

SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
24 FEBRUARY 2026

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Dr. Thomas J. McElheny, Former Capt, USMC, Chair
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary
Pete Skokos, Treasurer (virtual)
David Black
Carlos Moreira, Sgt Maj, USMCR (virtual)
Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)
Charles Shugg, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)
Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF (virtual)
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret) (virtual)
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA
W. Scott Wallace, GEN, USA (Ret)

Absent: Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair; 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-MAJ Savannah Kalka, Director of Finance

Guests in Attendance: SMA-CPT Mick Fallis, HS Athletic Director; SMA-CPT Marsha Reinig-Umana, MS Faculty Representative; CSM Jack Phinney, JROTC Instructor; CW4 Wes Rinehart, JROTC Instructor; Cadet Samuel Bonser

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 20 January 2026 Minutes:

Mr. David Black moved to approve the 20 January 2026 minutes; GEN W. Scott Wallace seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

Head of Middle School: Dr. Cheryl Korwin provided a read-ahead report. She discussed a successful SPIN event with a great turnout and the Honor the Eagle Awards for cadets in grades sixth through eighth with a 3.5 GPA or higher. Dr. Korwin mentioned upcoming events and field trips with mention of the PTCC fundraiser, Eagles Flight Walkathon. Chair McElheny commended Dr. Korwin for the positive changes and the overall campus culture.

MS Faculty Representative: SMA-MAJ Marsha Reinig-Umana provided a read-ahead report. She mentioned attending the Leadership and Ethics Conference was a great experience and looks forward to sharing with the prep cadets and staff. SMA-MAJ Reinig-Umana discussed the initiatives in the ELA department working with those cadets who need extra support and the SWAT team partnering with the Sarasota Police Department to discuss ways to cut tobacco use in middle school. Chair McElheny inquired as to how many times cadets recite the cadet creed, to which Dr. Korwin replied anywhere from two to five times a week.

MS Athletics Report: Dr. Korwin discussed that every Friday staff complete a report on athletes with regards to grades, behavior and effort, and if low, then athlete is not able to play for the next week. Dr. Korwin stated if the cadets don't represent us well on campus, then they don't get to represent us outside campus.

CEO/Head of High School Report: SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed meeting with board director, Mr. Ron Skipper, to execute a scholarship fund that will benefit six graduating cadets every year. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned a successful inaugural Leadership and Ethics Conference, and excited about the possibilities of partnering with New College of Florida after meeting with Dr. David Rancourt. She discussed meeting with GEN Wallace, COL Richard Swoope, and Chair McElheny on criteria for commandant position. SMA-COL Bowman mentioned working on new cleaning company, options for the guardian program for campus safety, and partnering with SSAS on sharing buses and routes to handle transportation challenges that may arise using county buses. She stated a meeting in March with Mussman Architects to discuss possibilities of campus upgrades.

SMA-COL Bowman mentioned a meaningful morning attending the prayer breakfast with SMA-CPT Barbara Shelby and six ninth graders. Mr. Black inquired as to the difference in school hours from the district and how the transportation FTE would work partnering with SSAS, to which SMA-COL Bowman replied that the middle school has different hours from the district and the transportation FTE would transfer to us from SSAS.

Mr. Black moved to approve the out-of-field instructors for second semester for both campuses; Ms. Michael Tollerton seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

SMA-COL Bowman discussed data for biology, geometry and algebra have all increased as well as PM2 from PM1 across sixth through tenth grades. Mr. Black congratulated the administrative team and faculty for the extensive work and effort in raising the scores that resulted in higher than district's in geometry, algebra and biology.

HS Faculty Representative: N/A

HS Athletics Report: Coach Mick Fallis provided a read-ahead report. He discussed baseball and track and field in the current Spring season, and announced senior, Manny Ramirez, winning the heavyweight title at districts.

Cadet Report: Senior cadet, Samuel Bonser, discussed the success of the HAM radio program and the upcoming test for certification for a radio license.

SAI Report: MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned upcoming events with Drill and Adventure Raiders season and their upcoming Area 5 meet. MAJ Osterfeld announced the Drill team has qualified for Nationals in Daytona in May, first time attending with a stellar two-year record that played a significant role in the decision. He discussed upcoming events such as the county military ball on the seventh, Raiders Mud Pit Day on the thirteenth, and the postponement of the Flag Burning Ceremony due to the burn ban. MAJ Osterfeld discussed the positive turn around in uniform infractions with assistance from administration.

Treasurer's Report: SMA-MAJ Savannah Kalka provided a read-ahead report. She discussed balance sheets for both campuses and stated a current healthy fiscal position.

Nominating Committee Report: N/A

Facilities Committee Report: Chair McElheny stated updated information will be presented at the next board meeting.

Chair Report: Chair McElheny provided background information on enrollment growth and past funds received, as well as the district cuts for next school year outlined by Superintendent Terry Connor. He mentioned the current health of SMA as fiscally stronger than its competitors, advancing our athletic and intramural program, along with plans to improve the academic program for grades six through twelve paired with a strong military and values. Chair McElheny stated that some solutions are in plain sight and that we are very encouraged on where SMA is heading.

Leadership and Ethics Conference Committee: Ms. Tollerton thanked staff and board for a successful first conference and will have a compilation of the feedback from the students to present. BG Jerry Neff shared his pleasant surprise on the extensive student participation and stated it was positively eye opening.

PTCC Report: N/A

Alumni Recognition: N/A

Old Business: N/A

New Business: N/A

Public Comments: N/A

Board Comments: COL Ben Knisely inquired as to the resignation letter from Lt Col Scott Lempe as board director, to which Chair McElheny thanked Lt Col Lempe for his efforts in wanting what's best for SMA.

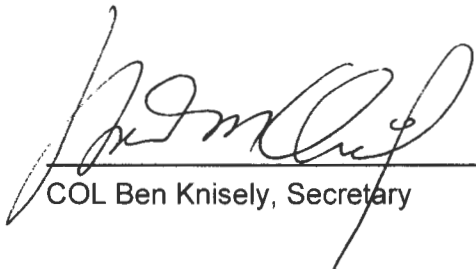
The next board meeting will be on 24 March 2026 at 2:30pm at the High School campus.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:38pm.



Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

3/24/26
Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

3/24/26
Date