

SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

18 NOVEMBER 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 (virtual)
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary
Carlos Moreira, Sgt Maj, USMCR
Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)
Charles Shugg, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)
Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA (virtual)
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)

Absent: Scott Lempe, Lt Col, USAF (Ret); W. Scott Wallace, GEN, USA (Ret); SMA-CPT Mick Fallis, HS Athletic Director; SMA-CPT Jared Lauther, MS Athletic Director

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, CEO/Head of High School
Dr. Cheryl Korwin, Head of Middle School
SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School (virtual)
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of High School (virtual)
SMA-LTC Bryan Burns, Assistant Head of Middle School (virtual)
MAJ (Ret) Russ Osterfeld, SAI
SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance
SMA-MAJ Savannah Kalka, Assistant Director of Finance

Guests in Attendance: CW4 Wes Rinehart, HS Army Instructor; SMA-CPT John Geimer, HS Economics/Government; SMA-CPT Esther Jaffee, HS Faculty Representative (virtual); SMA-CPT Marsha Reinig-Umana, MS Faculty Representative; Mr. David Black; Ms. Jennifer Vigne, Education Foundation; Mr. Herb Jones, Chair Emeritus (virtual); Ms. Jessica Albert (virtual); Ms. Kristina Villarreal (virtual)

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 23 September 2025 Minutes:

COL Ben Knisely moved to approve the 23 September 2025 minutes; Sgt Maj Carlos Moreira seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Chair McElheny introduced Ms. Jennifer Vigne of the Education Foundation. Ms. Vigne discussed the goal of the Education Foundation at SMA is to make sure students are better today than they were yesterday, by providing grants, and including SMA into their STRIDE program with other public high schools. She mentioned a database created with scholarships specifically to SMA cadets and initiate the Future Ready Scholars Program with staff on campus meeting with cadets regularly. SMA-COL Christina Bowman stated Ms. Vigne and her team submitted an impact report in the read-ahead.

Chair McElheny introduced Mr. David Black as a prospective board member. Mr. Black shared his background as an attorney in corporate America and building his investment company. He shared that watching SMA grow over the years has shown him just how many opportunities there are to further enrich the value we provide to students.

SMA-CPT John Geimer presented an update on the HAM Radio program currently at the high school. He discussed extending program to the prep with SMA-MAJ Dawn Sudbury attending teacher training and obtaining the certification to add radio to the after-school STEM program. SMA-CPT Geimer stated he is awaiting funding approvals from grants in the communication and energy industries, and excited to share the furthest the cadets reached was 3,700 miles to Chile. Sgt Maj Moreira inquired if there's research to advancements in industry after graduation, to which BG Jerry Neff replied that based on research participation in youth radio leads to double the success in an engineering path.

Head of Middle School Report: Dr. Cheryl Korwin provided a read-ahead report. She discussed data on current GPAs for the first nine weeks is promising and moving in the right direction, behavior referrals have decreased, and attendance is better. Dr. Korwin stated working on the academic leadership and culture through the Leader In Me framework with goal to become a Lighthouse School in five years. COL Richard Swoope commended the cadets in a great job at the Veterans Day Parade. Chair McElheny stated it was a privilege of being on campus this year and thanked Dr. Korwin for a job well done.

CEO/Head of High School: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She stated phase one of the accreditation with COGNIA is complete and beginning with phase two that introduces surveys to employees, cadets, and families. SMA-COL Bowman discussed the enrollment projections from the district, and scheduling the Medal of Honor training prior to Summer break in April with a new professional day for faculty and staff. She stated Dr. Cecilia Ferradino is awarded SMA's Teacher of the Year, and announced after application submission to the state's Department of Education, SMA has been recognized as a Purple Star School of Distinction.

MS Faculty Representative: SMA-MAJ Marsha Reinig-Umana provided a read-ahead report. She discussed a great showing at the UTC Santa Parade, SMA-MAJ Sudbury receiving her HAM license and built walkie talkies with cadets in the STEM after school club, and the upcoming Island Art Gallery in downtown Bradenton to

showcase cadets' artwork. SMA-MAJ Reinig-Umana mentioned athletics' success with the boys' basketball team winning first game in three years, and introducing a new club the SWAT team with cadets helping other cadets to prevent vaping and tobacco use.

HS Faculty Representative: SMA-CPT Esther Jaffee provided a read-ahead report. She stated faculty and parents want to see additional A/P classes developed and taught by faculty at SMA and not through FLVS, and stagger with additional CTE classes.

Athletics Report: SMA-COL Bowman stated that Athletic Director, SMA-MAJ Charlie Carver, is grateful for the donations and support to the athletic department.

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He discussed the upcoming events for Color Guard, Raiders, and JLAB with mention of the Military Ball on November 20th. MAJ Osterfeld thanked COL Knisely for his insight and advice on Military Ball protocol.

Treasurer's Report: SMA-MAJ Savannah Kalka provided a read-ahead report. She discussed balance sheets for both campuses and FTE based on enrollment for both campuses.

COL Knisely moved to approve the Teacher Allocation Plan; Sgt Maj Moreira seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Nominating Committee Report: Chair McElheny stated for COL Knisely to meet with our guest, Mr. Black, to discuss the roles and responsibilities as a prospective board member and present at the next board meeting.

Facilities Committee Report: Chair McElheny discussed both options for the high school campus of either updating the current campus, or sell and build new school, with mentioning some areas are the original building of at least seventy-five years old

Leadership and Ethics Conference Committee: Ms. Michael Tollerton provided an update on the conference. She stated two thirds of funds have been covered through donations, and mentioned two tasks still need to be discussed and allocated by board members. Ms. Tollerton mentioned the first virtual facilitator meeting in December and will send videos on training. She inquired as to the status on reaching out to the principals and counselors.

PTCC Report: Ms. Amber Martin provided a read-ahead report.

Chair Report: Chair McElheny discussed seeking approval at the next meeting for board priorities, characterizing as tier one critical priorities of first, fiscal health; second, measurable student achievement and academy grade of an "A"; third, quality branded character development program (Medal of Honor) resulting in positive differentiation from other schools; fourth, creating safe and functional facilities for both campuses; fifth, competitive teacher compensation package; and sixth, align academy and community support by reestablishing trust within our communities. He stated he will seek support in making sure anything decided fits a crucial priority.

Alumni Recognition: COL Knisely shared an alumni story of Hunter Jacob, class of 2016, who graduated from Virginia Military Institute on a full scholarship, became a civil engineer and was involved in the creation of the diverging diamond at the UTC mall. He stated Hunter is now married and with a new child, and elevated his career to become the number two person in his company and nominated as Civil Engineer of the Year award.

Old Business: N/A

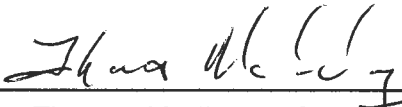
New Business: N/A

Public Comments: N/A

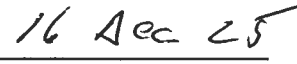
Board Comments: N/A

The next board meeting will be on 16 December 2025 at 2:30pm at the High School campus.

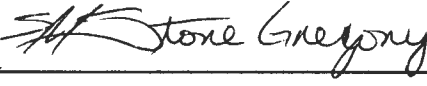
The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:49pm.



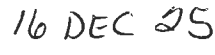
Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair



Date

FOR 

COL Ben Knisely, Secretary



Date