



NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Minutes of the Quality of Life (QOL) Committee Meeting, 4th Quarter, October 26, 2017
Wells Fargo Building 150 Fayetteville Street Raleigh, NC

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kirk Warner, Chairman
Patricia Harris
George Breece (by phone)
Bill Hatcher (by phone)

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Doug Taggart, DPI
Jamie Livengood, Wayne Cty Schools Liaison
Valerie Nasser, Craven Cty Schools Liaison
Brittany Norman, Onslow Cty Schools Liaison
Donna Grady, USMC Camp Lejeune/New River
School Liaison
Chloe Gossage, DPI
Keith Martin, BG (Ret), MCEC
Jeff Smith, DHHS
Stuart Ruffin, (by phone)
Paul Friday, (by phone)
Kelly Jackson, DMVA

OPENING REMARKS: CHAIRMAN KIRK WARNER

Chairman Warner called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Chairman Warner welcomed everyone to the Quality of Life meeting. We have 3-5 presentations. The presentations are all on similar topics. We also have presentations by Stewart Ruffin, NC4ME and Jeff Smith, Discharge upgrade issues for Veterans. Introductions of personnel attending the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Warner requested a motion to approve the minutes from the 3rd quarter meeting of the committee on July 25, 2017. Patricia Harris made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by George Breece and passed by unanimous vote with no further discussion.

CHILDREN'S CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT STATUS: KIRK WARNER

Chairman Warner stated that he was going to write a letter to be sent to a Senate member, Wesley Meredith. This is going to be a generic letter that could be used to forward our desires for Quality of Life to get funding and/support from the State for an additional Crisis Stabilization Unit in Fayetteville at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center which is a worthy need and has slipped through the crack. Chairman Warner did report on this topic at the 3rd Quarter North Carolina Military Affairs Commission (NCMAC) meeting and will have a draft letter written for the 4th Quarter Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting on Tues, November 7th. This letter will be for the ESG consideration to use for all our efforts. Doug Taggart commented that the former

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Superintendent of Cumberland County schools had written a letter of support for this cause. Since there is a new Superintendent, Doug Taggart will work on getting another letter of support. George Breece commented that this topic will come up at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) meeting on November 9th in the Fayetteville Community. George Breece would like a copy of the letter that Chairman Warner is preparing so that he can talk to Senator Meredith who will be attending the SWOT meeting. Doug Taggart will send Chairman Warner the original letter of support and work on getting a new letter of support from the Superintendent of Cumberland County Schools. Chairman Warner will work on the letter immediately. Kelly Jackson had no new updates on this topic. Kelly Jackson needs to schedule a meeting with Dr. Bigger from Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. Chairman Warner commented that it would be a good idea to try and get a letter of support from Womack Army Medical Center. That would be very persuasive and a critical need for our soldiers. George Breece commented that the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center staff briefed at a QOL meeting and that information would be in the minutes. Chairman Warner commented that we will continue our efforts on the matter.

NCMAC WEBSITE QOL COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION REVIEW: CHAIRMAN WARNER

Chairman Warner recommended that we defer this topic until the end of the meeting so we can proceed with the presentations. Chairman Warner gave everyone a handout of the information that is currently on the DMVA website for the QOL. We need to review this document and see if this information matches our priorities. George Breece had sent the Committee Members a copy of the Annual Report which is due in Dec 2017. Chairman Warner commented that the QOL priorities are in the Annual Report. Chairman Warner also submitted a place holder for # 15 Support options to improve K-12 Education in Military Host Communities. Chairman Warner submitted a paragraph which reads "K-12 educational quality is a major concern for the serving military and their families. Streamlined successful school transition and meaningful integration for military dependents are essential to quality of life. Military-friendly schools are a significant factor when service members decide where to retire or end their service. A positive K-12 education for military and veteran connected children in North Carolina by engaging and coordinating with the Department of Public Instruction, State Military Liaison Counselors, Troops to Teachers Grants, the Military Child Interstate Compact and the Military Child Education Coalition to achieve a comprehensive plan of educational support for our military families and host communities". If you have any questions on the paragraph, send your comments to Chairman Warner.

