



Orthodox Christian Laity

Orthodox Christian Laity 33rd Annual Board and Program Meeting

Via ZOOM November 13, 2020

Preliminary Minutes

Call to Order: President Argo Georgandis Pyle called the meeting to order at 10:06 am EST. Those attending via Zoom included: President Pyle, Executive Committee Members: George Karcazes, George Pontikes, Peter Petkas, Bill Souvall and Andy Kartalis. Board Members: Alice Kopan, Gayle Woloschak, William Caras. Peter Zarras called to report he could not stay for the meeting due to illness. Advisory Board members: Archbishop Nathaniel and Fr Nicholas Greanias participated. Staff members: David Oancea and Andrew Georgopoulos, and recently retired Executive Director, George Matsoukas, also participated. His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel opened the meeting with a memorable prayer. Board members acknowledged his 40th anniversary ordination to the episcopacy and prayed that God grant His Eminence many years. He is the senior hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America. A pre-recorded video greeting and blessing by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros was presented. We are grateful to His Eminence for his support and blessing.

Order of Business: Minutes of the 32nd Houston Annual Meeting were approved on motion of George Pontikes and second by George Karcazes. Reports of the Executive Directors George Matsoukas (November 19-August 2020) and David Oancea (September-November 2020) were presented and accepted on motion by George Karcazes and second by George Pontikes. In addition to the reports, Executive Director David Oancea presented two programs that require immediate decisions.

1. An overview and proposal that was previously discussed in a meeting by the Executive Committee to hire GiveBackNation, a fundraising development and coaching service, to assist OCL with branding, telling the OCL story, and implement a payment and database platform to integrate contact data, in order to streamline and improve the fundraising process and experience. Various proposals of how we can engage GiveBackNation and prices related to services were presented. Board would study proposals and provide input to executive director within the week so that we can use their services for the year-end mailing. The Year-end campaign should begin by December 1.
2. Zoom meeting date and questions for Professor Alexander Kitroeff, via the Zoom format and Facebook Live were presented. Board members are submitting questions to Executive Director. Format will be decided based on OCL technical capabilities, and a November 24 date at 7 pm (EST) are the most probable date and time. These details will be finalized with Professor Kitroeff. Board will be informed of progress.

Andrew Georgopoulos provided the **financial report**. Reserves are equivalent to last year. Donor numbers are down. Fewer donors are providing larger gifts. This is not a good trend. We need to

cultivate small donors. Encourage use of donations on the internet/social media. Presently we have 15 consistent monthly Paypal donors. How do we build this base? Andrew discussed the need to clean, update and integrate the OCL database. This database is essential for supporting the OCL communication and marketing functions. It is necessary to consolidate the database so that all contact information is in one place and accessible. Lists need to be constantly updated. Will GiveBackNation assist OCL by providing tools to work on the integration of the database? When we send mailings, do we receive National Change of Address (NCOA) checks which help keep the list current? It was suggested that OCL hire a student intern to help with updating the database. Andrew presented the Proposed 2021 Budget. Motion to approve was made by George Karcazes and seconded by George Pontikes.

George Karcazes provided an update of the **endowment fund** which was placed in a Raymond James Account in 2015. OCL is working with a new advisor since the retirement of Mr. Econocopoulos this past summer. The balanced portfolio is performing well. Its value is \$265,075.66 with 15 % of the portfolio in a cash account. Financial Reports were accepted with a motion by George Pontikes and second by Gayle Woloschak.

Webmaster Report presented by David Oancea covered the purpose of the site as well as the analytical statistics. The site is communication tool that not only communicates OCL's mission and vision, but also seeks to understand the vision for the Church held by active and dedicated Orthodox Christians in local parishes. The website is also a tool for OCL's educational ministry. The OCL message should be congruent, simple, and clear to maximize our contribution and impact.

Board discussion suggested that we need to reach out to clergy, followed by a discussion about the idea of building local chapters throughout the USA. The board expressed a concern that the church administration, as demonstrated in recent actions of the Assembly of Bishops, is not interested in lay participation. The bishops want to appoint all officers of all agencies, commissions, affiliate ministries and associations. OCL must continue and strengthen the call for lay participation. Zoom has enabled the board and executive board to meet effectively more frequently. The last Sunday of each month is a time set aside for MASTERMIND MEETINGS to discuss various issues. A result of such a meeting was a letter sent to His Eminence Elpidophoros, offering OCL's participation in the reorganization of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese under a new charter. The committees set up by the Archdiocese to receive and recommend changes should include OCL board members. It was also suggested that OCL host a congress inviting participants of independent lay organizations to gather to discuss the role of the laity in church governance and other matters. OCL should identify all such organizations and organize and host the meeting. A network of such organizations would be a positive force in the life of the Church. The meeting was concluded at 11:45 am, and the board met to elect board members and officers for the 2021 administrative year.

Election of board members and officers

Andrew Kartalis requested that he be elected to the advisory board. Andy was recognized for his years of outstanding and dedicated service. He came to OCL following his work on the Greek Orthodox American Leaders Board (GOAL). He and Katherine have been passionate advocates of the mission of OCL and hosted successful meetings in Cleveland. Roy Snyder was also approved to serve on the advisory board. Roy has health issues, and prayers are with him and his family. George Matsoukas was elected to serve as a board member. Gayle Woloschak was elected to serve as Vice President. The

executive committee officers are Argo Georgandis Pyle, President (Mrs. Pyle graciously accepted serving for a 3rd year, and the organization is grateful for her guidance, skills, and dedication); Vice Presidents include: Peter Petkas, William Souvall and Gayle Woloschak. George Karcazes will remain as Secretary and George Pontikes will remain as Treasurer. The following individuals have agreed to serve on the board of OCL: William Caras, Alice Kopan, George Matsoukas, Peter Marudas, Alex Petkas, and Peter Zarras.

The first action of the new board on motion of Alice Kopan and second by George Matsoukas was that the OCL logo will officially be the original logo designed in 1988 which includes the arch and OCL initials. This motion was approved by the board. Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

The 33rd Annual Program Meeting, highlighting the American Saints, presented by Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield, President of St Vladimir's Seminary, was convened at 1:00pm. It was opened with a prayer by His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and a greeting from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros. The program will be posted on the OCL website (ocl.org).

George Matsoukas, Recorder