

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES

December 2, 2010

Board of Director Members in Attendance:

LTG Howard Crowell, Jr., USA (Ret), Chairman

Mr. Herb Jones, Vice Chairman

Mr. Fred Derr, Treasurer

Dr. Celia Edmundson, Secretary

Mr. Steve Herb, Member

Mr. Woody Wolverton, Member

SMA Executive Staff in Attendance:

Col. Dan Kennedy, Headmaster & CEO

Col. Stephen Cork, Commandant of Cadets & CFO

Chairman Crowell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He addressed the topic of planning and scheduling SMA Board meetings. Due to unforeseen issues and topics coming to the attention of SMA Administration, the November and December scheduled meetings were adjusted. The Chairman said that he plans for a regular schedule in the future for Board meetings consistent with the agreed upon third Thursday of each month at 2:00. There was brief discussion and general consensus for this time.

General Crowell requested discussion or a motion to accept the minutes of the Board meeting of December 2, 2010. Mr. Derr requested a minor correction be made in the financial section. Page three, line two; "...Our current equity to net worth..." should be corrected to read; "...Our current equity or net worth..." The Chairman entertained a motion to approve the minutes with the discussed correction. A motion was made by Mr. Jones. Mr. Derr seconded the motion; voted with no objections and approved.

Academic Leadership Committee:

The Chair asked Mr. Kennedy to introduce Ms. Christina Bowman, Assistant Headmaster and Project Chairperson for the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for School Year 2010-2011. Mr. Kennedy reminded the Board members that this information is presented to the Board yearly. He also stated that this report is a major effort that all District schools are required to submit each year that forecasts student improvements. Mr. Kennedy went on to state that our prior year plan worked very well; we had good reports on our FCAT scores and student academic

improvement. The changes made this year were minor adjustments because of our accomplishments.

Ms. Bowman presented each board member with a packet noted as the Differentiated Accountability Requirements Charter School Checklist; a check list for the SIP. The packet is an overview of the 46 page report. The current plan has few changes from last year because of the previously noted success and effectiveness. Ms. Bowman commented that because of the dedicated efforts of our staff and faculty following this plan, we earned 100% on our stated annual improvement. All groups and sub-groups made progress. We are the only high school in Sarasota County to have earned the 100% AYP grade. Our teachers did a phenomenal job and our students stepped up to our expectations.

The four component areas that we focused upon for changes this year are (1) attendance/truancy, (2) instruction, (3) professional development and (4) communication. Ms. Bowman emphasized that all these areas overlap for the efforts, expectations and accomplishments of the students.

1. Attendance/truancy; over this past summer we reviewed and revised the process for this policy. The minor changes made provided a timely communication to faculty, students and student's families with concerns over attendance and truancy. When a student is absent we report the absence to the District as well as within Snap Grades (a website used by faculty, staff, students and student's families for grades, attendance, and communication). The District utilizes an automated call center and Snap Grades automatically sends out email messages. Staff and faculty are able to monitor students in crisis and this in turn supports our efforts on RTI (response to intervention). We also have created and established a Positive Behavior support program to promote and reward student good choices and behaviors.
2. Instruction; District-wide and State-wide education requires us to create Instructional Focus Calendars; similar to a syllabus, but, more intensive. (This is also part of the Professional Development plan.) The base-line for this information is on a weekly basis; what are you doing, how are you doing it and what are you teaching. The staff is required to have their syllabus completed by January in all content areas. We are also concentrating on Differentiating Instruction within the classrooms. This concept identifies specific details for the readiness, interests and learning profiles of our students. Additionally, we are working on End of Course Exams and Computer based testing to monitor student's progress and accomplishments toward expected bench marks.
3. Professional development; along with the issues noted before and continuing with our literacy word of the week (WOW), and student focus on reading.
4. Communication; Snap Grades provides an excellent tool for students, student's families and the faculty and staff to monitor progress. Also with this tool, the response to intervention time frame is reduced.

There was brief discussion that followed relating to the past year's practices, current changes to the SIP, and District wide policy.

Next, Dr. Edmundson discussed the ongoing project of SMA rack cards to be used for marketing and advertising. Discussion followed regarding specific items to be included. The Board expressed its appreciation to Dr. Edmundson for her efforts to research and prepare the material.

