

Minutes

Transition Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Date: July 5, 2023

Location: City Hall, Mayor's Large Committee Room

117 West Duval Street

Jacksonville, FL 32202

Chair: VADM Rick Snyder, USN (ret)

Attendees: CAPT Marcus Cantu, CMC Ian Thompson, CAPT Brian Binder, CMSgt David Hogan, COL George Downs, Dee Quaranta, CMC William Klein, CAPT Janet Espino-Young, CMC Tony Shepard, VADM Rick Snyder, USN (ret), Harrison Conyers, Shane Edwards, SGT Cody Mulkey, MAJ Robert Frierson, Bob Adelhelm, Joe Tavares, Rich Possert Jr., Wendy Layton, Jeremy Brown, Travis Akers, Mildred Smith, George Carroll, Joe Inderhees.

1. Meeting Called to Order 4:05 PM VADM Rick Snyder
2. Minutes from prior meeting- Rich Possert requested that reference to Old and New Business be deleted. Minutes moved, as amended, by Rich Possert and seconded by Travis Akers. Unanimously approved.
3. VADM Snyder provided a brief overview of the previous meeting and introduced a new member, Wendy Layton and also introduced Travis Akers. VADM Snyder explained that the focus of this meeting would be the active-duty military and its relationship to the City of Jacksonville.
 - a. CAPT Espino-Young, CO, USCG Mayport, provided a brief on USCG services provided through USCG Base Mayport and interoperability with JSO and JFRD
 - i. Ask: Support for USCG families especially affordable housing is a concern. Resiliency concerns include on-base power restoration and coastal erosion of A1A. (COJ is working with the Navy on funding for planning to raise A1A in Mayport 3'). CAPT Espino-Young also raised concerns on base encroachment (Harrison Conyers explained that the COJ and Navy have acquired the development rights to all water-front property in historic Mayport Village through a joint Multi-Year Agreement program).
 - ii. VADM Snyder asked about St. Johns Ferry traffic and impact on USCG Mayport. CAPT Binder mentioned that sailors working at BAE shipyards comprise most of the military traffic on the ferry.
 - iii. CMC Shepard, USCG HITRON, mentioned encroachment around Cecil Commerce Center and affordable housing are concerns.
 - iv. CMC Klein, USCG Mayport mentioned access to affordable dental care for active-duty military families was also a concern.

- b. COL Downs, CO, FANG, complemented the support received by City of Jacksonville Military Affairs and JAA. The F-35 bed-down is the largest issue facing the base. FANG has Guardsmen/women that are members of JSO and JFRD.
 - i. Ask: mental health support for service members and families is a concern with CenterStone and Wekiva providing some services.
 - ii. Bob Adelhelm asked if the increased decibel levels of the F-35 had raised concerns. COL Downs mentioned that there were no concerns expressed at the community Environmental Impact Study meetings several years ago.
- c. CAPT Binder, CO, NS Mayport, complemented COJ Military Affairs support. He stated that the Navy Community Planning Liaison Officer Mark McManus communicates with Harrison Conyers weekly on any issues/supports needed by either base.
 - i. NS Mayport stood up a Trident Ministry Team, which COJ MAVD is a member, to improve quality of service to sailors and families.
 - ii. Six Purple Star Schools exist in Duval County and that has been helpful for military families. Purple Star Schools have programming to support military families.
 - iii. The Food Farmacy, created by MAVD, served 495 military family members on June 29th. This effort provides a drive-through foodbank for active-duty military families at the Fleet Reserve near NS Mayport every second Thursday.
 - iv. Ask: dental issues beyond basic primary care are a concern. Continued MAVD support for the Trident Ministry Team. Would like to host Mayor Deegan occasionally on -base for special events. CMC Edwards thanked COJ for consistent support and mentioned inflation affects on housing costs as a concern. Legalized marijuana is leading to multiple issues with sailors and has led to many discharges.
- d. CAPT Cantu, CO, NAS Jacksonville, highlighted the mutual aid with JSO and JFRD. School liaison officers on base have been a great benefit for sailor's families. DCPS busing issues, especially for magnet schools have been a major issue for military families.
 - i. CAPT Cantu thanked MAVD for getting directly involved in moving the Intergovernmental Service Agreement with COJ Traffic Engineering forward. There is room for growth of this type of local assistance for on-base services.
 - ii. Ask: Continued Intergovernmental Service Agreement cooperation with COJ. Mentioned that NAS Jacksonville Hospital served 75,000 Veteran visits last year. Pharmacy traffic is high, but improvements have been made. JSO making sure that affordable neighborhoods must remain a safe environment for sailor's families.

- iii. CMC Thompson-mentioned that off-base housing costs were exceeding BAH increases, but that Jacksonville's real estate market was preferential to most Navy communities.
 - iv. CAPT Cantu mentioned that Navy Marine Corps Relief had provided more than \$1 million in loans/grants last year. This was in response to a question from George Carroll about the number of sailors on SNAP.
 - v. CAPT Binder mentioned that a RAND Corp survey reported that 25% of military families are affected by food insecurity.
 - e. MAJ Ryerson, representing the FL Army National Guard (Normandy Armory), briefed that the greatest interaction with the City of Jacksonville is related to emergency response during declared disasters.
 - i. Ask: stated the need for support with VA disability claims and career assistance.
- 4. Spouse employment-Travis Akers asked the Military Leadership present about spouse employment. CAPT Binder talked about the strong community support they receive including the Players Championship Military Job Fair held the Saturday before the tournament each year. CAPT Cantu discussed the support from the State of Florida passing legislation that allows out-of-state certifications/licensures to be valid in Florida for military spouses. MAVD maintains the Job4Vets website of 500 local or locally based companies that have open positions for transitioning military and Veterans.
- 5. The issue was raised by several committee members about the need to have better interaction between the active-duty military and high schools. Particularly, visits to school classrooms.
- 6. VADM Snyder raised the question about the availability of child-care facilities for military families. CAPT Cantu stated that on-base childcare was full but there are partnerships with private providers.
- 7. Resiliency-CAPT Binder noted that wastewater treatment at NS Mayport has been privatized. CAPT Cantu stated that power resiliency is an issue and that discussions have been held with JEA about micro-grids.
- 8. Dee Quaranta discussed services available for women Veterans and assistance and counseling available for military families that are transitioning from the service.
- 9. Public Comment: George Carroll discussed the need to make the community more aware of Military Academy appointment opportunities.
- 10. Closing comments: VADM Snyder stated the next meeting being held July 12, 2023, at 4PM will focus on services provided by Veterans Service Organizations in the community.
- 11. Move to adjourn at 5:47 PM moved by Travis Akers, seconded by Rich Possert.