



**MINUTES  
of the Joint Meeting of the Standing Synod  
and the 2018 Fall Session of  
the Metropolitan Council**

**Wednesday, September 19 – Friday, September 21, 2018  
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 Michael

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin  
His Grace, Bishop Paul (*except Friday*)

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Archpriest John Jillions, *Chancellor*  
(*except Wednesday afternoon*)  
Melanie Ringa, *Treasurer*

Archpriest Eric Tosi, *Secretary*

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

Archpriest Antonio Perdomo  
Archpriest Thomas Moore  
Archpriest Kirill Sokolov (*except Friday*)

Katherine Vitko  
Lynnell Brunswig  
Mark Linnehan

**DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES**

**Diocese of Alaska**

Archpriest John Dunlop

Patrick Pletnikoff

**Albanian Archdiocese**

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes

Donna Dimitri (*except Thursday afternoon  
& Friday*)

**Bulgarian Diocese**

Priest Gabriel Bilas

Bogdan Popescu

**Archdiocese of Canada**

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac

Mark Petasky

**Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

Susan Schlasta (*except Friday*)

**Diocese of the Midwest**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta

Robert Graban

**Diocese of New England**

Priest James Parnell

Michael Danchak

**Diocese of New York/New Jersey**

Igumen Joseph (Hoffman)

**Diocese of the South**

Priest Joseph Ciarciaglino

Christopher Lewis

**Diocese of Washington**

Archpriest Valery Shemchuk

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky

**Diocese of the West**

Archpriest John Dresko

David Lane, Esq.

**Diocese of Western Pennsylvania**

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

**ABSENT**

James P. Kornafel (*Diocese of New York/New Jersey*)

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

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

His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa (*except Thursday afternoon & Friday*)

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

*– Thursday afternoon*)

Priest Gleb McFatter (*Pension Board Chairman - Friday by conference call*)

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

*– Wednesday morning & Thursday morning*)

Maureen Ahearn (*OCA Pension Plan Administrator – Friday*)

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

Alexis Liberovsky (*Recording Secretary*)

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2018**

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting with prayer at 11:04 AM on Wednesday morning at the Immaculate Conception Seminary.

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

Father John Jillions introduced the agenda and indicated that the presentation of his report has been moved to Thursday morning. Father Eric Tosi provided further clarifications to the agenda.

**A.1. MOTION MIKHALEVSKY/GRABAN - To approve the agenda for this meeting as amended. CARRIED.**

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

Fr. 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. Fr. Tosi then presented the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Metropolitan Council on February 6-8, 2018 for approval.

**B.1. MOTION VITKO/DANCHAK -- To accept the previous meeting minutes of February 6-8, 2018 as presented. CARRIED.**

**C. Welcome**

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed the members of the Metropolitan Council present for the meeting and noted that a key task of the Council, according to the Statute, is to implement the decisions of the All-American Council. He introduced the members of the Standing Synod, noting that he has appointed Archbishop Benjamin as chairman of the committee that will plan the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OCA autocephaly and expressed gratitude to Bishop Paul for chairing the Preconciliar Commission and hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council in his diocese. He welcomed the new and reelected members of the Metropolitan Council. He thanked those members who will be completing their terms this year, for their contributions as members of the Council.

**E. Metropolitan's Report**

In his oral report, Metropolitan Tikhon focused particularly on the chancery restructuring that has been undertaken. He thanked Bishop Daniel who has been serving as chancery administration and consultant to the Metropolitan during this process as well as the members of the restructuring committee (Lisa Mikhalevsky, Frs. John Dresko and Timothy Hojnicky). He noted that the restructuring has been, in effect, a six-year process since his election to the Primacy.

He reflected on various aspects the recent 19th All-American Council, noting that it was a positive and peaceful gathering. He expressed satisfaction with the publication of his new book "*Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church*" just before the All-American Council. His Beatitude indicated that the book is a beginning. He reported that Fr. John Matusiak is preparing a study guide for the book and distributed samples pertaining to some of the chapters.