Financial Report:

Mr. Derr began the financial report by referring to the Balance Sheet. He indicated that we are in good shape with a current asset versus current liability ratio of 3.74, and with a working capital of \$770,000. Our net worth is \$2,365,000; a slight increase over last month. The Profit and Loss statement, as compared to the budget, is ahead by \$86,000 to date. Therefore, the net income is \$368,000 to date. This validates our continued conservative approach to managing expenses, and to developing revenue projections. Further, Mr. Derr noted the Profit and Loss statement showing previous year comparison; we are behind by \$148,000 over last year. This shortfall is primarily due to problems discussed previously at Board meetings about FTE funding. Given the FTE funding situation, we are in good shape. COL Cork added that the update and funding for the approved current year FTE had not been realized at the time of this report period. The approved additional funds, once received, will improve our position. Also, the capital funding from the District for the current year period was changed to accrue on a monthly basis as compared to last year when it was issued at the beginning of the year.

Following discussion of the financial report, Mr. Derr addressed the Revised Budget. He noted that in general, compared to the Original Budget, we are in a better position. COL Cork advised that the Revised Budget shows an increase of revenue over the year by approximately \$500,000. There was also some reduction of expenses; approximately \$110,000.00. General Crowell noted an increase in retirement benefit costs. COL Cork responded that the increase expense figures for retirement benefits were not available at the time of the planning for the Original Budget. Chairman Crowell next questioned the increased bus expenses. COL Cork replied that we had more students and that increased the expense for transportation. Discussion followed that a budget variance column should be added to the budget report for ease of comparison for prior and current year figures.

Following additional discussion of the budget, COL Cork presented the Board with a recommended Investment Policy for consideration and approval. The recent financial audit recommended the need for a policy. Mr. Wolverton questioned the written verbiage on government investment practice and asked if this was restricted to FDIC. COL Cork responded that the policy was written according to statute. Mr. Wolverton noted that there were a number of investment vehicles that provide secure and safe investment opportunity other than government protected accounts. Mr. Wolverton suggested that it be written that any investment practice that was insured, secured and protected by the Federal Government be used in the policy. Discussion followed questioning whether the statute and the proposed policy were in sync. Mr. Knisely questioned the value of the current funds in reserve. COL Cork responded that the value was approximately \$365,000, and that we have a goal of contributing 5% of net income on an annual basis. The funds are to be used for emergency situations and/or matters that the Board deems appropriate for funding.

After additional discussion, General Crowell entertained the recommendation that the investment policy be edited and rewritten for future consideration. There was general consensus by Board members that the topic be tabled until the next Board meeting.

Next, COL Cork addressed and requested approval for securing a new school bus on a lease-to-purchase agreement. This would require executive signatures by the SMA Board Secretary, and the school seal to verify that the Board approved the transaction creating a five year financial obligation. Mr. Kennedy addressed the need for this bus (77 passengers) by stating that our current bus that we had purchased used from the district was old, and that it was a serious safety concern. We experienced a growing number of break-downs which stranded students on the side of the road. For the safety of our students, and to be more cost effective, we need a new bus. The cost for the lease is \$1,800.00 per month for five years with a purchase option of \$30,000 at the end of the term. SMA has the option of using the District or the bus company for needed repairs. Mr. Kennedy recommended using the District for needed repairs. He said that SMA is mandated by the state for specific and regular inspections. Additionally, SMA qualifies for Capital Reimbursement funds by the District for this expense. Discussion followed on the cost for a lease as opposed to paying cash for the vehicle; \$105,000.00. (The actual bus expense is piggy-backed on the District's volume purchasing discounts.) The SMA District Capital Reimbursement funding [\$380,000.00; less \$40,000 to \$50,000 claimed to date] is available for use in a claim for the expenditure. Discussion followed regarding whether to purchase or lease the bus. Board members questioned the timing for claiming Capital Funds. COL Cork advised that if we pay cash for the item, we then submit a claim to District for the funds. The Chairman questioned the average life of a bus and Mr. Kennedy answered approximately eight years. After additional discussion, The Chairman entertained a motion from Mr. Jones to purchase the bus for an outright cash payment, and then claim the Capital Funds reimbursement from the District. Mr. Derr seconded the motion; voted with no objections and approved.

COL Cork addressed the next issue of the policy for Club Financial Management. General Crowell reminded the Board Members that the policy had been distributed prior to the current meeting. The policy is for informational purposes to the Board. Mr. Derr added that all bank statements are mailed to SMA and forward to his office to be opened and reviewed monthly. There were no recommended changes suggested for the policy.

