



Minutes of the Metropolitan Council Sessions

During the 15th All-American Council

November 10 - 13, 2008

Pittsburgh Hilton Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA

A. HS-MC Joint Session Minutes Monday, November 10, 2008

Guests:

AAC Chairs-designate:

Fr. Paul Jannakos

John Kozey

Preconciliar Commission Members:

David Drillock

M. Jannakos

Fr. J. Jillions

L. Morris

E. Skubey

1. Pension Plan

MOTION (G. Nescott/G. Popovich): To accept the recommendation of the Pension Board to prepare a restatement of the Pension Plan, which will involve republishing the Plan with all amendments that have been passed since the date of its last publication edited into the text. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Review of 15th AAC

Fr. Eric Tosi opened the discussion to the PCC to review their concerns and questions regarding the Council. J. Kozey, lay Council Co-chair, asked for a discussion of goals for each AAC session. Fr. Paul Jannakos said that having outcomes articulated/defined from the beginning of the sessions will help keep structure and flow in the meetings.

Fr. Eric reviewed the main agenda items of the plenary sessions. In response to a question concern where the strategic plan would be discussed at the Council,

Fr. Eric noted that it will be discussed as part of the SIC recommendations as well as during discussions of finances.

His Grace, Bishop Nikon informed the meeting that the review of the Town Hall Meetings would take place during the first plenary session. The process for taking questions on the Town Hall Meeting would involve each table writing down two questions for members of the Holy Synod on Monday evening, with responses from the hierarchs, ideally at the first plenary or possibly at the second plenary session on Tuesday morning.

The rest of Tuesday morning will be spent reviewing the SIC report; the afternoon will review the recommendations. His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, SIC chair, said that the Tuesday morning plenary would involve a review of the SIC summary and the on Tuesday afternoon there would be a review of recommendations, with an emphasis on the strategic plan.

Fr. Eric noted that the two proposed Statute amendments would be addressed at the first and second sessions respectively. The first proposed amendment will be taken up at the first session because it may effect the procedure for electing the new Metropolitan. It was agreed that Resolution Two will be discussed at the end of the third plenary session. Proposed resolutions will be discussed throughout the meeting.

It was stressed that the minutes for the AAC must be detailed. A general overview focusing only on what was concluded, and not what was discussed, are not sufficient.

Fr. Alexander Garklavs thanked Fr. Eric for his work in preparation for the AAC, taking on much of the work that Fr. Myron Manzuk has done in past, but was not able to because of illness.

MOTION (Dr. D. Solodow/Dr. F. Skordinski): That the Chairs of the All-American Council be given the discretion to establish parameters for discussions during Council sessions, including the number of speakers pro and con, the time allotted for speakers and when to close discussion. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. 9/11 Funds

MOTION (Fr. J. Reeves/Fr. J. Onofrey): That the Church withdraw \$151,500 from the Unrestricted Endowment Fund of the OCA to pay in full the remaining amount owed to the 9-11 Fund that was collected but unpaid at the time of the collection. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Dr. Alice Woog Appeal

MOTION (Dr. D. Solodow/G. Popovich): That the HS and MC go into executive session. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

In executive session Dr. Woog made a statement concerning her decision to decline an interview with the SIC during its investigation. Following her statement, she answered questions. Discussion ensued.

MOTION (Dr. D. Solodow/M. Stokoe): To come out of executive session and to record the following decision. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION (Dr. D. Solodow/Fr. J. Reeves): That the MC affirms its decision of September 4, 2008, regarding the removal of Dr. Alice Woog from the Council. YES – 17 NO - 10

Because of time restrictions, the meeting was adjourned until the AAC lunch break on Tuesday, November 11, 2008.

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B. MC Minutes from Lunch Session Tuesday, November 11, 2008

1. 2009 Budget

MOTION (Dn. J. Zarras/P. Bohlender): To table discussion on budget to after the AAC determines the budget. DEFEATED

Fr. Matthew Tate presented the Finance Committee's proposed 2009 budget. In discussing how this budget will be presented, it was clarified that the proposed budget would be presented as a financial “road map” that the Council feels would be effective for the Church.

Regarding changes to staff salaries and benefits there was a discussion concerning the responsibility of the Church to meet the employment agreements of staff, in particular the compensation packages of the Chancery administrative team. Deacon John Zarras stated that when the members of the administrative team were hired, they were guaranteed a three-year employment term. Fr. John Reeves said that he was not aware of any such agreements. Council members were divided concerning their awareness of these employment agreements. Fr. Tate stated that his fear is that if adjustments are not made by the MC, there might be no positions at all after the discussion about assessments. Mr. Bill Peters responded by saying

that the MC should not make any adjustments to staffing unless required to by the assessment established by the AAC. It was agreed that the compensation packages for the administrators' positions should remain as they are, without any cuts. Fr. Tassos stated that this will raise the assessment to just under \$92.00.

