



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

**Tuesday, September 20 – Thursday, September 22, 2016  
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY**

---

*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  
*(Tuesday Morning & Thursday)*

**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**

Donna Dimitri *(except Thursday)*

**Bulgarian Diocese**  
Priest Martin Watt

**Archdiocese of Canada**

Deacon Nicolas Svetlovsky

**Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**  
Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky

Susan Schlasta *(except Thursday)*

**Diocese of the Midwest**

Archpriest Alexander Kuchta

Robert Graban

**Diocese of New England**

David Zavednak

**Diocese of New York/New Jersey**

Archpriest John Shimchick

James P. Kornafel

**Diocese of the South**

Priest Joseph Lucas

Angela Parks, Esq.

**Diocese of Washington**

Archpriest John Vitko

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky

**Diocese of the West**

Archpriest John Dresko

Wesley J. Smith, Esq. *(Tuesday only)*

**Diocese of Western Pennsylvania**

Priest Nikolai Breckenridge

**ABSENT**

His Grace, Bishop Paul *(Standing Synod)*

Archpriest Robert Dick *(Diocese of New England)*

Archpriest Joseph Gallick *(Albanian Archdiocese)*

Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk *(Archdiocese of Canada)*

Popadia Christine Monkowski *(Bulgarian Diocese)*

Dr. John Schultz *(Diocese of Western Pennsylvania)*

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

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

Archpriest Theodore Boback *(Spiritual Advisor, Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America*

*– Wednesday morning)*

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak *(Secretary to the Metropolitan & Director, Stewards of the OCA*

*– Tuesday morning & Wednesday)*

Maureen Ahearn *(OCA Pension Plan Administrator – Tuesday afternoon)*

Cindy Heise *(Coordinator for the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations – Tuesday afternoon)*

Marge Kovach *(President, Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America – Wednesday morning)*

Alexis Liberovsky *(recording secretary)*

Martin Myers *(Bulgarian Diocese substitute lay representative)*

Anthony Pennella, CPA *(external auditor from D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP – Wednesday morning)*

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016**

Following an all-day retreat for the Metropolitan Council conducted by Protodeacon Peter Danilchick and Charles Ajalat on Monday September 19, 2016, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon celebrated a prayer service at 9:00 AM on Tuesday morning to open the meeting at the Immaculate Conception Seminary.

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

The meeting was then called to order. Frs. John Jillions and Eric Tosi indicated minor clarifications to the agenda as to presenters of reports and requested its approval.

**A.1. MOTION KUCHTA/ZAVEDNAK – To approve the agenda for this meeting as presented. 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). He 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 February 16-18, 2016 for approval.

**B.1. MOTION FR. J. VITKO/KUCHTA – To accept the previous meeting minutes of February 16-18, 2016 as presented. CARRIED.**

**C. Welcome**

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed everyone present for the meeting, including the members of the Standing Synod in attendance and noted the absence of Bishop Paul due to illness. He also extended a particular welcome to the new members of the Council. He then expressed gratitude to Archpriests John Vitko and John Schimchick, whose terms on the Metropolitan Council are ending with this meeting.

-

**D. Metropolitan's Report**

Metropolitan Tikhon presented an oral report. He noted the fruitful discussions on leadership at the previous day's retreat led by Protodeacon Peter Danilchick and Charles Ajalat. He emphasized that prayer, humility and discernment are required to exercise leadership. He noted the importance of improving communication and dialogue. The presence of the Standing Synod at Metropolitan Council meetings improves communication.

He then presented the core of his report, reflecting the four pillars of the Guiding framework in reverse order. Regarding External Relations (Pillar IV), he highlighted, as an introduction, the final paragraphs of Holy Synod's response to the Episcopal Assembly on canonical regional planning in March 2015. He then reported on his trips abroad, particularly concelebration with the Ecumenical Patriarch, as well as other significant activities. During this section of the Metropolitan's report on External Relations, a broad and extensive discussion on means of communication took place, resulting in the following resolution. It was indicated that the issue in question is already being addressed.

**D.1. MOTION K. VITKO/ MIKHALEVSKY – That important documents that the Metropolitan would like to share with the whole Church be disseminated by email to bishops and priests for further dissemination to their flocks. CARRIED with 5 opposed (Jury, Kuchta, Lucas, Svetlovsky, Watt).**

Concerning Evangelism and Outreach (Pillar III), His Beatitude noted the success of the OCA Mission School as well the outreach provided by the OCA website. As examples of Stewardship (Pillar II) for the Church, he expressed appreciation for the work of the Stewards of the OCA (SOCA), the Chancery staff, the Archives Advisory Committee and the Metropolitan Council. Regarding Spiritual Life (Pillar I), he indicated his conviction that this pillar must be the foundation for all the other pillars. He pointed to the ascetic labors of Saint Herman and reported on the work of the Synaxis of Monastic Superiors, the Department of Pastoral Life, ORSMA, SMPAC as well as theological education, which was the subject of the Holy Synod's retreat in June.

