

**St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church
Haverhill, MA**

1995 Annual Parish Assembly

The 1995 Annual Parish Assembly was held on Sunday, January 22, 1995.

Edgar Mosesian, 1994 Parish Assembly Chairman, introduced Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, Diocesan Vicar General, and Judge Vincent Gurahian, Chairman of the Diocesan Council, who would be available if clarification were needed on any issues. Preliminary procedures regarding eligibility to vote for members were reviewed by Judge Gurahian. Edgar stated that the parish had 129 dues paying members and 90 of those members were present. Since 1/3 of the membership is required for a quorum, we satisfied the requirement.

The meeting was called to order at 1:50 p.m. with an opening prayer by the Vicar General.

Officers present were:

- Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian, Diocesan Vicar General, who presided over the Assembly
- Rev. Fr. Sahag Kaishian, pastor
- Edgar Mosesian, 1994 Parish Assembly Chairman
- Elaine Meuse, 1994 Parish Assembly Secretary

Nominations were presented for Assembly Chairperson and Secretary. Vasken Gostanian was nominated from the floor and added to the list of candidates for Parish Assembly Chairman.

Ballots were distributed, collected and counted by the Nominating Committee. Vasken Gostanian was elected Assembly Chairperson, and Cynthia Kasparian was elected Assembly Secretary.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to adopt Robert's Rules of Order since there is nothing in the Bylaws that stipulates how the meeting should be run.

Paul Kazarosian stated that Article 14A of the Bylaws lays out the order that the meeting should follow. Judge Gurahian clarified that the Bylaws only state what should be discussed, not the way in which they are discussed.

Sylvia Tavitian seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED.

Zarty Chilingirian asked if Fr. Sahag was eligible to vote. Judge Gurahian stated that since Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian was the presiding officer, Fr. Sahag was eligible to vote as a dues-paid member of the Parish.

MOTION by Margaret Kazarosian to waive the reading of the 1994 minutes.

Motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

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MOTION (con't.)

Discussion arose on whether there needed to be a motion to follow the agenda as written if we were to follow the Robert's Rules of Order. Paul Kazarosian made a motion to vote on the order of the agenda, which was seconded by Cy Minasian, but Paul later withdrew it. Der Hayr stated that it is the responsibility of the Parish priest and the Parish Council to prepare the agenda and its order, and it is out of order for the Assembly to override it. Michael Der Boghosian said that in 1994 Parish Assembly minutes, under #5 (Elections), Edward Der Bogosian made a motion to postpone elections until the end of the meeting. Michael said if it were possible to change the agenda last year, then the Assembly must be able to do it this year.

MOTION by James Derderian to follow the agenda as presented.

Motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur presented the report of the Nominating Committee. She stated that nominations would be taken from the floor, and input them on the computer with the list of names that the Nominating Committee has assembled. There would be a different color paper used for each ballot. The 1994 Nominating and Auditing Committees would distribute, collect and count the votes, and the votes would be recorded on the white board for view by the Assembly.

Parish Council

Barbara stated that the nominees for Parish Council with the four highest votes would each take a two year term, while the fifth would complete a one year term for the person who resigned before their term was completed.

Paul Kazarosian asked Barbara for the criteria used for nominating persons for the Parish Council in order to make honest choices. He also asked if they had gathered biographies from each candidate that could be reviewed by the Assembly. Barbara stated that they did not collect biographies and a review of the procedures that were used to create the list of candidates for nomination was not required. George Ohanian stated that since we can nominate members from floor, this is not necessary. Paul Kazarosian asked Barbara why certain members, who offered to place their names on the nominating list for Parish Council, were rejected. Der Sahag interjected that the Nominating Committee doesn't need to disclose this information, and that the Committee took a majority vote to pick the candidates.

The following nominations were taken from the floor and added to the existing list of candidates:

Margaret Kazarosian
Zarty Chilingirian
Zaven Gostanian

Paul Kazarosian asked the chairman if he could speak on behalf of one of the candidates nominated from the floor. Judge Gurahian stated that this was not appropriate at this time, but could be stated in the form of a motion for next year.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to close nominations.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur asked the nominees to stand as she read their names.

Auditing Committee

Barbara asked the nominees to stand as she read their names.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to close nominations.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Nominating Committee

The following members were nominated from the floor and added to the existing list of candidates:

Rose Der Bogosian
Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur

MOTION by Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur to close nominations.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Joseph Tavitian asked if the Parish was entitled to another Diocesan Delegate, since the Bylaws state that a parish is entitled to more than one delegate if there are more than 125 dues paying members, and currently 129 dues paying members are registered. Judge Gurahian clarified the Bylaws by stating that the election of another delegate is based upon the previous year's membership, further more another delegate may be elected in 1996, but not 1995, because the membership cannot elect an additional delegate until the current Delegate's term is up.

MOTION by Alice Kasparian to waive the reading of the annual reports and let the Assembly review the reports and just ask questions.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Review of Annual Reports

The following annual reports were reviewed and clarifications made as necessary:

- Pastor's Report: Accepted as presented
- Parish Council Report: Edgar Mosesian stated that his name was inadvertently omitted as secretary.
- Diocesan Delegate Report: Accepted as presented
- Merger Committee Report: Michael Der Boghosian wanted a clarification of the 3rd paragraph that stated the committee was formed in early December. He attended the Lawrence Church meeting, which was held on November 28, 1994 and that the committee was formed just prior to that meeting. Also, Michael had spoken to Edgar, who informed him that he didn't know that he was on the committee.

Edgar clarified his statement saying that he knew that he was on the committee, but didn't know that there was a meeting in Lawrence.

Margaret Kazarosian asked for a clarification of which parish had voted, and it was stated that it was only the Lawrence parish that voted.

Merger Committee Report Michael also clarified the fact that the vote was not unanimous. It was 38 to 2 in favor of the merger. James Derderian agreed.

The Assembly chairman asked that the remainder of the discussion be held until we reach New Business.

Review of Annual Reports (con't.)

Pledge Committee Report: Accepted as presented
Church Choir Report: Accepted as presented
Ladies Aide Society: Accepted as presented
Loosavoorich Report: Accepted as presented
Mr. & Mrs. Club Report: Accepted as presented
Sunday School Report: Accepted as presented
Women's Guild Report:

Sue Kezerian asked if all fourteen members of the Women's Guild were active members. Araxie Kasparian reported that according to the Bylaws, if you do not attend three meetings in a year, then you cannot be considered a member. Zarty Chilingirian stated that all the members paid their dues and that some of them were ailing, but that the group would be merging with the Ladies Aide Society this year. The Vicar General stated that all the groups should be returning their excess revenues back to the Parish Council, and the Parish Council will decide how much money should go back to them.

Young Adults Report: Accepted as presented

Parish Council 1994 Financial Report and Adopted Budget for 1995

The Assembly chairman asked the assembly to review the report and budget. Ardash Chilingirian asked for an itemized list of the Miscellaneous Income. Rafik Papalian, Parish Council Chairman, stated that he knew that \$1,000.00 of the income was from a mercy meal that the Ladies Aide Society had prepared and the bill was paid to the Parish Council. It was suggested that next year Miscellaneous Income be itemized or kept to a minimum.

Michael Devejian commented that after reviewing the financial reports for the last three years, the parish is consistently losing money with an \$8,300.00 loss predicted for 1995. The largest expense that the church incurs is the monthly assessment from the Diocese. He asked if we could either reduce or suspend these assessments. The Vicar General answered that a proposal such as that would have to be voted on at the Diocesan Assembly. The Vicar General also said that he reviewed the report and the budget and concluded that this parish must increase revenues greatly to avoid incurring any losses. He offered that the 50th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church would be an excellent instance for revenues to increase considerably, and that planning for this event should begin immediately. He stated that the parish should put aside the talk of the merger and get on with what was needed to ensure that the church survives, such as the fixing the steeple, and planning for the church anniversary.

Joseph Tavitian commented that the deficit of \$3,249.00 for this year is not the true deficit and should be combined with the Net Transfers of \$4,810 for an actual deficit of \$8,059.00, because we were not working with a balanced budget. Also for consideration, there was a \$5,000 bill for the 1994 Diocese assessment that has not been paid. Joseph said that Martin Aaronian had reviewed this deficit and agreed with Joseph.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to accept the 1995 budget.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Old Business: Attitash Property

MOTION by Marsha Moccia to table this issue until a qualified attorney, who specializes in titles searches, can make a full analysis on the entitlement of the property and all the documents for authenticity.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Jack Johnson asked for a clarification of the issue with the property. Marsha stated that since the issue was tabled, there couldn't be any discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Steeple:

Joseph Tavitian gave a brief history on the problems with the steeple. In November 1993, the Parish Council voted to have a structural engineer give the church a report on the condition of the church building. Joseph said that there are copies of the report for review by the membership. The bell tower is in poor shape. The structural engineer told the Parish Council that if he informed the building inspector of the status of the bell tower, the building inspector could close the building. The estimate of repairs was \$180,000.00 to 220,000.00, depending on the extent of the work. Joseph also said that some minor repairs can be done for alot less, but there would be no telling when the steeple would fall down.

