

**St. Nicholas Parish Council Meeting**  
**Recorded Meeting Minutes**  
*26 June 2014*

**Members in Attendance:** Claire Nobles, Elena Panomarenko, Nino Burjanadze, Peter Vlasov, Mark Pietrzykoski, Michele Smith, Suzanne Tolstoy, Paul Moser, Ken Mitchell, Sharon Osmolovsky, Ivan Andonov (Deputy), and Walter Alesevich (Deputy)

**Clergy in attendance:** Father George and Father Valery

The PC meeting began at 7:00PM with a quorum in attendance. Shortly after the meeting began, all members were in attendance.

**Everyone sang the Opening Prayer.**

**Approval of Agenda**

Claire N. asked for approval of the meeting agenda. Walter A. then moved to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of last Meeting's Minutes.

Claire N. called for an approval of the recorded minutes for the May PC meeting. A few corrections were offered. Then Michele S. moved the minutes be approved as corrected. The PC passed the motion with all members voting in favor of approval.

Father George Kokhno's Report.

Father George said he had no report, but would be offering comments during the meetings various discussion topics.

Father Valery Shemchuk's Report

Father Valery said he also would have no report, but would be offering comments during the meetings various discussion topics.

President's Report.

Claire N. said that she too would be speaking on later topics and suggested we move on to the meeting topics. She did emphasize a big thanks to everyone who is contributing time and effort to support the projects and work of the Cathedral.

**Old Business**

Strategic Planning Working Group.

Ken M. indicated his view that at this point, the Cathedral should spend its efforts in trying to improve selected areas of capabilities in order to get the Cathedral moving. He said there had been many good suggestions by parishioners for areas to develop in the Cathedral. But Ken M. indicated we needed to develop more and better ways to involve parishioners in the work of the church.

Father George suggested we had achieved a good result so far from the work of the Strategic Plan. He said we had a great set of feedback and participation from the parish during the first phase of the planning.

Update on Maslenitsa.

Suzanne T. said we had grossed close to \$76,000 from the program and we had spent about \$10,000 on costs. She further said each church (St. John and St. Nicholas) received about \$32,000. Last year the amount was about \$30,000 for each church. At this point the books on the program are now closed. Everyone one on the PC felt that this was a good result and were well satisfied.

Suzanne T. said at this point both Marina P. and she felt the time had come for them to retire from managing this program. Claire N. then thanked Suzanne and Marina for all their hard work this year and through past years. Claire said that now we have to work on a transition. Suzanne T. said we would likely need to consider new venues. There are several possible around the area. Claire N. said a venue discussion would have to be well through out in the near future.

## **New Business**

Dates for the Fall Bazaar.

Claire N. began asking about the date for the bazaar. She said we need to check when St. John (ROCOR) plans to have their bazaar this year – they have usually been a week before ours. Nino W. suggested the last weekend in September as a possible time for our bazaar. Several members liked the idea of having the bazaar the last weekend in September. Father George said last year in early October, the weather was still warm outside and that would affect the preferred food items and menu. Suzanne T. asked that we wait and scope out what other events are going on with various churches before finalizing our plans. Michele S. said Columbus Day weekend has advantages with a longer weekend. We had used that weekend last year. The final proposal then became either the Columbus Day weekend or the last weekend in September (Oct. 11/12 or Sept. 27/28). Paul M. indicated he would check about what activities are going on in this area on those weekends. Fr. Valery said we need to have a pre-bazaar meeting as soon as possible as well as identify a chair. Claire N. said we would work on finding a chair.

Candle Counter.

Paul M. indicated he wanted a good working knowledge and come up to speed with how the candle functions and what are the requirements. He said we need to understand what the issues are. He also indicated we need to do a better job covering the Saturday night Vigil as well. There was concern about how to get the money to safe. Michele S. said it is best to have two people to transport the collected money from the service, from coffee hour, and the gift corner. But, in transporting money, we could use one PC member and one other known parishioner to transport. Also, we will be obtaining tamper proof carry bags that seal and will make it more secure to transport the collected money. Claire indicated that other money coming in like coffee hour could use a receipt book to record the money collected and then send a receipt with the transferred money to be counted.

It was agreed not to sell candles during certain parts of the Sunday Liturgy that would include: during the Gospel reading, the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and Communion. This would encourage parishioners to better focus on these parts of the Liturgy service.

Michel S. then added that she had reworked the old tabulating worksheet for collection counting and that check scanning does go live next week, which, should all help to improve the collection counting process for everyone.

Procedures for charitable collections after Liturgies - for special hardship cases.

Claire N. raised the concern on how to handle decisions on calls for the parish to donate when a hardship case comes in. It was pointed out that the Benevolent Fund has its own procedures to decide how to distribute its funds.

Fr. George discussed how to bring situations to the parish clergy for helping. He noted we have already special fund collections for OCA and other church projects, which, ask for special collections for help. He continued by saying who will be the judge, to choose whom funds are to be given? He said he did not find in the guidelines a set of steps to match money between the Benevolent and Discretionary Funds.

Michele S. said we need to decide who makes the decisions on who we can help. Sharon O. recommended it be the clergy who decides. Father George said no, it should be the Council and the Clergy together who should decide.

Michele S. said we could set up a set of questions requestors need to answer to the priests before it then comes to the Council for a formal request and decision. Mark P. suggested we select a chair for charitable giving. Michele S. also asked should we clarify how much help we give to individuals versus organizations who request help? She continued that maybe we should set up a list of requests that we can not directly help from the Discretionary Fund or Benevolent Fund and ask the parish itself to help by sending out notices on announce. Michele S. indicated that we do have to be concerned about the legitimacy of requested need. Further, we need to continue the discussion on this topic. Michel S. then said the Budget and Finance Committee would take this discussion up and continue on the guidelines for the Discretionary Fund.

Decision about Carrier Maintenance Contract.

Michele said our insurance contract renewal is going up about \$300 in cost for the next year.

George N. had said we should continue with the current policy carrier for the Cathedral.

**Michele S. then offered the Motion: The Cathedral shall continue with the current insurance policy carrier for our Air Conditioning/Heating System with the expected yearly cost increase of \$300. A second was offered. The PC voted all in favor of the motion. Therefore the motion passed.**

Gift Corner Update.

Michele S. said that George N. had made additional changes to the Gift Corner upgrade plan and went back to our contractor. The plans are now with the cabinet worker. It will take four to six weeks yet for him to produce the cabinets. Then, likely in August the cabinets will be ready to install. The installation should be fairly easy, though there would be a small amount of wiring

work required. Michel S. said she would also ask the contractor what requirements on site there will be for installation.

#### Cemetery Upkeep.

Lana Gerich has been doing upkeep and covering the expenses for the Cathedral cemetery property up keep at Rock Creek Cemetery for many years now.

**Suzanne T. made the motion on behalf of Lana G. to put a new finance program in place. Motion: The Operating Fund set aside \$500 per annum to be effective immediately, and that the Gift Corner match that fund's amount so that the cost of labor for maintaining, planting, weeding, etc., at least annually, is covered by the Cathedral. The monies would also be used to purchase and replace plantings as well as holiday decorations as needed. These funds would be identified as a line item in the annual budget and be carried over from year to year. The motion received a second. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor of the motion. The motion passed.**

#### Discussion about Security Improvements.

Ivan A. found several options for a security camera system that could accomplish the needs of the Cathedral.

One Option would provide a set of indoor and outdoor cameras, a router, a computer, and uses thin cable wiring - plus wiring for electric. Two sets of cameras runs about \$3,000 plus about \$800 for installation supplies. Ivan A. said he could hook up the system with some help and save money for that part. The system also has battery backup if the electric fails. He said interior cameras could be installed in the choir loft and offices in the Annex Building. The camera system is mostly automatic and every 30 days it will automatically start over by writitng over the previous months video recordings. Each camera system has eight cameras – one system could manage four outside cameras and four inside.

After discussion of the equipment and various options, Ivan A. suggest we go with an incremental approach allowing us to step by step build the system and not have to invest too much money at one time, until we see how this all works.

**Michele made the Motion: The PC authorizes Ivan A. to acquire the first phase of the security system, which would be for interior camera, and allow an expenditure of \$2,000 dollars from Cathedral funds to fund this acquisition. The motion received a second. The motion carried with all members of the council voting in the affirmative to the motion.**

#### Committee Reports

##### Budget & Finance.

Michele S. presented her report on the budget.

As of May 31, 2014 the Cathedral's Fund balances are as follows:

Operating Fund:	\$ 44,547
Reserve Fund:	\$255,422

Total Operations: \$299,969

Basement Facilities: \$ 17,866

Major Repairs Fund: \$ 65,230

Property Acquisition: \$201,180

Total Facilities: \$284,276

Gift Corner: \$ 89,191

Long Term Endowment: \$ 57,157

Discretionary Fund: \$ 3,095

Benevolent Fund: \$119,934

Shandor Memorial: \$ 1,489

Total Benevolent: \$124,518

Total of All Funds: \$855,111

Michele S. noted that we are doing well with our revenue and expenses against the planned budget for this fiscal year so far. However, in comparison to how we trended last year, we are not doing as well. Charitable income is down in comparison to last year. Only in the Facilities budget though are we going over budget due to more projects. Do note that Mark P. has established a separate, independent collection to fund his church grounds improvements. Next month's report will be the mid year budget report.

Stewardship.

Michele S. talked about the recent church survey. She said we used almost the same survey as last time we did the survey, which, was in 2012 so that comparisons can be measured between survey years. Of note were the facts that this recent survey included a similar return response rate as the 2012 survey and demographics of the respondents were again very similar from last time.

The survey overall provided some good news about the Cathedral. We have either improved or stayed the same on all survey categories. Areas where improved opinions of the Cathedral performance included: perceived good sense of community among parishioners, financial needs are well explained, more parishioners are contributing \$1000 dollars or more in charitable donations, higher approval of the cleanness of the church and property, improved ability to contact the clergy, improved church office response and accessibility. The Sunday school program had improved opinions on all factors. Also noted was increased number of church activities to participate in. Many respondents noted how church groups and the church in general was more welcoming. There also seemed to be a higher sense of excitement about the Cathedral's future. Also noted was that now more parishioners get their information from the announce e-mail.

Claire N. said we should send out a summary of results to the parish and compare it to 2012. Elena P. said when we send out our survey results, also ask for people who would like to work on our communication system.

Father George gave permission to extend the meeting for 15 more minutes, as the nine o'clock hour was reached at this point.

**Personnel.**

Claire N. said the issue has been brought up about a vacation time package for Zene Tesfaye, our office bookkeeper. This is being looked into.

**Facilities.**

Mark P. indicated our water heater is not working. Ivan A. said he is thinking about installing more powerful floodlights on the Cathedral's roof and will come up with a proposal. One objective is to light up the cross on the roof.

Michele S. indicated she has asked our basement renovation contractor to conduct a walk through inspection throughout the church and identify what items needs to be repaired or upgraded.

**Legal and By-Laws.**

Nino W. said, she and the committee are reviewing the standing rules and will continue to revise. Also, she indicated that a Virginia "pro bono" lawyer is reviewing the civil law suit concerning the trailer rental and we are preparing for the hearing that is now set for Sept. 15, 2014.

Paul M. called for a motion of adjournment at 9:15PM. The PC unanimously voted in favor.

**Everyone sang the Closing Prayer.**

**Next Meeting: June 17, 2014**

*These minutes have been prepared and submitted on June 16, 2014 by Council Secretary Ken Mitchell.*

*Approved:*

---

---

*President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish*

---

*Priest for the Cathedral*

---

*Date*