

Orthodox Church in America – Diocese of New England

Diocesan Council Minutes – Wednesday, February 18, 2008 – New Britain, Connecticut

1. OPENING

The regular meeting of the Diocesan Council held on Wednesday, February 18, 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 November 2008 Meeting of the Diocesan Council were reviewed.

MOTION: John Barone moved, seconded by Timothy Tassmer that the minutes be accepted as presented. The motion passed.

3. REVIEW OF DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY MINUTES

The Minutes of the 45th Diocesan Assembly held at Dormition of the Theotokos Church, Cumberland, RI in October 2008 were received and reviewed to be approved at the 2009 assembly.

4. HIERARCH'S REPORT

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

- Fr. Jason Vansuch has been transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan JONAH. Fr. Jason's term on the Diocesan Council ends in October 2009. His place will be filled by Dn. Gregory Uhrin.
- The Metropolitan Council is meeting today so our delegates are not present.
- The Lesser Synod will meet jointly with the Metropolitan Council at all MC meetings. Also, the Holy Synod will meet at least once a year with the MC.
- The Holy Synod will be holding a Lenten Retreat and Strategic Planning meeting in Colorado the last week of February.

Bp. NIKON will be distributing brochures from Magellan Behavioral Health, Inc. which is the approved OCA Employee Assistance Program. This is in response to Fr. John Hopko's inquiry on the status of the Pastoral Care program.

5. TRESURER'S REOPRT

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 to February 28, 2009. He noted that income is slightly ahead of projected but Fair Share is behind. The ROLL Radio program income has ended in 2008 having just received the last payment. On the expense side the Liability Insurance will end in March since we do not own the Diocesan Residence. We will be getting new insurance which will be tied to Holy Trinity Church, New Britain for address purposes only. We are also over budget on the scholarship program because there are more applicants than expected.

Financial Statement of Assets - 2/20/2009

Checkbook Balance	\$ 8,271.99
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Diocesan Budget: 9/1/2008 – 2/28/2009

Total Actual Budget Income (Inflows)	\$ 174,607.08
Total Actual Budget Expenses (Outflows)	\$ 166,775.27
Total Income/Expense (Net Total)	\$ 7,831.81

Peter stated that a Thank You letter was received from Matushka Linda Kozler and a card from Matushka Ann Sovyrda for gifts given to the Widowed Matushki.

MOTION: Fr. Dennis Rhodes moved, seconded by Mat. Ann Sovyrda, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. The motion passed.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

The current issue of the paper will be going out on March 2nd. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen asked for an Associate Editor to assist with the maintenance of the data base. \$25 would be taken from the current stipend for this position with the balance remaining with the Managing Editor. He hoped that it could be someone from the Boston or Northern Deaneries.

MOTION: George Ludko moved, seconded by John Barone, to have an associate editor with a stipend of \$25 taken from the Managing Editors current stipend. The motion passed.

7. ONE STEWARDS

Prdn. Paul Nimchek stated that mailing for the 2009 ONE Stewards campaign will be in the mail this week. There was about \$3000 that should be credited to the 2008 campaign. Every parish has received a preliminary parcket for the parish rector to promote March as ONE Stewards month.

8. DIOCESAN PASTORAL COMPENSATION

The Diocesan Pastoral Compensation Guidelines were distributed to everyone for review and to be updated.

MOTION: Fr. John Hopko moved, seconded by George Ludko, to accept the guidelines as updated. The motion passed.

9. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

No report since they are in session as we meet.

10. YOUTH

Fr. John Hopko, Youth Director of the Diocese, stated that the kids ‘really like this place’ so he will discuss the preparation of the facilities or lack there of with the camp custodian. This year the staff will report on August 9th, the Ralliers on the 10th and closing with the Feast of Dormition on the 15th. First up in the planning stage is to gather the staff. COST: As mentioned and discussed in the past there needs to be an adjustment to the cost of the Rally.

MOTION: Fr. John Hopko moved, seconded by Fr. Dennis Rhodes, to adjust fees from \$125 to \$175 for the 1st child, \$125 for second child or more. The motion passed.

Fr. John thought that there should be a focus mailing in May or June called “Sponsor a Child to Rally.” This could be under the ONE Stewards banner and could be considered the 2nd mailing for ONE Stewards. This could be put into the paper with a coupon that can be sent back with your donation. No child will ever be turned away from Rally.

