

Diocesan Council Meeting March 09, 2017
St. Mark Orthodox Church
452 Durham Road, Wrightstown

MEETING MINUTES

Opening Prayer at 10:11am

Present:

- **Administration:** Archbishop Mark (Hierarch), Fr. Martin Browne (Chancellor); Joseph Tosca (Treasurer);
- **Frackville Deanery:** Fr. Timothy Hojnicky (dean & Metropolitan Council clergy rep); Fr. Stephen Vernak, Sandy Tosca
- **Philadelphia Deanery:** Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk (dean); Fr. Barnabas Favel; Protodeacon Peter Skoog
- **Wilkes Barre Deanery:** Fr. Nicholas Solak (dean); Protodeacon Sergei Kapral
- **Metropolitan Council:** Susan Shlasta (lay rep)

Absent: John Shingara, Fr. Michael Demko

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Fr. Martin Browne. *Second:* Fr. Timothy Hojnicky. Approved.

Archbishop's Remarks – Diocesan Assembly

- The Assembly was peaceful, and we had a surplus.
- Diocesan property. Fr. Martin and Fr. Nicholas will be heading the process of securing the property and reporting back to our Diocesan council.
- Archbishop Mark is still working on removing wall paper and painting the Diocesan Center.
- Fr. Nicholas asked when the Episcopal Assembly is meeting again. ABM responded that it is supposed to be in September.
- ABM reported that there are five parishes where there will be vacancies and transfers.

Review of Officer's Reports

a. Chancellor Diocesan / Orphanage Property

- Fr. Martin Browne thanked everyone for their participation and assistance.
- FMB noted that the annual chancellor and treasurers meeting was attended in January by Joe Tosca and himself. He reported that the meeting had a fraternal spirit. One of the main issues for the upcoming 2018 All American Council will be funding for the next triennium. Melanie Ringa reported that the new system is working well.

- Background Checks: There is a possibility of a single company for us to use for our background checks.
- Bill Marianes, returning to the Diocese on Saturday, June 3rd in Harrisburg. He will be presenting 2 modules (discipleship and stewardship) from 10 – 2:30pm. All are invited (clergy, leadership, and all members). There will be some networking opportunities and more practical concerns. There are some concerns regarding it being a memorial Saturday, as well as Vespers concerns; however, this is his first available, and only one in a while.
- Several people have expressed the opinion that it is time to have ABM move out of S. Canaan, and to find (even temporarily) a place for rent. In relation to M. Sandy – she is ready to step aside, and to retire. This *will not* create a hardship for her. Fr. John Onofrey (FJO) wanted to clarify that this would not go against what we decided at the assembly.
- Fr. Stephen Vernak (FSV) asked what the plan would be to find this housing. Discussion ensued. Protodeacon Peter Skoog (PDS), recommended that we set a deadline, find an area that we want to move to, and contact realtors.
- ABM gave his blessing. Asked for the Harrisburg/Mechanicsburg, as well as Philadelphia/Bethlehem area clergy to start looking. At the next council meeting we will report back on what we have found in June.
- Sandy Tosca mentioned that we need to consider the cost of moving, and the message to our parishes and how this is done. She also recommended that we contact

Action Item: Motion that when the title to the property comes in, that we contact a realtor to come and tell us what we need to bring the Diocesan Center to market. If a selling price is determined, the Diocese will contact the council members before further action. Fr. Stephen Vernak. **Second.** Fr. John Onofrey. Approved.

- Orphanage/Diocesan Property. ABM has appointed Fr. Martin Browne (FMB) and Fr. Nicholas Solak (FNS) to head the efforts. Met. Tikhon assigned Fr. John Jillions to give weekly updates on the progress or lack thereof.
- A letter was received from the Attorney General, however the parties were incorrectly stated. We are awaiting the revised letter.
- FNS noted that there was confusion as to who was to make the corrections. It was determined that John Petorak (attorney for St. Tikhon Monastery) is responsible. We currently do not know if it has been done.
- FMB noted that he was approached asking whether or not the Diocese was willing to give St. Tikhon Seminary “first right of refusal” on the property when we are ready to sell. FMB noted that we were, however we will not do it at the jeopardy of selling in a timely manner, or for a fair price.

- FNS followed up on a comment, asking ABM how long since he received minutes from St. Tikhon Seminary. He has not for almost 2 years, and has not attended meetings in quite a while.

b. Treasurer presented by Joseph Tosca

Budget vs. Actual

As of March 7, 2017

Parish Support

- *Actual: \$72,838.95*

Total Income

- *Actual: \$85,754.05*

Total Expenses

- *Actual: \$102,130.94*

Net Operating Income

- *Actual: (\$16,361.29)*

Joe noted that this deficit is due to some timing issues, and payments made to the OCA for the first quarter; as well as some extra programs (Assembly, teen retreat). We are also awaiting some deposits.

Account Balance Summary

- *Peer Group Checking: \$19,435.74*
- *General Checking: \$129,046.76*
- *Protected Fund MM: \$79,076.54*

TOTAL: \$181,621.31

Aging Summary

As of Feb 28, 2017

We reviewed the summary and ABM recommended that we forgive the Diocesan portion of the debt, and to collect only the OCA amount.

Alden Station – balance of \$955.65

This is due to a removing “dues” upon the decease of a member. We cannot realistically expect to recover this amount.

- Fr. Stephen moves to forgive the debt. Second: Fr. John Onofrey. Approved.

McAdoo – balance of \$16,050.75

The debt was discussed, and it was noted that for a variety of reasons, there is not a reasonable expectation that they will be able to cover the full amount. FMB recommended that we forgive the Diocesan amount. At 60% the OCA portion would be **\$9,630.45**.

- Sandy Tosca mentioned that we should approach them about a reasonable payment plan and gifting/forgiveness.
- FJO asked that they be contacted about how to provide transparent financial records.

St. Nicholas, Philadelphia - \$5,823.40

Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk recommends that we keep invoicing St. Nicholas as long as their status is undetermined.

Diocesan Program and Appeals Summary (attached)

2017 Financial Reports (Not Submitted)

Motion to approve the treasurer's reports. Protodeacon Sergei. Second: Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk. Approved.

Break for lunch at 12:39pm

Return from lunch break at 1:13pm

Deanery Reports

a. Philadelphia – Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk

- Holy Assumption has requested that Fr. Mark Koczak be transferred from the Diocese of Washington, and be transferred to our Diocese and assigned to the parish. We are awaiting a letter.
- St. Nicholas (Philadelphia) – still not resolved. They have a “priest” that has been “serving” them.

b. Frackville – Fr. Timothy Hojnicky

- Ss. Peter and Paul, Minersville, Fr. Hatrak is retiring after Pascha
- St. Mary, Coaldale is vacant. Only Sundays – no Lenten services
- St. Mary, St. Clair parish would like to meet to talk about their options
- Ascension, Lykens with Dn. Seraphim as admin and living on site. They have a fuller schedule of services, even during the week.

- Holy Apostles, Mechanicsburg still working on settling invoices, and waiting for their funds in escrow with the township.

c. Wilkes-Barre – Fr. Nicholas Solak

- St. Vladimir, Lopez - Fr. Dennis Hendershot has really helped keep
- Ss. Peter and Paul, Uniondale – Fr. Innocent Neal doing well
- St. John, Dundaff – Fr. Michael Evans serving as administrator
- St. John, Nanticoke – Fr. Trian is serving the parish well
- Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes Barre – some positive news, especially considering its recent difficulties. There is a 125th anniversary this coming fall.
- Pastoral changes in the months ahead
- Fr. John Kowalczyk, training at the Indiana School of Philanthropy. He hopes to give a presentation on Tuesday, March 21st at noon: “Why people don’t give”
- Seven priest participated in an unction service in the Bronx for Fr. John Nightingale. He has made good progress and he has a “good spirit”
- Fr. Nicholas will be leaving on sabbatical – Fr. David Mezynski, from SVOTS, will be providing 80% of the coverage.

OLD BUSINESS

- Diocesan center was already discussed above

NEW BUSINESS

- Sandy Tosca recommended that we offer some assistance to McAdoo with their cemetery as well as some office work/clerical.
 - Fr. Timothy is going to follow up with the parish
- **Charity:** \$750 scholarship to help support a student at Christ the Saviour to attend Cross Road in Boston
Motion: Fr. Timothy. Second: Protodeacon. Approved.
- Metropolitan Council.
 - Sandy Schlasta mentioned that Met. Tikhon shared how to implement the four pillars
 - AAC – there will be a service component to the city of St. Louis
 - Each Diocese will be asked to produce a video
 - Fr. Stephen will take the point on this project and will have a report at the next meeting on what the cost might be.
 - Theme – “mission” mindedness, the Diocese is continuing its missionary work
 - FNS suggested that we ask each of the deans to provide a list of activities
- Seminary Scholarship (\$2,000): Fr. Matthew Joyner
Motion: Fr. Stephen. Second: Fr. Martin Browne. Approved.

- 2018 Diocesan Assembly
 - Starting to look at potential hotels
 - Fr. Barnabas will share with his council members
 - St. Michael parish has organized a committee to organize the hospitality
- Fall Lecture: Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon
 - “Atonement” or a talk on scripture
 - \$750 p/day
 - He is willing to stay in people’s homes
 - Fr. Stephen will contact Orthodox Speakers Bureau
- Fr. Nicholas Solak
 - Asked regarding a flyer for Bill Marianes. FMB said that Bill will provide a flyer
 - FNS asked to step-down as the coordinator of the Clergy Continuing Education and recommended at Fr. John Edward take his place. ABM asked FNS to contact Fr. John
 - FNS also spoke about two specific challenges to Clergy Peer Groups
 - Commitment to staying with it/keeping it on their calendar
 - Trust between members
 - There are five groups in our Diocese
 - Cindy Heise from OCA will cover the CPLG program while FNS is on sabbatical
 - FMB mentioned that isolation is perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing our clergy
- FJO asked a question regarding Diocesan insurance. Discussion was held

Next Meeting on June 8th

- Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA
- 10am – 3pm

Motion to close: Fr. Stephen. Second. Fr. John Onofrey. Approved.

Closing Prayer at 2:45pm