



**MINUTES
of the Joint Meeting of the Standing Synod
and the 2019 Fall Session of
the Metropolitan Council**

**Wednesday, September 18 – Thursday, September 19, 2019
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY**

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

PARTICIPANTS

STANDING SYNOD

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon (*Thursday only*)
His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin

His Eminence, Archbishop Irénée
His Eminence, Archbishop Michael (*Thursday only*)

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

CHURCH OFFICERS

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *Chancellor*

Andrew Smith, *Treasurer*

MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Archpriest Antonio Perdomo
Archpriest Thomas Moore
Archpriest Kirill Sokolov

Lynnell Brunswig
Mark Linnehan

DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES

Diocese of Alaska

Archpriest David Askoak

Albanian Archdiocese

Archpriest Dennis Rhodes (*except Thursday
afternoon*)

Donna Dimitri

Bulgarian Diocese

Priest Gabriel Bilas

Bogdan Popescu

Archdiocese of Canada

Protodeacon Jesse Isaac

Mark Petasky

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

Sharon Shingara

Diocese of the Midwest

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs

Robert Graban

Diocese of New England

Priest Theophan Whitfield

Michael Danchak

Diocese of New York/New Jersey

Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman)

James P. Kornafel

Diocese of the South

Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglino

Christopher Lewis

Archdiocese of Washington

Gregory Honshul

Diocese of the West

Archpriest John Dresko

David Lane, Esq.

Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

Ray Steeb

ABSENT

Archpriest Valery Shemchuk (*Archdiocese of Washington*)

Dorothy Chaney (*Diocese of Alaska*)

Katherine Vitko (*Member elected by the All-American Council*)

GUESTS (*for all sessions unless otherwise indicated*)

Archimandrite Alexis (Trader), (*Chairman, Department of Pastoral Life - Wednesday*)

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky (*Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations*

- Thursday afternoon)

Archpriest John Schroedel, (*Technical Manager - Wednesday afternoon, by phone*)

Priest Gleb McFatter (*Chairman, OCA Pension Board - Wednesday afternoon*)

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak (*Secretary to the Metropolitan & Director, Stewards of the OCA – Thursday*)

Judge E.R. Lanier (*OCA General Counsel*)

Alexis Liberovsky (*Recording Secretary*)

Barry Migyanko (*staff*)

Dimitrios Rentel (*Youth Project coordinator – Thursday afternoon, by phone*)

Michael Stieglitz (*Acting Administrator, OCA Pension Plan - Wednesday afternoon*)

John Thetford (*staff - except Wednesday afternoon*)

Susan Wisnewski (*Accounting Manager - Wednesday & Thursday afternoons*)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

A. Call to Order (attached)

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, the morning session was opened with prayer at 11:03 AM. Due to absence of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the day's sessions were chaired by His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, who read the attached Statement Regarding Metropolitan's Absence.

B. Agenda: Introduction (attached)

Father Alexander Rentel introduced the agenda for the meeting, indicating minor changes in sequence of items. The revised agenda was approved by consensus.

C. Roll Call/Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)

Father Rentel then conducted the roll call, announced guests who would be present at various points during this meeting (see participants list), and noted the absence of several members. He requested approval of Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary for the meeting, which was accepted without objection. Father Rentel then presented for approval the attached draft minutes of the previous regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council on February 13-15, 2019 and the special meeting on April 18, 2019 for the sole purpose of endorsing Andrew D. Smith as Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, which was conducted via teleconference. After corrections in the list of participants for the meeting on April 18, 2019, the minutes of both meetings were approved by consensus.

D. Welcome

Archbishop Benjamin welcomed the members of the Metropolitan Council present and noted that it is a time of mourning for the Church due to the recent repose of Archbishop Nikon as well as Archpriests Steven Belonick and John Matusiak, whose ministries had a church-wide significance. Memory Eternal was sung for these newly-departed clergy. He extended a particular welcome to the new members of the Metropolitan Council.

E. Chancellor's Report (attached)

Father Alexander Rentel presented the attached Chancellor's report. In addition to the activities of the Chancellor and an overview of the work of the chancery, the report also presented the current work of SMPAC and ORSMA and the progress of efforts in chancery restructuring. Questions and discussion followed.

E.1. Department of Pastoral Life (attached)

Archimandrite Alexis (Trader), new Chairman of the Department of Pastoral Life, presented the attached report on revitalizing the Department's work, outlined recent activities, and projected undertakings. Questions and discussion followed.

F. Internal Governance Committee (attached)

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Chairman of the Metropolitan Council's Internal Governance Committee, presented the attached report, which outlined its work in revising Council Member's Handbook and the committee structure of the Council.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:27 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:32 PM.

Fr. Sokolov further elaborated on the Committee's report and proposed the following resolutions.

F.1. MOTION SOKOLOV/DIMITRI - As recommended by the Internal Governance Committee, that the Ethics Committee and Human Resources Committee be merged and reconstituted as the "Human Resources & Ethics Committee" with its Charter/Job Description being as presented in the September 18, 2019 draft of the Handbook. CARRIED.

F.2. MOTION SOKOLOV/DANCHAK - As recommended by the Internal Governance Committee, that the "Financial Development Committee" be removed from the Council Member's Handbook list of committees and that the Finance and Investment Committee's Charter/Job Description be revised as presented in the September 18, 2019 draft of the Handbook. Namely, that the following provision be added: "Receive reports from the Stewards of the OCA (SOCA) and present appropriate recommendations for

action concerning the Church’s fund-raising policies and activities to the Metropolitan Council.” CARRIED.

In discussion of the following motion, an amendment was proposed and defeated. The original motion with the insertion of the words “discretionary line item” replacing “discretionary fund” was then approved as follows.

F.3. MOTION SOKOLOV/HOFFMAN - As recommended by the Internal Governance Committee, that the Charity Committee be dissolved as a standing committee and that in its place a discretionary line item (in the amount budgeted for the previously existing Charity Committee) be established for the use of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon. This discretionary line item shall be subject to yearly audit by the Audit Committee and external auditors. Guidelines for the handling of the discretionary line item shall be drafted, reviewed and approved by the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED with 1 opposed (Ciarciaglino).

F.4. MOTION SOKOLOV/DRESKO - As recommended by the Internal Governance Committee, to create a “Technology Committee” of the Metropolitan Council with a Charter as presented in the September 18, 2019 draft of the Handbook. The Technology Committee will be empowered to invite subject experts to serve as advising members of the Committee. CARRIED.

F.5. MOTION SOKOLOV/POPESCU - As recommended by the Internal Governance Committee, to create a “Properties Committee” of the Metropolitan Council with a Charter as presented in the September 18, 2019 draft of the Handbook. The Properties Committee will be empowered to invite subject experts to serve as advising members of the Committee. CARRIED.

G. Legal matters (attached)

G.1. MOTION DRESKO/BRECKENRIDGE – To move into executive session. CARRIED.

In executive session, David Lane, Legal Committee Chairman, and Judge E.R. Lanier, OCA General Counsel, presented confidential aspects on a variety of current and potential legal issues. Discussion ensued.

G.2. MOTION DRESKO/GRABAN – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.

Following a short recess at 2:37 PM, the session resumed at 2:47 PM.

H. Treasurer’s Report (attached)

Andrew Smith, new OCA Treasurer, highlighted his first report to the Metropolitan Council. He thanked former Treasurer, Melanie Ringa, and Accounting Manager, Susan Wisnewski, for their assistance during his transition into the responsibilities of Treasurer. In the course of his report, he proposed the following resolutions.

H.1. MOTION SMITH/RHODES - To designate \$21,000 of Fr. Alexander Rentel’s salary as housing allowance for 2019 and following years. CARRIED.

H.2. MOTION SMITH/DIMITRI - To adopt a spending rate of 3% of the prior year-end value of endowments, not to override any purpose restriction or earnings-type restriction that applies to any endowed fund. CARRIED.

H.3. MOTION SMITH/DRESKO - To adopt the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the OCA Chancery and the OCA Pension Board. CARRIED.

H.4. MOTION SMITH/RHODES - To approve a plan to migrate from Blackbaud to QuickBooks using Techsoup (available to not-for-profits). CARRIED.

Discussion and questions on numerous financial issues followed. Susan Wisnewski, Accounting Manager, who manages daily financial operations of the OCA, provided additional clarification on some issues. Mr. Smith indicated that the 2020 budget would be presented for approval at the end of the meeting as some decisions by the Council during the meeting could alter the budget. He outlined ongoing efforts in chancery restructuring, welcomed new staff members and thanked remaining and outgoing staff.

J. Information Technology report (attached)

Archpriest John Schroedel presented the attached report by video conference call. In particular, he provided website traffic statistics and answered questions from Council members.

I. Pension Board Report (attached)

Priest Gleb McFatter, Chairman of the OCA Pension Board and Michael Stieglitz, Acting Administrator of the OCA Pension Plan, presented the attached report on the current status of the Pension Plan and answered questions.

K. 20th All-American Council (attached)

Father Alexander Rentel presented the attached report from Deacon Peter Ilchuk, Council Manager, on initial preparations being undertaken for the 20th All-American Council scheduled to be convened in Baltimore in July 2021. He noted that the first meeting of the Preconciliar Commission would be taking place at the Council site the following week. Extensive discussion on various aspects of the All-American Council took place.