**E. Major Goals for Upcoming Year**

Metropolitan Tikhon initiated discussion on the process of implementing and promoting all the discussions at this meeting. In response to questions, he stated that a major goal for the upcoming year would be to reevaluate the work of OCA departments and to prioritize their activities. He also underscored the importance of monasticism in enhancing the spiritual and liturgical life of the Church and advocated for greater connections between parishes and monasteries. Discussion ensued on various related issues.

Following a recess for lunch at 12:30 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:35 PM.

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

Maureen Ahearn, OCA Pension Plan Administrator, presented the attached report from the Pension Board and the attached introduction of amendments to the Pension Plan proposed by the Board titled: *“Provide for deemed retirement for Members upon reaching age 75”* and *“Excuse Member Contributions for Members Who Are Eligible for Retirement and Have Reached Age 80”*.

**F.1. MOTION MIKHALEVSKY/GRABAN – To approve the following amendments to The Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan**

**Plan Section 1.28 is restated as follows:**

**1.28 "Retirement" The termination of employment of a Member on his Normal, Deferred or Disability Retirement Date. A Member who has not earlier retired shall be treated as having terminated employment on the first day of the month coincident with or immediately following his seventy-fifth (75th) birthday for the purpose of enabling commencement of a benefit while otherwise remaining Employed (including remaining Employed and having Compensation for purposes of being obligated to contribute to the Plan with respect to such Employment). The Pension received by a Member shall not be treated as Compensation for purposes of determining contributions due to the Plan or for determining benefit accruals.**

**Plan Section 5.5 is added as follows:**

**5.5 If a Participant first becomes eligible to receive additional benefits after attaining Normal Retirement Age, whether as a result of performing additional service or because of a benefit increase through the Plan, the actuarial increase applicable to those additional benefits will be calculated from the date the additional benefits would first have been paid rather than the date on which the Participant attained Normal Retirement Age.**

**Plan Section 3.2(c) is added as follows:**

**3.2(c) A Member who is receiving a Pension benefit and continues as an Employee shall not be required to contribute to the Plan as of the first day of the month coincident with or following his reaching age 80. Nonetheless, the Employer Contribution shall continue with respect to any Compensation paid to such Member. CARRIED.**

Questions and discussion ensued. Per the request of the Metropolitan Council last year, the Pension Board is continuing to explore drafting of a policy for retired priests serving older parishes, similar to the Mission Parish Priest Retirement Benefits Policy adopted a year ago.

## **G. Chancellor's Report**

Fr. John Jillions highlighted his attached written report with appendices. He particularly noted the need for long-term planning in order to actualize a vision for the Church's ministry as expressed in the four pillars put forth by Metropolitan Tikhon. Regarding the Department of Pastoral Life, he stated that a major project is to undertake revision of the Guidelines for Clergy issued over twenty years ago. Questions and discussion ensued on various issues.

### **G.1. ORSMA**

Cindy Heise highlighted the confidential report from the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA), which included case statistics and coordinator activities. She noted the success of the ORSMA/SMPAC workshop conducted with OCA hierarchs during the Holy Synod retreat this year. She also indicated that parish compliance with the OCA Policies, Standards, and Procedures (PSPs) on Sexual Misconduct continues to improve with the submittal of annual compliance forms and the execution of background checks as required. Questions and discussion ensued.

### **G.2. SMPAC**

Fr. Jillions presented the confidential report from the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC). He highlighted SMPAC activities, while noting that SMPAC is an oversight policy-making body responsible to the Holy Synod, while ORSMA deals with actual misconduct cases and implements policies created by SMPAC. Questions and discussion ensued.

Following a short recess at 3:22 PM, the session resumed at 3:42 PM.

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

Fr. Eric Tosi summarized his attached written report with attachments, including a proposal to redesign the OCA website. He presented the recommendations for Mission Planting Grants in 2017 from Fr. John Parker, Chairman of the Department of Evangelization, for which funding is to be approved as part of the proposed OCA budget for the coming year. Questions and discussion ensued, particularly regarding insurance issues.

### **H.1. Archives Advisory Committee (attached)**

Alexis Liberovsky, Committee Secretary and OCA Archivist, summarized the attached written report, noting that the environmental assessment of the OCA Archives for which the Council had allocated funding had been completed and indicated the availability of the lengthy assessment report for those who may wish to read it. In response to a question, he reiterated that the Committee continues to deal with the immediate needs of the OCA Archives in their current location as well as long term planning for relocation to a proper facility.

