
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

MINUTES
2023 Fall Session

Thursday, September 28, 2023
Conducted by video conference

Wednesday, October 11 – Thursday, October 12, 2023
Hilton Springfield, Springfield, Virginia



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*

Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, *Secretary*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Justin Patterson
Archpriest Lawrence Margitich
Archpriest Christopher Foley

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky
Lynnell McFarland
Alexis Liberovsky

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Diocese of Alaska

Archpriest Maxim Isaac (*only 10/11-12*)

Anthony Lekanof (*only 10/11-12*)

Albanian Archdiocese

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes

Donna Dimitri

Bulgarian Diocese

Deacon Bogdan Popescu

Daniel Ralich (*only 10/11-12*)

Archdiocese of Canada

Archpriest Gregory Scratch

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Nicholas Solak

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest John Baker

Robert Graban (*only 9/28*)

Basil Kochan (*only 10/11-12*)

Diocese of New England

Priest Patrick Burns (*only 10/11-12*)

Evelyn Kreta

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archpriest David Garretson

Mitchell VanDuyn (*only 10/11-12*)

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino (*only 10/11-12*)

Joshua Godbold

Archdiocese of Washington

Deacon Matthew Prentice

Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

Archpriest Matthew Tate

David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest John Parker

Ray Steeb

ABSENT (*for all meetings unless otherwise indicated*)

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino (*Diocese of the South*) – only 9/28

Archpriest Maxim Isaac (*Diocese of Alaska*) – only 9/28

Priest Patrick Burns (*Diocese of New England*) – only 9/28

Anthony Lekanof (*Diocese of Alaska*) – only 9/28

Danalisa Radu (*Diocese of Eastern PA*)

Daniel Ralich (*Bulgarian Diocese*) – only 9/28

Mitchell VanDuyn (*Diocese of NY/NJ*) – only 9/28

GUESTS (*for all meetings unless otherwise indicated*)

His Eminence Archbishop Daniel (*Episcopal Moderator – OCA Pension Board*) – only 10/11

Archpriest John Dresko (*OCA Pension Board Trustee*) – only 10/11

Archpriest Chad Hatfield (*OCA Pension Board Trustee*) – only 10/11

Archpriest Thomas Soroka (*Project Manager for OCA Departments*) – only 9/28

Archpriest Stephen Vernak (*OCA Office of Pastoral Life*) – only 9/28

Mary Ann Bobulsky (*OCA Pension Board Trustee*) – only 10/11

Stephanie Crocenzi, CPA (*external auditor from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C.*)

– only 10/12

James Heinzman (*CPA, CFE, partner at Schultheis & Panettieri, LLP*) – only 10/11

Frank Lou, CPA (*external auditor from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C.*) - only 10/12

Melanie Ringa (*OCA Pension Board Trustee*) – only 10/11

Michael Stieglitz (*Administrator, OCA Pension Plan*) – only 10/11

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

A. Opening Prayer

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon led the meeting participants in prayer at 2:05 PM to open the initial meeting of the 2023 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council, conducted by video conference.

B. Call to Order

With His Beatitude's blessing, Fr. Alexander Rentel called the meeting to order, noting that the Fall Session will consist of this meeting conducted by video conference and in-person meetings on October 11-12 at the Hilton in Springfield, Virginia.

C. Agenda (attached) Introduction & Roll Call

Fr. Rentel reviewed the attached agenda for the day's meeting and conducted the roll call, indicating guests who would be in attendance to present reports today.

D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Father Rentel presented for approval the attached updated draft minutes of the regular 2022 Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council convened by video conference on March 14 and 16, 2023. With a minor further correction, the Spring Session minutes were approved by consensus. The minutes of the Special Sessions of the Metropolitan Council convened by video conference on May 4, 2023, and September 6, 2023, were approved by consensus as presented.

E. Metropolitan's Report (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon presented oral remarks along with a written log of his activities since the Spring Session. He welcomed new Council member, Fr. Gregory Scratch, and thanked outgoing member, Robert Graban. He expressed gratitude for Fr. Joseph Ciarciaglino's recent successful surgery and his valuable work on the Council. He mentioned those clergy and prominent laity who have reposed in recent months. In his activities log, His Beatitude outlined Primatial travel; Chancery meetings; Archdiocese of Washington pastoral visits, events, and administration; Stavropegial institutions; locum tenency in the Diocese of New England and External Affairs. He expressed his joy in visiting dioceses and parishes. He particularly highlighted the episcopal ordination of Bishop Nikodhim (Preston) of the Albanian Archdiocese. He noted the importance of the Pension Plan and the discussion of pension matters that will take place within the Council in a full-day session on October 11.

