



## **NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

**Minutes for Executive Steering Group (ESG) Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, February 2, 2021**

**Microsoft Teams/984-204-1487 Code: 329 338 134#**

### **Members Present**

Grier Martin, Chairman  
Frank Bottorff, Base Sustainability, Chair  
Kirk Warner, Quality of Life, Chair  
David Hayden, Economic Dev, Chair

### **Members Not Present**

Hon Chuck Allen, Installation Area

### **Additional Attendees**

Larry Coleman, NC National Guard  
Chad Sydnor, Cassidy, and Associates  
Christopher Hailey, LA to Grier Martin  
Jamie Norment, ACT  
Paul Friday, DANC  
Ariel Aponte, DMVA  
Kelly Jackson, NCMAC Executive Director

### **OTHER Commission Members Present**

Representative Cleveland

### **Ex-Officio Present**

Secretary Walter D. Gaskin, DMVA

### **OPENING REMARKS: CHAIRMAN GRIER MARTIN**

Chairman Grier Martin called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Chairman Martin welcomed everyone to the Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting and thanked everyone for all of their hard work. He asked Kelly Jackson to take the roll call and let him know if there was a quorum. She said that they had a quorum for this meeting. Kelly Jackson read the ethics statement. The Group has a legal obligation to disclose any conflict of interest that may or may not arise or potentially arise with your regular job or any of the business of the Executive Steering Group. If you have a potential conflict, she asks that you disclose that potential conflict, so we are aware of potential conflicts. Does anyone have such a conflict? So, does anyone have any potential conflict of interest with the business on the agenda and if not, please be cognizant of any potential conflicts that arise from the discussion topics and govern yourself accordingly.

### **CONSENT MINUTES: CHAIRMAN GRIER MARTIN**

Chairman Martin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter meeting held on November 3, 2020. David Hayden made a motion to approve the minutes. Kirk Warner seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous vote. The Executive Steering Group minutes were approved.

### **DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS (DMVA) UPDATE: SECRETARY WALTER GASKIN**

Chairman Martin said that it was time for the update from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. We have a new Secretary and an outstanding selection for this position. As military people we all know that when you introduce someone with an illustrious career their resume and accomplishments

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are long and then we could be here for a long time so he will just hit the highlights. He retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Lieutenant General after commanding at almost every level of the Marine Corps and including the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, NC. He is very familiar with North Carolina and Camp Lejeune. He led Marines in Iraq and also found time to get a master's degree in Public Administration. There are many other things on his resume but the one other thing that he wants to say is that he was the Deputy Chairman for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Military Committee representing the United States. Chairman Martin said that he thought the highlight is that he comes to the Secretary position fresh off of a very short term on the NC Military Affairs Commission, So he is familiar with our work, a fan of what we do and excited about supporting our Commission. Secretary Walter Gaskin introduced himself to the group. He said that he felt like he was at a family reunion, so it is hard to introduce himself to a group that he admires and loves out there. He told the Governor that he had 39 years in the Marine Corps with 25 years coming out of Jacksonville. He remembers when Western Boulevard in Jacksonville was a dirt road. That is how long he has been around. He understands what happens on the bases and many of his friends are down in that area. He also has family in the Army and the Air Force and knows the issues that come from being on the Active Duty side and those that are Veterans and family members. He said that it was an honor for him to be here as an advocate and serve along with all of you. Today he wanted to say he is a fan of what the NC Military Affairs Commission does and that is an understatement. He has seen the great work that this Commission has done and the growth of that work over the years. He is a second by product of what happens when they reach the Cabinet level and that is what is important to him. He has come in and done his assessment of the goals that he would like to see for this Department. Those goals are to 1) Ensure effective, accountable, and a well-run Department as he has done throughout his career; 2) Support Military Communities to include personnel, installations, and surrounding communities; Support the Veterans and their families by providing a full spectrum of resource.; 3) Continue collaborative and supporting efforts with non-profit and civic organizations that support the Military and Veterans Affairs; 4) Great and better collaboration with the NC Military Affairs Commission. There have already been some great conversations about how the NC Military Affairs Commission (NCMAC) and the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) can work together and collaborate. There has already been an increase in support when it comes to legal reviews on Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) for the NC Military Affairs Commission and there needs to be more. Also, the 2020 Community Grants that were approved by the Commission will be managed by the DMVA's Grant Manager. This fiscal support by the DMVA will help to ensure a timely turnaround once the Commission has approved funding. These are the immediate things that I see that we can do to help, and he stands to do that. He is transparent and open. Many of you know him and he appreciates this opportunity to tell you that and look forward to future collaboration. Chairman Martin opened up the floor for comments from the group. David Hayden said that his short tenure on the NC Military Affairs Commission created an incredible expertise to add to your already full complement of skills and glad to have you as part of this group. He said that he looks forward to working with his office and he is excited to see him in that position. We have had a string of Marines in that position, but he loves Marines and gives them a hard time. Secretary Gaskin said that we know the issues and it is important to the NC Military Affairs Commission and the Department that we work together. We do not need friction, but to get on with the business and get things done. He is looking forward to doing that work. Chairman Martin said that he was looking forward to a future of collaboration.

