

# **Sarasota Military Academy**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **MEETING MINUTES (IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL)**

**21 SEPTEMBER, 2021**

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

##### **Present:**

Thomas J. McElheny, EdD, CAPT, USMC (Ret), Chair  
Mr. Warren P. Hudson, CAPT, USN (Ret) Vice Chair / Treasurer  
Dr. Brian Crupi, LTC, USAR  
Ms. Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)  
Mr. Scott Lempe, LTC, USA (Ret)  
Ms. Linda Long  
Mr. Pete Skokos  
Ms. Tessa Suplee, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)  
Ms. Cynthia West, RN Lt, USA (Ret)

##### **Howard G. Crowell, Jr., LTG USA (Ret), Chair, SMA Foundation Inc.**

Mr. Herb Jones, Vice Chair, SMA Foundation Inc.  
CAPT (Ret.) Frederick M. Derr, Treasurer, SMA Foundation Inc.  
Mr. Rafael Robles, Executive Director, SMA Foundation Inc.

**Absent:** Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary

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

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Chief Executive Officer  
LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets  
SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance  
SMA-COL Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School  
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of School, High School  
SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director, High School  
SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of School, Middle School  
SMA-LTC Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of School, Middle School  
SMA-LTC Ryan Lee, Assistant Head of School, Middle School  
MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of School, Middle School  
SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith, Athletic Director, Middle School

**Guests in Attendance:** Ms. Jenny Glassmoyer, Kerkering & Barberio; Mr. Tom Pellegrino, Pellegrino & McFarland; Mr. Vincent Tortora, Pellegrino & McFarland; Ms. Jocelyn Jordan, Kerkering & Barberio; SFC Riess Pellegrino, Faculty Representative, High School; Ms. Susan Hartman, PTCC President, High School

Location: In-Person and Virtual

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

Chair Thomas McElheny requested to move old business of the Mask Mandate Policy to after the audit is presented and approved.

**Motion to Approve the 31 August 2021 Minutes:**

Ms. Tessa Suplee motioned to approve the 31 August, 2021 minutes with requested changes; Mr. Scott Lempe seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

**Committee Reports:** Vice Chair Warren Hudson presented to the board the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to extend to Mr. Jim Tollerton a placement on the Board of Directors as a new Director. He detailed his experiences as a prominent supporter in the community will be a benefit to the board.

**Ms. Suplee motioned to approve the recommendation of Mr. Jim Tollerton joining the Board of Directors as a Director; Ms. Linda Long seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

Vice Chair Hudson recommended Mr. Scott Lempe to be nominated as the new Treasurer.

**Ms. Cynthia West motioned to approve the recommendation of Mr. Scott Lempe as the new Treasurer; Ms. Suplee seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

SMA-LTC Steve Kok introduced Mr. Vincent Tortora, Ms. Jenny Glassmoyer, Mr. Tom Pellegrino and Ms. Jocelyn Jordan to discuss the audit.

Mr. Tortora discussed the result of a clean audit along with financials for both schools and a breakdown of expenses, revenue and assets. He mentioned how the SMA Foundation is controlled by SMA per the bylaws and is included in the audit. Mr. Tortora and Mr. Pellegrino recommended the funds be broken down into different banks as to maximize the FDIC insurance.

**Vice Chair Hudson motioned to approve the presented audit; Ms. Suplee seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**Old Business:** Chair McElheny explained the Mask Mandate Policy and how it has changed and ordered by the Governor and the County over the past few months. He stated SMA-COL Christina Bowman spoke with the Director of Charter Schools and recommended we follow the Governor's ban on a mask mandate. Attendees such as parent Mr. Eric Williams, parent Ms. Tara Ehrmann, parent Mr. Dan Delzer, parent Mr. Drew Baggiani and SMA-MAJ Michael Finley shared their opinions on enforcing a mask mandate policy.

**Vice Chair Hudson motioned to amend the Mask Mandate Policy to follow state law that masks be optional to parents with encouragement to wear masks; Ms. 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 optional end-of-year survey as well as a successful meeting with SMA-COL Fred Fout, SMA-COL Tom Vara and SMA-SFC Angela Cohen regarding Admissions and the lottery process. SMA-COL Bowman highly encouraged the board to attend the event *Evening with Heroes* through Operation Patriot Support assisted by COL Ben Knisely who will attend as a guest speaker. Mr. Peter Skokos agreed to attend the event as he runs Operation Patriot Support in this area.

**Technology and Data Impact Report:** N/A

**SMA Head of School Report, Middle School:** SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He stated a successful virtual open house with parents and faculty as well as a special 9/11 tribute with stories of heroism and a visit from local police officers.

**SMA Middle School Athletics Report:** SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith provided a read-ahead report. She mentioned the soccer, running and basketball clubs starting as pre-season conditioning and working very well with high school Athletic Director, SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver on the collaboration of both schools to create bonding activities. SMA-MAJ Smith further detailed the volleyball teams had joint practices and middle school stayed to support high school team, lacrosse continues to incorporate both schools into joint practices and activities and emphasized how both directors continue to bring both schools together in various ways.

**Instructional Design & Curriculum:** SMA-LTC Lisa Currie provided a read-ahead report. She stated working with the data to analyze tests with an explanation to cadets on understanding the scores will assist them in setting new goals and progress.

**SMA Head of School Report, High School:** SMA-COL Fred Fout stated three departments have submitted action plans towards literacy initiatives and is awaiting the rest. He mentioned National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held in October and will send the date to the board to attend. SMA-COL Fout mentioned testing is underway with the in-school ACT and FSA retakes as well as PSAT for all 10<sup>th</sup> graders and is looking forward to the government replacing the FSA tests with progress monitoring and growth. Ms. Linda Long agreed but shared her concerns for handling the transition to higher institutions as well as their requirements.

**SMA HS Athletics Report:** SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver provided a read-ahead report. He discussed a successful first cross country meet at the middle school campus and he looks forward to working with SMA-MAJ Smith for more cross events. SMA-MAJ Carver stated he met with Dr. Brian Crupi on campus to discuss the sports program and facilities. Dr. Crupi shared with the board how sports can be a driving force for enrollment as well as the students' growth. He discussed his concerns on the condition of the facilities and lack of additional gyms to facilitate a growing sports program. SMA-MAJ Carver agreed stating the stress on SMA-MAJ Smith with the middle school gym as the only gym available for all court sports for both schools.

**SAI/Commandant's Report:** LTC Weiss provided a read-ahead report. He commended his instructors for a great job within Rifle resulting in cadets attending Olympics and Service Academies, Drill Team and Raiders with their invitational Raider competition held at Lakewood Ranch High School on 25 September as well as JLAB placing in the first two levels of competition and onward to Washington DC for nationals. LTC Weiss stated the Legion of Valor Bronze Award to C/COL Abigail Koester was that morning and cadets presented very well to guests of the County after formation. Chair McElheny thanked LTC Weiss and the JROTC team for their efforts.

**Staff Representatives:** SMA-MAJ Smith stated no staff concerns at this time at the middle school. SFC Riess Pellegrino provided a read ahead report identifying concerns that he stated will be addressed by SMA-COL Fout through himself and the upcoming staff meeting.

**Media Report:** N/A

**Treasurer's Report:** SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report and balance sheets per campus. He discussed total assets and ESSER funds along with working capital and long term debt. Vice Chair Hudson recommends a workshop to be created as well as a fourth committee to find ways to reduce expenses with a focus on fiscal year 2023. Chair McElheny stated fiscal stability is a

priority and suggested Mr. Tollerton, Mr. Lempe and Vice Chair Hudson to form the committee. Mr. Lempe recommended a work session for all directors to understand the school grade and its components.

**Vice Chair Hudson motioned to approve the proposed budget for FY2022; Dr. Crupi seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

SMA-LTC Kok discussed the cost for raising the salary of teachers to the county's base salary.

**Vice Chair Hudson motioned to approve raising the base salary to district level for teachers even if budget is at a deficit; Ms. Suplee seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**PTCC Report:** Ms. Susan Hartman provided a read-ahead report for the high school. She discussed the online merchandise store is growing and continues to add more items. Ms. Hartman stated the first PTCC virtual meeting is 22 September and has received the first club and classroom grants. She thanked the administration and staff for their support. Chair McElheny recommended Ms. Hartman meet with Ms. West, as she was the first PTCC president for SMA.

**Foundation:** Mr. Rafael Robles provided a read-ahead report. He discussed financials to include a breakdown of revenue from campaigns and expenses. Mr. Robles invited the Operating Board to the next SMA Foundation board meeting held on 30 September at 2:30pm and can also be attended virtually.

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

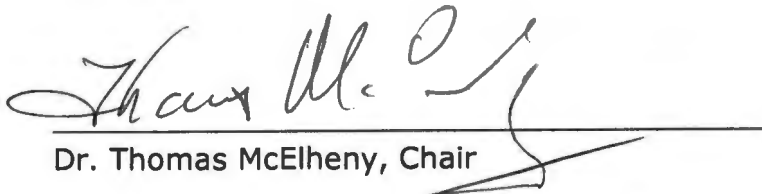
**Chairman:** Chair McElheny recommends starting each board meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance as well as prayer with special guests from local houses of worship.

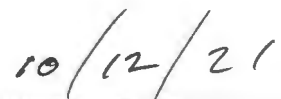
**New Business:** N/A


**Public Comments:** Ms. Long commended Chair McElheny on a successful meeting. Mr. Lempe requested to schedule a meeting for the workshop in which SMA-COL Bowman recommended one week with two sessions of two hours each designated to the school grade and budget.

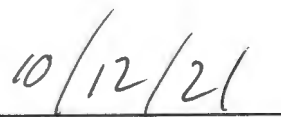
The next board meeting will be on 12 October 2021 at 2:30pm.

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:53 pm.

  
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Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

  
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Date

  
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COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

  
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Date