La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women,

April 15,2023, Queen of the Apostles Church in Tomah

Meeting called to order at 9 a.m. Present were: President Susan Tully, P[resident Elect Marie Fleisner, Vice President Candace McGrath, Treasurer Debbie Wolfe, Immediate Past President, Melanie Frey, Spiritual Advisor Father Eugene Wolf, Parlimentarian Monica Gornicke, Historian Julie Brindle, and Secretary Kay Kesler

Commission chairs present : Kathy Herfel, Spiritual, Janet Amundson, Pro-life Liaison, Bonnie Langrek NCCW table coordinator.

Deaneries present: Arcadia: Janet Amundson, Chippewa Falls: member at Large: Jean Felber; Durand, Kathy Herfel; La Crosse: Kay Kesler member at large; Marshfield Marie Fleisner; Richland Center: Candace McGrath, treasurer; Stevens Point Debbie Wolfe; Thorp: Bonnie Langrek member at large;

Tomah: Kay Dougherty, and Wausau: Natalie Goeden.

Excused were Tony Lenzendorf, president; Carol Wildenberg Eau Claire.

A quorum was declared to be present.

Father Wolf, our Spiritual Advisor, reminded us all that God most often does not speak in a booming voice, but in whispers. Father also shared that he will not be going to the National Convention this year, he is observing his 60th anniversary of his ordination. He shared that his home parish of Wilton will have a special celebration for him at the church on May 21,2023.  He shared that the daughter of the lady that organized his ordination party at the church, is now heading up his 60th anniversary celebration at the same church.

Debbie Wolfe,treasurer, presented the treasurers report. The St. Ambrose savings has $90,765 in it. The checking account has $9,752.80.. Debbie has not written any checks out to honor current budget allocations, there are about $23,000 in checks to be written out, so she will borrow $30,000 from savings to do that.

President Susan Tully says we need to encourage younger women to join and welcome them. She ask if we should re-brand ourselves, do we need to change and be more relevant and be active to support our sisters. WE need to re-create and re-brand ourselves to attract younger women. The report is due at the  next meeting, July 15, 2023.

Representatives from the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalope spoke in person and by Zoom to ask for a monetary donation to the Shrine and for people to come out and help plant on May 15th. The board voted to give them $1500 for spring plantings.

Deanery reports from Arcadia, Wausau, Richland Center, Thorp, Marshfield, Durand, Tomah, and La Crosse were made along with Leadership and Spirituality  Commission reports. All reports are posted to the website.

Kay Doherty of Tomah Deanery made a motion to donate $1500 to purchase a bench at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalope to honor Father Wolfe on the 60th Anniversary of his ordination. Motion made, seconded and approved. The bench will be by the rosary walk.

Melanie Frei, past president, presented the budget committee’S report :

2022-2023 Budget Committee Proposals

Our Budget Committee has made several MAJOR changes to our budget. Though the actual budget totals are not that different, the method of distributing funds is fundamentally different. These notes explain some of our thinking.

Problems to address:

Several years ago, our LDCCW funded a project called “Safe Haven Sunday” with $17,000. The idea, from the Dept of Family Life, was to provide parents with tools to talk with their children about pornography and to give them tools to protect the “portals” of their homes from this devasting scourge. The money was to print books for each family in the Diocese to begin this initiative. Then, each year, there would be a follow-up weekend in February to continue “Safe Haven Sunday” teaching and tools. Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, the program was completely dropped. No follow-up was planned or executed. The investment we made was not well used. This situation moved us to look more closely at the funds we were sending to the Diocese.

Melanie met personally with Curia members: Jack Felsheim, Ann Lankford, Chris Ruff, Chris Rogers, and (by phone) Chris Carstens.

Though we do receive thank-yous from different departments for money sent, Melanie learned:

•    several chunks of money designated for certain ministries never were given to their budgets.

•    Several gifts did not get to their intended recipients.

•    Some monies went to projects that were, in fact, already well-funded.

•    Monies were going to self-funded activities.

•    Much of what we were supporting in our budget was already being supported by the Diocesan Annual Appeal, so in fact, the ladies were contributing to that at their parishes, and then contributing again with our Council Sunday Collection monies.

To address these issues, the Budget Committee adapted several principles to use when deciding on budget distributions.

1)    We will not fund what is already funded by the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Ladies can choose at their discretion how much they want to give to this fund at their individual parishes. The one exception is Casa Hogar, which does seek funding over and above what they receive from the D.A.A.

2)    Any monies given to Diocesan work will be considered on an annual basis only. The individual departments can submit a request for funding of particular projects—a “one and done,” not to be automatically renewed. The different department heads all seemed to agree that this was reasonable. We received two requests that you will see on the budget to consider: one for gift books to the newly ordained deacons, and one for speaker fee money for special Eucharistic Renewal training.

3)    The greatest part of our budget will now be disbursed through a grant program. Grants will no longer have any “deadlines” for applications. Those who wish to apply for a grant can do it at any time according to their needs. This will enlarge the responsibilities of the Grant Committee, but the Committee will be under the parameters of each grant in requirements and amounts.

4)    All the grant monies will be combined into one fund to be disbursed by the Grant Committee. With the exception of the LDCCW grant, each grant would have a specified amount proposed by the Grant Committee and voted on by the Board of Directors, so applicant knows exactly how much money would be granted.

5)    The amount in the budget for the Grant Fund is what we thought is a reasonable estimate of total grant requests. See column G on the proposed budget.

Grant amount proposals of current grants  (Grant parameters themselves are written by Grant Committee.)

Camp Grant                    $150 each applicant

Fr Wavra Grant                    $1000 each applicant

LDCCW Grant                    various amounts not to exceed $2500.

Human Trafficking Ministry Grant        $1000 each applicant

New grant proposals:

Short term Catholic Mission grant        $300 each applicant

College education grant to specified

Catholic colleges.                $500  each applicant

                                                                      (Franciscan, Ave Maria, St Benedict, St. Thomas Aquinas, others?

                            schools chosen by faculty mandatum and reputation of faithfulness to Catholic doctrine.)

Seminarian Grant                $500  per applicant

Journey Program Grant                $300  per applicant

Ministry to University students            $1000 per chapter

    FOCUS CHAPTERS

    STUDENTS FOR LIFE

    NEWMAN CENTERS

6)    Our future may have less funds to distribute. By shifting our distributions to a grant system, we can adjust grants to lower amounts of money without disrupting budgets that may have come to rely on annual disbursements.

7)    Other items to consider changes: Redistribution of monies for NCCW convention attendance.  NCCW Conventions cost about $1000 (registration, hotel, Province dinner, closing banquet) plus transportation.

Should we fund 12 ladies completely or 20 ladies for $600? or 15 for $800? with perhaps the option of grant monies for those who still cannot pay the remainder?  Will this get more ladies to the Convention?

8)    INCOME CHANGE:  Much higher income for our biennial convention Spring 2023.  Registration cost will be higher, and the convention will be “bigger”.

The budget ( attached) was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourns at 2:30 p.m. the next meeting is scheduled for July 15,2023 at 9 a.m. at the Tomah Knights of Columbus Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Kesler