

**SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
28 APRIL 2026

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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  
Pete Skokos, Treasurer  
David Black  
Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)  
Charles Shugg, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)  
Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF  
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)  
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA  
W. Scott Wallace, GEN, USA (Ret)

**Absent:** Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary; SMA-LTC Caitlin West, Assistant Head of High School (virtual); 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 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 Esther Jaffee, HS Faculty Representative (virtual); SMA-MAJ Marsha Reinig-Umana, MS Faculty Representative; SMA-MAJ Michael Finley, Department Chair; SMA-CPT Kathy Simon (virtual); Dan Kennedy (virtual); Tristan Hermanson (virtual); Frances Marx (virtual); Nikki Orth

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 24 March 2026 Minutes:**

Vice Chair Erica Gregory moved to approve the 24 March 2026 minutes; Mr. Pete Skokos seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.

**Head of Middle School:** Dr. Cheryl Korwin provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the progress thus far with the Leader in Me program and the next steps towards becoming Light house school. Dr. Korwin mentioned preparing for the upcoming PM3 testing and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion ceremony on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. She honored 8<sup>th</sup> grader, Quincy Tran, who was recognized for the third year in a row as the middle school representative in Sarasota county as a Shining Star for the Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse.

**MS Faculty Representative:** SMA-MAJ Marsha Reinig-Umana provided a read-ahead report. She mentioned faculty preparing for PM3 testing while strengthening character development in the classrooms to end the year strong.

**MS Athletics Report:** SMA-CPT Jared Lauther provided a read-ahead report. Dr. Korwin mentioned a new protocol for participating in athletics where feedback on grades and behavior are reported back to athletic director weekly, and cannot play the following week if in poor standing.

**CEO/Head of High School Report:** SMA-COL Christina Bowman provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the need to obtain a new auditor, as the previous one stopped government audits and the board approval of the 2025 tax audit.

**Mr. Ron Skipper moved to approve the 2025 tax audit; Brig Gen Shugg seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

**Mr. Ron Skipper moved to approve the new CPA firm, Miller and Miller, for next year's audit; BG Jerry Neff seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.**

SMA-COL Bowman mentioned a successful professional development day and meeting with five other charter schools for the charter school consortium she created. She stated the meeting with Dr. Johnson in reviewing data went well, and successful SMA day with First Tee of Sarasota on both campuses through a connection from Ms. Michael Tollerton. SMA-COL Bowman discussed the wish list compiled by each department for Mussman Architects and the importance of the upcoming Medal of Honor Character Program training on April 6<sup>th</sup> for both campuses.

COL Ben Knisely inquired as to the advantages of the collaboration with SSAS on transportation, to which SMA-COL Bowman replied the collaboration works well by adding two additional buses and two 14-passenger vans, as well as adding opportunities for sharing other resources. Mr. Black inquired about the FAFSA report, to which SMA-COL Bowman replied the goal for next school year is to increase FAFSA participation with the assistance of the partnership with Education Foundation.

**HS Faculty Representative:** SMA-CPT Esther Jaffee provided a read-ahead report. She discussed the upcoming debate tournament on Saturday with twelve schools and over 100 students competing.

**HS Athletics Report:** Coach Mick Fallis provided a read-ahead report. He highlighted baseball's current winning record of 6-5 and the #1 seed in the WAC conference, as well as track and field competing at a high level.

**Cadet Report:** Senior cadet, Samuel Bonser, discussed the success of the HAM radio program with four cadets passing exams to obtain their technician certification with the FCC and himself passing the additional general technician certification.

**SAI Report:** MAJ Russ Osterfeld provided a read-ahead report. He mentioned a successful round of interviews for next year's Regimental Staff with the Change of Command ceremony scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup> at formation, followed by refreshments in the conference room. MAJ Osterfeld stated the energy within the regiment was evident as the new staff were announced during formation, especially with next year's JROTC accreditation. He discussed waiting for decisions on service academy acceptances and the upcoming Service Academy Fair in May and the new date for Congressman Steube's Academy Fitness Test. SGM Kenneth Lee stated a positive turnout for the second ASVAB test of this school year.

**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:** Chair McElheny announced that board member Sgt Maj Carlos Moreira will be resigning from the board due to an upcoming deployment. He expressed sincere gratitude for his commitment to SMA and wished him all the best in his service.

**Facilities Committee Report:** N/A

**Chair Report:** Chair McElheny provided background information on enrollment growth and the challenges facing the enrollment deficit of the county paired with the increasing number of charter schools. He honored the founders of SMA with the vision of creating a unique military academy and the courage to execute it. Chair McElheny discussed the option of merging campuses to the middle school and the land restrictions it presents, as well as the monetary surplus for that option that could go towards salaries, coaches, or resources for a higher SMA standard. He further discussed creating three working groups of board members to gather information with the committee chairs as follows; Vice Chair Erica Gregory for Strategic with Ms. Tollerton, COL Knisely, and COL Richard Swoope; Chair McElheny for Facilities and Finance with Mr. Black, BG Neff, and Mr. Skipper; and Brig Gen Shugg for Athletics. Chair McElheny stated that each board meeting will include dedicated time to review information gathered, with the goal of reaching a cohesive shared vision with staff, parents and cadets by June 30<sup>th</sup>. He stated board members' attendance of each group will be confirmed at next board meeting.

SMA-COL Bowman mentioned the advantage of combining campuses with less operating expenses of only one campus as well as extending our JROTC program to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Black inquired as to the fiduciary responsibility, to which Chair McElheny replied that he will look into whether a firm needs to be hired. Chair McElheny mentioned GEN W. Scott Wallace searching for a superintendent and the meeting with GEN Wallace, Dr. David Rancourt and himself went well regarding the process of implementing an ROTC program at New College.

**PTCC Report:** N/A

**Alumni Recognition:** N/A

**Old Business:** N/A

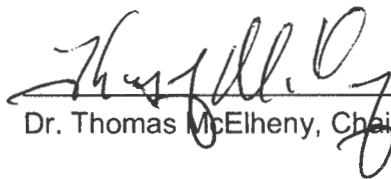
**New Business:** N/A

**Public Comments:** N/A

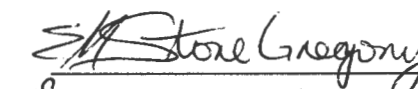
**Board Comments:** N/A

The next board meeting will be on 28 April 2026 at 2:30pm at the High School campus.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 4:31pm.

  
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Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

5/19/24  
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Date

  
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for COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

5/19/24  
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Date