

Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

Executive Summary of the Standing Committee (SC) Meeting of September 13, 2023 On Zoom

Present: Miguel Briones, Daphne Cody, Toni Daniels, Jeannette DeFriest, Gerald Floyd, Bishop Paula Clark

Absent: Wes Kimes (traveling)

A quorum being established on Zoom, Toni called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and Jeannette opened with prayer.

Minutes

Miguel moved and Gerald seconded the approval of the minutes and the executive summary of the regular monthly meeting of August 9, 2023. *Motion carried.*

Bishop's Report

The bishop reported that the episcopal residence of the former bishop has been put on the market, and buyers are showing interest in it. Meanwhile, she has moved near St. James Commons to a temporary apartment for three months while searching for a new permanent episcopal residence.

Next, the bishop offered her current thoughts about raising up new clergy in our diocese. First, she believes that we ordain people for the whole church, not just to fill job openings. Sometimes some of our best priests come from other places, and sometimes our priests go elsewhere. She noted that she's been our bishop for a year, and she's yet to have ordained anyone, although there is now an ordination on the calendar for November 1, and more postulants and candidates being raised up now. She's not planning to stop the flow! Second, the bishop reminded us that the report from the task force on the diaconate is forthcoming, and that report will lay out more recommendations for that order. Third, the bishop commented on the slowing of interest in ordained ministry in general in our society. With that in mind, we may look more closely at older vocations (people closer to age 72) than previously.

Gerald asked about making the church accessible to more people and thereby creating space for younger vocations. The bishop agreed, pointing out such as examples as physical limitations and the reading level of our worship being barriers. Daphne asked who would speak to our aspirants for holy orders about the changing realities of parish priesthood, such as half-time rectorships. The bishop noted that we have jobs available but they are in rural and small-town settings, and may not be full-time. The bishop said that she names those realities when she talks with nominees for the priesthood.

Finally, the bishop reported that the Budget Committee has finalized a 2024 budget and that the Bishop & Trustees have approved it. The amount to be taken from the Bishop's Funds will be significantly less in 2024 because the Trustees of the Endowment agreed to contribute more to operations in 2024. The Trustees of the Endowment did have a stipulation that they expect the

Endowment to be reimbursed when the property at 65 E. Huron sells. The bishop also mentioned that the bishop's staff trimmed expenses wherever possible. Jeannette reminded the group that while the SC doesn't approve the budget, it is customarily shared with us before being presented at Convention, as a courtesy. Also, the SC is responsible for the compensation package for the bishop which necessarily is related to the budget.

President's Report

Toni reported that there's an October 15 deadline for the SC to submit their annual report to be published in the diocesan official annual report to the Convention. She has asked Daphne to work with her to make a draft. That draft will be sent to SC for review before our October 11 meeting.

Rules of meeting and business ("Group Norms")

(Diocese of Chicago's Constitution & Canons, Article 10, Section 3)

Wes has compiled our ideas into a final summary and put it in the Dropbox. Toni clarified that it's not compulsory for the new SC to use it, but that it's there for them to consider or to use as a base for their own decisions about how they want to operate.

"Selling or Mortgaging Parish Property" Guide

The guide is now ready for public consumption. Toni asked the bishop to describe the guide on the next monthly leadership Zoom call. Toni will also ask Communications officer Jen Boyle-Tucker to link it on the website and to publish the link to it on the weekly e-newsletter. Daphne and Toni will put in the SC annual report too. Jeannette suggested a TV commercial-style short video that could go up on the screen at Diocesan Convention, and she will take the lead. Gerald suggested another channel for getting out the word about the guide: via the deans to the deanery clergy.

The Bishop's Letter of Agreement (LOA)

Toni posted the LOA in the Dropbox and reviewed the question about provisions for the bishop's sabbatical. Daphne moved that the SC amend the bishop's LOA to align with sabbatical policies in LOA's for parish clergy and other diocesan staff by having the eligibility for sabbatical to arise after five years, rather than seven years. Gerald seconded the motion. *The motion carried.*

Another part of the Bishop's LOA involves an annual review of the bishop's ministry. Bishop Paula reaches her one-year anniversary as our bishop this month. Bishop Paula said that she was going to a House of Bishops meeting on September 19 and that she would ask around what some others have done for format and timing and will get back to the SC.

Consents on episcopal elections:

We have one consent before us this month. Daphne moved and Miguel seconded that we consent to the Rev. Canon John T. W. Harmon's election as Bishop of Arkansas. *The motion carried.*

Toni will submit this result via the online consent process.

Neighboring dioceses

Jeannette had requested by email before our meeting that our SC make a pastoral response to our sibling Standing Committees in the Dioceses of Western Michigan and Eastern Michigan upon the abrupt departure of their joint Provisional Bishop the Rt. Rev. Prince Singh. She noted that in Chicago we know how difficult it is to become unexpectedly the ecclesial authority. The Diocese of Western Michigan was already recovering after the abrupt departure of their diocesan bishop the Rt. Rev. Whayne Hoagland not long ago. Toni will draft a pastoral note to the two Standing Committees on behalf of our SC.

Next Meeting & Adjournment

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM in person at St. James Commons.

The bishop closed the meeting with prayer, and Toni adjourned our meeting at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Daphne Cody, Secretary