



**MINUTES  
of the Joint Meeting of the Standing Synod  
and the 2016 Spring Session of  
the Metropolitan Council**

**Tuesday, February 16 – Thursday, February 18, 2016  
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY**

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*These draft minutes are subject to approval at a subsequent meeting of the Metropolitan Council*

**PARTICIPANTS**

**STANDING SYNOD**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon  
His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin

His Eminence, Archbishop Michael  
His Grace, Bishop Paul

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Archpriest John Jillions, *Chancellor*  
Melanie Ringa, *Treasurer*

Archpriest Eric Tosi, *Secretary*

**MEMBERS ELECTED BY THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL**

Archpriest Chad Hatfield  
Archpriest Antonio Perdomo  
Archpriest Thomas Moore

Maureen Jury  
Katherine Vitko  
Larry Skvir

**DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES**

**Diocese of Alaska**

Archpriest John Dunlop

Patrick Pletnikoff

**Albanian Archdiocese**

Archpriest Joseph Gallick (*except Tuesday morning*)

Donna Dimitri (*except Thursday*)

**Bulgarian Diocese**

Priest Martin Watt

Deacon Esteban Vazquez

**Archdiocese of Canada**

Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk

Priest Justin Mitchell

**Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

Susan Schlasta (*except Thursday*)

**Diocese of the Midwest**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta (*except Thursday*)

Robert Graban (*except Tuesday morning*)

**Diocese of New England**

Archpriest Robert Dick (*except Thursday*)

David Zavednak

**Diocese of New York/New Jersey**

Archpriest John Shimchick

James P. Kornafel

**Diocese of the South**

Priest Joseph Lucas

Angela Parks, Esq. (*except Tuesday*)

**Diocese of Washington**

Priest John Vitko

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky (*except Tuesday*)

**Diocese of the West**

Archpriest John Dresko

Wesley J. Smith, Esq.

**Diocese of Western Pennsylvania**

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

Dr. John Schultz

**ABSENT**

None

**GUESTS** (*for all sessions unless otherwise indicated*)

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky (*Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations*)

*– Thursday morning*)

Raymond Boyd (*Stewardship Assistant - Wednesday morning*)

Judge E.R. Lanier (*OCA General Counsel – except Thursday*)

Alexis Liberovsky (*recording secretary*)

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

Metropolitan Tikhon celebrated a prayer service at 9:08 AM on Tuesday morning to open the meeting at the Immaculate Conception Seminary.

**A. Agenda: Introduction (attached)**

The meeting was then called to order. Regarding the meeting’s agenda, Fr. Eric Tosi announced that Cindy Heise and Dr. Albert Rossi would not be present to deliver reports and, therefore, the ORSMA and SMPAC reports would be presented as part of the Chancellor’s report. He also informed the meeting that Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky would likely deliver his External Affairs report this afternoon. He added that there would likely be a brief report on the Pension Plan on Thursday, although Ted Bazil would not be presenting it, as indicated in the agenda. Fr. Tosi then requested a motion to approve these changes to the agenda.

**A.1. MOTION KUCHTA/ZAVEDNAK – To approve the agenda for this meeting as amended. CARRIED.**

**B. Roll Call/Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (attached)**

Fr. Tosi then conducted the roll call and announced guests who would be present at various points during this meeting (see participants list). Fr. Justin Mitchell was congratulated on his ordination to the priesthood just a few days before this meeting. Fr. Tosi requested approval of Alexis Liberovsky as recording secretary for the

meeting, which was accepted without objection. He presented the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Metropolitan Council on September 22-24, 2015 for approval.

**B.1. MOTION FR. J. VITKO/DICK -- To accept the previous meeting minutes of September 22-24, 2015 as presented. CARRIED.**

**C. Metropolitan's Report**

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the new members of the Standing Synod and the Metropolitan Council. He presented his wide-ranging report on his own ministry along with other significant activities in the OCA, categorizing them in the context of the following four pillars of the Guiding Framework for the Orthodox Church in America entitled "*The Apostolic Work of the Church*", which he has been preparing:

- I – The Spiritual Life
- II – Stewardship
- III - Evangelism and Outreach
- IV – External Relations: Long-Term Goals

He stressed that the fundamental reason we are here as the Church is to provide all of mankind with the possibility of entering the kingdom of heaven. He noted that drafting of the Framework is nearing completion along with brief videos to accompany release of the Framework. He highlighted the work of Department of Pastoral Life, ORSMA and SMPAC as facets of promoting and safeguarding spiritual life in the Church. Accomplishments in stewardship reported by the Metropolitan included the annual diocesan chancellors and treasurers meeting, the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA), optimization of OCA Chancery operations, particularly through the efforts of the Human Resources Committee, as well as the work of the Metropolitan Council and the Archives Advisory Committee. He requested consideration of a full-time Secretary to the Metropolitan.

