

## **Budget adopted with significant cuts in program and diocesan askings**

By Mary Frances Schjonberg

(*Episcopal News Service*) The 76th General Convention adopted a \$141 million budget for 2010-2012 on July 16 that asks for less money from dioceses and drastically reduces church-wide spending by \$23 million.

The House of Deputies spent approximately three hours debating the budget and rejecting all attempts to change its revenue or expense categories. The budget was then passed on a voice vote and sent to the House of Bishops which concurred without debate.

[Program, Budget and Finance](#) (PBF) committee Vice Chair and Connecticut Bishop Andrew Smith presented the budget's enabling [Resolution D067](#) to the bishops. Diocese of Western Kansas Bishop James Adams immediately called the question, which is used to end debate, and the house agreed. The bishops then approved the budget by voice vote.

The Rev. Renee McKenzie-Hayward (Pennsylvania), one of four deputies who spoke as members of the convention's black caucus, began that house's debate on the morning of July 16 by asking deputies to pass the budget "in the spirit of ubuntu" and to do so without fear.

"We acknowledge the pain that this budget brings, but let us also acknowledge the opportunities that God may be showing us," she said. "For we as children of the African diaspora know a little something about surviving in adversity. When we have no more, we do more."

The deputies had no stomach for adding money to the budget, despite repeated attempts to do so in six categories. David Abbott (East Carolina) at one point called it "less than totally responsible" to amend the budget.

"This committee has labored for over 60 hours ... with complete transparency, agonizing to tears over the decisions they have made," he said. "We must trust our committee. We cannot micromanage our budget, and I urge you, as I intend, to vote against each and every amendment to this budget."

Some church-wide programs will be eliminated under the budget, encouraging more mission work to take place in dioceses and congregations. At least 30 of the 180 people employed by the Episcopal Church in its New York and regional offices could lose their jobs.

The next General Convention could be two days shorter, and interim church bodies will meet face-to-face less frequently during the triennium. The Episcopal Church's provincial contribution to the budget of the Anglican Communion Office would decrease by a third.

PBF restored a budget line item dedicating 0.7 percent of income to U.N. Millennium Development Goals work that had been cut from a draft version of the budget, and added a corresponding percentage for domestic-poverty initiatives.

PBF's proposal predicts total triennial income of \$141,271,984, with \$79,161,193 coming from the dioceses and \$27.6 million from investment income. Expenses are budgeted at \$140,856,531. Those figures compare with the projected bottom line of the current 2007-2009 triennial budget of \$164,863,529 in revenue and \$163,934,334 in expenses.

In January, the church's Executive Council approved a [draft 2010-2012 budget](#) based on \$161,820,613 in revenue and \$161,791,177 in expenses.

### **Vote ends with prayer for those losing jobs**

After the deputies approved the budget, the Rev. Ann Fontaine (Wyoming) called for "a moment of silent prayer for all the staff that will be axed, that they might find healing and hope." The Rev. Francis Wade (Washington), the house's chaplain, led the deputies in prayer "for those who bear great

responsibilities for that which we have chosen to do in this budget and for those who bear great burdens for what we have chosen not to do in this budget."

The bishops' chaplain, Brother Geoffrey Tristram, SSJE, noted the budget's impact during his prayers that closed that house's July 16 legislative work. He called on the bishops to pray for those Episcopal Church employees "whose positions have been eliminated or significantly reduced by passage of this budget; we hold them in our hearts."

"We also hold in our hearts those in Episcopal Church employment whose positions will assume additional burdens and stress due to budget shortfalls in this next triennium," he prayed. "We give thanks for all of the decisions and hard work by PBF. We give thanks for their commitment and their wisdom and their courage."

### **Efforts to restore \$5 million in program and administration defeated**

The deputies' debate was unusual. Instead of debating the entire budget, the house agreed to debate separately the budget's sections covering funding, program expenses (generally ministry and mission), corporate expenses (administrative support of the church center) and canonical expenses (offices of the Presiding Bishop and the president of the House of Deputies, in addition to General Convention and interim bodies). The entire budget was later approved on a single voice vote.

During their two legislative sessions July 16, deputies rejected proposed amendments to:

- add \$51,000 to the staff line in House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson's portion of the budget by reducing a line item for strategic planning in Chief Operating Officer Linda Watt's office (and rejected an attempt to reconsider their vote);
- add \$250,000 for a study on whether to move the Episcopal Church Center out of New York by taking a like amount from the General Convention Office's budget;
- add \$1.25 million to the revenue line for Episcopal Life to reflect circulation and advertising revenue that would be earned by the monthly newspaper during 2010 until a study on the newspaper's future (called for in Resolution D037, which was rejected that same morning by the bishops) could be completed, and to add a comparable amount to expense lines;
- add up to \$3 million from the church's short-term reserves to restore funding for the new development office (meant to raise major financial gifts to the church);
- add \$180,000 to restore funding for the Office of Women's Ministry; and
- add \$270,000 to restore funding for the racial justice office.