be submitted for approval in their reports to the next meeting of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED with 2 opposed (Grabau, Hoffman) and 2 abstentions (Moore, Tosi).**

Father Tosi then presented the attached report on preparations undertaken for the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council, scheduled to take place in 2021. He outlined the circumstances that have allowed for an immediate contract with the Hilton Baltimore Hotel.

- F.4. MOTION TOSI/DANCHAK - To approve, with the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, MD as the site of the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council to be convened on July 23-30, 2021. CARRIED.**

He indicated that that FOCA Executive Committee has agreed to hold its convention in conjunction with the All-American Council. Metropolitan Tikhon spoke of the need to establish a Preconciliar Commission for the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council. He indicated that, per precedent of previous councils, he would, as ruling hierarch of the diocese where the Council will take place, serve as Chairperson of the Preconciliar Commission. He indicated that the OCA officers are ex-officio members of the Preconciliar Commission and that Father Gabriel Bilas has agreed to serve as Metropolitan Council representative on the Commission.

- F.5. MOTION TOSI/POPESCU - To approve the establishment of the Preconciliar Commission for the 20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council to include Metropolitan Tikhon as Chairman, the Church Officers as ex officio members and additional members to be appointed by His Beatitude and to submit the membership for confirmation to the Holy Synod. CARRIED.**

Father Tosi also spoke regarding the appointment of local organizing committee members. Discussion took place concerning lessons learned from organizational aspects of previous councils and possible improvements.

Following a short recess at 2:29 PM, the session resumed at 2:44 PM.

## **I. External Affairs Report**

Father Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered an oral report summarizing recent activities of the OCA in external relations and highlighted other significant events particularly the situation in Ukraine and its effects on ecclesial relationships worldwide. Metropolitan Tikhon offered additional remarks on his own external activities for the Church. Extensive discussion and questions ensued.

Following a short recess at 4:09 PM, the session resumed at 4:15 PM.

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA) highlighted his attached report. He noted that SOCA surpassed its fundraising goal of \$85,000 for last year with an income of \$90,100. He answered questions from Council members

**G. Legal matters (attached)**

**G.1. MOTION TOSI/VITKO – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

In executive session, David Lane, Legal Committee Chairperson, and Judge E.R. Lanier, OCA General Counsel, presented confidential aspects on a variety of current and potential legal issues. Discussion ensued.

**G.2. MOTION TOSI/RHODES – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 5:05 PM.

After dinner, orientation for new Council members conducted by David Lane and Judge E.R. Lanier took place.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019**

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, the morning session was opened with prayer at 11:06 AM.

**K. Pension Board Report (attached)**

Pension Board Trustees Father Matthew Tate and Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton presented the attached overview of the Pension Plan as well as the attached report on the present status of the Plan from Father Gleb McFatter, Pension Board Chairperson. They then introduced for adoption three amendments to the Plan proposed by the Board.

**K.1. MOTION RHODES/GRABAN - To amend Section 4.3 of the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan to permit increase of disability benefit. CARRIED.**

**Plan Section 4.3 is restated as follows:**

**4.3 Upon Disability Retirement**

**Upon Retirement at his Disability Retirement Date, a Member shall be entitled to receive his Accrued Benefit as of such Retirement Date actuarially increased by some, or all, of the Member's Accumulated Voluntary Contribution Account. When a Member who is receiving a Disability Retirement Benefit reaches his Normal Retirement Date, the Disability Retirement Benefit shall end and the Member shall be immediately eligible to receive his Normal Retirement Benefit except that the monthly payments received as the Disability Retirement Benefit shall be counted as monthly payments for the purpose of counting the 120 monthly payments of the Normal Form of Retirement Income. A Member receiving a Disability Retirement Benefit shall apply for his Normal Retirement Benefit within 90 days of becoming eligible for a Normal Retirement Benefit and may elect among the forms of benefit available.**

- K.2. MOTION DANCHAK/BRECKENRIDGE - To amend Section 1.9 of the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan to permit designation of beneficiary. CARRIED with 1 opposed (Ciarciaglino).**

**Plan Section 1.9 is restated as follows:**

**1.9 "Beneficiary"**

(a) The person designated by a Member to receive payments after the Member's death under an optional form of benefit described in Article 6; under the return of contributions described in Article 7, Section 3.2 and Subsection 8.2(b)(i); or under the Normal Form of Retirement Income described in Section 1.22. Effective January 1, 2009, the Beneficiary of a Member who is married shall be his Spouse. A Member who is married but who seeks to designate a person other than his spouse to receive payments after his death may, with the written consent of his Spouse (which consent must be duly notarized), change his designated Beneficiary at any time, but no designation shall be effective unless filed with the Pension Board. If no Beneficiary has been designated, or the designation is defective, the balance shall be paid to the Member's estate. Such person is the designated beneficiary under Code Section 401 (a)(9) and Treasury Regulation Section 1.401 (a)(9)-4.

