



**MINUTES  
of the Joint Meeting of the Lesser Synod  
and the 2014 Spring Session of  
the Metropolitan Council**

**Tuesday, February 4 – Thursday, February 6, 2014  
East Norwich Inn, East Norwich, NY**

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

**PARTICIPANTS**

**LESSER SYNOD**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon  
*(all sessions except Tuesday morning)*  
His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon  
*(all sessions except Tuesday morning)*

His Grace, Bishop Michael *(Tuesday, Wednesday)*

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**Church Officers**

Archpriest John Jillions, *Chancellor*  
Melanie Ringa, *Treasurer*

Archpriest Eric Tosi, *Secretary*

**Members elected by the All-American Council**

Archpriest Chad Hatfield

Dr. Paul Meyendorff  
Maureen Jury

**Diocesan Representatives**

**Diocese of Alaska**

Archpriest John Dunlop

Patrick Pletnikoff

**Albanian Archdiocese**

Archpriest Joseph Gallick

**Bulgarian Diocese**

*Vacant*

Protodeacon Michael Myers

**Archdiocese of Canada**

Deacon Justin Mitchell

**Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Priest James Weremedic

David Yeosock

**Diocese of the Midwest**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta

Sam D’Fantis

**Diocese of New England**

Priest Robert Dick (*except Tuesday morning*)

David Zavednak (*Wednesday, Thursday*)

**Diocese of New York/New Jersey**

Archpriest John Shimchick

**Diocese of the South**

Priest Gleb McFatter

Judge E.R. Lanier

**Diocese of Washington**

Priest John Vitko

**Diocese of the West**

Archpriest John Dresko

Deacon Antony Dyl

**Absent due to weather or illness**

Archpriest William Evansky (*Diocese of Western Pennsylvania*)

Archpriest David Garretson (*Members elected by the All-American Council*)

Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk (*Archdiocese of Canada*)

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky (*Diocese of Washington*)

Dr. John Schultz (*Diocese of Western Pennsylvania*)

William Peters (*Albanian Archdiocese*)

Janet Van Duyn (*Diocese of New York/New Jersey*)

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

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs (*SMPAC - Tuesday*)

Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky (*Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations – Wednesday morning*)

Archpriest Steven Voytovich (*Director, Department of Institutional Chaplaincies – Thursday*)

Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko (*Archdiocese of Canada – except Thursday*)

Cindy Davis (*Coordinator for the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegation – Tuesday morning*)

James C. Geoly, Esq. (*legal consultant – Thursday morning*)

Alexis Liberovsky (*recording secretary*)

Gregory J. Nescott, Esq. (*legal consultant*)

Dr. Albert S. Rossi (*SMPAC – Tuesday*)

Thaddeus Wojcik, Esq. (*OCA Special Counsel – Tuesday & Thursday*)

Matushka Valerie Zahirsky (*Chairperson, Department of Christian Education – Thursday*)

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2014**

His Grace, Bishop Michael celebrated a prayer service at 9:10 AM to open the meeting at the East Norwich Inn.

**A. Agenda: Introduction**

Bishop Michael then called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Fr. John Jillions delivered preliminary remarks announcing that agenda changes would be necessary as His Beatitude is currently attending a meeting of denomination heads of Christian Churches Together (CCT) and will be returning by this afternoon’s session. Fr. Eric Tosi detailed further agenda changes including the transfer of the Metropolitan’s

report to this afternoon and the addition of an External Affairs report from Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky on Wednesday morning.

Fr. Tosi requested a motion concerning the appointment of the recording secretary for this meeting-

**A.1. MOTION MYERS/YEOSOCK – To approve Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary. CARRIED.**

**B. Roll Call**

Fr. Tosi then conducted the roll call and introduced guests present for this meeting (see participants list). He asked for prayers for Father David Garretson and Janet Van Duyn who are absent from this meeting due to health issues.

