

HOLY APOSTLES PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

3/20/25 @ 7:30 PM

1. **Call to Order:** James Maragos at 7:35 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). Read by Bill Leider.
4. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. Patty Pappas presented the Minutes of the February 20, 2025 meeting. She moved that the Parish Council approve the February Minutes; Bill Leider seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
5. **Correspondence:** Patty Pappas presented the following correspondence: Invitation to the Fr. Ted Poteres Retirement Celebration on May 18th; St. Demetrios Lincoln Square Greek Fest announcement for June 6, 7 and 8; thank you note from Cross Road Institute; thank you note from Westchester Food Pantry; Hodges/Loizzi billings summary; donation request from Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the Pilgrimage of Discovery program.
 - a. Motion to donate \$100 to Pilgrimage of Discovery program by Terry Chiganos. Seconded by Bill Leider. Motion passed by majority.
 - b. Motion to purchase a table at the Fr. Ted Poteres Retirement Celebration on May 18th by Peter Bell. Seconded by Bill Leider. Unanimously approved.
6. **Church Etiquette:** Father Dokos provided a brief overview of church etiquette, emphasizing that all Parish Council members should, to the best of their ability, address any ushering concerns outside the church and keep discussions quiet and discreet. He reminded everyone to refer to the Ushering Guidelines document that has been distributed.
7. **Ecclesiastical Report:** Father Dokos presented a Patristix video regarding the Lenten Prayer of King Manasseh for discussion.
8. **Ministries:**
 - a. **Finance: Report by George Antonopoulos**

He reported that the cash position at the end of February reflected an increase of \$160,000 since the beginning of 2025, bringing the account totals to \$1.46 million. The income and expenses for January and February 2025 are generally in line with the same period last year. Once the budget is broken down month by month, we will have a clearer picture of how the quarter progressed.
 - b. **Stewardship: Sandra Pihos provided a report on stewardship pledges.**

Metric	Feb 2025 YTD	Feb 2024 YTD	% Change
Number of Pledges	403	416	-3%
Total Pledged	\$640,907	\$602,003	6%
Amount Collected	\$402,679	\$402,243	0%
Median Pledge	\$800	\$800	0%
Average Pledge	\$1,590	\$1,447	10%

- c. **Building and Grounds: Report by Chris Pepke**
 - i. Illinois State Fire Marshal Boiler Inspection: Our boilers were installed in 2001. The State requires an inspection every 2 years. HA has not complied with this so we requested an inspection. This inspection was on 3/14/25 and was approved as noted: Replace leaking automatic gas valve; test or replace safety pressure release valves (quarterly); start maintaining boiler log; start keeping boiler service records; install CO detector.

ii. Plumbing Projects Update: Bottle filling stations have been installed in the location of the two water fountains; the sump settling pit has been cleaned out; minor plumbing work was performed in the mechanical room; the next plumbing project is to install a sump pump for baptismal font.

iii. 2025 Landscape/Snow Contract: Chris received bids for a season-based annual landscape and snow removal contract. He would like to move forward with Beary Landscaping, with a contract price of \$32,833. The contract includes snow removal on both the public sidewalks and our sidewalks. This is a maintenance contract, so Metropolis approval is not needed.

a. Patty Pappas moved for adoption of a motion which, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: "For building and grounds to contract with Beary Landscaping for scope of services including lawn and snow maintenance with season-based pricing. Maintenance of contract will be managed by Building and Grounds from year to year in accordance with the Holy Apostles Bylaws."

b. Bill Leider seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

iv. Main Office Remodel/Monument Sign/Mechanical Brick Wall Enclosure Update: A contract has been signed for these projects. The next step will be for drawings to be completed by the end of March.

v. Front Door Project Update: Work is starting on 3/24/25. The anticipated completion is 4/4/25.

vi. Duct Cleaning Update: The project is complete and was successful. Before and after photos were distributed.

vii. New Thermostats: These were installed in the classrooms. This will help with efficiency and cost savings.

viii. Duplex Electric: They have completed 95% of the electric panel investigation work. This was a Village of Westchester requirement.

ix. Tamper Proof Outlets: These have been installed throughout the Church at 18" AFF. This is another Village of Westchester requirement.

x. Three TV's: Installed in the classrooms.

xi. Two Electronic Carts: Assembled.

xii. Old Thermostat: Removed from the MPR.

xiii. South Entrance: Removed one of two exit signs. Village of Westchester requirement.

xiv. Exit Sign In Classroom Lower Level: This was not functioning and was replaced.

d. Technology: Report by Steve Milak

i. Steve investigated the printing issue that the office has been experiencing for a few weeks. The root cause is a VLAN (virtual local area network) setup. Outsource Solutions Group will send a tech onsite to address this week.

ii. A new workstation was purchased and installed in the church office along with a dedicated UPS (uninterruptible power supply).

iii. Steve had discussions and aligned on solutions with Chris on how to work around power and lighting issues for the livestream camera during Holy Week.

e. Ushering: Report by Ted Dres

i. There is a revised Ushering Schedule.

ii. Recognizing the more modest attendance at weekday evening services, the schedule has been revised by eliminating some of the Officer in Charge slots.

iii. Review your assignments. If you are unable to meet your obligation, please find a substitute and email both Ted and your replacement.

iv. Holy Wednesday April 16th, 3pm is in need of an Usher in Charge. Please let Ted know if anyone is available for that Holy Unction service.

v. Holy Week (particularly Palm Sunday, Holy Wednesday, Good Friday, Anastasi and Agape services) has very heavy ushering needs. Council members are expected to be at all of these services. We need at least 7 additional ushers besides the Usher in Charge for those Holy Week services.

vi. We will try implementing greater use of the iPad for the candle stand.

9. Old Business:

- a. **Holy Apostles Foundation:** The inaugural meeting of the Holy Apostles Foundation was held on March 19, 2025, via Zoom, with attorney Joan Berg in attendance. The Board of Directors is composed of very talented individuals: Ernest Davis, Ernest Karras, Kristi Athas Landorf, Tom Loukas, Tim Stojka and Joanne Volakakis. During the meeting, we ratified the Bylaws and elected the following Officers:

President: Kristi Athas Landorf

Vice President: Joanne Volakakis

Secretary: Ernie Davis

Treasurer: Tom Loukas

Once all the necessary paperwork is filed with the State of Illinois and the IRS, we will proceed to open an account at BMO Harris. Additionally, four committees were established: Finance, Investment, Marketing, and Audit. Most of the new Board members will be present at the coffee hour following church this Sunday.

- b. **Macaronatha Luncheon: Report by Sandra Pihos**

As of March 9, 2025, Luncheon donations were as follows: \$1,835.00 through Vanco, \$1,484.00 collected in cash, \$1,720.00 in checks, for a total of \$5,039.00. The donation link will stay open until March 31st or people can donate via checks to the office. All of the gross proceeds will go to the Jesse Brandow Ministry. Expenses were \$1,315.43 of which \$363.73 will not reoccur next year. Donations included dessert (rice pudding), water, coffee stirrers, soda, lemonade, fruit punch, macaroni, paper plates, dinner utensils, take home containers, take home bags, cream, ice, produce, salad dressing, bread, butter pats, butter, and tea bags. 310 people were in attendance.

- c. **Cemetery Plots: Report by Patty Pappas**

While the two contracts to swap out plots have been signed by both parties, we are still waiting on Chapel Hill to place initials where indicated. The purpose of doing so is to have properly executed contracts. An announcement was placed in Sunday's Church Bulletin, which read as follows: "Holy Apostles is pleased to offer cemetery plots for sale at Chapel Hill Gardens West, located at 17W201 Roosevelt Road in Oakbrook Terrace. Situated within the serene, park-like Garden of Ascension, these plots provide a peaceful and dignified final resting place. With fewer than 50 plots remaining from the original purchase of 270, this is a unique opportunity for our members to secure a plot at a significantly discounted price—well below the cost of purchasing directly from Chapel Hill. For more information, please contact Lou Kafkes, Parish Administrator, at 708-562-2744." We have made a request for announcements in the Mosaic and the Weekly News email as well.

- d. **Metropolis Special Clergy Laity Assembly: Report by James Maragos**

Steven Savas and Patty Pappas were appointed at the HA Special Parish Assembly as delegates to the Metropolis Special Clergy Laity Assembly. James Maragos and Father Dokos will also be in attendance. The Assembly will be held via Zoom on April 1st. The subject matter of the Assembly will be to discuss and vote upon the location of the new Metropolis of Chicago Center.

- e. **Motions for the Executive Committee and Building & Grounds Spending Limits:**

- i. Motion by James Maragos: "In order to ensure business continuity, the head of building and grounds committee may approve work up to \$10,000 per month and \$40,000 maximum per year, of materials or services without approval of the Parish Council, of non-budgeted and/or unforeseen capital spending; provided that he/she has informed the Executive Committee."

ii. Motion by James Maragos: “In order to ensure business continuity, the Parish Council Executive Committee may approve up to \$5,000 per month for items or emergency services within the budget, without the approval of the whole Parish Council.”

iii. Both motions are withdrawn for further review and discussion by the Bylaws committee, consisting of James Maragos, Sandra Pihos, Patty Pappas, Terry Chiganos and Peter Bell.

f. Youth Safety Compliance: Report by Patty Pappas

As of March 19th, 15 out of 88 Youth Workers are not yet compliant with the Archdiocese’s youth safety training requirements. To reach full compliance, we have established a Holy Apostles database. Each ministry leader involved with youth at HA will be responsible for keeping the database updated, ensuring the Parish Youth Safety Administrator (Lou Kafkes) is informed of new Youth Workers and those who are no longer involved. Without the HA database, we would be unable to identify new youth workers in the Archdiocese’s system and effectively track their compliance with required safety training.

A letter has been sent to all youth ministry leaders, providing them with the list of noncompliant Youth Workers and requesting that they follow up with their volunteers to ensure full compliance before those volunteers can resume contact with the youth. Additionally, ministry leaders will receive the Archdiocese’s compliance report monthly, so they stay informed about the compliance status of the Youth Workers under their leadership.

g. Celebration of Books: Report by Father Georgiou

At the Celebration of Books, Fr. Andrew Damick, Chief Content Officer of Ancient Faith Ministries, was the featured speaker, presenting an insightful talk on the topic “What Do Angels Have To Do With Our Salvation?” Over two days, \$3600 worth of resources were sold, providing valuable information to many attendees. Thank you to Fr. Damick as well as the HARC staff. We look forward to the Celebration of Books next year.

10. New Business:

a. Spring Parish Assembly: It will be held on May 4th. All Parish Council members should be present.

b. Greek School: Report by Sandra Pihos

Currently, there are 27 students in grades 4 through 6 at Greek School, some of whom face diverse learning challenges. Throughout the year, various adjustments have been made to support their individual learning needs. Greek school Principal, Zoe Koultourides, has implemented a wide range of strategies to help the students succeed, but she has reached the limit of available approaches. To better meet the needs of all students in this group, she proposes transitioning from the traditional grade-level structure to organizing students by proficiency level.

To make this shift, an additional teacher is needed for the remainder of the term. Zoe has been very resourceful, securing \$10,329.27 worth of equipment this year to help reduce program costs. At this time, she is requesting that the Parish Council contribute the remaining funds necessary to hire a new teacher. The PTO enthusiastically supported this effort with an \$840.00 contribution which she would like us to match.

i. Motion by Sandra Pihos: “To give the Holy Apostles Greek School \$840.00 to help underwrite the cost of hiring an additional Greek School teacher for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.”

ii. Bill Leider seconded the motion. Motion is defeated.

iii. Motion by Sandra Pihos: “To give Holy Apostles Greek School \$1,680 to help underwrite the cost of hiring an additional Greek School teacher for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.”

iv. Chris Pepke seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

c. Holy Week Planning: A committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 24th, at 6 PM via Zoom to begin preparations.

d. Next Parish Council Meeting: April 10, 2025 at 7:30 PM

e. Motions Review:

Sandra Pihos provided a brief review of the laws pertaining to the making of motions.

f. Grant Writing:

Chris Pepke reported that based upon our reserve study and projected expenses, the cost of maintaining our church building and grounds will exceed budgeted amounts in the future. We will look into alternative funding sources. A committee will be formed to research grants and we will recruit experienced parishioners as well as outside sources for assistance with grant writing.

11. Key Dates:

- a.** New Parish Council and Holy Apostles Foundation Board Meet and Greet: 3/23/25 - after Divine Liturgy
- b.** Holy Week Planning Committee: 3/24/25 at 6:00 PM via Zoom
- c.** Greek School Greek Independence Day Program: 3/25/25 at 4:45 PM
- d.** Bishop Timothy Visit: 3/28/25, Greet at 6:30 PM, Salutations at 7:00 PM, Reception by Parish Council to follow
- e.** Metropolis Special Clergy Laity Assembly: 4/1/25 at 6:00 PM via Zoom
- f.** Greek Independence Day Parade: 4/6/25 in Chicago
- g.** Parish Council to host Lenten Meal: 4/9/25 after Presanctified Liturgy
- h.** Holy Week: 4/13/25-4/20/25
- i.** Holy Apostles Spring Parish Assembly: 5/4/25 after Divine Liturgy
- j.** Fr. Bill Chiganos Memorial Service and Coffee Hour: 5/11/25
- k.** Graduate Sunday and Holy Apostles Picnic : 6/1/25
- l.** Church Golf Outing: 7/7/25 at NEW LOCATION: Willow Crest Golf Course at the Oak Brook Hills Hilton

12. Closing Prayer: Father Georgiou

13. Adjourn:

- a.** Motion to adjourn by Sandra Pihos. Seconded by Peter Bell. Unanimously approved.
- b.** James Maragos officially adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM.

Absent: Nicole Voelz