

SAINT NICHOLAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

ATTENDEES:

- Fr. Bill Gikas, Evans Agrapidis, Paul Savidis, John Psomas, Jim Coromilas, Nick Pirsos, Nick Karras, Georgette Betts-Tsakalos, Jon Zymaris, Angelo Lefer, Claire Melissas, Manny Toskos and Liz Koykas.

ABSENT:

- Melissa Gasparis, Steve Limperopulos and Jim Giokas.

FATHER BILL'S MESSAGE:

- Father Bill gave the opening prayer.
- Father Bill discussed the Great and Holy Council in Crete. It's the first of its kind since the 8th century. Hopefully it will stand as a symbol of unity throughout the Orthodox Church.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

- Evans acknowledged that our mid-week meeting is a new approach. He was happy that we had reached a quorum.
- Evans shared the experience of all who attended the Metropolis of New Jersey Clergy Laity Assembly. All attendees shared a live Skype message from Patriarch Bartholomew. The topic of his message was reconciling Orthodoxy with modern times. This is the first time this interactive vehicle was ever used and was a great success.
- Evans thanked the following people for their work on the storage project in the basement: John Psomas, Gerry Stamatelatos and his fellow Boy Scouts.
- Music and Meze night was something new to promote kefi and Evans felt it had accomplished its goal. It was a great success.
- Evans reported that we would be discussing revised by-laws and hopefully this GA will approve them.
- The mortgage burning campaign will be introduced at this GA meeting.
- The Parish Council is considering how to approach the work involved with tenants and rentals. It will be decided if an outside property manager is warranted.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

- Phil Vogis nominated Evans Agrapidis seconded by Jon Zymaris.
- Dotty Karras nominated John Psomas. John declined the nomination.
- Vote: Evans was elected unanimously.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 22, 2015 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES:

- The minutes we reviewed.
- Athena Katsaros moved to approve the minutes with the only correction being that Sam Williams salary was reported as \$50,000 per year and should read, \$35,000 plus \$5,000 for Psalti duties per year.
Seconded by: Sam Williams
Vote: Unanimous

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Treasurer Nick Pirsos handed out copies of the treasurer's report to all.
- After he read them aloud, and explained their content, there were a few questions that Nick answered.
- The Treasurer's report was then approved unanimously.

STEWARDSHIP:

- A handout was given to all in attendance. After everyone had time to review, comments and questions were taken from the audience.
 - A statement was made that the mortgage is a balloon mortgage. Treasurer Nick Pirsos corrected this by stating that we do not have a balloon mortgage, only that our interest rate resets in 4 years.
 - A question was asked of Nick: "How did we arrive at 420 stewards? Aren't some people just paying to get married or have their child baptized?"
 - Nick's response was as follows: Household stewards with recurring pledge cards are approximately 320 people. Recurring Household stewards without pledge cards are approximately 100 people. There are also transient Household stewards who are between 25-50 people. The transient group, were not included in the 420 total.

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH AND SHRINE:

- Our local commitment for the two-year period of 2015 and 2016 is \$10,000.
- This is accomplished by a once a month tray in church on Sundays.
- Last year we raised \$5,000 and this year have raised \$1,700 so far.
- It was recommended that our last payment should be paid in person at the building site with all dignitaries present for a photo op. The Parish Council will discuss this at their next meeting.

FELLOWSHIP HALL RENTALS:

- Hall rentals for 2016 are less than budgeted.
- This may be because last year was our initial year and there was anticipatory demand.
- In the second half of 2016, we will be embarking on a marketing campaign, the particulars of which were recently discussed and approved by the Parish Council. It is the hope of the PC that this marketing campaign will increase rental revenues.
- The question was asked, "Why do stewards under 40 years of age receive a discounted rate for Fellowship Hall rentals and seniors do not?" The explanation was

“The PC is trying to promote church activities to our younger families. This is one way to promote that.”

- The overall rental rate was questioned as maybe being too high. Our rental rate was established by checking comparable halls in the area. St. John’s Greek Orthodox Church gets \$1,550 no matter how many attendees a function has. The Ridgewood Woman’s Club charges \$300 per hour. The Armenian Church charges \$1,500 flat fee. The PC therefore considers our rate very competitive.

EDUCATION WING RENTALS:

- This number is also anticipated to be lower than last year.
- The YSA is a 10-month lease, so there is no income in the months of July and August.
- Last year we had a summer rental by a science club, which will not be returning this year.

MINISTRY REPORTS:

Sam Williams was present at the meeting but did not make a report.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Golf Outing: Evans urged everyone to support this fundraiser since it is one of the two major fundraisers of the year, for Saint Nicholas.
- The Festival will be held September 23rd-25th, 2016. The town of Wyckoff has already approved our festival. The formation of sub-groups to run the festival is already under way. The target profit for the festival is to equal to last years net of about \$80,000.
- Wyckoff Day: Nick Karras spear-headed this event for St. Nicholas. The 2016 festival and parish as a whole were promoted to the general public. The concept was to raise awareness of St. Nicholas and to maintain positive town relations. The event was a great success. Nick applauded Father Bill for his attendance and interactions even though he had to officiate a baptism and a wedding on the same day.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Revision of By-Laws. John Psomas reported that there were four goals in revising the By-Laws.
 - 1) Greater transparency
 - 2) No improprieties or even the appearance of improprieties
 - 3) Modernizing
 - 4) Removing ambiguity
- The PC feels the revised By-Laws accomplish these goals.
- After discussion and acceptance of some minor revisions from the floor, a motion was made to accept the revised By-Laws by Michael Symeonides. The motion was seconded by Phil Vogis.
 - The result of this vote was: 48 yea, 1 nay, 2 abstentions. The vote carried.
 - Father Bill will now send the amended By-Laws to the Metropolis of New Jersey for approval. They then will become ratified.

MORTGAGE BURNING/REDUCTION PLAN

- This plan was presented by treasurer, Nick Pirsos.
- A detailed handout was given to all stewards present.
- After reviewing the plan in detail, Nick reported that this plan is not written in stone and has much flexibility.
- Comments from the audience included:
 - “Congratulations to the PC for including all levels of income and giving, in this plan.”
 - Another steward applauded the plan and commented, “If you do not ask, you will not get.”
 - A steward commented that people should consider how much they pay for things like cable and cell phone and compare that with their church contribution, to put this fundraising in better perspective.
 - It was asked if a payment plan could be set up. The PC responded that yes they are looking into that possibility.
 - A comment was made that we should erect a large thermometer to show how donations are coming in.
 - There were no negative comments from anyone and all seemed to be behind the plan.

The meeting was closed at 10PM by Evans Agrapidis, the Chairman of the General Assembly.

Father Bill then asked for 30 seconds for silence for the victims of the Orlando shooting tragedy. Father Bill then gave a closing prayer.

Respectfully,
John Psomas

Fr. Basil C. Gikas
Proistamenos

Evans Agrapidis
Parish Council President

John Psomas
Parish Council Secretary