

HRMFFA Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from 16 April 2026

1. HRMFFA's quarterly Board of Directors meeting was held at the Regional Building on 16 April 2026. Public Board members present were Mayors Duman, Dyer, Gray, Hux, Glover, Kaplan, Pons, West; Supervisors Cornwell, Garner, Hanson, Hardy, Icenhour, and Shepperd. Mr. Len Remias represented the City of Norfolk. Private Board members present were Buckless, Faulkner, and Klett. Mr. Bill Brown represented ECPI University. Executive Director Dwyer, Deputy Executive Director Nichols, and Treasurer Hansen were present. A quorum was achieved.
2. Board Chair Shepperd called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. and welcomed new Board members Supervisor Shannon Hanson of Gloucester County, Supervisor James Icenhour, Jr. of James City County, and Supervisor Walter Hardy of Surry County. Chair Shepperd also welcomed new Installation Commanders CAPT Ray Glenn, Naval Station Norfolk and CAPT Katie Jacobson, Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek-Fort Story.
3. Chair Shepperd called upon Mr. Nichols for public comments, there were none. Mr. Nichols introduced Mr. Alan Kilgore, NASA Langley Research Center Deputy Director, to provide an update on the NASA Langley Research Center's recent Artemis II mission contributions. Mr. Kilgore expressed great pride in Langley's role, noting the center's unique technology and testing capabilities were foundational to mission success. He specifically highlighted the Orion capsule critical drop testing conducted at Langley to analyze splashdown conditions, as well as the launch abort system development, designed to safely pull the capsule away in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Kilgore also detailed extensive wind tunnel research to ensure vehicle stability and performance during every phase of flight. To showcase the evolution of mission monitoring, Mr. Kilgore presented Scientifically Calibrated In-Flight Imagery (SciFLY), displaying high-resolution infrared booster separation imagery. He contrasted this modern capability with the limited resolution available during the Apollo era decades ago, noting ground and air-based technology now provide incredible clarity. Looking forward, Mr. Kilgore stated that NASA is preparing for Artemis III, IV, and V with the long-term goal of establishing a permanent moon base.

4. Chair Shepperd introduced guest speaker Mr. Stephen Mucklow, U.S. Fleet Forces Command Executive Director and Chief of Staff, who opened by expressing his





gratitude for the opportunity to represent the fleet, noting the national interest in naval operations mirrors the global enthusiasm seen for the Artemis missions. Having served in his role for four months following a tenure as Director of N89 and Surface Force Pacific, Mr. Mucklow highlighted his 30-year military career as the foundation for his understanding of force generation. He emphasized that preparing the fleet for global requirements is not merely a headquarters task but a collaborative effort heavily reliant on the local industrial base, particularly in ship repair and maintenance.

The Fleet Forces Command mission remains centered on generating ready forces and executing strategic sea-based deterrence through the SSBN fleet in support of U.S. STRATCOM. Mr. Mucklow detailed the significant regional footprint of this mission, noting approximately 150,000 military personnel, contractors, and civilians are employed within the region to support these operations. In addition to homeland defense, the command serves as the naval component for U.S. NORTHCOM, a role that has seen a strategic shift over the past year toward the southern flank and SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility.

Reflecting on recent operational dynamics, Mr. Mucklow described the fleet's ability to pivot rapidly in response to national security demands. While initial emphasis was placed on the southern flank, the Iran contingency necessitated a swift reallocation of resources, including Carrier Strike Group and Expeditionary Strike Group movement to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) AOR. Despite these crises, he reaffirmed that the China perspective remains the primary long-term priority guiding the Navy's warfighting capability development and modernization efforts.

A recurring theme throughout Mr. Mucklow's remarks was the vital link between operational success and the industrial base. He stressed that the Navy relies on the availability of skilled labor at facilities like Norfolk Naval Shipyard to maintain existing force structures and develop new capabilities. He reiterated Sailor quality-of-service remains a top priority for Navy leadership and regional base commanders, specifically mentioning personnel evacuation during the Iran contingency and expressing appreciation of the supportive ecosystem that bridges the gap between the military and local community.

In closing, Mr. Mucklow looked ahead to the nation's 250th anniversary, noting Hampton Roads will play a prominent role in celebrating naval heritage this June. He concluded by acknowledging the force's high operational tempo, stating that ships will require significant maintenance and reconstitution upon return. He expressed deep appreciation for the continued support of regional partners in maintaining the infrastructure necessary to sustain the fleet's readiness and global reach.





Following his formal remarks, Mr. Mucklow engaged in a comprehensive dialogue with board members regarding the intersection of military requirements and regional civilian infrastructure. Mr. Len Remias initiated a discussion about critical gaps in local infrastructure that impact Sailor and fleet resiliency. Mr. Mucklow identified affordable childcare as a primary concern, noting high costs place a significant burden on military families. He emphasized the necessity of robust medical support, specifically mental health resources, which requires a collaborative effort between government facilities and civilian medical care. Beyond these social services, he noted traditional infrastructure issues, such as parking availability at ports and shipyards, directly influence quality of life and the workforce.