DPI SUPPORT TO MILITARY FAMILIES: CHLOE GOSSAGE AND DOUGLAS TAGGART:

Chloe Gossage and Doug Taggart gave a presentation to the committee. Chloe Gossage started the presentation. Chloe Gossage commented that DPI received some proposals for additional

support around military and veteran connected children. This raised many questions in the Superintendent's office. What is out there now? What do we do inside the department? Where are the needs? How wide spread are the needs? What is already out there in the communities and near the bases? What might be lacking? What is missing in the other areas of the state that there is a need but it is not as concentrated and community focus around it. We narrowed this down to 2 challenges. Dual challenges: 1) School districts near military bases: Serve a disproportionate number of children of military personnel and access to some additional State and Federal resources. 2) School districts across the State: Serve children of military personnel and veterans, but less frequently with unique challenges and have fewer military-specific resources and experience. (National Guard and Reserves). Chairman Warner commented that the schools may not know that National Guard and Reserve units are deploying. Doug Taggart commented that the National Guard does try to send out letters to school systems affected by National Guard deployments. Chairman Warner commented that does happen in the Reserves. Chloe commented that they are trying to find out what protocols are in each school system. Patricia Harris commented that in Wake County Public Schools is sending out a questionnaire asking if you have a veteran or service member in your family. The questionnaire trying to find out if this is a military child. Doug Taggart commented that he is the business owner of the Military Student Identifier and by law (2014). All schools are required by law to send out this questionnaire but it is self-reporting information. Chairman Warner commented that the Chief of the Army Reserve (CAR) is from NC and this would be a good opportunity to share this information with him. Chairman Warner will share this information to the CAR. Doug Taggart commented there are 2 data sources; Defense Manpower Data Center DEERS information (2015) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Household information. Statewide need: NC children ages 5-17 there are 65,108 military-connected children. That is broken down into 2 categories: Full-time Active Duty parent/guardian 46,163 children and National Guard or Reserves parent/guardian 18,945. NC Veteran households with children ages 5-17 equal 254,718 households. Cumberland and Onslow counties are the 2 counties with the most children of active duty military. Cumberland and Wake counties are the 2 counties with the most children of National Guard and Reserves. Cumberland and Wake counties are the 2 counties with the highest number of children in Veteran Households. Children in NC that qualify for Pre-K has risen from 1,650 in 2015-16 to 1,810 in 2017-18. Federal Military-Specific School Liaison Officers: Fort Bragg 3, Camp Lejeune 2, Cherry Point 1 Seymour-Johnson AFB 1. State Military -Specific Regional Military Family Counselors (RMFC): Craven, Cumberland, Onslow and Wayne counties. There are 33,871 military connected children served by the RMFC and 31, 237 military connected not served by RMFC. Chairman Warner asked the question. What are we doing to try to support the children not served by the RMFC? Doug Taggart commented that they are working on how to determine what support is needed. They are currently conducting analysis on this matter. The Military Liaison's do attend School board meetings in their areas. The Troops to Teachers

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Coordinator serves as NC Department of Public Instruction military liaison. The additional duties are to coordinate Interstate Compact State Council and serve as a champion for military connected student issues within Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Military Liaison duties could be done as a full-time position. This position could also conduct the training for the school staffs prior to the deployments especially for school systems for the National Guard and Reserves. Handle all the calls that come into the DPI that are military children connected. DPI also has a NCDPI School Counseling office. They have an annual conference and are well represented by the military. DPI going forward. They are in the process of collecting additional data and surveying select school districts. The goals are to 1) Improve available data to better identify needs 2) Identify and disseminate local best practices, particularly to counties with less experience 3) Identify training and resource gaps to inform future proposals. There were no questions on the presentation.

NC4ME UPDATE: STUART RUFFIN

Stuart Ruffin presented for NC4ME. Their steering committee got together which included Secretary Hall, Major Sponsors of this program and other State agencies. This was a productive meeting. NC4ME is a Public/Private Partnership. They work the public and private sectors as a team. They want to train the employer to hire military talent. They have a custom strategy. Why Companies should hire military talent, how they can hire military talent and making a connection between open positions and qualified candidates during hiring events. A Hiring Event is much different than a Job Fair. At a Hiring Event, you will interview for a position that you have pre-registered for with that company. They have scheduled Human Resource (HR) training events in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh and New Bern. There will be Hiring Event at Camp Lejeune on Dec 13. The program has 1 full-time person and some volunteers. They are looking for more sponsors to support this initiative. Please let Stuart Ruffin know if you have any recommendations for additional sponsors. Second the NCMAC may need a tutorial about the program. A request may be coming from the Economic Development committee for NC4ME to present this 5-minute tutorial. They are fulfilling their mission. Chairman Warner commented that John Buckley from Coca Cola was looking for a few good men. This information was on FOX News. Chairman Warner recommended that Stewart Ruffin should check this out as a contact. Chairman Warner will bring up the tutorial at the ESG for a presentation at the NCMAC meeting. So, then there will be 2 committees talking about this subject. There were no questions on the presentation.

