

GRACE Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2020
2:00-4:00 p.m.
Virtual – Google Meet

Members present: Bishop David Ricken, Fr. Dan Felton, Todd Blahnik, Bill Micksch, Fr. Peter Ambting, O.Praem., Fr. Brian Belongia, Fr. Patrick Beno, Sr. Marla Clercx, ANG, Andrew Cribben, O.Praem., Fr. Antonio de los Santos, Fr. William Hoffman, Fr. Michael Ingold, Fr. Robert Kabat, Fr. Jose Lopez-Vargas, Fr. James Lucas, Deacon Jeff Prickette, Fr. Tom Reynebeau, Fr. Mathew Simonar, Deacon Paul Umentum, Fr. Mark Vander Steeg

Others present: Kim Desotell, Gerry Faller, Marv Wall, Lori Ashmann-Recorder

Members not present: Deacon Kevin DeCleene, Abott Gary Neville

- Call to Order and Opening Prayer: Bishop Ricken called the meeting to order with an opening prayer.
- Agenda Review and Approval: Motion made by Fr. Vander Steeg and seconded by Fr. Ingold to approve the agenda with the addition to address a communication from St. Mary of the Angels Parish. Motion carried.
- Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Fr. Vander Steeg and seconded by Deacon Prickette to approve the April 1, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion carried.
- Opening Remarks: Bishop Ricken provided opening remarks of encouragement and gratitude during this time of pandemic.
- Office of Catholic Schools Update: Todd Blahnik reported on handling of COVID related matters throughout the schools. Positivity of cases is minimal and compliments on mitigation efforts have been extended from local health departments. The quality of education remains at a high standard in a safe environment. Gratitude is extended to all teachers and staff for ongoing efforts. One attribute that has remained steadfast throughout the year is flexibility.
- GRACE President's Report: Kim Desotell presented her report and highlighted the following.
 - Enrollment: Enrollment status for school year 2020-21 was summarized including that involving those families who selected the Our Lady of Grace Virtual Academy and those that enrolled at Trimester 2.
 - Learning Growth: A COVID Learning Response Team has been formed to analyze student learning challenges and opportunities. The team and its efforts were outlined.
 - Fundraising: Schools continue site-based fundraising efforts enlisting different approaches. Successes are being encountered. These activities also promote a sense a community which is much needed at this time of pandemic.
 - Day of GRACE: The first annual day of giving, titled "Day of Grace", will take place on February 3rd. Funds raised from this all-day giving campaign will support tuition assistance and learning technology.
 - Chesterton Academy: Preparations continue for the launch of the high school in fall 2021 with ninth grade. A silent support campaign is taking place. An informational virtual event on classical education will take place on December 3, 2020 and the details including connection link was shared.
 - Ten Year Anniversary: A commemorative anniversary prayer book is under development. This book will be gifted to families and supporters at the conclusion of the school year.

Gratitude was extended to the Board of Directors for their support. Discussion followed concerning the Notre Dame School of De Pere building for which an update was provided by Marv Wall. In addition, Gerry Faller provided an overview of the System Offices move to 1822 Riverside Drive.

- GRACE Board of Trustees Report: Bill Micksch presented:
 - Strategic Plan: Progress continues with Focus Areas and Action Plans; however, the Facilities initiative is on hold due to COVID.
 - GRACE Parish Investment Task Force: Deacon Jeff Prickette reported on the Taskforce's work to date. The group has met twice and is comprised of the following: Fr. Reynebeau, Fr. Cribben, Fr. Lopez-Vargas, Gerry Faller, Fr. Kabat and Deacon Prickette. Discussion ensued regarding elements and directives from the October 29th Summit including in part, processes to bring forward and address a parish concern, data clarification involving annual receipts, communication, rent and janitorial/maintenance. It was agreed that objectives of the task force will be recaptured. Fr. Felton and Fr. Vander Steeg will meet with Gerry Faller. Bishop Ricken directed an overall review of shared responsibilities and requested that Todd Blahnik and Dean Gerondale be involved in continued efforts.

- Financial Report:
 - 2019-20 Last Year: Gerry Faller presented the Wipfli Auditor's Report 2019-20 and reviewed the accompanying Treasurer's summary. Highlights from the Audit Report were provided. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding was reviewed, and it is now in audit. Marv Wall added that the audit resulted in clean opinion and a management letter was not issued by Wipfli. Motion made by Fr. Reynebeau and seconded by Fr. Ingold to approve the 2019-20 Wipfli Auditor's Report as presented.
 - 2020-21 Current Year. Gerry Faller reviewed the current financials ending October 31, 2020. Review of PPP received and used summarized with resultant action not yet known as is in audit. Discussion followed regarding projections.
 - Analysis Documents: Gerry Faller presented the GRACE Key Financial Metrics and Comparison Revenue and Expenses Pie Charts from 2011-12 to 2019-20. Review was completed. Gerry Faller is intentionally reaching out to parish business managers with the graphics to provide them data on the financial progress.

- Other: Deacon Umentum referenced the St. Mary of the Angels Parish communications to the Board from May and July requesting reduction in parish subsidy. Discussion ensued. As previously discussed, a process is to be established involving procedure, research and factual data. A reduction request of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish will be submitted in writing to the Board by Sr. Clercx. Due to ongoing implications, requests presented as information at this time with further developments to take place by the Parish Investment Task Force. Further work by the Task Force should also include short- versus long-term avenues and consideration of the assessment of the parishes by Notre Dame Academy.

- Bishop Ricken's Closing Remarks: Bishop Ricken expressed gratitude for the collective efforts to work on a solution involving parish investment which requires flexibility. Prayers to continue for an end to COVID and its devastating effects. The Diocese is committed to helping others and is concerned for health care workers nationally. Appreciation was extended for the care and special responses by priests and pastoral leaders to all, serving as loving shepherds of the people giving hope and keeping our eyes on Jesus as our church is a ship in turbulent waters.

- Adjournment: Bishop provided a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

Next meeting: April 28, 2021, 2:00-4:00 p.m.