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### **QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) COMMITTEE: KIRK WARNER**

Kirk Warner said that the QOL committee met on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. It was a very good meeting with approximately 31 in attendance. If you have not attended a QOL meeting, you are missing out. Once you engage the K-12 educators they come in like a hornet's nest and they are awesome. We have participation from all of the school connected counties in the state. We talked about the new Department of Public Instruction Superintendent, Catherine Truitt. She is a military spouse, and her husband is a Naval Academy graduate and a nuclear submarine guy. He thinks that she will be an asset for all of us in connection to military families. We do not need to forget that she is there and take full advantage of her being there. He thinks that Mrs. Truitt and Secretary Gaskin are kindred spirits, and he can make some serious strides here. We got an update from Nick Sojka on the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) on educational opportunities for military children. We talked about the inclusion of the National Guard and Reserve families under the Compact. There have been a couple of issues that have been raised from Camp Lejeune and others that during COVID and virtual learning that the grades went to pass/fail. There was a student that transferred to California and the school district that he/she went to is having an issue accepting a pass/fail and not a letter grade. This matter is being handled at the local level but could be raised to the MIC3 if it is not resolved at the local level. We cannot have this with the Stop Movement orders and other things going on. We had a great presentation from Paul Berry, Veterans Bridge Home and NC Serves. He would like to have them put on the agenda down the road for a Full Commission meeting. Between this presentation and Jeff Smith and Veterans offerings, they are both great presentations. Paul Berry briefed on NCServes, and their statewide coordinating care network for Veterans and families. They are a one stop shop. That program is really going well, and they touch the service members and their families and do something about those issues and concerns. The next topic was K-12 and the Purple Star Program. That program is doing well, and the applications are due February 1, 2021. Then there is also a Purple Up Day, and he thinks that is in April. Most of the counties around installations are participating in this program. One of the positives from this program has been the number of educators that have been trained on the MIC3 and how it helps military students in all school systems. Also, that the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) school systems are now part of this program. They have also received some national recognition for being part of this program. We also talked about the delayed Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders and stop movement affects. The feedback from the Commander's Council was that it has not affected the readiness of the troops, but it is affecting the families in reference to mental health concerns. It is especially affecting the families with special needs children and take note of that.

Kirk Warner said that he had reports from all of the Military Liaison Counselors and School Liaison Counselors and there was one in particular that was noteworthy. Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and Wayne County have some great collaboration going on. The Base has adopted one of the low performing schools in Wayne County, Carver Heights Elementary. There are two programs that the Airmen can assist with. There is a Seymour Studies where the Airmen help to tutor students that are lower performing in that school. Those students go to the Base twice a month, have lunch in the Dining Facility (DFAC) and the leadership pays for them to have a hot breakfast. They receive tutoring on math and reading from the school curriculum. Each unit on the base rotates the tutoring and then the students go on a field trip after the tutoring is completed. This program is starting to grow. They are going to try to get this program over into the Middle school and the children in this program will be able

