

# **Sarasota Military Academy**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

14 March, 2019

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#### **Board of Director Members' Attendance**

##### **Present:**

Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman  
F. Steven Herb, Esquire, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Kimball Bobbitt, Treasurer  
Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary  
Ms. Carter Donovan  
Ms. Linda Long  
Dr. Logan Malone, RADM USN (Ret)  
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:** Dr. J. Robert Parkinson; SMA-LTC Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School Campus; SMA-LTC Dr. Catherine Rodriguez, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus; SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew, Director of Literacy and IB; SMA-LTC Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; SMA-LTC Ryan Lee, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; SMA-CPT Leslie Smith, Athletic Director, Middle School Campus; SMA-CPT Terri Davis, Staff Representative for Middle School; MSG Johnny Browning, Staff Representative for High School

##### **SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance**

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Executive Director of Schools  
SMA-MAJ Steve Kok, Director of Finance  
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus  
LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets – Senior Army Instructor (SAI)  
SMA-MAJ CJ Bannister, Chief Development Officer, SMA Foundation Inc.  
SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner, Athletic Director, High School Campus  
SMA-LTC Tom Vara, Head of School, Middle School Campus

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

SMA-CPT Ashley Wyka, Staff Representative for High School; Ms. Michelle Collins, HS PTCC President; Ms. Melissa Watrobsky, Prep PTCC

Location: SMA High School campus. The chairman called the meeting to order at 2:33 pm.

**Motion to Approve the Minutes from the 14 February, 2019 meeting:**

COL Ben Knisely moved to motion for the approval of the 14 February, 2019 minutes; Mr. F. Steven Herb seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

**Executive Director of School Report:** SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. SMA-COL Bowman stated a great start to the 2019/2020 enrollment with a high turnout at the enrollment meetings for both schools. She mentioned attending the safety meeting with Sheriff Knight and said she was extremely pleased with both SR2s and will be continuing their contracts for next school year. SMA-COL Bowman stated the partnership will remain between SMA and the Sheriff's Department and will be in compliance by the mandate.

SMA-COL Bowman stated that the Strategic Plan was approved last meeting and will be meeting with SMA-MAJ CJ Bannister to continue with the completion of the plan. Chairman Herb Jones inquired as to the funding that is available for next year in which SMA-COL Bowman explained how it is unclear from the District as to how funds will be disbursed.

SMA-COL Bowman discussed the phenomenal job the teams from both schools had done with the AdvancEd meetings and reported the AdvancEd team stating that our school was the best they've ever seen. She mentioned she will forward the final review once it's received. SMA-COL Bowman discussed her meeting with Mr. Urfer went well along with her luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Williams. Chairman Herb Jones announced SMA-COL Bowman performed amazing as ringmaster at the Circus Sarasota. SMA-COL Bowman stated she will be meeting with Mr. Derr on upgrading the current condition of the new parking lot.

SMA-COL Bowman discussed staffing and salaries as Florida is ranked number five in the nation for the lowest salaries. She mentioned creating incentives for quality hires such as a referral bonus in which Chairman Jones agreed with the need to look into increasing salaries for next year. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned meeting with the charter schools and the district in regards to the funding for next school year.

**HR Report:** SMA-COL Bowman discussed staff replacements to date along with the need for quality hires.

**SMA Prep Head of School Report:** SMA-LTC Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the school-wide "outbreak" was a great success and the news were there to report the enormous efforts as the third year performing. SMA-LTC Vara stated SMA is on the "outbreak" website and also announced the funds raised to place a well in South Sudan is getting worldwide mention. He discussed the continuous improvements the security team is making to secure the campus more efficiently during formation. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned Dr. Todd Brown will be representing SMA at the IB World Conference in New Orleans.

**SMA Prep Athletics Report:** SMA-LTC Vara announced the boys soccer team lost in the county finals by shootouts and the golf team will start after spring break.

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

**SMA Head of School Report:** SMA-LTC Fred Fout provided a read-ahead report. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned the International Heritage week and how wonderful each day was presented with different heritages ending with a live musician for Hispanic Day.

Mr. Kimball Bobbitt mentioned the increase of enrollment for next year. Dr. Tom McElheny inquired as to receiving a three year history with percentages. SMA-COL Bowman stated that SMA-LTC Abby Williams and her team went to the Prep to go over ninth grade schedules as well as doing the same at SSAS.

**SMA HS Athletics Report:** Athletic Director SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner provided a read-ahead report. SMA-MAJ Mazner announced five wrestlers went to States with four that progressed to the next day and one finishing at sixth place. She stated how proud she was of all the cadets. Chairman Jones stated he attended the Winter Sports Banquet and was a great success in which SMA-MAJ Mazner thanked Ms. Long for attending as well.

**IB Report:** SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew provided a read-ahead report. Ms. Melissa Watrobsky announced the Odyssey of the Minds won the regionals with Cadet Aeryn Sachs as their leader for the first time creating a structure made out of fossil wood that could hold 680 lbs. She mentioned States are in April and have a good chance at Worlds.

**SAI/Commandant's Report:** LTC Ben Weiss provided a read-ahead report. He stated the Drill Team having eleven teams that will be represented at States. Dr. McElheny inquired as to how many cadets are interested in the military academies in which LTC Weiss responded one will be going to West Point and one is unsure. LTC Weiss discussed eighteen cadets will be going to West Point after break for pre-admission interviews and stated plans for reaching out to the other military academies for cadets to visit. LTC Weiss honored SFC Riess Pellegrino in his efforts with the Rifle Team and how the team brings in multiple scholarships with three this year receiving scholarships.

**Staff Representatives:** SMA-CPT Terri Davis provided a read-ahead report for the Prep. SMA-LTC Vara discussed meeting with every department chair to review a plan and create suggestions on concerns that were expressed. Ms. Linda Long inquired as to progress made since last board meeting and if the staff are content with the updates and how concerns were addressed. SMA-LTC Vara replied that he was able to address concerns and derive to a solution staff is content with.

SMA-CPT Ashley Wyka stated the only concern is with the electronic policy to extend to banning smart watches as well as cell phones. SMA-COL Bowman stated that Hillsborough County has incorporated smart watches ban into their electronic policy.

**Treasurer's Report:** SMA-MAJ Kok provided a read-ahead report. He stated three areas awaiting information to complete the projections for next year. SMA-MAJ Kok stated the loss of FTE with twenty cadets graduating early in December and is very encouraged with the increase of next year's enrollment numbers.

**PTCC Report:** Ms. Michele Collins provided a read-ahead report. She stated eleven grants were issued for the month of February totaling \$8500. She announced March will be 10K in grants delivered.

Ms. Watrobsky mentioned scholastic books are selling now, the archery club will be at the Prep next year as well as \$500 grant issued thus far.

**Foundation, Inc.:** Chairman Howard Crowell stated that the Foundation's main goal is to raise funds and donors as we are not able to compete with other schools in multiple areas. He stated it is the responsibility of this board and Foundation to provide upgrades and opportunities to compete with other schools. Vice Chairman Jones inquired as to the new voucher programs and how it will impact our school in which SMA-COL Bowman stated that all charter schools will be impacted based on the charter school meeting she attended.

Chairman Crowell and the board discussed how to increase revenue as expenses have been cut as such. SMA-MAJ CJ Bannister inquired as to the ability to announce future plans for the location of the high school in order for her to discuss with donors. Dr. McElheny requested for SMA-MAJ Bannister to forward the SMA video file to him for possible free publicity. COL Ben Knisely stated speaking with builders in the area east of the highway as to percentage of land dedicated to schools and parks.

**COL Ben Knisely motioned for the approval of the Form 990; Vice Chairman Herb seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**Committee Reports:** N/A

**Chairman:** Chairman Jones discussed Dr. Todd Brown as a guest speaker at his Rotary Club event and how his concept will be adapted worldwide. He proposed for Dr. Brown to attend the next board meeting to hear his report. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned Dr. Brown's Project Inspire brings the real world into the classroom and his curriculum will be used worldwide.

Chairman Jones discussed the possibility of Oliver North as a guest speaker at our Gala in January 2020 in which after much discussion, the board agreed to not have Mr. North as the speaker.

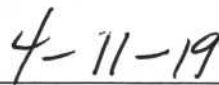
**Old Business:** N/A

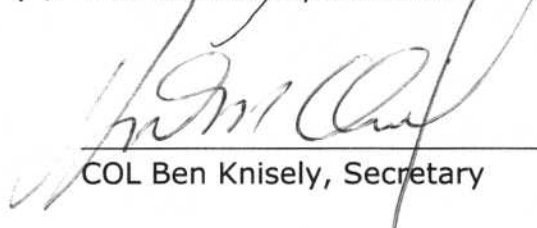
**New Business:** N/A

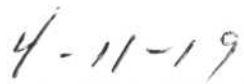
**Public Comments:** N/A

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:21 pm.

  
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Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman

  
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Date

  
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COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

  
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Date