

# Orthodox Church in America – Diocese of New England

## Diocesan Council Minutes – Wednesday, August 26, 2009 – New Britain, Connecticut

### 1. OPENING

The regular meeting of the Diocesan Council held on Wednesday, August 26, 2009, at Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT, was opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 7:30 p.m. His Grace, Bishop NIKON, of Boston, New England and the Albanian Archdiocese chaired the meeting.

### 2. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the May 2009 Meeting of the Diocesan Council were reviewed. In Section 14, Pension Board report, it was confusing about the amount of DNE clergy participating in the pension plan. Revised wording was suggested on the statement “Fr. John Kreta has received a letter stating that all DNE clergy are not on the plan.” to “Fr. John Kreta has received a letter stating that not every clergyman in the DNE is on the plan.”

**MOTION:** Marion Gulash moved, seconded by John Barone that the minutes be accepted as amended. The motion passed.

### 3. HIERARCH'S REPORT

His Grace, Bishop NIKON, presented a short oral report. Highlights of His Grace's report include:

- Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the pastorate of Fr. Robert Arida at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston.
- Celebrated the Great Feast of Pentecost at Holy Trinity Church, New Britain.
- Attended the SVS Institute in late June along with other members of the Holy Synod.
- Participated in the Consecration of Archim. Melchizedek as bishop of Pittsburgh.
- Clergy from the Boston Deanery together with clergy from the Albanian Archdiocese attended a luncheon marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of my ordination to the Holy Priesthood.
- Participated in two sessions of the Crossroads program in Boston.
- Chaired meetings of the St. Tikhon's Investigation Committee.
- Visited the diocesan kids at Youth Rally.
- Celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, NH and ordained Nicholas Dellermann, graduate of St. Tikhon's, to the Holy Diaconate.

### 4. TRESURER'S REPORT

Peter Kopcha, Diocesan Treasurer, presented a report about the diocesan finances, including distribution of detailed reports of the Diocesan Checking Summary and a comparison of Diocesan Income/Expenses and Budget for the period encompassing September 1, 2008 through August 26, 2009. He noted that income is behind again due to deficits in Fair Share. There are 7 parishes that are behind as of this report, for a total of \$17,278, with New Britain presenting a check today. Also, the income from ONE Stewards is down by \$4000. On the expense side, the balance sheet is coming in under budget, not because of savings but due to underpayments on Fair Share, ONE newspaper, mission support and insurance. Also, there are more scholarships being paid than budgeted by \$5000. Total actual income over expenses is ahead due to the net proceeds from sale of the diocesan residence.

#### Financial Statement of Assets - 8/31/2009

Checkbook Balance	\$ 9,017.95
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#### Diocesan Budget: 9/1/2008 – 8/26/2009

Total Actual Budget Income (Inflows)	\$ 577,554.45
Total Actual Budget Expenses (Outflows)	\$ 572,733.75
Total Income/Expense (Net Total)	\$ 4,820.70

**MOTION:** Fr. Dennis Rhodes moved, seconded by Alexia Tassmer, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. The motion passed.

Peter Kopcha stated that 6 scholarships have been given out this year for a total of \$15,000.

- Jeff Freight – St. Tikhon’s Seminary
- Dn. Lee Theophan Whitfield – St. Vladimir’s Seminary
- Fr. John Konkle - St. Vladimir’s Seminary
- Justin Dumolan - St. Vladimir’s Seminary
- Mat. Jennifer Mosher - St. Vladimir’s Seminary
- Andrew Boyd - St. Vladimir’s Seminary

Fr. David read a letter from Andrew Boyd thanking His Grace and the Diocesan Council for the scholarship as he began his first semester at SVS.

5. CHOIR DIRECTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Mat. Cindy Voytovich stated that the 4 members of the class have been together for about 1 year. The next gathering will be in October.

6. FORCC

The next meeting will be September 17<sup>th</sup> at Holy Trinity Greek Church, Bridgeport, CT. The Annual Benefit / Scholarship dinner will be October 4<sup>th</sup> and the guest speaker will be Met. JONAH.

7. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Dn. John Zarras stated the next meeting will begin on September 21<sup>st</sup> and will be a joint session with the Holy Synod. Agenda items will include naming a new treasurer, reviewing and adjusting the 2009 budget, discussion on the high legal fees, adjusting the Honesdale Mortgage, establish a 2010 budget. The Strategic Planning Committee, which Fr. Robert Arida is chairman, had its first meeting at SVS during the Summer Institute, June 18 – 20. They began to take an in-depth review of the ecclesiology of the OCA. A questionnaire will be developed and sent to all dioceses and parishes. The next meeting will also be at the time of the MC meetings. The committee will begin to look at how and why the statute was developed asking senior clergy such as Frs. Thomas Hopko and Daniel Hubiak to give insight and historical perspective.

8. MISSIONS

Fr. Mark Sherman, Dean of Missions reported that the mission in Belfast, Maine group is no longer active. The location is not totally dead but a pastor who has outside income would be needed for a viable mission.

9. COMMUNICATIONS

Fr. Sergius Halvorsen said the fall issue deadline is September 9<sup>th</sup> for news. There are major problems with the diocesan mailing list. We have had numerous non-delivered issues of ONE and ONEStewards appeals due to the new Post Office address checking software. Fr. Sergius will provide every parish an excel spreadsheet of their address list for updating. The secretary will email these to all rectors for return before the Diocesan Assembly in order to update our mailing list.

