

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES 30 JANUARY 2023

A meeting of the Archdiocesan Council was held on January 30, 2023, at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Allison Park, PA. The meeting began with prayer and was called to order by Archbishop Melchisedek at 6:30 pm.

Present: Archbishop Melchisedek; Treasurer Alexis Parshook.

Clergy: Fathers William Evansky, Mark Meholick, Stephan Gresh, Andrew Nelko, John Parker, Thomas Soroka and John Mikita.

Laity: Raymond Steeb, Joe Kormos; Nicholas York. **Guests:** included Rdr. John Thompson (Canonsburg)

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Minutes were distributed prior to the meeting electronically, copy filed. There were no changes or corrections.

Parish Development with Joe Kormos : a lengthy initial discussion with Joe Kormos began the meeting, clarifying the immediate and long-term trajectory of the parish development program, with discussions of implementation strategy.

Treasurer's Report: The report, including bank balances, income and expenses and investment information was distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Copy filed. Alexis Parshook offered a review. Special donation was given to the Holy Transfiguration Monastery for their hospitality to His Eminence during his recovery. As of March 2023, the diocese is assuming financial responsibility for the St. John the Divine (Monessen) Church building; the parish will be inactive but not closed at that point. Recent assessments were done on the Monessen & Duquesne properties. The diocese is on the New Fiscal year as of Jan 2023. Report motioned & seconded. Passed.

Report of the Hierarchy: His Eminence still undergoing physical therapy but resuming Liturgical celebration and pastoral visits in diocesan parishes. His Eminence noted that he is in informal discussions with Archbp. Mark of Eastern PA regarding the question of "merging" dioceses, examining feasibility, etc. Fr. Mikita asked for His Eminence's take on this issue. Regarding diocesan boundaries, may make more sense to redraw geographically with other areas, many obstacles and differences between East & West PA. The question is further complicated by the presence of St. Tikhon's Monastery and the Seminary in South Canaan. His Eminence encouraged input on this subject. Towards the end of the session, it was requested this be brought up again at a future meeting for input.

Report of the Chancellor: Fr. Bill reported on the progress of transitioning the archbishop back to the Chancery. He alluded to some upcoming parish transfers soon being worked on. Attended a Christian Associates meeting with His Eminence; the diocese partnered with the New Kensington Parish for a local retreat, which went very smoothly, with the help of Fr. Vernak. Upcoming clergy gathering at the cathedral February 9th; Working with Fr. Cadman on

reactivating the youth committee, progress difficult, being done virtually. Fr. Bill noted other upcoming events, including the small Parish Forum and the Clergy retreat in Chicago in October. Fr. Tom Soroka asked His Eminence about whether priests in the diocese should be encouraged to attend the pan-orthodox Vespers service during Great Lent, as His Eminence faithfully attends annually.

Department Reports:

- Building and Grounds – submitted in advance by Dn. Truckley. Hopefully last major projects for a while, trying to tone down major expenditures & uses of reserve funds.
- Metropolitan Council: meeting to hire a broker to sell the Syosset property (previous expired); commercial broker to develop into residences. Upcoming virtual meetings are in March, including the finance committee, looking closely at the pension plan, hope soon for plans for next steps to help the plan survive. Fr. Parker asked whether it's appropriate to gather feedback from the parishes regarding the 2% assessment increase for the pension contribution; parishes that have contributed faithfully feel like their bearing the brunt of expense for those who haven't been cooperating. He also asked what the hierarchical plan was to make efforts towards increased compliance in the plan (which was not really answered, as the discussion ensued). Ray Steeb noted that the plan was too generous early on and hurt itself in the long run; OR the percentage being collected was too low for too long, two primary reasons for the situation. The OCA would have been paying for it anyways, just a difference of timing. Selling the chancery property won't solve the pension fund problem.
- Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy—everything on track with renewals in various parishes.
- Legacy Parish Assistance Program (Jeannette)—nothing new to report

Unfinished Business:

- None to report

New Business:

- Ad Hoc Diocesan Committee Proposal—presented to His Eminence by Reader John Thompson & Katya Hill. Modifications to the proposal were made following deans meeting and feedback from His Eminence. One goal is to provide a survey of Christian education in the parishes and to respond to the needs, by providing resources and opening communication.
- Family Day: Fr. Bill asked if anyone is or knows someone who is willing to get involved to chair a diocesan Family Day event somewhere, stressing the need to move quickly to reserve space.
- Right to Life March: His Eminence expressed an ongoing desire to rent a bus to bring participants to the March. Ray Steeb said he'd speak to a parishioner who might be interested. His Eminence asked for continued ongoing local speakers to address this hot issue. Fr. Soroka also offered assistance with this.

- Fr. Andrew Nelko inquired as the status of creating criteria for Diocese assistance to help fund certain projects for parishes seeking help. Fr. Evansky noted that the concept is good, however the budget committee had discussed this issue previously, determining that with the downturn of investments this would not be the ideal time for funding additional projects.
- (Requested to address the East/Western PA discussion again for input at future meeting)

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for May 15 (*note: later changed*). The meeting closed with prayer and the singing of It is Truly Meet.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priest John Parker
Acting Secretary

Archbishop MELCHISEDEK
Diocesan Hierarch

Archpriest William J. Evansky
Diocesan Chancellor