

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

26 MARCH 2024

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Dr. Thomas J. McElheny, Former Capt, USMC, Chair
Pete Skokos, Treasurer
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary
Brent Bogart, Former LT, USN
Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR
Carlos Moreira, 1st Sgt, USMCR (virtual)
Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA

Absent: Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair; Herb Jones, Chair Emeritus;
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of High 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 Steve Kok, Director of Finance
MAJ (Ret) Russ Osterfeld, SAI
SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director
SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of Middle School
LTC Cheryl Korwin, Assistant Head of Middle School

Guests in Attendance: LTC Scott Lempe; CW4 Wes Rinehart, JROTC Instructor; CSM Jack Phinney, JROTC Instructor; SMA-CPT Makayla Francis, High School (virtual); SFC Ernesto Ramirez, High School Faculty Representative; SMA-CPT Ellie De Murias, Middle School Faculty Representative; SMA-CPT Marsha Reinig-Umana, ESE Liaison, Middle School

Location: SMA Middle School

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to Approve the 13 February 2024 Minutes:

COL Ben Knisely moved to approve the 13 February 2024 minutes; Ms. Heather Koester seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Head of Middle School Report: SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned the distribution of twenty-three translation devices to cadets purchased by a donor who were thankful and grateful as it assists in the classroom immensely. SMA-COL Vara discussed data compiled over the past three quarters of cadets who were failing a class and the steps put in place for continuous communication to families and resources to raise grades. Ms. Koester inquired if data is collected on outcome of additional tutoring to those cadets failing classes and if rewards are given to those who are excelling, in which SMA-LTC Korwin replied that introducing the Honor of the Eagle Award in few weeks to those who continue to excel in classes.

Head of High School/Provost Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed how administrative team is focusing on data and professional development through Thinking Maps for faculty. SMA-COL Bowman thanked LTC Scott Lempe for connecting SMA with the district to incorporate PLC in the teacher evaluation moving forward. She stated the 3% bonus is still pending due to ESSR 3 funds approval and the fund allocation for grade allowance increase will be distributed in the mid-April paychecks.

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned upcoming events such as the Change of Command ceremony on 2 April, PT schedules and Cadet Challenges. MAJ Osterfeld discussed the goal to see growth and achievement with cadets and morale motivation, not just discipline. He mentioned the accomplishments of two cadets placing in the JROTC Rifle Nationals, with seniors Gabby Ayers placing first and Emrie Fast-Clarke placing third.

Academy Athletics Report: SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver provided a read-ahead report. He discussed a large turnout for soccer tryouts at the middle school and a successful meeting with athletic directors from other schools in the area in creating a conference for high school athletics.

Treasurer's Report: SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the profit and loss statements by campus. SMA-LTC Kok stated the remaining funds from the foundation was transferred to operating with specific tracking, as most funds were restricted. LTC Lempe inquired as to the next year's budget, in which SMA-LTC Kok replied that it is still in progress.

Staff Representatives: SMA-CPT Ellie De Murias stated no concerns at this time. SFC Ernesto Ramirez stated staff were inquiring about the 3% bonus, which was answered by SMA-COL Bowman. Chair McElheny stated a plan is in progress for a new level of transparency from board to teachers with quarterly visits from LTC Lempe and himself. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned this board is supportive of additional 4% raise for next year.

PTCC Report: N/A

Bylaws Committee: Ms. Michael Tollerton and Ms. Koester discussed the need to create sub-committees with roles defined as to where the board can assist in filling the gaps now that foundation has been dissolved. They mentioned an advisory council for board members and scheduling a board retreat before year ends.

Chair Report: LTC Lempe shared a presentation to the board on capital budget with options on whether leveraging future funds can benefit current campus needs. He mentioned areas of discussion need to clarify the size and location of our academy in order to devise a financial plan moving forward. Chair McElheny stated the preliminary budget would be presented at the next board meeting. SMA-COL Bowman stated priorities would be outlined once decision on size of each campus has been determined; in which Chair McElheny agreed and recommended board bring back to table next month.

Board: Mr. Carlos Moreira recommended the board receive input from faculty and staff as to the growth of SMA.

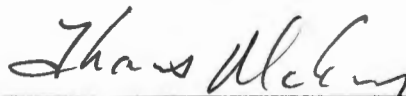
Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

Public Comments: CSM Jack Phinney inquired as to whether JROTC Instructors can obtain a CDL license to drive buses for sporting events.

The next board meeting will be on 16 April 2024 at 2:30 pm at the High School campus.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 6:16 pm.



Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

4/16/24

Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

4/16/24

Date