

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY
ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH
12-61 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
FAIR LAWN, NEW JERSEY 07410
SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1994**

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM by Chairman Joseph Basralian, followed by an opening prayer by Fr. Vahan Hovhannessian.

The first order of business was the election of Assembly officers.

For Assembly Chairman, Rex Kachigian nominated Joseph Basralian. The nomination was seconded and accepted. Mr. Basralian assumed the Chairmanship.

For Assembly Secretary, Rex Kachigian nominated Arda Kiljian. The nomination was seconded and accepted. Mrs. Kiljian assumed the position of Recording Secretary.

For Assembly Parliamentarian, the Chairman appointed Sarkis Bedevian.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Rex Kachigian, Chairman of Parish Council, introduced the candidates selected by the Nominating Committee. The following persons were nominated for Parish Council for a term of two years:

Thomas Ashbahian
Bert Bedrosian
Ara Hourdajian
Gabriel Kaprelian

Gregg Najarian
Kevork Ohannessian
Ted Takvorian, Jr
Patricia Zengel

The following persons were nominated for Auditing Committee:

Amy Vartoukian

Leon Hovsepian

The following persons were nominated for Nominating Committee:

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer

Mary Ann Mozian

Profiles of the candidates above were distributed to all parishioners attending the Assembly. The Chairman opened the nominations from the floor.

For Parish Council, Arthur Beylerian nominated Sarkis Gabrellian. The nomination was respectfully declined. Araxy Moumdjian nominated Arthur Beylerian. The nomination was respectfully declined. Since there were no further nominations from the floor, a motion was made to close the nominations for Parish Council. The motion was seconded and passed.

For Auditing Committee, there were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made to close the nominations for Auditing Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

For Nominating Committee, there were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made to close the nominations for Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

At this point ballots were passed, prior to the reading of the minutes.

A motion was made to accept the 1993 Assembly minutes. The motion was seconded and passed.

Rex Kachigian, Parish Council Chairman, stated that according to Section 17-B of our By-laws, he hereby declared the nomination of Very Reverend Father Vahan Hovhannessian to be ratified by the General Assembly. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Father Vahan thanked everyone and expressed his happiness vis-a-vis the assignment to be the spiritual leader of this community and President of the Parish Council. As to a brief review of his term at St. Leon, the following were the focal points:

1. LITURGICAL. This is a very important aspect of the Church mission. The existence of this church is based upon the fact that we are Armenians who come here for the worship of God.
2. PASTORAL. Father Vahan stipulated how important it is for him to know the community, even each and every one of our families. He continued noting that even a simple hospital visit would be much more meaningful if he knew the person. So, in order to facilitate this type of personal interrelationships, Father Vahan has been emphasizing the importance of home visitations and active participation in the church services. The Lradoo and the Sunday bulletins have devoted numerous articles and announcements in regards to pastoral home visitations.

The second aspect would be the hospital visitations. Father Vahan pointed out that he has to be notified about an ailment or a hospitalization in order to provide the spiritual support.

The third and last point of the pastoral services are the relations he has established with other Armenian organizations, especially with the Hovnanian Armenian School and the Armenian Home for the Aged in Emerson. Father Vahan mentioned his visits to both organizations on a timely basis. He also mentioned his role in the local Fair Lawn clergy organization.

3. COUNSELING SESSIONS: Father Vahan mentioned that families with either spiritual or other family oriented problems found refuge in the church and her teaching. He was satisfied that through biblical references and counseling these families were able to overcome their respective problems.

Father Vahan enumerated the various other programs he has started.

Bible Study - This group meets twice a month to discuss and study various topics related to the books of the Bible.

Discussion Group - Fifty to sixty people attend the meetings once a month. Discussion topics include liturgy, history and our faith as Armenian Christians.

Deacon Training - The church needs younger people to get involved in the choir or to become Deacons. Hayr Soorp noted he has 10 to 12 new members with whom he meets every Friday evening and for which he has prepared a set of new booklets to help them prepare for their services.

Armenian Conversational Classes - Classes are held every Friday to help parents and young adults learn more about the culture and language.

Choral Group - This group meets every other Tuesday and is a sister group of the Choir. The main theme of the Choral Group is to boost our Armenian heritage through Armenian folk and popular songs

Hayr Soorp also stated that he is also pursuing his doctorate at Fordham University. He had spent the last two weeks in Rome at the Biblicum to continue his research studies towards the Ph.D. in Biblical Studies.

