

**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 Koprovia 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 Elyn 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. Elyn 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  
+ Paehl  
10/11/20*

## Task Force Update (May 5, 2020)

### Opportunity

- Task Force (Fr. Jacob Van Sickle, Mary Ann Bobulsky, Ellyn Gillette) asked to look at a potential Seminarian Endowment Fund
- Scope expanded to look at how we secure substantial gifts to fund the Diocesan ministries

### Current Fund-Raising

- Mostly passive/unsolicited
- De-centralized by ministry
- No List and/or Tracking of existing donors

### Future Ministries Requiring Funding

- Supplemental pay for mission clergy
- Hispanic ministry development
- Parish education on Liturgical Music

### Potential Solutions

- Hire a Development Director
- Outsource fund-raising activities
- Create a diocesan-wide benefactor program to fund all needs
- Assign separate leader/task force to re-create funding by ministry as needed

### Pros and Cons

#### *Development Director*

##### Pros:

- Creation of a centralized donor list and tracking of donors
- Expertise in fund-raising (e.g. estate planning, direct mail, email)
- Dedicated to fund-raising
- Contacts outside the Diocese; expansion of donor list
- Ability to cultivate major donors

##### Cons:

- Funding the position annually (typical salary range \$55K-\$90K; median \$69K)
- Finding the right candidate for the position (includes job description)
- Requires resource from Diocese to support the position

#### *Outsourcing*

##### Pros:

- Expertise in specific areas of fund-raising (e.g. estate planning, direct mail, email)
- Fund activities as needed
- Exit strategy more seamless (i.e. discontinue the services)

##### Cons:

- Requires resource from Diocese to manage the outsourcer(s) and maintain the donor list
- Dedication to the cause may be neutral

## **Pros and Cons (cont'd)**

### *Diocesan-Wide Benefactor Program*

#### Pros:

Less resource intensive once the process is established  
Centralized fund-raising for all ministries

#### Cons:

Donors limited to Diocese population (approximately 4,763 members)  
Need resource(s) from Diocese to manage the program and create/maintain the donor list

### *Separate Leader/Task Force per Ministry*

#### Pros:

Seamless exit strategy (i.e. volunteer-based)

#### Cons:

No centralized donor list and tracking  
May unknowingly step on other ministries' toes (e.g., trip over same donors)  
Varied fund-raising expertise (from non-existent to limited)  
Re-creating the "wheel" every time  
Volunteer-based (longer lead time from idea to execution)

## **Fund-Raising Options**

### Events

(source: Veritus Group)

Cultivating major donors will bring in more net revenue than events  
Events are resource intensive

### Estate Planning

Substantial gifts  
Longer lead time

### Mass Donor Appeal Letter/Email

(source: The Better Fundraising Company)

The 40/40/20 Rule:

40% of the success is who you're talking to

40% of the success is the offer

20% of the success is the creative (e.g., font, the type of header, etc.)

## **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.

**Diocese of the  
Midwest (5-5-20)**

**Mission Development**

**Mother Maria of Paris  
Charitable Ministry**

**Seminarian Scholarships**

**Overview**

Mission Development &  
Renewal for Aging Parishes

Charitable arm of the Diocese;  
Publicizes & collects donations  
for parish supported campaigns &  
charities

Provides \$1,000 per Seminarian per  
semester per year (note: St. Vladimir's  
matches donations from the Diocese up to  
a certain amount)

**Financial Support**

Varies by request

Varies by request

\$18,000 to \$36,000 per year  
(Typically 3 to 6 Seminarians enrolled  
at any time; 3-year program; 2 semesters/year)

**Start Date**

December 31, 1999

Formed in 2019

*Validating start date with Diocesan Treasurer*

**Seed Money**

\$113,216.57

\$5,000

?

