

St. Nicholas Parish Council
Recorded Meeting Minutes
19 December 2013

Members Present: Claire Nobles, Walter Alesevich, Sharon Osmolovsky, Elena Panomarenko, Mark Pietrzykoski, John Stepanchuk, Suzanne Tolstoy, Paul Moser, Michele Smith, Peter Vlasov, Ken Mitchell and Nino Burjanadze-Willsea, and Marina Poutiatine via conference call

Members Absent: Paul Grenier (Deputy Member)

Clergy in attendance: Metropolitan Tikhon via conference call, Fr. George Kokhno and Fr. Valery Shemchuck

Visitors: Dan Schuresko, George Nartsissov, and Alexander Moskolenov

The meeting started at 7:00 PM with a quorum acknowledged as being present.

Everyone participated in an Opening Prayer before the meeting began.

Approval of Agenda

Claire asked for the approval of the presented agenda. Suzanne T. moved to approve the agenda. A second was offered. The Council approved the agenda with a unanimous vote of all present.

Approval of the October Minutes

Claire N. asked for approval of the October minutes, which had been previously tabled for further review. Suzanne T. proposed the Council accept the minutes for October. A second was offered and the Council voted all in favor of approving the minutes.

Approval of the November Minutes

Claire N. asked for approval of the November minutes. Several minor corrections were offered. Suzanne T. made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. A second was offered. The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously by Council vote.

Discussion on commissioned Icon for the memorial of “September 11, 2001”

Alexander Moskolenov provided a new set of drawings for the Icon to Commemorate 9/11, based on feedback he had received earlier from the Council. He presented his two drawings: one with the major symbols of Washington, DC clearly written into the icon, plus the Mother of God as the Protector.

Mark P. suggested a more prominent view of the Pentagon should be in the 9/11 Icon. Alexander M. suggested it is difficult, design wise to write the Pentagon in this particular icon. The discussion then turned on how much the icon should focus or be on the 9/11 Memorial versus the Mother of God as the Protector who receives and comforts souls. It was suggested to ask the donor if they wanted an icon focused on 9/11 or more on Washington, DC. The Metropolitan intervened in the discussion stating that there are prescribed rules for the writing

and protocols that are required. He suggested that more discussion take place and consider all aspects. The Council agreed to have more discussions.

Father George Kokhno's Report

Father George told everyone, he had attended the clergy meeting of the Washington, DC area Orthodox priests. The group decided to develop a small committee to bring about a plan for local unity. Several priests are in the group. The next meeting will be in March and parish presidents from the local parishes and other lay leaders will be invited to attend. He also said he appreciated all the hard work of the Council and other parish members during the past year.

Father Valery Shemchuk's Report

Fr. Valery wanted to thank everyone for the work during the past calendar year. He also expressed his optimism that the Cathedral's activities for the upcoming year will be good for everyone.

Parish President Report

Claire N. said the Cathedral had a very good Thanksgiving Day service. Likewise, our St. Nicholas day Feast and celebration, organized by Ksenia Panomarenko was very successful and we had several visitors from other churches attending. Plus, His Beatitude was here with us for the Feast. There was practical activity for the children who participated -- a homebound project - sponsored by Susan Rudy. We were able to organize a dinner with the Metropolitan where he met with some of the leaders and volunteers at the Cathedral. Claire N. said we had a good chance to meet and talk with him over a nice dinner. His Beatitude also went with us to Christ House and enjoyed his experience. Last Sunday, we did a Stewardship presentation for those who stayed for the two coffee hours. This allowed us to get out some of our principles we now are advocating about our stewardship at the Cathedral. Finally, she said a big thanks to everyone who worked to make things happen at the Cathedral. She expressed happiness that we have a good amount of participation right now.

Old Business

Strategic Planning Working Group Update.

Ken M. said that the part two meetings are going well and the meetings should be completed over the next week. He then plans to write up a draft of the material created by the working group and then have a meeting of the strategic planning working group to finalize their work. The next following that would be to submit the plan to the Independent Review and Clergy team for their input on the document.

New Business

Budget and Finance Committee.

Michele presented the November financial report. The Operating Fund balance as presented is an over statement as some funds will be redistributed to other funds to reflect intentions. We will have somewhere around \$25,000 to \$30,000 surplus for the reserve fund by the end of the year – this is because of our withholding of payments of dues to the Archdiocese.

For the most part, our 2013 budget projection tracks close to the actual cumulative at this point. Although we are slightly behind on revenue on the actuals. This situation could change by the end of December – it is possible the actual might track closer to the projected budget figures. For the unrestricted gifts, we are higher than we thought earlier this year. The restricted gifts (i.e. money for baptisms, etc.) are higher than normal this year, as we had a higher amount of baptisms; but normally these figures are unpredictable as to what we will actually receive.

For the non-charitable income (i.e. candle sales), it is slightly over the projected. Also the coffee hour, particularly from the second service has created an increase. Too, the general fund came in over \$42,000, but this is slightly inflated, due to some of the revenue being owed to the Gift Corner.

On the Disbursement side of the equation, we are under budget projections; due to savings in office supplies and good office management from the office staff. For Cathedral personnel, it is about on target; sight overpayment maybe for insurance. The big item here was the unanticipated expense owed to the District on property tax expenses. For utilities, costs have slightly been dropping year by year.

So our good news is due to baptisms, volunteers who are making food, cemetery plot sales, and reductions in expenses do to our industrious office staff workers.

On the bad news side, pledging income has fallen, so have the gifts; not fully sure why, but it is a significant drop this year.

Michele S. then made a few final points. The 2014 Budget Annex Fund owes money to the Operating Fund. The revenue surplus this year establishes the idea of having a real budget reserve, thus having enough money to pay expenses for 6 months. She then thanked all the members of the budget and finance committee for all the hard work they have provided.

Michele S. then turned to presenting the 2014 Fiscal Year Cathedral Budget. She discussed the major aspects of the proposed budget and discussed the underlying assumptions. The Council then engaged in a short discussion, however, everything on the budget proposal seemed clear and straightforward.

Walter A. then made the following motion.

Motion: I move that the Parish Council approve the 2014 Fiscal Year Budget Proposal as presented by the Budget and Finance Committee as amended. The motion received a second. The Council took a vote and the vote was unanimously in favor of the Budget Proposal for 2014.

Michele S. also discussed the issue of funds due to the National Church. The National Church still operates on a dues per person basis that is \$92.00 per person. The Archdiocese, however, is now on a proportional giving system. This latter system of the Archdiocese may be better for St. Nicholas in the long run.

Christmas Decorations.

Mark P. said that worship services during the week of Christmas and Pascha should be undertaken with caution and preparation. Mark P. indicated that Sasha had strung lights that were not pleasantly looking and also could hinder parishioner access to the Cathedral. We really should have a committee to organize (particular around Pascha) the events, put up the decorations, and many other things that need to be done to prepare the Cathedral during these events. He pointed out that Sasha decorated the Cathedral on his own, because other churches in the area were decorating. Mark P. indicated he has spent a fair amount of his time on the decorations activity. Suzanne T. said we had recently eliminated the role of “Starosta” whose job it was to undertake these exact tasks.

Claire N. said this activity seems to fall under facilities; she said we needed to have an organized group performing the decorating. Mark P. said we need some one with capability to be the Chair. Father George said with a new set of altar servers, they could at least offer some help with the altar part of preparations for the holy feast events.

Plans for Maslenitsa.

Suzanne T. said that things are progressing well on the plans. Paul M. designed a nice web page and we are putting up it up. For our theme, we are using a design from an egg from the Hillwood Museum collection - with their permission. We are presently collecting items for the silent auction. Suzanne T. said they are also working on decorations and entertainment. She still needs donations. Fr. George and Fr. Valery have found solutions to the administrative problems – many Russians are calling with inquiries and reservations. The date is February 28, 2014. Suzanne continues to ask for volunteers.

Approval of Plaque for Father Dmitry Grigorieff.

