

MINUTES OF THE 1993 PARISH ASSEMBLY
ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH
12-61 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
FAIR LAWN, NJ 07410
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1993

The meeting was called to order at 1:50 PM by Chairman Sarkis Soultanian.

Charles Pinajian, Chairman of the Auditing Committee, reported there were 86 dues-paying members in attendance which constituted the required quorum.

The first order of business was the election of Assembly officers. Sarkis Gabrellian nominated Joseph Basralian as Chairman of the Assembly. The nomination was seconded by Charles Pinajian and was accepted. Mr. Basralian assumed the chairmanship.

For Assembly Secretary, John Nakashian nominated Arda Kiljian. The nomination was accepted. Charles Pinajian nominated Anne Kachigian. Mrs. Kachigian declined the nomination. Mrs. Kiljian assumed the position of Assembly Secretary.

Charles Pinajian was appointed Parliamentarian by the Chairman.

A motion was made to waive the reading and accept the minutes of the 1992 Assembly. The motion was seconded and passed.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian, Chairperson 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:

Sarkis Bedevian	Arthur Ohnikian
Leon Bedigian	Jan Royland
Leon Hojegian	Nancy Scicchitano
Rex Kachigian	Dennis Tarzian
Kevork Ohannessian	Richard Tomasian

The following persons were nominated for Auditing Committee:

Leon Hovsepian	Jacques Tossounian
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The following persons were nominated for Nominating Committee:

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian/Katherine Ohnikian

Profiles of the candidates listed above were distributed to all persons attending the Parish Assembly.

There were no additional nominations from the floor.

A motion was made by Sarkis Gabrellian to close the nominations for Parish Council. The motion was seconded and passed.

A motion was made by Barbara Hovsepian to close the nominations for Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

A motion was made by Robert Ishkanian to close the nominations for Auditing Committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS

Chairman Basraian said that the individual reports would not be reviewed as they had been previously sent to all members. He asked that questions be directed to specific reports only.

John Nakashian, Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, in reference to the Parish Council report, remarked that the parish should be very appreciative of the outstanding manner in which Chairperson Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian conducted herself during this most trying year. There were many difficult deliberations and decisions to be made. She is to be commended most highly.

Rex Kachigian stated that we should go over the situation regarding the new pastor. Chairman Joseph Basraian responded that this item will be discussed under Old Business and New Business.

Corrections

Robert Ishkanian, Parish Council Treasurer, pointed out a typographical error in the Comparative Budget Summary, page 38, under Van Expense for Actual 1992. The correct amount should be \$2,417 and not \$2,4127.

Barbara Hovsepian, Parish Council Member, pointed out that in the Church Endowment Fund Report, page 36, the Lucy Tutunjian Memorial Fund was listed under Church School when it should be listed instead for St. Vartan Camp/St. Vartan Summer Studies Program as this fund was earmarked specifically for these activities by the family. Mrs. Hovsepian also asked how the accrued income for the Youth Christian Education Fund was used. Mr. Ishkanian did not know the specifics.

Mary Ann Mozian asked for clarification as to how the accrued income for the Armenian School Fund is being distributed. Dr. Khatchadurian asked if this was set up in order to benefit students with special talents, etc.

Mrs. Mozian responded that Armenian School receives only \$25.00 annually from the Parish Council which, in turn, is given out as an award to a student exhibiting specific talents or areas of interest as stipulated by the School. Mr. Ishkanian mentioned that Parish Council receives a lump sum check from the Diocese with respect to all funds without specific allocation.

Mrs. Hovsepian said that the Peter Jesraly fund was set up for scholarships for talented Armenian Youth and reiterated that the school received only \$25.00 per year which represented far less than the accrued interest on the fund. She asked why the excess was being added to the general church fund. Chairman Basralian referred the matter back to the Parish Council to review the initial set-up of each fund and make sure that if such funds are to benefit a specific organization, they do so in the future to insure that the funds are not used for general purposes.

Sarkis Bedevian pointed out that the Church receives one check from the Diocese in April of each year as previously mentioned, with interest calculated at approximately 7%. He noted that the Parish Council should calculate the amount due to each organization and notify them accordingly.

Jan Royland noted that under the memorial funds established for 1992, there was an instance where a fund was established at St. Leon and subsequently Der Arshen requested that it be transferred to St. Mary's Church. Mr. Ishkanian noted that the issue was brought up at the Parish Council and that, according to the family's request, funds were to be transferred to St. Mary's for transmittal to the designated charity in Syria.

Sarkis Bedevian stated that there is a policy that has been applied for over 23 years at St. Leon, that all monies emanating in lieu of flowers are to stay in St. Leon. It would be unfair to allow the flow of monies to St. Mary's. There was a question of whether the fund was for in lieu of flowers or a charity in Syria which was not resolved at the Parish Assembly.

Chairman Basralian asked the Parish Council to act on this issue.

AUDITING COMMITTEE

Chairman Joseph Basraian directed the Assembly to the Comparative Operating Budget.

Sarkis Bedevian said we have to clarify the allocation of a full year's salary for the pastor when we still do not have one. Robert Ishkanian explained that he felt it was prudent to budget the salary despite the fact that we do not yet have a pastor because he assumed one will be assigned very soon. Mr. Bedevian accepted the idea. However, he pointed out that Diocesan dues are based on a special formula -

- 1 - The number of Members
- 2 - How much the Budget is
- 3 - The numbers of Sacraments performed

By showing such a large Budget allocation for Pastor Salaries, St. Leon would be taxed accordingly. Mr. Ishkanian felt this amount is immaterial and it would be evened out since we would have fewer sacraments with the lack of a pastor.

Mr. Rex Kachigian noted under Visiting Clergy, we have only budgeted \$600.00. He said such amount would hardly cover our visiting clergy expenditures for a month or so. Mr. Ishkanian noted it was set up according to last year's budget in hopes of finding a pastor soon.

Thomas Ashbahian, Assistant Parish Council Treasurer, suggested an increase in the allocation for St. Nerses Seminary from \$2,000.00 to \$2,200.00. A motion was made by Barbara Hovsepian to increase the allocation. The motion was seconded and passed.

Rex Kachigian requested an explanation regarding the increase of \$1,000.00 for the Sports Association. Robert Ishkanian stated the reasons for the increases were as follows:

- 1 They did not get a final accounting from George Kachajian, Jr. on the number of gym rentals.
- 2 The Parish Council felt the youth of the church are an important, integral part of the parish and subsequently a fair amount should be allocated.

Mr. Leon Hovsepian noted that the title "Capital Provision Improvement" should read "Capital Improvement Fund - Community Center". Mr. Ishkanian explained that for major improvements, the money comes out of the Reserve Fund. In addition he said that any improvement which extends the life of the Hall is considered a Capital Improvement and that any ordinary, necessary repair and maintenance are considered an operating expenses.

Sarkis Bedevian referred to page 40, the Summary of Organizational Funds on Hand. Under Building Fund, Mr. Bedevian asked if that amount shown was the sum contributed by individuals for the expansion of the church. Robert Ishkanian responded that the fund was established and existed prior to his taking over the Treasury and he was unable to elaborate.

Mr. Bedevian pointed out that the people who contributed those amounts did so with a specific purpose and it would only be fair if Parish Council contacted them either by telephone or by written letter updating them on what has been done, or would be done in the future regarding the funds and whether they would like these contributions allocated to other purposes.

Chairman Joseph Basralian agreed, and felt it was most appropriate for the Parish Council to act upon this issue.

Robert Ishkanian explained there are two separate accounts.

- 1 A checking account is for the Building Fund; and -
- 2 \$18,000.00 in a Memorial Account which represents the contributions for the expansion.

The funds, although separate, serve the same purpose. John Nakashian said the Memorial Fund is separate from the expansion fund of the church.

Helen Mazoujian asked if it would be possible to allocate \$17,000.00 for the repair of the roof from this fund. It was noted that the roof repair has been approved at the 1992 Parish Assembly.

Rex Kachigian proposed a motion to accept the Auditing Committee Report. The motion was seconded and passed.

Rex Kachigian made a motion to accept the 1993 Budget as amended by Thomas Ashbahian. It was seconded by Leon Hovsepian. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

RENOVATIONS AND REPAIRS

Rex Kachigian asked about the status of the renovation to the Community Center. Sarkis Gabrellian reported that the renovations will begin on Monday, February 8, and include the following:

- Phase 1 - New wall covering
- " 2 - Carpeting
- " 3 - Mirrors and wall covering in bathrooms
- " 4 - New chairs to arrive in March

Mr. Gabrellian said the Committee expected to cover the costs through donations. Regarding the question of what would happen to the existing chairs, Mr. Gabrellian said some would be used on the second floor and some would be stored for future use.

Leon Hovsepien asked if the roof will be taken care of soon and if the sound system in the Community Center was to be replaced, to which Mr. Gabrellian responded that the acoustical problem will be solved once there are enough donations. Grace Pinajian stated that the goal is to have all the improvements in the Hall finished before Palm Sunday and Easter. Mr. Gabrellian reminded the Assembly that Grace Pinajian, Lynn Beylerian and Thomas Ashbahian are involved with the Hall renovations.

Barbara Hovsepien pointed out that the Hall will be needed for upcoming events such as the Women's Guild Fish 'n Chips Dinner on Tuesday, March 9 and the Armenian School Lenten Luncheon on Sunday, March 21. Mr. Gabrellian reiterated that if all goes as planned, the Hall should be ready. Chairman Basralian added that these renovations will last us into the year 2000 and beyond.

Mrs. Hovsepien requested again that something be done with the sound system. She pointed out that the Sunday School, Armenian School and ACYOA deserve a better sound system, as all their efforts go in vain due to a lack of good acoustics. Mr. Gabrellian promised that if there are enough donations the sound system will be replaced.

NEW BUSINESS

1. SEARCH FOR A NEW PRIEST

Rex Kachigian asked about the status of the search for a new priest. Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian responded that so far the Committee has interviewed five priests. She mentioned that another candidate will be officiating next week, after which the Committee will vote on one and hopefully the Church will have a priest. Dr. Khatchadurian noted that all but one of the candidates have been Hayr Soorps. She also noted this parish is anxious to have a priest soon as it is a very difficult time for the parishioners, but especially for the Parish Council Chairperson and the Church Secretary who, in addition to their normal daily tasks had to assume many responsibilities of a parish priest for the past six months.

Sarkis Gabrellian suggested not rushing into a decision because, if the right person is not obtained it would only aggravate the difficulties. Leon Hovsepian clarified that the Committee has a list of priorities as to what the parishioners expect from a priest, so the vote would be cautioned with expediency.

Mr. Kachigian wanted an explanation regarding whether when the Search Committee selects someone, who then would ultimately approve the selection. Would the Assembly be involved in the selection process?

Chairman Joseph Basraian responded that Parish Council will have the final vote and according to the By-laws, the process does not include the Parish Assembly with a vote on the selection. Since such a law exists in the By-laws, we have to abide by it.

Thomas Ashbahian had a copy of the By-laws and cited that --

Article 15 "A Special Assembly may be requested"

Article 17 "Once the selection of a new priest is approved by Parish Council, it goes directly to the Primate."

Sarkis Bedevian noted that five priests have been interviewed but this is creating an awkward situation as far as the selection of one among the five.

Mr. Bedevian said the Parish Assembly should give a vote of confidence to the Parish Council so things are not delayed once the selection is made. He also said that if too much time passes without the selection of a new priest the Primate might say, "I have plans for this particular priest." He asked if we then go to our next-in-line selection? Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian responded saying that the Primate was consulted regarding the selection of any of these five candidates.

Mr. Bedevian pointed out that these priests are not going to wait for our decision. Other parishes might act faster than us and select a priest before us. What would the next step be then? Do we go to the next choice? Dr. Khatchadurian clarified the issue, stating that the Search Committee was set up originally to find the best suitable priest. As to the time frame, the By-laws, Article 47 stipulates that when there is a vacancy, the Primate can... "appoint a priest with the agreement of the Parish Council", so the Parish Council could choose this solution instead.

Dr. Knarig mentioned that if the Search Committee members all agree on a selection, then there will be a decision by the end of this month. Dr. Knarig also reaffirmed that parishioners have already given a vote of confidence to the Parish Council. There was a motion by Anne Kachigian to allow the Parish Council to vote on the decision once the Search Committee presents its selection. It was determined that such a motion was not needed.

Sarkis Bedevian affirmed that St. Leon is a very reputable parish and it attracts good clergymen. He said he would like to bring to the attention of the Parish Council and the Search Committee, that the priest they ultimately select has to accept the use of the residential facilities on church property.

Dawn Hourdajian stated she is unaware of who the five candidates are and would like to see the newly elected Parish Council members participate in the approval process make the transition very smooth.

Regarding calling a Special Assembly to ratify the appointment of a priest, Sarkis Soutanian felt the ratification could take place the following year at the Parish Assembly.

It was also noted that the newly elected Parish Council members will be invited to the meetings and can join in all processes, except voting until their election is approved by the Primate, so that they will be serving only in an advisory capacity until that time.

Sarkis Soultanian said he did not favor such a motion because it only puts a burden on the Parish Council, as though for the purpose of getting the blessing of the newly elected members.

Sarkis Bedevian pointed out that the Parish Council has had everyone's backing during this hard time. The Council is to be commended for doing such an excellent job and surely will continue in that way, as we all should work for the benefit of St. Leon.

Carol Ashbahian asked for the names of the individuals on the Search Committee.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian enumerated the listing as - Sarkis Soultanian, Vasken Ohanyan (Chairman), John Nakashian, Charles Pinajian, Lucy Dabagian and herself. As to the larger Search Committee, it is comprised of each organization's Chairperson and/or Representative. The larger Committee reports to the smaller Search Committee which, in turn interviews and screens the priests and will hand its formal selection and recommendation to Parish Council. The Parish Council will ultimately vote on their selection.

Vasken Ohanyan stated the purpose of a small committee was merely that it is hard to interview someone with fifteen people.

Regarding the questions of salaries, stipend, housing accommodations, etc., - this is to be handled by the Parish Council.

There was a motion to give newly-elected members the privilege of assisting in an advisory capacity. The motion was seconded and voted upon. The motion passed with twenty-nine (29) for, twenty-four (24) against and abstentions.

2. ALTAR CURTAINS AND CARPETING IN THE CHURCH.

Grace Pinajian requested that the altar curtains be changed. She suggested the new one go all the way up to the top and open from the center. Mrs. Pinajian noted also that the electrical mechanism, which was installed three years ago is not functioning properly. Mr. Pinajian said he would also like to see the pew cushions either replaced or repaired.

Barbara Hovsepian added that the church needs re-painting and the walls covered since we still see the cinder blocks. She also would like the Baptismal Mural replaced with a more appropriate painting.

3. AID TO ARMENIA.

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian referred to the special bulletins in reference to Armenia Winter Relief and stopping the blockade and emphasized the importance of Hot-Line Calls. At a cost of \$17.50 a person could send five (5) telegrams to the most important political figures such as the President, UN Secretary General, etc. She also urged parishioners to call the White House (202) 456-1111. The special bulletin will be sent to all parishioners on the Church mailing list. Also, Dr. Knarig called on Vasken Ohanyan to present the decision reached by Parish Council.

Vasken Ohanyan informed the Assembly that Parish Council wished to present a motion to donate \$10,000.00 from the church's Reserve Fund for "Armenian Winter Relief." Charles Pinajian seconded the motion, with a stipulation that the donation be earmarked specifically for the purchase of fuel. Rex Kachigian supported the motion and asked how this donation will be channeled to Armenia. Dr. Khatchadurian stated that the funds would be transferred through the Diocese as was done last year.

Chairman Joseph Basralian commended the donation and found it most appropriate.

Robert Ishkanian reported there is \$120,000 to \$130,000 in the Reserves, which funds have no allocations. Thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) has to be put into the Community Center Capital Improvement Fund and Van Fund. After the decorations and improvements to the Hall the Church would still have \$80,000 to \$90,000 in reserve. Since the Church will receive donations for the repairs of the Hall, Rose Najarian felt the \$10,000 donation to Armenia is not enough. Sarkis Gabrellian agreed in principle, but said that people should also be donating money to Armenia in a more individualistic manner.

Ara Hourdajian questioned the channeling of funds to a nation under blockade. It was answered that if you pay the price the fuel is available on the black market and will be provided.

Grace Pinajian reminded the Assembly that we are assuming we are going to get donations for the repairs of the Hall, but we are only anticipating this, as we do not know for sure how much in contributions we will receive. Also, the bookings for 1993 are in no way commensurate with those of 1992 and cannot be anticipated to be the same rental incomes for the Hall unless things get better as the year progresses. Since we are dealing with so many unknowns we should consider these important factors.

The motion to transfer \$10,000.00 from the Reserve Fund

to "Armenia Winter Relief" specifically for fuel as soon as possible, was presented for a vote and passed unanimously.

Assembly Chairman Joseph Basralian thanked Chairperson Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian and all outgoing Parish Council Members, especially for keeping the parishioners together through such difficult times.

The Nominating Committee reported the final results of the balloting. The following persons were elected for the 1993 - 1995 term -

PARISH COUNCIL
Sarkis Bedevian
Leon Bedigian
Rex Kachigian
Arthur Ohnikian
Jan Royland
Dennis Tarzian

Richard Tomasian
(Alternate)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Katherine Ohnikian

Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian
(Alternate)

AUDITING COMMITTEE
Jacques Tossounian

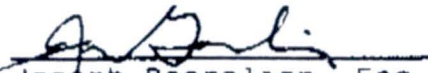
Leon Hovsepian
(Alternate)

There were requests to expedite the approval of newly - elected members by the Diocese as soon as possible.

The 1993 Parish Assembly was adjourned at 2:30 PM with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,


Arda Kiljian
Recording Secretary
1993 Parish Assembly


Joseph Basralian, Esq.
Chairman
1993 Parish Assembly


Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian
Parish Council Chairperson