(b) A Member or a Member's Beneficiary entitled to designate a person or entity to receive any remaining payments of the 120 payments of the Normal Form of Retirement Income after the Member's (or Beneficiary's) death, may designate the person or entity to which payments are to be made including to an organization affiliated with the Orthodox Church in America or to the Plan for the benefit of other Members.

- K.3. MOTION GRABAN/BRUNSWIG - To amend Section 1.28 of the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan to maintain employer contribution level. CARRIED.**

**Plan Section 1.28 is restated as follows.**

**1.28 "Retirement"**

The termination of employment of a Member on his Normal, Deferred or Disability Retirement Date. A Member who has not earlier retired shall be treated as having terminated employment on the first day of the month coincident with or immediately following his seventy-fifth (75<sup>th</sup>) birthday for the purpose of enabling commencement of a benefit while otherwise remaining Employed (including remaining Employed and having Compensation for purposes of being obligated to contribute to the Plan with respect to such Employment)(herein, the "in-service benefit"). The Pension received by a Member shall not be treated as Compensation for purposes of determining contributions due to the Plan or for determining benefit accruals so long as the Member's compensation with respect to his/her employment paid with respect to any month after his/her benefit commences is not reduced below his/her average monthly compensation paid during any contiguous twenty-four month period in the sixty months prior to his/her commencing his/her in-service benefit.

Discussion and questions on a variety of issues concerning the Pension Plan ensued.

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

- L. Chancellor's Report (attached)**

Father Alexander Rentel presented his first report to the Metropolitan Council since becoming Chancellor, outlining his initial tasks in the position as well as the tasks he hopes to accomplish.

Cindy Heise delivered the attached reports from the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC) and the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA), as well as a confidential statistical report on status of cases since 2015. Questions and discussion ensued.

**M. Clergy Wives Survey**

Cindy Heise delivered an oral report on the results of the clergy wives survey she has conducted for the Department of Pastoral Life in order to determine needed support for clergy wives and to assist them in a variety of difficulties in their lives and ministries. Questions and discussion on a variety of related issues ensued.

**H. Metropolitan Council Committees**

**H.1. Reorganization Committee (attached)**

Father Timothy Hojnicky presented the attached Reorganization Committee report. He stressed that the committee was charged only with developing structure and was not involved in hiring and dismissing personnel. Discussion and questions ensued.

Following a short recess at 2:40 PM, the session resumed at 2:50 PM.

**N. Treasurer's Report (attached)**

Melanie Ringa highlighted the attached brief Treasurer's report and appendices, which included preliminary financial results for 2018. She additionally thanked the diocesan treasurers for timely remittances of proportional giving contributions and their productive participation along with diocesan chancellors in the annual chancellors/treasurers meetings. She also noted that, with the appointment of the new OCA Representative in Moscow, financial difficulties including recordkeeping, accountability, shortfalls and other issues at Saint Catherine's Church have now been resolved.

She proposed the continued engagement of D'Arcangelo & Co., as external auditors.

**N.1. MOTION RINGA/SOKOLOV – To approve the engagement of D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP for the external audit of 2018 financials not to exceed a cost of \$20,000. CARRIED.**

Due to the absence of Father John Dresko, there was no report from the Finance Committee, but Ms. Ringa provided a provided a brief update on investments.

**P. Thriving in Ministry Presentation**

Fathers Nicholas Solak and Theophan Whitfield delivered an oral report on efforts undertaken to establish Clergy and Clergy Wives Peer Learning Groups, which are being funded by a \$470,700 grant received by the Orthodox Church in America from the Thriving in Ministry initiative of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. This project is a rollout from a pilot program in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Father Theophan provided an overview of the project, while Father Nicholas focused on the practical aspects of the Peer Learning Groups and the training seminar that he and Father Theophan had just attended. They indicated that this funding is provided over five years and the program will be pan-Orthodox. They responded to many questions from Metropolitan Council members.

Following a short recess at 3:48 PM, the session resumed at 4:05 PM.

**Q. Open Discussion**

Archbishop Benjamin reported on preparations for the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OCA Autocephaly and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska, including cruise pilgrimages to Alaska from each diocese and events to be held within each diocese. Father Alexander Rentel and others stressed the need for education and reflection on the unique history and identity of the OCA. The possibilities of publications, retreats and other events related to OCA history were discussed. The Council agreed to have a retreat on a historical theme before its fall meeting. Metropolitan Tikhon presented the attached study guide for "*Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church*" and a discussion ensued on the use of the book and the study guide throughout the Church. The use of funds from the pledge drive during the 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council targeted for funding a process towards hiring a full-time Youth Director and various other issues pertaining to youth ministry were extensively discussed.

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 5:00 PM.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2019**

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

**C. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)**

Father Tosi then presented the draft minutes of the special phone conference meeting of the Metropolitan Council on October 18, 2018 for approval. After correction of typographical and other minor errors, the minutes were approved as attached.

**C.2. MOTION RHODES/VITKO -- To accept the Metropolitan Council special meeting minutes of October 18, 2018 as presented. CARRIED.**

**T. Other Business/Committee Meeting Issues**

Father Alexander Rentel presented a motion that would authorize him to conduct a survey of governing documents throughout the Orthodox Church in America to determine whether they comply with the new OCA Statute adopted in 2015. After discussion, a motion was adopted as follows.

**T.1. MOTION GARKLAVS/HOJNICKI – The Metropolitan Council recommends that the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America undertake a survey of the governing documents of all dioceses, parishes, monasteries, institutions, offices, and organizations of the Church in order to determine the level of their compliance with the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America. The Chancellor is to report on this matter to the Holy Synod of Bishops at their Fall 2019 session, and, if necessary, provide recommendations for possible action. CARRIED.**

Following up on earlier discussion regarding a Personnel File Policy, a resolution, drafted by the Legal Committee, to adopt the Policy was presented for a vote. After long discussion, the motion was rejected and a substitute motion to table the matter was adopted as follows.

**T.2. MOTION RHODES/DANCHAK – To table the PERSONNEL FILE POLICY for further elaboration by the Legal Committee and subsequent discussion at the Fall meeting of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED.**

Metropolitan Tikhon opened discussion on restructuring of Metropolitan Council Committees. He indicated that he is appointing a new slate of members to the Internal Governance Committee, which can now begin to evaluate the work of the Committees and to suggest possible restructuring. The members are Father Kirill Sokolov (Chairperson), Metropolitan Tikhon (Synod Liaison), Father Alexander Rentel (Chancery liaison), Father Nikolai Breckenridge, Lynnell Brunswig and Donna Dimitri. It was agreed that only the Internal Governance Committee, the Legal Committee and the Finance/Investment Committee would remain fully functioning. The other Committees would suspend their activities pending evaluation and restructuring, although they would remain available as needed. Discussion ensued.

Following a short recess at 10:27 AM, the session resumed at 10:44 AM.

Metropolitan Tikhon announced that Archbishop Irénée has agreed to continue to serve as Synod liaison for the Finance/Investment Committee while Archbishop Benjamin will serve as Synod liaison for the Legal Committee.

#### **S. Strategic Planning**

In response to questions regarding possible chancery relocation, His Beatitude noted that analysis would be conducted in a practical manner beyond vague ideas and that a Relocation Committee would be appointed before the Holy Synod meeting in May to undertake this work. Discussion of key factors to be considered in the study of this issue ensued.

Regarding strategic planning, it was suggested that the four pillars laid out in "*Of What Life Do We Speak?*" are an outline for a strategic plan going forward. It was also agreed that the previous strategic plan of several years ago was excellent. Various aspects of possible strategic planning in our current context were extensively discussed. It was suggested that the Internal Governance Committee undertake an initial review of the matter.

#### **U. Adjournment**

Other issues, issues including the work of the Youth Department, were briefly discussed.

New Council members introduced themselves

#### **U.1. MOTION SOKOLOV/HOFFMAN – To adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.**

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

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 11:36 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,  
Recording Secretary