10. ONE STEWARDS

Prdn. Paul Nimchek stated that the \$1500 was collected from the July Appeal. There were two great articles in the ONE about the youth rally which helped spark funding. The printer erred in not adding the line “Support Youth Rally”. They were apologetic and donated 5000 envelopes. The “Bishop’s Circle” has 8 members this year and His Grace will be taking them to dinner in the near future.

11. PENSION BOARD

Fr. John Hopko reported that at the last pension board meeting proposed amendments to the basic plan have been approved and will be presented to the MC at their next meeting. A “years of service” component will be added in order to have a more equitable distribution of funds.

12. YOUTH

Fr. John Hopko, Youth Director, presented a written report (on file with the secretary) about the recently completed Youth Rally. Report highlights:

- 51 kids + 11 staff [minimum required] = 62 total Ralliers.

- No problems with the camp being ready in time for staff arrival or ralliers.
- **Must** have more staff in 2010.
- If the camp charges rise the Diocese of New England should also raise charges

Fr. John Bacon, who is a certified camp counselor, came to Rally to conduct a certification class for all the counselors for this years Rally.

**MOTION:** Fr. John Hopko moved, seconded by Marioin Gulash, that all staff members for Youth Rally 2009 be given a stipend of \$120. The motion passed.

13. OLD BUSINESS

None.

14. NEW BUSINESS

A. Diocesan Assembly:

- All meeting and services will take place at “St. Mary’s”. Rooms have been set aside at the Marriot Waterbury at \$79/night. The Banquet will be buffet style with an open bar. Tickets for the banquet are \$30. Since His Beatitude will be speaking at the banquet it will be open to everyone.
- All information will be sent via email to all parishes by mid September. Deadline for everything; reports, documentation, hotel, etc. is October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- It is **required** for all Deans to submit a printed report to the Diocesan Assembly.
- Speakers: Metropolitan JONAH, Archimandrite Meletios Webber and Fr. Steven Voytovich, a presentation on behalf of the Visitation Ministries Department.
- **NO** COLA adjustment this year.

B. 2010 Budget:

Peter Kopcha presented the proposed budget for 2010. Discussion ensued.

**MOTION:** Fr. John Hopko moved, seconded by Fr. Dennis Rhodes, to adjust the Bishop’s Stipend from \$19,750 to \$22,500. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Dn. John Zarras moved, seconded by Fr. Dennis Rhodes, to raise the scholarship amount from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Fr. Dennis Rhodes moved, seconded by Fr. John Hopko, to approve the Proposed 2010 Diocesan Budget as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Assembly Officers:

Clergy Vice-chairman:	Fr. Sergius Halvorsen
Lay Vice-chairman:	George Ludko
Secretariat:	Fr. David Koles, Fr. Steven Voytovich
Credentials Committee:	Timothy Tassmer, Alexia Tassmer
Nominations & Resolutions:	Fr. John Hopko, Greg Shesko

The slate was accepted unanimously.

C. Future Assemblies / Speakers:

2010 – Springfield, VT / Clairmont, NH  
 2011 – Ansonia, CT

It was suggested that a theme for the 2010 assembly be ‘Missions’ and a possible speaker be Fr. Theodore Pisarchuk of Jacksonville, FL.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Diocesan Council is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT, beginning with the celebration of Daily Vespers and the blessing of the new council at 6:30 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Acting on a motion by Marion Gulash, the meeting closed with the singing of “It is truly meet ...”

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest David Koles  
Diocesan Secretary

#### **Members of the Diocesan Council present for this Meeting:**

1. His Grace, Bishop NIKON, Diocesan Bishop
2. Fr. John Kreta, Chancellor
3. Fr. David Koles, Diocesan Secretary
4. Peter Kopcha, Diocesan Treasurer
5. Dn. John Zarras, Diocesan Metropolitan Council Lay Representative
6. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Dean of the Connecticut Deanery
7. Fr. Andrew Tregubov, Dean of the Northern Deanery
8. Fr. Mark Sherman, Dean of Missions
9. Dn. Gregory Urin, Clergy-at-Large Representative
10. Fr. Marc Vranes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
11. Fr. Dennis Rhodes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
12. Matushka Ann Sovyrda, Laity-at-Large Representative
13. Tim Tassmer, Laity-at-Large Representative
14. George Ludko, Laity-at-Large Representative
15. Alexia Tassmer, Laity-at-Large Representative
16. Rosemary Delaney, Laity-at-Large Representative
17. John Barone, Laity-at-Large Representative
18. Marion Gulash, Auditor (Voting)
19. Matushka Cindy Voytovich, , Auditor (Non-Voting)
20. Protodeacon Paul Nimchek, ONE Stewards Financial Secretary
21. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, Director of Communications – Chairman, CER; ONE Newspaper/Webmaster
22. Fr. John Hopko, Diocesan Youth Director

#### **Members of the Diocesan Council excused for this Meeting:**

1. Fr. Robert Arida, Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative and Dean of the Boston Deanery
2. Gregory Shesko, OCA Pension Board Representative

#### **Members of the Diocesan Council absent for this Meeting:**

1. David Rodgers, Auditor (Non-Voting)