

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

22 August, 2019

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman
Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary
Mr. Kimball Bobbitt, Treasurer
Ms. Carter Donovan
Ms. Linda Long
Dr. Thomas J. McElheny

Howard G. Crowell, Jr., LTG USA (Ret), Chairman, SMA Foundation Inc.
Frederick M. Derr, CAPT USN (Ret), Treasurer, SMA Foundation Inc.

Absent: F. Steven Herb, Esquire, Vice Chairman; SMA-LTC Dr. Catherine Rodriguez, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus; Dr. Todd Brown, Community Outreach; SMA-LTC Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of School, Middle School; SMA-LTC Ryan Lee, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; SMA-CPT Bryan Burns, Prep Faculty Rep

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Executive Director of Schools
SMA-LTC Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School Campus
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus
LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets – Senior Army Instructor
SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew, Director of Literacy and IB
SMA-MAJ Steve Kok, Director of Finance
SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner, Athletic Director, High School Campus
SMA-LTC Tom Vara, Head of School, Middle School Campus
MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus

Guests: Members of the SMA faculty, staff and PTCC representatives.

SMA-CPT Ashley Wyka, High School Campus; SMA-CPT Jennifer Vanston, High School Faculty Rep, SMA-MAJ Sylvia Gillotte, High School Campus; SMA-MAJ Regina Wolfgang, High School Campus; Ms. Michele Collins, PTCC President, High School; Ms. Terri Derr, Realtor

Location: SMA High School campus. The chairman called the meeting to order at 2:36 pm.

Motion to Approve the Minutes from the 13 June, 2019 meeting:

COL Ben Knisely moved to approve the 13 June, 2019 minutes; Dr. Thomas McElheny seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Executive Director of School Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She provided an update of the current enrollment at both schools. She discussed the Manatee County Bus for both schools are at a max with waiting lists and the results of a survey to Manatee County parents that ninety percent would not be able to attend SMA if a bus was not offered. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned extra funds received towards the Mental Health Allocation Plan and asked the board for approval to allocate extra funds to additional hours for Ms. Sarah Cottrez, school psychologist and to Tidwell Hospice.

Chairman Herb Jones moved to approve the addition of Tidwell Hospice and extra hours to Ms. Sarah Cottrez to the Mental Health Allocation Plan; Dr. Thomas McElheny seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

SMA-COL Bowman stated the new 2019-2020 Employee Handbook has been distributed to the board. The board discussed the new policy changes as well as the nepotism clause.

Dr. McElheny moved to approve the review of the Nepotism section in the 2016-2017 Employee Handbook for clarification of direct or indirect supervision; Ms. Carter Donovan seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

HR Report: SMA-COL Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She stated the abrupt resignations of the band director and Chinese teacher at the high school due to retirement and move to Tampa, respectfully and a long-term substitute at the Prep due to maternity leave. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned the upcoming Open Houses at both schools and a breakfast with participation at both formations for thirty to forty potential donors through the Third Thursday Group of the Community Foundation on 19 September.

SMA Prep Head of School Report: SMA-LTC Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He discussed a great start of the first two weeks and SMA-CPT Deb Walker and Dr. Todd Brown attending National Conferences. SMA-LTC Vara discussed the assessment teams and security throughout Florida at the principals meeting and ensuring every classroom has been visited. He discussed the enrollment this year was very good and Chairman Jones complimented SMA-LTC Vara and the staff to a great year in academics.

Community Outreach Report: Dr. Todd Brown provided a read-ahead report. SMA-COL Bowman thanked Ms. Donovan and Ms. Linda Long for attending the Education Summit and mentioned Sarasota County Superintendent Dr. Bowden was in attendance as well. Ms. Long suggested county wide publicity of the next Education Summit along with pictures and biographies of the presenters. She suggested the need for additional marketing highlighting special events and unique Academy wide programs. Chairman Jones inquired as to whether the personnel to fulfill additional marketing is available in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that she will speak to our third party PR company. Dr. Tom McElheny suggested we obtain a standard distribution list for all publicity and begin forming a relationship with each publication. Ms.

Donovan inquired as to Dr. Brown's job description in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that she will forward the information to her.

SMA Prep Athletics Report: N/A

MYP: SMA-LTC Lisa Currie provided a read-ahead report.

