

Final Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force

Minutes for the Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting #120 on Thursday, January 18, 2024

The Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) held a publicly noticed meeting at the Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown at 9:00 AM EST – 12:08 PM EST. For Agenda: See Page 3.

Task Force Members Present:

Tom Neubauer, Bay Defense Alliance, Vice Chairman
Brigadier General Chip Diehl, USAF, (Ret)
Major General John Haas, USA, The Adjutant General (TAG) of Florida
Rear Admiral Don Quinn, USN, (Ret)
Ms. Kay Rasmussen, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC)
Commissioner Jim Scholl, Monroe County
Mr. Jamal Sowell, Indelible Solutions
Mr. Reeves Valentine, Lockheed Martin

Task Force Members Present via ZOOM:

The Honorable Thomas Bowman
Major General Richard Haddad, USAF, (Ret)

Task Force Members Absent:

Senator Tom Wright, Chairman
Representative Patt Maney
Representative Tyler Sirois

Speakers Present:

Secretary J. Alex Kelly, FloridaCommerce
Kellie Jo Kilberg, Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Chair
Major General James Hartsell, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)
Joe Marino, Veterans Florida
Dennis Baker, Florida Veterans Foundation
Deputy Secretary Lindsay Volpe, FloridaCommerce

Others Present in Person:

Robert Brown, University of Central Florida (UCF) Florida Space Institute
Matt Chesnut, Space Florida
Debi Graham, Northwest Florida Defense Coalition
John Kiriazes, UCF Florida Space Institute
Rob Lawrence, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)
Rob Long, Space Florida
Scott Luth, Space Florida
Mike Miller, Space Florida
Mike Mosley, One Okaloosa EDC
Steve Murray, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)
Allison Reinwald, Florida National Guard (FLNG)
Captain Ryan Rhoden, FLNG
Nathan Sparks, One Okaloosa EDC

Doug Stauffer, One Okaloosa EDC
Cory Strickland, FloridaCommerce
Niki Welge, FloridaCommerce
Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife

Others Present via ZOOM:

Katie Allan, Bay Defense Alliance
Sue Burke, Office of Commissioner Jim Scholl
George Cheros, National Center for Simulation
Dave Dahl, Navy Region Southeast
Ron Demes, Key West
Neal Finkelstein, National Center for Simulation
Christina Gardner, NAS Key West
Mark McManus, Navy Region Southeast
Sheila McNamara, Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC)
Rick Miller, South Florida Defense Alliance/FDA
Dave Murzin, 850 Consulting Group, LLC
Greg Tudor, FloridaCommerce
The Florida Channel

Staff Present:

Tim MacGregor, Director, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Ray Collins, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Michelle Griggs, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Chris Weller, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce



Florida Defense Support Task Force – Meeting #120
Four Points by Sheraton, 316 W Tennessee St, Tallahassee FL 32301
AGENDA for January 18, 2024

Please contact the Military & Defense Team for Zoom Webinar information.

KEY:
(I) = Information
(D) = Discussion
(A) = Action

All Times are listed in Eastern Daylight Time (EST)

- 9:00 – 9:05 Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions..... Chairman **(I)**
- 9:05 – 9:15 Old Business.....Chairman **(A) / (I)**
 - Approval of Minutes Chairman **(A)**
 - TF Grants and Contracts Status Michelle Griggs **(I)**
- 9:15 – 12:15 New Business.....Chairman **(I)**
 - Florida Commerce Overview Sec. Alex Kelly
 - TF Member Reports
 - Florida Defense Alliance Update Kellie Jo Kilberg **(I)**
 - Department of Military Affairs Update MG John Haas **(I)**
 - FDVA Update Maj Gen (R) James Hartsell **(I)**
 - Veterans Florida Update Joe Marino **(I)**
 - Florida Veterans Foundation Dennis Baker **(I)**
 - FloridaCommerce Veterans Programs Dep. Sec. Lindsay Volpe **(I)**
 - Military & Defense Update Tim MacGregor **(I)**
- 12:15 – 12:30 Public Comment.....Chairman
- 12:30 – 1:30 Closed Session

Reminder – Upcoming Meeting Dates:

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Feb 15, 2024 | Zoom | | |
| Mar 21, 2024 | Panama City Tyndall AFB | Apr 18, 2024 | Zoom |
| May 16, 2024 | Tallahassee (24-25 Grants) / FDA | Jun 2024 | NO MEETING |
| Jul 18, 2024 | Jacksonville NS Mayport | Aug 15, 2024 | Zoom |
| Sep 19, 2024 | Doral US Southern Command | Oct 17, 2024 | Zoom |
| Nov 21, 2024 | Orlando Lockheed Martin / FDA | Dec 2024 | NO MEETING |

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer began the meeting at 9:00 AM EST.

I. Agenda Item I: Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer welcomed everyone in person and on the Florida Channel to the Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) meeting. He welcomed FloridaCommerce **Secretary J. Alex Kelly** to the meeting and asked **Captain Ryan Rhoden** to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. **Tim MacGregor** called the roll of TF members.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer asked all public comments to be emailed to Ray Collins at Ray.Collins@commerce.fl.gov to be read into the record at the conclusion of the meeting. He reminded the TF that the meeting is governed by the Sunshine Law

II. Agenda Item II: Old Business

Approval of Minutes

A quorum being present, Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer asked for corrections to the November 16, 2023 TF meeting minutes. Ms. Kay Rasmussen noted that her company was misidentified and should be changed to One Okaloosa Economic Development Council, versus Commission. Also, in Real Admiral Don Quinn's comments starting on page 6, it reflects that he stated "the Live Local Act does not pose any threat to Northwest Florida..." The Live Local Act does pose a threat to Eglin Air Force Base, the largest Air Force installation in the Department of Defense, and Hurlburt Field both of which are located in Okaloosa County, in Northwest Florida. Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer asked to change to Brigadier General Brian Laidlaw (from Colonel) in his member report. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes with the above noted changes. Ms. Kay Rasmussen made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Rear Admiral Don Quinn, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Task Force Grants and Contracts Status

Michelle Griggs reported on several current TF contracts and grants.

Grants:

Grant reports for the second quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 23-24 were due on January 12th, after the printing of this report. They will be included in next month's report.

The contract for DTF 24-100, the University of West Florida, was fully executed on December 11th.

DTF 24-102, Clay County Development Authority requested the remainder of their grant award on December 18th and has submitted their final report on the project. This grant is closed pending payment.

DTF 24-104 Jacksonville Aviation Authority was approved by FloridaCommerce leadership and sent to the grantee for partial execution. On January 4th, JAA submitted some administrative changes to the contract. Those have been incorporated and the contract is routing again through FloridaCommerce for approvals.

The contract for DTF 24-105, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, was approved by FloridaCommerce and was sent to GMCC for partial execution on January 3rd. It was returned partially executed on January 17th and is now routing for final execution.

Contracts:

CON 23-300, Strategic Plan 2024-2029: On January 2nd, The Roosevelt Group submitted a second draft to the M&D Team which is currently under review.

CON 24-400, 2023 Economic Impact Study, Matrix Design Group submitted a first draft of the summary to the M&D Team on December 1st and a second draft on December 19th. The main report was received on January 5th. Both drafts are currently with Staff for review.

Continuing Services Contract:

23-01 Spousal Licensing Reciprocity Matrix: the draft spreadsheet was received by the M&D Team on December 20th. It was sent back to Matrix for confirmation of contacts and link updates on January 5th and Staff is waiting on its return for the final review.

23-02 FY 23-24 Military Benefits Guide – a draft version of the Guide was sent to the M&D Team on December 19th. It was sent back to Matrix with guidance to update statutes and broken links on January 8th and Staff is waiting on its return for the final review.

Agenda Item III: New Business

FloridaCommerce Overview

Secretary J. Alex Kelly presented on Florida's support of the military, defense and veterans to include topics to include economic impact, areas of investment, the Governor's focus and investment on military and defense and current legislation as it pertains to House Bill 1419 and Senate Bill 1420.

The presentation slides, when available for posting, will be found at the link below by clicking on Florida Defense Support Task Force, then on FDSTF Meeting Presentations – 2024:

<https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

Task Force Member Reports

Brigadier General Chip Diehl reported that MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) continues working with the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation's (OLDCC) and their Public Schools on Military Installations (PSMI) Program. MacDill AFB is currently working through their grant application process for funding for a middle school and renovations at the Tinker School. Congress must continue to fund this program as schools on NAS Key West and Eglin AFB look to receive funding for their schools next year.

Major General Richard Haddad briefed on Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC):

After more than forty days of intensive search, rescue, recovery and salvage efforts alongside the Japan Coast Guard, Japan Self-Defense Forces, local law enforcement and Japanese civilian volunteers, the U.S. Military concluded operations following the CV-22 mishap that occurred on November 29, 2023 off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Search, rescue and recovery operations included more than 1,000 personnel, 46 aircraft, 23 maritime vessels and 21 unmanned aerial and underwater systems searching more than 60,000 square kilometers of the ocean's surface and 39 square kilometers of the ocean floor. "While it is with tremendous deep regret that we were unable to find our last teammate, Major Eric Spendlove, the combined joint efforts of our Japanese allies and U.S. military forces have been inspiring to see the lengths our forces will go in order to attempt to bring a teammate home," said Rear Admiral Jeromy Williams, Commander Special Operations Command Pacific.

United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) hosts 1st Special Forces Group Truth Conference focusing on force health. U.S. Army General Bryan P. Fenton, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command and Command Sergeant Major Shane Shorter hosted the fourth of a series of virtual forums focused on people, at Joint Special Operations University, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida on December 14, 2023. This forum dealt with force health.

This quarter's 1st Special Forces Group Truth Conference focused on force health with an emphasis on brain health and resiliency to empower leaders with access to the resources available for the command's people. The series of quarterly events are a component to the USSOCOM Preservation of the Force and Family's Integrated Performance Campaign. The purpose of the events is to develop a mutual understanding across senior leadership and explore a variety of approaches to address the threat of self-harm to the people in the formation, and the intent is to generate follow-on actions for the leaders to implement at the echelons below.

Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR):

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Ryan traveled up to Moody Air Force Base this week to participate in the Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) for the bed-down of two squadrons of F-35s projected to arrive in fiscal year 2029. Lieutenant Colonel Ryan and the APAFR staff anticipate Moody F-35 utilization of Avon Park at a tempo similar to the way A-10s currently use the Range.

From January 29th through February 10th, APAFR will be hosting a Close Air Support Large Force Exercise including surface to surface fires conducted by AFSOC personnel out of Fort Liberty, North Carolina. Over 100 ground personnel along with multiple aviation units are scheduled to participate.

On January 24th, APAFR staff, in conjunction with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Avon Park Correctional Institution, will hold the kick-off meeting for the Range's Military Installation Resiliency Review.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer discussed that the Collegiate Purple Star campus designation recognizes schools that demonstrate a commitment to support military students and families as they transition to the college environment. Yesterday, Gulf Coast State College was officially designated as the first Collegiate Purple Star campus, recognizing the services it provides to all active military and veteran students and their families.

In 2009 Navy Region Southeast identified an encroachment and security issue for 18 acres of property adjacent to Naval Support Activity Panama City. This property was included as a top tier encroachment property by the TF many years ago and funds to purchase were appropriated by the Legislature. Bay County matched those funds with about \$1.3 million and the property was acquired. Since then, Bay County has been working to transfer this state-owned property to the Federal Government and has encountered many obstacles. With the help of Florida's Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis, the Cabinet and Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, the process has finally been approved.

The Bay County community is excited to host the next in-person meeting of the TF in March in Panama City and will include a tour of Tyndall AFB, which is taking shape as the resilient installation of the future. Missions are doing well and the base received the first eight (8) (of 72) F-35s. They are excited to welcome the TF back to Panama City.

Rear Admiral Don Quinn reported that the 479th Flying Training Group at NAS Pensacola will have a change of command on January 25th.

Hurricane Sally repairs continue. The Navy had originally planned to demolish hangar 3260 but now plan to repair it as it will have great short-term mission impacts and losing that hangar would hurt several of the missions at NAS Pensacola.

The signage at the back gate to help move traffic during the Blue Angel practices and to the National Aviation Museum is in the works and should be up this year.

Unmanned vehicle pilot training will be expanding in Training Wing 6, which will be supported by members from other services.