**F. Chancellor’s Report (attached)**

Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor, summarized his attached written report. He particularly noted the leadership and hard work of Metropolitan Tikhon, which has greatly eased tensions and engendered a cooperative spirit throughout the Church. He highlighted the recent meeting of diocesan chancellors and treasurers and his own participation in the assemblies of several dioceses. He also noted the upcoming meeting on February 12 of a missions focus group to consider prospects for expanding the Church’s evangelistic efforts. He underscored the importance of the adoption by the Holy Synod last fall of the new Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct and the resulting smoother functioning of ORSMA and SMPAC. He emphasized the developing scope of the work of the Board of Theological Education and the need for increased funding for seminaries. He noted the loss of longtime chancery staff members Gregory Sulich and Helen Detke with their passing last October. He drew attention to the appendices to his report, which chronicle his travels since the last Metropolitan Council meeting and outline Parish Health Inventory Indicators. An extensive discussion took place on clergy pension, particularly as it relates to the resolution adopted at the last Metropolitan Council reaffirming mandatory participation of all eligible clergy in the OCA Pension Plan.

**F.1. ORSMA**

Cindy Davis delivered her report outlining the activities of the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA). She particularly highlighted the presentations she delivered at the Diocesan Assemblies of Alaska and New York/New Jersey and OCA seminaries as well as her dialogue on sexual misconduct issues with representatives of Orthodox Churches worldwide and other denominations at the WCC Assembly in Korea last October. She also presented projected initiatives in prevention and education, especially in conjunction with compliance to the new Policies, Standards and Procedures (PSPs) on Sexual Misconduct adopted by the Holy Synod last fall. Discussion of various issues pertaining to ORSMA ensued.

**F.2. SMPAC**

Dr. Albert S. Rossi summarized the written report from the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC). He noted some changes in the membership of SMPAC as well the adoption of new PSPs by the Holy Synod and revision of SMPAC’s charter. He announced that FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) about the work of ORSMA have been developed and will soon be posted online. He reported that SMPAC continues to monitor the submission by dioceses and parishes of Annual Compliance Reports and highlighted SMPAC’s other activities. He observed that evangelization is occurring through SMPAC’s work. He invited Fr. Alexander Garklavs to deliver some additional comments on SMPAC. Fr. Garklavs noted that the current new approaches of the OCA in addressing sexual misconduct are pioneering and groundbreaking among the Orthodox Churches worldwide and the change in culture must continue. He stressed the importance of a

pastoral approach in sexual misconduct issues. Ensuing discussion focused on a variety of resources that will soon be made available to clergy and parishes.

Fr. Jillions commended Thaddeus Wojcik for his previous legal work for the OCA on sexual misconduct issues and announced that with Mr. Wojcik's renegotiated employment terms with the OCA; Mr. Robert Koory, Esq. has been appointed by Metropolitan Tikhon as special legal liaison and is charged with handling all sexual misconduct legal issues for the OCA.

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

Fr. Tosi presented the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Metropolitan Council on September 24-26, 2013 for approval.

**B.1. MOTION LANIER/MEYENDORFF -- To accept the previous minutes as presented. CARRIED.**

Following a short recess at 11:26 AM, the session resumed at 11:48 AM.

**J. Reorganization Work Group**

Fr. John Shimchick, chairperson of the Work Group, presented a brief oral report. He reviewed the history of the Work Group and its previous findings and conclusions. He requested further guidance and direction from the Lesser Synod on what issues the Work Group should be henceforth considering and its methodology. Bishop Michael provided further comments on the Work Group's tasks stating that the elimination of a central administration is not under question but that there is a need to redefine relationships among various bodies in the Church and to appropriately realign their interaction.

**G.1. Archives Advisory Committee (attached)**

Fr. Tosi introduced Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist, who summarized the attached report from the Archives Advisory Committee. He highlighted the Committee's December meeting including its adopted Mission Statement and the various initiatives that were planned. He also noted that in a conference call the previous week, the Committee had decided to hire a highly qualified consultant from nearby Long Island University to assess the current conditions of the OCA Archives as well as housing and preservation needs going forward. The Committee is also considering the employment of interns and/or volunteers. Members of the Metropolitan Council hailed the professional qualifications of those chosen to serve on the Committee and expressed continued support for the Committee's work.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:12 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:32 PM

