

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

8 FEBRUARY 2022

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Thomas J. McElheny, EdD, CAPT, USMC (Ret), Chair
Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary
Mr. Scott Lempe, LTC, USAF (Ret), Treasurer
Ms. Linda Long
Mr. Pete Skokos
Ms. Tessa Suplee, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)
Mr. Jim Tollerton
Ms. Cynthia West, RN Lt, USA (Ret)

Absent: Dr. Brian Crupi, LTC, USAR; Ms. Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret); SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Chief Executive Officer; SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of School, High School; SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of School, High School; SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director, High School; SMA-LTC Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of School, Middle School; SMA-LTC Ryan Lee, Assistant Head of School, Middle School; Mr. Rafael Robles, Executive Director, SMA Foundation Inc.

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets
SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance
SMA-COL Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School
SMA-COL Tom Vara, 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. Susan Hartman, PTCC President; SMA-CPT Jeanette Marks, Marine Science, High School

Location: SMA High School

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm.

Motion to Approve the 18 January 2022 Minutes:

COL Ben Knisely motioned to approve the 18 January 2022 minutes; Mr. Jim Tollerton seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Chair Thomas McElheny commended the six cadets who attended the Tiger Bay event along with a cadet who spoke up with a question to one of the guest speakers. Ms. Long agreed that cadets attending this event every month truly is the pride of the community.

Executive Director of Schools Report: N/A

SMA Head of School Report, Middle School: SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He discussed two successful visits from SMA-COL Fred Fout, high school cadets and counselors to speak with the eighth grade class on the transitioning to the high school campus with unique experiences being downtown. SMA-COL Vara mentioned author Kyle Prue visited the sixth and seventh grade classes to speak about the passion he has for reading and writing and stated the cadets were engaged and excited to meet with him. He highlighted the \$250 scholarship awarded to SMA-CPT Miller and the Buchanan's Outstanding Teacher Nomination awarded to SMA-MAJ Mark Fulghum.

SMA-COL Vara discussed enrollment for next school year by grade and stated the success of students able to visit the campus and attend an enrollment meeting. He mentioned an FSA writing simulation being held tomorrow during the half day across all grade levels. Mr. Tollerton inquired as to the Technology Conference in which MAJ Becky Morris replied that it was excellent and the SMA attendees will be coming together to provide a Professional Development (PD) opportunity to faculty.

SMA Middle School Athletics Report: SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith provided a read-ahead report. She mentioned the new girls soccer assistant coach, SMA high school senior Sophia Hoffman, and the successful turnout to the lacrosse tryout which will result in cadets continuing with the sport to high school.

Technology and Data Impact Report: N/A

Instructional Design & Curriculum: SMA-LTC Lisa Currie provided a read-ahead report.

SMA Head of School Report, High School: SMA-COL Fout provided a read-ahead report. He commended SMA-MAJ Hellen Harvey for a successful and engaging literacy week as well as her increase in books signing out of the media center and her limitless resources to faculty and cadets. SMA-COL Fout mentioned a conversation with a specialist from the district on school grade and the changes due to a new law. He stated factors such as JROTC and an overall ASVAB score, Dual Enrollment included in acceleration rate as well as completed STC courses without the need of a certification. SMA-COL Fout discussed enrollment numbers for next year as well as current transition rate of our eighth graders to the high school.

SMA HS Athletics Report: SMA-COL Fout stated a successful senior night for girls' soccer and one female soccer player visited the soccer coach and team at the US Military Academy at West Point.

SAI/Commandant's Report: LTC Ben Weiss provided a read-ahead report. He stated that JROTC teams would place in almost all competitions such as Drill Team with two third places and one second in Brandon competition as well as 3 third places and one second in Tampa and a first and second place in the knockout competition. He stated the Rifle Team placed first as a team and individual in the Alabama competition.

LTC Weiss mentioned a few trips planned with one to the Naval Academy, a trip in August to the Merchant Marine and planning one to the Air Force Academy. He stated cadet Sophia Hoffman's visit to the US Academy at West Point with the soccer coach and team and cadet Cooper Bowditch has open applications to all academies. LTC Weiss stated his retirement at the end of February and thanked the board for the opportunity.

Staff Representatives: SMA-MAJ Smith stated a few concerns presented by staff were answered in an email from SMA-COL Christina Bowman. SMA-COL Fout stated the concerns from staff were on raises and told the staff representative the board is still in discussion. Mr. Tollerton inquired if faculty are sensitive to the 8 March referendum in which SMA-COL Fout replied that his staff is very concerned and working with the PTCC in getting message out into the community on voting. Mr. Scott Lempe emphasized that if referendum fails, funds are pulled from salaries and benefits.

Media Report: N/A

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Lempe and SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. SMA-LTC Kok discussed the FTE adjusted numbers and the profit and loss for both campuses. Chair McElheny and Mr. Tollerton commended both on the new presentation of the budget.

PTCC Report: Ms. Susan Hartman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the merger of the funds, as one PTCC is moving forward. Ms. Hartman stated the positions available on the board for the middle school. She mentioned the increase in grants for both campuses as the grant amount has also increased. Ms. Harman stated upcoming events that require PTCC support in a non-grant manner. Chair McElheny commended the team on their commitment.

Foundation: N/A

Marketing and Communications Report: N/A

Committee Reports: N/A

Chair: Chair McElheny stated that he presented Mr. Warren Hudson a letter of gratitude on his efforts while on the board. He recommended spending fifteen minutes of every board meeting to discuss the vision of SMA and the direction of where we want to be as a school. Chair McElheny stated a marketing meeting next week would be discussing digital and print. He mentioned the Sunshine Law allowing a virtual option as long as there is a physical quorum that can vote.

Old Business: N/A

New Business: Mr. Lempe discussed the level of confidence the new budget process will project in the approval in June rather than September. He mentioned other changes such as the five-day count of FTE in August as well as after winter break and the budget implications coming from the Stoneham Shooting legislature that may provide mandates but with no additional funding. Mr. Lempe discussed the enrollment projections for charter and public schools presented every year by the district are very accurate and based on historical data with a quantifiable approach in determining said projections.

Mr. Tollerton stated that SMA has a different prospective than the school board and can increase enrollment past the district numbers. He inquired as to the right size SMA should be at as well as understanding our mission in which Chair McElheny agreed that it reverts to understanding our mission and vision.

Mr. Lempe stated that the district's board will be voting on district raises on 15 February and stated that our strategic plan states SMA's need to keep salaries aligned with the district. He mentioned SMA-COL Bowman's recommendation to form a work session to discuss raises and options and asked the board the information needed to make a confident decision. Ms. Long stated all options need to be presented while Mr. Tollerton would like to know what funds are available.

Mr. Tollerton inquired as to a long range planning committee to discuss land acquisition east of I-75 for a new high school. Chair McElheny recommended Mr. Tollerton to chair a new long range planning committee to discuss options.

Public Comments: SMA-CPT Jeanette Marks introduced herself to the board and shared her concerns of losing quality faculty due to salaries not meeting with the districts. Chair McElheny expressed his moral dilemma as the board is limited by budget and revenue but will discuss options with the board during the work session. He was grateful for SMA-CPT Marks in coming forward.

The next board meeting will be on 8 March 2022 at 4:30pm at the Middle School campus.


The chair adjourned the meeting at 4:05 pm.



Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

3/8/2022

Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

3/8/2022

Date