

DIOCESE OF EASTON
MINUTES OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING
(In-person and Zoom)
May 22, 2023
Diocese of Easton—Bray House

ATTENDANCE

Clergy Members:

The Rt. Rev. Santosh K. Marray, Bishop
The Rev. Deacon Barbara Coleman, 2024
The Rev. Laura Dorsey, 2024
The Rev. Michael Lokey, 2025
The Rev. Deacon Jim Kamihachi, 2026 (Zoom)
The Rev. Dr. Nicholas Sichangi, 2026 (Zoom)

Lay Members:

Linda Hurley 2024 (Zoom)
Nancy Linck, 2024
Florence Adams, 2025
Gordon Fronk, Esq., 2025 (Zoom)
Chrissy Aull, 2026
Granville Blades, Esq., 2026
Kay Ferraro, 2026

Members absent: The Rev. Deacon Peggy Samuels, 2025; Penni Walker Doyle, 2025; James Martinez, 2024.

Adjunct Members attending: Charles Bohn, Diocesan Treasurer; Fred Welsh, Department of Finance Chair (Zoom); John Dragone, Canon to the Ordinary (Zoom).

The meeting was called to order by Council Vice-President, Gordon Fronk. Nancy Linck was appointed Timekeeper. Florence Adams gave the opening prayer and Granville Blades shared his spiritual journey.

The Agenda was approved with the following correction: under Adjournment—the date of the next meeting will be July 24, 2023.

The minutes of the last meeting were briefly reviewed, having been sent to the members prior to this meeting. A motion was made by Nancy Linck and seconded by the Rev. Barbara Coleman to approve. The motion carried.

The Leadership Conference on March 25, 2023 was discussed with a positive response from those who attended, noting it to have been a good opportunity to be with others from around the diocese, to learn what they are doing and to gain the awareness of how our individual parishes are a part of the whole of the diocese. The Council made suggestions toward continuing such communications, such as having sessions on what it means to be Episcopalian, both as a refresher for some and to help those coming to us from other Christian traditions to learn how we are connected, i.e., parishes to diocese to The Episcopal Church. Further suggestions included the re-establishment of Vestry Training, The Treasurers and Wardens meetings, the Fresh Start program for priests new to our diocese.

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Treasurer's Report/Diocesan Finance Committee

The Treasurer's Report and Notes, the Statement of Revenue and Expenses as of April 30, 2023 were provided prior to the meeting. From his "Treasurer's Notes, Charlie Bohn reiterated the note about the transfer of funds as agreed upon at the last meeting and that the Diocese was still looking for a part time fiancé person to assist Finance Administrator, Megan Timms.

Discussion then ensued related to the potential sale of St. Paul's Hillsboro (present location of the Retreat House) to St. Theika Orthodox Church. Charlie Bohn noted that negotiations remain underway for this sale. The property has been offered for sale, as is, for \$250,000 based on the appraisal amount of \$250,000 (Retreat House—\$200,000; St. Paul's Church building--\$50,000). A survey of the right of way is needed to complete the sale. The cemetery is not included in this transaction—it remains the responsibility of the Diocese.

Mike Lokey, Chair of the Diocesan Property Committee, suggested that proceeds from the sale be made available to the Real Property Committee, in light of its Canon 510.3 (a) (which states, in part, "All bank accounts and other financial resources associated with such property must be transferred to the Treasurer of Convention and be made available to the committee for ongoing expenses and improvements."). This money would greatly help the Property Committee meet its responsibilities to care and maintain the numerous "orphaned properties" of the Diocese, most of which have little or no resources to pay for the needed care and maintenance. Fred Welsh, Chair of the Finance Committee, acknowledged that this will need to be addressed with the Finance Committee.

Bishop Marray then advised Council of the appointment of the Rev. Elizabeth Phillips as a part time Coordinator for Children and Family Development. The newly ordained Deacon was previously appointed to this role but it has been on hiatus this past year while she completed her seminary training. Rev. Phillips will be visiting the parishes to gain insight into needs, etc., in preparation of a job description and Letter of Agreement for the Coordinator position. In addition to her Coordinator position, Rev. Phillips will be assigned as Deacon to St. Philip's Episcopal Church as of July 1. St. Philip's, along with the Diocese, will share in her compensation—1/3 Diocese of Easton; 2/3 St. Philips. Bishop Marray stated that this is not in the present budget but that the Diocese' portion of her compensation can be paid from the Parousia Fund, which started with \$10,00 in 2020 and now has \$75,000, for this first year of

her ministry. Fred Welsh acknowledged this and said this, too, will need to be addressed with the Finance Committee.

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The Revs. Mike Lokey and Barbara Coleman moved and seconded the Treasurer's Report. The motion carried.

The Revs. Barbara Coleman and Laura Dorsey moved and seconded the appointment of Elizabeth Phillips as Coordinator of Children and Family Ministry with the understanding that the Diocese portion of \$6000 for her compensation for this year will come from the Parousia Fund (St. Philips' portion will be \$12,000). The motion carried.

New Business

Diocesan Convention 2024 Update

The 2024 Convention location has been established to be held at Emmanuel Church, Chestertown, MD. Plans are underway and some challenges have surfaced, mainly related to the lack of parking. Emmanuel's Rector, The Rev. Claire Nevin-Field has suggested an alternative spot for the Saturday meeting—Washington College. Rev. Claire has been in contact with the College and she, the Bishop, Megan Timms, John Dragone, Frank St. Amore and Darcy Williams will be attending a meeting there on Wednesday, May 23, 2023 to see how this may work. Should the venue for the business part of the Convention be moved to a different location, the Friday night Eucharist will still be held at Emmanuel.

Bishop Marray also advised that the date of the Convention will need to be moved from the first Saturday in March, as normally held, to February 24, 2024. This is due to the House of Bishops' Spring gathering conflicting with the March date.

(Bishop Marray via email on 5/25/2023 advised Council and Standing Committee that this meeting proved informative and productive regarding the use of the facility and that the facility "would fulfill all the requirements for a fruitful and productive convention." The dates, however would have to change to the second Saturday in March, 3/9 rather than the last Saturday in February to accommodate Washington College's availability and Bishop Marray's attendance at the house of Bishops on the first Saturday of March)

Bishop Marray further advised that the Diocese and the Convention planning Committee are looking into suggestions to improve the flow and activities of the Convention. Among these is the suggestion that the Resolution and Reports portions

of the Convention be presented via Zoom, the Wednesday or Thursday evening prior to the Convention; any voting could be easily handled as we have previously done so via Zoom.

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Meeting and Resolution about Retreat House request

As referenced in the Treasurer's Notes, Charlie Bohn reported on a meeting held on May 4th to discuss a request from the Retreat House for reimbursement of some expenses. The Retreat House had provided a list of those expenses for which they were seeking reimbursement. Upon review of the requests, many if not most of the expenses had already been paid by the Diocese. It was suggested, and the consensus of those present, to offer a present to The Retreat House of \$40,000, acknowledging their contribution to the Diocese rather than get involved in any kind of dispute over the requested reimbursement. The amount offered being a bit more than the potential reimbursable items. Council is asked to approve the request which, as detailed in the report provided by the Treasurer, would come from the unrestricted funds of St. Paul's-Hillsboro. A formal resolution was presented.

The Rev. Mike Lokey made a motion to approve the requested \$40,000 gift to the Retreat House. The Rev. Laura Dorsey seconded the motion. The motion carried. The resolution was signed at the meeting by the Bishop, President of the Diocesan Council and the Rev. Laura Dorsey, Secretary of the Diocesan Council.

Resolution on the Bishop's Sabbatical Funds

Also as referenced in the Treasurer's Notes, approval is requested of the Council to use the Bishop's remaining professional expense funds, not to exceed the total budgeted amount of \$5,000, for his use during his upcoming sabbatical. A formal resolution was presented.

Granville Blades, moved the approval of this request; it was seconded by Nancy Linck. The motion carried. This resolution was signed at the meeting by the Bishop, President of the Diocesan Council and the Rev. Laura Dorsey, Secretary of the Diocesan Council.

Convention 2024 focus

Bishop Marray spoke about steps to consider, reflect, re-interpret what the diocese has accomplished and how we can improve for our future, perhaps shift the conversation a little in light of our time with Bishop Sean Rowe on March 25, 2023. It was suggested that our theme for next year's convention might be along the ideas of Bishop's Rowe—Re-emergence and Resurrection.

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Task Force on Trinity Cathedral

Bishop Marray advised that the task force has been established. (Subsequent to this meeting, Bishop Marray sent Council Members a report on May 23, 2023 providing the following list of members of the Diocesan Task Force on Trinity Cathedral:

The Right Rev. James “Bud” Shand, Chair
Diane Freestate, Diocesan Standing Committee
Chrissy Aull, Diocesan Council
Larry Steele, Property Committee
Katie Murphy, Trinity Cathedral
Charlie Bohn, Diocesan Treasurer
The Very Rev. Frank St. Amour III, Northern Convention Dean
Jefferson Moak, Diocesan Archivist
An Academic member to be selected by President & Dean of VTS
A member from outside the diocese as soon as identified and agrees to serve
Regan Smith, Ex-officio (Chancellor)
John Dragone, Ex-officio (Canon to the Ordinary)
Bishop Santosh Marray, Ex-officio (XI Bishop of Easton, MD))

Exploratory Committee on Communion Partner with the Anglican Diocese of Kapenguria

The Bishop advised that a committee for this is also being established and acknowledge the Rev. Nicholas Sichangi as its Chair. (Subsequent to this meeting, also on May 23, 2023, the Bishop provided the members with the following members of the:

Diocese of Easton
Exploratory Committee on Communion Partner Relationship
Diocese of Easton and Diocese of Kapenguria, Anglican Church of Kenya

The Rev. Nicholas Sichangi, Chair
Ms Jane Sichangi
The Very Rev. Charlie Osberger
Jessica Steele
Joanne Fisher
The Rev. Barbara Coleman)

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Deconsecration of St. Paul's Church, Marion Station pending the construction of a new edifice

Bishop Marray advised that on the previous Wednesday he was present to deconsecrate St. Paul's-Marion Station Church pending its being torn down. The Rev. Mike Lokey, rector of St. Paul's-Marion Station advised that the congregation is currently meeting in the Parish Hall and that they are in the process of getting bids for demolition and plans for the reconstruction of a new Church.

Canon to the Ordinary's Report

John Dragone gave his report with he indicated he would send electronically to the secretary for inclusion with these minutes.

Funding Mediation from Presiding Bishop's Office—Title III

Bishop Marray provided three documents to the Council members via email on the morning of this meeting. The documents are a March 23, 2023 letter signed by eleven persons of the diocese addressed to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Easton requesting assistance in the reconciliation of disagreements "affecting the pastoral relations between a Bishop and Diocese" per Title III, Canon 12, section 11 of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church; an April 12, 2023 memorandum from The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Office of Pastoral Development of the Episcopal Church sent to Bishop Marray in response to the "current situation with Fr. Nathaniel Pierce;" and a letter dated May 13, 2023 from the Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves addressed to Bishop Santosh and Father David regarding her proposal to provide consulting work with the Diocese and Bishop.

The Bishop gave historical background from his perspective relating to the letter of March 23, 2023. There was concern about the cost expressed and a lack of understanding of why the request was being made, given the response provided by Bishop Ousley in April to be followed by the proposal from Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves in May. A question was raised about the Standing Committee's response or involvement that was not answered. At this point the meeting was running very late. Vice-President Gordon Fronk concluded the discussion for the evening by saying that more information was needed before a decision could be made.

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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2023 at 6 P.M. The location will be Miller Hall, Trinity Cathedral, or Bray House in Easton, MD.

Respectfully submitted by:

The Rev. Laura M. Dorsey,
At-large Clergy Member, Class of 2024
Secretary to Diocesan Council