With regard to the chancery restructuring, he noted that all chancery staff members were asked to resign but that he only accepted the resignations of the three church officers. His Beatitude expressed profound gratitude to the officers for their hard work and was joined by the Council who also expressed its appreciation. He also indicated the need to restructure Metropolitan Council committees for more efficient functioning. Concerning the Youth Department, he stated that he has prepared a proposal for the expansion of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, which also indicates how the funds raised during the spontaneous fund drive at the All-American Council, could be used. He also briefly reported on his work in external affairs, particularly his recent visit to Poland.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:30 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:34 PM.

Questions and extensive discussion ensued concerning the Metropolitan's Report, particularly concerning youth work and the pledge drive at the All-American Council. His Beatitude and Bishop Daniel also provided clarifications concerning chancery restructuring.

Following a short recess at 2:48 PM, the session resumed at 3:09 PM.

**G. Secretary's report**

Fr. Eric Tosi presented an oral report, which provided an update on chancery maintenance building, indicating that roof and driveway have been repaired and carpeting has been replaced. Outstanding items include replacement of the solarium windows and the front door. Regarding the archives renovation project, he

indicated that planning for the work is progressing slowly and that there have been some cost overruns. In response to questions, Fr. Eric assured the Council that the Pods where the Archives will be stored temporarily are waterproof. He also reported some details concerning development of the redesigned OCA website, which is nearing completion. He also stated that work on the 2019 Desk Calendar is underway and that the new metrical book has been published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Fr. Eric then summarized the attached 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council Post Council Report and underscored the positive content of the Council, particularly the youth program, as well as the quality of the venue. He noted that actionable items are the Statute amendments, the financial resolutions and youth ministry. He then highlighted the attached survey of Council participants, which led to an extensive discussion of many facets of the Council and suggestions for possible improvements for the future. He further indicated the recommendations concluding his report, which led to additional discussion.

Fr. Eric then presented the draft *Social Media Guidelines for Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Orthodox Church in America*, which includes a *Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct* and an *Image Release Form*. In discussion, Fr. Eric indicated that the policy would apply to employees and volunteers for the OCA, as well as members of its governing bodies. It would not apply to all clergy throughout the Church. However, dioceses are welcome to adopt the policy.

**G.1. MOTION LANE/PARNELL – To adopt the *Social Media Guidelines for Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Orthodox Church in America*, which include the *Social and Digital Media Code of Conduct* and the *Image Release Form*. CARRIED with 5 opposed (Dresko, Lewis, Linnehan, Mikhalevsky, Perdomo) and 3 abstentions (Breckenridge, Hoffman, Isaac).**

**H. Legal matters (attached)**

**H.1. MOTION BRECKENRIDGE/DRESKO – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

In executive session, David Lane, Legal Committee chairperson, and Judge E.R. Lanier, OCA General Counsel, presented a variety of current and potential legal issues.

**H.2. MOTION DRESKO/RHODES – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

Additional discussion of legal matters took place concerning SMPAC, ORSMA and related issues.

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 4:39 PM.

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

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018**

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

**F. Chancellor's Report**

Fr. John Jillions delivered a brief report. He indicated that a full accounting of his work is available in his comprehensive report to the recent All-American Council. His report touched on the chancery restructuring as a positive measure and encouraged the Metropolitan Council to be assiduous in its responsibilities as defined by the OCA Statute. He concluded by thanking His Beatitude, the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council for the opportunity to serve as Chancellor for seven years. He stated that there is nothing new to report on SMPAC and ORSMA since the All-American Council. An issue of concern is reporting from the dioceses on compliance with the Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct. Discussion ensued and suggestions to improve compliance reporting were offered.

Metropolitan Tikhon distributed and presented for later discussion the proposal he had drafted for the expansion of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. .

**I. Stewards of the OCA**

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA), presented an oral report. He indicated that he has taken the fundraising course at Indiana University for which funding had been allocated by the Metropolitan Council, which was very helpful. He recounted his fundraising efforts and presented various ideas regarding the funds raised for Youth Ministry at the All-American Council. In discussion, it was agreed that the third Sunday in October would henceforth be SOCA Sunday for its annual appeal. Extensive discussion ensued on various fundraising strategies and the allocation of funds raised for Youth Ministry during the pledge drive at the All-American Council.

Following a short recess at 11:06 AM, the session resumed at 11:34 AM.

**J. Metropolitan Council Committees**

Metropolitan Tikhon suggested that discussion of Metropolitan Council Committee Reorganization take place after the reports of the Committees.