Fr. Tosi then highlighted the attached Preliminary Report for the 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council with the attached PowerPoint presentation. He indicated that based on the success of the youth program and joint convocation with the FOCA convention, these features would be retained for the 19<sup>th</sup> Council. He then outlined the process of site selection for the 19<sup>th</sup> Council and presented the following proposals for decision to the Metropolitan Council.

**H.2 MOTION HATFIELD/JURY – To approve the St. Louis Union Station Hotel in St. Louis, MO as the venue for the 19th All-American Council. CARRIED.**

**H.3. MOTION MIKHALEVSKY/K, VITKO – To approve the recommendation concerning Preconciliar Committee membership as presented and to submit these names for appointment to the Holy Synod. CARRIED.**

**I. External Affairs Report**

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered an oral report highlighting the following issues: conflicts around the world, including Syria and the resulting refugee crisis, and their impact on the Church; the Council in Crete; as well as the complexities of current relationships throughout the Orthodox world and in ecumenical relations. He also reported on OCA representation, competently provided by several new people at significant international events in recent months.

The day's sessions were adjourned at 5:28 PM.

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

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016**

Following the celebration of a Divine Liturgy at Saint Sergius Chapel at 8:00 AM, the meeting was opened with prayer led by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon at the Immaculate Conception Seminary at 11:06 AM.

**M. External Auditor Report (attached)**

Mr. Anthony Pennella, CPA and Partner in D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP, the new external audit firm engaged by the OCA per decision of the Metropolitan Council, highlighted the audited financial statements and other reports, which are attached to Treasurer's report, and were prepared by his company in conjunction with the audit they conducted for the Orthodox Church in America. He provided several constructive suggestions concerning accounting policies and practices. He noted the unqualified opinion of the auditors. He answered questions, particularly concerning endowments and bequests.

**N. FOCA (attached)**

Archpriest Theodore Boback, Spiritual Advisor, and Marge Kovach, President, presented the attached report and PowerPoint presentation on the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA). They highlighted its history and its wide-ranging current projects and activities. They stressed FOCA's close relationship with the OCA and joint initiatives. FOCA is looking forward to its annual convention in 2018, which again will be held concurrently with the All-American Council. Questions and discussion ensued.

**J. Legal matters (attached)**

Angela Parks, Chairperson of the Legal Committee, presented its attached report.

**J.1. MOTION J. VITKO/ZAVEDNAK – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

Confidential details pertaining to legal matters were discussed in executive session.

**J.2. MOTION ZAVEDNAK/JURY – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

Following a recess for lunch at 12:36 PM, the afternoon session was called to order at 1:31 PM.

**J.3. MOTION DRESKO/JURY – To move into executive session. CARRIED.**

Discussion of confidential details pertaining to legal matters continued in executive session.

**J.2. MOTION DRESKO/GRABAN – To move out of executive session. CARRIED.**

Following a short recess at 2:30 PM, the session resumed at 2:48 PM.

**K. Stewards of the OCA (attached)**

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, newly appointed Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA) highlighted his attached report. He expressed profound gratitude to Raymond Boyd for his work and indicated that he would continue to build on Mr. Boyd's efforts. He outlined a vision for his work as SOCA director.

**L. Internal Audit (attached)**

Melanie Ringa presented the attached report from the Auditing Committee, consisting of all new members recently appointed by the Metropolitan Council. She noted the excellent work of the new auditing team. She indicated that the comments in their report were identical to those of the external auditor. She conveyed the Committee's request for clarification regarding their responsibilities pertaining to auditing of stavropegial institutions. Discussion ensued.

**O. Metropolitan Council Committees**

**O.1. Charity (attached)**

Fr. Alexander Kuchta, Charity Committee Chairman, presented the attached report. He expressed hope that the new charity page on the OCA website would generate more visibility to both donors and those needing assistance.

**O.2 Internal Governance (attached)**

In addition to the attached brief report, Fr. Chad Hatfield indicated that the Metropolitan Council Members' Handbook has been revised to conform to the new OCA Statute. He noted that topics related to millennials, and social media communications have been suggested for future Metropolitan Council retreats, which are in reality workshops. He suggested Deacon Michael Hyatt as a possible speaker.

**O.3. Human Resources**

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, Committee Chairperson, reported that job descriptions have been drawn up for the Archdeacon/Secretary to the Metropolitan as well as the SOCA Director, while reorganization for the chancery and revised job descriptions are in process.