Following a recess at 10:42 AM, the session resumed at 11:07 AM.

Metropolitan Tikhon continued his report, underscoring evangelism and outreach through the newly established Mission School as well as through OCA communications and website personnel. In highlighting the Church's endeavors in external affairs, His Beatitude spoke of the recent consultation of Office of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations. He also reflected on the importance of ongoing work in this area and shared his experiences during recent interviews on PBS and BBC. He indicated the significance of his upcoming visit to Finland. Extensive discussion and questions ensued.

**D. Guiding Framework Session I**

In order to review, especially for new members of the Council, the Guiding Framework for the Orthodox Church in America entitled "*The Apostolic Work of the Church*", which he has been preparing, Metropolitan Tikhon delivered an abbreviated PowerPoint presentation outlining the four pillars of the Framework. Release of the Framework to the Church in a challenging manner and other related issues were discussed.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:35 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:35 PM.

**G. Chancellor's Report (attached)**

Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor, summarized his attached written report. He noted the importance of reclaiming our Church's vision and history. He highlighted some of the historical events leading to the granting of our autocephaly. He then briefly reported on the work of the Department of Pastoral Life, Board of Theological Education/Diaconal Vocations Program, ORSMA (Office for Review of Sexual

Misconduct Allegations), and SMPAC (Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee), as well as various clergy matters that are addressed on an ongoing basis. Discussion and questions ensued.

## **H. Secretary's report (attached)**

Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary, summarized his attached written report. He spoke of the work of the Committees of the Metropolitan Council. He highlighted the importance of health insurance and other benefits for clergy. He indicated the need to redesign the OCA website and presented the attached prospectus for this proposed project.

### **H.2. Archives Advisory Committee (attached)**

Alexis Liberovsky, Committee Secretary and OCA Archivist, summarized the attached written report and indicated that the environmental assessment of the OCA Archives for which the Council had allocated funding at its last meeting had to be postponed but would be rescheduled in the near future.

Fr. Tosi then reported on initial preparations that will soon be underway for the next All-American Council. Discussion and questions on the Secretary's report ensued.

Following a recess at 3:11 PM, the session resumed at 3:46 PM.

The Legal Report was moved to the following day due to the absence of Angela Parks, who was delayed during travel to the meeting.

## **K. Metropolitan Council Committees**

### **K.1. Charity (attached)**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta summarized the Committee's attached report. He additionally reported that a charity webpage is being prepared for the OCA website. In discussion, the reasons for the establishment of this committee were noted, particularly the misuse of charity appeal funds years ago. The webpage would clearly state the purpose of the committee and the funding it provides and would provide possibility for donations but would not be a church-wide charity appeal as in the past. It was agreed that this page should be posted along with a donate button on the OCA homepage.

### **K.2. Ethics**

Archpriest Thomas Moore, Committee Chairman, indicated that the Committee has nothing to report at this time.

### **K.3. Human Resources**

In the absence of the Committee's Chairperson, Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, who was delayed to the meeting by her mother's illness, Fr. Tosi reported that she was scheduled to discuss the revision of the attached Employee Handbook and other task assigned to the Committee by His Beatitude.

### **K.4. Internal Governance (attached)**

Archpriest Chad Hatfield presented the committee's attached report and detailed the process for soliciting bids to engage an external auditing firm.

#### **K.4.A. MOTION – HATFIELD/JURY – To engage D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP of Rye Brook, NY as the external auditor for the Orthodox Church in America. CARRIED.**

It was noted that the Metropolitan Council had previously approved by electronic ballot the appointment of John Skrobot and Dimitri Pletz as internal auditors. To fulfill the requirements of the OCA Statute, recommendations for another internal auditor were solicited and the responsibilities of the position were discussed.

The committee structure of the Metropolitan Council was discussed at length, especially in terms to fulfilling the responsibilities of the Metropolitan Council outlined in the OCA Statute.

The session was adjourned with prayer at 4:51 PM.

After dinner, an orientation session was conducted for the newly elected members of the Metropolitan Council.

### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at the OCA Chancery at 8:00 AM, the meeting was opened with prayer led by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon at the Immaculate Conception Seminary at 11:02 AM.

#### **J. Stewards of the OCA (attached)**

Raymond Boyd, Stewardship Assistant, delivered the attached PowerPoint presentation on the Stewards of the OCA (SOCA). Discussion and questions ensued.

#### **I. Legal matters (attached)**

##### **I.1. MOTION PARKS/FR. J. VITKO – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

In executive session Angela Parks, Chairperson of the Legal Committee and Judge E.R. Lanier (OCA General Counsel presented confidential details of their attached report, which was followed by discussion and questions.

##### **I.2. MOTION DRESKO/GALLICK – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

Following a recess for lunch at 12:28 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:36 PM.

#### **L. Treasurer's Report (attached)**

Melanie Ringa highlighted the attached Treasurer's report with a PowerPoint presentation, particularly sharing the final financial results for 2015 and very preliminary figures for the beginning of 2016. In conjunction with budgeting for renovation for the OCA Representative's apartment in Moscow, a discussion ensued on the role of the Representation Church. Concerning budgeted OCA funding for seminaries, the following motion was made.

##### **L.1. MOTION DRESKO/PLETNIKOFF – That the funds designated for seminaries in the 2015 and 2016 budget be apportioned in equal amounts among the three theological schools of the Orthodox Church in America. CARRIED.**

In conclusion, Ms. Ringa reiterated the need for a third internal auditor as required by the OCA Statute.

#### **M. Financial Development Committee**

Fr. John Dresko proposed the following motion.

**M.1. MOTION DRESKO/HATFIELD – That the Financial Development Committee be subsumed into the Finance/Investment Committee of the Metropolitan Council. CARRIED.**

**N. Finance/Investment Committee**

Fr. Dresko, the new Committee Chairman, discussed the work of the Committee and the budget process, particularly for staff, including the hiring of a full-time secretary to the Metropolitan. He indicated the challenges and adjustments of working under the provisions of the financial resolution adopted at the 18<sup>th</sup> All-American Council. Financing for the next All-American Council was also discussed.

Metropolitan Tikhon led the Council in singing “*Memory Eternal*” for Protopresbyter John Meyendorff to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth today.

Following a recess at 2:44 PM, the session resumed at 3:31 PM.

**P. Open Discussion**

Metropolitan Tikhon led an open discussion on a variety of issues including efficient use of time at Metropolitan Council meetings, the organization of the OCA administration, particularly the competencies of departments and the interaction of all entities. It was suggested that departmental work should reflect the four pillars of the Guiding Framework presented by Metropolitan Tikhon. Among numerous issues discussed were communication, clergy health and priestly formation.

The Recording Secretary noted that this is the first meeting of the Metropolitan Council in recent history where all Council members are in attendance.

The session was adjourned with prayer at 5:33 PM.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:00 AM.

**R. Pension Board Report (attached)**

Fr. Eric Tosi read the attached report on the OCA Pension Plan submitted by Priest Gleb McFatter, Chairman of the Pension Board. In spite of a negative return on Pension Plan investments for calendar year 2015, ending market value of plan assets at December 31, 2015 was \$24,249,348. Current active participating membership in the Plan is 335 (the highest number to date) and 174 people receive monthly benefits.

**T. External Affairs Report**

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered an oral report highlighting the following issues:

- The upcoming Great and Holy Council;
- The recent meeting of Patriarch Kirill with Pope Francis. He particularly noted the pastoral letter of Metropolitan Tikhon regarding this meeting and the Metropolitan’s television interviews on PBS and BBC concerning the meeting, which provided a significant American Orthodox witness on the matter;
- Recent developments in the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA and other Assemblies around the world;
- Recent events in other Orthodox Churches worldwide and their jurisdictions in America;

- The recent consultation on OCA External Affairs and Interchurch Relations that took place at the Chancery in January, under the leadership of Metropolitan Tikhon;
- The work of a various talented people who have represented the OCA in external and interchurch relations over many years.

Metropolitan Tikhon provided further insights on the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops and other matters. Extensive discussion of the report and related issues ensued.

Following a recess at 10:53 AM, the session resumed at 11:20 AM.

#### **U. Other Business/Committee Updates**

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky and Fr. Chad Hatfield reported on the meetings of the Human Resources and Internal Governance Committees that convened the previous evening. Fr. Tosi noted that the next Council meeting is scheduled for September 19-22.

#### **S. Guiding Framework Session II**

Metropolitan Tikhon asked for a consensus on a topic among the four pillars of the Guiding Framework for a retreat prior to the next meeting of the Council. The consensus was that the retreat topic should be Spiritual Life and more particularly clergy health. The Internal Governance Committee will take this into consideration in planning the retreat. Preparation of videos to accompany release of the Guiding Framework was discussed. The work of the OCA departments and the availability of other resources for the Church were further deliberated.

Fr. Tosi provided significant new statistical information on parishes in various jurisdictions from Alexei Krindatch, Research Coordinator of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA, which was discussed by the Council.

#### **V. Adjournment**

In conclusion, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked the Council for a productive meeting, noting the significance of full attendance by all the Council members. His Beatitude declared the meeting adjourned at 12:24 PM.

The meeting was concluded with a closing prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,  
Recording Secretary