

St. Nicholas Parish Council
Recorded Meeting Minutes
20 February 2014

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

Clergy in attendance: Father George Kokhno and Father Valery Shemchuk

The meeting began at 7:02PM with a quorum of the members present.

Opening Prayer

Everyone joined in the opening prayer.

Approval of Agenda

Suzanne T. moved to approve the presented meeting agenda. A second was given. The motion to approve the agenda received a unanimous vote from the Council.

Approval of the December and January Meeting Minutes

Mark P. made a motion to approve the December Meeting Minutes. A second was offered. Ten members of the PC voted approval of the minutes. There was one abstention.

The January Meeting Minutes were tabled for further review.

Father George Kokhno's Report.

Fr. George mentioned that this is the last Council before the election and thanked everyone for their hard work and their patience in going through the issues and problems. He praised everyone for working together. He hoped everyone would be rewarded with gifts from heaven for all their hard work. He said our people now feel safe, at peace, loved and welcomed in our church. He gave a special thanks to Sharon O. for all the work she performs for the Cathedral.

Father Valery Shemchuk's Report.

Fr. Valery said he just would just reiterate the remarks by Fr. George.

Parish Council President's Report.

Claire N. said we have had many good things going on, including: the upcoming All Parish Meeting, speakers, upcoming pan Orthodox meetings across the DC area and of course the upcoming Maslenitsa. She was thankful for all of these activities and thanked everyone for all their hard work on many of these projects.

Old Business

Strategic Planning Working Group.

Ken M. indicated the work was going well, and noted we now have a completed Strategic Planning Framework for the parish to use in continuing the strategic planning process. He hoped by early summer, everything would be ready for the Council to work with the Metropolitan to decide the priorities.

Update on Maslenitsa.

Suzanne T. said there was one week until the “Maslenitsa event.” At this point, she said, most everyone has made arrangements and everything is near completion. She indicated the Faberge Eggs came out very well. She noted, this year we have been able to attract new, outside people who will attend the event.

Summer Camp Proposal.

Walter A. said our insurance company indicated for this project; our rates would not go up right now. He said the Russian Center in a legal contract would have to provide indemnification and insurance coverage for the time they would be using the Annex. He continued to say; if we do not ask for compensation, but demand insurance coverage, it is not a valid contract, since the Cathedral would be receiving no compensation for its side of the arrangement. Walter A. said right now we should continue discussing about the insurance. He said for now, we are not saying no, but due to time constraints, we cannot go forward with a clear yes. Mark P. said we need some one who has legal and contract expertise to continue with the dialog. Nino BW. suggested, can we get we get our pro bono attorney, Mr. Jon Morris, to work on this issue. The PC decided to take this approach to see if there was a possibility to go forward with this project for next year.

Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds.

Claire N. said the document that was developed by Michele S. and others looks very good. Michele S. said we should now add this as an addition to the Financial Policies and Procedures document as an amendment. Maria P. asked about the tax issue and how it affects the priests. Michele S. clarified that the reference to taxable income was in the definitions section of the document and was included only to illustrate that gifts to the clergy are not to be considered Discretionary Fund income. Everyone thanked Michele S. on the work put into the document. The priests both indicated they were satisfied with these results.

Michele S. then requested a formal motion to adopt the document.

MOTION: Walter A. moved to accept the document, Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds, and that this document is to be included in the new Financial Policy and Procedures document. A second was offered. A vote was taken and the PC voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion therefore passed.

New Business

Annual Parish Meeting, March 9th.

Claire N. said the Parish meeting is set for March 9, 2014, with the Metropolitan attending. She also said that Candice Johnson has agreed to serve as the Chair of the Elections Nomination Committee.

Claire said there is an issue concerning the new by-laws that were put into place last year. We voted to change the numbers on the Parish Council from 12 to 9, to reflect the smaller size of the church. Walter A. has found an inconsistency – whereby we need to elect a third of the members every year. What really was intended was to go to nine members as soon as possible rather than over several years. This year three members are going off the Council. Therefore, we would just need to vote for two Alternates or Deputy members.

Walter A. offered a motion to deal with the situation.

Motion: The Parish Council recommends to the Annual Meeting that the body waive the requirement in Article VI (section 4) for this Annual Parish Meeting that the Annual Parish meeting elect one-third of the Council Members for a three-year term. By doing this, we will achieve our goal of reducing the Council to nine members. This will not affect the election of deputy council members during that period. As this is a waiver of a by-law provision, a 2/3^{rds} vote at the Annual Meeting is required. The motion received a second. The Council then voted and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Therefore, we agreed to put the motion to the entire parish at the Annual Meeting.

Marina P. talked about Walter A. leaving the Council, and therefore we have no lawyer or legal expert on the Council. Fr. George indicated we had a in years past a PC member who was not a lawyer, but still headed the Legal and By-laws committee. Fr. George said Walter A. can continue on the legal committee with no problem.

Claire said that there would be a need to have tellers, people to assist in registration of voters and parishioners holding proxies, and arrange for a parliamentarian. She also said a meeting notice and agenda must go out in the next few days and the packet of materials needs to be ready before the Sunday of the Parish Meeting.

Revised Policy on Sexual Misconduct.

Ken M. submitted the following motion at the request of the OCA Holy Synod for passage by the Council.

Walter A. made the motion to adopt and a second was offered.

MOTION: Resolution to Adopt OCA Policies, Standards and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct: The Parish Council of St. Nicholas Cathedral, and all members of the clergy and laypersons

working on behalf of St. Nicholas Cathedral agree to be bound by and comply with the *Policies, Standards and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct* and any amendments thereto. The Cathedral's *Priest in Charge* and Parish Council will use all reasonable efforts to ensure that such *Policies, Standards and Procedures* are distributed to and understood by all Lay Persons working with youth on behalf of the parish.

Furthermore, St. Nicholas will adopt the following programs:

Screening of potential 'youth workers'

1. Screening of all laypersons who will have more than incidental contact with minors in connection with Church ministries or programs, to include: the completion of an application form; a criminal records check; a check with the District of Columbia's Metropolitan Police (or their recommended provider); and an interview by the clergy or a responsible staff member. This will also apply to voluntary church schoolteachers. All references on the application form shall be verified and documented in writing.
2. The *Priest in Charge* shall receive any training on child sexual abuse matters that is available from local law enforcement or social service agencies.
3. Unless approved by the Bishop in writing at the request of the *Priest in Charge*, laypersons that are volunteers should not be considered for work with youth or children until they have been members of the parish for a minimum of six months.
4. No person who has been convicted or has plead guilty to any violation of law involving child sexual or physical abuse, and no person known to have a paraphilic diagnosis such as, but not limited to, pedophilia, exhibitionism, or voyeurism as defined by the American Psychiatric Association shall be allowed to work with children or youth in any capacity.
5. Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with the *Priest in Charge* before being approved to work with youth.

Supervision of youth activities, including open door and two adult policies

6. Two or more adults shall be present, except for necessary brief absences, during any Church activity involving children.

7. Doors on any parish rooms in which youth activities are taking place must either be left partially open or have a glass window unless there is adequate adult supervision in the room.
8. Prior written permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained for any youth to participate in any parish sponsored youth activity away from St. Nicholas.

Transportation Policy

9. The following Transportation Policy shall apply: (a) drivers must be 18 or older and not have adverse driving records; (b) the driver cannot be alone with one youth in a vehicle unless he/she has the advance approval of the *Priest in Charge*.

a. Reporting and investigation of inappropriate activity

10. Laypersons shall report possible sexual misconduct in a parish to the *Priest in Charge* if the *Priest in Charge* is not alleged to have committed the acts. If a report cannot be made to the *Priest in Charge* it shall be made to another member of the clergy serving in the parish in the order of precedence. If there are no other clergy the report shall be made to the senior elected layperson of the parish council.
11. Any inappropriate conduct between an adult and a child shall be confronted immediately and investigated.
12. By District of Columbia ordinances and directives, clergy and those involved in child and youth ministry are “mandated reporters” and are legally required to report suspected instances of child abuse by “parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child’s care”. (This mandated reporting does not apply to information conveyed to the priest in confession.)