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

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed the Metropolitan Council and expressed appreciation for the Council's forbearance permitting him to miss the opening session of this meeting in order to attend a gathering of Heads of Communion of Christian Churches Together (CCT). He summarized his attached written report and highlighted a "Focused Statement of Purpose", which he is attempting to develop and is presenting to various church bodies for feedback. He requested the input of the Metropolitan Council. Towards further formulation of vision underlying the "Focused Statement of Purpose", he reflected, as detailed in his attached report, on various issues, including fracturing in the life of the OCA, repentance and healing, statute revision, mission and evangelism, clergy health, seminaries, finances, monasticism, his own primatial cathedral, external affairs and others. He noted, with prayerful remembrance, the recent falling sleep of former staff members Gregory Sulich and Helen Detke and former Metropolitan Council member, Walter Palchik. He emphasized the need

for authenticity in serving Christ and His Church. His Beatitude answered many questions during extensive discussion on a variety of issues affecting the Church

Following a short recess at 3:06 PM, the session resumed at 3:28 PM.

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

Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary, summarized his attached written report, particularly highlighting changes in chancery staff due to the passing of Gregory Sulich. He presented a new staff arrangement with PDN Joseph Matusiak now as both the Metropolitan's Deacon and personal secretary. Barry Migyanko was hired as the executive administrator which combined a number of positions in the chancery. He also spoke of the need for a financial assistant to assist Melanie Ringa. He reported on the progress of the computer replacement at the chancery due to the need to move away from Windows XP and the progress on the new parish and clergy database. He noted some critical work on the building and property which will be done over the summer including the organizing and cleaning of the various storage rooms. He highlighted the work of the communications team including recent work on the OCA website and new annual *The Orthodox Church* magazine. Fr. Eric also introduced the new ordination policies and certificates which will now be standard within the Church. He also reviewed a variety of logistical and administrative issues surrounding different meetings and events which draw attention to the work of the Church.

**H. 18th All-American Council (attached)**

Fr. Tosi highlighted his attached report with a PowerPoint presentation. He reported on the initial meetings of the Preconciliar Commission and the Local Organizing Committee. He noted that the 18<sup>th</sup> All-American Council will have a youth component organized by Father Benjamin Tucci. He indicated a variety of organizational and financial issues. He then highlighted the attached preliminary report from Fr. Tucci. He also noted that major agenda issues will be adoption of the revised Statutes and finances. The theme of the Council will be "How to Expand the Mission" mirroring the 1<sup>st</sup> All-American Sobor in 1907. He expanded on the possibility of a day of service, the process of presenting the revised Statutes before and during the Council. He raised the issue of the Church's expectations of the Council and how the Council should work. He indicated that electronic registration and voting are being explored. He presented draft logos for the Council. Extensive discussion on numerous aspects of the All-American Council ensued.

**I. Strategic Plan Post-Conciliar Committee (attached)**

Fr. John Vitko highlighted his attached report with a PowerPoint presentation. He noted continued progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan at various levels of the Church particularly through continuing education, diocesan revitalization, management and leadership training as well as youth and young adult ministry. He indicated that many initiatives have transitioned into the normal life of the Church and that the Plan is slated to be phased out by the 18<sup>th</sup> All-American Council.

The session was adjourned with prayer at 5:29 PM and was followed by the celebration of Great Vespers at Saint Sergius Chapel for the feast of Saint Theodosius of Chernigov.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2014**

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, the meeting was opened with prayer led by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon at the East Norwich Inn at 10:35 AM.

**K. Metropolitan Council Committees**

**K.1. Charity (attached)**

Protodeacon Michael Myers presented the attached brief report of the Charity Committee.

**K.2. Crisis Management Team**

Fr. Eric Tosi presented an oral report on the recent activity of the Crisis Management Team, which concerned only one issue. He also noted that crisis management training with Bernie Wilson has yet to take place.

**K.3. Ethics**

Dr. Paul Meyendorff, committee chairperson, reported that the Committee had received no complaints since the last Metropolitan Council meeting.

**K.4. Human Resources**

While absent from the meeting due to illness, Fr. David Garretson relayed that the Committee had no issues to report. Fr. Eric reported that the Committee will be revising the Employee Handbook.