Michael Der Boghosian asked if this report was mailed out to the parish. Joseph stated that most of the parish was notified by word of mouth. Michael reminded everyone that there are church services every Sunday, and if the report is correct, this could be a serious issue. He also commended the Parish Council for their work the past year. They really struggled by themselves. We shouldn't take this problem lightly.

Rafik Papalian said that he discussed the repairs to the steeple with a carpenter who had done some repairs to the Parish House and had done a good job. He asked the man to take a look at the bell tower and see if he could at least keep it in tact. The carpenter said that he would look at it in the spring.

Michael said that the contractor probably padded the bill. Rafik stated that the cost of the estimate was \$3,500.00. Marsha Moccia interjected that the Parish Council should get a quote on damage control immediately.

Edward Der Bogosian stated that if the insurance company found out, there could be a question of whether we could be insured. Richard McNeil said that if we are considering a merger with Lawrence, then we shouldn't consider doing any major repairs.

The Vicar General stated that the Diocese is currently performing extensive repairs to their building after not doing anything for many years. He reiterated that this was a very serious issue and we should do the repairs now and not wait until later.

Grace Devejian asked if the Diocese would be responsible for paying for the repairs. Judge Gurahian said that although the Diocese holds all titles, repairs are the responsibility of each church.

Michael Takessian said that he felt that the removal of the bell was a good idea.

Merger:

James Derderian gave a brief synopsis of the Merger Committee. It was formed as a fact finding committee. They met with the Lawrence committee to find out what they were going to do. Lawrence is unsure of their situation. The Lawrence committee is looking into several possibilities, which include building a new church, or coming to our church and maybe building a new hall and using the existing hall as Sunday School classrooms.

James asked the membership to consider the expense of building a new church. He felt that it would be difficult to get the Haverhill parish to move to another church. James also said that the committee needs to gather more information, and would be meeting with Lawrence to discuss the issue.

A discussion ensued on the actions of the Merger Committee in the past months and the Lawrence Church Parish Special Assembly that was held in order to vote on the purchase of land in Ward Hill to build another church.

Judge Gurahian said that the Primate has the power to bring about a merger, but the parishes have to agree. The Primate will only step in if there is an emergency.

Other New Business

MOTION by Martin Aaronian to increase the Parish Council from a seven man to a nine man council upon approval from the Diocesan Council. This motion was amended to read: Increase the Parish Council from a seven member to a nine member council upon approval of the Diocesan Council.

The motion was seconded by Edgar Mosesian. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Paul Kazarosian requiring each candidate for Parish Council and Diocesan Delegate to prepare a short biography for the Nominating Committee to make their selection. Candidates will not be considered unless the biography is presented, even if nominated from the floor. The Nominating Committee will present the biographies to the Parish Assembly.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Virginia Tavitian stated that there were three items that the new Parish Council should consider as some of their priorities.

1. The front doors should either be improved or replaced.
2. The fence around the church should be painted.
3. The lawn should be improved.

Joseph Tavitian said that the Bylaws state that each parish should establish a reserve fund. All surplus funds in each group should be turned over and placed in a reserve fund. He suggested that the Diocesan Delegate and the Parish Council chairman be the signatories for the fund.

MOTION by Joseph Tavitian to have the Parish Assembly establish a reserve fund transferring surplus monies to this account.

The motion was seconded.

Judge Gurahian clarified the motion by saying that this was in the Bylaws, so there was no need for a motion.

ELECTION RESULTS

Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur presented the results of the elections. She also said that if one of the elected members could not complete their term, the next highest vote getter will finish out their term.

Parish Council Election:

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>No. of Votes</u>
Zarty Chilingirian	51 *
Edward Der Bogosian	48 *
Virginia Chobanian	47 *
Edward Basmajian	43 *
James Derderian	41 **
Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur	39
Vasken Gostanian	38
Sylvia Tavitian	37
Michael Takessian	34
Harry Kasparian	30
Margaret Kazarosian	16
Zaven Gostanian	15
George Tashjian	6

Nominating Committee:

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>No. of Votes</u>
Rose Der Bogosian	44 *
Zaven Gostanian	43 *
Allison Basmajian	42 *
Barbara Sarkisian-Arthur	41
George Mardekian	39
Ann Drouin	37
Araxie Kasparian	14
Virginia Tavitian	8

Auditing Committee:

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>No. of Votes</u>
Michael Devejian	41***
Janice Mosesian	22
Martin Aaronian	16
David Howard	9
Invalid Votes	2

- * elected to a two year term
- ** completing a one year term
- *** elected to a three year term

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m. with a closing prayer by the Vicar General.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cynthia Kasparian
1995 Parish Assembly Secretary

Vasken Gostanian
1995 Parish Assembly Chairman

Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian
Vicar General, 1995 Parish Assembly President