**Cotter Schools Board of Directors**
**April 29, 2025**

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

Board Members not present: Jennifer Miller Gutierrez, Kevin Gorman

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

Agenda**:** There was a review of the 4-29-25 Agenda. Barry McRaith made a motion to approve the Agenda; Andrew Kiefer made a second. Motion passed.

The following Minutes were reviewed:
Board of Directors minutes (3-25-25)
Committee Minutes:
Governance (4-8-25)
Operational Vitality (4/22/25)

Tom DeMarais made a motion to approve the Minutes; Ann Renk made a second. Motion passed.

*Committee Reports*:

**Operational Vitality Committee**:
Our Committee Chair reported an overview of the quarterly meeting with Slaggie Capital. Our endowment numbers had remained on track through March, however, due to the tariff announcements and volatility of the markets, that was not the case in April. The current plan is to wait it out.

Our Committee Chair also shared that our Audit is still not complete, but should be completed by the deadline in May. There have been several hiccups attributed to the switch over from Quickbooks to Skyward programming. Although there are some learning curves this year between our Business Office and our Auditor, we are hopeful that next year's audit should be more efficient and timely.

**Governance**:
The Governance Chair reported that we spent time at our last meeting discussing the President evaluation process. Following the board meeting today, the board will go into Executive Session to discuss the President's evaluations.

Ann Renk has done great work as an Advancement Consultant and will become a Cotter employee at some point this summer. Due to our by-laws, unfortunately, she will need to leave our Board.

Also, Father McNea will be leaving our Board after our June meeting due to his transfer to Mankato beginning July 1.

We are looking to potentially add one or two new members this year. Several names were reviewed by the present board. Members were encouraged to reach out to Mary Eileen if they had any comments or concerns with the suggestions put forth. Mary Eileen will then reach out to prospective candidates to engage potential interest and their availability to serve.

**Mission Effectiveness**:
There was no meeting during the month of April and no report at this time. Mission Effectiveness will be preparing a year-end Strategic Plan Summary for both the Board and our Cotter teachers and staff. The summary will be available at the May meeting.

**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:

- Cotter Auction: Mary Eileen thanked everyone who was able to attend the Cotter Auction. We are receiving a lot of positive feedback and early numbers look like we may have increased our fundraising over last year's numbers.
- Residential Enrollment: This remains a point of concern as our numbers will be significantly lower next year. Our Residential Enrollment Director submitted a 30-day notice last Thursday and we will need to hire a replacement for this position. It was suggested that we form a small committee and schedule a meeting to specifically address the feasibility and potential future plans for the Residential Enrollment program. Dawn will be in touch with interested board members in the coming weeks to schedule a meeting.
- Enrollment: We continue to accept new local students in many of our grade levels. We would be anticipating an increase in numbers for the coming year, however, with the sizable decrease in residential enrollment, our numbers will likely be close to the same as this year.
- Lourdes Hall: We have submitted a revised bid for Lourdes Hall. It is our understanding that Winona State will meet today to review all bids and select the bid that is most beneficial to them. We are hoping to hear an answer yet this week. We will alert the board via email as to any information that we receive.
- High School Principal selection: Mary Eileen advised the Board of the lengthy interview process that took place over the course of the last couple of weeks. We have offered our internal candidate the position of Jr. High Principal and have offered one of our external candidates the position of High School Principal. We will provide more information to the Board at the May meeting once offers have officially been accepted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 a.m.

The Board then moved into Executive Session to discuss the President's evaluations. Mary Eileen Fitch and Dawn Guzzo left the meeting at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Guzzo, Secretary