SMA Head of School Report: SMA-LTC Fred Fout provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the enrollment numbers coming in at lower than expected and stated the challenges of retention and a higher percentage from the prep partially due to the facilities and wanting to wear civilian clothes. Dr. McElheny stated there was a need for more information and suggested to brainstorm on decision points of cultural dynamics and high school social atmosphere. Ms. Long and Ms. Donovan agreed that an action plan cannot be in place on generalities and data needs to be compiled on specific reasons. SMA-LTC Vara mentioned Ms. Terri Davis compiled information before school ended from cadets who chose to attend another high school and will breakdown the data even further. SMA-COL Bowman suggested to add to the withdrawal form as to why a cadet is leaving and follow-up with parents by phone.

COL Knisely inquired as to outside reasons cadets are leaving SMA high school in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that district high schools have created specialized programs and specialized charter high schools have now opened to accommodate students and their specific needs which all contributes in the increase in competition. Chairman Jones stated that he would like SMA-LTC Fout and SMA-COL Bowman to report back to the board on changes going forward.

SMA-LTC Fout explained the changes for this school year regarding literacy and the increase in school grade by all ninth graders taking IB Inquiry Skills and tenth graders taking English all year round on an A/B schedule with JROTC. He also explained expanding Algebra to all year for cadets entering at a score of below three on FSA Math and a score of three and above in Algebra 1 in one semester. SMA-LTC Fout stated the goal was to have small classes which was a challenge but accomplished. He stated that science has been realigned to have Environmental Science for ninth graders instead of Biology with Biology in tenth grade.

SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew explained the literacy component with ELA population tripling from previous year and an increase in below a three in reading level. LTG Howard Crowell inquired as to necessary resources to assist cadets in which SMA-LTC Fout replied that USA Test Prep will now be used for English and Math and that the ninth graders have already completed their first benchmark.

SMA-MAJ Sylvia Gillotte discussed the dedication of the teachers and the extra efforts all give to cadets at their free time. She also discussed how the high school has seen drastic changes over the last five years and morale needs to be lifted. SMA-MAJ Gillotte offered to provide the first benchmark data to the board and stated she will assess the cadets every few weeks. SMA-COL Bowman agreed that utilizing the USA Test Prep assessments will allow teachers to track progress with tools to strengthen the areas of weakness.

SMA-CPT Ashley Wyka discussed the change in culture as she is an SMA Alum and stated the need to be consistent in discipline and structure with teachers and cadets. LTG Crowell stated that leadership needs to address the inconsistencies in staff in order to continue with cadets. Dr. McElheny suggested receiving feedback from staff on how and why the culture at the high school

has changed. SMA-LTC Fout stated that his team has recognized the cultural issues and changes are in place such as LTC Weiss walking around with his leadership team to all classrooms to make themselves known as well as wanting to give the department chairs the same ability with their classrooms.

Ms. Donovan stated that this is a pivotal year for the high school in which SMA-MAJ Gillotte agreed due to all the changes that has happened thus far with the new administrative team and their increased presence on campus and after-school activities. Chairman Jones stated that structure and instruction is what is unique at SMA and needs to be a priority.

SMA-LTC Fout mentioned the upcoming athletics and JROTC events and commended SMA-CPT Hellen Harvey for arranging an Award Winning Author, Kyle Prue, for speaking to our cadets at both campuses with signed books.

SMA HS Athletics Report Athletic Director SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the highly qualified coaching staff SMA has this year and their concerns with stipends not matching the county. SMA-MAJ Mazner explained the need for additional support with facilities and sponsors to continue increasing participation in both sports and JROTC activities. She stated that currently there are three hundred and fifty cadets who participate in sports and/or JROTC activity after school and the importance of supporting their growth and culture. SMA-LTC Fout stated that most of the current coaches put their stipends back into their programs to ease the burden for our cadets and SMA-MAJ Mazner thanked SMA-LTC Fout for attending every game. Chairman Jones assured SMA-MAJ Mazner that the board fully understands the importance of after-school activities to the developmental growth of a cadet and procuring a new facility is top priority.

IB Report: SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the challenges of the IB program on a 4x4 block schedule last year and was pleased to announce that this year the program is on an A/B schedule. SMA-LTC Donehew mentioned her goal is to embrace the IB philosophy throughout the entire school and stated that a few studies have proven to be beneficial to the lower performing students. Ms. Long inquired as to the additional resources needed to incorporate IB throughout entire school in which SMA-LTC Donehew replied that most teachers have already been trained in IB and a career program would need to be added that can be incorporated into the JROTC curriculum.

SMA-COL Bowman agreed that the IB pedagogy is good teaching and integrates the curriculum from all core subjects. SMA-LTC Fout discussed the increase in costs due to training and whether the district would be able to provide. He states the IB grading policy lends well with the concept of competency grading mastery that would satisfy the nationwide discussion of the impact of zeroes on students and stated that the change can be accomplished. Chairman Jones suggested Ms. Long, Ms. Donovan and Dr. McElheny visit other wall-to-wall IB schools and provide the board with a report.

SAI/Commandant's Report: LTC Ben Weiss provided a read-ahead report. He stated that the National Defense Act of 2020 has included eighth grade into the JROTC curriculum. LTC Weiss stated that it would not authorize funding yet but eventually will. He discussed the JROTC's role to cadets in teaching ownership and teaching cadets to always take the "hard right" over the "easy wrong".

Staff Representatives: N/A

Treasurer's Report: SMA-MAJ Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the audit financials from last year resulting in a loss and explained the necessary cutbacks and downsizing to balance the budget for this fiscal year. Ms. Donovan suggested showing faculty and staff the budget with revenue and expenses to explain the limitations on items, resources or additional programs they may want in which SMA-MAJ Kok agreed on sharing the financials data.

Dr. McElheny moved to approve the unaudited FY19 budget as the budget of the past; Ms. Donovan seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Ms. Donovan moved to approve the proposed balanced budget for FY20; Dr. McElheny seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Chairman Jones reiterated that revenue only comes from FTE funds and donations so the need to keep enrollment up and to engage families and community to give to SMA.

Mr. Derr introduced Ms. Terri Derr as a realtor in the community. He explained the possibilities in purchasing land out east as well as a lender and builder who have showed interest in a new facility for the high school.

Dr. McElheny moved to present a purchase offer to Wells Fargo; Ms. Long seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

PTCC Report: Ms. Michele Collins provided a read-ahead report. She mentioned the new camouflage hoodies and providing the school 11.5K in grants last year. SMA-COL Bowman thanked Ms. Collins for all her efforts with the PTCC and volunteering daily in the cafeteria.

Foundation, Inc.: Chairman Howard Crowell stated he has engaged in a headhunter to look for professional fundraiser for the Academy.

Committee Reports: SMA-COL Bowman stated a date needs to be set for the Strategic Planning Committee to meet again and the committee agreed it will be on 29 August. Chairman Jones mentioned Dr. McElheny and Ms. Donovan receiving the board assessments. SMA-COL Bowman stated the board is down two positions and Dr. Logan Malone has resigned.

Chairman: N/A

Old Business: N/A

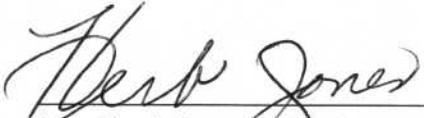
New Business: Ms. Donovan has recommendations to the literature that was distributed in making the SMA 500 Club campaign better. Chairman Jones discussed the change of ranks of each head of school.

COL Knisely moved to promote both heads of school in front of school as COL by SMA-COL Bowman as CEO; Dr. McElheny seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Public Comments: SMA-CPT Jennifer Vanston introduced herself as the new faculty rep for the high school.

Next meeting will be on 12 September, 2019 at 4:30 pm at the Prep campus.

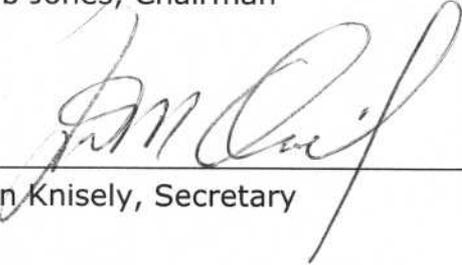
The chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:19 pm.



Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman

9/12/2019

Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

9/12/19

Date