NAS Whiting Field has received 71 of its 130 new helicopters. They've also purchased another 435 acres of land for buffering against incompatible development around the installation and outlying fields, which brings the total to about 20,000 acres to protect their missions. NAS Whiting Field has received Readiness and

Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funds in the amount of \$1.2 million to restore habitat around outlying fields. They also received \$1.54 million to restore habitat around Choctaw Beach, on the west side of Eglin AFB.

Santa Rosa County is working with OLDCC, the Navy and the School Board to look at sites around NAS Whiting Field for locations to build new schools due to the population surge in the county.

Ms. Kay Rasmussen briefed that the 96th Test Wing at Eglin AFB announced the long-awaited Enhanced Use Lease Agreement (EULA) opportunity for 98 acres of development outside their west gate, adjacent to the University of Florida's Research Engineering and Education Facility (REEF). It will be focused for a research and technology campus.

Higher Ground Education has been successful in obtaining a new developer to build two (2) new childcare centers in Crestview and Mary Esther. Lack of childcare has been identified as a resiliency challenge and number one priority for the installation and its multiple units. Eglin AFB's footprint is the largest installation in the DoD and deals with very long commute time challenges.

The 96th Test Wing on Eglin AFB, as well as Hurlburt Field, have been expanding their existing childcare development (CDC) facilities. The main CDC on Eglin AFB is finalizing renovations and the 96th Test Wing will be building a new CDC facility in Crestview. The new facility in Crestview will provide capacity for 200 children.

During last year's Legislative Session, the challenge with duplication of licensure and certification extending the expense and timeline for home-based facilities was cleaned up and improved. As such there's a now strong effort in to promote the opportunity to have home-based childcare facilities. Not only will this be another answer to tackling the childcare challenge in the area, but also provides a significant second income to those families.

Workforce is needed to staff those CDCs so both Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field are providing incentives to attract and retain the workforce required to fill those facilities.

The congestion of Highway 98 to the west of Hurlburt Field was discussed at previous TF meetings as it provides a negative impact to mission response time. A Transportation Forum was held in November and a follow-on vector check is scheduled for February 20th to discuss and learn what has taken place in the last couple of months to move forward. Lieutenant General Tony D. Bauernfeind, AFSOC Commander, has met with key legislators to elevate the need to reduce the congestion on Highway 98, thereby supporting the AFSOC team at Hurlburt Field.

She extended her appreciation to Mr. Rob Long, the Chief Executive Officer of Space Florida, and his team as they traveled to Northwest Florida earlier this week to visit many of the area's installations. They received briefings and tours and met with installation and community leaders to gain situational awareness of the opportunities and the challenges in Northwest Florida. She appreciates their outreach and is excited for future opportunities and collaborations.

Commissioner Jim Scholl briefed that NAS Key West has been busy hosting flight training and special operations training and supporting test and evaluations in coordination with Coast Guard Sector Key West. Last year they hosted 69 aviation-trained detachments with over 600 aircraft and 8,000 personnel. The Army Special Forces Underwater Operation School hosted 85 units and 3,000 personnel with training and deployment certification. Coast Guard Sector Key West, along with Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South hosted Operation Vigilant Sentry which protects the south border and water routes into the country.

They are hopeful that Sigsbee Charter School will receive funding to rebuild. In April, the school will be hosting the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) meeting for the southeast and the mid-Atlantic regions and are expecting about 100 attendees.

Mr. Jamal Sowell reported from Northeast Florida:

Northeast Florida Sentinel Landscape

North Florida Land Trust is leading a group that includes the leadership of Camp Blanding, NAS Jacksonville, NS Mayport and Blount Island Command in developing and submission of a proposal for the Sentinel Landscape program. This Northeast Florida Sentinel Landscape would be anchored on Camp Blanding and the Pinecastle Range Complex and includes all Department of Defense (DOD) and Florida Guard facilities in the Northeast Florida area. As the selection of the Northeast Florida proposal into the Sentinel Landscape program will greatly benefit Camp Blanding and the Pinecastle Range Complex, he proposes the Task Force formally endorse this proposal and submit a letter of support to the DOD members of the selection committee. He has proposed letters of endorsement prepared for consideration by the Task Force.

Navy Region Southeast

Senate Confirmation and subsequent promotion for Rear Admiral Ian Johnson is complete.

All United States Navy (USN) installations and facilities will conduct the annual Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain force protection exercise in February. Citadel Shield (February 5th through 9th) will be mostly internal, unit level training. The following week (February 12th through 15th) Solid Curtain will be more dynamic and could potentially include closing of base gates due to exercise threat levels and events.

Region Southeast and NAS Jax/Mayport Community Planning Liaison Officer (CPLO) remains engaged with the Florida Defense Alliance regarding amendments filed to the Live Local Act and potential encroachment threats this law presents to our military installations.

NS Mayport

The USS THOMAS HUDNER (DDG 116) recently returned to homeport at NS Mayport following an eight-month deployment where she steamed for over 60,000 miles. The THOMAS HUDNER served as an air defense unit for the USS GERALD R. FORD and other vessels of Strike Group-12 off the coast of Israel. While conducting patrols in the Red Sea, THOMAS HUDNER successfully engaged 3 one-way attack Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).

Naval Station Mayport was proud to host both teams who participated in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl. The Wildcats of University of Kentucky and the Clemson Tigers visited the installation on December 26th and 27th, respectively. Both teams received a tour of the USS JASON DUNHAM (DDG 109) and received a glimpse of life at sea to include participating in damage control and firefighting drills.

Mayport has commenced major and minor repair projects from damages sustained from Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. These projects include replacement of the Pass and ID Office at the main gate, replacement of the beach line security tower, perimeter roadway repairs, flood damage repairs, roof repairs, and repairs to chains and fenders in the basin. These repairs have started exactly one year from the date of Hurricane Nicole.

NAS JACKSONVILLE

NAS Jacksonville is presently hosting a detachment of United States Marine Corps (USMC) F-35B aircraft from January 17th through February 12th. This detachment will be in the local area to conduct training at Outlying Field Whitehouse as well as at the Pinecastle Range Complex.

NAS Jacksonville will be hosting Admiral Yang Yong-Mo, the Chief of Naval Operations from the Republic of Korea (ROK) on February 2nd as he conducts a site visit with ROK P-8 crews currently undergoing training on the installation.

On New Years Eve, an unknown individual fired a weapon into the air and the round landed on NAS Jacksonville causing damage to a P-8 aircraft. Local law enforcement officials have been notified of the incident. This is not the first time that bullets have been found on the western edges of the parking apron and flight line at NAS Jacksonville.

