

# **Sarasota Military Academy**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES (VIRTUAL)

12 JANUARY, 2021

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

### **Present:**

Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman  
Thomas J. McElheny, EdD, Vice Chairman  
Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary  
F. Steven Herb, Esquire  
Mr. Warren P. Hudson  
Ms. Linda Long  
Mr. Pete Skokos  
Ms. Tessa Suplee, Lt Col, AF (Ret)

Howard G. Crowell, Jr., LTG USA (Ret), Chairman, SMA Foundation Inc.  
Mr. Rafael Robles, Executive Director, SMA Foundation Inc.

**Absent:** Mr. Kimball Bobbitt, Treasurer

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

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Chief Executive Officer  
LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets  
SMA-COL Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School Campus  
SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of School, Middle School Campus  
MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus  
SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith, Athletic Director, Middle School Campus  
SMA-MAJ Steve Kok, Director of Finance  
SMA-MAJ Dr. Todd Brown, Director of Community Outreach

**Guests in Attendance:** N/A

Location: Virtual

The chairman called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

### **Motion to Approve the 8 December, 2020 Minutes:**

Mr. F. Steven Herb motioned to approve the 8 December, 2020 minutes with corrections; Vice Chairman Ms. Tessa Suplee seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

**Executive Director of Schools Report:** SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the enrollment postcard was sent to all fifth and eighth graders in Sarasota county as well as specific Manatee county zip codes directing them to a landing page for enrollment. SMA-COL Bowman stated twenty-nine students are to start in the second semester at the high school and commended the administrative teams, faculty and staff on both campuses on how they addressed the January 6<sup>th</sup> incident in Washington, D.C.

SMA-COL Bowman stated the visits by LTC Ben Weiss to the prep every Tuesday morning to speak with students and military studies instructors is very successful with the goal of creating more connections of the prep to the high school. Mr. Warren Hudson agreed by also commending SMA-COL Bowman and staff in connecting the prep students with the high school. SMA-COL Bowman read a letter from a high school student thanking a staff member and stated the science and computer science positions at the prep are posted on the SMA website and Indeed.

**Community Outreach Director Report:** SMA-MAJ Dr. Todd Brown provided a read-ahead report. He discussed a few press recognitions such as the New Year's Eve Suncoast View segment highlighting SMA and infectious disease as the story of 2020 as well as winning bronze in the global contest representing 120 countries for SMA and Operation Outbreak for Best Hybrid Platform.

Chairman Herb Jones inquired as to how to maximize said accomplishments into donations and/or grants in which SMA-MAJ Brown replied that he is in the process of applying for specific grants through the technology field. He also discussed making changes to the Outbreak simulation to now test human behavior and interactions with added pathogens and other factors such as masks. SMA-MAJ Brown stated he is currently looking into the Department of Defense for support.

**Technology Report:** MAJ Becky Morris provided a read-ahead report. She discussed receiving two new chrome book carts and will provide a detailed report on total number of chrome books and carts for each campus requested by SMA-COL Bowman by next meeting.

**SMA Prep Head of School Report:** SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned SMA-CPT Samantha Miller was selected as the Middle School Teacher of the Year and looking to replace the science teacher position.

**SMA Prep Athletics Report:** SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith provided a read-ahead report. She announced the boys soccer team made it to the playoffs and lost in the finals by shootout for the third time in five years along with the cross country team exceling with a new sixth grade member who was undefeated all season. SMA-MAJ Smith stated the athletic awards ceremony was successful awarding the MVP and Most Improved and that tryouts for flag football, volleyball and lacrosse are underway.

**Instructional Design & Curriculum:** N/A

**SMA Head of School Report:** SMA-COL Fred Fout provided a read-ahead report. He provided data on total COVID cases on the high school campus and mentioned it

is lower than the county's stating that mitigation strategies are working. SMA-COL Fout discussed recruiting strategies with LTC Weiss, Dr. Henry Orazi and the high school chorus along with himself going to the prep to speak with eighth graders over two days as well as airing two exclusive webinars on the evenings of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> for the families. He stated a virtual presentation at SSAS for parents as well as flyers sent to hand out to eighth graders at Suncoast were successful as both schools are good feeders into SMA high school.

**SMA HS Athletics Report:** SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner provided a read-ahead report.

**IB Report:** N/A

**SAI/Commandant's Report:** LTC Weiss provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the ongoing plans to have high school groups attend the prep school regularly. LTC Weiss mentioned the possibility of extending the JROTC program to the eighth grade is promising and suggested an instructor moving with the eighth graders into ninth grade similar to the cohort program in the Army.

LTG Howard Crowell inquired as to a solution for the eighth grader earning rank to not be demoted when entering ninth grade and suggested changing the insignias to be different from the high school as it used to be. LTC Weiss suggested having eighth graders wear the traditional Class B uniform while on the prep campus and can advance quickly in ninth grade by waiving the time requirement with a test that can allow student to rank up faster. Dr. Tom McElheny agreed with LTG Crowell and stated recruitment and retention efforts need to tie into the JROTC program in which SMA-COL Bowman agreed as well.

LTC Weiss stated formation and inspections are successful with maintaining social distancing as well as uniforms are looking great with the barber cutting hair on campus twice thus far.

**Staff Representatives:** SMA-MAJ Smith stated that one concern was mentioned on closing the gap in raises to what the county offers. SMA-CPT Hellen Harvey provided a read ahead report.

**Media Report:** N/A

**Treasurer's Report:** SMA-MAJ Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report and balance sheets per campus. He discussed the current financials thru November 30<sup>th</sup> with a YTD Profit and Loss per campus. SMA-MAJ Kok stated that FTE had an adjustment from previous numbers and looked positive with twenty-nine students starting second semester. Mr. Herb inquired as to the eligibility of the second round in PPP in which SMA-MAJ Kok replied that he'll know shortly. Chairman Jones stated the decreasing of expenses was done well but need to increase FTE numbers and maximize the Foundation efforts.

**PTCC Report:** N/A

**Committee Reports:** N/A

**Foundation:** Mr. Rafael Robles provided a read-ahead report. He discussed breaking down his report into four sections as financials, Flanzer Trust Program, a

new way to support SMA and marketing. Mr. Robles presented a breakdown of end of year financials for the Foundation of both restricted and unrestricted funds with the goal of doubling by end of fiscal year. He discussed the Flanzer Trust Match Program breaking down restricted funds supporting marine science, music and athletics departments as well as raiders and adopt a cadet programs.

Mr. Robles presented a new way to support SMA with the vehicle donation program through a non-profit out of Oregon where any vehicle or boat can be donated and proceeds from the sale will go to SMA. He stated that the organization provides us with a designated landing page as well as quarterly marketing content to advertise. Chairman Jones inquired as to how this program will be marketed in which Mr. Robles replied that it will be up on the SMA website as well as social media.

Mr. Robles stated 5,951 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" postcards were sent out to fifth and eighth graders in the district as well as 1,688 of that number mailed to specific families in zip codes throughout Lakewood Ranch. He stated that the total cost for this campaign was \$0.33 per postcard that entailed a QR code to a landing page for tracking. Ms. Linda Long inquired to receiving a copy of the postcard image in which Mr. Robles replied that one will be sent out to everyone along with the vehicle program URL. Dr. McElheny offered software to use for assistance in conversion rates.

Mr. Robles stated Mr. Anthony Baade couldn't attend meeting due to travel and that the next Foundation board meeting is 18<sup>th</sup> February.

**Marketing and Communications Report:** N/A

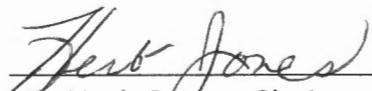
**Chairman:** Chairman Jones wished Ms. Phyllis Siskel a very happy birthday from the board.

**Old Business:** N/A

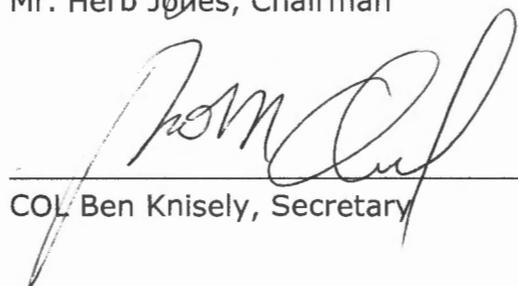
**New Business:** Chairman Jones stated the bylaws amendment will be sent out to be approved at the next meeting.

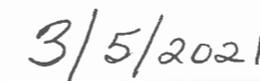
**Public Comments:** N/A

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:45 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