**J.2. Charity (attached)**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Committee Chairman, summarized the Committee's attached report and announced that the Committee had yesterday approved an additional disbursement of \$3000 to St. Basil Church in Wilmington, NC for victims of flooding caused by Hurricane Florence. Fr. Kuchta also reported that, as his term on the Metropolitan Council is ending at this meeting, that he has asked Fr. Antonio Perdomo to take over as chairman, pending the approval of His Beatitude.

The possibility of further aid for the victims of Hurricane Florence was discussed and the following motion was proposed.

**J.2.A. MOTION MIKHALEVSKY/HOFFMAN – To authorize the Treasurer to disburse up to \$5000 in aid to St. Basil Church in Wilmington, NC for those affected by Hurricane Florence.**

After extensive discussion on this type of disbursement and the purposes of the Charity Committee, the motion was withdrawn and tabled.

**J.3. Ethics**

Archpriest Thomas Moore, Committee Chairman, indicated that the Committee has nothing to report at this time.

**J.4. Human Resources**

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, Committee Chairperson, reported that the Committee has been inactive while she and some of its members have been working with Bishop Daniel on chancery restructuring. Work on revising the Employee Handbook and other matters will resume once restructuring is completed.

**J.5. Internal Governance**

Father Eric Tosi indicated that the Metropolitan Council term of Father Chad Hatfield who was Chairman of the Committee has ended and then provided an update on the Committee's work. He noted the requirement of

OCA Statute to appoint or reappoint members of the internal Auditing Committee during the first meeting of the Metropolitan Council after a regular All-American Council. He indicated that John Skrobat and Dimitri Pletz, who are eligible to remain on the Committee for another term, have agreed to continue, while Matsushka Theodora Blom asked not be considered for reappointment due to other commitments. Fr. Eric reported that a search was conducted for a replacement. Polly Walker who has requisite qualifications has agreed to serve on the Committee.

**J.5.A. MOTION DRESKO/GRABAN – In accordance with Article V, Section 9 of the OCA Statute, to reappoint John Skrobat and Dimitri Pletz for an additional term as members of the internal Auditing Committee and to appoint Polly Walker as a new member of the Committee. To express gratitude to Matsushka Theodora Blom for her work as a member of the Committee. CARRIED.**

**J.6. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

Archbishop Benjamin, Chairman of the Committee, outlined preliminary plans for the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of autocephaly and the glorification of St. Herman of Alaska, which will be marked in 2020. He indicated that events and projects would include a concluding celebration in Washington, DC, pilgrimages to Alaska, a youth rally and the publication of a historical commemorative book. It was also noted that 2019 would mark the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Saint Herman and other missionaries in Alaska.

**J.1. Metropolitan Council Committee Reorganization**

An extensive discussion took place on the history and purposes of the various committees of the Metropolitan Council and how they facilitate the competencies of the Metropolitan Council as defined in the OCA Statute. It was agreed that the Internal Governance Committee would develop a proposal for the reorganization of the committee structure within the Metropolitan Council.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:37 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:31 PM.

Metropolitan Tikhon announced that he has appointed Archpriest Kirill Sokolov as the new Chairman of the Internal Governance Committee.

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

Melanie Ringa highlighted the attached Treasurer's report and appendices, which included 2018 financial results for the first half of the year, the proposed balanced budget for 2019 and audited final financial statements for 2016 and 2017 as well as the recently completed reports of both the external and internal auditors. The Council discussed credit card reporting procedures, as indicated in the internal audit report. The Metropolitan Council indicated the strong need for this to be corrected immediately.

Fr. John Dresko proposed on behalf of the Finance Committee that in conjunction with the chancery restructuring and some possible indeterminate financial factors, the issue of employee contributions for health insurance premiums that the Metropolitan Council had previously discussed be reconsidered. It was reported that the OCA currently covers the entire insurance premium for its employees, while many employers, even in the Church, require as much as a 50% contribution towards health insurance premiums from its employees

**K.1. MOTION DRESKO/PARNELL – That employees of the Chancery be required to contribute 15% of medical insurance premiums, effective January 1, 2019. CARRIED with 5 opposed (Dunlop, Jillions, Kuchta, Linnehan, Sokolov) and 5 abstentions (Bilas, Hoffman, Isaac, Petasky, Tosi).**

**K.2. MOTION DRESKO/MIKHALEVSKY - To approve the proposed 2019 budget as amended by the previous resolution. CARRIED with 1 abstention (Linnehan).**

Ms. Ringa then reviewed All-American Council revenues and expenses where there is a surplus and the Archives Renovation funding which is running over budget. Options for additional funding of the project were discussed. She also presented a report on Youth Ministry pledges received from the All-American closed. She thanked the Council for the honor to serve as OCA Treasurer.