Chairman Crowell entertained a motion to approve the financial statements. Mr. Herb made a motion to approve the financial statements as presented; Mr. Jones seconded the motion; voted with no objections and approved.

General Crowell next entertained a motion to approve the revised budget. Mr. Herb made a motion to approve the revised budget; Mr. Wolverton seconded; voted with no objections and approved.

Headmaster's Report:

Mr. Kennedy began his statements by sharing a conversation he recently experienced with another educator that SMA had earned 100% AYP (Annual Yearly Progress). This is considered by educators as the 'Holy Grail' of education; a near impossible task to accomplish at the high school level. Our total testing scores for last year improved over all other high schools in the District except Pine View. This is a tremendous achievement.

Mr. Kennedy anticipates that this should positively impact our school grade. The release and announcement of school grades are expected in early December for all Sarasota District schools. The format for scoring high school grades has changed since last year. There are many factors besides FCAT scores that are now considered; i.e. number of students enrolled in AP classes; students enrolled in dual enrollment; number of students taking ACT/SAT; scores on these tests; number of transfers; drop-outs, etc. Based on measurements in previous years, Mr. Kennedy said that we would be way above the rating for an 'A' school. We're not sure this year with the new scoring system. However, our success is directly related to the dedication and team work exhibited by faculty and staff. The team work of reaching across academic discipline lines has really paid off; math, reading, language arts, etc. For example, First Sergeant Lisa Thomas and the JROTC department have proactively worked with our other academic departments to strengthen student writing skills. An effective School Improvement Plan also factored into the successes. Mr. Kennedy expressed extreme pride in all SMA employees for their tireless and dedicated efforts.

General Crowell acknowledged the impressive results. On behalf of the Board, he recognized the outstanding effort and results of the SMA staff and faculty. Additionally, he noted that the SMA Board does not take the staff and faculty efforts for granted. Mr. Herb recommended that a letter be sent, under the signature of the Board Chairman, to congratulate the faculty and staff for their success. Mr. Kennedy stated that all employees of the organization should receive the correspondence. He shared an event that emphasized the total commitment all our employees. The day the FCAT scores came out, the Facility Manager, Mr. Jim Young, was waiting at Mr. Kennedy's car and stated that he had read about the success of our recent FCAT scores. At that time, the Headmaster knew that the interest of the students had permeated the entire SMA family. Dr. Edmundson asked when the SMA school grade would be known. Mr. Kennedy stated that the District expects to announce their findings in early December for the school year 2009-2010. There was additional discussion and consensus that Administration prepare a letter for the Chairman's signature.

Mr. Kennedy next referred the Board to additional enclosures in their notebooks. One is a publication from the Rotary Club recognizing our Interact Club that is under the direction of Ms. Christina Bowman. Also, enclosed is a 5-Star program flyer. This is the eighth year that SMA has earned the award. SMA is the only District 5-Star High School. Mr. Kennedy further reported on the following:

1. Enrollment: Current enrollment is 790 with 10 full-time at SCF; 21 dual enrollment cadets plus 17 at SCTI. (The 10 full time, 21 dual enrolled and 17 at SCTI are included in the 790 figure.)
2. Five Star School Award: SMA was presented with the Five Star School Award during the last District board meeting conducted on 2 November at the Landings. SMA was the only charter school and the only high school to receive the award. We have been a Five Star school since our first year of operation.
3. School Grade: Pending at this time.