The conversation shifted to the operational burden carried by the Hampton Roads region. Mr. John Polowczyk, Virginia Ship Repair Association, noted approximately two-thirds of the East Coast's available U.S. Navy destroyer (DDG) force is deployed, primarily supporting Caribbean and Middle East missions. Mr. Mucklow explained the Navy is utilizing combat surge forces beyond traditional models. This high tempo directly impacts the local industrial base; as maintenance schedules will shift to accommodate surging deployments. Ship repair contractors must remain flexible, citing USS Gerald R. Ford as an example, noting its deployment duration will require maintenance work package reassessment.

Addressing first responders and emergency management, Mayor Hux of Poquoson inquired about better integration between local agencies and the military. Mr. Mucklow highlighted Installation Commanding Officers serve as the primary link for these relationships. He praised existing mutual aid agreements for disaster relief and routine contingencies but suggested a more modern integration is needed regarding homeland defense. Specifically, he called for enhanced communication between local law enforcement and installation security to counter emerging threats, ensuring bases are protected against evolving security risks.

Final remarks focused on economic development and maritime supply chain. Mr. Doug Smith, Hampton Roads Alliance, noted a regional delegation recently returned from the United Kingdom to explore defense technology and supply chain enhancements. In response to regional shipbuilding and ship repair industry support, Mr. Mucklow recommended establishing closer ties with the Naval Supply Systems Command and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to address fleet obsolescence. He concluded by discussing the broader Maritime Action Plan (MAP), which calls for expanded shipbuilding capacity and significant infrastructure improvements, stressing fleet sustainment for the coming decades requires a holistic approach integrating industrial





base growth with infrastructure modernization supporting naval forces.

5. Mr. Nate Paukovits of The Roosevelt Group provided a Washington Update. Highlights included:

An update on the federal legislative landscape, starting with a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding assessment. Mr. Paukovits described the current environment as highly partisan, focused on a \$75 billion "Reconciliation 2.0" blueprint for enforcement agencies, which must be cleared before broader DHS appropriations can proceed. Executive Director Dwyer noted these funding lapses are having major negative impacts on Coast Guard military and civilian personnel and reaffirmed HRMFFA is urging the congressional delegation to resolve the crisis.

The briefing transitioned to the President's "skinny" budget release, which proposes a \$1.5 trillion top-line defense budget focused on modernization, including missile defense, ship procurement, and the F-47. This budget includes a \$1.15 trillion base, a \$350 billion reconciliation bill, and a \$100 billion war supplemental to replenish ammunition and maintenance stocks. Notably, while uniformed troops are slated for a significant pay raise, no such increase is currently proposed for the civilian workforce.

Regarding regional impacts, Mr. Paukovits highlighted 87% of Virginia's military construction funding flows into Hampton Roads. Current TRG advocacy highlights include FY27 legislative requests, increasing NASA Langley's science budget, expanding Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSAs) for childcare at Langley AFB, and addressing Counter-UAS threats. To mitigate drone incursions similar to those seen at other bases, he stressed the need for a regional "common operating picture" that integrates community and installation sensor networks.

Mr. Paukovits also detailed the Maritime Action Plan (MAP), a strategy to restore domestic shipbuilding dominance through shipyard capacity expansion and the "Military to Mariner" workforce pipeline. A critical regional opportunity is the upcoming July 1st nomination period for Maritime Prosperity Zones, which offer 10-year investment incentives and loan guarantees. Paukovits urged Hampton Roads to adopt a collaborative strategy to secure these designations.

The subsequent discussion, led by John Polowczyk and Stephen Mucklow, focused on the tension between fleet readiness and new ship construction. While the Navy prioritizes "fight tonight" readiness accounts, leadership is advocating for a higher





budget top line to build the "force of tomorrow" without decommissioning existing vessels one-for-one. It was clarified that the MAP is a broad national strategy which will directly impact the Hampton Roads maritime ecosystem. To accelerate growth, the Navy is exploring innovative modular construction and utilizing existing Coast Guard hull designs for new frigates.

6. Review and Approval of FY27 Federal Legislative Priorities. Executive Director Dwyer presented the FY27 federal legislative priorities, which remain consistent with previous drafts while incorporating critical updates. The overview included:

Continued prioritization of coastal resilience by advocating for inclusion of all regional military and federal installations in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers storm risk management studies. To facilitate this, HRMFFA is seeking legislative language to alter current funding limitations that prevent the Peninsula study from using supplemental funds or accepting local community contributions. While nearly \$1 billion is slated for regional military construction, advocacy efforts include requests for a congressional "floor" on operations and maintenance spending to protect Facility Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) funding from budget cuts.

