

**MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST**  
**Hyatt Place Hotel, Midway Airport, Chicago, Illinois • 10 December 2019**

**I. OPENING.**

The meeting opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 10:10am. Bishop PAUL officially called the meeting to order. Introductions of all present.

**II. ATTENDANCE.**

Present: His Grace, Bishop Paul; Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor; Priest Herman Kincaid, Secretary; Robert Koncel, Treasurer.

Council Members: Archpriests James Dank and Elijah Mueller, Priests Andrew Bartek, Benjamin Tucci, Jacob Van Sickle, Protodeacon George Potym, Mary Ann Bobulsky, Ellyn Gillette, Robert Graban, Kenneth Herman, Simeon Morbey and Carrie Sabourin.

Deans: Archpriests Alexander Kuchta, Andrew Clements, Timothy Sawchak, Dusan Koprivica, Paul Wesche, and Priest Joel Weir.

Philip Sokolov, Bishop’s Secretary.

Priest Joel Wilson, designer of the new Diocesan website.

**III. SCRIPTURE READINGS.**

Ellyn Gillette – 1 Timothy 1:8-14.

Fr. Jacob Van Sickle – Mark 8:22-26.

Members offered reflections on the readings.

**IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.**

Motion to accept: Simeon Morbey, seconded by Fr. James Dank. Motion passed.

**V. BISHOP’S REPORT.**

1. Candidates for the Priesthood - This is being discussed at Deanery Meetings. I released prayers that I would like to have prayed. I have been busy with many ordinations - I have ordained 5 people in the past few months; 2 more in Missouri in December; one more in January. Thanked Fr. Elijah and the St. Macrina Program.
2. Nature of council meetings moving to a more ministerial model and less business oriented.
3. Charitable Ministries - I don't want to ask money from the parishes; I want to find other ways by planning fundraisers. We need to have a Director of Development for the Diocese, who has some expertise with handling donations.

**VI. CHANCELLOR’S REPORT.**

1. Update on Burbank Property: Robert Koncel was asked by Fr. Zdinak to step out of the meeting for discussion. The Diocesan move to Burbank by February 1, 2020, is moving forward; we have a Memorandum of Understanding with the parish there. We pay utilities for the house; we pay the parish \$1,000/month rent; they pay their insurance but we pay renter's insurance. The House does need improvements. Mr. Koncel, since he has retired from his secular employment, has been doing a lot of the legwork getting the bids. The kitchen is dirty and needs updating. Hardwood floors on 2nd and 3rd floor need to be refinished. The estimates came in at \$30,269. Mr. Koncel is offering to do many of the renovations himself for \$10,000 for labor, plus \$702 handyman insurance. Total cost would be \$18,088. (This has been presented by Fr. Zdinak in accordance with the OCA's Conflict of Interest Policy - Mr. Koncel was not present in the meeting.) Simeon Morbey noted that the Finance Committee decided to have the Diocese follow the OCA’s Conflict of Interest Policy, thus the reason Robert Koncel was asked to leave the meeting for discussion. Fr. Zdinak is the official presenter of Robert Koncel’s proposal. MOTION – Mueller/Tucci:

To accept Robert Koncel's written proposal to act as general contractor for the renovation of the Burbank property on behalf of the Diocese. Discussion and questions on the motion. MOTION PASSED.

2. Retirement: Fr. Zdinak to continue as Chancellor beyond his January 1, 2020, retirement date as Dean of St. Theodosius Cathedral. Discussed future pastorate of St. Theodosius Cathedral. Fr. Zdinak and Fr. Adamcio will serve as supply priests for the cathedral until such time as a new Dean can be assigned.

#### **VII. DEANERY REPORTS.**

1. **Chicago.** Fr. Alexander Kuchta reported Fr. Stacey Richter's presence has led to renewed activity and an extensive renovation of St. Elizabeth in Chesterton. Merrillville agreed to offer back compensation to Fr. Peter Bodnar in the amount of \$30,000 over two years. Fr. Bodnar, during his pastorate, offered to forego compensation increases until the parish mortgage was under control and/or retired. This retroactive compensation settles this issue. The Wheaton parish is doing a Mission Exploration in Aurora, IL.
2. **Cleveland.** Fr. Andrew Clements reported on Fr. Zdinak's retirement. Fr. Clements will be the administrator of St. Theodosius Cathedral after Fr. Zdinak's retirement.
3. **Indianapolis.** Fr. Joel Weir still adjusting to role as Dean. Fr. Gregory Ealy has moved into Dayton and is doing well. Still looking to fill pastorate in Lima.
4. **Kansas City.** Fr. Timothy Sawchak reported that Fr. Christopher at St. Michael's is looking to retire post knee replacement surgery. Assets from the now closed Doslege parish are proceeding to the Diocese per our Diocesan Bylaws. Discussion ensued regarding the process for such transfer to the Diocese of any closed property.
5. **Michigan.** Fr. Dusan Koprova reported on St. Peter & St. Paul Cathedral's sale of their hall. They have a buyer and are proceeding with the sale. They will condense within the remaining property. A renovation donation for the Cathedral proper was recently received. St. Mark's will celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in conjunction with the Deanery's celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the OCA's autocephaly.
6. **Minneapolis.** Fr. Paul Wesche reported the Deanery is well staffed by competent priests except in Minot. Fr. Andrew Jaye is doing great work in St. Cloud. Minot has a number of issues needing attention before a new rector can be assigned. Bismarck parish has a diverse congregation from various Orthodox backgrounds. Conditions are favorable in Bismarck to open a mission. General discussion ensued on the nature of missions, why parishes close and the need to revitalize our current parishes.

