

HOLY APOSTLES PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

2/20/25 @ 7:30 PM

1. **Call to Order:** James Maragos at 7:33 PM
2. **Opening Prayer:** Father Dokos
3. **Recite Mission Statement:** The mission of Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church is to proclaim and live our Orthodox faith as One Church and One Body of Christ through worship, ministries, education, and youth guidance. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7)
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Patty Pappas presented the Minutes of the January 16, 2025 meeting. Bill Leider moved that the Parish Council approve the January Minutes; Sandy Pihos seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
5. **Explanation of Robert’s Rules of Order:** James Maragos, Sandra Pihos and Patty Pappas informed the Parish Council that, in accordance with the Holy Apostles Bylaws, all meetings must be conducted following Robert’s Rules of Order. They offered an overview of these Rules and led a mock exercise to demonstrate their application in practice.
6. **Correspondence:** Patty Pappas reported that event invitations were received from the following organizations: Panhellenic Scholarship Foundation, IOCC Chicago Grand Banquet, Assumption Centennial Celebration, DuPage Pads, Greek American Rehabilitation & Care Centre Fashion Show. Additionally, she shared a donation request letter from the Souper Bowl of Caring (IOCC), as well as donation acknowledgments from the AOK Foundation and St. Iakovos Retreat Center.
 - a. Motion by James Maragos to donate \$100 for full page ad for the Fr. Ted Poteres Retirement Program Book. Sandra Pihos seconded the motion. Motion passed by majority.
7. **Ecclesiastical Report:** Father Dokos presented a video regarding the Prayer of St. Ephraim for discussion.
8. **Ministries**
 - a. **Finance:** George Antonopoulos reported that in January the cash accounts increased by \$128,000, due in large part to the collection of pledges. He presented a review of the 2024 pledge collections: \$914,000 was pledged. \$903,000 was collected. For 2025, \$920,000 is budgeted for pledges. To date for 2025, \$504,000 has been pledged, and \$311,000 has been collected. The average monthly expenses budgeted is \$108,000. In January, the expenses were \$111,000.
 - b. **Stewardship:** Sandra Pihos provided a report on stewardship pledges.

Metric	Jan 2025 YTD	Jan 2024 YTD	% Change
Number of Pledges	345	373	-8%
Total Pledged	\$554,615	\$532,695	4%
Amount Collected	\$311,419	\$301,364	3%
Median Pledge	\$600	\$800	33%
Average Pledge	\$1,608	\$1,428	13%

- c. **Building and Grounds:** Chris Pepke reported as follows:

- i. Approval has been received from the Metropolis of Chicago, Buildings Projects and Architecture Committee (BPA) for the rebuilding of the front doors. Work will begin very soon.
- ii. Duct cleaning will begin on 2/24/25.
- iii. Thermostats for the classrooms will be updated. They will be installed in the next week or so based upon material lead time. There will be one thermostat per floor.
- iv. Two new bottle fill stations will be installed within the next couple of months.
- v. Lawn care - we are looking to switch to a new service.
- vi. Snow removal - we are looking to switch to a new service. We have received three bids received & will accept a bid within the next month or so.
- vii. Hanging wires - we will rent a lift to begin cleaning and moving them.
- viii. Roof corrections - an annual inspection of the roof was performed. Warranty items have been taken care of. Other roof items with cost impact will be corrected this spring.
- ix. Lower level storage room - we will be removing a wall in order to create better storage.
- x. Security cameras - we are in the process of receiving three bids in order to upgrade the cameras.
- xi. TV's - Greek School received a grant for two TV's . They will be installed within the classrooms.
- xii. Capital projects - an architect is needed for three projects: remodel of the main office, building of the new monument sign along Wolf Road, and building of the brick wall enclosure around the air conditioning units on the south end of the church. We have received pricing from the architect, with design costs being \$10,000. This contract does not require approval from the Metropolis of Chicago BPA Committee.
 - 1. Motion by Chris Pepke: To proceed with Palmyra Architect design services for remodel of the office, monument sign, and brick wall enclosure.
 - 2. Bill Leider seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
- xiii. Fire inspection report - there are 33 open items to be addressed. We are moving forward with completing the list. It will take some time. We will then request a re-inspection.

d. Technology: Report by Steve Milak

- i. We let a contract expire for support from our IP vendor for two Wi Fi access points. It is no longer needed because we now have additional Wi Fi access points. This will save us \$200-\$300 per year in contract fees.
- ii. YouTube viewership: In 2024 we had approximately 15,000 views of our livestream videos. On average, 50 devices are connected to the livestream each Sunday. Viewership is all U.S. based, primarily in the Chicago suburbs.

Viewership age is estimated to be 65 years and older. The gender of the views is 56% female and 44% male.

e. **Ushering: Report by Ted Dres**

- i. Ushering reminders: Direct any questions to the Usher in Charge. Not everyone will receive an assignment. The goal is to rotate ushering assignments so everyone has a chance to learn different positions. Conversations are not to occur during liturgy - move to the office if necessary. Ushers are not to stand in the entryway so as not to impede entry into the nave. Always remain quiet and respectful. Greet quietly. Ropes are to be placed in the first few pews for Sunday School students. There are no designated sections for memorial services. Ushers are to stand at their assigned places prior to Holy Communion and before trays are passed. Candles need constant maintenance.
- ii. Sandra Pihos distributed updated Ushering Guidelines to all Parish Council members.

f. **Missions:** Peter Bell - no report.

9. **Old Business:**

- a. **Holy Apostles Foundation:** James Maragos reported that the Foundation Board was selected in December 2024. They will hold their first meeting via Zoom on 3/19/25 at 8:00 PM. There will be a Meet and Greet to introduce the new Foundation Board on 3/23/25 after Divine Liturgy. The Board will help educate the Holy Apostles community on the various ways to donate to the church through the Foundation. There are multiple options for giving. A donation to the Foundation was also received in January.
- b. **Leamus Maintenance Contract:** Mike Thiakos reported that the Parish Council does not have a copy of the final contract or the contract appendix, which is needed in order to discuss at the meeting. The contract will need to align with the motion that was approved at the 1/16/25 Parish Council meeting. We may need further discussion regarding that motion. He reiterated the need for a certificate of insurance for all vendor contracts.
- c. **Macaronatha Luncheon:** Sandra Pihos and Valentia Vourlos will co-chair this event. Sandra Pihos reported that all Parish Council members must be present for the Macaronatha Luncheon. A sign up sheet was distributed for goods. The Parish Council will underwrite the cost of the Luncheon. All gross proceeds from the free will donations at the Luncheon will go to support missionary Jesse Brandow in Central America. Specifically, the funds will support the translation of the Orthodox Chant Stand into Spanish. An online donation option will also be made available through the church website.
- d. **Office Assistant Search:** Sandra Pihos reported that she has reached out to several organizations to promote the associate position employment opportunity at Holy Apostles. To date, two people have submitted resumes, which will be evaluated. The employment description identifies the duties and hours. Everyone is encouraged to apply.

- e. **Vanco Software Use Report:** Sandra Pihos reported that with the usage of Vanco software, some materials have been lost due to technology issues. Alicia Magas is doing training to assist different ministries with the Vanco software. We will determine if these technology issues can be resolved.
- f. **Youth Worker Registration:** Patty Pappas reported that according to the Archdiocese Youth Worker Safety Platform, 15 out of 87 Youth Workers at Holy Apostles are not fully compliant. To better track our compliance, we created an internal database for ministry leaders to add and remove Youth Workers. A letter will be sent to ministry leaders to inform them of the noncompliant Youth Workers, as well as the new database and responsibility to keep it up to date.
- g. **Cemetery Plots:** Patty Pappas reported that the plot exchange contracts have been reviewed, and that Chapel Hill must place initials next to each place where Holy Apostles has placed initials. We will begin advertising the sale of the remaining plots, now numbering under 50 in total. We will consider offering an informational meeting for interested parishioners.
- h. **Greek School** - Nicole Voelz reported that she had a joint meeting with James Maragos and Principal Zoe Koultourides. She also introduced herself to the Greek School teachers to inform them of her role as liaison. She sat in on the PTO meeting. She reported on the Greek School's possible involvement in the upcoming Greek Parade (April 6, 2025), upcoming Greek Independence Day Program (March 25, 2025), acquisition of new desks and TV's, grant applications, dinner dance and encouragement for students to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy in Greek.

10. **New Business:**

- a. **Executive Committee and Building and Grounds Spending Limit:** James Maragos reported that there may be times when the Executive Committee will need to act upon a project or make a purchase before having to wait until the next Parish Council meeting.
 - i. Motion by James Maragos that the maximum amount that can be spent in between Parish Council meetings by the Executive Committee for items approved in the budget or emergencies is \$5,000.
 - ii. George Antonopoulos seconded the motion. Motion is withdrawn to allow for further discussion at future meetings.
- b. **Ministry Contacts:** Sandra Pihos reported that we should create a ministry contact list. The Ministry booklet provides general ministry email addresses but does not refer to particular individuals due to leadership changes. We will create a ministry contact list which will be kept in the church office.
- c. **Graduate Sunday/Church Picnic:** Both events will be held on June 1, 2025. Mike Thiakos will serve as chair of the Picnic. All Parish Council members are expected to be there. Announcements will be made in the Mosaic and through other channels of communication.
- d. **Special Parish Assembly:** March 16, 2025 to elect delegates to the Metropolis of Chicago Special Clergy Laity Assembly. We will officially announce the Holy Apostles Special Parish Assembly meeting at least 10 days in advance.

- e. **Father Bill's Memorial Coffee Hour:** The Parish Council will host on May 11, 2025.
 - f. **Meet and Greet for new Parish Council and Foundation Board Members:** March 23,2025. We will be publicizing this event.
 - g. **Purchase of Computer Equipment:**
 - i. Motion by Steven Milak: To allocate up to \$1100.00 for the purchase of computer equipment for the administrative office.
 - ii. Sandy Pihos seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
 - h. **Church Zoom Account Use:** Sandra Pihos reported that we do have a Zoom account for meetings. Our Parish Administrator, Lou Kafkes, will set up the meeting and send out an invitation. This is available to all committees and ministry leaders.
 - i. **Task List:** Nicole Ostendorf reported that she has been assigned to keep track of Parish Council tasks on a month to month basis to promote efficiency and accountability. She has created a database to assist with organization of the tasks, which will be a working document. Tasks from today's meeting: Fr. Ted Poteres donation; James Maragos to contact insurance company; follow through for Zoom account use setup; Barbara Pappas Memorial Committee; ministry contact list.
 - j. **Special Clergy Laity:** Holy Apostles will select two representatives at a Special Parish Assembly. They will represent Holy Apostles at the Metropolis Special Clergy-Laity Assembly, which will be held via Zoom on April 1st. This Metropolis Assembly will allow the parishes to vote on the purchase of property for the new Metropolis Center.
 - k. **Seniors Group:** Bill Leider reported that he would like to oversee the creation of a new seniors group. He would like to continue discussions to further this idea.
 - l. **Fr. Stephen Damick:** Fr. Nicholas reported that Fr. Stephen Damick will give the sermon at Divine Liturgy on March 16, 2025. Fr. Damick will also be the speaker at the Celebration of Books reception that same evening following Vespers. He will be presenting a lecture on "What do angels have to do with salvation?"
11. **Next Parish Council Meeting:** 3/20/25 at 7:30 PM
12. **Key Dates:**
- a. Host OCF College Day 2/22/25
 - b. Macaronatha Luncheon 3/2/25 (all Parish Council needed)
 - c. Holy Apostles Special Parish Assembly 3/16/25
 - d. Celebration of Books 3/16/25
 - e. Holy Apostles Foundation - New Board Members Meeting 3/19/25 via Zoom
 - f. New Parish Council and Holy Apostles Foundation Board Meet and Greet 3/23/25
 - g. Metropolis Special Clergy Laity Assembly 4/1/25 at 6:00 PM via Zoom
 - h. Holy Apostles Spring Parish Assembly 5/4/25
 - i. Fr. Bill Chiganos Memorial Service and Coffee Hour 5/11/25
 - j. Graduate Sunday and Holy Apostles Picnic 6/1/25
13. **Closing Prayer:** Father Georgiou
14. **Adjourn:** James Maragos at 10:02 PM
Absent: Ted & Nicole