F. Office of Pastoral Life (attached)

Archpriests Nicholas Solak and Stephen Vernak presented the attached report from the Office of Pastoral Life highlighting recent efforts in the Thriving in Ministry, Synaxis and Clergy Wives programs, the upcoming National Clergy Synaxis Retreat and application for a Lilly Endowment grant in multiple stages over several years to aid clergy in addressing economic challenges. Questions and discussion ensued.

G. Chancellor's Report (attached)

Fr. Rentel highlighted his attached report, particularly concerning his recent visit to Ukraine, the nearly completed search for a new OCA General Counsel, and his own time-consuming work as ORSMA coordinator, since the repose of Bernard Wilson. Discussion ensued.

H. Property Committee

H.1. MOTION RENTEL/GRABAN - To move into executive session. CARRIED.

In executive session, Gregory Honshul provided a brief update from the Property Committee on efforts to sell the Church's Westwood property in Oyster Bay Cove (Syosset), NY.

G.2. MOTION RENTEL/RHODES – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.

I. Report of the Secretary (attached)

Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, OCA Secretary, summarized his attached report, highlighting chancery office relocation from New York to Springfield, office operations, the recent first meeting of the Preconciliar Commission for the 21st All-American Council and the ongoing relocation of the OCA Archives from Westwood to St. Vladimir's Seminary Library. Some discussion ensued

J. Church Planting Grants (attached)

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Project Manager for the OCA Departments, presented the attached proposal from the Department of Evangelization for planting grants in 2024.

J.1. MOTION GARRETSON/MCFARLAND – To approve the recommendations of one first-year Mission Planting Grant for St Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Mission in Palm Coast, FL, and two second-year Mission Planting Grants for St. Ambrose of Milan Mission in Roanoke, VA and Archangel Gabriel Mission in Hickory, NC, totaling \$104,000. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

K. Closing

Fr. Rentel reminded participants that the Fall Session would continue with in-person meetings at the Hilton in Springfield, Virginia, on October 11-12, with the first day being a joint meeting/retreat with the Pension Board and a guest speaker in fulfillment of the Pension resolution adopted at the 20th All-American Council. Metropolitan Tikhon thanked the Council for its deliberations and closed the meeting with prayer at 4:51 PM.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023

2-B. Call to Order

Following an education session for the Metropolitan Council together with the Pension Board throughout the morning conducted by James Heinzman, CPA, CFE, partner at Schultheis & Panettieri, LLP, the second meeting of the 2023 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council, was called to order with His Beatitude's blessing by Fr. Rentel at 1:18 PM. He reviewed the agenda and schedule of the afternoon meeting and conducted the roll call, indicating the Pension Board members and other guests who would be present for the meeting focused entirely on pension matters.

2-E. Metropolitan's Remarks

His Beatitude offered some general remarks and welcomed new members Archbishop Gregory Scratch and Basil Kochan. He then intoned Memory Eternal for Gregory Nescott, a former member of the Metropolitan Council.

L. Pension Board Report (attached)

Melanie Ringa presented highlights of the attached Pension Board report with supporting documents highlighting recent actions of the Pension Board and activity of the Pension Office, recommendations for funding, and financial reports. Ms. Ringa presented on the Plan's funding status, compliance levels, cash flow analysis, investments performance, and administrative expenses.

M. Pension Committee Report & open discussion on pension matters (attached)

Donna Dimitri highlighted the attached report from the Metropolitan Council Pension Committee. In discussion, all agreed that cooperation needs to be maintained to enable fruitful joint work for the benefit of the Church. A multitude of issues were discussed, including confidentiality and release of actuarial analysis reports. James Heinzman made valuable comments and observations regarding maintaining the solvency of the plan into the future.

Following a break at 3:04 PM, the meeting resumed at 3:25 PM.

There was agreement on the necessity of mandated participation compliance in order for the plan to grow. Questions were raised as to whether an increase in participation would ultimately benefit the Plan since more benefits would need to be paid out. It was noted by the Pension Board that the benefits are calculated on a 12% total contribution, and the remaining portion, including the additional 2% recommended at this meeting, does not increase the benefits of the participants but rather is meant to address the overall cash flow deficit of the Plan.

