

**HOWE MILITARY SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING -- 04 May 2019**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

1303 hrs., All Saints Chapel (Approx. 120+ Alumni / guests present)

**Attendance**

- Fred Seibold, President
- Eleni Mitropoulos – 1st VP
- Tramel Harris - Treasurer
- Rudy Recile - Secretary
- Crystal Vaughn, 2nd VP

The Howe School Prayer was recited by COL D. George Douglass, (US Army RET) (A60), who was present in clergy attire and functioned as an ordained Deacon at the request of Fred Seibold.

Eleni Mitropoulos (A04) Motioned for the approval of this year's Annual Business Meeting Agenda, 2nd by Rudy Recile. (Motion passed by voice vote.)

**Opening Remarks**

HMSAA President, CDR Fred Seibold, USN (RET) (A53)

The closure of the School represents the biggest challenge to the HMSAA in its "since 1902" history. We must strive to keep the memories alive and provide the means for alums to stay in contact and reminisce, and maybe help each other somehow. We will have to raise money to help preserve and store memorabilia.

**HMA President's Report**

Dr. Thomas L. Tate, COL, US Army (RET)

[COL Tate assumed the role of HMA President Feb 2018, succeeding Dr. James Benson, COL, USMC (RET)]

In academic year 2019, Howe fielded a competitive soccer team and increased the quality of students. School didn't hit enrollment goals for 2018-19, couldn't pay teachers, ran out of money before 4/15; sold athletic fields / complex to trustee Bob Fanning for \$500k (in order to float operations through 6/30/19). The athletic complex is to be used for regular school activities free-of-charge until final closure or reorganization. A two-acre land-lease for farming remains active. Proceeds of school sale are to feed a HMSAA preservation endowment, the purpose of which would be to preserve / maintain the Howe Mansion, St. James Chapel, and Howe memorabilia.

The decision to close the School occurred during the 15 MAR 19 Trustee meeting. At the time, the priority to notify all concerned was in the order of Students and their families, Staff, Alumni, and the immediate community. Seniors and Juniors were included in plans for closing the school. (No clarification regarding Jr/Sr student involvement available.)

Zacher Commercial Realty hired a third-party service provider to assess property value and market campus for sale. The School needs \$10M to continue normal operations. COL Tate will maintain a skeleton crew (Administrative and Maintenance staff) until closure. He stated the potential high-end sale price for the school is about \$3.5M, while the low-end would be around \$1.5M.

If it were possible, COL Tate would prefer that an outside entity acquire campus and continue operating as a school. He stated he and the Trustees looked into a charter school option but couldn't make it work. COL Tate is committed to maintain school operations until the end of the academic year.

COL Tate closed his remarks by stating he wants to create a group to preserve Howe artifacts. He then called for any questions from the floor.

Question: Unnamed attendee: Why aren't the Trustees here to speak? (Eleni Mitropoulos is a Trustee; she rose and responded as such.)

(Note: Despite assurances that he would be in attendance to address specific questions / concerns, Trustee board president Phil Malone was absent and/or made himself unavailable for this meeting.)

Question: Kenny M. Washington III (A64) rose to summarize his past experiences as a Trustee, his and others' plan to reorganize school operations several years ago, and chastised the current state of conditions since. He requested that HMA Trustees delay their plan to close / sell campus for approximately 120 days, in order to allow he and his group of interested Alumni to present their revised plan to the Trustees. There was no actionable response from COL Tate or the Trustees to his commentary or request.

Question: Kenny Washington IV (A84) asked about preventative maintenance, and whether there was a plan to salvage campus operations.

COL Tate: The plan was to increase enrollment and fundraising, and stated he thought everyone did their best to save HMA.

Question: Jay Thompson (A84) how much to open doors next year? COL Tate: \$6M

Question from the floor: Will we be able to save the school?

Fred Seibold: The real question is how can we save the memorabilia?

Question from Brad Drew (A86): If we come up with money where does it go?

Eleni Mitropoulos: If the school is purchased, money from the sale would be used to preserve / maintain St. James Chapel, the Howe Mansion. and the artifacts / memorabilia contained within them.

Question from Ron Swanson (A55): Has a real assessment been made of the property? \$1.5m is too cheap.

COL Tate: campus was professionally appraised. He was provided a report of the appraisal.

Question from the floor: Have any "deep pockets" been approached? COL Tate: People were approached but to no avail. School has not shown growth so no one will invest. Fred Seibold referred interested parties to the School's recent and incomplete IRS 990 filings of, which do not indicate on paper that Howe is / has been a good investment.

Question from the floor: Where did the money go from investments? COL Tate: Unaware of any donors. Any money donated to the school went to operating costs.

Fred Seibold suspended further questions, and returned the meeting to the Agenda.

Eleni Mitropoulos Motioned to approve the Minutes from the 2018 Alumni Annual Business Meeting, 2nd by Tramel Harris. (Motion passed by voice vote)

### **Financial Report**

Tramel Harris (A93)

Checking account balance is \$140.00; the \$10,000 CD (taken out in April of 2018) will mature in March 2020.

(The moment Mr. Harris began to deliver his treasurer's report, several past HMSAA officers and a trustee rose and walked out of the ABM.)

Much of the Association's operating costs have been covered by the HMSAA Directorship, out of pocket. The need for fundraising was emphasized.

### **Committee Reports**

Executive: No report

Alumni Weekend / Events: No report

Awards: No report

Bylaws & Rules: No report

Fundraising: No report

Mentoring: No report

Nominating: (See below)

Special Projects: No report

Traditions: No report

### **Nominations and Elections**

The Following Directors were nominated and elected to a 3-year term: (Terms typically begin July 1st and end June 30th.)

\* = reelected.

\*Natalie Carter (A95)

\*Crystal Vaughn (A12)

\*Eleni Mitropoulos (A04)

Larry Willoughby (A69)

Paul Graegin (A84)

Mike DeWitt (A01)

James McKnight (A78)

Brian Morabito (A90)

Note: The slate of officers for the 2019--2020 term were elected by unanimous voice vote at approximately 1900hrs., 04 May 19 at the Alumni Club in Sturgis, MI, where a quorum was achieved. This specific, after ABM meeting of the Directors is customarily convened immediately following the Annual Business Meeting, and on campus. This year, however, a post-adjournment meeting was not possible on account of Alumni Weekend's tight schedule of events. Elected for the next one year term (01 JUL 19 through 30 JUN 20) were:

President: Fred Seibold  
1st VP: Eleni Mitropoulos  
2nd VP: Larry Willoughby  
Secretary: Rudy Recile\*\*  
Treasurer: Tramel Harris

\*\*During the 02 JUL 19 HMSAA Regular Business Meeting, Rudy Recile stepped down as Secretary and Brian Morabito was elected as Secretary. (7 yea, 0 nay, 2 abstentions, 2 absent)

### **Unfinished Business**

None declared

### **New Business**

Alumni Weekend 2020 is tentatively scheduled to be held in Sturgis, MI, or another nearby city. Slated for either May or June, exact dates are yet to be determined but will be considerate of Alumni input.

Fred Seibold called for a Motion to:

"Allow the Association to revise the HMSAA bylaws as needed to: accommodate the closure of the School, purchase real estate, and for the storage of memorabilia."

So moved, per Larry Willoughby (A69), 2nd by Crystal Vaughn. (Motion passed by voice vote.)

Meeting adjourned at 1400hrs.