

# DIOCESAN COUNCIL MINUTES

## DIOCESE OF THE WEST

April 26, 2018

**His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin** convened a regular meeting of the Diocesan Council at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco CA at 10:34 am on Thursday, April 26, 2018.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Archbishop Benjamin, Bishop Daniel, Archpriest Basil Rhodes, Archpriest Lawrence Russell, Archpriest John Dresko, Archpriest John Pierce, Archpriest Matthew Tate, Archpriest Stephen Soot, Archpriest Lawrence Margitich, Archpriest Anthony Karbo, Archpriest Michael Anderson, Archpriest Damian Kuolt, Priest Andrew Cuneo, Mat. Theodora Blom, David Lane, Dorothy Nowik, Lynnell Brunswig.

**ABSENT:** Subdeacon Johan Morse, Subdeacon Paul Pilipenko,

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Archpriest David Lowell, Priest Andrew Smith, Priest Andreas Blom, Monk Barnabas (Day)

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – The reading of the minutes of the January 18, 2018 meeting of the Diocesan Council was waived.

**MOTION to approve the minutes January 18, 2018,** by Fr J. Dresko

**SECOND** by Fr. B. Rhodes **MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION to approve Minutes of the 2017 Diocesan Assembly,** by Fr. J. Pierce

**SECOND** by Fr. B. Rhodes **MOTION PASSED**

**ARCHBISHOP'S REMARKS** – Abp. Benjamin gave his archpastoral report. Congratulations to Fr. Andrew and Mat. Anna who have a new baby boy, Cyrus. His Eminence noted the pastors who are retiring, including Fr. I. MacKinnon, Sacramento, Fr. Michael Regan, Concord, and Fr. George Gray, Portland (scheduled for June 2019). The AAC 2018, celebrations, travels and other items were discussed (The full report will be posted separately)

**MOTION to have an icon made for Mary Caetta, as a gift for her retirement,** by L. Brunswig

**SECOND** by D. Nowik, **MOTION PASSED**

**CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS** – Bp. Daniel, Diocesan Chancellor, talked about his ongoing work within the DOW and for last six months assisting His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, consulting on the needs in Syosset. His Grace has recently been appointed Chancery Administrator, to fully restructure the workings of the Chancery. It was pointed out that His Beatitude has asked the OCA officers and everyone on staff to submit their resignations; effective as of last day of the 2018 AAC, noting that everyone is cooperating and in general support of this action. This is not intended to be dramatic, but His Beatitude inherited a structure not well suited to a Church. Four members of the Metropolitan Council have been appointed to work on the re-writing of job descriptions and the employee manual: Fr. J. Dresko, Lisa Mikhalevsky, Fr. James Parnell and Fr. Timothy Hojnicky. A common theme in all of this: the Chancery serves the whole Church and there needs to be a perceived value for the money the Dioceses give and is being spent on their behalf. Lastly, His Grace has finished the task of getting the OCA representative in place in Moscow.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – Bp. Daniel introduced Mat. T. Blom, as the new Diocesan Treasurer, following the sudden resignation of M. Caetta. Notes on her experience will be posted on the Diocesan website.

Mat. T. Blom reported that everything needed for the work of Treasurer is in good order. One difficulty is getting signatories changed throughout all functions in the Diocese. Given her financial background, there will be minor changes in reporting and budgeting. Of note: 1) parish assessments are 'up' substantially, and 2) there is an extraordinary fraud-loss that will be transparently shown in all financial reporting.

**MOTION to move the amount of the fraud-loss from savings into operating account(s),** by Fr. M. Tate

**SECOND** by Fr J. Dresko **MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION to secure new Diocesan Credit Cards for use of the Archbishop, Chancellor, Mission Dean, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant** by Fr. D. Kuolt  
**SECOND** by Fr. B. Rhodes **MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION to remove Fr. I. MacKinnon and Mary Caetta from all diocesan accounts and add (Bishop Daniel) David Brum and (Mat. Theodora) Heather Blom as signatories and key executives to the following accounts:**

- 1) Wells Fargo Diocese of the West, OCA checking, savings and CD accounts**
- 2) Columbia Bank CD's**
- 3) Capital 360 business savings and CD's**

by Fr J. Dresko

**SECOND** by D. Lane **MOTION PASSED**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT** – D. Nowik reports that the Financial Committee is preparing the 2019 Diocesan Budgets. Special requests must be submitted to the finance committee by May 15.

**MOTION to authorize the Finance Committee to spend up to \$5,000 (in aggregate), and the Treasurer to spend up to \$1,000 (in aggregate) outside of the approved budget during the fiscal year; AND such expenditures will be reviewed and approved at the subsequent meeting of the Diocesan Council.**

**SECOND** by Fr. L. Margitich **MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION to authorize \$1,000 for the purchase of a MacBook for the Treasurer's use,** by Fr. M. Tate

**SECOND** by Fr. A. Cuneo **MOTION PASSED**

Due to Quickbooks' inflexibility, poor reporting, and being generally recognized as non-compliant with General Accounting Practices, the recommendation has been made to move to a new, better designed software package for non-profit accounting. The recommended solution is cloud-based, designed for non-profits, less expensive, has better user-permission management, facilitates external audits, etc.

