Cotter Schools Board of Directors
January 28, 2025

Board Members present: Amy Donnenwerth, Barry McRaith, Kurt Knuesel, Shelley Stewart, Andrew Kieffer, Jennifer Miller Gutierrez, Father McNea, Father Russ, Mary Eileen Fitch, and Dawn Guzzo

Board Members not present: Ann Renk, Father Arens, Erica Jerowski, Tom DeMarais

Board Chair, Amy Donnenwerth, called the meeting to order at 7:33 am. Father Russ led our prayer.

Agenda**:** There was a review of the 1-28-25 Agenda. Barry McRaith made a motion to approve the Agenda; Kurt Knuesel made a second. Motion passed.

The following Minutes were reviewed:
Board of Directors minutes (11-26-24)
Committee Minutes:
Mission Effectiveness (1/10/25)
Operational Vitality (12/10/24)
Operational Vitality (1/21/25)

Barry McRaith made a motion to approve the Minutes; Jennifer Miller Gutierrez made a second. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Operational Vitality Committee:
Our Committee Chair reported that Slaggie Capital joined our January Operational Vitality meeting and presented our 3rd quarter investment reports. We continue to hit or outperform our benchmarks.

Mary Eileen reported that all Vision 2020 pledges are now in. The Slaggie Family completed their tuition assistance endowment pledge in December. The previously donated HEF endowment funds have been fully invested. The recently donated Slaggie Funds remain in an interest bearing account, but will be transitioned to long-term investments over the next few months.

Governance:
The Governance Committee Chair reported that our next meeting is in February. We will be able to comment further on our survey data from our board retreat at that time.

Mission Effectiveness:
The January Minutes were posted for the board to review and the Board was invited to ask questions. It was reported that our committee members and sub-committee members continue to work on Year Three Strategic Planning Goals and are happy with the progress being made.

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:

- Academics: Testing for Pre-K through Grade 8 happens three times a year. We are currently in our Winter testing session. Mary Eileen was able to report that one portion that has been completed in Grades K-2 has shown incredible progress from the Fall testing. We believe that this is a strong testament of the Believe In Read and LTRS programs that have been instituted.

- Administration: The Principal position is currently listed and we are currently reviewing the applicants as they come in. Our goal is to potentially start interviewing at the end of February or beginning of March.

- St. Nicholas: We have hired new teachers for the Montessori program at St. Nicholas. They are currently in training right now. The Toddler Room will likely start in the summer, while the Children's House will likely start in the fall. Marla Kuchler, our Main Square Montessori Director, will assist Christine and help monitor this program. To clarify, our families at St. Nicholas Hall will have the option of enrolling in the Montessori program or our traditional Pre-K programs.

- St. Teresa Update: Construction work continues at St. Teresa on floors three and four. In early March, construction work will begin on floors one and two to help ensure that the work is done by August so that everyone can be moved back in to start the new school year. Our Board Meetings will be relocated to either a room at St. Joseph or the third floor of St. Nicholas. Dawn will keep everyone updated.

- Catholic Schools Week: Mary Eileen took the time to thank our board directors for all of their time and commitment to Cotter Schools. After many hours of planning, we will be having our CSW Mass this Friday with all of our K-12 students attending.

- Mission Integration: Several of our students at the elementary level have asked about receiving sacraments from the Catholic Church, although their parents may not be Catholic or may no longer be practicing the faith. St. Luke teachers and staff, together with Father Russ, hosted a meeting and approximately 30 adults attended to learn more about the process. We are very excited about the interest that is being shown.

- Lourdes Hall: A new appraisal amount has been released. Per state protocols, state government agencies have a two week period to make an offer. Once the two week period is over, it can then be open to the public for bids. We are expecting this two week period to expire any day and as previously mentioned, have a strong interest in acquiring this property due to its central location on our campus.

  We are unaware what outside interest, if any, there will be with this property. In the event that an offer has to be submitted in a timely manner, Jennifer Miller Gutierrez made a motion that the board approve a purchase price up to $2M. Barry McRaith seconded this motion and the motion passed by the Board. In the event that the bid amount needs to exceed $2M, Mary Eileen will communicate with the board for approval. Mary Eileen assured the board that we would keep them posted on any developments.

- Winona State University: President Ken Janz and Vice President Jon Olson have met with Mary Eileen on two occasions for conversation as to a potential joint project for field development that would benefit both WSU and Cotter. Concerns were voiced as to the potential conflicts when needing shared field space especially due to our growing enrollment and additional teams that we now have. Mary Eileen will communicate these concerns with WSU.

Amy thanked everyone for attending our meeting today. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Guzzo, Secretary