Tabled for now.

Manning the Church.

There was a discussion around trying to find ways to keep the Cathedral open on Sunday afternoons following the morning worship services for those who wish to come in and pray. One Sunday eight Orthodox Christians came by in the afternoon seeking a place to pray and visit. It seems some of our parishioners think the church could be open on Sunday afternoons, if we were able to find parishioners who would stay and keep it open. Sharon O., however, pointed out at the same time when most people leave, the church does need to be closed and secured.

Claire N. asked if we could ask for volunteers to stay here until 5PM on Sundays. Sharon O. indicated we do tend to receive phone calls on Sunday afternoon by people making inquiries and also people coming by. Claire N. said there is no need to have the office staffed and phone answered on Sunday afternoons. But if volunteers want to keep the Cathedral open until 5PM on Sunday – then why not? Mark P. said we should try to find volunteers to sit in the church on Sunday. We need to figure out how to do this -- maybe the new custodian could do some of this. There was a suggestion to form a committee to consider this matter. It was mentioned that Fr.

Valery generally speaks on Pascha Sunday after the vespers, but after that, generally people leave and do not stay in the afternoon. It was suggested that we might try to keep the church open after the vespers on Pascha Sunday. It was noted that on Christmas Day on old calendar, people come and stay even after the meal. We should have some food to offer those visitors on these types of days. Fr. George, Claire N., and Sharon O. will meet and talk more about this topic. But the immediate need is on having the Cathedral open more on Sunday afternoons.

Suzanne T. added a point saying -- having more content on the phone to help people inquiring about openings and activities can help too, we should task someone to search for volunteers.

Committee Reports

Stewardship.

Marina said the pledge letters have been sent out. At this point some 40 pledges have come in – and there are likely to be about 50 in total.

Personnel—Sasha's plans.

Nino B. said she had spoken with Sasha, and he has no immediate plans to move, until after our next bazaar in October 2014. Walter A. said he knew that Sasha would be retiring from his employment at the hospital in the springtime of 2014.

Facilities.

Mark P. is continuing to contact the companies about the tree issue – he has heard nothing from the line cutters. In wintertime he noted prices are cheaper for this work. He also said that the gutters have been cleaned for all three buildings. George N. said we got a letter from the insurance company about the heating system. He noted that an engineer will be coming out and installing a new switch system - this should be done next week.

Legal and By-Laws.

Nothing to report. Walter then asked was there any new information about thefts in the church? Claire N. said there was nothing new on that topic. Mark P. said during the “Nut Roll” project last week, there was some pilfering that occurred. We need to do something to protect the downstairs – especially on Saturday night. The issue is that we have to leave the downstairs area open to have the restroom facilities available. It was decided we needed to talk with experts about possible ways to secure the Church Hall, yet still allowing for the facilities to remain accessible.

Final Matters.

We sent out pledge statements with errors in the letter and they had to be revised. Sharon O. said we had to correct this, but some people submitted their forms immediately, based on the error. Sharon O. also said we never did clarify with those who sent in their check on this error. Michele S. said it was bad situation and she will contact them about the errors and ask them what they want to do, if anything.

Walter A. made a motion to adjourn. There was a second. The Council then voted to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Everyone sang the Closing Prayer

Next Meeting: 23 January 2014 7PM

Addendum – Electronic Vote on Motion

The following motion was made by Nino Burjanadze-Willsea and was sent out by Claire Nobles on December 21st.

Motion: I propose a motion that as a Christmas bonus, we give each of the part time staff one extra week worth of pay and the full-time staff two weeks worth of pay. Funds are available to cover the above, proposed motion. The motion received a second. Twelve members of the Council voted in favor of the motion. Therefore the motion was passed.

These minutes have been prepared and submitted on January 22, 2014 by Council Secretary Ken Mitchell. Ken Mitchell has amended these minutes on Feb. 6, 2014. These minutes have again been updated at the request of Council members and resubmitted for vote on Feb. 11, 2014 by Ken Mitchell

Approved:

President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish

Priest in Charge of the Cathedral

Date