STATE MILITARY LIAISON COUNSELORS: VALERIE NASSER AND JAMIE LIVENGOOD:

Valerie Nasser, Jamie Livengood, Brittany Norman and Donna Grady made the presentation for the State Military School Liaisons. ET Mitchell made this connection between the State Military Liaison Counselors and Chairman Warner. A handout was provided for the committee members. This presentation is boots on the ground perspective. NC houses the 3rd largest

military population in the US behind California and Texas. The military is the 2nd largest industry behind agriculture in NC. There are over 44,000 school-aged children of active duty members in NC. The Military Liaison Counselors were created by the state in 2007 in the counties that housed the major military installations. In the Spring of 2008, these positions were hired. The mission of a Military Liaison Counselor is to research, develop and implement programs and practices that will support the military students and families in NC schools. NC was one of the first 11 states to sign on the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). We were part of the very first meeting for the MIC3 and are subject matter experts in their fields and the MIC3. The committee was given the Compact Rules and a 2016 Military Family Lifestyle Survey. Military members that retire or leave the service while they are still in school, the child is only eligible to be served by MIC3 for 1 year after they service member retires or leave the service. Through a military lens, K12 education needs someone at the table. This is for legislation, policies or processes. The state military liaison counselors use this military lens to determine how it will affect our military families and what are the implications. The School Report Cards is a snapshot of data that military families review when looking for information about school in the area they are moving to. This data needs to be very user friendly. The state of Virginia has a very user friendly data which is helpful to military families to make good decisions. NC School Report Card data is not as user friendly as other states. Doug Taggart will go back to DPI and talk to them about making our snapshot data more user friendly. The formula for growth and proficiency is 50/50 or 20/80 and is used differently in states to reflect the data. The average family does not know that there are different formulas being used by each state. This is normally explained by the school liaison. The military families want updated electronic media and a point of contact and the schools that their children will be attending and is well versed in military child education. They also want the faculty and staff to be aware of their unique needs. The top 3 solutions are: 1) Allow schools/districts to self-examine programs and processes to improve the experience of our military students and families, 2) Criteria will help standardize services across the state, 3) Recognize schools that are committed to serving our military-connected students and families. Doug Taggart commented about considering this as an initiative through the NCMAC and the QOL priorities #10. Doug will do some research and get back to the committee on how to proceed. A problem that the liaisons encounter is that without legislation, military families are not currently eligible until they are physically located within district boundaries. A solution could be to change the enrollment criteria through legislation. An example is California Senate Bill 455 or Arizona House Bill 2107. NC still does enrollment with paperwork. Another solution could be adding online PowerSchool registration to streamline remote process. The military installations could be the pilot group for this solution. The military liaison counselors participate in deployment events, welcome to the base events and other various events. Bottom line: Military families have specific needs unique to military lifestyle. K-12 Education must continually think on the front end of legislative, policy and process changes. A concern for military families is funding

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the K3 class size and is NC cutting arts education and PE. These issues are the topics for 50 percent of the calls that the Military Liaison Counselors receive. Patricia Harris asked if they military liaisons had talked to any of the Veterans groups. The Veterans organizations can be helpful with these matters. There were no additional questions on the presentation.

