
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

MINUTES
2022 Spring Session



Wednesday, February 9 – Thursday, February 10, 2022
Conducted by video conference

These draft minutes are subject to approval at a subsequent meeting of the Metropolitan Council

PARTICIPANTS

CHAIRMAN

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

CHURCH OFFICERS (*EX OFFICIO*)

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *Chancellor*
Andrew Smith, *Treasurer*

Priest Alessandro Margheritino, *Secretary*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Thomas Moore
Archpriest Kirill Sokolov
Archpriest David Rucker

Katherine Vitko
Lynnell Brunswig
Mark Linnehan

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Diocese of Alaska

Archpriest David Askoak

Albanian Archdiocese

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes

Donna Dimitri

Bulgarian Diocese

Priest Gabriel Bilas

Bogdan Popescu

Archdiocese of Canada

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Nicholas Solak

Danalisa Radu (2/09 only)

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest Elijah Mueller

Robert Graban

Diocese of New England

Priest Theophan Whitfield

Evelyn Kreta

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman)

James P. Kornafel

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino

Joshua Godbold

Archdiocese of Washington

Deacon Matthew Prentice

Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest John Parker

Ray Steeb

ABSENT (*for all meetings unless otherwise indicated*)
Archpriest Michael Anderson (*Diocese of the West*)
Dorothy Chaney (*Diocese of Alaska*)
Mark Petasky (*Archdiocese of Canada*)
Danalisa Radu (*Diocese of Eastern PA*) – 2/10/22

GUESTS (*for all meetings unless otherwise indicated*)
Archpriest Thomas Soroka (*Project Manager for the Departments*) – 2/10/2022
Protodeacon Jacob Frimenko (*Clergy Health Synaxis Survey Director*) – 2/10/2022
Deacon Peter Ilchuk (*All-American Council Manager*) – 2/10/2022
Maha Adranly (*Auditing Committee member*) – 2/10/2022
Stephanie Crocenzi, CPA (*external auditor from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C.*) – 2/10/2022
Judge E.R. Lanier (*OCA General Counsel*)
Alexis Liberovsky (*Recording Secretary*)
Frank Lou, CPA (*external auditor from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C.*) – 2/10/2022

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022

A. Call to Order

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the session with prayer at 1:04 PM. and called the meeting to order.

B. Agenda (attached) Introduction & Roll Call

Archpriest Alexander Rentel reviewed the attached agenda for the Spring Session and conducted the roll call. He indicated that if necessary to complete the agenda of this Session, an additional meeting could be convened at a later time after this week's meetings. He conducted the roll call and noted guests who would be present for the meeting to deliver reports. He requested approval of Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary for the meeting, which was accepted without objection.

C. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Father Rentel presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the regular 2021 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council convened by videoconference on Thursday, September 30, 2021 and in person at the Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel in Cleveland, OH on Monday, October 18 and Tuesday, October 19, 2021, as well as the attached draft minutes of the Special 2021 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council convened by videoconference on Monday, November 22, 2021. After minor corrections, the draft minutes of both sessions were approved by consensus as presented.

D. Metropolitan's Report (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon presented his attached report highlighting events of church-wide significance and his own archpastoral work in his diocese, the dioceses currently under his locum tenancy, as well as his primatial work. He welcomed new members of the Council. He reflected on the significance of the Expanded Joint Meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council convened in Cleveland last October as preparation for the upcoming 20th All-American Council. He provided a chronology of his activity since the October meeting and expressed his own insights into key issues to be decided by this meeting. Extensive discussion and questions ensued.

E. Chancellor's Report (attached)

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor, presented his attached report highlighting his activities and travels as well as the work of the Chancery, especially personnel changes and the annual performance evaluations conducted in January. He also noted the curtailing of services at St. Sergius Chapel located within the Chancery building.

