

Virginia Beach Military Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting

22 May 2023

1500 - 1630

Members Present:

Chair RADM Fenton Priest, Vice-Chair RADM Gregory Nosal, CAPT J.J. Cummings, RADM Mark Gemmill, CAPT Loren Heckelman, CAPT Robert Herbert, RADM Robert Katz, RADM Charles Kubic, RADM Phillip Olson, CAPT Louis Schager, Joseph Strange, CAPT Charles Stuppard

Members/Guests Present via Phone:

MCPO Lawrence Barbrey, Gene Garland, CDR Kathleen Owens, Kip Fairwater

Members Absent:

CAPT Christopher Chope, RADM Kevin Cook, Elizabeth Dietzmann, CAPT Robert Smith, City Councilman R.D. Norman Holcomb

Guests/Advisors/Staff Present:

Charles Bauman III, Laura Baxter, Nolan Birsh, Sultan Camp, Rick Dwyer, Mercedes Holland, Portsmouth City Councilman Mark Hugel, John Lauterbach, Jack Livingston, Ernest McDonald, Tecora McIntyre, Kenny Miller, Todd Nichols, Elisabeth Parker, City Councilman Chris Taylor, John Uhrin, Capt. Michael Witherspoon

- I. Chair Fenton Priest called the meeting to order at 1502.
 - a. Chair Fenton Priest welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also welcomed and introduced new member RADM Charles Kubic as well as special guest Captain Michael Witherspoon, who is the outgoing Commanding Officer of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek – Fort Story.
 - b. General Introductions were made around the room for all those present.

- II. Approval of 27 March 2023 Meeting Minutes
 - a. Motion: Greg Nosal
 - b. Second: Charles Stuppard
 - c. Minutes approved unanimously

- III. City Update – City Council Liaisons

City Councilman Chris Taylor shared the following information:

 - a. City Council passed the FY23-24 budget this month to include staff increases, pay raises, and educational funding.
 - b. District 8 was hit by a tornado and we are grateful for the collaborative recovery efforts of the community, state and federal government.
 - c. Public Safety Announcement: please lock your doors. It's summertime and there is an uptick in nonviolent crimes such as petty and car theft from unlocked doors.
 - d. City Council has 5 new members and they are working well with the 6 established members.

- e. The Something in the Water Festival went well for the day that it was not rained out. There was no violence, mixed reviews from vendors due to the isolated footprint, and looking forward to tweaking details for better dates to avoid the rain. Cleanliness was maintained and well-managed. An economic impact report is forthcoming.

IV. JEB Little Creek – Fort Story/NAS Ocean Updates

Captain Michael Witherspoon is the Commanding Officer of JEB Little Creek-Fort Story and his tenure ends next month. His updates include:

- a. 1 June 2023 at 1800 is the Change of Command ceremony.
- b. Currently prioritizing infrastructure renovations such as dredging in the harbor to deepen the channel, pier repairs, and physically moving the headquarters to the center of the installation.
- c. Captain David Gray will be taking over the command of JEB Little Creek-Fort Story. Capt. Witherspoon thanked everyone for their support during the last three years of his leadership. He will be moving back to Alabama to work with some Marine midshipmen at University of Auburn in Tuskegee to develop the ROTC program for the next 2-3 years.
- d. Rear Admiral (Ret) Robert Katz asked if the military received any requests for bus transportation for the Something in the Water Festival since Virginia Beach City Public school buses were used. Capt. Witherspoon confirmed that they did not receive any transportation requests.
- e. Capt. (Ret) J.J. Cummings asked what the vision was for the base 10 years from now and how MEDAC can support the vision. Capt. Witherspoon shared that the future is moving towards unmanned vessel support. MEDAC can support by continuing to nurture and facilitate a close relationship with the City of Norfolk through communication to ensure the region is a unified front.
- f. Rear Admiral (Ret) Gregory Nosal asked about the installation's golf course maintenance. Capt. Witherspoon shared there were some staffing challenges due to COVID and his staff actually helped maintain the landscape of several base locations. They have been diligent in their efforts to maintain the upkeep and look of the golf course and he's proud of the sacrifices his staff made to go above and beyond locally.
- g. Chair Priest thanked Capt. Witherspoon again and congratulated him on his professional successes. All wished him well on his future endeavors.

V. HRMFFA Update – Rick Dwyer

- a. Secretary Crenshaw, the Virginia Veterans and Defense Affairs, is updating the Strategy to Action Plan. Installation visits are occurring throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia to engage the military staff and prioritize articulated initiatives. We helped facilitate some local leadership meetings locally to ensure information was shared.
- b. The National Defense Authorization Act subcommittee meetings that were supposed to happen last week and this week have been deferred due to ongoing debt ceiling conversations. The hope is for the subcommittee to meet in late June or early July.
- c. Congresswoman Jen Kiggans introduced the Sailor Standard of Care Act cosponsored by Congressman Bobby Scott and Congressman Rob Wittman. It adds mental health care billets for units with more than 15 limited duty sailors assigned to it, provides mental health

screening and offers suicide prevention best practices. Kudos to Todd Nichols for his tireless efforts on working with our consultants in Washington, DC to finalize the wording.

- d. The next HRMFFA meeting is 15 June at 10:30am held in the Regional building and is open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

VI. Economic Development Update – Charles Bauman

- a. The Virginia Beach Department of Economic Development is continuing to prioritize business retention efforts through marketing the City and keeping business investments here.
- b. Over the past 12 months, 15 companies have been incentivized through the Virginia Beach Development Authority's Economic Development Investment Program (EDIP) with a capital investment of almost \$500M retaining about 500 jobs and creating another 1,200 jobs.
- c. The State of the Port event that was held at the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront was our department's efforts to work with the Port of Virginia to launch our insert into the Maritime industry.
- d. Unmanned systems is one of our department's newly designated business sectors and we are excited to further conversations with the military sector to glean new business opportunities that benefit the community at large.

VII. Military Workforce Development Update – Sultan Camp

- a. Back in January of 2023, we teamed up with military spouses to do an audit of what was being offered in Hampton Roads to incoming military families. For example, we learned that Ft. Eustis offers a "Welcome to Hampton Roads Information Session." Langley Air Force Base and MilSpouseFest does an event specifically for military spouses to blow off steam. Both the Ombudsman and Langley Air Force Base did a vetted resource fair. As a result, we are looking to have a one stop 3 hour event that brings all those pieces together with a capstone of a bus tour of the region. Newport News did this about 3 weeks ago and it was a great success. The beta test of this event will be done the last week in September to coincide with the Blue Star Families Welcome Week.
- b. The first 757 Summit on the southside was held last week at NAS Oceana. During the Red White & Brew Networking Mixer, there were 60 job seekers and 30 company reps which facilitated higher level conversations. The morning sessions included LinkedIn head shots and resume reviews. The evening was a traditional career fair. Controlling the job seeker to company rep ratio has proven to be a successful module. There were over 240 attendees for all of the events within the summit.
- c. The main issue with the southside event seems to be promotion. In speaking with an active duty person, they will say they will push it out but there is no spike in registration activity. In speaking with a military spouse, they say they will push it out and there is a registration spike within hours. The purpose of these events is to allow transitioning military personnel to receive relevant information which helps them decide whether or not they want to stay in the military or exit and helps relieve anxiety because their network is built.
- d. The DoD Skillbridge Expo will be held on 9 June from 10a-1p at NAS Oceana. If you have any companies that would like to participate at no cost to them, please reach out to Sultan Camp.

VIII. Command Visit Program Update

- a. Chair Fenton Priest shared that this item had been turned over to Captain (Ret) Kit Chope who was unable to attend the meeting and he thanked Captain (Ret) Charles Stuppard for assisting with getting Captain Michael Witherspoon to today's meeting. No other updates at this time.

IX. Special Presentations and Discussions

- a. Laura Baxter, Executive Director of the Armed Services YMCA of Hampton Roads gave a detailed presentation. Please see attached for the full presentation. Highlights include:
 - i. The history of the Armed Services YMCA of Hampton Roads.
 - ii. They are only 1 of 12 locations nationwide.
 - iii. They are not affiliated with the US YMCA.
 - iv. They are not funded by the Department of Defense or corporately.
 - v. Staff are 100% military spouses.
- b. Kenny Miller, USO Center Operations and Program Manager of Hampton Roads/Central shared the detailed presentation on the USO 2023 Experience scheduled this year in conjunction with the Jackelope Festival for 1-4 June. Please see attached for the full detailed presentation. Highlights include:
 - i. USAA is the Title Sponsor.
 - ii. APEX Entertainment is hosting the opening event for an expected crowd of 650 military families.
 - iii. ECPI's Culinary Institute is hosting a dinner event.
 - iv. IMGGoing Entertainment is coordinating live entertainment at the oceanfront.
 - v. Gold Star Families are sponsoring Jumping for a Purpose in honor of fallen military heroes.

X. Announcements

- a. Tonight at 2100 the USS Iowa battleship gun barrel is being moved to JEB Little Creek – Fort Story to be placed in front of the light house. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony in August.
- b. There will be a Veterans Day Memorial Ceremony at noon on 19th Street across from the Convention Center.
- c. There will be a car show at Fort Story this Saturday, May 27, 2023 in front of Building 300.
- d. The HIVE is now open to military spouses with a business license as a free resource.
- e. The 139th consecutive Memorial Day Parade is being hosted by Portsmouth Military Affairs Committee starting at 10a this coming Monday on High Street in downtown Portsmouth. All are welcomed to attend.

Adjourned at 1636

Next Scheduled Virginia Beach Meeting: 28 August 2023 (No July Meeting)

Next Joint Committee Meeting: 26 June 2023 (Norfolk to Host)