VETERANS SUICIDE AND OTHER ISSUES (NCDHHS): JEFF SMITH

Jeff Smith made a presentation on veteran suicide and other issues. A handout was provided. Veteran suicide numbers in NC are 5 per week. We have 3 breakout groups attacking Veteran Suicide. These groups are looking at Vietnam Veterans, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Children of Military Families and Veterans. NC buries Veteran's children in our State Veteran cemeteries. We continue to work on this crisis through the breakout groups and the Governor's working group. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is also working and will continue to work on the topic of the Children's Crisis Stabilization Unit in Fayetteville. He talked about Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharges. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) gave the OTH discharges and entitlement of 90 days. The NCDHHS is working with our Local Management Entity (LME)/Managed Care Organizations (MCO) to work on this issue. On Friday, October 27 is the groundbreaking for the project The Veterans Life Center. Patricia Harris was a partner in this project. It will have housing for 150 homeless and at risk veterans. This is a great project. Mental Health event at the McKimmon Center on November 7th at 8:30.

MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: BG (RET) KEITH MARTIN

BG (R) Keith Martin make a presentation on Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). MCEC was founded to be an advocate and provider of services for training, resources and research solely committed to the mission of military and veteran connected children. The mission changed over the years since OIF/OEF. Now we support a continually deployed force. Keith Martin works with the States and MCEC has done a lot of work with NC. That work was funded by the Federal Government and Department of Defense (DoD). The last 3 years, funding does not exist anymore. Hats off to the School Liaison Officer (SLO), School Liaison Counselors and Veteran Service Officers (VSO). They are all doing more with less. The comprehensive support plan was developed by the founder of MCEC. If the Federal Government is not going to fund the training needed there will be a gap. The group that will gain the most and lose the most is the state. The handout is the key document. We are in discussion with DPI. We hope to extend that discussion with the Full North Carolina Military Affairs Commission (NCMAC), Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) and MIC3. They all have a stake in education and education quality. Education is a top concern for military families. Overview: There are two powerful cross currents affecting the future size and disposition of US military forces. At the same time as there is clear evidence the overall size of US forces will grow, there is also clear evidence that DoD wants to eliminate excess infrastructure: HEADLINE: 'Mattis

(SECDEF) calls for base closing-points to 19% excess capacity.' In fact, the Army and Air Force, both with major presence in NC each cite 30% excess infrastructure. The reality is that with or without a new round of BRAC, decision will be made to close, consolidate and relocate facilities. How does a state position themselves to be the "Most Military Friendly State"? Four quick points why K-12 education is important to force structure decisions: 1) Service members tell us that it is important, 2) Service member assignment satisfaction, 3) Service Chiefs tell us educational quality will be a factor in force structure decisions, 4) Other high military density states have recognized the issue (TX, AL, SC, FL). They will tailor a plan with input from DPI, NCMAC, MIC3 and DMVA. The plan must be proactive, tangible, effective, visible, promoted and sustained. Properly designed, it will be good policy, good practice, good publicity and good politics. The plan could purpose a meeting of the Superintendents with the higher density of military students. Lead by the State Superintendent. Keith Martin also recommends but not as part of the MCEC work, that NC needs a Director of Military Child Education as part of DPI to coordinate these matters. Doug Taggart commented that we are working on having a Superintendents meeting of the Superintendents from the Top 10 Military Students. Working with Jamie Livengood to have Dr. Dunsmore host this event. We want to share the practices that are working and list needs that they have. Doug Taggart also commented that the MCEC classes he has attended have great facilitators. Doug Taggart asked Keith Martin if MCEC facilitators could help with this event. Keith Martin stated he thought they could. There were no other questions or comments about the briefing.

NCMAC PRIORITIES 6, 9, and 10: CHAIRMAN WARNER:

Chairman Warner leads the discussion. He talked about priority #9. They will keep #9. They discussed #10. They will keep #10. Doug Taggart will get input from Doug on status and action. Keith Martin commended we may need to look at sustainment of items that go off the list. They discussed #6. Lead is QOL and Supporting is Economic Development. The revised recommendation is too broad. Chairman Warner commented that they may review these 3 priorities through emails discussion. This discussion on the priorities will continue and then they will move on to the website QOL information.

COMMENTS: Kelly Jackson commented on the First Lady's Holiday Open House that will be on Dec 16 from 10:00 – 12:00 at the Governor's Mansion. This is for all military families that want to attend. There will be a website for the families to register to attend. I will share the flyer to this group as soon as it has been developed.

CLOSING COMMENTS: Chairman Warner thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the great presentations.

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ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Warner asked for a motion to adjourn. Patricia Harris motioned to adjourn and Chairman Warner seconded the motion. Chairman Warner adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm.