

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting • 2 June 2020

I. OPENING.

The meeting opened with the singing of Ascension Troparion at 9:05am CST. Archbishop PAUL officially called the meeting to order. Introductions of all present.

II. ATTENDANCE.

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

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

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

Philip Sokolov, Archbishop's Secretary.

Absent: Archpriest Andrew Clements.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

Mr. Koncel wanted the minutes to state clearly that he would be reimbursed \$10,702. The \$18,088 figure was thought to include materials. Motion to accept: Simeon Morbey, seconded by Fr. James Dank. Motion passed.

IV. ARCHBISHOP'S REPORT.

1. Commented about how much he enjoys living in Burbank, Illinois. Emphasized how pleased the results of the rectory renovation were and commended Rob Koncel for saving the diocese so much money. Look forward to in person meetings at the new chancery. Expressed concern for the status of Archangel Michael – there are options being discussed by Archbishop, Fr. Zdinak, Fr. Kuchta, Fr. Segvich.
2. Travel stopped after trip for Annunciation. Staying in the chancery for the most time. Celebrated Pascha at Cathedral as a priest. Communed and/or preached at local parishes only a few times. Commented on the process for parishes to reopen in a phased manner regarding the Covid situation. The process varies depending on regional statistics.
3. Life of the diocese continues amid the pandemic. Met with seminarians virtually this year. It has been very hard for them because they couldn't even go to church there.
4. Anonymous donation of \$50,000 (discussed at prior meeting). Would like to have \$25,000 go to Mother Maria Charitable Ministry and \$25,000 for seminarians. Other ideas were discussed. \$50,000 was requested by donor to be used for clergy families in need. This has been completed. Suggestion by Fr. Van Sickle to post public thank you on website, stating the money assisted clergy families, in hopes of receiving additional donations.
5. There was also a \$100,000 donation which specified it be spent for clergy in need. I have already distributed \$50,000 to individuals in need. The other \$50,000 will be spent similarly by me.
6. Seminarian reports: One to take up chaplaincy position outside the diocese with hopes of returning someday.
7. Clergy are working as hard during the pandemic as prior to it. Expressed his main motivation during the pandemic is to care for the people of our diocese with love.

8. Brief chat on approaching Holy Communion. His Eminence stated he doesn't believe disease can be transmitted by Communion or by the spoon. However, he wants to mitigate the anxiety of people who are unsure.

V. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT.

1. Met with all clergy of the deaneries at least twice since the pandemic began. Finance Committee has met several times to monitor diocesan financial health and analyzing finances of parishes.
2. Commended the work of the clergy during the pandemic. Please keep our bishop and all bishops in your prayers. They are doing the best they can out of love for their flock, and it is not an easy situation.
3. Diocesan office continues to function with Philip working remotely. Philip has been working from home 1 day/week. He is back 2 days this week, and is back to 4 days next week.

VI. DEANERY REPORTS.

1. **Chicago.** Fr. Alexander Kuchta reporting. Burbank: Fr. John Segvich has been doing a wonderful job there, but the population is very elderly, and they have not been able to do anything during the lockdown. Fr. Elijah Mueller will be going to Milwaukee July 1st. Dn. Philip Maikkula from South Carolina will be going to Saint Makarios Mission in Chicago, IL (as a deacon). Fr. Thomas Mueller is not retiring, he will be staying at SS. Cyril and Methodius for at least a year. An email was sent to all the rectors in the deanery to see how things are going for them. They are all working hard, most having services. The chapel in Williams Bay has not had anything.
2. **Cleveland.** Fr. John Zdinak offered the report on Fr. Clements' behalf. Fr. Jonathan Cholcher, who was at Warren has transferred to the Diocese of the South. Newly-ordained Fr. Basil Crivella has been appointed acting rector there. Our deanery publication, which we were preparing for our 50th anniversary of autocephaly has been published, "The Lives of the American Saints". We will distribute them when we can get together again. We all want to thank Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky especially, who streamed daily services during the time of the pandemic.
3. **Indianapolis.** Fr. Joel Weir did not have much to report. Parishes have gotten through pandemic and are slowly reopening. Fr. Gregory Ealy is settling in (as much as one can!) in Dayton. We are hoping Fr. Joshua Coolman can be assigned in Lima, but he is still looking for employment.
4. **Kansas City.** Fr. Timothy Sawchak reporting. It was already planned for Fr. Moses Berry to retire. He is having one of his legs amputated below the knee, so this has accelerated. Fr. Ephraim Tauck just graduated from St. Tikhon's and will go there. The Deanery is hoping to gather in July and honor Fr. Moses for all his work. Dn. Matthew McDonald will be doing a month and a half internship at Archangel Michael Church in Saint Louis. The parish in Desloge was closed, as you may remember, so the property and buildings have been transferred to the Diocese. This includes the cemetery. The bylaws need to be adjusted since they mention that "members of the parish" can be buried there. Mr. Morbey mentioned that the OCA General Counsel should be our first point of contact for this and volunteered to reach out to him.
5. **Michigan.** Fr. Dusan Koprova reporting. The position of rector at St. Mark's Church will be open on August 1st with Fr. Yavornitzky's retirement. My parish and two others are

