



**MINUTES
2021 Spring Session of
the Metropolitan Council
of the Orthodox Church in America**

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021
Wednesday, March 3, 2021
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* (3/3/2021 only)

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Antonio Perdomo

Archpriest Thomas Moore

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov

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

Mark Petasky (2/24/21 only)

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicki

Sharon Shingara

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest Elijah Mueller (2/24/21 only)

Robert Graban

Diocese of New England

Priest Theophan Whitfield

Evelyn Kreta

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman) (2/24/21 only) James P. Kornafel

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino Christopher Lewis

Archdiocese of Washington

Archpriest Valery Shemchuk Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge Ray Steeb

ABSENT (for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)

Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman) (Diocese of New York/New Jersey) – 3/3/21

Archpriest Michael Anderson (Diocese of the West)

Archpriest Elijah Mueller (Diocese of the Midwest) – 3/3/21

Andrew Smith (Treasurer) - 2/24/21

Dorothy Chaney (Diocese of Alaska)

Mark Petasky (Archdiocese of Canada) – 3/3/21

GUESTS (for all meetings unless otherwise indicated)

His Grace, Bishop Alexis of Bethesda, (Chairman – Office of Pastoral Life) – 2/24/21

Archpriest Nicholas Solak (“Thriving in Ministry” Clergy Peer Learning Program Director) – 2/24/2021

Archpriest Thomas Soroka (Project Manager for the Departments) – 3/3/2021

Priest Alessandro Margheritino (Acting Secretary)

Deacon Peter Ilchuk (All-American Council Manager) – 2/24/2021

Michael Crofton (Investment Advisor – The Philadelphia Trust Company) – 3/3/2021

Judge E.R. Lanier (OCA General Counsel) – 3/3/2021

Alexis Liberovsky (Recording Secretary)

Michael Stieglitz (Administrator, OCA Pension Plan) – 2/24/2021

Susan Wisnewski (Accounting Manager) – 3/3/2021

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

A. Call to Order

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the session with prayer and called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

B. Agenda: Introduction (attached) & Roll Call

Father Alexander Rentel reviewed the attached agenda for the meeting, conducted the roll call and announced guests who would be present at various points during this meeting (see participants list). He requested approval of Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary for the meeting, which was accepted without objection

C. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)

Father Rentel presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the regular Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council convened on Thursday, August 27, 2020, Wednesday, September 16 – Thursday, September 17, 2020, and Wednesday, November 4, 2020. After consideration of comments on formatting of the text, the minutes of the 2020 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council 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 labors in spite of restrictions related to the pandemic. In particular, he noted recent OCA publication projects and offered prayers for those who have recently reposed, especially retired Chancellor, Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak.

E. Property Committee (attached)

Metropolitan Tikhon introduced the attached Property Committee report, which was delivered by Ray Steeb and indicated no new major developments regarding the sale of Westwood (the Chancery property). Marketing strategy going forward and related issues were discussed. Mr. Steeb indicated that space needs assessments for the three aspects (Chancery offices, Metropolitan's residence, Archives) of chancery relocation need to be done to facilitate the process going forward.

F. 20th All-American Council (attached)

Deacon Peter Ilchuk, Council Manager, delivered the attached report on preparations for the postponed 20th All-American Council (AAC) now scheduled for July 18-22, 2022 in Baltimore, MD. He noted that the FOCA convention would precede the AAC at the same location on July 15-18, 2022. A meeting of the Preconciliar Commission is expected to convene after Pascha for further planning.

G. Pension Board Report (attached)

A report from the OCA Pension Board, presented by Michael Stieglitz, Plan Administrator, provided an overview of the current status of the Plan. The Council reiterated its resolution adopted a year ago, requesting that the Holy Synod create a joint commission, composed of Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council members, to enforce compliance with the mandate of the OCA Statute and All-American Council decisions, that all eligible clergy are to be enrolled in the OCA Pension Plan.

H. Thriving in Ministry Presentation & Clergy Health Synaxis Proposal (attached)

The Office of Pastoral Life made a two-fold presentation to the Council. Archpriest Nicholas Solak provided an update on the Thriving in Ministry peer learning program for clergy and their spouses of all jurisdictions, which is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. He, together with His Grace Bishop Alexis of Bethesda, Chairman of the Office of Pastoral Life, submitted a proposal and funding request of \$33,500 for a series of Clergy Health Synaxes. In adopting amendments to the previously approved OCA budget for 2021 at the second meeting of the session on March 3, the Council authorized this funding.