**O.4. Ethics**

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

Following a short recess at 3:38 PM, the session resumed at 3:49 PM.

**P. Treasurer's Report (attached)**

Melanie Ringa highlighted the attached Treasurer's report including the 2015 audit report and 2016 financial results updated through August 31 as well as the status of endowments and investments. She reported that the new funding methodology adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> All-American Council has been working well. Regarding endowments, she indicated that a proposal would be prepared for the next Metropolitan Council meeting to define how these funds can be distributed in compliance with agreements governing the various endowments. She provided updated account figures on investments and noted that the Finance/Investment Committee would be reviewing investment and spending policies, which have not been updated in over 20 years.

**Q. 2017 Budget Presentation (attached)**

Fr. John Dresko presented the proposed 2017 balanced budget prepared by the Finance Committee. He reported on new federal regulations on fulltime employment and their effect on OCA finances. He noted the rising cost of medical insurance and possible provisions that eventually may be implemented for OCA employees. He indicated the new proportional giving funding methodology for the All-American Council. Discussion ensued on various budgetary and other funding issues.

**Q.1. MOTION DRESKO/HATFIELD – To approve the proposed 2017 budget as presented. CARRIED.**

**Q.2. MOTION RINGA/JURY – To accept the external audit reports as presented. CARRIED.**

As a point of personal privilege, Fr. Chad Hatfield commended Melanie Ringa, Fr. John Dresko and Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak for their excellent work in the financial sphere. He suggested that funds be allocated for Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak to attend the one-week fundraising course offered by the Indiana University School of Philanthropy. Fr. John Dresko commended this excellent course that he had attended in the past.

**Q.3. MOTION FR. J. VITKO/HATFIELD – To allocate \$1000 to enable Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak to attend the fundraising course at the Indiana University School of Philanthropy. CARRIED.**

**V. Future Meeting Dates**

Fr. Eric Tosi presented options for Metropolitan Council meeting dates in 2017. After discussion, the meetings were scheduled for February 21-23 and September 19-22. The fall meeting will include a retreat on September 19.

**R. Open Discussion**

Metropolitan Tikhon initiated discussion on planning and structure, continuing the deliberations in conjunction with his earlier report. He advocated prayer as the underlying context for this work. A lengthy dialogue took place on the process of communicating and implementing the vision of the four pillars of the Guiding Framework

The day's sessions were adjourned at 5:28 PM.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016**

The morning session was opened with prayer at 9:14 AM.

**S. Guiding Framework**

Metropolitan Tikhon continued to lead discussion on the process of communicating and implementing the Guiding Framework and its four pillars. Maureen Jury was asked to introduce a discussion of the four pillars in breakout groups. Each of the four groups would spend 15 minutes discussing each pillar and writing down priorities. She then read the four pillars and corresponding goals, as outlined on pages 6-7 of the Chancellor's report. The breakout discussions ensued for over an hour.

Following a short recess at 10:46 AM, the session resumed at 11:00 AM.



Maureen Jury then asked everyone to vote for the top priority in each pillar resulting from the discussion groups. After the voting, she announced the results, indicating the top priorities voted under each pillar.

**PILLAR ONE: THE SPIRITUAL LIFE:** Peer groups (clergy and lay); Training on developing a spiritual life; Catechism of the Good Shepherd in an Orthodox Context.

**PILLAR TWO: STEWARDSHIP:** Build understanding of stewardship/moving from fundraising to stewardship/fundraising for outreach; Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America (SOCA).

**PILLAR THREE: EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH:** Tell “Joe Parishioner” how to evangelize; Re-evangelize former Orthodox (“Nones” vs. those who rejected Orthodoxy, superficial ideas of our faith); Better use of social media.

**PILLAR FOUR: EXTERNAL RELATIONS:** • Plan for the 50th Anniversary of the OCA! (2020); Encourage IOCC, OCMC, OCF, OCPM, Syndesmos, FOCUS; Every parish attend events in other Orthodox jurisdictions.

A further discussion ensued on process and implementation, particularly on how implementation might differ in diverse settings throughout the Church.

Possible themes for the 19<sup>th</sup> All-American Council emanating from the Pillars of the Guiding Framework were discussed. It was suggested that all four pillar topics could be used as the theme.

**W. Adjournment**

In concluding remarks, Metropolitan Tikhon indicated the Metropolitan Council discussions on the Guiding Framework would be shared with the Holy Synod at its upcoming meeting for the further input and action by the hierarchs. He thanked the Council members for a productive meeting.

**W.1. MOTION DRESKO/JURY – To adjourn the meeting. CARRIED.**

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,  
Recording Secretary