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to continue this tutoring program. Hopefully, this can also go into the high school. The other initiative in that school is the Eagle Academy. This is for the higher performing students. Those students will have to do an application and be referred by their peers to be part of the Academy. Those students will receive an individual mentor who will help and guide them on life skills and academics in the pursuit of them joining the Air Force. This program just started in October and in November they went out to the homes of the students who had been selected to join the Academy and Coined them. This is a big thing to happen for the Community. The other big news is the proposal between the Base and Wayne County Schools. There is a proposal for a Public School to be placed on the Installation. There is a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been signed by the Board of Education, Seymour Johnson AFB Leadership and County Commissioners. The School would be staffed by the Public School System and be a Public School but use a facility on the Installation. This will be a school of Technical Arts and called Wayne School of Technical Arts. It will be focused on video production, recording, coding language and different technical types of careers that students could apply for. They will start out with about 100 students and the focus is high school right now but could expand up or down with grades depending on the interest. It will be a lottery and they will have 50% military students and 50% community students, and they will all submit applications. Cristy Barnes-Williams has had people reaching out to her about his new initiative by other Services. The goals are for this school to open up in Fall of 2022. We also had a great presentation from the NC 2020 Teacher of the Year Maureen Stover. She is a Veteran and military spouse. She talked about spousal licensure and how she had to tackle that process. He would like to have her speak at the upcoming Commission meeting. The last presentation was from Patricia Harris about Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. That is a work in progress, and we will keep an eye on that situation. Chairman Martin asked what topics did Kirk Warner have for the Commission agenda? Kirk Warner said that he recommended a presentation from Seymour Johnson on their initiatives from the Base Commander and also a presentation from Maureen Stover, NC Teacher of the Year.

Frank Bottorff said that at the BS&CA meeting they talked about the Score Card for the Air Force, and he thinks that most of the members have seen that document. It focuses on education and licensure. In the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) they put in that all of the Services need to do something like this. To do a score card of basically community and state support. He thinks that most of these items fall under Quality of Life and the things that they are looking at today. He thinks that we need to be doing some critical thinking on potential items for the score card and help us to focus those items that we can do locally, regionally and state level to improve what our score cards are for each of the Installations. This is a future task that he thinks would fit best with the QOL committee. But will take everyone to work on this as it is a big subject and very important. The purpose behind the score card is for force structure or installation decisions. We need to keep our eye on this and spend some time on this topic. Chairman Martin asked Frank Bottorff if with some look from the NC Military Affairs Commission might lead itself to some recommendations we could give to the Governor and the General Assembly? Frank Bottorff said that was absolutely correct. That should be our intent to look at the areas that they put value on and then see what we can do to strengthen ourselves in those areas. We need to be careful that it does not turn into a Report Card opposed to a Score Card. It is kind of that already, but it could help us to focus some effort with the Governor and the General Assembly on how we can improve things within the State to meet the expectations of our service members. Kelly Jackson said that a person to have assist with this topic is Jamie Livengood, Wayne County School System. She

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has done a deep dive into this subject and could be very helpful. Frank Bottorff said that the Score Card that we have is from the Air Force but that is not the clear guidance that is in the NDAA, which seems to be more general. But he believes that most people will look at that moving forward for a starting point. Chairman Martin asked Kirk Warner to take a look at this and do some thinking on how that can be incorporated into his Committee. Kirk Warner said that he would do that, and we have already circulated that information and a follow-up makes a lot of sense.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: DAVID HAYDEN**

David Hayden said that they met on January 21, 2021, via Microsoft Teams and had a full complement of attendees. We had an update from Jamie Norment for Fleet Readiness Center-East (FRC-East) and Cherry Point and Rodney Anderson for Fort Bragg. Courtney Smedick gave an update for the NC Military Business Center (NCMBC) and Denny Lewis for Economic Development Partnership for NC (EDPNC) and the shift to spending our dollars to more of a marketing strategy.' We also had an update from Chad Sydnor from Cassidy and Associates. David Hayden thinks that because of the total change in the Administration and the new dynamic of what is happening in Washington, DC, he recommends that we have a good update on what is going on and the impacts for the Senate and the House on the NDAA and the appropriations that are coming our way. To see if this is impacted or if things are changing. He knows that Chad Sydnor will present at the Full Commission meeting, but this could be a good time to bring in Jim McCleskey to get another perspective. He just had Jim McCleskey speak at another event, and he had some great insight. So, with his comments and also Chad Sydnor's comments there could be some different perspectives because they are coming at this from different angles. He also wants to accent the Military Tax Exemption discussion. He is glad to see that Rep Cleveland on the call because he knows that he is a big supporter of a solution that not only addresses the military retiree pay but also state and federal retirees. We know that from Senator Burgin speaking at the last Commission meeting that he has a plan to have both the State Senate and State House introduce bills with a new proposal that ties military retirees pay state tax exemption to a certain revenue milestones and phases. Then if the revenue increases the phases would include state and federal employees. He thinks that there is going to be some support and that Senator Burgin had advocated for Veteran's groups to get involved to make a statement. He thinks that this group might consider early on about whether or not we want to take a position in the NC Military Affairs Commission in support of any of this legislation, He welcomes any comments of Rep Cleveland on this matter. He thinks that if we are serious about pressuring a military retirees pay state tax exemption that the NC Military Affairs Commission needs to come out with some type of statement. David Hayden said that the NDAA was eventually passed and was put forward, but the appropriations bill did not match up correctly. Some of the things that were in the NDAA for construction in Eastern North Carolina were not actually on the appropriations bill which is a twostep process. If you do not have the money appropriated for it, and it has been approved to be constructed, it will not get built without the appropriations bill covering it too. We also heard about the impact that might occur with the cancellation of the Southern Wall construction. There were some questions about whether that would allow for additional revenue to be put back into construction that was taken away or was not even scheduled to go in there. We will keep an eye on that. The new Commandant of the Marine Corps may want fewer F-35s than the former Commandant which could affect the number of F-35's in NC. Something to keep our eyes on.

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Rodney Anderson gave us an update from Fort Bragg. and it might be worthwhile to have the new Garrison Commander, COL Scott Pence attend the NC Military Affairs Commission meeting and introduce himself and speak about what is going on at Fort Bragg. One of the questions that he was asked about at the last ESG meeting was about the uncompleted loop around Fort Bragg. That is something he may be able to shed some light on that and other things going on at Fort Bragg. One thing that they noted at Fort Bragg was that the number of soldiers transitioning out had decreased by 2,000 from the last year. That number could change and go back up to the average numbers that had been other years. This is another reason why we need to get the Grants underway for Transitioning service members and the military retirement pay tax exemption. From the NCMBC update, they talked about the new construction, and they got some numbers for 2020. The information was that DoD Prime Contractors for 2020 increased \$1.5B over 2019 and federal Prime Contractors for 2020 increased \$2.4B over 2019. We continue to have an increase in construction money coming into North Carolina. We also reached out to someone we had not heard from before. It was an economic development organization that encompasses everything East of I-95 to include Fort Bragg. There is a lot of Aerospace industry presence that was brought to our attention by Joe Melvin and the presentation was very insightful.

We also looked at a 2013 Economic Development Report that was develop by the NC Military Affairs Commission in conjunction with the Department of Commerce. The report addressed the economic impact of the Military in North Carolina. That report is seven years old, and we need to get that updated. We have already had a meeting about this topic since our Economic Development Committee meeting with a representative from the Department of Commerce and Frank Bottorff. David Hayden said that he was not able to attend that meeting. They will be moving forward on a collaboration to get this report updated between the NC Military Affairs Commission and Commerce. Frank Bottorff said that they are in the fact finding stage of the study. Commerce is going to reach out to REMI who are the ones that did the modeling for the last study. That is potentially where some costs could come from. He thinks that Commerce is well suited under the proper timeline to help redo this study. They have a lot of internal capabilities, and the modeling would need to be done by REMI. His recommendation is to work with Commerce as a partner after we get the estimates for costs and then we can figure out a timeline. For their benefit we can probably plan on getting the costs estimates and then discussing this at the next quarterly Commission meeting. We can talk about redoing the study at the beginning of the next fiscal year. That will give Commerce an opportunity to start to include the work effort into their planning and then we can figure out the funding support required. David Hayden said that he thought the report is of extreme value to our Commission to have an updated version of the report. Frank Bottorff said that this is a topic that they talk about at the Association for Defense Communities (ADC) at their annual training conference. There is a state council that is part of the ADC and most of the people that sit on the council are either Secretary level or Assistant to the Governor. We also try to sit at the table and represent North Carolina. The topics of Economic Impact and the modeling done by REMI is discussed every year and the value is there. For Secretary Gaskin, if he wants to get the background on the ADC that this Commission is a member of and then when we are able to attend the conferences, he may want to consider attending them. David Hayden said that he appreciated Secretary Gaskin's comments about legal review for the Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) that the Commission has that are outstanding and there are three of them. They are for Defense Alliance of NC, NC4ME and the National Guard Association of the United States. He wanted to again thank Kelly Jackson for all that she

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does for the Commission and its members. He wanted to ensure that Secretary Gaskin knows how valuable she is to the success of this Commission.

Chairman Martin said that he wanted to take a minute to talk about the military retirement tax exemption. He asked that Rep Cleveland to weigh in on this matter. He does think it is right for the NC Military Affairs Commission to make a statement of support for this topic and a good time to do this with our upcoming meeting and the current legislative session. He asked Rep Cleveland if he any thoughts this? Rep Cleveland said that he was going to file the normal bill that he files, and he has trouble with Senator Burgin's bill. That bill will immediately give the military people their retirement benefits free and then it depends on income to the state going forward. He said that he may be jaded but when it comes to the state going forward that could be easily manipulated. His personal opinion is that if we are going to give retirees a break, they all should get the same treatment. That was the issues in the Bailey settlement. We are treating our citizens differently for taxes and that is wrong. Bringing one group in to treat them fairly, and leaving some folks out is wrong also. He will be filing his bill, but he has looked into this a little deeper, so in a week or so and the numbers come out the way he thinks they may, he will be filing a different bill to approach it from a different manner. If his thoughts come out properly and it is cheaper for the state to approach it that way, we might make some progress for everybody. With the NC Military Affairs Commission's mission to support the military and everyone feels that we should go forward and endorse the Senator's bill that is fine. He can just vote no.

Chairman Martin said that the Course of Action that he would suggest for the NC Military Affairs Commission is not to ensure a specific bill but to consider endorsing legislation that has a certain set of characteristics. That gives a break or exempts military taxation and then we do not have to comment one way or another on what it does of each group. Any legislation that eventually gets passed is going to look so differently from what the initial bill that was filed after it does through the political process of the House and the Senate and finally signed by the Governor. So, we recommend to the General Assembly that it pass into and signed by the Governor a bill that has the following characteristics and then that would leave room for a much wider possible path that the bill may have. What are your thoughts? Kirk Warner said that seconded that thought to support the concept and then provide a basis to support that concept. Then we can provide the legislators something in hand to say that this Commission has looked at this with the problem and we support this topic. This is a win-win for us. David Hayden said that he thought that this was a good idea and to keep it focused on the main thing. Chairman Martin asked if anyone disagreed with this proposal. He said that he would work with Kelly Jackson to work up a draft Resolution and he will circulate it to the ESG and then the Commission members prior to the meeting. The documents would say that the NC Military Affairs Commission strongly recommends or urges the General Assembly and Governor to enact into law the elimination of the tax on military retirement income. Are there any other specifics that need to be added? David Hayden said that we could further elaborate that it is a factor on where transitioning service members decide to live after they leave active service. Kirk Warner added that they are a great potential workforce. Also, that this legislation could pay for itself by just keeping people here. Rep Cleveland said that there have been two studies done by the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch. The original study said that it was 1:1.80 and the second study was 1:2.50 which means it brings in money. That information included all retirees. Chairman Martin said that he would include some references to the evidence to show that financially this would be a good thing. He asked David Hayden what he needed for the Commission

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meeting? David Hayden said the update from Chad Sydnor and Jim McCleskey and COL Pence from Fort Bragg. Chairman Martin said that was a good idea to be more deliberate in getting the Commanders to speak to the Commission members and give them some face time with this Commission. He asked what is the best way to reach out to COL Pence? David Hayden said that would be Rodney Anderson or Arnold Gordon-Bray.

### **BASE SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (BS&CA) COMMITTEE: FRANK BOTTORFF**

Frank Bottorff said that the Base Sustainability and Community Affairs Committee met on October 27, 2021. He said that the three main take ways from the BS&CA meeting was when they talked about the Score Card which will now be reviewed by the QOL committee. We also spent a lot of time on the Census which is going to be the one item that he wanted to bring forward to the Full Commission meeting. The Census is not over yet and there will be opportunities going forward for the Communities to review their numbers and potentially request some modifications. All of the information is not out there yet so this will be a good time to have the State talk about this again, so we do not lose focus and get this wrapping up. We also did talk about Wind for a bit. The Governor did put out a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) over the past couple of months. We need to hand this out to all of our members and this document was sent to the BS&CA committee members. Frank Bottorff said that we do not need to talk about this at the meeting but give a general update to the members. There is more activity going on at the state level and it is about time for us to re-energize ourselves on Wind and get a brief next quarter on what the state laws is for getting a permit but there has not been anything that has gone through this process yet. He thinks that in the future we will see something go through the permitting process. We all need to understand this process are and also what the roles of the different Secretaries in that permitting process. Then we need to look at it from the base sustainability side, are they protecting the installations or is it encroachment. This quarter there is no action but in the next quarter his committee needs to focus on that subject. They talked about the installations in general and there is a lot going on everywhere, but these were the highlights. Frank Bottorff said that he needed 10 minutes for the Census update.

### **FINANCE AND BUDGET TASK FORCE: FRANK BOTTORFF**

Frank Bottorff gave a budget presentation to the group. He said that everything is going according to the plan. The expenditures to date are \$426,883.30. The Grants have been approved but they have not been executed yet. Since we have not identified the Grant Manager we will be putting out the Award Letters. Kelly Jackson said the Vince Lovell, DMVA will be the Grant Manager. She has sent him the grant information and they will be getting together in the next two weeks to start the process. She also said that she is working on the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for Defense Alliance of North Carolina (DANC) for \$50K, NC4ME for \$40K and National Guard Association of the United State (NGAUS) conference for \$10K. She has met with the DMVA General Counsel to get these MOUs reviewed. Frank Bottorff said that it was time to talk about the next budget request. Kelly Jackson said that she was working with Amy Bowman, DMVA Chief Financial Officer about submitting a non-recurring budget of \$1M. Frank Bottorff asked if the Commission received \$1 M or \$2 M in the budget last year? Kelly Jackson said they received \$2M and carried over \$800+. Secretary Gaskin said that was exactly the type of collaboration that his office needs to offer the Commission. He will ensure that the budget is submitted, and the MOUs are executed. He was also listening to things that needed to be done reference PPE as well as education wide all of the installation requests. He wants to see more of a



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collaborative effort. The NC Military Affairs Commission does great work but need manpower to get this work done. Chairman Martin said that he appreciated those words and this level of support moving forward.

### FY 2020-2021 Expenditures:

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Spent:</u>
Cassidy and Associates (Lobbying Service)	\$ 178,500
EDPNC	\$ 90,000
Sentinel Landscapes	\$ 150,000
Temporary Solutions (Stipend)	\$ 417.40
Strategic Plan (Employee)	\$ 5,330.26
Strategic Plan (Printing)	\$ 1,334.00
Travel	\$ 101.64
ADC Fees	\$ 1,200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 426,883.30</b>

### INSTALLATION COORDINATOR UPDATES: CHAIRMAN MARTIN

Chairman Martin asked the Installation coordinators if they had any comments. He asked if we had a representative from Camp Lejeune? Kelly Jackson said that we do not have one for the ESG at this time. Chairman Martin asked for a recommendation? Kelly Jackson said that the other 2 Camp Lejeune representatives on the Commission are Bill Hatcher or David Myers. Chairman Martin said they would work on getting a representative before the next ESG meeting.

Fort Bragg: Kirk Warner said that they had a new Garrison Commander.

Cherry Point: Frank Bottorff said that the installation construction to support the F-35's is going well. That is a lot going on at Cherry Point construction wise and that does not mean that there are still not some needs. The flight line is being redone with hangars and construction for other things. On their list of items that is not there is for FRC-East the funding line that comes through the Navy. That would be for the F-35 maintenance hangar and upgrading some of the WWII maintenance hangars that FRC-East uses. That is still on their list and one of their top priorities for the future.

Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (SJAFB): Kirk Warner said that the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Commander/Garrison Commander Col Kurt Helphinstine is very involved in the educational opportunities that are going on at Seymour Johnson. We may want to reach out to him for him to brief the Commission on the great things happening at SJAFB. Chairman Martin asked if his presentation should be for the Quality of Life Committee or the Full Commission. Kirk Warner said that there is more than just Quality of Life information and it should be for the Full Commission meeting. Frank Bottorff said that we had talked about this Commander issues a couple of times. We talked about allotting about 20 minutes at each Commission meeting and bring in a different Commander each meeting. So, they would only brief every couple of years. So then at every meeting we spend a couple of minutes at each meeting focused on a military leader and talking about service related issues. That could be helpful to the Commission as a whole. Some of the things they will talk about will resonate across the services. Chairman Martin said that most of the Commission members have some experience with one branch of

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the military or one military community. This would be good exposure to other branches of service. Which Commander do we want to each out to for this next meeting, Fort Bragg, or Seymour Johnson? Kirk Warner said whichever Commander is available. Chairman Martin said he would start with Fort Bragg and then go to Seymour Johnson. He asked Kelly Jackson to add this to the agenda for the Military Affairs Commission agenda moving forward. Also, to see if the Corps Commander for Fort Bragg can speak to the Commission which would be a different perspective from the Garrison Commander.

**STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: FRANK BOTTORFF**

Frank Bottorff said the Strategic Plan is complete and a living document. We can start working on revisions. We have printed copies of the plan and any member of the Commission can get copies if they want some. He is proud that we got this document completed by ourselves. This was a document for the members by the members and it has been delivered to the State Legislature as required. He said that we probably need to go back into the Strategic Plan and look at the things that we need to execute and make a spreadsheet. Then at each quarterly meeting we address the items that we said need to be addressed. We need to stay focused on our Strategic Plan and take action on the items we said need to be done.

**COMMUNITY GRANTS: FRANK BOTTORFF**

Frank Bottorff said that we have already talked about those. There are two old grants that are closing out and completing the final paperwork. The new grants are ready to do. We should be completing the kick-off letters in the near future. Kelly Jackson said that she is in contact with the Program Manager at Office of State Management Budget (OSMB), and she will ensure that we get a copy of the final paperwork. It is just paperwork at this point.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: CHAIRMAN MARTIN**

Chairman Martin said that ET Mitchell was leading this working group. She could not attend the meeting today, but she is working on a Strategic Communications plan for the Commission as many of the members had requested. There was a consensus that we need Strategic Communications but not a consensus on what Strategic Communications means. So, ET Mitchell will be leading a working group to take a look at that. ET Mitchell and Rodney Anderson have been looking hard at that topic. She has also been working with Ariel Aponte from the DMVA on this topic. There is more work to be done but it should be ready to be presented to the Commission members at the next Commission meeting. Kirk Warner said that he wanted to mention that Frank Bottorff had put together a good NC Military Affairs Commission briefing. He has given this briefing and would be easy for any of our members to give if requested. Chairman Martin asked if Kirk Warner thought this would be good to present to the Commission member. Kirk Warner said that he would be happy to share it with the members at the next meeting. This could also be put on the NCMAC website. Frank Bottorff said that it would be a great idea for Kirk Warner to give the briefing to the Commission members. It was created so they can give this briefing to Veterans organizations in their areas and get out this information about the Commission. Chairman Martin said that this is always good information for all of our members and especially the strategic plan that has been developed. Kirk Warner said that he was ready to give the briefing and it would talk about 10-15 minutes. Chairman Martin said to put this on the agenda depending on time.

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**CASSIDY AND ASSOCIATES: CHAD SYDNOR**

Chad Sydnor from Cassidy and Associates gave the members the lobbying update. He said that he and Jim McCleskey are always happy to talk about what is happening in DC. He and Jim McCleskey talk every week. He will give a recap of how we came out of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. North Carolina got a number of wins both in the NDAA and the Defense Appropriations. For Seymour Johnson AFB, they got the Bryant Multi-Sports Complex that the NDAA authorized. There will be a 30 year lease extension. This will be between Wayne County and the Air Force to execute this lease. For Cherry Point, the fitness center and pool. It was authorized for \$51.9M in the NDAA but the money was not appropriated. This was a bit unusual. Then the NDAA was voted and then the veto override and then packaged all of the bills with the COVID relief and other bills in a gigantic bill. We did get it authorized and we will take a run at getting the money this year. Cherry Point had a couple of other things in the NDAA. A provision clearly stating that the Navy was responsible for paying for Military Construction projects at FRC-East and that had been a food fight between the Marine Corps and the Navy since FRC-East is under the command of Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) a three star Admiral. The NDAA has cleared up that question. Senator Tillis has stuck a study in the NDAA to look at the Marine Corps Aviation Enterprise. There has been talk with General Berger's Force Structure 2030 plan that it could negatively impact the installation with a number of F-35's that the Marine Corps is going to buy and the number of aircraft per squadron. Senator Tillis's office just sent his office the answers that General Austin provided on the questions for the record. He will go over that information in a little while. He was asked about that issue also and he committed to looking at the Marine Corps Force Structure plan as well. Fort Bragg had three projects that were on the unfunded list that we were looking to get pulled forward and appropriated. One of them was the Cherry Point Fitness Center and Pool which was authorized and not appropriated. Fort Bragg had an energy resiliency project, an Etha project as it is called that was pulled forward at a cost of \$6.1M. A chilled water facility for a Special Operations Training Facility. The big project that was appropriated was for \$25M to repair the runway at Elizabeth City for the Coast Guard Station. This has been a long lingering problem for the Coast Guard that has now been addressed.

Where we are now, the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Senate is 50-50 with Vice President Harris being the tie breaker. Senator Schumer is now the Majority Leader and Senator Mitch McConnell is now the Minority Leader. We still do not have an Organizing Resolution that both of the parties have agreed to. So, we are still in that limbo area. Once that become official, then Jack Reed of Rhode Island will be the Chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee, Pat Leahy of Vermont will be the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. This is not new, it happened back in 2000 and Vice President Chaney was the tie breaker, Trent Lott, MS and Tom Daschle, SD were the Majority and Minority leaders. Then it flipped because Senator Judd from New Hampshire or Vermont switched parties. With the advanced age of some of the Senators and some of them in their 80's. that balance of power could shift as it did when Senator Leahy had to be hospitalized for a medical issue. The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) has organized. There is a small split. They split the Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities committees. They now have two committees. Now there will be an Intelligence and Counter Terrorism Sub-Committee and an Artificial Intelligence Cyber and Research Sub-Committee. That is a change for this coming Congress.

He said that Senator Tillis had submitted a few questions for the record to General Austin for his confirmation. He has been confirmed as the Secretary of Defense. Kathleen Hicks is having her hearings

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now to be the Deputy Secretary of Defense. He will send the Questions for Record (QFR) to everyone on an email blast. There are a couple items of interest. The first one on Cherry Point, Senator Tillis brought up the Marine Corps Aviation Force Structure and General Austin committed to review this with the Secretary of the Navy and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. A couple big things for Fort Bragg. He asked that they ask questions about Pope Army Airfield. As you know it was an Air Force Base and now an Army Airfield. About this time last year, the Global Reaction Force went out the door and the first time it went out as a Brigade. That deployment highlighted a number of deficiencies at Pope Airfield (lighting, runway conditions and general infrastructure). The Army did not want Pope Army Airfield and did not want to maintain it, but they got it any way. We asked Secretary Austin about that and there are some answers from him on that topic. He committed to \$90M in funding for Pope in FY2021. So, during this budget cycle, we should see \$90M going to Pope for in Military Construction and Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM). The total investment for Pope for the next five years will be \$224M. That is a significant investment for Pope to address some of their deferred maintenance issues and neglect. Secretary Austin was asked about extending the Runway and as many of you know that runway is not long enough to support a fully loaded C-17. The Army does not want to pay for this because it will primarily benefit the Air Force. Secretary Austin did say that it is an Army requirement to so it. It is a big deal to extend a runway because there has to be a zone beyond the runway (crash area) for safety purposes. This is the first time that the Army has said that this is a requirement but at this point an unfunded requirement. He will send the QFR's to everyone.

The budget for FY 2021, the information is that we will not see the Biden budget until early May which is about three months late. It is not uncommon in the first year of an administration for the budget to be delayed. We were hoping for late March or early April, but it looks like early May. That concluded the comments from Chad Sydnor. Secretary Gaskin said the Pope and Bragg initiative from the Secretary of Defense, it will take on the same model as Fort Stewart and Hunter, when Hunter became an Army Airfield from an Air Force Base and the extension of the runway. That is what they are looking at so it can respond to world-wide contingencies. Then for the Navy and the Marine Corps, this is a historical fight between blue and green dollars so that is not unusual. What is going to happen as the new Secretary of the Navy takes a look at General Berger's plan. It was once dollars and the number of aircraft to limit it from when we had Harriers and F-18s, so he does not see that as changing any in the Force Design.

**AGENDA FOR FULL NCMAC:**

Chairman Martin asked for topics for the February meeting agenda.

DMVA Update	Secretary Walter Gaskin (15)	
Committee Updates	Committee Chairpersons (10 each/40)	
Task Force Updates	Task Force Chairpersons (10 each/20))	
NCCC Update	Michael Scalise (10)	
Census update	Bob Coats (10)	
C&A/DC Update	Chad Sydnor/James McCleskey (25)	ESG
	(Partnership)	
Commander Update	Fort Bragg	ESG
NC Teacher of the Year	Maureen Stover (15 minutes)	QOL
SJAFB Education opportunities	SJAFB Commander (10 minutes)	QOL

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Resolution	Part of Economic Development	Econ Dev
C&A Renewal	Part of Budget	
NCMAC Presentation	Kirk Warner	

**NEW BUSINESS: CHAIRMAN MARTIN**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Martin adjourned meeting 11:37 am.