#### **VIII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.**

Next meeting is in February. Searching for Secretary for the OCA. Relocation study from Syosset to D.C. area is ongoing. Metropolitan TIKHON desires to reside within his diocese.

#### **IX. ST. MACRINA ORTHODOX INSTITUTE.**

Fr. Mueller asks support to promote the program in areas where there is not a diaconal presence. Program also educates lay people for ministry, including institutional chaplains. Discussion ensued regarding the nature of diakonia in parish life.

*Lunch at 12:12pm.*

#### **X. BILL MARIANES VIDEO.**

A video from Ted Talk was viewed: *Start with Why: How great leaders inspire action.* A discussion ensued on whether to invite Bill Marianes to an upcoming Council meeting. MOTION – Morbey/Graban: To invite Bill Marianes to our future Diocesan Council meeting. MOTION PASSED.

**XI. FAMILY WEBSITE.**

Fr. Jacob mentioned postings by His Grace. Not many responses from public. Discussion ensued on how to generate publicity for this website.

**XII. WEBSITE.**

Presented by Fr. Joel Wilson. Focusing on representing the old website content in a new way, all in line with His Grace's mandate to equip the saints. Walked Council members through the pages and links of the new website format.

ACTION ITEM: Ellyn Gillette will research and report back on the proper structure of our current investment funds, their relationship to one another and proper use by the Diocese, especially in relation to the work of a potential development officer.

**XIII. TREASURER.**

1. Reviewed printed financial reports and fielded questions.
2. Offered a summary of pursuing a life insurance policy for His Grace. Unfortunately, His Grace is "uninsurable". To ensure financial stability of the diocese during a transition of episcopal leadership, the Finance Committee recommends creating a savings type account to resolve this issue.
3. A separate checking account was created by the Diocese for the Mother Maria Charitable Ministry. The members of Mother Maria will not have access to disbursement.
4. Directors and Officers Insurance: This needs to be updated for the Diocese for theft up to one million dollars.
5. Burbank Property: A memo of understanding has been reviewed and signed by both the Diocese and the Parish Council of Archangel Michael in Burbank. Over one hundred hours of work has been completed by Rob since the Diocesan Assembly. Work continues.
6. \$100,000 donation to the Diocese by the Cecil & Elizabeth Browning Trust "to be used for the Parish Cemetery of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Buckner, Illinois".

MOTION – Morbey/Dank: To place financial surplus realized in the fiscal year as a result of the 13% proportional giving policy be placed in the Financial Reserves budget line item for the next fiscal year. MOTION PASSED.

**XIV. OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. Move to Burbank: covered during Chancellor's Report.
- B. Gift policy. ACTION ITEM: Simeon Morbey will wordsmith the OCA Gift Policy to reflect Diocesan needs for future review by Council members.

**XV. NEW BUSINESS.**

- A. \$50,000 donation: Received for use within the Diocese. Discussion ensued regarding use and allocation of the donation. MOTION – Tucci/Herman: For the Finance Committee, with Ellyn Gillette, research potential use of the donation and present ideas to His Grace and Council members. MOTION PASSED. ACTION ITEM: Finance Committee, with Ellyn Gillette, follow up the above-mentioned motion. ACTION ITEM: Ellyn Gillette, Mary Ann and Fr. Van Sickle are appointed as a new task force to investigate a seminary endowment fund creation.
- B. *The Vigil* newsletter. MOTION: Morbey/Mueller – This issue of reinstating *The Vigil* be reconsidered after a new diocesan Communications Director is appointed. MOTION PASSED.

**XVI. NEXT MEETING.**

In May or June. Will allocate 3 days instead of usual 2 (one extra for Bill Marianes presentation).

**XVII. OTHER.**

Fr. Sawchak mentioned that the report of the Youth Coordinator should have been on the agenda and a report should have been submitted.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with the singing of “It is truly meet” upon motion by Mr. Morbey, seconded by Fr. Dank at 3:39pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Mr. Philip Sokolov with Priest Herman Kincaid, Diocesan Secretary*