

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania (OCA)
Diocesan Council Meeting – 3/23/10

The meeting opened at 10:45 am with the singing of “O Heavenly King” with a blessing of the new members of the Council. All members of the Diocesan Council were present. Fr. Timothy Hojnicky was appointed Secretary.

The minutes from the 46th Diocesan Assembly were received. Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept them. Doug Yates seconded. Unanimous approval made.

Bishop’s Report:

The Holy Synod has met for their Spring 2010 session, and a summary of that meeting was posted on the OCA website.

The St. Tikhon’s Investigative Committee (STIC) report was sent to the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council and was released on 3/23/10 to the general public. The committee defined some land issues: The Diocesan Center was found to be on orphanage property. It was proposed that a temporary Orphanage Board be constituted to resolve the land issue and then dissolve the corporation.

The recommendation of the Committee was to move the Diocesan Center to Philadelphia, the Bishop’s see, and the monastery would buy the present Diocesan Center building. Discussion on the report was tabled until more information is available. David Yeosock volunteered to be on the temporary Orphanage Board of Directors. Fr. Dan Kovalak moved to appoint David Yeosock to this committee. This was seconded by Fr. David Mahaffey. Unanimous approval made.

His Grace reported on the Haiti relief efforts within the diocese. 27 parishes responded by email, \$12,349 was raised for the IOCC, 22 emergency buckets, and 621 cleaning kits.

The American Bishops will meet in New York City in May. The goal is the uniting of the American Churches canonically. The OCA will have a vote at the assembly.

The Holy Synod will meet in retreat in April in Colorado.

The Strategic Planning Committee plans to have a basic Diocesan Bylaws proposal by their next meeting. Fr. Dan Kovalak asked if the statutes revisions were working in symphony with the strategic plan. It was reported that both were still works in progress.

Chancellor’s Report:

Fr. John Kowalczyk reported on the Bishop’s schedule (from the Diocesan Assembly through Great Lent). A letter was read regarding the Diocesan Health Insurance plan speaking about a better rate for the diocesan plan.

It was pointed out that an appointed committee should be made to address these issues from the perspective of the clergy to examine all the options. Much discussion ensued.

Fr. Nicholas Solak moved to form and charge a committee of clergy and lay specialists to oversee the Diocesan Health Insurance, made up of plan participants. The committee is charged to provide a contact point, evaluate options with current plans, and build a database for those in the diocese. It was requested that the committee would report back to the Diocesan Council by the May 20th Diocesan Council Meeting. Fr. Michael Hatrak seconded. Unanimous approval made.

Volunteers: Mark Linnehan (Chair), John Buckeye, Fr. John Soucek, Fr. David Mahaffey, Fr. John Kowalczyk, Mat. Kathy Kowalczyk. It was suggested that John Malinchok would act as a consultant for St. Tikhon's Seminary and that we would invite a member of the monastic community to sit on the committee as well.

Fr. John Kowalczyk reported on the Krindatch Survey from SCOBA. This project was to study attendance and participation in SCOBA parishes.

There will be three teacher trainings in the Diocese: June 5, at Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Wilkes-Barre, September 25, at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia, and October 9, at Christ the Saviour Church in Harrisburg.

The Office of Young Adults has a retreat in February and scheduled a one day retreat in May.

The Financial Affairs Committee has scheduled a Diocesan Administrative Meeting on April 17, at St. Michael's Church in Jermyn.

The Transfiguration Fellowship Meeting scheduled for April at the Seminary/Monastery will be co-sponsored by the Diocese, but in reality the diocese will really have no part in it, other than giving a blessing to have it. It was recommended that the Diocese be removed of its sponsorship of the event and simply say that it was blessed by Bishop Tikhon.

Parishes are invited to submit requests for Diocesan Funding to the Chancery for consideration. Doug Yates suggested that this account should then be replenished to plan for future purchases.

Sexual Misconduct procedures were discussed. The Diocesan procedures were handed out, and it was discussed to redistribute the policies and procedures again.

Communications:

One-third of the Diocese does not even own a computer. There was only a 10% response from the survey. The format requests were that 27% who responded wanted one issue a year with no monthly newsletter. 12% who responded wanted a monthly

newsletter and no annual issue. The most cost effective plan is to have a 12-16 page Annual newsletter and no monthly publication. Fr. John Soucek moved to have quality Diocesan Newsletter issues, less copies (2,500), to then be increased as the demand arises. Mark Linnehan seconded. Unanimous vote made.

Treasurer's Report:

Fr. Martin Browne presented his report. Mark Linnehan moved to use the Pennstar CD to pay off the Bishop's car. The remainder of the CD balance would be rolled into a higher CD rate. David Yeosock seconded. Unanimous approval made.

There was a discussion on assessments. The assessments at present largely go to Syosset. If more was spent on the parishes there would be more opportunities within our diocese. A question was posed as to what other dioceses give towards St. Tikhon's Seminary. Our diocese gives upwards of \$150,000 a year to the seminary.

Metropolitan Council Report:

Most of the sessions were done in executive session. The ongoing legal issues continue to burden the Church. The Alaska lands were not as extensively lucrative as previously thought.

The next All-American Council will be held from October 29-November 6, 2011 in Seattle, Washington.

A discussion was held on Church growth.

A discussion was held on the OCA newspaper.

The next Diocesan Council meeting will be held on Thursday, May 20th.

The Diocesan Assembly was scheduled for November 19-20, in Bethlehem, PA.

A motion to adjourn was made by Fr. Martin Browne, seconded by Mark Linnehan. The meeting concluded with the singing of "It is Truly Meet" at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Timothy Hojnicky