**Fund Type**

Endowment Fund &  
Missions Project Fund  
(baseline principle set at  
\$450K for the Endowment)

Earmarked Checking Account

Diocesan Checking Account

**Current Funds**

EF: \$412,621  
MPF: \$104,611

Checking: \$16,723

Included in Diocesan Checking

**2020 Budget**

\$46,800

\$10,000

\$34,000

**Administrative/  
Fundraising  
Duties**

Bishop, Chancellor, Diocesan  
Council

Fr. Lincoln & 2 Laypersons plus  
Advisory Council with 2 Clergy &  
2 Laypersons

Bishop, Chancellor, Diocesan Council

**Current Fundraising  
Methods**

Unsolicited Donations  
Stock Market Performance  
Diocesan Website  
Proceeds from closed missions &  
parishes

Unsolicited Donations  
Campaign Donations  
Diocesan Website

Unsolicited Donations  
September Appeal from Parishes  
Diocesan Website

## Report of Diocesan Metropolitan Council Representatives

The February 2020 Metropolitan Council (MC) meetings took place from February 5-6 at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington (Long Island) NY. The meeting was chaired by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon. The OCA has reported on the meeting at <https://bit.ly/2AdiE3q>. This report will focus on items of particular interest to the Diocese and other potentially actionable items.

In His **Metropolitan's report**, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon first noted that the Standing Synod is not meeting with us. Their presence had been initiated many years ago as a safeguard in "the times of troubles". They will meet at a separate time; this is not to preclude the Standing Synod meeting concurrently with the Metropolitan Council in the future, if desired.

His Beatitude noted the falling asleep in Our Lord of Fr. John Kuchta, a past member of the Metropolitan Council, and Mr. Milos Konjevich, a member of the Pension and Investments Committee and past treasurer of the Diocese of the South. His Beatitude spoke about his work as Locum Tenens for the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese; his intention is to move steadily forward in filling those vacancies while allowing an appropriate mourning period for the loss of their shepherd and father, Archbishop Nikon of blessed memory.

The theme of the upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> All American Council, July 23-30, 2021 in Baltimore Maryland is "Hope in an Age of Despair". This should not be seen negatively; it is an age of despair, not in the church, but in society. His Beatitude has reviewed every survey and every comment from the previous AAC. One of the suggestions to be implemented is that the lunch periods will be 2 hours instead of one. His Beatitude is also preparing Volume 2 of his document "The Apostolic Work of the Church", a.k.a., "the 4 pillars". The FOCA will meet in coordination with the AAC.

His Beatitude then transitioned into a **discussion on youth**. He noted that his dialog with the youth during a recent visit to Holy Transfiguration in Livonia, Michigan was "the most productive thing I have done in a long time". The youth felt comfortable asking questions. They know the teachings of the church in various matters such as LGBT, but don't know why the church has the position it does. Things haven't been explained to the youth in ways where they can understand and then reason their way through. The youth want to better understand OCA governance and find out how they can help the church. They feel they're not getting a chance to participate and influence the parish.

At the 19<sup>th</sup> AAC, there was \$87,000 pledged for youth, of which \$53,427 was actually collected. We have spent about \$10k of that amount. Discussion followed about how to most effectively use the remaining funds for the benefit of the youth. The MC formed an ad-hoc committee to begin to develop programs and methods to address the identified areas needing focus.

Continuing the discussion on youth, Dimitrios Rentel delivered a comprehensive report on the results of his survey from over 1,500 youth, parents and clergy. Dimitrios noted that "connections and meaningful relationships, not just with friends but with priests and older adults are what keep youth and young adults in the church." Steve Christofouros presented the 5 needs of the youth today and the MC reached a consensus on the corresponding goals of a youth ministry:

1. Need to know Jesus Christ / Christ-centered education
2. Need to know who they truly are / Orthodox identity
3. Need to belong to the full community of the Church / Provide a bridge from youth to adult
4. Need to be empowered by faith to make a difference / Service to the greater community
5. Need to be equipped with the teachings of the Orthodox faith / Prepare youth to be Orthodox Christians out in the world.