4. Accident Reenactment: The fire department, police, emergency services along with Bay Flight conducted a realistic accident reenactment on the SMA Field on the 18th. Juniors and seniors attended. Tomorrow we have a Safe Car Driving presentation. Mr. Kennedy indicated that he has lost 44 students to date due to death from car accidents.
5. Veterans Day Parade: This year's Veterans Day Parade was outstanding. LTG Crowell provided us with a moving speech before the regiment marched off to the staging area at Osprey and Main. An estimated 1,000 parents participated. Following the parade our PTCC sold hot dogs and burgers to the hungry students and parents. There were also numerous displays and demonstrations.
6. Raiders: Our raider teams returned from the District five raider championships with first place awards in every event. On to the states!
7. Wreaths Across America: To date, SMA has sold over 1300 wreaths for the grave markers at the National cemetery.
8. McIntosh Middle School: For the 9th year, SMA has participated in the McIntosh Middle Veterans Assembly. SMA provided a drill demonstration, pipers, drum line and raiders to manage parking.
9. Military Ball: The 2010 Military Ball will be held on Saturday, December the 11th at the exhibition hall near the airport. All board members are welcome to attend. If you are attending, please contact COL Cork or me and we will make appropriate seating arrangements for you.
10. Academic Olympics: Mrs. Schroeder has started practices for the SMA Academic Olympics team. We have some very sharp cadets on the team this year.
11. Food Drive: SMA is participating in the Mayors Feed the Hungry Program and so far we have filled 100 food boxes.
12. Graduation rate: SMA's graduation rate is 92.2; second only to Pine View.
13. Care packages for the deployed troops: SMA staff filled and sent off 24 boxes for deployed troops.

Audit Committee:

Mr. Jones advised the Board that there had been an Audit Committee meeting on November 15th. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the language in COL Cork's employment agreement due to the time lapse from the commencement of the negotiations. After some discussion, all parties were satisfied with some changes pertaining to the consulting agreement upon expiration of the employment agreement. Also, clarification was made in regards to the twelve weeks of unused vacation time that will be due COL Cork upon the termination of his employment agreement. The Audit Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Jones stated that COL

Cork signed the contract and settlement agreement. Mr. Jones made a motion to ratify the agreement. The Chair entertained the motion; Mr. Derr seconded; voted with no objections and approved.

On behalf of the Audit Committee, Mr. Jones extended his appreciation to Mr. Derr for the effort and many hours invested in the completion of this assignment.

Development Committee:

Mr. Wolverton informed the Board that he had a discussion with his friend Bob Ross (a veteran fund raiser within our community) about SMA's desire to raise funds. Mr. Ross referred Mr. Wolverton to Ms. Terri Hansen, Venice Community Foundation (VCF). After a phone conversation with Ms. Hansen, Mr. Wolverton learned that VCF would be pleased to support and provide a consultant to SMA (at no cost to SMA) to develop a plan for fund raising. Mr. Wolverton and Mr. Kennedy are to meet with Ms. Hansen in the near future. Mr. Wolverton also stated that he believed that SMA needed a full time person to work on this project. Details on the meeting and this project would be supplied at the next scheduled Board meeting.

Alumni/PTCC Committee:

Mr. Kennedy advised the Board that he had covered all details related to this group and their activities in his report. All the monies they raise benefit the school. They do a wonderful job and are a great group of men and women. Mr. Jones reflected that it would be desirable to have a member from the group attend the Board meetings. General Crowell stated his concern that the Board had stated in previous meetings the desire to have a PTCC member attend. Mr. Kennedy stated he would discuss the Board's desire with the group.

Chairman's Report:

General Crowell reminded the Board that the year was coming to a close and encouraged each member to consider making a contribution to the school. He also noted his view that the Board should focus on a long-range view of the school. The Chair recommended that we re-establish a Long Range Planning Committee. The committee would work with the Headmaster, the school and the Board to develop plans for the future. Some questions to consider are: Do we want another high school in a separate location? Do we want a middle school as a feeder to our current school to prepare student for the academics of the future? Does this establish us as a magnet school? Does the change in academic plans affect District wide support or prohibit the plans for these considerations? Do we want to build a new building or continue the remodeling plans on our campus?

The Chair suggested that the Committee advise the Board regarding decisions for the future of SMA. Mr. Derr agreed with the Chairman's comments. Dr. Edmundson stated her agreement that the Board has the responsibility to lead to the future and she would like to see this committee re-established. Mr. Jones stated the Committee would be good for management and their efforts to plan for the future. Mr. Knisely shared with the Board that as a born and bred Sarasota native, he had enjoyed the generous benefits of the area foundations and would like to be a member of the proposed committee. After much discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Derr, Mr. Herb and Mr. Knisely would be the committee members. The committee once formulated would report back to the Board.

Old Business:

Nothing to report.

New Business:

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 2:00 p.m., January 20, 2011 on campus.

Public Comments:

No comments.

Meeting adjourned by the Chairman at 11:44 a.m.

LTG Howard Crowell, Chairman

Dr. Celia Edmundson, Secretary

Drafted by: EE
Edited by: SDC