

# Orthodox Church in America – Diocese of New England

## Diocesan Council Minutes – Wednesday, November 18, 2009 – New Britain, Connecticut

### 1. OPENING

The regular meeting of the Diocesan Council held on Wednesday, November 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 August 2009 Meeting of the Diocesan Council were reviewed.

**MOTION:** Marion Gulash moved, seconded by Fr. Dennis Rhodes that the minutes be accepted as presented. The motion passed.

### 3. HIERARCH’S REPORT

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

- With the death of Patriarch Pavle, Bishop Ireney of Montréal represented the OCA.
- The Church of Serbia will receive Bishop Nikolai once all conditions set by our Holy Synod are met and all actions by Bishop Nikolai are brought to a close.
- The positions of OCA Director of Communications will be eliminated by the end of the year. Fr. Andrew Jarmus will finish out the year and then his duties will be distributed among others. Also, Fr. Samuel Gantt will no longer be a communication specialist.
- Archdeacon Kyrill Sokolov will be moving to California and will no longer be the Metropolitan’s deacon. He will continue to oversee the OCA website and the diaconal vocations program.
- Fr. Mark Sherman has asked for retirement from St. Nicholas Church, Salem, MA. This was granted and the search for his successor has begun.

### 4. TRESURER’S REPORT

Peter Kopcha, Past Diocesan Treasurer, presented the report about the diocesan finances, during this time of transition, 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, 2009 through November 18, 2009. He noted that income is in line with where we should be at this time. Also, expenses are also on track with a few large expenses; \$580 for pictures of Bp. NIKON for all parishes, \$1200 over budget for the past Diocesan Assembly for travel expense. On the checking summary it must be noted that monies were transferred from checking back to savings. This original ‘borrowing’ was due to a lack of available cash before the end of the fiscal year due to deficits in Fair Share.

As of the date of this meeting 8 parishes have returned their ‘Census Forms’. The requested due date is December 6, 2009 in order for the revised Fare Share contributions to be calculated and distributed to each parish by the end of the calendar year.

#### Financial Statement of Assets - 11/20/2009

Checkbook Balance	\$ 23,335.11
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#### Diocesan Budget: 9/1/2009 – 11/20/2009

Total Actual Budget Income (Inflows)	\$ 104,913.81
Total Actual Budget Expenses (Outflows)	\$ 81,481.94
Total Income/Expense (Net Total)	\$ 23,431.87

**MOTION:** Alexia Tassmer moved, seconded by Fr. John Hopko, that the Treasurer’s Report be accepted as presented. The motion passed.

5. CHOIR DIRECTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

No report at this time.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

No report at this time.

7. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Dn. John Zarras stated the next meeting will begin in February. He is on the finance committee and stated that the OCA is putting away 'surplus' income for legal expenses. With the extra meetings that the MC has had travel expenses are up and each diocese will be asked to pick-up those expenses for their representatives. The Strategic Planning Committee, which Fr. Robert Arida is chairman, will meet again in December 2009.

8. ONE STEWARDS

Prdn. Paul Nimchek stated that the \$2100 has been collected since September 1, 2009.

9. MISSIONS

No report at this time.

10. YOUTH

Fr. John Hopko, Youth Director, said that he is at the beginning of the 2010 Rally prep. He would like all forms to be on the web site to help reduce the paper pile. Now is the time to recruit people for staff. No date has been set for this years rally. We get dates from the camp as to availability. Also, the camp is building a 'retreat center' on the grounds which might be suitable for an assembly.

11. SCHOLARSHIP

Peter Kopcha stated that as of the fall 2009 scholarships have been given out for a total of \$4,500.

- Fr. Lee Theophan Whitfield – St. Vladimir's Seminary
- Justin Dumolan - St. Vladimir's Seminary
- John Carr - St. Vladimir's Seminary
- Andrew Boyd - St. Vladimir's Seminary

12. CER (Committee on Evangelization and Revitalization)

No report at this time. His Grace stated that several parishes were participating in the Natural Church Development program. Fr. Dennis Rhodes, St. Mary's Waterbury, CT spoke about the progress at his parish using the program. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Christ the Savior, Southbury, CT said they have completed the survey and focus group and are preparing for the second faze.

It was stated that this is a program to determine 'church health'. A healthy church should grow. When the survey is taken there are 8 areas of parish life that are looked at to determine ones score.

13. PENSION BOARD

Greg Shesko reported that stocks were beginning to rise which is a good thing. The board is interviewing companies to do an external audit. The last audit was done December 2008. The reason for finding a new auditor was that they were not pleased with the current auditors at their timeliness in reporting.

14. FORCC

The next meeting will be November 19<sup>th</sup> at St. Demetrios Romanian Church, Bridgeport, CT. The Annual Benefit / Scholarship dinner was held on October 4<sup>th</sup>. His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH was the guest speaker.

15. OLD BUSINESS

a) 2010 Diocesan Assembly:

Speaker: 1) Fr. Justin Matthews of FOCCUS; 2) Fr. Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery; Fr. Theodore Pisarchuk of IOCC.

b) Assembly Liason Committee:

Alexia Tassmer and Prdn. Paul Nimchek volunteered to be the DC liason officers with the local organizing committee from Claremont/Springfield for the 47<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly.

c) 46<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly review:

The lay delegates to the assembly had commented that the “meeting of lay delegates” was poorly organized and took a while to get started. It was suggested that either the chancellor or a DC lay representative lead the discussion. There was a consensus that the Lay-Vice Chairman be the director of the gathering of the lay delegates.

Also, on the agenda, there should be a time to present to the entire assembly what was discussed at this gathering.

## 16. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial/Investment Committee:

Fr. Robert Dick stated that in his parish there is a committee of 3 parishioners who make up their investment committee. They have set parameters and are governed by these rules as to investments and report regularly to the parish council. Bp. NIKON asked John Skrobat to come up with some parameters and information about forming a finance committee to be presented at the next meeting. Greg Shesko was also asked to contribute. Fr. John Kreta stated that this must go through the DA for final approval.

B. Parish Statistical Report:

It was asked to clean-up this form by defining some of the categories; having a date range so that all parishes report for the same time period, possible in conjunction with our diocesan fiscal year; add a category for persons serving in the military; divide the college student section into two, ‘your students’ away at college and students who attend your church while at college, etc.

C. Fare Share:

Fr. Robert Dick asked that we review all parish budgets in the hopes of moving toward a tithe from all parishes to finance the DNE & OCA similar to the DOS. Discussion followed.

**MOTION:** Dn. John Zarras moved, seconded by Fr. Robert Dick, that the Diocesan Council undertake a study to see if we can move from the current Fare Share to a Tithe, including a review of parish budgets, for financing the DNE & OCA. The committee to be appointed by Bishop NIKON. The motion passed with one opposed.

### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Diocesan Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2009, at Holy Trinity Church, Willimantic, CT, (at the request of the delegates from outside CT) beginning with the celebration of Daily Vespers 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/Webmaster
4. John Skrobat, Diocesan Treasurer
5. Fr. Robert Arida, Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative and Dean of the Boston Deanery
6. Dn. John Zarras, Diocesan Metropolitan Council Lay Representative
7. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro, Dean of the Connecticut Deanery
8. Fr. Mark Sherman, Dean of Missions
9. Fr. Marc Vranes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
10. Fr. Dennis Rhodes, Clergy-at-Large Representative
11. Fr. Robert Dick, Clergy-at-Large Representative
12. George Ludko, Laity-at-Large Representative
13. Alexia Tassmer, Laity-at-Large Representative
14. Rosemary Delaney, Laity-at-Large Representative
15. John Barone, Laity-at-Large Representative
16. Marion Gulash, Laity-at-Large Representative
17. Inga Leonova, Laity-at-Large Representative
18. Thomas Eisenmann, Auditor (Non-Voting)
19. Fr. Michael Korolev, Auditor (Non-Voting)
20. Fr. John Hopko, Diocesan Youth Director
21. Gregory Shesko, OCA Pension Board Representative
22. Peter Kopcha, Past Diocesan Treasurer

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

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

1. Fr. Andrew Tregubov, Dean of the Northern Deanery
2. Matushka Cindy Voytovich, Auditor (Voting)
3. Protodeacon Paul Nimchek, ONE Stewards Financial Secretary
4. Fr. Joshua Mosher, Director of Communications – Editor, ONE Newspaper
5. Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, Chairman, CER