I. Report of the Acting Secretary (attached)

Priest Alessandro Margheritino presented his first report as OCA Acting Secretary, highlighting information technology issues, SMPAC (Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee), OCA Archives, and publications projects. Father Rentel moderated discussion and questions especially pertaining to the Desk Calendar. Father Margheritino asked for further suggestions regarding the Desk Calendar, especially on how to make it more useful. He indicated that for the time being he is working remotely from Ohio but expects to relocate to New York after his release from the Diocese of the Midwest in late May.

J. Adjournment

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon stated that he is encouraged, in spite of the pandemic. He noted that we are flexing our spiritual muscles in finding new ways to accomplish our work in a positive manner. He adjourned the first meeting of the Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council with a closing prayer at 3:51 PM.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

2-A. Call to Order

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting with prayer at 1:04 PM

2-B. Agenda: Introduction (attached) & Roll Call

Father Alexander Rentel reviewed the agenda for the meeting and conducted the roll call.

2-C. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)

Father Rentel presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America convened on Thursday, November 19, 2020. The minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the Metropolitan Council on November 19, 2020 were approved by consensus as presented.

2-D. Metropolitan's Report

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that he has nothing further to report since the first meeting of the Spring Session.

K. Chancellor's Report (attached)

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor, presented the attached report from his office highlighting his own activities and the work of the Chancery staff and the communications tools that are being used when work is done remotely. He outlined personnel transitions and the need to fill several positions. He closed by indicating upcoming meetings and preparations for Great Lent

L. Treasurer's Report (attached)

Andrew Smith, OCA Treasurer, introduced Michael Crofton, Investment Advisor from The Philadelphia Trust Company, who introduced the attached report on the performance of the investment portfolio for the Orthodox Church in America managed by the Philadelphia Trust Company, effective January 31, 2021. Mr. Crofton answered questions from the Council.

M. Legal matters (attached)

Judge E.R. Lanier, OCA General Counsel, presented the attached joint report of the Legal Committee of the Metropolitan Council and the General Counsel. It highlighted successfully concluded litigation, participation in the work of the Legal Committee of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops, and matters connected to the relocation of the OCA, as well as diocesan and parish support in legal issues. He also explained the attached *"Memorandum of Understanding between and among the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America; the Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk; and the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America"* that was recently prepared in order to clarify the status of St. Tikhon's Monastery as a stavropeghial institution located on the territory of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. The document awaits final approval by the Holy Synod at its upcoming meeting.

L. Treasurer's Report (continued)

Mr. Smith continued the attached presentation from the Office of the Treasurer with a review of initial financials for 2021, a final report for 2020, the internal audit for 2020, donations in 2020 through the Stewards of the OCA, and amendments to the previously adopted 2021 budget with new projections of increases in both

revenue and expenses, while maintaining a balanced budget. He indicated that, in spite of some challenges and uncertainties due the pandemic, the Church's finances are showing overall positive results.

L.1. MOTION DIMITRI/GRABAN – To accept the report of the internal Auditing Committee for 2020 as presented. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

L.2. MOTION DIMITRI/HONSHUL – To adopt amendments to the 2021 budget as presented. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Smith also reported on budgetary considerations for the postponed 20th All-American Council and his discussions with Deacon Peter Ilchuk in this regard. A suggested candidate was presented for a vacancy on the Auditing Committee and proposal of additional candidates was requested.

N. OCA Departments update (attached)

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Project Manager of the Departments of the Orthodox Church in America, delivered the attached report highlighting the various completed, ongoing, or pending projects or tasks of the six currently active Departments of the Church. An additional discussion took place concerning preparation of an adult catechism, which is an interdepartmental project coordinated by Fr. Thomas Soroka that is now nearing completion. Spanish language missionary work and publications were also discussed.

O. Internal Metropolitan Council Matters

Fr. Rentel announced a proposal for a joint meeting of the Metropolitan Council with the Holy Synod as well as diocesan chancellors to take place in the fall. This proposal has been endorsed by the Standing Synod. If travel is possible, the meeting would be in-person and would be convened in early October at a location to be determined.

2-J. Adjournment

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon encouraged Metropolitan Council members to share the work of the Council within their dioceses and thanked members for their work and prayers. His Beatitude adjourned the Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council with prayer at 3:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary