

MINUTES OF THE 01 DEC 14 NCMAC/LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING
Jacksonville, North Carolina

Rep. Efton Sager via Phone
Tom Bowlen via phone
LtCol Dicks via phone
Lt Col Brown (NCNG) via phone
Lt Col Cook via phone (NCNG)
Harry Brown
Drew Moretz
Gen. Bud Martin
Darryl Black
Maj. Bobby Lumsden
Jamey Falkenbury for Lt Gov Forest
Paul Friday (by phone)
Ilario Pantano

10:10 Senator Brown called the meeting to order opening the meeting with legislative items to be discussed, including:

- The convening of the NC General Assembly on 1/14/15
- Carrying over the Yellow Ribbon Program
- Amount of funding needed to fund BRAC preparation

Gen. Paul Dordal briefed the preliminary list of Military Affairs Commission's top ten priorities list with some revisions having been made:

1. Reducing risk of downsizing/closure.

- After meeting with with installations, communities, MOTSU and ARO, an initial SWOT analysis has been developed.
- A budget request has been developed based on that analysis. Anticipated request could be between \$85 and \$100 million.
- Objective is to put that funding into bond projects based on a bond referendum thereby improving the State's position before a BRAC occurs.

Example: New River needs to build more facilities for storm water drainage to bring in missions. A bond referendum would allow this and obviate the need to ask the General Assembly to fund. DOT is already obligated and City obligated to some of their projects.

- MG Wilson submitted a proposed budget to the Governor's staff on behalf of the Commission.
- \$25k/month to continue SWOT/lobbying efforts

- Mapping support - Legislation requires that this go to the State Construction Office

2. Supporting military-affiliated students.

- Request on in-state tuition per Drew Moretz is \$4.8M in recurring funds for UNC to participate in Yellow Ribbon funding program. The new VA reform bill renders us inconsistent with the federal program. Legislation is needed that allows us to comply with federal law, or remove Yellow Ribbon requirement. Some campuses have done that, but still valid for private universities.
- Best-guess numbers are \$9 million or \$9.1 million to fund transition costs to provide in-state tuition
- Board of Governors and NC Community Colleges have not yet met on this issue
- Working on improving information available to service members while they are still active duty
- Expect to see increasing in enrolling service members and veterans
- First track is first-year appropriation, is fully supported and we will be able to comply by July 1, 2015
- Legislation must be written to conform with federal law before appropriation legislation is due
- May want to work on this for Military Appreciation Day

3. Preserve land near military installations.

- Working Lands Group has a number of underfunded initiatives. Recommend a REPI ltr to OSD requesting recognition as a Sentinel Landscapes State for matching funds from OSD. We have put that into bond project list but do not want to rely solely on that. An increase to the amount may need to be considered in the effort to keep working lands from being developed. Good for agriculture and the military.

4. Encouraging economic development opportunities associated with supply chain support for military operations equipment.

- Investigate disparity in labor costs among depots
- Work with Commerce to ensure State knows what it can do to build missions

5. High structures/Wind turbine farms.

- Following release of maps, we will have a better idea of whether the language in HB 484/HB 433 needs to be amended

6. Maintaining Hofmann Forest.

- Supreme Court decision pending

7. Coordinate transportation and infrastructure issues affecting major installations.

- DOT will provide list of their projects and determine compatibility with needs of bases; public-private partnerships and state funding can be used

8. Integrating Guard and Reserves into workforce.

- Economic Development Committee is working on this. It is not a legislative “ask” at this juncture

9. 911 Call Centers

- This issue rests primarily with Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune and Fayetteville and Fort Bragg, and may require legislation, per Senator Brown

10. Waiver for firefighting certification cost or funding & childcare center certification.

- Senator Brown could not move the bill forward 4 years ago for lack of consensus from bases

The NC National Guard is requesting federal funding for buffer zones around installations and their centers.

\$1.65 million is being requested for BRAC dollars.

Mr. Tom Bowlin presented on NCNG requests.

- Issues being vetted with DPS and their agenda for the General Assembly
- ONS funding for Tarheels Challenge: \$449,000
- Special appropriation for force readiness centers (Smithfield, Jacksonville, Elizabeth City and Louisburg
- Armory fire insurance
- Camp Butner has an influx of people moving to that area: \$650,000 in nonrecurring funds the first year and \$250,000 for the next 5 years to buy easements and protect the area. He has been in discussions with Bryan Gossage of NC DENR.
- Statute updated – House/Senate language
- The Adjutant General as a State official requests annually recurring funding in the amount of \$3,500 to host diplomats, not for travel or official gifts
- Infrastructure strategic action plan for a new “hub and spoke.” Mr. Bowlin has been speaking to some Congressional Delegates, also
- Recognition for NCNG being Center for Cyber Security and particularly, a Cyber City of Excellence
- Hard training events: Emergency Management wants additional funding for helicopter rescue training
- Support from General Assembly for Air Guard and Army Guard cyber units in the form of a resolution from the General Assembly

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- Museum, Learning Center of Excellence
- Professional liability insurance for surveyors, architects, engineers, which is currently not authorized
- Equitable sharing of proceeds from federal asset forfeiture, i.e., funds from drug seizure.

The Guard has experienced cuts by the federal government, and State support has been hampered.

Division of Veterans Affairs Director Ilario Pantano briefed on priorities within his Department.

- DVA feels strongly about the GI bill and focusing on employment throughout life cycle of a service member
- Would like to develop a way to identify through the Secretary of State's office's database how many veterans are being hired by businesses
- Focusing lens on state government and inside Agencies; they are directed to meet certain levels of hiring. DPS excels at this.
- DVA needs funding to pay staff for its call centers, to staff new cemetery with 5 personnel, pay service officers at VA medical centers, and for 2 positions on Fort Lejeune and Fort Bragg. The second annual report is being released in January benchmarking gains and losses by county, and where DVA has contributed. 25% of Guide relates to jobs. Shows what colleges and universities offer, scholarships, benefits, etc.
- Cost for DOT road signs beyond billboards, radio ads, bumper stickers
- \$1 million on the high end – 100s of thousands on low end
- Looking at major private sponsors to print and distribute, e.g., Walmart
- \$130,000 annually used to be distributed to Counties through DVA – last year's money was rescinded; asking that it be reinstated this year
- With the DHHS grant, we are in process of taking operation paperless and be completely digital to assist veterans in all aspects
- Support of North Carolina Legal Aid Veterans Assistance program – a number of veterans have behaved poorly following discharge, which keeps them from getting benefits. If an attorney could work with the vet, the outcome could be different changing that veteran's quality of life and also benefitting the economy.

Chairman Brown stated that a lot of the requests can be fulfilled on the appropriations side, and many requests are tied to a prospective bond referendum. He emphasized the importance of including requests in the Governor's budget, as well.

Maj. Lumsden noted that some budget line items will not be under Commerce and that grant programs may be under a different agency. Bonds will be stack-rated for recommendation to Governor. The Governor decides what gets pushed forward.

Gen. Martin asked if lobbying efforts by the consultants are needed by the NCNG. Tom Bowlin asked for support in DC, and advised that the Guard must exercise caution relative to the Guard's association with a direct lobbying effort.

Visits to DC are anticipated for late January and with the Governor possibly in April.

Senator Brown stated that the issue of retirement pay for military being exempt from income tax needs clarity. There has been an interpretation of federal law whereby NC Department of Revenue has determined that some military retirement pay is taxable. Sen. Brown indicated communication with Department of Revenue may be in order.

Executive Steering Group Chairman Dordal commented that changing the structure of the Commission will be discussed at the December 2 ESG meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Legislative Affairs Committee was made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Chairman Brown asked for additional questions or comments of which there were none. Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 11:35 AM.