

DIOCESE OF THE WEST

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MINUTES

October 8, 2013

At 7:55 p.m. on October 8, 2013, His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin convened a meeting of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West at Saint Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, California.

Present: Archbishop Benjamin, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Archpriest Basil Rhodes, Archpriest Lawrence Russell, Archpriest John Pierce, Archpriest Matthew Tate, Archpriest David Brum, Archpriest Anthony Karbo, Archpriest John Dresko, Archpriest Lawrence Margitich, Archpriest Michael Anderson, Archpriest John Strickland, Priest Damian Kuolt, Subdeacon Wesley Smith, Mary Caetta, Dorothy Nowik, and Ivan Pouschine. Also in attendance was Andrew Smith, Diocesan Administrative Assistant.

Previous Minutes- The minutes of the June 6, 2013 meeting of the Diocesan Council were received.

Report of the Archbishop – His Eminence welcomed everyone to the Diocesan Assembly and presented an overview of diocesan life and noted that present concerns are included within the agenda. The proposed appointments of officers of the Diocesan Assembly was also reviewed at this time.

Report of the Treasurer – Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, reviewed the YTD 2013 Diocesan Budget and noted that all is well, as reflected in the distributed report. His Eminence thanked Mary for her fine work and wished her well in her upcoming move.

Finance Committee - Dorothy Nowik, member of the diocesan finance committee, presented the proposed 2014 diocesan budget for review by the Diocesan Council and for subsequent presentation for approval by the Diocesan Assembly. Discussion ensued.

Motion: It was moved and seconded (Dresko/Tate) “To include an additional \$2,500.00 in the Youth Ministry line item in order to provide for additional activities in the coming year.” The motion carried.

Motion: It was moved and second (Dresko/Kuolt) “That the proposed 2014 Diocesan Budget, prepared by the Diocesan Financial Committee be presented to the Diocesan Assembly for its approval.” The motion carried.

Discussion Concerning Stipend to Retired Archpriest Leo Arrowsmith – Discussion took place concerning the status and financial constraints of retired of Archpriest Leo Arrowsmith. It was moved and seconded (Russell/Archbishop Benjamin) “To allocate \$6,000.00 to the 2014 diocesan budget’s discretionary charities fund to be distributed to Archpriest Leo Arrowsmith for the period of one year at the rate of \$500.00 per month.” The motion carried.

Discussion of Proposed Honorarium for Substitute Clergy – A discussion took place concerning the appropriate and acceptable amount of honoraria provided to substitute or “supply” clergy. It was decided that this will be determined by the Archbishop who will then publish his policy in this regard.

Metropolitan Council – Archpriest John Dresko reported on the recent meeting of the Metropolitan Council, noting that the OCA 2014 budget was passed as a balanced budget, the assessment is now at \$92.00 per person, and the Pension Board approved an increase in pension payments. Based upon salary, the payments remain 6% for the participant and will increase to 8% for the parish/employer. Formal communication of this change will be received in the near future.

Lifegiving Spring – The present status of the purchasers of Lifegiving Spring Retreat Center was reviewed. It was again noted that the property has been abandoned and left in a state of disrepair. In light of the fact that the purchasers have stopped making payments and have indicated their desire to simply walk away from the property, various options were presented as to how the Diocese might proceed. After an in-depth discussion, it was determined that it would be best to follow the route of a “non-judicial foreclosure.” It was moved and seconded (Archbishop Benjamin/Tate) “To initiate a non-judicial foreclosure on the Lifegiving Spring Retreat Center.” The motion carried.

Assessments – A lengthy discussion took place concerning the manner of funding the work of the Diocese as well as, on the church-wide level, the work of the Orthodox Church in America. Following lively and informative discussion about the various options and approaches, a way of proceeding in this regard was agreed upon and approved for presentation to the Diocesan Assembly. It was moved and seconded (Tate/Smith) “To recommend that our annual diocesan assessments be set at 10% of parish income, less building/capital improvement funds, charity, and pass-through items.” The motion carried. There was also discussion concerning the determination of what percentage of the funds collected at the diocesan level will be forwarded to Syosset for use by the national church. It is estimated that, following discussion with those at the national level, this will be determined at somewhere between 30-32% of diocesan income.

Adjournment – His Eminence adjourned the meeting of the Diocesan Council at 9:50 p.m.