ready to move into Phase Three with the blessing of His Eminence. OCA and Diocesan educational materials were very helpful to deanery parishes during pandemic.

6. **Minneapolis.** Fr. Paul Wesche reported “nothing unusual”. Parishes are opening up at various speeds.

VII. TREASURER.

1. Referenced written report. P & L statements (emailed). Buckner cemetery \$100,000 donation, fraudulent check, PPP deposit, Finance Committee meetings (diocese making all payments) – holding our own financially. Highlighted some fund transfers. Chancery renovation is almost complete.
2. Strategic Investment Plan – thanked Bob Graben. Most are reserve funds in case we need them. Most were cash accounts. Making recommendation to invest funds in various ways. Spoke about transferring OCA escrow fund to operation reserve fund. MOTION: After performing a detailed review of our Morgan Stanley financial investments, the Finance Committee recommends that we close the existing OCA Reserve Fund and transfer the remaining funds to the Operating Reserve Fund. Moved by Finance Committee, Seconded Elynn Gillette. PASSED.
3. Bookkeeper discussion recap. Much currently is reactive, rather than proactive. Fr. Van Sickle asked about the cost. Rob Koncel said the cost will be little more than what is being paid now to the accountant to do this work. Simeon Morbey gave a history of discussion by the Finance Committee about bookkeeping in general for the diocese. Extensive discussion ensued. The motion was discussed and amended. MOTION: Koncel/Bobulsky – After reviewing the Diocese’s current system of having our current bookkeeper input expenses, invoice parishes, etc., in conjunction with an accountant prepare our financial statements via QuickBooks and file our required tax documents, etc., the Finance Committee recommends that we pursue finding and funding a Bookkeeper position who can perform all of the current functions of our current bookkeeper and account. In addition, we shall also pursue securing a different accounting firm to perform periodic audits of our Diocesan Finances. This goal would be to fill this position by December 2020 and this new system be ready for January 2021. Specific details to be resolved by the Finance Committee. PASSED.

VIII. ENDOWMENT TASK FORCE.

1. Elynn Gillette reviewed Task Force’s written report. Recommendation: Identify an existing parishioner, clergy, or diocesan employee in the Chicago area who can fill the role of a development director on a part-time basis to identify and cultivate major donors. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the nature of a development director’s position. ACTION ITEM: Task Force will continue to investigate cost of development director. Simeon Morbey also asks the Task Force to investigate targets for development in relation to giving sources shared by the OCA and other charitable entities. ACTION ITEM: New group consisting of Diocesan Officers, Kenneth Herman, Carrie Sabourin will investigate needs of fundraising in the diocese.
2. \$50,000 donation (overview of our committee discussion – pay down mortgage, mission endowment fund, split 25K to seminarians, 25K to Mother Maria). MOTION: Herman/Morbey – Designate \$25,000 to seminarians and \$25,000 to Mother Maria of Parish Charitable Ministry. PASSED.

IX. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

1. Written report submitted. Discussion on the report. Fr. Zdinak asked if MC has the authority to liquidate the Oyster Bay Cove property without the permission of the AAC.

X. OLD BUSINESS.

1. Gift Policy – SIMEON MORBEY presented his draft of the gift policy. This was tabled to the next meeting.

XI. NEW BUSINESS.

1. None.

XII. NEXT MEETING.

1. Before the Diocesan Assembly.
2. Diocesan Council: November 30 – December 2, 2020 (with Bill Marianes presentation).

XIII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Morbey, seconded by Sabourin, at 12:15pm CST. His Eminence read the Zadostoinik of the Ascension

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

*Approved
+ Paed
10/11/20*