Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report to the Diocese of New England
Part 2

Archpriest Patrick Burns and David Zavednak

The Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council was held on October 14th and 15th at the Hotel Belvoir in Springfield, Virginia. The information presented throughout both days was very positive. A good summary of the meeting is available on the OCA web site. Here are a few 'take aways' on the topics that were discussed.

Finances: Treasurer Andrew Smith provided a summary of income and expenses as of the end of the second quarter (June 30th). Revenue was $1.725M on an annual budget of $2.688M (64.2% above budget) with Diocesan contributions at 58.2% of budget. Expenses incurred were $1.18M on an annual budget of $2.688M (43.8% below budget). This resulted in unrestricted net income of roughly $548K through Q2 2026. OCA investments have performed well in 2026, with a blended return of 12.3% for the first two quarters of 2026 and over 26% for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2026.

Andrew also presented a proposed balanced budget of $2.73M for FY2027 which was reviewed and approved by the Metropolitan Council. The budget has a modest increase in expenses including 3.7% cost of living increase for all salaried employees (matching current projections for 2027 Social Security increase), increase in Office of Pastoral Life Grant Programs to accommodate larger anticipated cohort for the Financial Health Initiative, and elimination of rental expense for both Metropolitan's residence and Chancery offices in light of purchase of property in Washington, D.C.

Pension Plan: Archpriest John Dresko and Plan Administrator Michael Stieglitz presented the status of the Pension Plan. The monthly contributions continue to exceed the monthly benefits payable. Through August of this year, the plan added $405K to the investment account and are on track to meet the budgeted additions of $605K for the full calendar year. Helping the positive performance of the plan is the growth in parishes that are contributing to the system. Over the last 18 months, 57 additional parishes have enrolled (now 363 parishes).

Father John also noted the Pension Board has been actively reviewing ways to reduce costs and increase investment performance. After review of the cost and performance of Morgan Stanley, the Pension Board investigated other investment managers and selected Hirtle & Co. as the new investment manager. In the opinion of the Pension Board, Hirtle is a better fit for the OCA Pension Plan. Additional information will be provided in the next quarterly newsletter that will be available in early November.

Departments: Archpriest Justin Patterson reported on the Church Planting grant program. Twelve Mission parishes submitted grant requests, of these, two parishes were identified and were approved by the Metropolitan Council with the Holy Synod having final approval. Father Justin also reported that eleven parishes submitted requests for the Growing Spaces Grant. Of these, three were presented to the Metropolitan Council and were approved.

New Chancery: After Liturgy at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington, DC, we toured the newly purchased building that will serve as the Chancery and residence for the Metropolitan. The building is a short walk from the Cathedral (three building from the Cathedral and next to St. Nicholas' Rectory). The OCA was able to purchase the building with a sizable donation from the late Joseph and Theresa Domanick. The rooms are large

and well-lit by natural light. The building was constructed in the 1930's. As part of the recent refurbishment, the building footprint was expanded and completely renovated with new heating and cooling system, wiring, plumbing and fixtures, and appliances.

Metropolitan Tikhon expressed his joy and excitement that acquiring this facility brings together the primatial, liturgical, pastoral, and administrative aspects of the life of the OCA and will aid in the stability of the OCA. The building provides a wonderful facility for improving the visibility of the OCA in the Washing DC area for hosting visiting dignitaries. The main floor will be used to great visitors, provide a sitting and dining area, and will be used to display pictures, documents, and relics. The large basement area will be used for meetings of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council. The second floor will be used for offices and file storage with the third floor reserved for the Metropolitan's residence. Purchasing of furniture is underway and Metropolitan expects to move into the Chancery by the end of November.

After our tour of the new Chancery, there was much discussion on how the Metropolitan Council could help to integrate the Chancery with St. Nicholas Cathedral and to help the Officers adapt to the new Chancery. The Metropolitan Council approved a one-time contribution to the Cathedral's ongoing renovations, including improving its parking facilities (there is a very limited parking area for the clergy with 'on street parking' for parishioners). With the relocation of the Metropolitan's residence and Chancery to Washington, DC, Saint Nicholas Cathedral is assuming a more prominent role in the life of the entire Church, serving as a principal setting for primatial liturgical celebrations, ecclesiastical gatherings, and the welcoming of hierarchs, dignitaries, and visitors. The Council recognized that these improvements will help the Cathedral more fully carry out its responsibilities not only to its local community, but also to the Metropolitan and the Orthodox Church in America as a whole. We also discussed additional staff will be required to coordinate events, meet and greet visitors, keeping the facility clean, etc. It was decided to give the Metropolitan and the Officers the opportunity to move in and get settled then come back to the Metropolitan Council at the Spring meeting and identify the needs.

Sale of Westwood: At noted in the Part 1 of our report, the Property Committee reported they are still working with the Buyer and appropriate parties to resolve issues that have developed during the closing process.

Respectfully Submitted

Archpriest Patrick Burns
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