The NAS Jacksonville airshow will be held from October 18th through 20th, 2024. If there are any Florida military units that would like to send a static display to the airshow, please reach out to the NAS Jacksonville CPLO, Mr. Mark McManus at mark.w.mcmanus3.civ@us.navy.mil. NAS Jacksonville will gratefully host any air or ground units that wish to set up a display at the airshow. Military recruiters will be present in the static display area during airshow weekend.

NAS Jacksonville and the City of Jacksonville have reached an agreement with Timuquana Country Club on a Restrictive Use Easement on 24.5 acres of land that is under the NAS Jacksonville Accident Potential Zone. This is the final phase of an effort that has brought the entire 300 acres golf course into Restrictive Use Easement and protects NAS Jacksonville from encroachment along the northern fence line. This purchase was enabled by grant money provided by the Florida Defense Support Task Force.

PINECASTLE RANGE COMPLEX

Putnam County planning staff notified NAS Jacksonville about a proposed development of up to 60 luxury homes on Hog Island, located within Lake George in Georgetown, Florida. Lake George is one of the ranges of the Pinecastle Range Complex (PRC) and is used for mine warfare training where inert air-launched Quickstrike mines (500 pounds to 2,000 pounds) may be dropped from tactical and maritime patrol aircraft. Lake George Range is also used for electronic warfare range where the use of radar emitters and missile simulators are available and electronic, infrared and chaff countermeasures may be employed. This island is located within PRC Range Compatibility Zone 2 (RCZ-2), which is defined as airspace of armed over-flight when an aircraft with ordnance places the cockpit master arming switch into the “armed” position and energizes the weapons racks on the aircraft. The Navy considers this area incompatible for development due to health and safety concerns. Following engagement with Putnam County about the RCZ-2 issue as well as referencing state laws regarding real estate disclosure as well no private aviation will be permitted to this island since it lays within Restricted Area 2907, the applicant has withdrawn the application to develop this island.

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE (COJ)

The city recently attended a Distinguished Visitors Day at Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island. The event displayed highlighted several future and current maritime logistics connectors. The Marine Corps is experimenting with a variety of platforms to determine how they could be used to deploy and sustain Marines in a future environment that is fundamentally naval, contested and highly distributed.

The Food Farmacy program sponsored by the COJ Department of Veterans and Military Affairs continue to address food insecurity issues for our service members in the local area. This program provides food twice a month and averages approximately 400 families supported each day.

The Jacksonville Area Ship Repair Association held a meeting on January 17th with representation of the City of Jacksonville. This meeting was to discuss strategies to promote DOD investment in vessel laydown and repair contracts in the Jacksonville area.

A GREAT PATRIOT DEPARTS

Major John L. Haynes, age 93, passed peacefully in his Monticello home on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. The “Major” was a great man and devoted American patriot who completed 30 years of military service in the US Marine Corps, followed by almost 50 years of volunteer service to his fellow Veterans and their families. His military service included combat duty in WW II, Korea and Vietnam. His deep patriotic commitment dates back to his childhood, where he participated daily in actions that contributed to the national war effort: creating victory gardens, collecting scrap iron and steel, participating in the war Bond effort, and joining the Civil Air Patrol at the age of 13.

At the most fundamental level of his nature, the Major’s military and civilian contributions reflected his deep love for our nation and our way of life. He represented the epitome of selfless service to his country and fellow citizens. At age 93, he continued participation in eleven (11) military service organizations and remained active

assisting Veterans and military widows in obtaining their disability benefits. His work also included visiting the gravesites of fallen heroes with a group of retired Veteran friends.

Major Haynes was internationally recognized as a great leader and innovator in his military occupation specialty of Explosive Ordnance Disposal. He was known for devising and instituting new demolition techniques and procedures that led to significant casualty reductions. He was a great leader who led his troops, both military and civilian, in a bold, decisive and energetic style, which inspired the loyalty and respect of all.

His military and civilian awards are too numerous to list, some of the most highly recognized ones include: The Purple Heart, The Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Gold Star and Combat "V", Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, 3 stars, 2 Presidential Unit Citations, 3 Awards of the Navy Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, China Service Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Cross of Gallantry the Silver Star (Vietnam). He was inducted into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame in 2013, received the Governor's Medal of Merit in 2017, was selected by Governor Scott to represent him in Washington, DC for the signing of the "VA Mission Act of 2018", and he received the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Medal of Honor March of 2022.

He is buried at the Tallahassee National Cemetery in Tallahassee, Florida.

Mr. Reeves Valentine briefed that on January 11th, the DoD released its first ever National Defense Industrial Strategy calling for generational changes to the industrial base. The report didn't list specifics or the associated costs, which are scheduled to be released later this year. It did identify some weaknesses in the U.S. industrial capacity and with four (4) priorities which are building a more resilient supply chain, increasing the industrial workforce, using more flexible acquisition policies and employing economic deterrence.

The nation could, again, be facing the impacts of a Continuing Resolution by tomorrow with a limited government shutdown. Congress has until early March to complete 12 appropriation bills to prevent the shutdown from happening.

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Orlando and Patrick Space Force Base (SFB) are working on a resiliency and infrastructure improvement opportunity. A consultant was recently selected and kickoff is expected to commence later this month. This plan would help provide a framework for potential defense community infrastructure program projects.

A study is underway to support potential encroachment and buffering projects at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Okahumpka, Florida. This is in partnership with FloridaCommerce, Stetson University and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. The project begins this month.

The traffic circulation improvement study in order to improve traffic in and around the Central Florida Research Park is currently underway, thanks to a grant from the TF.

The Orlando modeling, simulation and training contingent recently traveled to Washington, DC. This was a regional delegation organized by the National Center of Simulation and UCF to engage in strategic discussions with key legislators and government officials. Enthusiastic support from Capitol Hill was received along with recognition for Orlando's unique collaboration approach to defense industry.

Florida Defense Alliance Update

Kellie Jo Kilberg, FDA Chair, reported that in December she recently met with Senator Tom Wright, along with Senator Danny Burgess and Senator Vic Torres to follow up on issues which arose during the November FDA meeting.

The new chairman of FDA's Mission Sustainment Assurance and Growth Working Group is Dr. Neal Finkelstein who is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the National Center for Simulation. Dr. Finkelstein is the perfect

person to lead the group into the future not only to sustain missions, but to look at enhancing policies and programs as Florida leads in DoD innovation and growth.

Both working groups are working on panel discussions for the FDA virtual meeting on February 13th. Currently, the Mission Sustainment Assurance and Growth Working Group is tracking legislation regarding Senate Bill 328 / House Bill 1239. FDA is looking to clean up language on the Live Local Act. They support the language "a proposed development located within one quarter mile of a military installation identified in statute 163.3175(2) may not be administratively approved." However, they don't support the additional language that "each county shall maintain on its website a policy containing procedures and expectations for administrative approval. Pursuant to this subsection." That specific line leaves open interpretation from each community what it means for administrative approval.

She and Family Support Working Group chair, Kathleen Nestor, participated in a virtual call with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Military Communities and Family Policies, Patricia Barron, in December. They discussed Florida's programs and challenges within those programs. One issue on which they are currently working is sending the list of DoD children coming into Florida to schools earlier so Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans are developed earlier for smoother transition into the new school.

The Family Support Working Group is coordinating the next Family Café in Orlando in June to include a military track for families. Family Cafés bring different agencies together to support families with special needs children.

Family Support is tracking House Bill 1549 / Senate Bill 1498, the Audiology Speech Language Pathology Compact (30 states have this Compact) and Senate Bill 7016, which includes both the Audiology Speech Language Pathology Compact and the Physical Therapy Compact. Compacts seek to eliminate barriers to interstate professional practice, improve patient access to professional services and enhance public protection through a shared interstate licensing data system. It helps military spouses when they relocate to begin working without delay.

She suggested that the streamlining of processes be addressed now that the transition into FloridaCommerce is complete, particularly pertaining to grants, tightening up the process so the communities can receive their contracts earlier.

Department of Military Affairs Update

Major General John Haas provided a presentation on the Department of Military Affairs, Florida National Guard to include such topics as a current mobilization update to include domestic response operations, an overview of support due to Hurricane Idalia, their FY 2024-2025 Legislative Budget Request, strategic priorities and the transition to the F-35.

The presentation slides, when available for posting, will be found at the link below by clicking on Florida Defense Support Task Force, then on FDSTF Meeting Presentations – 2024: <https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) Update

Major General James Hartsell provided an agency update to include information on veterans' outreach, disaster recovery centers, veterans' homes programs, their Hope for Florida program, veterans' mental health programs, key legislation and the Governor's budget recommendation during this Session and Florida's impact on veterans.

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Veterans Florida Update

Joe Marino presented an update from Veterans Florida including information on their VETS Program, major outreach events, SkillBridge employers and industries, entrepreneur partners, performance and legislative budget request and policy priorities.

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Florida Veterans Foundation Update

Dennis Baker presented on the Florida Veterans Foundation to include topics such as veteran support hotlines, publications and successful programs and partnerships:

- Free Veterans Legal Helpline
- Free Veterans Transportation
- Free Dental Care
- Five Star Veterans Center
- North FL Women Veterans Center
- Ashley's Cottage
- Veterans in Crisis Support (Financial, Disaster Relief)
- Governor's Veterans Suicide Prevention
- Florida Veteran's Council
- Crisis Center Tampa Bay
- NE FL Women Veterans
- 5 Star Veteran's Center Jacksonville
- Heroes' Mile, Deltona
- Bay Area Legal Tampa Free Veteran Legal Helpline
- Veteran's Treatment Court
- Project Vet Relief
- Florida Association of Managing Entities (FAME) Rural and Low-Income Mental Health

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FloridaCommerce Veterans Programs Update

Deputy Secretary Lindsay Volpe presented on FloridaCommerce's Jobs for Veterans' State Grant (JVSG) Program Overview. She discussed the program mission and locations, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, principal duties and employment services in 2022, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff and advocacy programs in 2022 and veterans' employment and earnings 2019 through 2022.

The presentation slides, when available for posting, will be found at the link below by clicking on Florida Defense Support Task Force, then on FDSTF Meeting Presentations – 2024: <https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

Military & Defense Update

Tim MacGregor discussed:

He thanked the TF for their sponsorship for last year's training conference with the DVOPs and LVERs, referencing Deputy Secretary Lindsay Volpe's earlier presentation.

Our Team continues working on the development and the growth of the Office of Military Defense at FloridaCommerce. A new reorganizational plan and position descriptions were recently approved but there's still some shuffling around within the division of Economic Development. **Ray Collins** and **Michelle Griggs** remain part of the Office of Military and Defense, along with **Chris Weller**. **Cory Strickland** is moving to Partnership Programs, so he'll be looking to hire someone (possibly a veteran through the SkillBridge program) to run the DIG and DRG programs.

The Office of Military and Defense is expanding beyond the TF and FDA to include workforce development, defense industry, economic development and manufacturing.

He's looking for ways to increase our office's relationship with Space Florida as their Team was in attendance earlier in today's meeting.

Ray Collins works hard on the weekly newsclips to keep everyone informed on what's going on with current military events, so please be sure to read them each week.

The Office of Military and Defense website is still a work in progress as we migrate the webpages to. <https://floridajobs.org/>.

He and **Ray Collins** will be attending the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) National Summit in Washington, DC in early April and looks forward to seeing many of our stakeholders there, as well.

The first National Defense Industrial Strategy has been released. The link to this document is as follows: <https://www.businessdefense.gov/docs/ndis/2023-NDIS.pdf>

The nomination period for ADC's Great American Defense Community is through February 14th. The link to the nomination form is as follows: <https://defensecommunities.org/gadc/>

The Defense State Liaison office has released their 2024 active-duty spouse survey. Responses can be submitted through late February. The link to the survey is as follows: <https://www.dodsurveys.mil/>

January 25th, the Office of Military and Defense will be participating in the Defense Community Infrastructure Program webinar, sponsored by OLDCC.