Individual certification of compliance

13. Every person involved in youth programs and each parish council member shall be given a copy of the *Policies, Standards and Procedures* and shall certify in writing that they have read and will fully comply with them.

All members of the PC voted in favor of the motion.

Marina P. said we need to rethink how we notify our parish and parishioners and how we make them aware of how to recognize and handle these situation. The Council directed Ken M. to contact Father John Vitko and learn more about what we as a parish might do.

Approach to Service Cancellation—telephone tree.

A discussion took place. Concerns were expressed about the cancelling of the previous week's Vigil and the Sunday combined Liturgy. Some people felt it was a mistake to cancel services and also questioned our approach to notifying parishioners about the cancellations; partially because not everyone uses the Internet. Claire N. said we need to reengage our phone tree. She suggested we might ask parishioners to sign up for a phone tree duty as an option for how to notify if we will close the church. Walter A. said when we send out a notification; it should not go out after 7PM of the day before the service. Marina P. suggested we ask those in the parish, how many will need to be called and see what kind of response we receive. Then once we have that information, we can better figure out how to notify parishioners of the closings. Many thought the best way is to send out announcements and put a notice on the web site. It was also suggested we use local stations such as WTOG. Suzanne T. said should consider to buy a new phone answering system that can be easily programmed with closing announcement messages.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance.

Michele S. first said that the Kitchen Renovation company has submitted a final set of drawings for finishing the gift corner.

Michele S. then gave some big picture details about the Parish Budget as January 31, 2014. We collected about \$54,000 in revenue and had \$32,000 in disbursements. Thus leaving us with a net of \$21,500 for the month and fiscal year so far. But this is normal for this time of year. She noted we are not doing remarkably well at this point in comparison.

She noted the Fund balances, but also indicated to meet the financial guidelines required some transfers of monies and zeroing out would be occurring.

Fund Balances as of January 31, 2014.

Total Operations – \$302,682.11

Total Facilities - \$283,037.89

Gift Corner - \$84,405.72

Long Term Endowment - \$57,147.94

Total Benevolent and Education - \$118,435.50

Total of all Funds - \$845,709.16

Michele S. said she had sent out correction letters on the pledge issues that needed to be clarified.

Marina P. said we are still getting checks for the “new annex” and need to let people know that all money goes to building repairs.

Michele S. specified the following:

1. We are closing down the new annex fund.

2. As of March 15, 2014 all contributions made on the building fund is to go towards building repairs.
3. The New Annex fund has paid its debt to the operating fund, thus there is no need for the fund to continue.

Walter A. then made the following motion, which received a second.

Motion: The New Annex account is to be closed. Any new money contributed to the “new annex” shall go to the Building Repairs account and we shall notify parishioners at the annual meeting of this change. From here forward, money specifically contributed to the “new annex” shall go to the Building Repairs fund, but we can establish a sub account for those monies. The motion was voted upon and a unanimous vote in favor of the motion was given. Therefore the motion passed.

Stewardship.

The survey has gone out. We received 10 so far. It was the same as last year.

Claire wondered how non-Internet uses can participate. We can print out hard copies and we can announce by priests and have copies available at the candle counter

Personnel.

No report.

Outreach.

No report.

Facilities.

Mark P. is hoping to have a meeting of the Committee fairly soon.

Legal and By-Laws.

Walter A. indicated he had talked earlier in the meeting about the Committee’s work.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55PM with a motion and unanimous approval from the Council.

Everyone participated in the Closing Prayer.

Next Meeting: 20 March 2014, 7PM

These minutes have been prepared and submitted on May 22, 2014 by Council Secretary Ken Mitchell.

Approved:

President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish

Priest in Charge of the Cathedral

Date