**K.5. Internal Governance (attached)**

Archpriest Chad Hatfield highlighted the committee's attached report. He noted his work with Fr. Tosi on the success of the Metropolitan Council retreat last fall and requested suggestions of topics and speakers for future retreats. The possible need for confidentiality agreements for OCA staff was discussed.

**Q. Department Reports (attached)**

Fr. Tosi briefly highlighted the active work of OCA Departments as recorded in their attached reports and noted the upcoming presentations from the Departments of Christian Education and Institutional Chaplains scheduled for Thursday morning.

**P. Pension Board Report**

Fr. Gleb McFatter delivered a brief oral report. He reported that the OCA Pension Plan investment return for the past year was 15.6%. He noted a generally smooth transition with the newly implemented changes in Plan contributions. He also indicated that 267 out of 649 parishes are participating in the Plan and that the Plan is now 82% funded.

**R. Other Business**

Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered an oral report highlighting a variety of significant issues and events, particularly the meeting of heads of communions of Christian Churches Together (CCT) the previous day with the participation of Metropolitan Tikhon, the visit of Archbishop Anastasios of Albania to St. Vladimir's Seminary, a recent conference call of the executive committee of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in which Metropolitan Tikhon participated, the withdrawal of Antiochian bishops from Episcopal Assemblies worldwide, recently published statements on primacy from the Moscow and Ecumenical Patriarchates, the situation of the Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia, OCA participation in the consecration and enthronement of Archbishop Job (Getcha) in Paris, the difficult situations in Syria and Ukraine, the upcoming meeting of Orthodox primates scheduled for March in Istanbul. In discussion, it was noted that our only possible position regarding the Ukrainian situation is to pray for peace. The recent letter from Archbishop Kyrill of ROCOR regarding the Assembly of Bishops was also discussed.

**O. Legal matters (attached)**

Judge Lanier, Chairman of the Legal Committee, reviewed confidential details of Thaddeus Wojcik's new Letter of Engagement with the OCA. Under this new arrangement with Mr. Wojcik, he assumes the role of Special Counsel to the OCA and, as such, he will devote his efforts on behalf of the Church to certain assigned duties, including tax matters; corporation law compliance; and general litigation issues, all in accordance with the terms of a written letter to him from His Beatitude detailing these duties. The intent of this new arrangement with Mr. Wojcik is to reduce the demands on his time and, concomitantly, to work a reduction in the overall level of legal fees necessary in the representation of the Church. Judge Lanier also indicated that Mr. Robert Koory has been appointed Special Legal Liaison from the SMPAC to the Holy Synod and to the ORSMA by letter of His Beatitude to him detailing his duties in this respect. Judge Lanier further explained that these new arrangements should result in no gap in legal representation for the Church, but that this matter would be monitored closely to ensure this result. He then summarized the attached report of the Legal Committee. In conclusion, he expressed the profound gratitude of the Metropolitan Council and its Legal Committee to Mr. Wojcik for his selfless ongoing legal work for the Church. Following a recess for lunch at 1:26 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 2:22 PM.

Discussion of specific legal issues continued. Judge Lanier reported on certain pending cases involving the OCA and noted that several of these had been terminated by state court rulings since the last meeting of the Metropolitan Council. Among these dismissed cases was the claim against the OCA previously asserted by Father Vasile Susan in the Illinois state courts. He noted further that the Holy Synod had several years earlier agreed to hear Fr. Vasile Susan's views and claims and had, by action of Metropolitan Jonah, scheduled his appearance before the Synod at one of its regular sessions. Judge Lanier observed that Fr. Susan did not appear before the Synod after notice of his opportunity to do so, and that he did not provide the Synod with any advance indication of his intent not to appear at the appointed time. Judge Lanier also spoke briefly on the on the initial work of the Statute Revision Task Force and the projected presentation of the revised Statute draft throughout the Church in anticipation of its adoption at the 18th All-American Council.

#### **L. Treasurer's Report (attached)**

Melanie Ringa highlighted the attached Treasurer's report. She reported on the internal and external audits for 2012, where a \$5000 reduction in fees was negotiated. She then presented preliminary financial results for 2013 noting that the Honesdale loan has been paid off. She noted \$60,000 income from the FOS/Stewards of the OCA and \$20,000 from the Parish Ministries Conference. She highlighted the deliberations of the recent meeting of diocesan chancellors and treasurers, indicating vast differences in assessment funding throughout the OCA. She stressed that a funding formula must be developed in a timely manner for incorporation into the revised OCA Statute. Extensive discussion ensued on a variety of financial issues. A significant focus of discussion was the financial participation and greater integration of the OCA ethnic dioceses. Melanie Ringa suggested that these issues be referred to the Holy Synod for further deliberation.

