

**EASTERN FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH MUSICIANS
Federation Council Meeting Minutes
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
Bethesda, MD
October 28, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by President Paul Mavromihalis at 4:21 pm, who opened with a prayer.

The Roll Call of Delegates was read by Secretary Miriam Kotsonis. 12 Choirs and 11 Board Members were present and eligible to vote. Total voting strength for the meeting was 23.

District I (MD) – Annapolis, Baltimore Annunciation, Bethesda, Falls Church

District II (VA) – Newport News, Richmond

District III (NJ) – Asbury Park, Piscataway, Trenton/Hamilton, Westfield

District IV (Greater PHL) – Broomall, Media

Board Voting Members –Kathryn Athanasoulas, Sondra Awad, Katherine Birnbaum, Katina Doulis, Kay Kehayas, Maria Keritsis, Miriam Kotsonis, Nick Kyrus, Paul Mavromihalis, Fotini Nichols, Pamela Sande

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Miriam summarized highlights of the Minutes of the 2015 Council Meeting, which were distributed in the 2016 Council packets. Sondra Awad moved to approve as written, Pauline Aridas seconded, and the motion was passed by the Council.

President's Report - Paul read his report for the year. He began by remembering our friend, longtime choir director, and EFGOCM District 3 Supervisor, Marie Devino, who fell asleep in the Lord early this year. He continued by extending his appreciation to all those who have helped the EFGOCM by contributing to the website, the First Mode newsletter, and continuing education, as well as those who led and hosted Annual Conferences in 2015 and 2016. He also highlighted EFGOCM representation at the National and Metropolis Clergy Laity Meetings, along with participation in other Federation Conferences. He discussed two successful 2016 Church Music Institutes (CMIs) in Richmond and Broomall. He then announced an upcoming workshop in Westfield NJ on November

13. He reminded attendees that the deadline for the next round of St. Romanos Award nominations is January 31, 2018. He concluded by inviting National Forum Chairman Maria Keritsis to share information pertinent to our Federation.

National Forum Chairman's Report - Maria Keritsis reported that the Camp Hymnal with new English translations had been completed and used by Metropolitan Methodios in his Boston-area summer camp this year. The final Hymnal publication will also include the Doxology, Apolytikia, and a hymn for the optional section titled Plirothito. The final draft has gone to Dn. Anton Vrame and to Metropolitan Methodios, and the Hymnal will be published soon. The companion is a Hymn Series to be published in conjunction with the Department of Religious Education.

The National Forum has given a substantial endowment to Holy Cross Seminary for musical training, both Byzantine and Western, for seminarians. Maria says there is great interest in helping seminarians learn how to preserve their voices, as well as how to chant effectively when both accompanied by a choir using harmonized music and with psaltes. National Forum leadership will be contacting Costa Alexis and Jim Skedros in the near future to discuss the Forum's Endowment and plan of action.

Maria highlighted the request by the Metropolitans that choirs should know more about how to prepare for Hierarchal visits, beyond being familiar with changes in the order of the Liturgy. Maria will be working with the Metropolitans to understand what is most important to them and suggest ways to address this need.

A concern for the National Forum is how best to engage and help the many parishes with choirs that are not members of the Federations, particularly now when the new Liturgical materials are being introduced. How do we help them see the benefits of membership?

Treasurer's Report – The detailed 2016 report in the packet was a response to a request from a Council member in 2015 and will be continued in the future. In Adam Birnbaum's absence, Katherine Birnbaum gave highlights of the Treasurer's Report. She reported a surplus of about \$4,600 in the checking account, as opposed to the actual deficit reported last year. A suggestion was made to use surplus funds to encourage hosting of CMIs and Conferences by reimbursing churches for some of their expenses. This will be considered by the Board. There was a brief discussion of the way in which CMIs are partially subsidized by the National Forum, with a budget of up to \$2,000 per Federation for a two-year period, to be used for reimbursement of clinician travel and fees. The EFGOCM used its full allocation over the planned period. A proposed balanced Budget for FY 2017

was presented and included in Council participants' packets. Hope Demitry moved to approve the Treasurer's Report with Proposed 2017 Budget, Sondra Awad seconded, and the motion was passed.

DISTRICT REPORTS

Paul introduced each District Supervisor: Katina Doulis, District I (MD), Katherine Birnbaum, District II (VA), Kathryn Athanasoulas, District III (NJ), and Pamela Sande, District IV (Greater PHL). The District Supervisors mentioned highlights of the reports, which were included in the packets and therefore not read aloud. There was a request from the floor that members of the Federation should get earlier notice of upcoming concerts and events taking place throughout the Federations.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Scholarship –Chair Maria Keritsis reported that the funds that generate scholarships are invested in equities. We have a stop loss to limit declines to a maximum of 15%. We have been earning 4% to 4.5% interest on our principal, generating \$1500 this year, which is being added to the principal. Details of all account balances are included in the Council Meeting packet. This year, the Committee again selected Elias Kotsis of Holmdel, NJ, to receive a \$1,000 Gallos Scholarship. Elias is continuing his studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Maria requested that all choirs encourage individuals studying music (they do not have to be music majors) to apply for the scholarship, with criteria listed on the EFGOCM website.

Communications – Chair Nick Kyrus reported that the First Mode has been revived by Drucie Papafil and is being sent electronically via ListServ. He polled the group and found that almost everyone present is currently receiving notifications from ListServ. Nick also explained the process for member recognition, started in 2001, and awarded the 10-year certificates during the meeting. For recipients attending the Conference, 25-year certificates would be awarded at the Friday dinner, and 50-year certificates at the Saturday banquet. Other recipients would receive their certificates by mail or from a member of the choir present at the Conference. He urged all present, especially choir directors, to make sure their ListServ entries and rosters are updated.

Administration – Chair Kay Kehayas reported that the deadline for submission of Athenagoras Award and scholarship nominations had been moved up to May 1, beginning in 2017, so that they could be considered at the Spring EFGOCM Board meeting. May 1 will also be the due date for nominations of music for the next Conference under consideration. The Committee is working on updates to the Procedural Guide, created along with the Charter in 2015 from the original Bylaws.

At last year's Council meeting, a request had been made for the Administration Committee to consider amending the music selection process, to allow new music nominations during Council meetings. The Committee evaluated this proposal, ultimately recommending to the Board that the process not be changed. The Board accepted their recommendation. Youth – Chair Sondra Awad reported that she would like to know more about what each church is doing to encourage youth participation in our music. She would like to form a committee of people to discuss and implement options for getting youth more involved through choir and other activities. The Hymnology series is close to publication. She would like input on how best to implement this and integrate it into religious education curricula.

Continuing Education – Chair Miriam Kotsonis thanked the organizers of two very successful CMIs this year in Richmond VA and Broomall PA, and said there would be a workshop on hymnology at the present Conference. Based on the strong interest in online learning and recorded presentations found in the 2015 EFGOCM survey, she is working with the National Forum to establish a web-based learning capability. As the National Forum updates its online presence in 2017, this capability may become more accessible to all the individual Federations.

OLD BUSINESS

Music/Conductor Selection

Nick Kyrus reported on behalf of the Committee.

2017 Music/Conductor

At the 2015 Conference, the Council selected the Gallos IV Liturgy for the 2017 Conference, directed by Nick Kyrus. The host parish will be St. Demetrios, Perth Amboy, NJ, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

2018 Music/Conductor

We anticipate receiving the bid from Richmond within a week. We are deferring the selection of 2018 music and conductor to the 2017 Council meeting, because we anticipate that more composers will publish adaptations of their Liturgies with the new approved English translation between now and then. It was noted that nominations for music and/or conductors for 2018 and 2019 will be due by May 1, 2017.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections

Nominating Committee Chair Virginia Botsis reported that there had been no nominations for officers submitted from the EFGOCM membership prior to

the Council meeting. Current officers were asked to become part of the candidate slate for the term October 2016 – October 2018, and all agreed. President Paul Mavromihalis then polled the Council three times as to whether there were any additional candidates. No additional names were put forth. Therefore, the existing slate was presented for Council vote.

President: Paul Mavromihalis

Vice President: Fotini Nichols

Secretary: Miriam Kotsonis

Treasurer: Adam Birnbaum

Maria Keritsis moved that the slate be accepted, Pam Sande seconded, and the Council accepted the slate of officers by acclamation.

Paul asked that the District Supervisors be elected after adjournment of the Council meeting and reported back to him. The names of District Supervisors for the upcoming term are included as an Addendum to the 2016 Council Meeting Minutes.

Good of the Federation

- Kay Kehayes thanked Paul on behalf of the assembly for organizing the 2016 Conference.
- Members of the assembly commended the idea of reducing price for first-timers and youth. It was also suggested that the information be better publicized, with concern that many people had not seen it.
- Pam recommended that the Conference Committee analyze data from the registration lists to understand better who is coming and encourage more attendance.
- Paul noted that this is the first time that there had been no physical mailings at all for conference registration distribution, an evolution over time. A few years ago this would have been impossible.
- A comment from the floor recommended that an early “Save the Date” notice go out for the Perth Amboy Conference, and that positive advertising be done throughout the year. The registration process should also be simple and user-friendly. The date of next year’s conference in Perth Amboy was announced as October 26-29, 2017.
- Maria Keritsis invited the attendees to look at the National Forum and EFGOCM websites and share with her and with Miriam Kotsonis any ideas about how to make them easier to use. In particular, any thoughts about the Scholarships portion would be of great interest.

Motion to adjourn was made by Virginia Botsis and seconded by Pam Sande. The Council approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Kotsonis
Secretary

Note: Copies of all Reports were published in the October 28, 2016, Federation Council Meeting packet and are attached to the original Council Minutes.

ADDENDUM:

Results of the District Supervisor elections as reported to Paul Mavromihalis on October 28, 2016 were:

District 1 (MD) Faye Hayes

District 2 (VA) Alexa Garrison

District 3 (NJ) Kathryn Athanasoulas

District 4 (Gtr PHL) Pamela Sande

The four District Supervisors, along with the Officers and other Board members, took the Oath of Office on Sunday, October 30, 2016.