F. Property Committee (attached)

Ray Steeb and Gregory Honshul delivered the attached report and PowerPoint presentation from the Property Committee outlining stages of relocating this year to the Washington DC area the Metropolitan's Residence and an initial temporary OCA Chancery office and indicated associated costs that will need to be budgeted. They then updated the Council on the attempted sale of Westwood (the Chancery property) and reported that no viable offers have been received to this point. Marketing strategies going forward will be discussed in the coming weeks. The Property Committee also proposed the resolution below, projecting the relocation process of the Chancery by establishing an office in the greater Washington, DC area as early as July 2022. Metropolitan Tikhon and Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, would both relocate at the same time while the rest of the staff would remain at Westwood until the beginning of 2023. The report and resolution were discussed in detail.

F.1. MOTION HONSHUL & STEEB/RHODES - BE IT RESOLVED that the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America does hereby authorize the following actions, to occur before December 31, 2022, with relocation funding approved for expenditures through to December 2022, as follows:

- 1) To search and arrange for temporary rental quarters for the Metropolitan's residence and office, in the Washington DC metropolitan area;
- 2) To search and arrange for temporary rental quarters for an office of the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America, in the Washington DC metropolitan area;
- 3) The relocation of the Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America to the Washington DC metropolitan area;
- 4) The purchase of office equipment and furniture, acquired locally;
- 5) The packing and moving of furniture, personal effects, chancery administrative materials & equipment to the Washington DC metropolitan area;
- 6) And authorization of funds necessary to accomplish these efforts, to include approved rental and moving expenses, up to but not to exceed \$125,000, through 2022.
- 7) The Property Committee is hereby authorized to engage in all negotiations on behalf of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America necessary to arrive at rental contract(s) for said needs.
- 8) Every rental contract presented to the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America shall contain the following caveat in writing:
"This rental agreement acceptance by the prospective lessee constitutes a binding contract ONLY if subsequently approved in writing by both the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America and such written approval has been delivered to the said prospective lessor." CARRIED with 1 (one) opposed (Hoffman) and 1 (one) abstention (Kreta).

G. Report of the Secretary (attached)

Priest Alessandro Margheritino, OCA Secretary, delivered his attached report noting updates on technology issues, the work of SMPAC, the hiring of Ms. Emily Waters as the new Acting ORSMA Coordinator, and the management of Westwood. He reported updates regarding details of the process

to relocate the OCA Archives and the proposals received in response to the Request for Proposals issued in 2021. Extensive discussion ensued. Fr. Alessandro then introduced the ad-hoc Committee who recently visited St. Vladimir's Seminary to assess its available facilities for possible housing of the OCA Archives.

H. Archives relocation (attached)

Popadija Kitty Vitko highlighted the attached report on a recent site evaluation visit to the Florovsky Library at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary where the Seminary proposes to house the OCA Archives. With consideration of the proposal received from Saint Vladimir's last year and the recent physical facilities evaluation visit there, the following resolution was proposed by Popadija Kitty Vitko and Gregory Honshul. Extensive discussion and questions ensued. It was noted that, as with all Metropolitan Council decisions, the resolution would have to receive final approval from the Holy Synod.

- H.1. MOTION VITKO & HONSHUL/RUCKER - WHEREAS the on-site evaluation of physical facilities of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (SVOTS) effectively demonstrates their storage space to provide for necessary environmental protections, with sufficient dedicated space for the preservation and accommodation for the Orthodox Church in America's historical archive, WHEREAS the staff of SVOTS did effectively demonstrate the knowledge and expertise required for the proper handling, storage, and organization, including the ability to securely provide access to archival materials, WHEREAS there exists between the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and SVOTS an extensive history, and the creation of an agreement between these institutions to preserve and make available religious historical materials, to facilitate the academic advancement of the faith, will further their relationship, and by these services will benefit both institutions, and the church at large, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Council of the OCA does hereby authorize the Chancellor and Secretary of the OCA to engage SVOTS in logistical and contractual discussions, for the purpose of preparing a written agreement by July 15, 2022, for presentation and approval at the next session of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED with none opposed and 2 (two) abstentions (Solak, Radu).**

I. Adjournment

Metropolitan Tikhon thanked the Council for covering much material in a clear way during the day's meeting. He raised the need to discuss providing funds, as in the past, for Alaskan and Mexican delegates to participate in the upcoming All-American Council. He closed the meeting with prayer at 4:25 PM.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022

J. Call to Order

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting with prayer at 1:04 PM. Fr. Alexander Rentel called the meeting to order, delivered introductory comments regarding procedural matters to expedite efficiency of the meeting and conducted the roll call.

K. Metropolitan's Remarks (attached)

In opening remarks (as indicated in the attached text of his report), Metropolitan Tikhon requested that the Treasurer together with the Finance and Investment Committee:

- a) Formally review the compensation structure and the salary and stipend levels for all Chancery officers and staff, including the Metropolitan;
- b) Ensure that they are in compliance with the compensation guidelines of the Orthodox Church in America;
- c) Undertake this review with specific reference to the potential relocation of the Chancery offices and personnel to the greater Washington, DC area;
- d) Dialogue, at the appropriate time, with the Finance Committee of the Archdiocese of Washington to review and recalibrate, as necessary, the Archdiocesan financial contribution to the operation of the Central Administration in its anticipated new geographical location; and
- e) Report back on these matters to the Metropolitan Council by the Spring 2023 Meeting.

L. Treasurer's Report (attached)

Andrew Smith, OCA Treasurer, presented his attached report reviewing a variety of financial matters. He then introduced representatives from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C, who offered the attached PowerPoint presentation to review the external audit for the attached 2020 financial statements and responded to questions from Council members.

M. Internal Audit (attached)

Maha Adranly, a member of the internal Auditing Committee, presented the report of the Committee noting the good health of the finances of the Orthodox Church in America, and thanked Andrew Smith and Susan Wisnewski for their hard and diligent work.

L. Treasurer's Report (continued)

The Treasurer then summarized the attached preliminary annual results for fiscal year 2021 and proposed amendments to the 2022 budget that include provision for expenditures associated with the planned relocation of the Metropolitan's residence and OCA Chancery projected to begin this year to be partly drawn from available unrestricted reserve funds. Questions and discussion ensued.

- M.1. MOTION DIMITRI/SOKOLOV - To adopt amendments to the 2022 budget as presented. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

N. Pension Subcommittee Update

Andrew Smith offered an oral update on the external review of the OCA Pension Plan, which, in accordance with the decision of the Metropolitan Council at the Special Session on November 22, 2021, is currently being conducted by Cheiron, Inc. The adversarial tone of the latest report on the Pension Plan (attached?) from the Pension Board was also discussed in detail.

- N.1. MOTION LANE/BRUNSWIG - Be it resolved that the Metropolitan Council Pension Subcommittee be authorized to receive the preliminary and final reports from Cheiron regarding their analysis of the OCA Pension Plan and report to the Metropolitan Council with recommendations. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

O. 20th All-American Council (attached)

Deacon Peter Ilchuk, All-American Council (AAC) Manager, provided the attached update on plans for the upcoming 20th All-American Council scheduled for Baltimore, MD in July 2022, and presented the draft of the AAC Agenda prepared by the Preconciliar Commission, which will be submitted to the Holy Synod in March for final approval.

P. OCA Departments update (attached)

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Project Manager for the OCA Departments, presented his attached report on the various completed, ongoing, or pending projects or tasks of the six currently active Departments of the Church. Discussion and questions ensued.

Q. Office of Pastoral Life report (attached)

Archpriest Nicholas Solak highlighted the attached report from the Office of Pastoral Life that included updates on the Thriving in Ministry and the Clergy Synaxis programs. He introduced Protodeacon Jacob Frimenko to report on the recently conducted Clergy Health Synaxis Survey.

R. Clergy Health Synaxis Survey

Protodeacon Jacob Frimenko, a Professor of Management and Professional Leadership, summarized the methodology and results of a survey conducted within the Clergy Synaxis program to gauge personal spiritual, emotional, and physical health of clergy. In extensive discussion that followed, the importance and value of the program and survey were acknowledged.

S. Adjournment

In concluding remarks, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked the Council for its positive and productive work. He declared the Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council closed and adjourned the meeting with prayer at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary