

# **Sarasota Military Academy**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**17 JANUARY 2023**

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

##### **Present:**

Thomas J. McElheny, EdD, Capt, USMC (Former Marine), Chair  
Scott Lempe, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair/Treasurer  
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary  
Brian Crupi, LTC, USAR, (virtual)  
Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), (virtual)  
Heather Koester  
Linda Long  
Peter Skokos  
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)  
Jim Tollerton

Herb Jones, Vice Chair, SMA Foundation Inc. (virtual)  
Rafael Robles, Executive Director, SMA Foundation Inc.

**Absent:** Cynthia West, RN Lt, USA (Ret); SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of High School; MAJ Clarence Arrington, Senior Army Instructor; MSG Teddy Grace, (Ret) Athletic Director, High School; SMA-MAJ Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of Middle School; MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of Middle School; SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith, Athletic Director, Middle School; Jeanine Signorelli, PTCC President

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

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Chief Executive Officer/Interim Head of High School  
SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School, (virtual)  
SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance  
SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of Middle School

**Guests in Attendance:** SMA-CPT George Barbaresi, HS Faculty Representative

Location: SMA Middle School

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm.

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Motion to Approve the 13 December 2022 Minutes:**

COL Ben Knisely moved to approve the 13 December 2022 minutes with noted corrections; Ms. Linda Long seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

**Chief Executive Officer:** SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the current mid-year enrollment and a goal of 67% retention rate from the middle school. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned a successful visit from half of the eighth grade class at the middle school to the high school and states the other half will visit on Thursday.

**Head of High School Report:** SMA-COL Bowman provided a read-ahead report.

**High School Athletics Report:** MSG Teddy Grace provided a read-ahead report. COL Knisely inquired as to the request of acquiring vans in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that it could not be 15-passengers and above.

**Head of Middle School Report:** SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned a successful admissions meeting and the visit to the high school by half of the eighth graders earlier that day.

**Middle School Athletics Report:** N/A

**SAI Report:** MAJ Clarence Arrington provided a read-ahead report. Mr. Jim Tollerton inquired as to the availability of the chorus and Color Guard for the upcoming MOAS event in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that she would check availability with MAJ Arrington and Dr. Orazi.

**Treasurer's Report:** SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the profit and loss per campus and the change in FTE numbers for the second semester.

**Staff Representatives:** SMA-CPT Barbaresi stated a slow start of the second semester with two-four day weeks but now getting into routine. He mentioned the only concerns were the county raise in which the board and administration is already aware.

**PTCC Report:** N/A

**Foundation:** Mr. Rafael Robles provided a read-ahead report. He explained his financial dashboard to include unrestricted and restricted funds that are allocated to various programs. Mr. Robles requested to change the quarterly goals as well as the board to forward the gala corporate sponsorship email to their network.

**Committee:** Mr. Pete Skokos provided an update on the bonds documentation through Wells Fargo and plan to proceed if all looks good.

**Chair Report:** Chair McElheny discussed the assignment from last meeting on who we want SMA to be in three years. He stated a new organizational chart would be presented at the next board meeting. Chair McElheny mentioned the first board outreach of the Marines on 1 February for special formation.

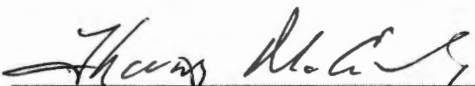
**Old Business:** SMA-COL Bowman inquired as to how to proceed in researching options to increase salaries to meet the county's recent increase. Chair McElheny replied to meet with Vice Chair Lempe to research options together.

**New Business:** Vice Chair Scott Lempe inquired as to whom and what organizations advocates for charter schools as the current legislature and school board are charter friendly. He recommended looking into legislative platforms to create an opportunity to present in Tallahassee on FTE reallocation. Ms. Erica Gregory recommended starting with a regional legislature forum including local representatives and the education committee. Chair McElheny stated for Vice Chair Lempe and Mr. Tollerton to work together on how to proceed. Ms. Gregory stated that any representative can carry a bill and does not have to go through education committee and that there is an opportunity to request funds through a representative for SMA directly.


**Public Comments:** N/A

The next board meeting will be on 7 February 2023 at 2:30 pm at the High School campus.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.

  
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Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

2/7/23  
Date

  
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COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

2/7/23  
Date