III. Agenda Item IV: Public Comment

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, highlighted some Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape key accomplishments in FY 23 & 24:

- 18,569 conservation acres acquired for \$48.2 million
- 32 Florida Forever projects targeting 528,000 acres
- 12,384 acres acquired for \$18 million by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Telogia Creek Wildlife Management Area
- \$14 million for two Destin beachfront acres by Trust for Public Land, Okaloosa County
- 2,812 acres acquired for \$11.2 million buffering NAS Whiting Field and Eglin Air Force Base
- Over \$14 million awarded for climate and coastal resiliency projects
- Three (3) estuary programs developing comprehensive conservation and management plans
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Florida Forest Service enrolled 482 landowners covering 92,792 acres in stewardship plans
- 11,305 conservation acres acquired for \$14.1 million
- 6,133 acres in three (3) tracts proposed for acquisition

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful Challenge Grant to fund prescribed fire tea in the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape
- Vision, purpose, principles and priorities adopted for the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape implementation plan
- \$4.2 million awarded for the NAS Whiting Field helicopter support center
- Emerald Coast Regional Council is preparing their Military Installation Resiliency Review (MIRR) for the installations in Northwest Florida

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 AM EST.

This meeting can be viewed on The Florida Channel:

<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/1-18-24-florida-defense-support-task-force/>

Final Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force

Minutes for the Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting #121 on Thursday, February 15, 2024

The Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) held a publicly noticed meeting on Zoom at 9:00 AM EST – 10:27 AM EST. For Agenda: See Page 3.

Task Force Members Present:

Tom Neubauer, Bay Defense Alliance, Vice Chairman
Brigadier General Chip Diehl, USAF, (Ret)
Major General John Haas, USA, The Adjutant General (TAG) of Florida
Major General Richard Haddad, USAF, (Ret)
Rear Admiral Don Quinn, USN, (Ret)
Ms. Kay Rasmussen, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC)
Commissioner Jim Scholl, Monroe County
Mr. Jamal Sowell, Indelible Solutions
Mr. Reeves Valentine, Lockheed Martin

Task Force Members Absent:

Senator Tom Wright, Chairman
The Honorable Thomas Bowman
Representative Patt Maney
Representative Tyler Sirois

Speakers Present:

Lieutenant Colonel Blake Heidelberg, Florida National Guard (FLNG)
Kellie Jo Kilberg, Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Chair
Ryan Bourgoin, Deputy General Counsel, FloridaCommerce

Others Present:

Sue Burke, Office of Monroe County Commissioner Jim Scholl
Lee Cardice, Cardice Audio Visual Services
Ron Demes, Key West
Dr. Neal Finkelstein, National Center for Simulation
Christina Gardner, Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West
Debi Graham, Northwest Florida Defense Coalition
Dale Ketcham, Space Florida
Mark McManus, Navy Region Southeast
Steve Murray, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)
Tyler Nolen, Northeast Florida Planning Council
Sheila McNamara, Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Dave Murzin, 850 Consulting LLC
Jenifer Rupert, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Cory Strickland, FloridaCommerce
Brooke Trawick-Gilbert, Bay Defense Alliance
The Florida Channel

Staff Present:

Tim MacGregor, Director, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce
Ray Collins, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce
Michelle Griggs, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce
Chris Weller, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce



**Florida Defense Support Task
Zoom Meeting**

Force – Meeting #121

AGENDA for February 15, 2024

Please contact the Military & Defense Team for Zoom Webinar information.

KEY:
(I) = Information, (D) = Discussion, (A) = Action

All Times are listed in Eastern Standard Time (EST)

- 9:00 – 9:05 Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions..... Chairman **(I)**
- 9:05 – 9:15 Old Business.....Chairman **(A) / (I)**
 - Approval of Minutes Chairman **(A)**
 - TF Grants and Contracts Status Michelle Griggs **(I)**
- 9:15 – 11:15 New Business.....Chairman **(I)**
 - TF Member Reports Kellie Jo Kilberg **(I)**
 - Florida Defense Alliance Update Ryan Bourgoin **(I)**
 - Florida Ethics & Sunshine Law Review Tim MacGregor **(I) / (A)**
 - FDSTF Annual Progress Report & Work Plan Tim MacGregor **(I)**
 - Military & Defense Update
- 11:15 – 11:30 Public Comment.....Chairman

Reminder – Upcoming Meeting Dates:

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Mar 21, 2024 | Panama City Tyndall AFB | Apr 18, 2024 | Zoom |
| May 16, 2024 | Tallahassee (24-25 Grants) / FDA | Jun 2024 | NO MEETING |
| Jul 18, 2024 | Jacksonville NS Mayport | Aug 15, 2024 | Zoom |
| Sep 19, 2024 | Doral US Southern Command | Oct 17, 2024 | Zoom |
| Nov 21, 2024 | Orlando Lockheed Martin / FDA | Dec 2024 | NO MEETING |

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer began the meeting at 9:00 AM EST.

I. Agenda Item I: Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer welcomed everyone connected via Zoom and watching on the Florida Channel to the Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) meeting. He asked **Tim MacGregor** to call the roll of TF members. He asked all public comments to be emailed to Ray Collins at Ray.Collins@commerce.fl.gov to be read into the record at the conclusion of the meeting. He reminded the TF that the meeting is governed by the Sunshine Law

II. Agenda Item II: Old Business

Approval of Minutes

A quorum being present, Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer asked for corrections to the January 18, 2024 TF meeting minutes. Noting none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jim Scholl made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kay Rasmussen, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Task Force Grants and Contracts Status

Michelle Griggs reported on several current TF contracts and grants.

Grants:

All grant reports for the second quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 have been received and are included in the report.

The contract for DTF 24-104 Jacksonville Aviation Authority was fully executed on January 30th.

The contract for DTF 24-105, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, was fully executed on January 22nd.

All FY 2023-2024 TF grant contracts have been executed.

Staff is working with grantees on possible extensions into FY 2024-2025. March 1st is the deadline for grantees to submit extension requests to Staff, which will be presented to the TF at the March meeting for vote.

Staff is also working on FY 24-25 grant applications for discussion at the March meeting in Panama City. To date, nine (9) grant applications have been received for next year's funding, in the amount of over \$3.1 million.

Continuing Services Contract:

23-01 Spousal Licensing Reciprocity Matrix: a new draft was submitted by Matrix Design Group on February 5th and is currently routing through FloridaCommerce for leadership approval.

Matrix Design Group is performing deep dive reviews on the Military Benefits Guide and the Economic Impact Study. Once complete, they will return both publications to Staff for review, then will be routed through FloridaCommerce leadership for final approval.

Contracts:

CON 23-300, Strategic Plan 2024-2029: Staff is waiting on The Roosevelt Group to submit a new draft of the Strategic Plan.

Agenda Item III: New Business

Task Force Member Reports

Brigadier General Chip Diehl updated that MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) is anticipating high turnover this summer and the Tampa Bay AirFest will be held on March 29th and 30th.

Lieutenant Colonel Blake Heidelberg, for **Major General John Haas, Florida National Guard (FLNG)**, reported that the FLNG remains engaged both overseas and domestically, continuing to support operational deployments with over 100 Soldiers and Airmen deployed in and around Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East.

They continue their domestic operations, supporting the Florida Department of Corrections with just over 400 Soldiers in 13 facilities across Northwest Florida and just under 40 Soldiers in South Florida supporting local authorities with aviation support on the ongoing migration mitigation mission.

Additionally, they are preparing their second iteration a small contingent of Soldiers and Airmen who will provide State Active-Duty support to the southwest border, working directly with and in support of the Texas National Guard.

He thanked the TF members for their continued support with their Grow the FLNG and F-35 transition initiatives.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer reported that Tyndall AFB is hosting a Weapons Systems Evaluation Program for the next two (2) weeks. This program involves units from seven (7) installations across the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Air Force and allows the aviators to fire the aircraft gun along with the missiles built by the 325th Munitions Squadron.

He'll be attending the retirement ceremony of Air Combat Command (ACC) Commander, General Mark D. Kelly next week as General Ken Wilsbach assumes control of the ACC. There are 35 wings and 1,344 units at 254 locations under Air Combat Command. Florida's ACC footprint includes the 325th Fighter Wing, First Air Force, Air Forces Northern, the Continental NORAD Region, the 601st Air and Space Operations Center and the 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group at Tyndall AFB. Other locations and detachments include Detachment 1 at Homestead Air Reserve Base, the 125th Fighter Wing at NAS Jacksonville, 53rd Wing and 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing at Eglin AFB, the 505th Command and Control Wing at Hurlburt Field and Avon Park Air Force Range.

The March TF meeting will offer a tour of Tyndall AFB's new buildings which are close to completion including the wing headquarters, a 360-room lodging facility, marina facility, a 480-room dormitory and a 330-capacity Child Development Center, due to open any day.

Leadership from Tyndall AFB and Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City are working closely with the community on two major issues, insufficient childcare capacity and the growing gap between the base housing allowance (BHA) and housing costs.

The Air Force Association Conference began Monday in Aurora, Colorado and Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall outlined new Air Force strategy affecting the Air Force mission within the National Defense Strategy.

Major General Richard Haddad briefed the following:

Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR):

APAFR held their Military Installation Resiliency Review at Avon Park Correctional Institute Training Facility on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. The goal of this exercise was to visualize the future state of resilience in communities surrounding the Range by identifying shocks, stresses, gaps, opportunities, and top priorities. This was a high-level conversation as there will be a deeper dive into details, analysis, strategy development, project identification and funding options.

APAFR recently hosted “Close Air Support (CAS) 3.0,” a 2-week live-fire CAS full mission profile exercise. The objective was to train Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) students. Participating aircraft included MC-130, MQ-9, U-28, MC-12, AH-6, MH-60 and A-10.

During CAS 3.0, APAFR was honored to host U.S. Congressman Scott Franklin, Florida, 18th District. The Congressman and staff received a mission briefing and were able to view an aerial training event during CAS 3.0 supported by 23rd Wing assets (2x A-10s and 1xHC-130). Major General (Air Force Retired) Jake Polumbo, Captain (Navy Retired) Rick Miller, and Captain (Navy Retired) Jim Philpitt also attended and informed Congressman Franklin about the Florida Advanced Training Range (FATR) initiative.

This week, APAFR Staff gave a presentation at a Central Florida Regional Planning Council Board meeting. Following the meeting, the board members, comprised of many local elected officials, went to the range to observe another JTAC/A-10 live-fire training mission like what Congressman Franklin and his staff were able to observe.

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)

Lieutenant General Tony Bauernfeind, AFSOC Commander, directed an operational standdown of the Air Force CV-22 fleet December 6, 2023 to mitigate risk while the investigation continues on the November 29, 2023 CV-22 mishap near Yakushima, Japan.

U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM)

Legendary football coach Lou Holtz and his son Skip, also a successful football coach, visited SOCOM headquarters to give a seminar on leadership on January 26, 2024. This was the first time the father and son spoke together lecturing a seminar. The father son duo touched on many aspects on how to be a successful leader.

Rear Admiral Don Quinn reported that repairs due to Hurricane Sally continue at NAS Pensacola. They are collecting a wish list of repairs not covered by hurricane funds and working to obtain MILCON funds for the planning for the new consolidated hangar and a Cyber Mission Force building.

Trainer billing continues at NAS Whiting Field as the budget includes funding for the hangar. The Chief of Naval Air Training is making strides on aircraft availability, especially the new helicopter. They're hopeful to produce about 50 helicopter pilots a month this fiscal year and for the first time in about ten years it seems they'll produce the required number of jet pilots for the Navy, Marine Corps and International Forces.

Ms. Kay Rasmussen briefed the 96th Test Wing hosted an Enhanced Use Lease industry day February 7th, for 98 acres of development in Okaloosa County outside the west gate at Eglin AFB. The desired development is for an Aerospace Research and Technology Park to support defense contractors to house non-classified missions as Eglin is in dire need of facilities, in particular a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). The deadline for response from developers is March 29th.

Another Enhanced Use Lease is planned later this year for 91 acres also outside of the west Gate of Eglin AFB in the town of Shalimar. These 91 acres are targeted for mixed use, temporary lodging, office space and small retail. The date for that Enhanced Use Lease is pending.

As a result of the legislation that was passed last year in supporting home-based family childcare centers many in the community have become interested in this option for family/childcare small business. The University of West Florida's Small Business Development Center is now offering classes for individuals who are interested in pursuing that opportunity.

The Tri County Defense Support Initiatives (DSI) Committee in Northwest Florida writes a Military Priorities Point Paper each year. They collaborate with the military unit commanders in the Tri-County area to identify the top priorities on which they can advocate not only locally and at the state level, but at the federal level, as well. That paper has been finalized and she is happy to share it with the TF. Included in the paper is the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing headquarters' need for MILCON for their facilities and needed SCIF space.

