

## HOLY TRINITY-ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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### Spring 2013 General Assembly Meeting Minutes April 21, 2013

#### ATTENDANCE

**Clergy:** Fr. William Cassis, Fr. Paul Truebenbach

**Parish Council Members present:** Dr. Pete Kambelos (Presiding), Maria Kontopos (Recording), Peter Aamodt, Nick Georgiton, Alex Geromes, Eleni Haralamos, George Kalemanis, Ron Nichols, Pete Rodish, John Sakelos, Nick Sarakatsannis, Ianthe Schulte, Andy Stefanopoulos

**Parish Staff:** Eugene Nicholas

**Parishioners:** 97 in attendance

#### MEETING

**Call to order:** Dr. Pete Kambelos called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

**Opening Prayer:** Father Paul gave the opening prayer.

**Election of Chairperson:** Lew Assaley nominated Charles Stephan. James Kellaris seconded. Charles Stephan was appointed with no opposition.

**Minutes of the October 14, 2012 General Assembly Meeting:** According to the Agenda, copies are available in the office. The minutes were posted on the website and on the bulletin board. A motion was made to dispense with reading of the minutes was approved unanimously.

#### **President's remarks: Dr. Pete Kambelos**

- Dr. Pete Kambelos thanked everyone for their time. The turnout is fantastic. We have been tasked with making an important decision. The issues presented were what this Parish should do in relation to the current gymnasium: (1) whether it be renovated into a banquet hall; (2) whether we renovate the gym as a gym; (3) whether we add a gym on the back of the church; or (4) whether we do nothing at all. Option A is the banquet hall, Option B is keeping it a gymnasium and Option C is constructing a new gym in the back of the church property. He does not think the Parishioners have enough information on Option C, but this information will be provided today. He encouraged the Parishioners to ask questions.

- At the last General Assembly meeting, the Parish Council was tasked to come back to the Parishioners with two options: (1) the feasibility of whether or not we make a banquet hall or (2) whether we renovate the space into a gym. The Parish Council has studied those two options in some detail. Many thanks to Nick Georgiton, Brad Fielden and Sam Boulmetis for doing the hard work and crunching the numbers. What has been presented as of late to the Parish Council by the Long Range Planning Committee is Option C. I will be honest that we have not had enough time to look at the feasibility of this option, but we were urged to endorse this option by the Long Range Planning Committee. You Parish Council has not studied the feasibility of this plan for enough time to support it. He appreciates the efforts of the Long Range Planning Committee.
- The Parish Council was asked to vote by motion that was seconded at the last meeting earlier this week with regards to endorsing an option. The decision was a 5-4 voting decision in favor of endorsing Option C. I strongly dissented to Option C and the vote of the Parish Council. Option C was approved unanimously by the Long Range Planning Committee. He is not rushed into recommended this elaborate plan and neither is the Parish Council united in recommending this plan. He believes this decision should be the Parishioners', not the thirteen people of the Parish Council. The wisest thing he could do is postpone a recommendation until we have had time to study this Option.

**Clergy Remarks:**

- Father Bill refrains from a report
- Father Paul:
  - Thank you to all of the parents who have helped with GOYA, JOY and HOPE. We have made good progress. He is looking forward to the future of those organizations.
  - We have started a new book for reading group. Reading group starts at 6 during Great Lent.
  - Thank you to Beth Unichuck. She has done a great job in the bookstore and with ordering supplies. Please make it a routine to stop in and see what is new each week. She has done a great job of making it a bookstore. We even had a comment from a visitor about how nice the bookstore was.

**Treasurer's report:**

- Nick Georgiton presented the Treasurer's Report. Everyone had a copy in the form of a cash flow v. budget report. We find this report is more pertinent to our situation because it shows the money we have coming in and going out. We are below the budget, but we are above the Stewardship from last year, which is fantastic. This allows us to do more things as a Church. The \$12,000 under budget on the revenue is offset by the fact that we have \$9,000 fewer expenses than expected. We always try to operate that we spend the money that comes in. We do not want to make a profit. He thinks the overall cash flow of the Church is in a very good position.
- On the back of the sheet was the May expense report. The purpose of this is to show that this coming month we will have \$66,000 in expenses. One of the challenges for Eugene Nicolas and the Treasurer is that Stewardship does not coming in consistently. We utilize

a line of credit that we pay interest on when we borrow the money. By the end of the year, it balances out. We mention this so maybe you can consider making Stewardship more consistently. Anything we can do to predict our expenses makes the operation of the church go by more smoothly. We cannot just hope to have a great Panegyri to pay back what we borrowed during the months before then.

- Patty Neuendorf asks why the office and church supplies are over 50% higher than the budget?
  - Nick Georgiton deferred to Eugene Nicholas because he handles the check writing. Eugene says that those expenses the church will pay for upfront and then we look for donors. Once we get the donations for those items, we will lower that amount. Nick Georgiton says that there are times when a Parishioner will say they will contribute to something, so the Church orders it and then we have to collect that check to pay for the things they ordered.
- Milan Snyder asks when the debt we have to the endowment fund will be paid off?
  - Nick Georgiton says about a year from now. We are ahead of schedule for paying that back and we received some donations that were applied to that. The balance of the endowment fund is \$24,000-\$25,000. The Parish Council made a commitment that we would pay off the debt. We have paid back more than half of the \$50,000 we borrowed.
  - Dr. Pete Kambelos mentions that this was done largely at his urging and it was a struggle to convince the Parish Council that it was a debt that we needed paid back.
- Chris Chryssovergis moves to accept the Treasurer's Report as delivered. Peter Aamodt seconds it. Milan Snyder corrected Chris Chryssovergis that the terminology is that you "remand it for audit." The motion was amended to send the Treasurer's Report to remand it to audit. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Stewardship Report:**

- Peter Aamodt made the Stewardship Report. He commended Nick Georgiton because his report had so much information regarding Stewardship that he can make his presentation short. We have made 94% of our goal from last year. Even though we were down against our budget, in 2012, our average per household was approximately the same. We raised the Stewardship goal. We want to make sure we raise the awareness regarding the regular cash needs for operating the Parish. Today we will talk about capital projects that will need more pledges to undertake the projects. The same holds true for daily operating expenses.
- Last year, you will note we had 561 Stewards overall for 2012, but we only had 314 pledgers. We have 231 pledgers in 2013. We are looking to convert more pledgers. While we appreciate all Stewardship, certainly we need more conversions.
- We generally do not require a motion to approve committee reports. The report was received as written.

**Panegyri Report:**

- Frank Cook gave the Panegyri Report. This year's festival will be the same as last year, except this year and better. Amen.
- A report does not need a motion. The report will be accepted.

**Endowment Fund Report:**

- Eugene Nicholas gave the Endowment Fund Report. The balance of the Endowment Fund is \$600,004. Dimitri Karageorge asks if this includes the \$25,000 debt? Eugene answers that this does not include the \$25,000 debt that needs to be paid back. It does include the \$25,000 that has been paid back to the Endowment Fund.
- Milan Snyder asks if anyone is auditing this account? Nick Georgiton says that the statement for the Endowment Fund is sent to the Church office and is on file for anyone to look at. Any monies invested in the Endowment Fund is auditable by the Audit Committee.
- Jim Gelis states that as a member of the Audit Committee, the Endowment Fund is a restricted fund and the Parish Council does not generally have the authority to tap into it.
- Father Bill states that the Endowment and Long Range Planning Committees serve independently. It has been determined that the Long Range Planning Committee and the Endowment Committee are directly responsible to the Parish Council. This year when we are doing the audits, his understanding is that the Endowment Committee will submit the report to the Parish Audit Committee for review. We need to make sure that the report from the Endowment Committee is submitted to the Audit Committee.

**Long Range Planning Committee Report:**

- Lew Assaley gave the Long Range Planning Committee Report. The facility is aging. The hall has not been renovated in 20 years. The Long Range Planning Committee studied the options, costs and benefits of the two options of refurbishing the gym or converting it into a banquet facility presented at the prior General Assembly meeting.
- Option 1: Convert the Multi-Purpose Room into a Banquet Hall
  - We would lower the decorative ceiling; add new LEF lighting, chandeliers, and wall sconces; replace the carpet; add a wood dance floor; drywall the large room with decorative relief columns along the walls; paint and add some wall covering; remove some of the movable partitions and replace the main partition with new wood type; and renovate the restrooms.
  - The total cost is approximately \$589,900 (the base budget is \$552,800 and the restrooms is \$67,100).
  - Benefits of this Option are more community functions, increase in rental revenue and energy cost savings due to the lower ceiling.
- Option 2: Upgrade the Multi-Purpose Room as a Gym
  - We would keep the existing high ceiling to remain with the new grid and panels; add new LED lighting; replace the carpet in the low ceiling area and main corridor; replace the existing wood floor with new wood flooring; drywall the large room with decorative relief columns along the walls; paint and add some wall covering; and renovate the restrooms.

- The total cost is approximately \$456,000 (the base budget is \$338,900 and the restrooms is \$67,100).
- The benefits of this Option 2 are maintaining the status quo, creating a better looking environment for church functions and it is the least expensive option.
- Option 3: Option 1 + Build a New Gym
  - We would convert the current gym into a banquet hall and build a new, stand-alone athletic facility to serve our youth and adults for basketball, volleyball, and other athletic or group functions. This new facility would contain restrooms, a locker area and a food service area. We would need to expand a portion of the back parking lot.
  - The total cost is approximately \$1,431,859 (the site development and parking is \$174,786, the building is \$1,157,373 and the floor allowance is \$100,000). This total cost does not include the cost of Option 1.
  - The benefits of this Option 3 are it serves our youth, it adds additional space, it is an additional source of rental revenue and it has energy cost savings.
- Regardless of what we do, we will vote on whether we want a banquet hall. If that passes, we can vote on whether we want Option 3. It is Lew's opinion that if we eliminate the gym and do not build the additional gym, we are sending the wrong message about what is important with respect to our youth. We need a place for our youth to be together, to play, to be friends and to make friends. Another reason to do Options 1 and 3 together is that the engineering costs will save 10%-15%.
- We need a 2/3 majority to incur a debt. The Metropolis requires 25% of the cost to be pledged before we can start. The Parish Council will need a fundraising committee and the construction would not begin until next year. If we borrow \$2,000,000, if we get a 4% mortgage for 20 years, that is a monthly payment of \$9,100.
- Wayne Maris asks how this money is going to ensure that this faith is accessible to his children and grandchildren and how is this better for his children? He comments that this is a beautiful facility, but yet we spend our children's money for a GOYA room that is used once a week. We heard the same song and dance when we built the Sunday School rooms, but they are used 1 hour a week for 40 weeks. That is a bad return on investment.
- Charles Stephan mentions that right now we cannot comment on the merits of Option 3 until we get to Old Business. If you have questions on Option 3, that's fine, but we cannot debate the meritness of it yet.
- Milan Snyder asks what if he does not like any of the points? Dr. Pete Kambelos says that you do not have to approve any of these options. You can vote to table these issues to further discussions.
- Bill Tsacalis makes the point that when we are discussion Option 1, it is important to lump Option 3. Option 1 almost forces a vote of Option 3. We have to look at them together to make an informed judgment.
- Charles Stephan makes the point that at the last General Assembly meeting there were two issues presented for recommendation and decision today. Three recommendations came back. When we discussion Option 1 or 2, we have to discuss Option 3, but we will not vote on Option 3 until we get to new business.

- John Storgion makes the comment that the Parish Council is responsible for the daily operations of the Church and the Long Range Planning Committee is to look out 5-10 years. The Long Range Planning Committee looks at the youth of the Church. When we built the Sunday School classrooms and expanded the kitchen, we were not looking for the next year; we were looking forward. This is how the Long Range Planning Committee operates.
- Sylvia Suhar appreciates the drawings and explanations that Lew Assaley has given us, but we have not heard anything about surveys being done with other Churches. A lot of times you can get an opinion of the Parishioners from other Churches within our Metropolis. Why haven't we approached other Churches and said "what kind of facilities do you have and how are they working?"
- Father Bill gives an update on other Churches in the Metropolis:
  - In Indianapolis they have completed a complex at \$7+ million. They are seeing an increase in attendance and participation.
  - In Louisville they have built the Church and improved the construction of the community center and Narthex. The Church has increased from 55 families to over 100 families.
  - No Church has failed to pay their loan and no one has defaulted. These renovations have always been positive. The Metropolis Council is tasked with approving all renovations and they will want a complete report on our funding.
- Patty Neuendorf makes that comment that for either Option 2 or Option 3, it looks like if we want to have a gym, it will be a real gym (with bleachers, score boards, etc). It will be a major expense to maintain the gym floor. Do the estimates for renovation of the gym take into account the maintenance costs for the gym floor and other parts of the gym?
  - Lew Assaley answers that the Long Range Planning Committee has looked at the capital expenditures, not the maintenance. They did not look at what we have to do to keep it running.
- Bill Tsacalis makes a motion to table the Long Range Planning Committee Report. Randy Stanifer seconds the motion. The motion is approved as stated.

**Old Business:**

- Large Hall Renovation:
  - Nick Georgiton states that at the last General Assembly meeting we were tasked to look at should this become a renovation of the gym into a banquet hall or should it remain a gym? Nick, as Treasurer, was tasked with the potential expenses associated with the renovation of either and to present his findings. Based on the numbers, the banquet facility from a financial prospective makes more sense. Either option will not pay for itself. We are all under the impression that we are trying to find what is best for the community.
  - Peter Aamodt makes a motion that we approve Option 1 to renovate the current gym into an upgraded banquet facility. Lew Assaley seconds the motion.
    - Randy Stanifer makes the point that it is important that the youth has a place to come. On a personal level, it does not matter to him, but he either wants Option 2 or Option 3. He has no desire to get rid of the gym.

- Karen Aamodt comments that on the Church survey done three years ago, the results were either to fix the gym or make it into a banquet facility.
- Bill Tsacalis stresses the importance of having some type of gym facility. Therefore, Option 1 will automatically require Option 3 to take care of our youth. Therefore a vote for Option 1 is a vote for \$2 million. He will vote against Option 1 for that reason. Options 1 and 3 are too extravagant for this community.
- Father Bill makes the comment that any discussion about revenue is irrelevant. We do not build Churches and gyms to be money makers. This is not a business. We do this for the benefit of the community. The Church is not a bottom line ministry. He has sheppard this discussion for three years. We finally got to the point where we have a vote on Option 1 or Option 2 and in the process we got Option 3. Sam Boulmetis came up with Option 3 because if we go with either Option 1 or Option 2, one part of the community will be disenfranchised. He wants the sense of the community to be that this is your choice, but we are where we are today with the Archdiocese because they were willing to take a risk.
- Gus Perdikakis makes the comment that this Parish has never gone without. Whenever we set our mind to something, God provides and look at what we have accomplished. He wants to vote for Option 3 because it shows progress for not only the basketball, but it can expand our opportunities for the Panegyri and other wonderful things that come from it. We have to recognize that the Parish Council voted for Option 3. Even though it was a 5-4 vote, we have to stand united.
- Peter Aamodt speaks in favor of the motion he made. This is a prelude to a vote for Option 3. It was a difficult decision and he was the one who made the motion in the Parish Council meeting. If it were just Options 1 and 2, he would be extremely torn. We still have to jump over some hurdles to get to that point.
- Buzzy Gas makes a motion to curtail debate on Option 1. Milan Snyder seconds the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Eleven (11) people voted in favor of Peter Aamodt's motion. It fails.
- Bill Tsacalis makes a motion in favor of Option 2. Melody Dargis seconds the motion.
  - There is confusion regarding how to vote if you want to vote for Option 3.
  - Chris Chryssovergis makes a motion to table Option 2 until the discussion of Option 3. Ianthe Schulte seconds the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**New Business:**

- Option 3: Lew Assaley makes a motion that we convert the current gym into a banquet facility and we build a second gym on the back of the facility and we approve the borrowing of up to \$1.5 million for that and the expansion of the parking. Peter Aamodt seconds the motion.

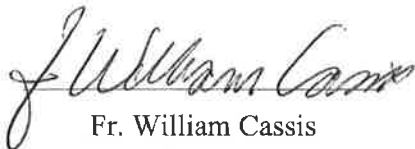
- There are 77 Parishioners in attendance eligible to vote. 52 votes in favor are needed for a 2/3 majority.
- Milan Snyder thanks the Long Range Planning Committee, the Parish Council and the people conducting the meeting for their efforts. Whether you agree with it or not, their efforts should be commended.
- 49 Parishioners voted in favor of Option 3, 26 opposed, 2 abstained.
  - The motion failed.
- Option 2:
  - 21 Parishioners voted in favor. Option 2 fails.
- George Haralamos makes a motion to consider Option 1 and Option 3 together without the financing portion of Lew Assaley's previous motion.
  - Lew Assaley makes an amended motion that the Parish Council will be charged with coming up with a steering committee to consider financing at a Special General Assembly meeting before the Panegyri. Ianthe Schulte seconds the motion.
  - Bill Tsacalis makes the comment that this is an underlying sneaky way to get the motion passed.
  - Karen Aamodt disagrees with Bill Tsacalis; it is just a way to reconsider the options together.
  - Father Bill comments that the failure of Option 1 and Option 3 is nothing but a failure of Parish leadership. We need to move forward as a parish.
  - Dr. Pete Kambelos responded to Father Bill's comment by succinctly stating that it was unconscionable and frankly offensive to hurl such an accusation at Parish leadership.
  - 42 Parishioners voted in favor of the motion.


### ADJOURNMENT

**Call to adjourn:** the motion to adjourn was made at 3:25 pm.

**Closing prayer:** Fr. Paul offered the closing prayer.

Approved as written,

  
Fr. William Cassis  
Proistamcnos

  
Dr. Pete Kambelos  
President

  
Maria Kontopos  
Secretary