An alternative method of determining the "head tax" and 2009 budget was proposed and discussed, though ultimately not chosen. This method would first calculate the total income derived from a \$50, \$90 and \$105 head tax applied to the OCA's reported 25,000 members. The next step would be to determine the 'unavoidable' expenses which must be met regardless of the OCA's income. These 'unavoidable' expenses include the costs of maintaining the Syosset property, anticipated legal expenses, payment on the Honesdale loan, governance, the annual financial audit and costs associated with the strategic planning process.

Subtracting these 'unavoidable' expenses from the various head tax-derived income would yield the total income available for discretionary spending. The AAC would be asked to establish priorities for this spending to guide the Metropolitan Council as it prepares the 2009 OCA budget.

This process was not chosen.

In addition to agreeing to hold the salaries and benefits of the four chancery administrative leadership positions as they presently are, it was agreed that that the position of chancery housekeeper would remain as it presently exists and would not be proposed at this time to contract out for like services. It was noted that the title of "housekeeper" was not an adequate description of the duties performed by the individual. It was also noted with the anticipated full time residency at the chancery of a new Metropolitan, the functions of daily maintenance of the chancery would be required at a greater frequency than the previous Metropolitan's need.

2. Response of the Holy Synod to the MC motion concerning Dr. Alice Woog

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin presented the MC the HS's following response to the question of Dr. Alice Woog's completion of her term:

“The Holy Synod commends the Metropolitan Council for upholding the 'Best Practices' policy of the OCA. The Holy Synod is also aware of the Council's authority under the laws of the State of New York to remove a member for just cause. Nevertheless, exercising our responsibility as archpastors to care for the flock of Christ, the Holy Synod blesses Dr. Alice Woog to complete the remaining two days of her term as a member of the Metropolitan Council.”

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C. HS-MC Joint Session Minutes Thursday, November 13, 2008

1. 2009 Budget

MOTION (Fr. M. Tate/Fr. J. Reeves): As an interim step, that the MC accept the original budget proposal based on a \$90.00 per capita assessment posted on the OCA.org web site with the following additions: \$30,000.00 for installation of Metropolitan Jonah, and \$20,000.00 for His Beatitude's travel; and that a full budget relative to a per capita assessment of \$105.00 will be approved at the 2009 spring MC meeting. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Regarding the status of the Chancery housekeep, Fr. Matthew Tate noted that the statement of Fr. Michael Tassos during the AAC discussion on finances was incorrect. The intention is not to go to a contract position. The 2009 budget in the MC provides for the current salary.

Fr. Theodore Bobosh cautioned that spending must be done cautiously. In many places spending, even when completely justifiable, can look exorbitant. This is a perception issue. The chancery must be sensitive concerning spending and announcements of expenses. On the other hand, it was noted that MC members on their part must help to clarify and contextualize these expenses.

MOTION (Dr. D. Solodow/Fr. M. Oleksa): Approval of portion of salaries designated as housing allowances for Frs. Alexander Garklavs, Eric Tosi, Michael Tassos and Andrew Jarmus. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Strategic Plan

The Council and hierarchs present engaged in a discussion regarding the scope, sequence and process.

Metropolitan Jonah said that there are numerous elements to the strategic plan; in order to complete a thorough review it will take time and qualified people in numerous fields like real estate, finances, legal issues... The development of the plan needs to be structured in such a way that it involves as much input from the Church at large as possible. This process should allow us to serve the Church to the best degree possible in all parts of the Church. His beatitude also emphasized that the life of the Church is in the dioceses. The local Church is the diocese gathered around their bishop. The national Church is the bishops gathered under the leadership of the primate. Vladyka Jonah stated that the less funding that the central church administration is drawing from the dioceses, the better. He also informed the MC that the Holy Synod will begin discussions about the strategic plan in December.

It was agreed that the procedure should be such as to include as broad a scope as possible. The composition of a group to develop a methodology for the plan must include the most qualified people as possible.

It was also stressed that the plan must work from the bottom up, but the most important constituency of the group must start at the highest levels. "Buy-in" from all stake holders is crucial for the plan to be successful. If the stake holders have a voice in the plan, then the buy-in occurs as they give their input into the plan's development.

Dr. Dimitri Solodow emphasized that in a discussion of Statue revision, that the canons of the Church must be the guiding principles.

ACTION ITEM: A joint HS/MC session will be called early in the New Year to discuss the strategic plan.

In his closing statement, Metropolitan Jonah expressed his gratitude to all members of the MC and stated that he was profoundly humbled and glad to serve as Metropolitan of the Church, and in that capacity as Chair of the Metropolitan Council.

Submitted by Archpriest Andrew Jarmus
Recording Secretary