The day's sessions were adjourned with prayer at 4:30 PM.

After dinner, orientation for new Council members conducted by David Lane and Judge E.R. Lanier took place.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:08 AM.

L. Metropolitan's Report

Metropolitan Tikhon presented an oral report. He apologized for not being present the previous day due to participation in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops together with Archbishop Michael. He thanked Archbishop Benjamin and Fr. Alexander Rentel for facilitating the sessions of the previous day. He expressed grief at the repose of Archbishop Nikon as well as Fathers Belonick and Matusiak. He welcomed new members of the Council. He indicated approval of decisions by the Council during the previous day's sessions. He provided an update on chancery restructuring and welcomed new staff members. He lauded the individual work and talents of current chancery staff members and those who have recently left the staff. He provided an overview of his activities in relations with other churches, particularly the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Archdiocese of America. He stressed that there are no plans for the Orthodox Church in America to give up her autocephaly. His Beatitude then answered questions from Council members.

Following a short recess at 10:31 AM, the session resumed at 10:47 AM.

Father Alexander Rentel announced that an email vote would be conducted concerning mission planting grants. He also indicated that Council members should sign up for committee membership with Fr. Kirill Sokolov.

M. Location Committee

Father Alexander Rentel presented an oral report on future location of the Metropolitan's residence and chancery. He indicated that the locations committee would soon begin its work. He noted that all options are being considered, including the possibility of staying at the current location. However, changes and improvements will have to take place, as the status quo on many levels cannot continue. Judge Lanier stated that there are no legal obstacles to redomesticating the OCA corporation in another state nor any impediments to the possible sale of Westwood (the current chancery property). Andrew Smith reported on the zoning status of Westwood and indicated that an appraisal would be done soon. Various factors pertaining to chancery location and the residence of the Metropolitan within his own diocese were discussed. It was stated that Westwood's basement could never be made fully adequate for housing the OCA Archives. Various factors concerning relocation of the OCA Archives were discussed. It was suggested that a visionary approach is needed for decisions on the future location of the chancery.

N. Archives Restoration (attached)

Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist, presented the attached progress report on media digitization now being done in the OCA Archives, with funding provided by a grant. He answered questions pertaining to the digitization project and other archival issues.

R. 50th Anniversary Committee

Archbishop Benjamin gave an oral report with updated plans for various events in conjunction with the upcoming 50th anniversaries of the granting of autocephaly and the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska, particularly several pilgrimages to Alaska as well as projected publications. Questions and discussion ensued.

P. Stewards of the OCA (attached)

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA), presented the attached report highlighting ongoing fundraising efforts to support the work of OCA Departments. He additionally spoke of the book in preparation for the 50th anniversary of autocephaly.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:30 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:30 PM.

Q. External Affairs Report

Father Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered an oral report covering OCA relations with other Orthodox Churches and involvement in ecumenical organizations. He also highlighted recent significant events in Orthodoxy worldwide as well as his own participation in several ecumenical meetings both abroad and in the US. Questions and discussion followed.

O. Youth Project (attached)

Dimitrios Rentel, youth project coordinator, presented by video conference call the attached report concerning his travels this summer and preparation of a survey to determine the scope of OCA Youth Ministry in the future. He provide some preliminary results of the survey and indicated that, after full analysis, complete results would be presented to the next meeting of the Metropolitan Council.

Following a short recess at 2:46 PM, the session resumed at 3:01 PM.

S. Presentation of 2020 Budget (attached)

Andrew Smith presented the 2020 OCA budget included in the Treasurer's Report and proposed the following resolutions, which were adopted after discussion.

- S.1. MOTION DRESKO/BILAS – In accordance with the motion adopted the previous day that applies a spending rate of 3% of the prior year-end value of endowments, to apply this spending rate to the Mission Fund, which is an endowed fund. CARRIED.**
- S.2. MOTION SMITH/LEWIS - To adopt the 2020 budget as presented while combining line 10 (release from restriction - restricted funds) with line 9 (release from restriction - endowment). CARRIED.**

V. Meeting Dates in 2020

Council members agreed to proposed dates for meetings of the Metropolitan Council in 2020. The meetings were scheduled for February 5-6 and September 16-17.

T. Open Discussion

A wide variety of current issues affecting the life of the Church was discussed, with a significant focus on theological education and the status of OCA seminaries.

W. Adjournment

- W.1 MOTION SOKOLOV/CIARCIAGLINO – To adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.**

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 4:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
Recording Secretary