In terms of collections on a weekly basis and sacraments, we reached our target. For 1994, expectations were raised due to the increased numbers of attendants in church. Mr. Ishkanian added that Christmas and Easter donations were also based on the same assumption.

Community Center Rental: Revenues went down in 1993, and according to Grace Pinajian, people generally reserve a few months in advance and in this area we are not anticipating a substantial growth. Mr. Ishkanian noted that income from various affairs did not materialize despite the tremendous efforts of the organizations and the volunteers who tried their best.

With respect to 1993, Mr. Ishkanian pointed out that considerably less was spent than what was proposed - \$225,600.00 proposed versus \$187,333.00 actual. This differential is reflected due to the absence of a priest for the most part of last year. We had visiting clergy and their visitation expenses are included under clergy stipend.

Our Diocesan dues decreased this year but as the number of sacraments increases, our dues will follow in the same direction and thus in turn will go up.

The administrative expenses also increased. These include the operating of copy machines, envelopes, office supplies, a fax machine, telephone expenses. We are not anticipating that these expenses will increase further in 1994.

Repairs and Maintenance: These were mainly painting and carpeting. Part of the painting job was already done. The carpeting expenses of the church sanctuary will be incurred in 1994.

Community Center Expenses: These include the cost of running and operating the Hall and include but are not limited to linens, dumpsters, etc.

Van Reserve Fund: Robert Ishkanian explained that we were directed to allocate a percentage of the Hall rentals toward the purchase of the van. We funded the Community Center Capital Improvement Fund and the Van Reserve Fund as stipulated.

Special Expenses (Page 36): The following expenses were approved by the Assembly in 1993:

- Aid to Armenia Fund
- Roof Repair Fund (This expense was decreased thanks to Tom Ashbahian.)
- Hall Renovations (Costs were offset by donations from the Abajian and the Mantashian Families.)

The Sunday Bulletin is issued on a weekly basis and includes biblical readings, prayers in English and Armenian, as well as church announcements. Hayr Soorp pointed out that no public announcement gets inserted in the bulletin without his consent and approval.

The Lradoo is generally 10 to 12 pages, very didactic. Contents include articles about the Bible, Liturgy and Church traditions in both English and Armenian.

Administration: There was a communications problem between the organizations and the office at the beginning, but Hayr Soorp is very optimistic about the future. He noted the addition of another secretary who is also a parish member, Mrs. Mary Ann Mozian. The office also has a new computer. Hayr Soorp asked that all correspondence be addressed to him and to please feel free to call him in case of a question or any problems.

Organizations: Hayr Soorp thanked all the organizations, starting with Parish Council. He noted that the last six months were very fruitful, and thanked Parish Council Chairman, Rex Kachigian, and the other members for attending the meetings so diligently, despite the latest weather conditions.

He thanked the ACYOA Seniors for their determination to keep this organization strong and active. He thanked the Women's Guild, the Choir, the executive bodies of all organizations, the chairpersons, all the volunteers such as the Altar Guild members, the faithful women who prepare the Mahs, the Altar Servers, the senior Deacons, Charles Pinajian and Sarkis Soutanian, for their help. He thanked the choir director, George Paroonagian, and last but not least he thanked the custodian, Minas Arakelian, for his services, his devotion and concern.

Finally, Hayr Soorp thanked God for this beautiful family and prayed to God that he may lead us as one united Christian family.

Chairman Joseph Basralian thanked Hayr Soorp and reaffirmed how proud this parish is to have Father Vahan as our priest and spiritual leader.

REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS

There were no questions in regards to organization reports.

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY REPORT

There were no questions about the Diocesan Assembly Report.

AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT

There were no questions in regards to the Auditing Report. However, Rex Kachigian noted that some recommendations were to be made as to a uniformed record-keeping system. Due to the absence of Charles Pinajian, chairman of the Auditing Committee, no further details were available at this time.

CORRECTIONS

Parish Council Report - Page 17, Paragraph one; "The Parish Council meetings are held on a biweekly basis and not a bimonthly basis.

Parish Council Report - Page 19; Thomas Ashbahian and John Voskian co-chaired the Food Festival

Parish Council Chairman Rex Kachigian thanked all outgoing Parish Council members for their dedication and commitment in fulfilling the responsibilities of their office. They are Barbara Hovsepian, John Nakashian, Robert Ishkanian, Vasken Ohanyan and Thomas Ashbahian.

1994 BUDGET

Robert Ishkanian, Parish Council Treasurer, gave a synopsis of the financial status. He reported that St. Leon has been operating on a very sound financial basis with a positive cash flow situation. However, there were some substantially material renovations, i.e. Capital Improvements to the structures such as the expenditures incurred with the installation of a new roof and other renovations in Abajian Hall. Therefore it was necessary to transfer funds into the Capital Improvement Account.

Operating Budget (Page 37): Robert Ishkanian went over the proposed 1993 Budget and compared it to the actual 1993 Budget and the proposed 1994 Budget.

Expansion of Cottage and Storage Shed Facility: Robert Ishkanian noted these are the new items to be discussed and Thomas Ashbahian will be able to clarify and answer any questions.

John Nakashian asked if there was a separate breakdown of utility costs. Robert Ishkanian referred him to page 38, line 6, which shows the specific expense.

Lucy Chagachbanian noted that under Saint Nersess Seminary the proposed 1993 and proposed 1994 remained at \$2,000.00 when a motion was made and passed in 1993 to increase this fund to \$2,200.00. Robert Ishkanian noted that this was an omission and will be rectified.

Sarkis Bedevian raised the issue of giving back 80% of any balance the organizations carry by the end of the fiscal year versus giving back to Parish Council 80% of the net income after expenses of a given fiscal year. Mr. Bedevian stated that the Parish Council had opted for the second option for 15 years and only two years ago the in-office Council members opted for this new resolution. He felt this took away the incentive for organizations to work since no funds would be left eventually. Mr. Bedevian wanted this to be a decision ratified by the Assembly and not by Parish Council alone.

Rex Kachigian answered that the Auditing Committee was responsible in the collection of the 80% of the balances and Parish Council had no say in this. Mr. Ishkanian felt that he basically agrees that organizations give 80% of the balance to Parish Council but, (1) there is no continuity among treasurers of organizations and, (2) various people could be handling large sums of money and after a certain number of years the 20% will add up to a substantial amount. Therefore if it is given to Parish Council, in turn when the organization needs any funds they should approach Parish Council and get the needed funds.

Mr. Bedevian reiterated that this came up two years ago when, Parish Council could not come with enough funds, they went ahead and decided to apply this new formula of getting 80% of the total balance.

Margaret Semonian confirmed that Parish Council asked for the Women's Guild savings account which was established some 40 years ago with the remaining 20% from each year.

John Nakashian stated that Women's Guild had this secret fund which ended up mushrooming into thousands of dollars.

Sarkis Soultanian answered that the organizations are not set up to play finances but instead those funds are for the welfare of the parish and that is exactly how they should be allocated.

Linda Paroonagian, Sunday School Superintendent, stated that this is going to create an immense problem. The school collects dues in September and in 1994 plans to have its major fund raiser which is the Christmas Pageant in December. Funds would be transferred to Parish Council at that time. This would create problems for the operation of the Sunday School. Mrs. Paroonagian asked if in such an instance an exception would be made and funds could be transferred to Parish Council in May by the end of the Sunday School year.

Robert Ishkanian replied that if need be, Parish Council would make an advance to the school.

Mrs. Paroonagian said that in this case the advance would be reflected in the budget.

Mr. Bedevian noted with more concrete examples that this percentage of the total balance would leave an organization with no working capital.

Chairman Joseph Basralian stated that the Parish Council will advise the organizations about this matter. Since the system has been working for such a number of years he did not see a reason to impose another policy.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian-Meyer noted this happened during her term as Parish Council Chairperson and at the time organizations had lots of funds and nothing was being done. There was an instance when a treasurer of one organization had passed away leaving no clarifications. Therefore, based upon these factors the Parish Council, at the time, decided to adopt the 80% of the total balance decision.

A motion was made to accept the budget. The motion was seconded and passed.

Memorial Accounts: Robert Ishkanian pointed out that these should have been broken down according to the families. This will be taken care of next year. Mr. Ishkanian thanked Dennis Tarzian for the excellent analysis job he did on the Endowment Fund.

Hayr Soorp wanted to clarify two aspects of the Memorial Fund:

1. The Pastor and the Church Office must be informed of the wishes of the family before the "In Lieu of Flowers" checks are received.

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2. "In Lieu of Flowers" cannot be channeled to different organizations through the Church Office. The church will receive and process only the checks issued to St. Leon Armenian Church and her organizations.

Church Expansion: Sarkis Soultanian stated that this project was started some seven years ago. Plans were postponed, although Parish Council passed a resolution which provided that construction will not start until 75% of the required funds were pledged. Due to the extraordinary events in Armenia, mainly the earthquake, followed by the issue of Karabagh, things were postponed. Parish Council requested that Sarkis Gabrellian and he, Sarkis Soultanian, co-chair this committee and revive the project. Mr. Soultanian mentioned they just assumed their new responsibilities and there is a great deal to be done, starting with getting permits, etc. Thomas Ashbahian is also assisting them. The blueprints were available for all to see and inquire about after the Assembly. Mr. Soultanian noted that four members have already pledged \$180,000.00 and we have \$20,000.00 in funds.

John Demirdjian asked what was the total anticipated cost of this project.

Mr. Soultanian estimated the cost to be somewhere between \$400,000.00 and \$450,000.00, but is confident the project will receive a positive response from the entire community. Mr. Soultanian said he would be glad to answer any questions and take pledges.

Linda Galgano noted that she is not familiar with the project and needed some information.

The expansion will include

- A new dome in the Narthex.
- A large dome in the center of the church (both sides of the church would be enlarged to accommodate the larger dome)
- There will be an elevator for the handicapped.
- Reorganization of Parish Council room, the offices, the attic as a conference room, etc.
- The ramp for handicapped will be eliminated.

Barbara Hovsepian noted the Narthex would also include a coat room.

Helen Mazoujian noted the efficiency of the ramp compared to an elevator.

Mr. Soultanian stated this elevator would have a large capacity and would be able to

accommodate a wheel chair.

There was a question by Patti Toofangjian about the building of a youth center, to which Mr. Soultanian answered in the negative.

NEW BUSINESS

Capital Improvements: Thomas Ashbahian reported the need for two small projects.

1. The cottage - or Minas' house - needs improvements, mainly the addition of a bedroom and the renovation of the existing bathroom at a cost of \$14,000.00, or less if the Men's Fellowship help defray the expenses.
2. Community Center Storage. There is a proposition to add an area 10' x 75' (which is the width of the Community Center) to keep all the lawn maintenance equipment, records, extra chairs, tables, etc...and improve the attic area at an approximate cost of \$19,000.00.

There were no questions on this subject.

Vahe Kiljian, treasurer of the Choir, asked about the purchase of robes and books for the Choir. Rex Kachigian said there was \$3,000.00 allocated to the purchase of the robes. Parish Council is comparing price quotations in order to get the best deal. As for the books, it was noted that some are not published. The small books are being ordered through donations. For the robes, a donation was already received for 12 robes for the deacons and acolytes as well as the choir. Parish Council will take care of this matter

Sarkis Gabrellian wanted to know the number of dues paying members. The number of dues paying members, according to the Treasurer's Report, stands at 199 members.

Leon Hovsepien asked how many of these 199 are current or eligible to vote. Dovie Tilbian did not have the answer to this question.

Dennis Tarzian noted that Parish Council is discussing the purchase of land adjacent to the church property, to which both Sarkis Bedevian and Rex Kachigian pointed out no such immediate plans, since no one is ready to sell or buy. Also no purchase can be finalized without the approval of the Assembly and the Diocese.

Rex Kachigian noted that the envelope system is not functioning well and to expect a call from Mary Ann Mozian to confirm envelope numbers. Mr. Kachigian asked everyone to please be patient and cooperate. Also he noted that one secretary works from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM, while the other works from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. That is, we do not have two full time secretaries.

Chairman Joseph Basralian read the results of the elections. They are -

For Parish Council - Thomas Ashbahian, Bert Bedrosian, Ara Hourdajian, Gregg Najarian, Gabriel Kaprelian, Patricia Zengel, Alternate

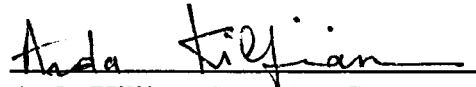
For Nominating Committee - Mary Ann Mozian

For Auditing Committee - Leon Hovsepien

The Chairman congratulated the newly elected and proposed a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and accepted.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM, following Hayr Soorp's closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,


Arda Kiljian, Assembly Secretary


Joseph Basralian, Esquire
Assembly Chairman


Sarkis (Rex) Kachigian
Parish Council Chairman


Very Reverend Father Vahan Hovhanessian
Pastor and Parish Council President