In his **Chancellor's Report**, Fr. Alexander Rentel said he will attend the Diocese of the Midwest fall assembly. The OCA has waited to replace Fr. Eric Tosi as Secretary; they are looking for someone who would fit in well with the people at the Chancellery, "someone we could work with". Fr. Alexander indicated they have a candidate. There will be a top to bottom review of the departments, with only an initial review completed so far. Missions and Evangelization has been somewhat dormant and is being revived for mission grants. The Music Department has been a continuing success story. Dr. David Drillock has retired but was asked to stay on to affect the transition. There is a third-year seminarian who could possibly succeed Dr. Drillock. There is a new project, led by Fr. Tom Soroka, funded by a



missions grant. It is a collaborative, wide-spectrum effort to compile input from the seminaries and departments into a Catechism, finishing during this anniversary year.

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak reported on the **Stewards of the OCA**. We have met our goal two years in a row. The last Sunday of October is designated as Stewardship Sunday. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year is a good opportunity for our campaign, with the music and evangelization departments and websites planned as the primary beneficiaries.

The **Thriving in Ministry** website, <https://www.thrivingorthodox.org/> is an excellent resource for peer learning support for Orthodox clergy and clergy wives.

For **External Affairs**, Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky reported that the OCA is trying to stay in communion with everyone. A meeting with His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow was very relaxed and positive. His Holiness stated no concern regarding the OCA's position on Ukraine. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Catherine representation church, and restoration is proceeding. In France, half of clergy and parishes has joined Moscow, with the others refusing and joining the Greek Orthodox Archbishop. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is commemorating Moscow per the priest's decision, and they have broken communion with Constantinople. Finally, in reading the Nativity Epistle of Metropolitan Hilarion of ROCOR, <https://bit.ly/3d3ISnf>, and comparing and contrasting it with the Proclamation of the Holy Synod of the OCA on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Autocephaly, <https://bit.ly/2ZBsg2s>, we see very different visions. The OCA's vision is wider in scope and includes the future of Orthodoxy in America. ROCOR is a Russian theme, with a sense that it is established for all time.

Next, the **property and site** were discussed. This is one of the most consequential decisions the Metropolitan Council has ever made. Factors in the decision include (1) the economics of maintaining the 106-year-old structure, (2) the location of the Metropolitan outside of his Diocese, (3) the Metropolitan living at his place of work and (4) travel times and logistics, and (5) providing a safe place for the OCA Archives. The MC resolved unanimously 1) It is not financially feasible for the necessary repairs and maintenance to be made to the Chancery; 2) It is not possible for the archives to be preserved if they remain at the Chancery; Therefore, 1) Efforts shall be made immediately for the sale of the Chancery property; 2) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location for the new Chancery administration building; 3) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location for the residence of the Metropolitan; and 4) Efforts shall be made immediately to determine a location for the archives. Fr. Alexander Rentel noted that "the achievement of this resolution demonstrates the Metropolitan Council's commitment to serving the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America with a particular commitment to transparency and fiscal responsibility."

Andrew Smith, **Treasurer** reported on his transition replacing Melanie Ringa, and updated us on the move to replace the Blackbaud accounting software with a much more economical and easier to use Quickbooks. An amended budget was passed, a new external auditing firm was approved, and interim financial results were presented.

Finally, the **Pension Board**, represented by Fr. Matthew Tate, Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton and Michael Stieglitz discussed the need to shore up the long-term finances of the pension fund. Retired priests are living longer than expected by the actuary, with the average retirement age of 72. Although the fund has been doing well with its historical 7% return, we need to prepare for downturns to keep the fund in good shape through 2049. A motion was made to increase the parish's contribution from 8% to 10%, effective January 2021. The priest's / employee's portion will remain at 6% since this change will not increase the benefits to them. The motion to increase the parish contribution passed, followed by much discussion about how to enforce the mandatory nature of the pension plan. A further motion passed that the MC petition the Holy Synod to create a joint commission to enforce compliance with the OCA Pension Plan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Graban  
Fr. Elijah Mueller  
May 26, 2020