

Metropolitan Council Report

Archdiocesan Assembly – Saturday, November 2nd, 2019

For detailed minutes of meetings and reports given to the Metropolitan Council, please see oca.org/about/metropolitan-council

Due to a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops, His Beatitude was absent for the beginning of the meetings. Archbishop Benjamin of the Diocese of the West, being the ranking member of the Synod present, chaired the meeting.

Chancellor's report – Father Alexander Rentel presented his report to the Metropolitan Council outlining mostly the ongoing process of chancery restructuring and his activities as chancellor in the previous 6 months.

Internal Governance Committee Report – At the Spring 2019 MC meeting, His Beatitude appointed a new Internal Governance Committee to assess the current committees of the Metropolitan Council, and to clarify their roles, or propose their dissolution, if warranted.

This committee proposed several things

- That the Ethics Committee and Human Resources Committee be merged and reconstituted as the “Human Resources & Ethics 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.”
- That the Charity Committee be dissolved as a standing committee and that in its place a discretionary fund (in the amount budgeted for the previously existing Charity Guidelines for the handling of discretionary funds shall be drafted and reviewed by the Metropolitan Council in the future.
- That two new committees be formed, the “Technology Committee”, and the “Properties Committee”.

Treasurer's report – Andrew Smith, newly appointed treasurer, presented his report, which included audited financials for the previous year. He also noted that the financials were on budget for the current year.

He also made several recommendations regarding the use of Endowment funds, and a change in financial software, as the current software is far more featured than we need, and the cost is not in our best interest, especially considering the push to switch to a very pricey cloud solution.

Mr. Smith also presented the proposed budget for 2020, which was subsequently approved by the council.

Pension Board Report – The pension board presented an overview of the status of the pension fund, which is underfunded, currently, but not to a level that jeopardizes the viability of the plan for the future. It was noted that clergy are required by AAC resolution to participate in the plan, and ignoring this requirement is disobedience that hurts them and their fellow clergy when they reach retirement.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the central administration and the Pension board. The MOU solidifies the responsibilities of each party with respect to facilities use and liability insurance, payroll administration and reimbursement, and use and reimbursement of other direct costs.

20th All-American Council Report – Deacon Peter Ilchuk submitted a written report about the work of the Pre-conciliar commission. The 20th AAC will take place from Monday, July 26th to Friday, July 30th 2021 at the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel.

Several items of note are, the room rate, which will be \$143 + tax per night, and a discounted parking rate of \$20 per night.

The FOCA will be holding their 95th National Convention in conjunction with the AAC from Friday, July 23rd to Monday, July 26th 2021. It is also their hope that many of the members of the Orthodox Church in America will be able to attend their sessions and events throughout the weekend prior to the Council.

Metropolitan Tikhon's report – Metropolitan Tikhon presented a report of his activities since the last meeting. Of note was His Beatitude's trip to the Church of Constantinople, where he went on pilgrimage with His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, to the region of Cappadocia. They concelebrated the Divine Liturgy in Dereyamanli, Turkey.

Open Discussion – Several items not in formal reports were presented and/or decided on.

A large portion of time was devoted to discussing a topic that has been brought up several times in the past few decades. That is, the physical location of the central administration. An ad hoc committee has been formed to explore the various options available as to the proper location of the Metropolitan's residence, the actual chancery offices, and the location of the Church archives. Whether or not the property in Syosset is the best place, the current status quo is untenable. The archives will never be able to be permanently housed in the current building, regardless of improvements, since none will provide a better environment for storage than a building designed for such a use. In addition, the Metropolitan would welcome living closer to his territorial diocese of Washington, DC. No plans have been made yet, but all options are being explored.

Youth Report – Demetrios Rentel, the current Youth Project Coordinator, reported on his visits to 5 Orthodox youth camps this past summer, and the results of the Youth Survey disseminated to the Church at large. The survey received, at the time of presentation, 1337 responses. The next step is to have a group of experienced youth workers analyze the data from this survey, and use this to better direct the youth department's direction.

Forgive me for any errors or omissions.

Submitted by Priest Nikolai Breckenridge