11. SCHOLARSHIP

Peter Kopcha stated that 5 scholarships have been given out this year.

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

12. TASK FORCE

Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, Chairman of the Committee for Evangelization and Revitalization (CER) reported on the Natural Church Development program. He stated that 4 churches will be participating. Christ the Savior, Southbury has taken the survey; Nativity of the Virgin, Waterbury is preparing to take the survey; St. Nicholas, Norwich is using this as a transitional tool as they prepare for a new pastor; All Saints, Hartford had its first meeting. Fr. Sergius noted that the CER is not funded and that the ‘teachers’ or ‘coaches’ of the NCD operate as independent contractors. He suggested that we look into having the parishes pay the diocese and the diocese pay the coaches. Fr. Sergius noted that at the current rate of loss in the DNE by 2020 the population would be 1000 people. The ultimate goal of the NCD is growth but also to ascertain the actual health of the parish and to get the parish to reflect on its needs. Fr. John Kreta suggested that the Director of Development be given a stipend

from the DNE and that he could set up programs, workshops, etc. for all parishes in the DNE to use and participate. This person would be like a Dean, an overseer.

13. PENSION BOARD

The first meeting of the new pension board was held on December 16, 2008. Fr. John Hopko was elected a trustee of the Pension Board. The next meeting will be mid-March. Two of the three Trustees and 3 of the 5 members are from the DNE. The first objective of the new board must to evaluate the ability of the plan to do what is set out to do. Last June the plan was worth around \$29 million and by November around \$19 million. There will be no changes until all studies are completed around December 2009.

14. CHOIR DIRECTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

[A report was sent via email to Fr. David Koles today at 4:30 p.m. but he had left home at 3:30 p.m. The reports will be sent to all members via email.]

15. OLD BUSINESS

- A. 46th Diocesan Assembly – October 23-24, 2009: Fr. Dennis said everything is on schedule.
- B. Possible speaker, Metropolitan JONAH with Fr. Meletios Webber as a back-up.

16. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Liason Officers for the Assembly: Alexia Tassmer and Prdn. Paul Nimchek volunteered to be the Liason Officers between the Diocesan Council and the local committee at Nativity of the Virgin, Waterbury.
- B. A letter from the Parish Council of Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Meriden, CT was received requesting the Diocesan Council to wave their National and Diocesan Assessments and to be allowed to freeze the salary of their pastor at the 2008 rate.
His Grace stated that He will be meeting with them on the weekend of February 22nd. As council our hands are tied since the COLA is from the Diocesan Assembly and the National Assessment comes from the All American Council. The Diocesan Council will send the Chancellor, Dean of the Connecticut Deanery and the Director of Evangelization to visit and talk with them but we can not allow this request since it is not under the competence of the council.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Diocesan Council is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2009, at Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT, beginning with the celebration of Daily Vespers at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on a motion by Fr. Marc Vranes, 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. Fr. Marc Vranes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
6. Fr. Dennis Rhodes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
7. Matushka Ann Sovyrda, Laity-at-Large Representative
8. Tim Tassmer, Laity-at-Large Representative
9. George Ludko, Laity-at-Large Representative
10. Alexia Tassmer, Laity-at-Large Representative
11. Rosemary Delaney, Laity-at-Large Representative
12. John Barone, Laity-at-Large Representative
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14. Protodeacon Paul Nimchek, ONE Stewards Financial Secretary
15. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, Director of Communications – Chairman, Membership Task Force, ONE Newspaper/Webmaster
16. Fr. John Hopko, Diocesan Youth Director
17. Gregory Shesko, OCA Pension Board Representative

Members of the Diocesan Council excused for this Meeting:

18. Fr. Robert Arida, Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative and Dean of the Boston Deanery
19. Dn. John Zarras, Diocesan Metropolitan Council Lay Representative
20. Fr. Andrew Tregubov, Dean of the Northern Deanery

Members of the Diocesan Council absent for this Meeting:

1. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Dean of the Connecticut Deanery
2. Fr. Mark Sherman, Dean of Missions
3. Marion Gulash, Auditor (Voting)
4. Matushka Cindy Voytovich, , Auditor (Non-Voting)
5. David Rodgers, Auditor (Non-Voting)