**L. Finance/Investment Committee**

Archpriest John Dresko reported that investment in a promissory note with OCCIF (Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund), approved at the last Metropolitan Council meeting, has not yet taken place due to some issues remaining to be worked out. He spoke of the work of OCCIF and the possibility of its closer affiliation with the OCA. He indicated that if there is appearance of any conflict of interest he would resign from the OCCIF board.

**M. Planting Grant requests (attached)**

Father Eric Tosi presented the attached planting grant requests submitted by Father John Parker from the Department of Evangelization. The request for an additional \$20,000 in order to convene diocesan representatives to discuss planting grants and related matters was tabled due to the upcoming reorganization of OCA departments.

**M.1. MOTION TOSI/HOJNICKI - To approve funding for two planting grants in 2019 as presented totaling \$36,000. CARRIED.**

**N. External Affairs Report**

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, indicated that a comprehensive review of recent OCA involvement in External Affairs and Interchurch Relations may be found in the report submitted to the 19<sup>th</sup> All-America Council. He delivered an oral report summarizing recent events particularly the unfolding situation in Ukraine and its worldwide effects throughout the Orthodox Church. Extensive discussion and questions followed.

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 4:04 PM.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2018**

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:04 AM.

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

Father Gleb McFatter, Pension Board Chairman, highlighted the attached report on the OCA Pension Plan via conference call. Fr. McFatter and Maureen Ahearn, Pension Plan Administrator, answered questions and provided clarifications on issues raised by Metropolitan Council members. Compliance with mandatory enrollment in the Plan for eligible clergy, as required by All-American decisions, was discussed, along with possible measures to enforce such compliance.

**Q.1. MOTION JILLIONS/BRECKENRIDGE – To express concern regarding the low level of compliance with mandatory enrollment in the OCA Pension Plan for eligible OCA clergy and to request the Holy Synod to address this issue and to provide a report on their action to the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED.**

**R. Department Report - Youth**

Metropolitan Tikhon presented changes to the Youth Ministry Proposal that he had previously distributed, which were extensively discussed. The allocation of funds from the pledge drive during the 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council was deliberated. It was indicated that pledges total \$87,000, although less than half have been received and receipted. It was also noted that the pledge drive as initiated during the All-American Council was targeted for funding a process towards hiring a full-time Youth Director. It was decided to approve the recommendation of the Youth Ministry Proposal as follows.

**R.1. MOTION DRESKO/POPESCU – To endorse a 1-year pilot program to establish feasibility of the establishment and definition of a full time youth director/coordinator for the Orthodox Church in America and to approve funding of this program from receipted pledges up to \$87,000. CARRIED.**

Following a short recess at 10:19 AM, the session resumed at 10:45 AM.

**S/T. Strategic Planning/Open Discussion**

A variety of issues pertaining to the work, role and structure of the Metropolitan Council and All-American Council were discussed. It was suggested that the Four Pillars indicated in Metropolitan Tikhon's book "*Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church*" be integrated into a statement conveying the Metropolitan Council's work and accomplishments. In response to questions regarding job responsibilities of officers and staff in the context of chancery restructuring, a flow chart of the new structure was shown. Metropolitan Tikhon indicated that as mandated in the OCA Statute, the Metropolitan Council would be asked, to endorse a candidate for Chancellor to be confirmed by the Holy Synod in October. Further discussion on restructuring ensued and Metropolitan Tikhon provided additional clarifications. Metropolitan Tikhon presented certificates of appreciation for being parish members of SOCA to representatives from St. Luke Church in Mclean, VA and Holy Apostles Mission in Mechanicsburg, PA

**U. Adjournment**

Council members agreed to proposed dates for meetings of the Metropolitan Council in 2019. The meetings were scheduled for February 13-15 and September 18-20. In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked Council members for a productive meeting and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 11:57 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,  
Recording Secretary