

Minutes of the Diocesan Council Meeting

October 12, 2010

Diocesan Center, South Canaan.

The Meeting began at 10:41 A.M. with the singing of *O Heavenly King*.

Fr. Michael Hatrak was absent. Fathers Matthew Cantrell and John Soucek arrived a few minutes later.

His Grace called for discussion and approval of minutes of previous meeting.

Fr. Dan Kovalak commended their timeliness and motioned to accept, seconded by David Yeosock.
Motion Carried.

REPORTS

Bishop Tikhon

Joint Holy Synod-Metropolitan Council Meeting

Spiritually beneficial

Discussion of Strategic Plan

Diocesan Town Hall meeting on plan scheduled for November 6 in Bethlehem with a half hour presentation at our Diocesan Assembly on November 19th.

His Grace encouraged formal responses to the plan on the part of our diocese and feels the representative will benefit from observing our Assembly.

O.C.A. -R.O.C.O.R Joint Meeting, October 5-6, 2010

Bishop Tikhon was our Episcopal representative and said its purpose was to clarify the relationship of the O.C.A. to R.O.C.O.R.

A joint statement was sent to both synods for their acceptance and action based on the recommendations made by the Committee.

His Grace characterized the meeting as positive with willingness to eliminate obstacles to complete intercommunion.

Diocesan Assembly

His Grace will present a Five Year Review and a Five Year Plan.

A three page summary of this will be published in the next issue of Alive in Christ, scheduled for November 1.

Four Areas of concern:

Administrative housekeeping
Clergy Health
Education
Parish Health

His Grace is currently preparing three encyclicals on fasting, gambling and proper communication for clergy and laity, with a focus on internet fora.

Fr. Dan recommended attention to the Marcellus Shale drilling enterprise with its potential effects on life in the northern tier of our diocese.

In discussing educational programs the teacher training programs were mentioned in addition to adult education lectures.

Comments included consultation on scheduling future workshops, as well as the positive feedback from participants and the suggestion of refresher courses every two years.

His Grace mentioned his meeting with representatives of All Saints Orthodox School in Weatherly which engendered discussion on Orthodox schools, struggles, opportunities and ways to support and expand those already in existence.

Fr. Dan mentioned the Homeschool Co-op meeting in Williamsport and suggested that the diocese examine the prevalence of homeschooling in the diocese and look at possible opportunities for support and development.

His Grace will charge the Education Department to survey the diocese on the issue of homeschooling and do a talent search in order to make recommendations to the bishop regarding providing as much Orthodox Christian education to our children in as many venues as possible to fulfill the counsel of St. John Chrysostom that we are to educate ourselves and our children in Godliness.

Chancellor's Report

Fr. John focused on one item on the bishop's itinerary, the OCPM conference in Philadelphia, commending His Grace, Fathers Mahaffey, Gorodenchuk and Solak for their presence and support and reported that our diocesan support made a very positive impression on the leadership of the OCPM.

His Grace commented on the importance of this ministry as an opportunity for clergy and laity to stretch our comfort zone and fulfill the gospel mandate to visit the imprisoned. Additionally he mentioned the Lazarus Project which is underway in our diocese in one parish which assists released prisoners in transition back to freedom.

Fr. Kovalak stressed the importance of the Episcopal Assembly support for prison ministry in order to receive recognition from the Federal Government which is essential for access to Federal prisons. Fr. John mentioned that the Orthodox Church has such recognition in Pennsylvania State Correction

Institutions and supported Fr. Dan's point. His Grace promised to do what he could through our Holy Synod and the Episcopal Assembly to promote the Prison Ministry project.

Fr. John then commented on **clergy assignments**

Fr. James Weremedic is now Rector at Wilmington

Fr. Daniel Matthewson is Acting Rector in Coaldale

Fr. David Mahaffey reported on Coatesville which has made an offer for compensation for a priest to serve full time. His Grace has not received a copy of the proposal. Fr. David will follow up.

Diocesan Assembly

Fr. John said the preparation was up and running, thanking Fr. Mahaffey for his support in Bethlehem at St. Nicholas and securing the rooms at Best Western.

Fr. John explained the diocese will handle reservations as a smoother, hopefully more efficient means for the parishes to reserve their rooms.

