

SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

20 JANUARY 2026

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 (virtual)

David Black

Carlos Moreira, Sgt Maj, USMCR

Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)

Charles Shugg, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret) (virtual)

Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF

Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)

Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA

Absent: W. Scott Wallace, GEN, USA (Ret); Scott Lempe, Lt Col, USAF (Ret); SMA-COL Christina Bowman, CEO/Head of High School; SMA-CPT Jared Lauther, MS Athletic Director

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:

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

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

MAJ (Ret) Russ Osterfeld, SAI

SMA-MAJ Savannah Kalka, Director of Finance

Guests in Attendance: SMA-CPT Mick Fallis, HS Athletic Director; SMA-CPT Marsha Reinig-Umana, MS Faculty Representative; SMA-CPT Kathleen Obendorf, MS School Counselor (virtual); Cadet Samuel Bonser; Nikki Orth (virtual)

Location: SMA High School

The vice chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm.

Vice Chair Erica Gregory started the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair McElheny stated the nominating committee report will be moved to the top of the agenda.

Dr. Thomas McElheny excused himself out of the room. Vice Chair Gregory called the nominating committee, to which COL Ben Knisely turned over to BG Jerry Neff. He stated it would be a mistake for another board member to step up as chair as Dr. McElheny has already laid out important board priorities and the momentum needs to continue as such.

BG Neff moved to approve Dr. Thomas McElheny as chair of SMA Board of Directors, Mr. Ron Skipper seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Chair McElheny reentered the room and resumed position.

Motion to Approve the 16 December 2025 Minutes:

Vice Chair Erica Gregory moved to approve the 16 December 2025 minutes; Ms. Michael Tollerton seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

CEO/Head of High School Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. Chair McElheny pointed out a successful graduation rate of 99.3% for last school year, second highest in county behind Pine View School, and added the goal for this school year is 100%.

HS Faculty Representative: N/A

Head of Middle School: Dr. Cheryl Korwin provided a read-ahead report. She discussed data provided for overall attendance, grades and behavior, with special attention to 74% of students holding a 3.0 GPA or higher. Mr. David Black inquired as to absences affecting funding, to which Dr. Korwin replied that only during the survey window and that the attendance in data provided is not consecutive days.

MS Faculty Representative: SMA-MAJ Marsha Reinig-Umana provided a read-ahead report. She discussed successful events such as the second semester change of command ceremony. SMA-MAJ Reinig-Umana mentioned updates to science with their field trip to NASA and Mote Marine, Ag-Science receiving twelve new flower beds with new irrigation system, and SMA-CPT Kathleen Obendorf starting a club called SWAT Team to focus on vaping dangers and mental health resources.

Athletics Report: N/A

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned upcoming events with Drill and Adventure Raiders season beginning at end of month, and the USF ROTC visit. MAJ Osterfeld discussed CSM Phinney holding an archery clinic for those that would like to get certified and continuing with the service academy cohort with their progress in test scores and physical fitness. He stated starting the second semester with focus on discipline, followed with responsibility, of the cadets, their uniform and behavior.

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.

Facilities Committee Report: N/A

Leadership and Ethics Conference Committee: Ms. Tollerton provided an update of the conference scheduled for 30 January 2026. She discussed a total of 25 students from six various schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties. Ms. Tollerton stated the event is completely funded through community sponsorships.

PTCC Report: N/A

Chair Report: Chair McElheny discussed the 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; sixth, align academy and community support by reestablishing trust within our communities; and seventh, add athletics and physical fitness as an integral part of an SMA education. He stated the rule as board members is to set a vision to provide to the CEO to implement, but not micromanage.

Chair McElheny stated that the CEO and himself would cast a vision together to present to the board with steps to implement and measurable goals. He stated that SMA-COL Bowman and himself will present vision with achievable goals. Chair McElheny discussed updates on the facilities with mention of available space near the prep middle school. COL Knisely inquired if land is available through the district for purchase, to which Chair McElheny replied to search for an advocate.

Alumni Recognition: N/A

Old Business: N/A

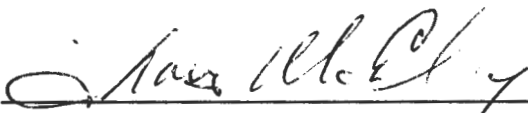
New Business: N/A

Public Comments: N/A

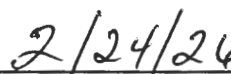
Board Comments: N/A

The next board meeting will be on 24 February 2026 at 2:30pm at the High School campus.

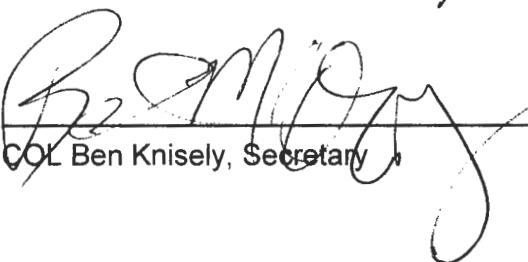
The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:46pm.



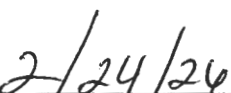
Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair



Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary



Date