

**Sarasota Military Academy**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

27 AUGUST 2024

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**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

Pete Skokos, Treasurer

Brent Bogart, Former LT, USN

Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR

Carlos Moreira, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt, USMCR

Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)

Ron Skipper, Former CPT, USAF

Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)

Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA (virtual)

**Absent:** LTC Cheryl Korwin, Assistant Head of Middle School; SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director; SMA-CPT Ellie De Murias, MS Faculty Representative

**SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:**

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

SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of Middle School

SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School

SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of High School

SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance

MAJ (Ret) Russ Osterfeld, SAI

**Guests in Attendance:** LTC Scott Lempe; SFC Ernesto Ramirez, HS Faculty Representative; SMA-CPT Bryan Burns, HS Faculty; Ms. Nikki Orth, PTCC President (virtual), Keller Button, cadet; Avery Alexander, cadet; Pierce Mihailoff, cadet

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 18 June 2024 Minutes:**

Ms. Heather Koester moved to approve the 18 June 2024 minutes; COL Ben Knisely seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

SMA-COL Christina Bowman introduced the top three leadership of the Regimental Staff. Each cadet introduced themselves and their goals for their roles for this school year.

**Chair McElheny moved to amend the agenda with the chair report before the committee reports; Ms. Koester seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**Head of Middle School Report:** SMA-COL Tom Vara provided a read-ahead report. He stated faculty cuts due to decrease in numbers. SMA-COL Vara announced his retirement on 20 December 2024.

**Head of High School/Provost Report:** SMA-COL Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed staff reductions due to decrease in numbers. SMA-COL Bowman stated SMA-LTC Caitlin West would provide all components that comprise a school grade at the next board meeting and the new safety house bill has placed many challenges to this school year.

**SAI Report:** MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the upcoming events for all military activities.

**Academy Athletics Report:** N/A

**Staff Representatives:** N/A

**Treasurer's Report:** SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the profit and loss breakdown for both campuses, as well as millage expenditures and FTE adjustment.

**COL Knisely moved to approve the new revised budget; Mr. Brent Bogart seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**Chair Report:** Chair McElheny discussed the importance of focusing on the facilities and place a hold on the superintendent search. He recommended the nomination of LTC Scott Lempe as board member with focus on spearheading the Facilities Committee. Chair McElheny inquired to the Bylaws Committee as to process in amending the number of board members to no less than seven.

Chair McElheny discussed the goals of the Facilities Committee to gather research and options to include a current property appraisal of both properties at fair market value. He stated initial talks with a few banks have commenced on best approach and recommended the Facilities Committee to consist of Vice Chair Erica Gregory, Mr. Ron Skipper, COL Ben Knisely, BG Jerry Neff, LTC Lempe and himself.

**Vice Chair Gregory moved to suspend superintendent search, BG Neff seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

Chair McElheny stated that the table of organization would revert to the original one without the superintendent position.

**Bylaws Committee:** Vice Chair Erica Gregory stated nothing new to add but reiterated the action items from last board meeting of forming sub-committees still need to be addressed.

**PTCC Report:** Ms. Nikki Orth provided a read-ahead report. She stated an increase in parent support and administrative support of PTCC initiatives from both campuses.

**Chair Report:** Chair McElheny assigned Mr. Skipper to research zoning laws and appraisers to maximize property value for an updated appraisal.

**Board:** N/A

**Old Business:** N/A

**New Business:** SMA-COL Bowman stated an approval for the 2024-25 School Improvement Plan to the district is needed.

**Ms. Koester moved to approve to submit the 2024-25 School Improvement Plan to the district; BG Neff seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

SMA-COL Bowman stated the employee handbook would be presented at the next board meeting for board review.

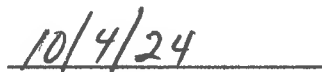
**Public Comments:** N/A

The next board meeting will be on 24 September 2024 at 2:30 pm at the High School campus.


The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:17 pm.



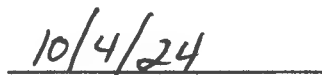
for: Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair



Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary



Date