**MOTION to migrate off QuickBooks to Aplos financial software, authorizing an expenditure of \$250/month for the monthly service fee and a one-time \$500 set-up fee,** by Fr D. Kuolt

**SECOND** by Fr. S. Soot **MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION to authorize up to \$2,500 for expenses related to Archbishop Avel's visit,** by Fr. M. Tate

**SECOND** by Fr. J. Dresko **MOTION PASSED**

**ALL AMERICAN COUNCIL** – Bp. Daniel announced the Diocesan Assembly, to be held in St. Louis, MO, Monday, July 23, 1:00 p.m., just prior to the 2019 AAC. Fr. D. Lowell has been appointed as the Chairperson. The Diocesan Council will meet at 12 noon at the same location.

**CLERGY AND PARISHES** – Bp. Daniel asks that we refer to Abp. Benjamin's report for comments on clergy assignments and changes. Discussion was held about the Calhan parish as a place for Internships, with Fr. A. Karbo overseeing. A potential approach includes viewing it as a 2-year position, therefore funding needs to be ongoing and in addition to other internship programs.

**MOTION to approve adding \$4,000 to the Internship Budget, to cover support in Calhan,** by Fr Matthew

**SECOND** by D. Lane **MOTION PASSED**

**DIOCESAN MONASTERIES** – Fr. L. Russell spoke about the role of monasteries here and around the country. Discussion was held regarding support for monasteries through a Diocesan mandated appeal. Also, St. John Orthodox Life School for young adults, June 18-24, needs to be supported and promoted in our parishes.

**DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS** – Fr. M. Tate reported on the good will created by visiting seminarians. Two are graduating next year, two doing internships in the Diocese. There are four expected to be very effective when placed in the Diocese. Two or three new seminarians will start next fall; important to have happen every year.

**CLERGY RETREAT** – Bp. Daniel shared the consensus of previous discussions that our next retreat will be in 2019, with Fr. Maximus as the proposed guest speaker.

**DUBOCE PROPERTY** – Bp. Daniel gave an update on the work that has been started. We are currently into the demolition phase. Progress payments are being made, based on the budgets previously approved and the work completed. D. Lane has created a draft agreement on property use, to be executed by the Diocese (in partnership with Synaxis Corp.) and Holy Trinity Cathedral, to cover an understanding of the use of the respective properties. Noted is the need for proper language related to insurance; who is covered and cross-covered. The ruling bishop's hands will not be tied by this agreement and can revoke the agreement.

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL** – Fr. J. Dresko submitted a draft Policy on Acceptance of Bequests from the Metropolitan Council, for the review of the Diocesan Council. More discussion was held on the proportional giving plan. MC passed a resolution to present the proportional giving plan at the 2018 AAC, with a period of 6 years to get to 'plan' instead of the previously planned 4 years. The DOW and DOS, which have maintained the 34% proportion, have actually increased the actual dollar amount of their remittances, while every other diocese has actually decreased not only their percentage of remittances, but actual dollars.

**COMMUNICATIONS** – Fr. D. Dresko would like to post information and a photo of our new Treasurer, as well as a 'fan review' of Abp. Benjamin's sermon on Sunday of Myrrhbearers.

**OCCIF** – Fr. J. Dresko reported that the annual meeting was held and they are finalizing their Investment Certificate Program. It is to be unveiled at the AAC2018, where they will take commitments for certificates (also offered via website), for anyone who is a member of the canonical Orthodox Church. Goal is \$20 MM. The Metropolitan Council of the OCA passed a resolution to invest \$150,000 in OCCIF.

**PENSION FUND** – Fr. M. Tate reported that the Pension Fund is doing well. The only troubling issue is the fact that several Diocese do not promote it. The Pension Board is considering allowing donors to give to the Pension Fund as a gift. Also noted, D. Lane has been given all info on the Pension Board, as he is serving as a Fiduciary.

**BACKGROUND CHECKS** – Fr. A. Smith reports people are happy with the new system and we are saving money. Abp. Benjamin noted that the training program for all priests and teachers in our parishes needs to be taken. There are certificates available so there will be no charge to the parishes.

**DIOCESAN CAMPS** – In response to a discussion regarding how insurance covers the camps, Fr. M. Anderson reports that he inquired and found that the camps are covered under the Diocesan insurance policy. L. Brunswig also reported that we will be covered at \$1MM/\$3MM in total going forward. She will contact the insurance company to confirm details.

**PARISH CELEBRATIONS** – Bp. Daniel announced: May 13<sup>th</sup> will be the celebration of Fr. I. McKinnon's Retirement, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Consecration of SS P&P, Phoenix October 19-20 will be the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Trinity Cathedral.

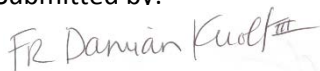
**OTHER BUSINESS** - 1) The GoFundMe site for Mat. Priscilla has worked well, and 2) Ordination in July: Dn. Timothy Wilkinson, to be ordained, possibility to open a mission in the Spokane WA area.

**NEXT MEETING** – It was unanimously confirmed that the special Diocesan Council Meeting, scheduled for June 21 to approve the 2019 Annual Budget, will be held by electronic communication.

The next regular meeting of the Diocesan Council will take place July 23, 2018 at 12:00 noon in St. Louis, MO

**ADJOURNMENT** – Fr. J. Dresko moved for adjournment. Motion Accepted. Archbishop Benjamin adjourned the meeting of the Diocesan Council at 1:19 p.m.

Submitted by:



Fr. Damian Kuolt, Diocesan Secretary