The legislative priorities urge the Congressional Delegation to engage with Air Force and Navy leadership regarding future force structures, specifically the F-47 and FA-XX platforms at Langley AFB and NAS Oceana. Continued support for SIOP also remains a top priority. Regarding quality of life, HRMFFA is requesting congressional oversight hearings to address TRICARE T-5 contract disruptions, including healthcare provider credentialing failures, unpaid reimbursements for healthcare services, and the shrinking provider network. Proposed workforce incentives include federal tax credits for hiring military spouses and low-income housing tax credits for developers building affordable housing within 15 miles of military installations.

Other legislative priorities included a programmatic addition to the Army's budget to establish a dual-use autonomous systems center of excellence, potentially located at the Newport News Airport. Additional priorities include:

- Supporting the \$32 million budget request for the Jefferson Lab High Performance Data Facility.
- Advocating for level funding at NASA Langley to prevent proposed budget cuts.
- Coast Guard homeporting new offshore patrol cutters in Hampton Roads.
- Seeking legislative "deadlines" to provide the Coast Guard with the same community partnership authorities (IGSA's) granted to the Department of War.



Following the presentation, a motion to approve the FY27 priorities was made by Mayor Dyer and seconded by Mayor Gray. The board unanimously approved the FY27 federal legislative priorities.

7. End of March 2026 Financial Statements: Executive Director Dwyer presented the financial statements, reporting that the organization's financial standing remains stable with revenues and budgetary expenses tracking closely to projections. He noted that although certain line items appeared slightly higher than anticipated, these variances were minor and did not present any cause for concern regarding the overall budget. The Board had no questions or comments.
8. Budget & Finance Committee: Chair Shepperd invited Mayor Duman to present the Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee Report. Mayor Duman reported the B&F Committee met virtually on April 8, 2026, to conduct a second review of the draft FY27 budget. Key budget revisions since the December 2025 presentation included a labor expense cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment increase from 3% to 3.5%. The COLA was confirmed by HRPDC Executive Director Bob Crum to align with regional planning consultations among HRPDC/HRTPO and HRTAC. Additionally, the committee maintained a near-term 3.5% interest rate sweep account planning figure.

The committee evaluated the February 2026 financial reports, noting annual revenues have been collected, aside from remaining incremental installments, with expenses on track. Regarding the Virginia Defense Forum, preliminary data indicates a projected surplus of approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000. However, final figures need to be confirmed by the Association of Defense Communities.

Regarding the surplus, the B&F committee presented two options for Board consideration. The first option involved reducing HRMFFA's Host Sponsorship commitment from \$25,000 to \$15,000 and donating the remaining surplus balance to the newly launched Hampton Roads Blue Star Families chapter. The second option retains the surplus funds, including these within the redistribution of funds to HRMFFA members after the FY26 financial audit. Mayor Kaplan made a motion in favor of option one, with Mayor West seconding the motion. The board unanimously approved the option one motion.

9. Executive Director Dwyer provided an update on the 2026 Virginia state legislative priorities, noting the Virginia Military Community Infrastructure Grant Program remains a key focus tied to budget negotiations. Governor Youngkin included \$2 million in the executive budget to help localities offset non-federal shares for DCIP grants, and while the Senate retained this funding, the House removed it. Mr. Dwyer emphasized



continued advocacy is essential, as the program will disappear without state-level funding for the next fiscal year. Regarding military spouse employment, efforts are underway to secure language-only budget amendments that would allow military spouses to qualify for V3 employment incentive grants.

The region saw significant success with Interstate Licensure Compacts, as the General Assembly passed legislation to join five of the six remaining compacts. Additionally, the state passed an incentive program for employer-sponsored childcare, which aims to increase community capacity. However, legislation regarding wind farm permitting deconfliction failed to gain traction due to a lack of appetite at the General Assembly level following federal administrative shifts.

Regarding recurrent flooding, Mr. Bob Crum reported that the region expects the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) to be replenished following the Commonwealth's move to rejoin Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). With a new auction scheduled for September, Mr. Crum noted that Hampton Roads has historically received about 70% of these funds. Finally, Mr. Dwyer noted that a bill proposing inflationary adjustments to the military retiree tax exemption was continued to next year, as budget constraints limited support for the measure during the session.

10. Chair Shepperd invited Executive Director Dwyer to provide a Virginia Defense Forum summary. Mr. Dwyer described the event as highly successful, noting it exceeded attendance expectations by attracting 250 registrants. Mr. Dwyer highlighted the quality of discussions and Battleship Wisconsin reception's success. Mayor Kaplan added remarks lauding the event's success, particularly the quality-of-life panel presentations. The positive feedback generated strong interest in holding the event next year, though the location remains undetermined. One specific outcome of the forum's discussions involved counter-UAS issues, leading to a proposal to establish a regional working group.
11. Executive Director Dwyer provided an update regarding the annual Pentagon trip in Washington, D.C., requesting members place a hold on their calendars for September 24th. The date was selected to minimize scheduling conflicts with local City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings. Scheduling factors included a strategic shift to avoid any potential government shutdown planning impediments.
12. Chair Shepperd adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.