

St Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

Dayton Ohio

Parish Council Meeting March 20, 2018

Present: Fr. Ted, Brian Garber, Kerrie Wiese, Rebecca Barone, Janine Elash, David Short, Bruce Garber, Ann McLarnan

Brian Garber called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Fr. Ted led "O Heavenly King."

Parish Alcohol Policy

The meeting began with a long discussion about the new Pascha celebration alcohol policy and the discord and anguish it is causing.

After Pascha 2017 concerns about the prevalence of alcohol at the feast were brought to Fr. Ted by several members of the congregation. Council agreed in May 2017 to consider what steps to take to rein in the use of alcohol at the feast. At the September 18, 2017 meeting it was agreed to limit alcohol at the Pascha celebration to what parishioners brought in their own baskets for their own family consumption. Council's threefold plan was **1.** To include a statement about this in the bulletin in late Lent, **2.** To announce the policy after the Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy and **3.** To speak individually to several parish members who have traditionally contributed alcoholic drinks to the Pascha potluck so that they would understand what was behind the policy change and would not be caught unaware at the last moment.

Council did in fact announce the new policy and the reasons for it several weeks ago, both in the bulletin and after Liturgy. Unfortunately, we neglected the third step of speaking personally to those who would be most affected. There may be several reasons for this failure: **1.** The plan to have personal discussions did not make it from the council secretary's notes into the final minutes of the September 18 meeting, and **2.** Council membership and leadership changed somewhat at the start of 2018 with perhaps some loss of continuity in planning for this new policy.

Council acknowledges the pain and confusion caused by this new alcohol policy. The manner in which we announced and implemented the policy was insensitive and we failed to carry through with plans we had previously made that could have made this easier on our brothers and sisters. We are profoundly sorry.

Nevertheless Council stands by the new personal-use-only Pascha alcohol policy. Fr. Ted expressed discomfort at the current level of alcohol use, feeling that it is an unhealthy and embarrassing situation that has been allowed to develop gradually. Council continues to feel that it is time to do now what we should have done earlier and begin to cut way back on the use of alcohol at Pascha.

Council discussed changes in the way we inform the parish of this kind of decision. We will announce Parish Council meetings and the planned agenda after Liturgy the Sunday before and will continue to stress that any member is welcome at Council meetings. An effort will be made to post approved minutes on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board as well as on the website.

Financial Report

Kerrie discussed financial reports from December 2017, and January and February 2018. Some additional contributions at the end of 2017 brought the total contributions to 88% of the approved 2017 operating budget. Contributions were \$9000 less than in 2016. Both the Icon Fund and the Playground Fund have been zeroed out. The total parish contribution to the playground from the capital improvement fund was \$423. Large expenses for January and February were snow removal and an unexpectedly large assessment for the 2018 All American Council. The car replacement fund was used to replace Fr Ted's parish car, which will show up in the March financials. In general income continues to trend down and maintenance expenses continue to increase as the building approaches 20 years old. We need to continue to pay close attention to this.

Maintenance and Facilities Issues

Rebecca reported some communication with Steve Brown seeking recommendations for a space planner to help with the Fellowship Hall and classroom space crunch.

More mulch is needed very soon in the playground to complete installation and to make up for winter settling. We need to maintain 9 inches across the entire playground, and currently need 4 to 5 inches more. Fr. Ted suggested contacting John Preston our current landscaper to see what it would cost to have him do the job. David suggests we measure how much is used this time so that we could plan ahead to do this at a parish work day next spring.

Bruce reported that the replacement of the old water heater seems to have solved the issue of excessive water bills. He will look into obtaining a raised toilet seat for the women's rest room and electrical outlet safety covers throughout the church. He has arranged for Reliable Electric to replace the emergency exit signs and the emergency lights on Friday for a cost of \$1500 to be taken from the Capital Improvement Fund. They also quoted \$2646 to replace the lights in the classrooms, which are obsolete. He will look for a second quote on that. He is authorized to spend up to \$3000.

We agree that we will not pursue changing the nave lighting or painting the nave ceiling at this time.

Other Business

Janine had questions about the charitable appeal policy which asks that any outside group, such as OCC or OCMC, check with Parish Council before bringing an appeal to the parish, and that each group limit itself to an appeal every three months. This policy was put into place several years ago to help coordinate charitable appeals so that parishioners can focus on one major fundraising request at a time. This policy still stands.

For the time being Council Meetings will be on the third Tuesday of each month, unless announced.

The meeting ended at 7:40 PM with Fr. Ted leading the prayer of St. Simeon.

Respectfully submitted,

V. Rev. Theodore Bobosh, Rector

Ann McLarnan, Secretary

Ratified _____ / _____ / _____