Discussion ensued on the recommendation of the Pension Board to begin invoicing parishes with non-participating clergy, both aged out and still eligible, as well as parishes with no assigned clergy. His Beatitude asked the Pension Board whether the invoicing of parishes is being officially proposed to the Metropolitan Council at this meeting as an amendment to the Pension Document. Ms Ringa and Fr. Dresko responded that the Pension Board still needs to further work on the numbers and reconcile the list of non-participating clergy with the Chancery office.

The two bodies renewed their commitment to cooperate and further improve communication and sharing of reports and documents, including the actuarial evaluation from the new actuary firm that is expected to be received by the Pension Board in the next few months. The Pension Board agreed that the Metropolitan Council would receive a presentation from the actuaries at the Spring 2024 session.

There was full agreement that measures must be undertaken urgently to guarantee the future of the Plan. On the advice of Mr. Heinzman, there was mutual consent by both bodies for the need to establish a Funding Improvement Plan (FIP) geared to solve the Plan's funding deficit. The Pension Board will work together with the actuary on the FIP once the actuarial analysis is received. It is anticipated that the Pension Board will present a draft of the Funding Improvement Plan at the Regular Fall 2024 Session of the Metropolitan Council.

N. Pension Committee resolutions

Resolution #02 (below) was read and proposed for adoption by the Committee. It was pointed out that a motion made by a committee does not require a second. In discussion, it was suggested that the motion violates the OCA Statute, but legal counsel indicated that the motion was proper.

N.1. MOTION PENSION COMMITTEE –

WHEREAS, at the regular Fall 2022 session of the Metropolitan Council, an increase in the “employer contribution” for participants in the OCA Pension Plan was approved for calendar year 2023 with a proposed further increase for 2024 and beyond, subject to review of parish compliance (motion O.1); and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board, in its report to the Metropolitan Council, has not provided the actuarial valuation and report from its new actuarial firm; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board reports, “the funded ratio of the plan decreased from 50% to 38% on January 1, 2023, primarily due to insufficient contributions paid into the plan and the lower-than-expected return on assets during 2022”; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council has a fiduciary duty to the Church as a whole and to its Pension Plan participants such that it desires to understand the tradeoffs involved in increased parish funding requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council understands that substantially more funding is needed, but cannot get necessary information from the Pension Board to determine the overall funding needed and the ultimate burden on parishes and other church entities; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board has not provided critical information about the plan including, but not limited to, actuarial scenario planning, testing of scenarios assumptions against past results, and commitment to administrative expense caps; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board states that non-participating clergy and church workers, if they participate, would substantially improve the funding of the plan, but the Pension Board has not quantified that assertion or otherwise disclosed the effects of increased compliance; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board has failed to model the effects of increased parish compliance.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

1. No further increase over the 2023 status quo in the employee or employer contribution to the plan is authorized at this time.
2. The Metropolitan Council will reevaluate this matter at the Regular Spring 2024 Metropolitan Council meeting. **DEFEATED** with four (4) in favor, twenty-two (22) opposed, five (5) abstentions.

Some participants questioned whether defeat of this motion implements the 2% increase of employer contributions for participants in the OCA Pension Plan effective January 1, 2024, as mandated by Motion O.1 adopted at the 2022 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council. In order to dispel any doubts in this regard, the following motion was proposed and adopted.

- N.2. **MOTION LANE/MIKHALEVSKY – To confirm that the 2% increase of employer contributions for participants in the OCA Pension Plan will be implemented effective January 1, 2024. CARRIED with three (3) opposed (Ciarciaglino, Dimitri, Godbold) and three (3) abstentions (Popescu, Scratch, VanDuyn).**

Discussion ensued concerning Pension Committee resolution #04 mandating that the monthly reimbursement of \$9,000 from the OCA to the Pension Plan for certain administrative expenses as approved in the 2023 OCA budget be placed in escrow going forward in 2024 until certain conditions are met by the Pension Board.

- N.3. **MOTION PENSION COMMITTEE –**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council approved a 2023 OCA operating budget at the regular Fall 2022 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council agreed, in that budget, to pay \$9000 per month, as the sponsor of the OCA Pension Plan, to offset administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board report to the Fall 2023 Metropolitan Council showed an increase in administrative expenses of \$59,455; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Board report to the Fall 2023 Metropolitan Council listed “legal fee overage due to MC Reviews/AAC” of \$20,500 in 2023 and \$15,000 in 2021 despite longstanding statutory requirements for both the All American Council and Metropolitan Council to provide fiduciary oversight of the Pension Plan; and

WHEREAS, it was the Metropolitan Council’s understanding that the Pension Board would be reducing administrative expenses, not increasing them; and

