

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

13 FEBRUARY 2024

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Dr. Thomas J. McElheny, Former Capt, USMC, Chair
Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair
Pete Skokos, Treasurer
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary
Linda Long, Assistant Secretary
Brent Bogart, Former LT, USN (virtual)
Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR (virtual)
Carlos Moreira, 1st Sgt, USMCR
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA (virtual)

Absent: Herb Jones, Chair Emeritus; SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director; SMA-LTC Cheryl Korwin, Assistant Head of Middle School

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Head of High School/Academy Provost
SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School (virtual)
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, 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: BG Jerry Neff; LTC Scott Lempe; SMA-CPT Makayla Francis, HS ELA Instructor; CW4 Wes Rinehart, JROTC Instructor; CSM Jack Phinney, JROTC Instructor; SMA-MAJ Michael Finley, Performing Arts Chair; SFC Ernesto Ramirez, High School Faculty Representative; SMA-CPT Ellie De Murias, Middle School Faculty Representative

Location: SMA High School

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm.

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance.

COL Ben Knisely introduced BG Jerry Neff as a prospective board member.

Motion to Approve the 23 January 2024 Minutes:

COL Ben Knisely moved to approve the 23 January 2024 minutes; Ms. Linda Long seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Head of Middle School Report: SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned a successful visit to the fifth grade class at Brentwood Elementary with the drumline and school counselors, as well as an eighth grade survey created by Military Studies to capture number of cadets transitioning to high school. SMA-COL Vara stated location, uniforms and athletics are areas cadets are concerned with to definitively decide on high school.

Head of High School/Provost Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She referenced the success of the inaugural Flag Retirement Ceremony, to which Chair McElheny concurred, affirming that it will become a regular occurrence. Mr. Carlos Moreira mentioned an opportunity for USF Veterans to sponsor the signature event. SMA-CPT Makayla Francis presented to the board data achievement for ninth and tenth grades. Ms. Michael Tollerton inquired as to the resources or assistance needed to close the gaps, in which SMA-COL Bowman replied researching resources and books with multiple languages to further assist ESOL cadets.

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He discussed a successful JPA accreditation that resulted in maintaining SMA's Unit of Distinction and the gold star on the uniforms for another three years. MAJ Osterfeld stated the rifle team competing in the National Championships and more efforts in bridging both campuses. CSM Jack Phinney stated the Raider Mud Pit Day is Friday, 23 February and the successful camaraderie between both campuses as the high school raiders regularly work with the middle school raiders.

Academy Athletics Report: SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver provided a read-ahead report.

Treasurer's Report: SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the profit and loss statements by campus. He discussed the need for approval of the single audit to ESSR funds.

COL Knisely moved to approve the single audit on ESSR funds in spending appropriately; Ms. Long seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

SMA-LTC Kok stated an update on millage payout by the district resulted in remaining balance as one-time deposit in February, with restrictions on usage. Chair McElheny stated working with SMA-COL Bowman and LTC Scott Lempe on two to five year plans for expected funds.

Foundation: SMA-LTC Kok discussed the approval of the dissolution of the SMA Foundation.

Staff Representatives: SMA-CPT Ellie De Muriás stated the only concern was to reintroduce computer science class for next school year. SFC Ernesto Ramirez stated no concerns with staff at this time and will share surveys from staff with the board.

PTCC Report: MAJ Osterfeld discussed the walk-a-thon at the middle school and the Eagle Awards sponsored by the PTCC for graduates.

Chair Report: COL Knisely stated resumes of prospective board member, BG Jerry Neff, was presented to the board last meeting. BG Neff introduced himself along with a synopsis of experiences, including SMA's BG Frank Laudano as one of his subordinates. Chair McElheny asked BG Neff to step out of the room for the board to vote.

COL Knisely moved to approve BG Jerry Neff as Director to the SMA Board; Mr. Pete Skokos seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Board: Mr. Moreira mentioned the high demand for STEM with scholarships at USF within the specific STEM subjects. He also stated a free program to learn English within Sarasota and Manatee counties for our ESOL families, as well as the successful Troops to Teachers program.

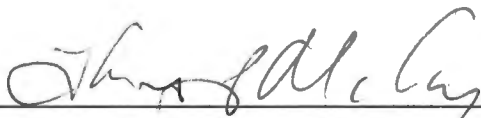
Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

Public Comments: N/A

The next board meeting will be on 26 March 2024 at 4:30 pm at the Middle School campus.

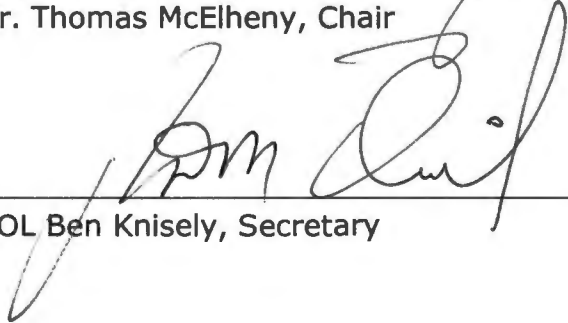
The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:58 pm.



Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

3/26/24

Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

3/26/24

Date