

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

21 JANUARY 2025

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

Scott Lempe, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

Carlos Moreira, 1st Sgt, USMCR

Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)

Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF

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

Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA

Absent: Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary; Brent Bogart, Former LT, USN; Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR; SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, Athletic Director; SMA-CPT Ellie De Murias, MS Faculty Representative; Ms. Nikki Orth, PTCC President

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, CEO/Head of High School

Dr. Cheryl Korwin, Head of Middle School

SMA-LTC Bryan Burns, Assistant Head of Middle School (virtual)

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: SMA-CPT Makayla Francis, HS Intensive Reading; SFC Ernesto Ramirez, HS Faculty Representative (virtual); SMA-MAJ Michael Finley, Drumline Instructor

Location: SMA High School

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm.

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to Approve the 17 December 2024 Minutes:

Mr. Ron Skipper moved to approve the 17 December 2024 minutes; BG Jerry Neff seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Head of Middle School Report: SMA-COL Dr. Cheryl Korwin provided a read-ahead report. Lt Col Scott Lempe asked if Dr. Korwin could discuss her dissertation, in which she explained how three factors contributed to the increase of math scores of SMA cadets to include attendance, parent involvement and student/teacher relationships. Chair McElheny asked if Dr. Korwin could share her dissertation with the board.

Dr. Korwin discussed testing scores to date, staff resignations and the proactive approach to addressing course recovery after every nine weeks rather than end of year.

CEO/Head of High School: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She commended Dr. Korwin and SMA-CPT Tina Hodges on a phenomenal job with testing and scheduling.

Ms. Michael Tollerton moved to approve the out of field instructors; Mr. Pete Skokos seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

SMA-COL Bowman thanked Ms. Tollerton for securing two cadet seats and one instructor to the Hillsboro College for Service Academies.

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He discussed upcoming JROTC events.

Academy Athletics Report: N/A

Staff Representatives: N/A

Treasurer's Report: SMA-LTC Steve Kok provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the current FTE and changes to the budget as well as cash reserves to include restricted and unrestricted funds. Lt Col Lempe provided a presentation on capital budget to include current outstanding loans.

Dr. McElheny stated the need to understand the opportunities and issues with a priority on student achievement. He discussed objectives have not been clear with the CEO and need to improve our values-based curriculum within a three-year plan prior to any build-outs. Vice Chair Erica Gregory shared her concerns as to what has been done in the last two years of discussing student achievement, in which SMA-COL Bowman replied data provided was from the 2022-23 school year with the increase of school grade to a "B", retaining quality teachers with salary increase, and a 17% increase in PM2 from PM1. Lt Col Lempe stated to identify what a new program looks like with improving academics and a deliberate focus on making all changes in one year.

Bylaws Committee: N/A

Nominating Committee: Chair McElheny mentioned a prospective board member who will be presented for nomination at the next board meeting.

PTCC Report: N/A

Chair Report: Chair McElheny discussed conversations with financial institutions that have specific resources dedicated to charter schools. Ms. Tollerton inquired as to the hiring of the consultant to review bylaws and articles of incorporation, in which Chair McElheny replied that SMA-COL Bowman would meet with the Bylaws Committee to schedule the consultant.

Vice Chair Gregory inquired as to how we move forward, in which Chair McElheny replied that he will meet with SMA-COL Bowman to grasp what is needed and how to execute along with specific board members assisting in identifying improvements to JROTC culture. Lt Col Lempe inquired if the PM2 data can be presented at the next board meeting, in which SMA-COL Bowman replied that data will be provided. BG Neff inquired to address the large balloon payment sooner and save interest rather than waiting for due date, in which Lt Col Lempe replied that it can be done. Vice Chair Gregory stated that local representatives could assist in obtaining the status of FEMA application that was submitted in November.

Lt Col Lempe moved to approve the use of capital funds to pay the interest on current debt service; Mr. Skipper seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Board: N/A

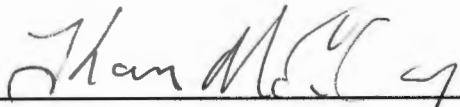
Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

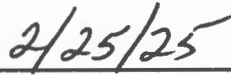
Public Comments: N/A

The next board meeting will be on 25 February 2025 at 2:30pm at the High School campus.

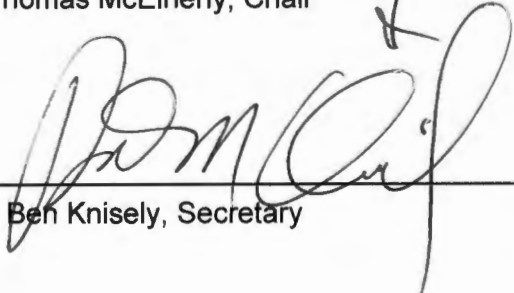
The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:54pm.



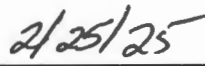
Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair



Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary



Date