

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

19 DECEMBER 2023

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Dr. Thomas J. McElheny, Former Capt, USMC, Chair

Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair

Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary

Linda Long, Assistant Secretary

Brent Bogart, Former LT, USN

Carlos Moreira, 1st Sgt, USMCR (virtual)

Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret) (virtual)

Absent: Pete Skokos, Treasurer; Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR; Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA; Herb Jones, Chair, SMA Foundation; SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of High School; SMA-LTC Cheryl Korwin, Assistant Head of Middle School; SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Head of High School/Academy Provost

SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School

SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance

MAJ (Ret) Russ Osterfeld, SAI

SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of Middle School

Guests in Attendance: SMA-CPT Makayla Francis, HS ELA Instructor; Dr. Cecilia Ferradino, HS ELA Department Chair; SFC Ernesto Ramirez, HS Business Entrepreneurship; SMA-MAJ Michael Finley, Music Department Chair; SMA-CPT Katherine Weaver, HS ELA Instructor, Cadet Jack Gutasukas.

Location: SMA High School

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

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to Approve the 14 November 2023 Minutes:

Mr. Brent Bogart moved to approve the 14 November 2023 minutes; COL Ben Knisely seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Head of Middle School Report: SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He discussed successful outreach with enrollment presentations to area elementary schools as

well as finalizing second semester admissions. SMA-COL Vara stated data would be provided at the next board meeting for the PM2 results.

Head of High School/Provost Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She introduced cadet senior Jack Gutauskas who discussed the Flag Retirement Ceremony on 30 January at 5pm for their Service Learning Project for JROTC accreditation.

Chair McElheny stated to amend the agenda for Vice Chair Erica Gregory to present after the Head of High School report. SMA-COL Bowman discussed the school grade increasing to a "B" and commended Dr. Cecilia Ferradino and SMA-CPT Makayla Francis for directly responsible for increasing ELA points and reading literacy. She mentioned that SMA-CPT Francis was awarded the December Chalkboard Champion for Sarasota county and SMA-MAJ Ashley Wyka the SMA Teacher of the Year. SMA-COL Bowman stated that the breakdown of data would be presented at the next board meeting.

Bylaws Review Committee: Vice Chair Gregory reviewed the bylaws for the operating board with committee members Ms. Heather Koester and Ms. Michael Tollerton. She discussed a few areas of improvement to allow the growth of the board for long-term success, such as establishing committees to open the board to the community and reactivate an advisory board. Vice Chair Gregory discussed the varied committees will align the military with the academy's mission by focusing on military, education, fundraising and marketing.

SAI Report: SMA-COL Bowman stated that LTC James Nelson has resigned as SAI and introduced MAJ Russ Osterfeld to the board.

Academy Athletics Report: N/A

Treasurer's Report: SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the profit and loss statements by campus

Foundation Report: Chair McElheny stated that COL Knisely has been nominated to the SMA Foundation board of trustees.

Staff Representatives: Middle School Faculty Representative had nothing to report. SFC Ernesto Ramirez provided a read-ahead report. He stated a survey went out to teachers on climate, in which the consensus would like to see board members on campus and in classrooms.

PTCC Report: PTCC provided a read-ahead report.

Superintendent Search Committee: N/A

Chair Report: Chair McElheny mentioned Mr. Scott Lempe to rejoin the board as an advisor as he is no longer the interim superintendent. He stated that he will spend one day a week on each campus after the New Year and encourages the board to visit classrooms. Chair McElheny discussed a successful meeting with Synovus Bank and their charter school package. He stated the need to understand the needs to upgrade facilities as the high school has more challenges.

Board: Mr. Carlos Moreira inquired as to scheduling an internal meeting on how to tie the board into campuses and departments, in which Chair McElheny replied that a board workshop could be arranged.

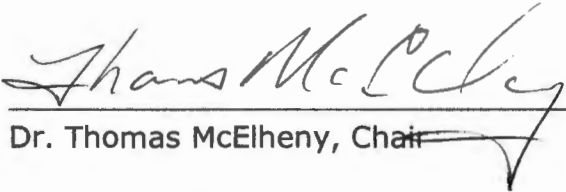
Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

Public Comments: SMA-MAJ Michael Finley mentioned the music department is doing a fantastic job in transitioning the eighth grade cadets to the high school. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned that MAJ Osterfeld is working on combining programs through JROTC.


The next board meeting will be on 23 January 202 at 4:30 pm at the Middle School campus.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:42 pm.



Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

1/23/24
Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

1/23/24
Date