WHEREAS, it was the Metropolitan Council’s intent that its funding would be used to directly benefit members by improving the financial position of the Plan.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

1. The Treasurer shall pay this offset at the previously agreed rate for the balance of this calendar year and then cease paying this administrative offset to the Pension Plan after Dec 31, 2023.
2. The Treasurer shall escrow \$9000 per month of OCA revenue into a reserve account called “Pension Beneficiary Rescue Fund” and to reflect that amount in the 2024 and subsequent budgets unless/until the Metropolitan Council directs otherwise.
3. The Finance and Investment committee, working with the Treasurer and other officers, shall present investment options for those monies with the intent of long-term capital appreciation no later than the Fall 2024 Regular Session.
4. It is the intent of the Metropolitan Council that these monies and any proceeds from investment of the same be used solely for the financial benefit of OCA Pension Plan participants to cover shortfalls in the funding of the Pension Plan. DEFEATED with three (3) votes (Ciarciglino, Dimitri, Godbold) in favor and twenty-eight (28) opposed.

O. Metropolitan’s concluding remarks

After housekeeping announcements and a review of the next day’s schedule and agenda by Fr. Rentel, Metropolitan Tikhon made concluding remarks expressing his satisfaction with the day’s proceedings and especially thanked James Heinzman for his presentation and contribution to discussions. His Beatitude stated that what occurred today should likely have taken place at the 20th All-American Council last year. He said that today’s meeting made great progress on resolving pension issue and thanked everyone for their work. He closed the meeting with prayer at 5:29 PM.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

3-B. Call to Order

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at All Saints of America Orthodox Church in Alexandria, Virginia, at 8:00 AM, Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting, reconvened at the Hilton in Springfield, VA, with prayer at 10:34 AM. Fr. Rentel called the meeting to order, conducted the roll call, and reviewed the agenda and schedule for the day. He informed the Council that two resolutions that had been submitted by the Pension Committee but not yet considered have been withdrawn.

2-H. Property Committee

2-H.1. MOTION RENTEL/LEKANOF – To move into executive session. CARRIED.

In executive session, Gregory Honshul and Ray Steeb provided an update from the Property Committee on efforts to sell the Church's Westwood property in Oyster Bay Cove (Syosset), NY.

2-H.2. MOTION RENTEL/RHODES - To move out of executive session. CARRIED.

The following motion that had been tabled at the 2023 Spring Session of the Council and referred to the Property Committee for further consideration was presented and discussed in executive session with a vote taking place in open session.

3-H.2. MOTION KRETA/RALICH - That a licensed appraiser be engaged to provide a current market value appraisal of the Westwood property, possibly hiring Leo & Scoblete, the firm that had conducted a previous appraisal in 2019, to update their \$5.7 million appraisal of Westwood as vacant land to include the mansion/buildings at a cost of approximately \$1500 before the Metropolitan Council considers any offer. DEFEATED with one (1) vote (Kreta) in favor, 27 opposed, two (2) abstentions (Burns, Ralich).

Before proceeding to Legal Matters, Fr. Rentel read the text of a letter he has addressed to the Nescott family expressing condolences from the Metropolitan Council on the occasion of Gregory's repose. Another letter from His Beatitude will also be presented to the Nescott family at the interment tomorrow.

P. Legal matters

P.1. MOTION RENTEL/ISAAC – To move into executive session. CARRIED.

In executive session, David Lane, Legal Committee Chairman, presented a report regarding current and pending legal matters affecting the Church. Questions and discussion ensued.

P.2. MOTION RENTEL/LANE - To move out of executive session. CARRIED.

R. Treasurer's Report (attached)

Andrew Smith highlighted the attached Treasurer's report and appendices that included the 2023 financial performance report through June 30. Unrestricted net income was \$68,000 through the second quarter. There was also discussion about communications and OCA fundraising efforts. He noted that performance of endowment and restricted funds has improved over 2022.

Following a break for lunch at 12:58 PM, the meeting resumed at 1:46 PM.

Before continuation of the Treasurer's report, Archpriest Maxim Isaac read the following statement addressed to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon from His Grace, Bishop Alexei and the Diocese of Alaska:

"On behalf of the mother diocese of Sitka and Alaska, I would like to thank Your Beatitude for your unwavering support of the needs of the Diocese of Alaska through your personal pledge to the Clergy Stipend Fund and through the encouragement you offer to others to give and support our Diocese. By the grace of God, and through the generosity of so many of the dioceses represented in this Council, we have made some progress in the Clergy Stipend Fund. And for our part, although the diocesan finances are not being helped directly by any of these funds and we are financially struggling, we do continue to give our widow's mite, our tithe of ten percent to the Orthodox Church in America, in support of His Beatitude's vision and the good work of the national Church"

Fr. Rentel then enjoined the Council to express profound gratitude to Andrew Smith for his sometimes difficult and multifaceted work for the OCA, which he accomplishes in addition to other full-time employment and family responsibilities.

