



**OCA Diocese of the South**  
**Plenary Session I: Meeting Minutes**

July 26, 2017

**I. Call to order**

Fr. Marcus Burch called to order the 40<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Diocese of the South at 3:15 PM on July 26, 2017 at the Marriott Chattanooga, TN. The assembly began with the singing of O Heavenly King.

**II. Notes about the structure of the minutes:**

Decisions are **highlighted in yellow.**  
**Follow-up items are typed in red.**

**III. Roll call and Attendance:**

Fr. Marcus Burch conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Bishop Alexander, President, Archimandrite Gerasim, VP, Fr. Marcus Burch and Bert Walther (Clergy and Lay Vice Chairs), Fr. Christopher Foley, Catherine Clark and Fr. Jason Foster (Credentials), Fr. Peter Robichau and Christopher Lewis (Secretariat), Fr. Nicholas Roth, Fr. Patrick Pulley and Fr. Nikolay Miletkov (Tellers). The secretariat was approved as noted here.

In Attendance:

1 Bishop  
59 Clergy  
1 Monastic  
48 Lay Delegates  
17 Observers  
1 Vendor

Delegates: 109

Observers: 17

Vendor: 1

Total in Attendance: 127

#### **IV. Approval of minutes from last meeting**

Fr. Marcus Burch read the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were approved as read. Moved Fr. Peter Smith moved to accept the minutes. They were accepted as posted.

#### **V. Special Business:**

Resolution honoring Milos Konjevich (From 28 July, 2016 – passed) was read by Fr. Marcus Burch, and given to Milos from the Archbishop.

#### **VI. Address of Archbishop Alexander:**

In his travels through the diocese, he has visited every deanery. Several items stand out: Clarksville, TN which was recently “nothing” is now a church. Marietta, GA is now blooming - beautiful churches, full of children, and everywhere ... full of life and diversity of membership. This has everything to do with the labors of our priests and our priests' wives. The archbishop offered thanks to all those who have labored as priests.

Things are “fragile” – any number of things can happen externally to disrupt apparent stability. It is a “slog” to continue in “doing well.” What can we put in place to put a clergy sabbatical system in place? What can we do to get the clergy and their wives away from the daily grind, and to come back refreshed?

Parishes can be upended by a cross word, but the remedy for this is humility, and Christ – the one thing needful.

#### **VII. Address of the Diocesan Administrator:**

Fr. Gerasim emphasized the importance of the health and well-being of the clergy of our diocese. One way to foster the health of our diocese is have healthy monasteries. We need to support our seminarians, our priests and our leaders to assure that we have a fruitful ministry as a diocese.

#### **VIII. New business:**

##### a) DOS By-Laws:

Fr. Dmitri Cozby noted: There have been some minor revisions were made to location of articles and the structure of the document.

There are only a few substantive changes to the DOS By-Laws. The first is to Article I about the Diocesan Hierarchy: The canons of the church are very clear about the limitations of the Locum Tenens. The Locum Tenens

is supposed to be a short-term solution to the lack of a diocesan bishop. [See full text of the revisions as presented to the assembly.]

Mother Thecla – Ss. Mary and Martha Monastery: There was some discussion of the bylaws related to monasteries (article 8 specifically in the UPBL) – the current wording of the bylaws allows for the bishop to control the monasteries at the bishop’s discretion. This is likely a reaction to the historical situation in Resaca, GA. Q: is anything being done about the rather secular wording of this portion of the bylaws?

Fr. Marcus asked if there was any way that we (as a diocese) could modify the bylaws to address the canonical concerns while still remaining in compliance with the national statutes. Fr. Dmitri noted that this would need to be coordinated with the national Church (Metropolitan Council and Holy Synod must address this). **It was proposed that a possible text for submission to the national church be drafted and presented at Plenary Session II on July 27.**

Abp. Alexander: “It is not within our competence to differ substantially with the national statutes.” However, a bishop intervening in a monastery’s affairs would be “exactly like” a stranger meddling in a family’s affairs. There is no way to legislate wisdom.

Christopher Lewis (DOS Council): Made a motion to accept the modifications of the bylaws as presented.

Fr. Thomas Moore: Seconded the motion to accept.

A voice vote was taken: **The proposed amendments to the DOS By-laws were accepted unanimously by voice vote.**

Changes to the Uniform Parish Bylaws: (none substantial, structural only)

Christopher Lewis (DOS Council): Made a motion to accept the modifications to the UPBL as presented.

Fr. Christopher Foley seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken: **The proposed amendments to the Uniform Parish Bylaws were accepted unanimously by voice vote.**

- b) Resolution from Fr. Alexander Fecanin: Resolution in expression of gratitude to Archpriest Peter Smith and Mother Terri Smith for faithful service in the Church together. [see full text as drafted] **By voice acclamation, the resolution was accepted.**

## IX. Adjournment

Fr. Marcus Burch adjourned the meeting at the movement of Fr. Benedict Churchill and the unanimous approval of those assembled @ 4:36 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Rev. Peter Robichau

Minutes approved by:

DRAFT



**OCA Diocese of the South**  
**Plenary Session II: Meeting Minutes**

July 27, 2017

**X. Call to order**

Fr. Marcus Burch called to order second session of the 40<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Diocese of the South at 10:10 AM on July 27, 2017 at the Marriott Chattanooga, TN. The session began with the singing of O Heavenly King.

**XI. Notes about the structure of the minutes:**

Decisions are **highlighted in yellow.**  
**Follow-up items are typed in red.**

**XII. Roll call and Attendance:**

Fr. Marcus Burch conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Bishop Alexander, President, Archimandrite Gerasim, VP, Fr. Marcus Burch and Bert Walther (Clergy and Lay Vice Chairs), Fr. Christopher Foley, Catherine Clark and Fr. Jason Foster (Credentials), Fr. Peter Robichau and Christopher Lewis (Secretariat), Fr. Nicholas Roth, Fr. Patrick Pulley and Fr. Nikolay Miletkov (Tellers). The secretariat was approved as noted here.

In Attendance:

1 Bishop  
60 Clergy  
1 Monastic  
46 Lay Delegates  
18 Observers

Delegates: 108  
Observers: 18

Total in Attendance: 126

**XIII. Treasurer's Report**

Noel Bush, new treasurer, offered introductory remarks, reflecting on the history of financial management in the diocese. His hope is to “take the diocese’s financials to the next level.”

After drawing our attention to current restructuring efforts, Mr. Bush focused on the current financials (available in full on the website).

Of note, it is customary for a business to have 8%-10% in liquid assets ... we are operating at 3% liquid reserves, which are too low.

Regarding “deposit accounts,” these are now “custodial accounts” that have always operated similar to a term account. This will be formalized in the days ahead.

Year to date, the 2017 financials are in keeping with projections.

The diocesan council stipulated (Tuesday) that Tithe Credits would be graduated so that 100% would be accorded the first two years, and then stepped down to 2/3 credit for another two years, with finally a 1/3 credit for the last two of six years (and the seventh year will assume full independence).

Ed Kovak from Rock Hill (St. Anthony): Asked for clarification on Church Friendly loans – Noel answered that the diocese is only allowed to accept loans (not deposits) from “member parishes” and not individuals (though individuals can make loans through parish corporations).

Fr. Justin Patterson from Nicholasville, KY (St. Athanasius) – asked for a formal document of the presented materials to be provided to parishes and missions.

Fr. Arkady from Jacksonville, FL: Asked a question about building plans underway at his mission (related to tithe credits). Noel asked that they take this discussion offline.

Fr. David Bozeman – Waxahachie, TX: Asked for clarification on the future of the managed debt program, roll backs and other possible changes. Noel noted that there was a new “tithe credit schedule” that was announced last year – this implied that there would be a scaling back or stepping down of tithe credits. Noel emphasized that any “scaling back” of credits should be done on a case by case basis. New loans would follow the 1/3 step down described earlier.

Fr. Jacob Kulp from Toccoa, GA: Noted that a large donation to their parish was placed in trust with the diocese. They were happy to see the way that their funds worked throughout the diocese. What they liked was the “immediate availability” of the deposit. Fr. Jacob expressed some concern about the immediate availability of funds (or lack of availability). Noel noted that when there are needs, the diocese can accommodate large requests, but these must be handled on a case by case basis.

Milos Konjevich – Dallas, TX: With the plan for fund management changing, there is some concern that we are in an “interim phase.” Where do we go from here? Is there a

plan beyond Noel Bush? Noel responded that he hoped he would be around for a while to assist, but this is uncertain. Noel's "one year term" limitation (self-imposed) can be extended, but was in place because he had no idea what he was accepting as the "interim treasurer."

Fr. John Maxwell – Ft. Smith, AR: Question – how long will it take to get to the 8-9% liquidity? Noel noted that there are a lot of "unknowns," but if you are skeptical of the capacity of the diocese to manage finances well ... it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you are optimistic about the ability of the DOS to manage finances well within a new framework, then it will likewise be self-fulfilling. It all depends upon the participation of parishes and individuals in future programs. You (parishes and priests) are the final arbiter of this.

Fr. Stephen Freeman, Oak Ridge, TN: noted that banks are not interested in supporting mission parishes – this is a program that makes things possible that would otherwise be impossible.

#### **XIV. 2018 Budget Vote:**

The diocesan council approved the budget of \$1,075,733.00.

Mat. Deborah Maxwell of Ft. Smith, AR moved to accept the budget as presented. Priest John Wheeling, Rogers, AR seconded the motion.

Milos Konjevich moved to discuss the budget and questioned the expense of book-keeping, and also commented that tithe credits (leading to equity) will be credited to another balance sheet.

Mat. Elizabeth Perdomo – Pharr, TX: Can we amend the budget to include \$250,000.00 instead of the "true" \$150,000.00 that is reflected in the current budget. This would not guarantee the disbursement.

With this motion, the budget for mission support would be increased to a total of \$223,750.00 –

**The budget was accepted with the above amendment unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **XV. Elections:**

##### **Diocesan Council:**

**Appalachian:** Burt Walter / Alex Skirpan ALT ([skirpan@verizon.net](mailto:skirpan@verizon.net))  
**Carolinas:** Stephen Iltis / Dave Homyk ALT  
**Dallas:** Mat Elizabeth Perdomo / Stephen Bodnarchuk ALT  
**South Florida:** Gary Popovich, Delegate / Susan Robinson ALT  
**North Florida:** Willard Brown [Willardbrown2011@yahoo.com](mailto:Willardbrown2011@yahoo.com) /  
Dr Mark Buchman ALT [Mark.Buchman@outlook.com](mailto:Mark.Buchman@outlook.com)

**Mississippi River:** Katherine Clark, Delegate | Tom Rosenblatt, ALT  
**Southeastern:** Christopher Lewis, Delegate /

**Audit Committee:**

Christopher Naughton (Lexington, KY):

Edgar Kobak (Rock Hill, SC) 28searay@gmail.com 724-316-7052

Fr. Paul Coats (Rock Hill, SC)

Affirmed unanimously by voice vote.

**XVI. New Business:**

Resolution regarding monasteries was presented by Mother Thecla.

Fr Peter Smith moved to accept the motion as presented.

Fr. Kevin Rigdon (St. Maria of Paris): Seconded the motion to accept.

**XVII. Resolution of Gratitude for the host Committee of the 40<sup>th</sup> Assembly:**

On behalf of the faithful of the Diocese of the South, we the gathered delegates of the 40th Annual Diocesan Assembly want to extend our heartfelt thanks to St Tikhon Orthodox Mission and St Maria of Paris Orthodox Mission, and to their faithful, for hosting this 40<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly in the City of Chattanooga, TN. We would particularly like to recognize the efforts of Archpriest David Arnold, Dean of the Appalachian Deanery, as well as "not the Dean", Mr Dean Arnold, the local lay liaison. We acknowledge also the efforts of Ms Michaela Staskiewicz in reviewing and assisting in selecting the host site, Mr Alex Fecanin for providing beautiful and prayerful liturgical music, and Priest John Cox and those volunteering with him, for providing a nourishing and joy-filled youth program. Additionally, we express our gratitude to Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, and to Fr Stavros Ballas and the Faithful of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church for hosting our Pontifical Liturgy. May God grant them many years!

**XVIII. Pastoral Conference:**

The pastoral conference will be held February 12-16 at Holy Resurrection, Clinton, MS

**XIX. Adjournment**

Fr. Marcus Burch adjourned the meeting at the motion of Fr. Photios Avant and the unanimous approval of those assembled @ 12:10 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Rev. Peter Robichau

Minutes approved by: