

HOLY TAXIARHAI and ST. HARALAMBOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 19, 2023

**Commencement of Meeting:** The Parish Council meeting began at 7:00pm with an opening prayer led by Father Tilemahos. Father Dean also present. Tom Sikoral acted as Chairman of the meeting. Nick Megremis acted as Recording Secretary.

**Attendees:** N Megremis, T Rizos, J Karnezis, T Kanelos, G Houpis, T Zavos, T Bournias, T Sikoral, T Karabatsos, A Demeros, A Andrews, G Coologeorgen, B Bozikis, G Bepis, P Giannopoulos, E Kiriazopoulos, A Koutsikos, M Pontikes

Anna Prekas, Peter Stamatias, George Anastasiadis and Dr. Dean Velis also present as a non-voting participants.

**Absent:** K Ioannou, E Dimoutsikos, D Loomos

PARISH OPERATIONS

**Defibrillators (presented by Peter Stamatias)**

- Mr. Stamatias is an attorney and a member at St. John's. He came to speak to us regarding pros and cons about adding external defibrillators in our buildings.
- Illinois has "Good Samaritan" laws on the books to protect users of these machines in an emergency situation if their use is in good faith.
- St. John's has 3 around their buildings.
- Mr. Stamatias says we as an organization would have immunity against civil lawsuits. But there must be training on how to use the defibrillators.
- He recommends we continue to look into getting these machines installed as he believes the pros outweigh the cons. Recommends that we reach out to our insurance carriers and also with the Metropolis for further guidance.

## Minutes

Minutes of the November meeting were made available prior to the Meeting. Small updates were suggested by Father Dean and Minutes will be updated before being posted.

- **Motion to accept minutes from the November 21st Parish Council meeting, as amended.**
  - G Bepis/2nd T Zavos. **Vote: 9-0-6. Passed Unanimously.**

## Treasurer's Report (Led by T Zavos)

- September and October Financials were presented before the Meeting.
  - November Financials will include a separate account just for Iconography.
  - Going forward bank accounts will exactly match our separate “restricted funds” found on the Balance Sheet (Building Fund and Iconography Fund) so there is no longer any commingling of restricted funds.
  - There is currently \$200,000 available in cash, including \$105,000 that is currently invested in CDs.
  - School Expense Allocation will be a single line item credit under Administrative Expenses going forward.
  - The Smokers Thanksgiving Event netted \$27,000. There was also a 50/50 raffle done at the event that raised an additional \$2000 that will be donated to charity.
  - Already approved wage increases for Clergy and Office Staff will go into affect January 1st.
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- **Motion to Accept the September and October Financials as distributed.**
    - G Cooloorgen/2nd A Koutsikos. **Vote: 15-0-1. Passed Unanimously.**
  - **Motion to approve Christmas Bonuses for Clergy, Office and Janitorial staff.**
    - A Demeros/2nd A Andrews. **Vote: 16-0-0. Passed Unanimously.**

### **General Assembly Wrap Up (Led by T Zavos)**

- Any favorability year to year should go into some kind of “rainy day” fund going forward to use as a reserve.
- A bookkeeper, as approved at the last GA, will still need to be hired at some point, but T Zavos has offered to keep doing this work at least until mid 2024 in order to offset this expense.
- Payroll expenses are currently being negotiated and we hope to drive down this expense.

### **Schools Update (Led by G Anastasiadis)**

- George presented a handout at the meeting.
- Schools are currently at peak enrollment.
- 2023-2024 School Financials looks to be favorable.
- Currently there is interest in a 1st grade for the Day School with 7 students committed to enroll next year, with an additional enrollment expected from “overflow” from other churches. An announcement for the first grade will be made some time in January.

### **Parish Council Elections (Led by T Sikoral)**

- All current members and also George Giolas have been re-elected for another 2 year term.

### **Outreach (Notes provided by George Giolas)**

- Completed the Compassion International weekend. Over 210 total visits with 8 children being sponsored on site. Committee will be sending out a Thank You email with a link to sponsor children in the near future. The link in the email will be credited to our Church so that we can keep track of how many children are sponsored.

- The Night to Shine event has been postponed to 2025 due to it falling on our Vesper evening, as well as the need for many volunteers. This will be a work in progress for 2024 to host the 2025 event.
- Committee will be hosting a drive to support a new city-granted homeless shelter on the North Side some time in the summer of 2024. An Amazon shopping list will be made for people to purchase as well as a bin at the church for specific items that will be posted.

### **Bylaws Committee (Notes provided by George Giolas)**

- The Committee has completed its review and have recommendations for changes. The Committee sent the new Bylaws to the Metropolis for an informal review. They have received feedback and are going to hold a meeting in January to review and make updates as necessary. After this meeting, the Committee plans on having a “Town Hall” meeting some time in January to present their finding and recommendations. Once presented, they will then seek final approval at the General Assembly meeting in the Spring of 2024.

### **Endowment Committee (Notes provided by George Giolas)**

- The Committee is now awaiting the approval of the Bylaws that include new Endowment language. The goal is to have a set amount to start the fund (this will be brought to the PC) and presented to the General Assembly for approval. Once approved, the committee will begin to market the Endowment Fund.

### **Kitchen Committee (Notes provided by George Giolas)**

- The Committee is awaiting on a decision from Philoptochos to choose the cabinets of choice. The Committee has presented two options (based on professional opinion) on storage. The storage will address the cabinets in the kitchen and the storage room in the kitchen. Enclosing the water heater and installing new shelving (standards) on the wall to maximize the space. The second phase of the committee is to address the kitchen equipment. Ordering new equipment as well as moving over items from the older

kitchen. The Committee does plan on meeting with other groups including the Food Fest Committee members to coordinate the layout and equipment.

### **Inreach (Led by T Kanelos)**

- The Inreach Committee has engaged speakers to come and talk for each Wednesday night of Great Lent.
- Planning a Pot Luck Meal sometime in the new year.

### **Youth Committee (Led by G Coologeorgen)**

- Family nights are going very well and are well attended.
- Lunch with Santa took place on December 2nd and that too was well attended.
- Basketball season is still going well and there has been many fans from both sides in attendance.

### **Facility Planning Committee (Led by T Bournias)**

- At the last General Assembly meeting, those in attendance approved a new Multipurpose Room in the West Lobby and also as funding for a new classroom, 3 small children's bathrooms, and a teacher conference/breakroom with a small kitchenette.
- The Committee will be meeting with the builder on December 30th.
- Additional bathrooms for weekday Services are still needed.

### **Iconography (Led by T Bournias)**

- Tom spoke with the Iconographer and we are still on course for delivery by October 14, 2024.
- There is enough money in the Iconography Fund to make final payments.

### Stewardship (Led by N Megremis)

- Nick presented Stewardship numbers at the meeting.
- As of the date of the meeting, we have 678 Steward families pledging \$466,000 for 2023. Total given year to date is \$453,000.
- There were 93 New Stewards in 2023 that gave a total of \$29,150. 12 of these New Stewards celebrated baptisms, and 6 others celebrated weddings with us this year.
- There are 66 Steward families involved with our Athletics, and 90 involved with our Schools in some capacity.
- Our 2024 Stewardship Campaign and Commitment Card was sent out to our Stewards in early December.

### FOR THE GOOD OF THE PARISH

- The Parish Council Retreat has been postponed due to lack of commitment.
  - It is recommended that we need a schedule and a commitment from our Ushers to institute an Usher Schedule. A Andrews and A Demeros will work on organizing.
  - A forklift and snowblower (among other items) are some needed capital items.
  - It was also recommended that our future General Assemblies should have a check-in to confirm that attendees are actual current Stewards before we call for votes.
  - Alter garments for the Alter boys are in need of updating.
  - The plaque for Father Dean's and Presvitera Georgia's 40th Anniversary at our Parish is being researched. P Giannopoulos presented 3 options, which will each cost up to \$2500.
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- **Motion to approve spending up to \$2500 for Father Dean's and Presvitera Georgia's 40th Anniversary commemorative plaque.**
    - T Sikoral/2nd G Bepis. **Vote: 16-0-0. Pass Unanimously**
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- Safety pads for the gym have been ordered.
  - Anniversary Dinner will take place on February 4th at the Fountain Blue.

- Youth protection training and background checks need to be completed by December 27th for all Parish Council members and anyone in our Parish working with our youth.

**Closing Thoughts (Led by Father Tilemahos)**

- Bible Study continues to be well attended and has been the highlight of the fall.
  - A search for a new Youth Director will be started soon.
  - It's important that PC Members support our Anniversary dinner in February.
  - The Metropolis cutting of the Vasilopita will be hosted by our Church on January 14th. Please try to attend.
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- **Motion to adjourn meeting.**
    - A Koutsikos/2nd E Kiriazopoulos. **Vote: 17-0-0. Pass Unanimously**

Closing Prayers led by Father Dean at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Nick Megremis, Recording Secretary