Andrew Smith continued his report highlighting his attached report regarding a received bequest, endowments and restricted funds. He then outlined the finance office restructuring transition that has taken place with the utilization of outsourcing for many functions.

Andrew then introduced Frank Lou and Stephanie Crocenzi from Satty, Levine & Ciacco, CPAs, P.C., the present external auditing firm for the Orthodox Church in America, who offered the attached PowerPoint presentation to review the external audit of the attached 2022 financial statements and responded to questions from Council members. After completion of their presentation and departure, Andrew Smith proposed the following motion.

**R.1. MOTION SMITH/POPESCU –
WHEREAS, Satty, Levine, and Ciacco, CPAS, P.C., (Satty & Partners) has audited the financial records of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) for the year ended December 31, 2022; and,**

WHEREAS, Satty & Partners has produced draft financial statements with an unmodified opinion, noting that the “financial statements... present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Orthodox Church in America as of December 31, 2022...”; and,

WHEREAS, Satty & Partners has presented these financial statements and their opinion to the Metropolitan Council on October 12, 2023; and,

WHEREAS, OCA Administration will work with Satty & Partners to finalize the footnotes to the financial statements,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

The Metropolitan Council accepts the results of the 2022 audit and authorizes the Chancellor to sign the Management Representation Letter for final issuance of the 2022 financial statements upon completion of the footnotes. CARRIED with one (1) abstention (Kreta).

Andrew Smith answered further questions regarding the external auditing firm and the outsourcing of financial operations. He then provided comments on the proposed 2024 budget and noted that it is substantially the same as in 2023. He noted that the budget has been thoroughly vetted by the Finance and Investment Committee. After extensive discussion of the 2024 proposed budget by the Council, the following motion was presented.

R.2. MOTION LEKANOF/RHODES –

WHEREAS, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) Treasurer, in consultation with the other Officers of the OCA, has drafted and presented a 2024 budget; and

WHEREAS, budgeted revenues for diocesan contributions are based on the contribution percentages for 2024 enumerated in the funding resolution adopted at the 20th All-American Council and the OCA’s best current information on anticipated diocesan budgets for 2024; and

WHEREAS, other budgeted revenues, including unrestricted giving and releases from restriction, are based on the best current information available to the OCA administration; and

WHEREAS, the budget includes use of unrestricted reserve for expenses associated with the maintenance of Westwood and grant matching; and,

WHEREAS, budgeted personnel expenses include a 3% cost-of-living increase for W-2 employees and increases for clergy that are part of a multi-year effort to bring clergy compensation in line with OCA clergy compensation guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, budgeted personnel expenses include the most updated information available on such non-salary offerings as health insurance, pension contribution, and other fringe; and,

WHEREAS, the budget includes explicit designation of housing allowance amounts for eligible clergy members that align with reasonable expectations for actual housing costs in the District of Columbia metro region; and,

WHEREAS, the Finance and Investment committee of the Metropolitan Council has reviewed and endorsed this proposed budget;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

The Metropolitan Council adopts the 2024 budget as presented. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Andrew Smith, Fr. Rentel and Metropolitan Tikhon provided background regarding proposed spending of the unrestricted bequest received from the Petrykowski family. Andrew Smith indicated that the motion was formulated by the Finance and Investment Committee based on recommendations from the OCA Officers, with the Committee adding a stipulation that 10% be set aside for future endeavors. The Committee therefore proposes the following motion for adoption by the Council.

R.3. MOTION FINANCE & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE –

WHEREAS, Jerome and Daria Petrykowski, longtime members of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Parma, OH (active in the Orthodox Church in America [OCA] at the parish, diocesan, and national levels) named the OCA a beneficiary of the Petrykowski Family Trust; and

WHEREAS, upon Mr. Petrykowski's repose in 2021 (Mrs. Petrykoswki having preceded him in death) and settlement of his estate in 2023, the OCA received \$56,638.66; and

WHEREAS, the Petrykowski bequest had no written designation of any restricted use; and

WHEREAS, the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America has identified several important initiatives in 2024 for which there is no current funding; and,

WHEREAS, these include the commission of a new icon of All Saints of North America in anticipation of the 2025 All-American Council, the funding of a pastoral formation conference in 2024, and the invitation to a delegation of hierarchs from a jurisdiction outside of the United States to visit at the expense of the OCA; and

WHEREAS, the Finance and Investment committee of the Metropolitan Council has reviewed and endorsed making this internal designation with the stipulation that 10% be set aside for future endeavors.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

- 1. The Metropolitan Council agrees to designate the Petrykowski Family Trust bequest for the purposes stated above with at least 10% being set aside for future endeavors; and**
- 2. The Metropolitan Council explicitly disclaims being bound by any precedent in future similar cases; and**
- 3. While not planning or intending to do so, the Metropolitan Council has the right to reverse this decision in the future, reverting any money remaining from the bequest to unrestricted use.**

4. This action is taken with gratitude to God for Mr. and Mrs. Petrykowski and their many years of service and stewardship to Christ's holy Church. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- R.4. MOTION SMITH/LEKANOF – To delegate authority to the Treasurer to approve housing allowance amounts within budgeted compensation for clergy employed by the OCA Chancery, with review by the Finance and Investment Committee. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

After providing the Council with clarifications in response to questions regarding housing allowances, Andrew Smith proposed the renewal of an unsecured promissory note with OCCIF. After discussion of several options regarding the invested funds, a motion was adopted as follows. Following

- R.5. MOTION SMITH/LANE – To renew for five years the previously invested unsecured promissory note with OCCIF (Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund) in the amount of \$150,000 at the currently offered simple interest rate of 4%. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Andrew Smith reported that he intends to investigate investment vehicles for the Church's unrestricted net assets, working together with the Finance and Investment Committee, and would present any concrete actions to the decision of the Metropolitan Council, as needed, at a future meeting. The Council agreed with this proposal. Fr. Rentel again expressed the Council's gratitude to Andrew Smith.

2-N. Pension Committee resolutions

The Pension Committee proposed a statement by the Council to memorialize yesterday's discussions and actions regarding the OCA Pension Plan. After some deliberation, a motion was adopted to issue the statement as follows.

- 2-N.1. MOTION LANE/RHODES – To adopt the following statement:

“The Metropolitan Council appreciates the renewed spirit of cooperation between the Pension Board and the Council exhibited at their joint meeting. The Council acknowledges the expediency of the mutual sharing of documents and information by the Pension Board, the Metropolitan Council Pension Committee, and the Metropolitan Council as a whole.

The Council looks forward to a Funding Improvement Plan (FIP) to be presented prior to the Regular Fall 2024 Session of the Metropolitan Council.

The Council looks forward to receiving the actuarial valuation report in early 2024 and the actuarial projection report that the Pension Board expects to receive at the conclusion of the 2023 calendar year.

Pursuant to item seven (7) of the resolution adopted at the 20th All-American Council, Mr. James Heinzman, CPA, CFP, presented benefit pension plan training to the joint meeting of the Pension Board and Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council found this training, and the questions and answers associated with it, very valuable.” CARRIED with one (1) abstention (Scratch).

Following a break at 3:38 PM, the meeting resumed at 3:52 PM.

S. New Business

Matushka Evelyn Kreta suggested that funding be allocated for a Spanish translation of the new OCA catechism. Several suggestions on this matter were discussed.

Fr. Rentel encouraged Council members to volunteer to work in Council committees according to their expertise.

Fr. Rentel reminded members that the Council’s Spring Session will take place by video conference on March 5 and March 7, 2024. He proposed that the 2024 Fall Session be scheduled in Springfield, Virginia on October 9 and 10, opening with a Divine Liturgy at the Primatial Cathedral in Washington, DC to mark Metropolitan Tikhon’s nameday. Several members suggested that both regular sessions of the Council held annually take place in person.

Discussion took place on retired clergy serving mission parishes and how that would affect their pensions. Fr. Matthew Tate, who is a member of the Pension Board, stated that this would be discussed by the Board.

T. Adjournment

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon suggested communication as a future important topic for in-depth discussion by the Council and to come up with common approaches at the various levels of the Church. He stated that he was inspired by this meeting and thanked everyone for their diligent work and participation. He expressed special appreciation to Matushka Kreta, whose term on the Council is expiring at this meeting, for her zealous work as a Council member. He again stressed the importance of effective communication, even in conveying Metropolitan Council decisions. His Beatitude then declared the Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council closed and adjourned the meeting with prayer at 4:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary