Cotter Schools Board of Directors
October 29, 2024

Board Members present: Amy Donnenwerth, Barry McRaith, Kurt Knuesel, Ann Renk, Tom DeMarais, Shelley Stewart, Andrew Kieffer, Father McNea, Father Russ, Mary Eileen Fitch, and Dawn Guzzo

Board Members not present: Jennifer Miller Gutierrez, Erica Jerowski, and Father Arens

Mary Eileen introduced Katie Kinneberg, a 4k Cotter teacher. She is enrolled in the Christ the Teacher Leadership program through St. Mary's University and was present at our meeting for the purpose of observation for an assignment.

Board Chair, Amy Donnenwerth, called the meeting to order at 7:32 am. Father Russ led our prayer.

Agenda**:** There was a review of the 10-29-24 Agenda. Barry McRaith made a motion to approve the Agenda; Fr. McNea made a second. Motion passed.

The following Minutes were reviewed:
Board of Directors minutes (9-24-24)
Committee Minutes:
Governance (10/8/24)
Operational Vitality (10/22/24)

Barry McRaith made a motion to approve the Minutes; Fr. McNea made a second. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Operational Vitality Committee:
Our Committee Chair reported that Slaggie Capital joined our October Operational Vitality meeting and presented their 3rd quarter report. It was previously reported that Slaggie Capital would have the entirety of the HEF funds invested in long-term plans by the end of July, however, due to a cautionary approach, that process did not happen. The remainder of the funds will likely be fully invested by year-end. Our HEF, Operating and Scholarship Funds are all meeting or beating their benchmarks. It remains hopeful that we will receive the Slaggie Foundation Tuition Endowment gift by year-end.

Our Chair also reported that our food service is progressing in a way that we should not lose any money this year. Due to some Business Office staffing issues, our Audit process had some slight delays. There have been some new hires and the Business Office is well on its way to being caught up.

Governance:
The Governance Chair reported that during our last meeting we covered some of the logistics for our upcoming Board Retreat on December 6. He also reported that there was some conversation as to potential research on utilizing a different source, other than the Diocese, for our employee health insurance and benefits.

Mary Eileen also reported that we have had potential employees turn down employment offers once they reviewed our benefits package. She did inquire with the metro Catholic schools and was advised that they provide independent benefit packages to their employees and are not a part of their Diocese benefits program. It was suggested that our Business Office inquire with a broker to help us find the best possible program allowing us to compare it with our current benefit plan offering.

Mary Eileen reported that some of our major benefactors would be joining our board retreat for a brief time giving them an opportunity to meet our board and to mutually discuss Cotter's future goals.

Mission Effectiveness:
Our Mission Effectiveness Committee Chair reported that although there was no committee meeting this month, there were several sub-committee meetings and that the Strategic Plan work continues.

President's Report: The confidential President's Report had been posted for the board to review and Mary Eileen made the following comments at today's meeting:

- Our 7-12 Principal, Dave Forney, will be retiring at the end of the academic year. We will be posting for the position in November and leave the post open for several months. Ideally, we would like to conduct interviews and fill the position in the spring.

- The Residential Enrollment Program remains a high priority topic. Efforts continue to analyze the exact costs of the program. We also continue to project the consequences if we only accept those students who are able to pay an average of 80% tuition costs. We will provide more data for further discussion at our next Operational Vitality meeting and the board will be updated at our November meeting.

- The Wanek Educational Foundation Group, connected to Ashley Furniture, together with another one of our benefactors, will be visiting Cotter tomorrow to meet with our STEM Team. They have already made a generous donation, but may be interested in investing further with us.

- Founder's Day – Sister Judy, while President here at Cotter, did a wonderful job planning events to celebrate Founder's Day. We believe that it is important to continue these traditions in an effort to educate our students about Cotter's history, and in particular, about the founders and benefactors that have supported and made Cotter the school that it is today. We also want to inspire and impress upon our students that philanthropic efforts and support must be passed down from generation to generation. On November 19, two students each from Grades 4-12 are going to participate in a wreath laying ceremony at Bishop Cotter's gravesite in honor of his November 19 birthday. Further recognition events will be planned throughout the course of the academic year.

- St. Teresa Alumni Association – They have shown us incredible amounts of support and appreciation that our campus remains a place of Catholic Education. They have loved witnessing all of the improvements that our campus has experienced these last several years. Although the Association is in the process of dissolving, they still hope to be a presence of support on our campus.

- Lourdes Hall – We have heard that the property will eventually be reappraised. In the event that the adjusted asking price is considerably less than the present one, Cotter may have an interest due to its location in the center of our campus. We will update the board in the event the option to purchase becomes practical.

- Advancement – The Fall Appeal was sent out later than anticipated, however, we remain hopeful that it is a successful campaign. Some board members advised that they would be more than willing to join tours and get-togethers with prospective donors if our Advancement Director would find this helpful.

Amy thanked everyone for attending our meeting today. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Guzzo, Secretary