

Parish Council Meeting
October 7, 2024
Remote Zoom Meeting (recorded)

Roll Call

Parish Council Members Present: Christine Dardaris, Donna Dimitri, Sergio Georgi, Davit Jishkariani (until 8:20), Zachary Smith, Reem Tarazi

Parish Council Members Absent: Nilda Salavachi

Clergy: Fr. Kai

Auxiliary Members Present: Linda Croke, Linda Notskas, Steve Coraluzzi, Anila Vero

Meeting opened at 7:38 pm with prayer.

Discussion about AI generated minutes: Reem and Christine shared concerns regarding flow, organization, and some inaccuracies. For now, Reem prefers to continue to take minutes. Zach suggested using a feature without Zoom that provides a summary. This will be explored.

Secretary's Report (reported by Reem Tarazi)

Reem presented revised minutes from the September meeting. Discussion prompted by Christine regarding accuracy of minutes regarding decision for investment account transfer. Revised minutes remained as presented.

Sergio moved to accept minutes as presented and seconded by Zach. Davit abstained. Motion passed.

Donna reminded Zach to inform Reem of any online donations.

Treasurer's Report (reported by Zachary Smith)

At end September 2024:

- Checking account up to ~\$25,500
- Investment account down to ~\$282,000
- 56 pledges total; >42,000 pledged and ~34,600 received
- Icon pledges steady with few payments received
- Transferred \$15,000 from investment account to checking account to help pay off window project costs
- Notable Income
 - Candles/collections substantially higher than last year to date
 - Pledges little behind YTD last year; maintain \$60,000 goal
 - A generous memorial donation
 - A cemetery lot
 - Sunday school income reflects hotdog sale + Elisabeth papa raffle
- Notable Expenses
 - Registration cost for annual meeting for 5 delegates
 - Reimbursement to Fr. Kai for a lunch with several priests
- Almost \$38000 in red year to date; not unexpected given window project [Capital improvements YTD 58,400]

- Annual gain in investment account YTD ~27,500
- Bank and CC statements available for review

Reem moved to accept the September report, seconded by Davit. No discussion. Zach abstained. Motion passed.

Zach brought up issue of Insurance. Last year's premium was \$13,187; this year \$12,559. Deductible 10,000 per claim, so try to avoid submitting claims. Next year, could consider changing to lower deductible and increase premium [5000 deductible=13,200 premium, 1500 deductible=13,700 premium]. Zach suggested withdrawing money from investment account to cover premium. Reem made motion to transfer 10,000, seconded by Sergio. Christine suggested transfer full amount needed. Council agreed to transfer 10,000 from investment account.

Clergy report (reported by Fr. Kai)

1. Archdiocese meeting sparked desire to support Albanian Orthodox church in Albania given the situation there (e.g., support priest salary ~6000-7000 per year)
2. Fr. Kai attending seminar/workshop in Chicago later this month at request of bishop; seminar being conducted by the OCA
3. Reflected on the bishop's vision for the archdiocese and our role in supporting the transition
4. His Grace will supply relics for our church. Fr. Kai suggested we have a designated place for icon of saints and associated relics. Fr. Kai suggested commissioning icon from a former parishioner in Georgia.
5. His Grace wants churches to update cover for Gospel in altar
6. Continue to connect with parishioners.
7. Recognized the role and work of parish council

Chairperson Report (reported by Donna Dimitri)

1. The window project is moving forward. The window film of the 10 Feast Days with crosses on either side on the casement windows and the 4 saints for the door was delivered and is at the church. Waiting to confirm installation date with Lewis. It will be in the next few weeks.
2. The church sign which had been removed from the stand in front of the church was hung on the outside wall of the church. Special thanks to Tom Moore for having the bracket made and then hanging the sign. The existing stone base will be removed.
3. Father Dennis and I will be attending the OCA Metropolitan Council meeting in Springfield VA, October 9-11. Will report at the November meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Report (reported by Sergio Giorgi)

1. Provided summary of some main themes that emerged from the Archdiocese Assembly
2. Streaming channel has 247 subscribers
3. Fr. Kai playing Byzantine chants before Liturgy on Sunday
4. Fr. Kai discussed plan for producing more educational content related to our church history

Sunday school update (reported by Donna Dimitri on behalf of Ilirjan Papa)

1. Great participation in Sunday School the first two weeks with ~ 10 kids! The ages vary from pre-schoolers (2) to elementary school (2) to middle school (3) and high school (3). Last Sunday we only had 2 children for Sunday School.

2. Michele Sarkos, Dhimitra Thodhori and Jorgeta Kashari have volunteered to help with Sunday School. Anita also expressed a desire to help last Sunday as well. We can use any help we can get. I am trying to organize the lessons and share them with the teachers ahead of time each week and making use of materials shared by Donna.
3. Plan for now is to have three classes: Preschool kids, Elementary + Middle School kids, High School kids. If we have good participation from kids and teachers, we can split the elementary and middle school into two classes as well.
4. In terms of lessons, started the new school year talking about the new Church Calendar starting in Sep 1, the very first feast of the Birth of the Theotokos (Sep 8), the Elevation of the Cross (Sep 14), the Holy Trinity, and God's Creation. We are also working on the importance of prayers.
5. Ilirjan taking care of school snacks and supplies for the kids. These will be donations to the church.

Old Business

1. Semi-annual meeting scheduled for October 20
2. Davit mentioned that he is not able to commit as much time to parish council. He suggested that council might benefit from another trustee with more availability and encouraged us to consider new membership. Council highlighted Davit's contributions outside of meetings. Nilda is officially stepping down from parish council given commitment to AANO
 - a. Donna welcomes ideas of others who might be interested in serving
3. AA meeting summary will be shared at semi-annual meeting on 10/20; thank you to Sergio for managing the audio visual
4. Updating parish directory
 - a. Hasn't been done in 5 years
 - b. Looking for people to help out; Donna will make announcement and put in messenger
5. Pledge reminder letter- Do we want to do this?
 - a. Agreed pledge reminder letter would be helpful and can also put pledge cards on tables at semi-annual meeting
6. 10/27 Fall Costume party – Paula Bendo and Fiori Papa organizing; set up 10/26 at 11:00am
7. Nameday celebration on 11/10
 - a. Bishop unable to attend but will visit in February
 - b. Potluck luncheon
8. 12/22 Sunday school pageant

New Business

1. Linda Notskas suggests church give icon of Resurrection when we have a funeral at church, as we do icons for baptisms and weddings (cost ~30 each). Council agrees.

Next Parish Council monthly meeting scheduled for Monday, November 11 at 7:30pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm with a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Reem Tarazi