

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN
COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting • 15 September 2020**

I. OPENING.

The meeting opened with the reciting of “O Heavenly King” by Archbishop PAUL at 6:37pm CST.

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; Priest Andrew Bartek; Mary Ann Bobulsky, Ellyn Gillette, Robert Graban, Kenneth Herman, Simeon Morbey, and Carrie Sabourin. Also present: Philip Sokolov.

Absent: Priests Benjamin Tucci and Jacob Van Sickle, and Protodeacon George Potym.

A quorum was determined by a majority of voting members present, in accordance with the Orthodox Church in America Statute, Article X, Section 5.

III. DISCUSSION.

His Eminence summarized the background of the agenda item. Summary: The Archbishop proposes the Diocese take possession of the former monastery property from the Springfield parish to be established as a monastery under His Eminence’s omophorion. An anonymous donation of \$100,000 will be made to the Diocese upon approval of this proposal. This donation will retire any debt held by the Springfield parish related to the monastery property and fund minor improvements to the monastery property.

Questions and discussion:

Ms. Gillette: Is Mother Alexandra a U.S. Citizen?

His Eminence: Yes. She was born here. She came up through the Wheaton parish.

Ms. Gillette: You said the Diocese would take care of the property’s expenses for the first year; who would then take over?

His Eminence: Mother Alexandra and the community that she builds there.

Ms. Gillette: How much revenue is generated today by the candle-making business? (The answer was not known. The Springfield parish would have those records.)

Fr. Mueller: Who would be the chaplain?

His Eminence: Retired Archpriest Peter Bodnar lives nearby.

Mr. Morbey: What would be the relationship of the Monastery with the Diocese ultimately?

His Eminence: Similar to a parish it would have its own bylaws, and if it dissolved the assets would revert to the Deanery c/o the Diocese.

Mr. Morbey: Suggested the Diocese retain the property and make it available for the use of the sisterhood.

His Eminence: We can consider that.

Fr. Kincaid: We would have to consider the liability/insurance implications.

Morbey/Mueller: Move that we accept His Eminence’s proposal. Carried.

IV. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Philip Sokolov with Priest Herman Kincaid, Diocesan Secretary

*Approved + Paul
9/24/20*

September 7, 2020 Proposal for Diocesan Council Approval

Over the last two and a half years there were developments that took place related to the former monastery of the Entrance of the Theotokos in Marshfield, MO. At that time Mother Sergia, the Abyss asked me to release her along with Mother Victoria to the Serbian Diocese under Bishop Longin and to join the monastic community of Archangel Michael and All Angels Skete in Weatherby, Missouri. Fr. Alexi Altschul is her spiritual father and the Abbot of the men's monastery. There is also a women's monastery there and that is where Mother Sergia and Mother Victoria went to reside.

The reasons for this release were due to cancer related health issues for both Mothers. In March of 2018 I closed the Presentation Monastery and released Mothers Sergia and Victoria to Bishop Longin of the Serbian Diocese of Midwest America. Under the guidance of Fr. Andrew Moore, former rector at St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church in Springfield, the parish agreed to have the former monastery property deeded to them and assumed a debt of around 80k. Since April of 2018, St Thomas the Apostle now owns the Marshfield property. Attempts to do something with this property in the way of a retreat center or possible children's day camp never materialized.

In March of 2019, the head of charitable foundation (who wants to remain anonymous) contacted me about making a substantial gift to the Diocese of the Midwest (DOM) so the Diocese could release St. Thomas from the care of the property and transfer ownership to the DOM. Fr Basil Ferguson from St. Thomas had informed me on several previous occasions of the parish's wishes to be relieved of this property, as they were not able to deal with the expenses of caring for it and the loan that came with it.

Right around this same time, I started corresponding with Mother Alexandra (Hagan) who was a nun at the Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Guatemala. She indicated her desire to come under my omophorion and seek monastic assignment here in the Diocese if one was available. Naturally I began to think about her moving to Marshfield, MO to start a monastery there. On April 16th of this year Bishop Kirillo from the Serbian Church released Mother Alexandra to my omophorion.

Since then, Mother Alexandra visited the former monastery property in Marshfield, in June of this year and has indicated her willingness to move there.

St. Thomas in Springfield has sent an assessor to determine what repairs might be needed in the Marshfield property to bring it up to code so to speak. At this point it is estimated that electrical, plumbing, and roof repairs will be no more than \$8 to \$10k.

St. Thomas is holding a meeting on September 20, 2020 to vote on transferring the property and current debt to the DOM. The current loan pay off is at about \$62k. The DOM would take care of the maintenance and care of the property for the first year.

The charitable foundation is committed to giving an Anonymous gift to the Diocese of the Midwest of \$100k as a designated gift to go towards the reopening of the former monastery in Marshfield. This money will be in Diocesan hands two weeks from now. These funds would go towards paying off the loan, making the necessary plumbing, roofing, electrical repairs, and cover maintenance and monthly expenses of the Marshfield property for the first year.

There is a facility on grounds for making candles that Mother Alexandra is willing to learn and raise revenue to care for the monastery.

Once St. Thomas approves this plan to transfer, the loan is to be immediately paid off, and the property would be transferred to the DOM. Eventually the property would be incorporated as a monastery of the Diocese of the Midwest.

There is currently a couple that has been staying at the Marshfield property to watch over it. They were recently given a two-month notice to relocate. That time comes up on October 18, 2020. It is conceivable that Mother Alexandra would be ready to move to the Marshfield property November 1, 2020.

So what I am looking for here is for the Diocesan Council to sign off on this plan and allow for this donation to be used for its intended purpose. I heartily endorse it and believe it gives great potential for once again having a diocesan monastery that is properly organized. It will avoid past problems we have had with how monastery life has been ordered in the Midwest Diocese.

Thank you and God bless you all,
Archbishop Paul