Fr. Dan enquired about the Russian Liturgy in Philadelphia and whether there is a priest serving. Fr. John explained that the priest who was interested backed out. It is hoped to find another candidate.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Some have refused: councils and priests, to comply with the policy

Discussion followed about possible disciplinary measures.

Fr. Dan made a **motion**, seconded by Fr. Mahaffey

That the report on compliance be expanded to include sexual misconduct policy, parish meeting minutes and annual budget and it is the recommendation of the Diocesan Council in agreement with His Grace Bishop TIKHON that those not in compliance will not receive hierarchical approval of Parish Meeting minutes and election of officers.

Motion carried

Mark Linnehan made a **motion**, seconded by David Yeosock,

That parishes which are not in compliance with sexual misconduct policy by November 1 will be subject to further hierarchical action.

Motion carried.

Parish Census

Fr. John distributed the parish census data, pointing out the four parishes which have not yet submitted their census.

Treasurer's Report (Recorded by Father Tim Hojnicky)

- Fr. Martin presented his report: see attached. As of 10/12/10 all of the 2009-2010 expenses have been taken care of. The fiscal year is not officially over until 10/31.
- The only notable recent expense was the purchase of a new washer for the Diocesan Center.
- We have received statements and copies of our assessment checks from the OCA from January to the current time as requested at the last meeting.
- Harrisburg will propose a tithe style of assessment at their November 14 Parish Meeting. They would then join Mechanicsburg and Williamsport in their method of paying their assessment. The tithe for Harrisburg would significantly decrease their contribution.
- The Philadelphia deanery will propose a resolution to the Diocesan Assembly asking the Diocese to go to a tithe model by 2018
- New Budget items:
 - o \$2400 for stipends for deans (\$800 a dean per year).
 - o There will also be a "parish assistance" item at \$2500
 - o Included is repayment to the CD (\$4,800) for the car payment
- Fr. David Mahaffey made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, seconded by Fr. Dan Kovalak. ***Unanimous Approval.***

Metropolitan Council Report.

Tithing:

Extensive discussion in light of O.C.A. budget which will have a \$272,000 deficit for 2009 due to the legal settlement with the Kondratick's, among other things. The 2010 Budget will have a \$5000 surplus and 2011 has a projected surplus of 125,000 with the goal of building up a reserve.

The issue of Harrisburg's tithe and its reflection of the disproportionate place the O.C.A. central administration assessment has on our budget further fueled the discussion including suggestions that the Diocesan Administration review the budgets and income and expense statements sent in by parishes.

Fr. Mahaffey mentioned the minor place stewardship has in the Strategic Plan Draft and quoted Fr. Hopko's remarks on the unique, positive nature of the Metropolitan Council meeting.

O.C. A. Website

Redesigned at a cost of \$75,000 with a connectivity option for individual parish websites.

Staffing

Currently 6 full-time and 4 part-time employees in Syosset.

All American Council

October 29- November 4 2011

Household of Faith is the theme.

Website with information will be launched on October 31, though no web address was given.

Efforts to cut costs, though there will be an assessment for the council.

Alaskan Air, Air Tran are available and have or will have special offers. Alaskan Air flies out of Newark and Philadelphia, Air Tran out of Allentown.

Pension

Funded 85% with a goal of 100% projected for 2025

Current return 7-7 ¾%

Questions were raised about the election of new bishops in the South and Alaska. Discussion followed.

St. Tikhon's Orphanage Board

Fr. David Mahaffey made a motion, seconded by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky asking the Holy Synod of Bishops to include as a Diocesan Council representative on the St. Tikhon's Orphanage Board Mr. David Yeosock.

Motion carried.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

Fr. Mahaffey presented a resolution passed by the Philadelphia Deanery for inclusion on the Diocesan Assembly agenda regarding the diocesan commitment to go to a tithing system by 2018. The resolution was accepted by the Council and will be on the Agenda.

Following discussion begun by David Yeosock, Mark Linnehan made a motion, seconded by Fr. Matthew Cantrell,

That the National Church Administration remit to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania an amount equal to the difference between Christ the Savior, Harrisburg's current assessment and projected annual tithe which will be donated by the diocese to the Agia Sophia Coffee House Project.

Motion carried with one abstention.

Fr. David Mahaffey motioned to adjourn, seconded by everyone.

The meeting ended at 3:58PM with the singing of *It is Truly Meet*.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Martin Browne, Secretary