During discussion of the following resolution proposed by Fr. Jillions, Metropolitan Tikhon stated that he would suggest that the Lesser Synod place discussion of ethnic dioceses on the agenda of the next Holy Synod meeting. The Metropolitan Council agreed that these complex issues include spiritual dimensions and concurred with His Beatitude's suggestion by defeating the resolution.

**L.1. MOTION HATFIELD/D'FANTIS – the Metropolitan Council requests that the Holy Synod give serious consideration to reviewing the agreements with the ethnic dioceses, towards the goal of enabling the OCA Treasurer to include them in the OCA's financial planning for the future. DEFEATED with 1 vote in favor (Jillions) and all others opposed.**

The session was adjourned with prayer at 4:13 PM and was followed by committee meetings.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2014**

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:05 AM.

Melanie Ringa presented additional financial issues to the Council for deliberation and action.

- L.2. MOTION RINGA/GALLICK – To approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the \$1 million bequest received from the Estate of Charles Morse for use in Missions and Evangelism in the Orthodox Church in America be placed into a Metropolitan-Council restricted endowment fund, and that only the investment earnings from this endowment be used for programs in the Missions and Evangelism programs. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Another issue pertained to defraying some registration costs for youth attending the 18<sup>th</sup> All-American Council. Extensive deliberation took place to ensure wise stewardship in this matter.

- L.3. MOTION JURY/VITKO – To earmark up to \$15,000 from the Antonia Rotko Youth Department bequest for a matching funds fundraising program to enable youth to attend the 18th All-American Council with details to be worked out by Father Benjamin Tucci, Youth Director for the 18th All-American Council. CARRIED with 7 opposed (D’Fantis, Dresko, Dunlop, Gallick, Lanier, Weremedic, Yeosock).**

**P. Legal Discussion**

Judge Lanier introduced James C. Geoly, Esq. an attorney who has provided legal assistance to the OCA on a number of matters and by previous decision of the Metropolitan Council was invited to speak at this meeting. His extensive presentation centered on liability and misconduct issues and also offered valuable insights into the First Amendment, church structure and many other legal concerns for the Church. His lengthy presentation is part of the continuing education of the Metropolitan Council on its legal and fiduciary duties.

Following a short recess at 11:13 AM, the session resumed at 11:22 AM.

**Q. Department Reports (continued)**

**Q.1. Christian Education (attached)**

Matushka Valerie Zahirsky supplemented the Department’s attached report with a PowerPoint presentation and handouts. She highlighted various examples of educational materials recently developed by the Department particularly on feasts and saints. She noted the success of the Parish Ministries Conference in 2013.

**Q.2. Institutional Chaplains (attached)**

Archpriest Steven Voytovich supplemented the Department’s attached report with a PowerPoint presentation and handouts. He highlighted the continually developing and wide-ranging work of the Department, the various endorsing and credentialing bodies that the Department participates in, as well as the resources of the Department’s website.

**R. Other Business (continued)**

Fr. Tosi announced that the next Metropolitan Council meeting would take place on September 23-25, as previously scheduled.

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon emphatically stated to the Council that he is happy to accept feedback on all issues at any time and initiated a discussion on theological education. Representatives of all three OCA seminaries who were in attendance took part in this wide-ranging dialogue. In discussion, a consensus emerged that extensive dialogue is needed within the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council and throughout the Church to develop collaborative efforts by seminaries and bishops in theological formation that would be of greatest service to the Church. It was also concluded that theological education, which is often an afterthought at the parish level, needs to be a paramount concern for the Church moving forward. Metropolitan Tikhon noted that theological education would be a major agenda item at the next meeting of the Holy Synod.

**S. Adjourment**

**S.1. MOTION LANIER/RINGA – To adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.**

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 1:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,  
Recording Secretary