The DSI leadership team will be traveling to Washington, DC in March to meet with Florida's Congressional Delegation leadership. Unfortunately, she will not be joining the TF at their March meeting in Panama City.

Traffic congestion on Highway 98 west of Hurlburt Field continues to be an issue. AFSOC Commander Tony D. Bauernfeind has stressed that this congestion is an encroachment on his missions at Hurlburt Field and if that encroachment is not eliminated it will result in realignment of missions. A round table was held with local leadership back in late 2023 and a follow-up round table event held will be held next week. **Ms. Rasmussen** will be speaking to provide a brief overview on the TF and offer potential funding opportunities, not only through the TF grant program, but also the Defense Reinvestment Grant and Military Base Protection grants.

Locality rate pay was discussed. The Department of Defense (DoD) has a process which identifies the rate of pay at military installations, then regions can be provided their own rate pay. The Eglin installation area is grouped as "Other" in the United States and as a result, the rate that Eglin leaders can pay civilian employees is extremely low. With the low locality rate, the challenge is to attract and retain civilian workforce at Eglin and Hurlburt Field. She is working to get more information on this issue.

Five (5) live World War II bombs were discovered in Choctawhatchee Bay and were detonated yesterday by explosive ordinance disposal technicians from Eglin Air Force Base.

Major General Richard Haddad added that the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance is looking into the locality rate pay issue in their area, as well.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer added that locality rate pay is important in Bay County, as well, and asked **Ms. Rasmussen** to provide additional information to the TF to address at a future meeting.

Commissioner Jim Scholl briefed that Monroe County has been working on the locality rate pay issue for over twenty years as their government civilians don't earn enough money to rent or purchase a home. They've worked with the South Florida Federal Executive Board but Monroe County does not have enough federal government civilian employees to qualify, so they are grouped with Miami for locality pay. Monroe County is more than willing to partner in on any locality pay discussions for the State of Florida.

They recently hosted a visit for Coast Guard Cutter, the Barbara Mabrity, named for the lighthouse keeper in Key West for over 40 years back at the turn of the century.

Training continues with operational squadrons and training squadrons at NAS Key West.

They are working with FEMA on a county road repair project on the south side of NAS Key West. The installation requested an abandonment of the road so they could take it over to provide more resilience and security upgrades, but because it was damaged during Hurricane Irma in 2017 FEMA had funded the project to restore the road. Hurricane Ian came along and delayed the project. FEMA has finally agreed to abandon the road to allow the Navy to take over future maintenance.

In April, Sigsbee Charter School located on NAS Key West is hosting two regions of the Department of Defense Education Activity in hopes to receive more visibility with the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation and receive future funding for the school.

Mr. Jamal Sowell reported the following:

Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville (Jax):

NAS Jax was contacted by a developer who desires to develop a 2+ acre site inside Accident Potential Zone (APZ) 2 with affordable housing under the Live Local Act. The developer was referred to the Navy after engaging the City of Jacksonville's Planning Department. This is the first known instance of Live Local encroachment in the Jacksonville area.

Representatives from NAS Jax met with the owners of 127 acres of land inside APZ2 of NAS Jax to continue the dialog regarding a restrictive use easement. The owners have informed the Navy they wish to sell the land

outright. NAS Jax is awaiting to see who acquires this land and will engage the new owners to determine intent and if development under the Live Local Act is a potential.

The City of Jacksonville (COJ):

The city remains engaged on encroachment protection efforts around all our installations. The city is working with NAS Jax on easements expected to close in March over the final 25 acres of the 300-acre Timuquana Golf Course and one property under the Outlying Field Whitehouse APZ. The city is also working with NAS Jax on six (6) properties presently being surveyed by the Navy for easement closings this summer.

Florida Defense Alliance Update

Kellie Jo Kilberg, FDA Chair, provided a summary of the FDA meeting held earlier in the week. Rick Miller presented an update on current legislation with focus on Senate Bill 328 and House Bill 1239 concerning affordable housing and amendments to the Live Local Act. She is concerned with the line in the amendment which states that each county is to propose verbiage to be placed on their website about their process for administrative approval under the Live Local Act as many of Florida's twenty installations are in different counties with different processes.

The Family Support Working Group presented a panel on Educational Challenges Affecting Military Families with Exceptional Children. The panel consisted of subject matter experts from DOD, two bases and outside advocacy and support organizations. Military families are highly mobile and given the limited time military families may spend in one location the need to quickly receive and maintain services for Exceptional Family Members is especially important to avoid underserving this population. Critical issues that were highlighted are shortages in specialized staff (compacts), timely processing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), ensuring continued access to services in current IEPs from prior schools (honoring IEPs) rather than suspending services and redoing IEPs, building relationships with dedicated personnel in school districts to help quickly resolve issues affecting military families (MacDill model), disaster planning for Exceptional Student Education services—creating plans to continue services or quickly restart services, and mental health and trauma education for educational staff dealing with military children, especially children with special needs.

The Florida Military Family Special Needs Network is planning a full-day, statewide meeting on Thursday, June 13, prior to the start of the 26th Annual Family Café. The meeting will take place at the Hyatt Regency Orlando. All network partners are invited to attend.

The panel presented by the Mission Assurance and Growth Working Group highlighted the impact of Florida's universities on the growth of Florida's bases. Panelists provided information from the University of Central Florida's Space Institute, the ROTC impact within Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Aerospace Studies, the industry impact from the University of Florida and their partnership with NVIDIA and the University of South Florida's Institute of Applied Engineering. These universities are engaged in creating the next pipeline of quality, innovative students to fill the workforce needs.

The final presentation was from The Roosevelt Group's Kathleen Ferguson who discussed the current climate in Washington, DC to include FY 24 appropriations, highlights of the FY 24 National Defense Authorization Act and information on how to submit a congressional request through local representative's websites.

Florida Ethics & Sunshine Law Review

Ryan Bourgoin, Deputy General Counsel, FloridaCommerce, presented a review on Florida statutes in regard to ethics, gifts, travel, public records, record retention, the Sunshine Law and conflicts of interest.

Presentation slides are currently available here:

<https://selectflorida.org/military-defense/florida-defense-support-task/>

Once the FloridaCommerce Office of Military and Defense website has been updated, it will be available here:

<https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

FDSTF Annual Progress Report and Work Plan

Tim MacGregor reported that the FDSTF's FY 2022-2023 Progress Report and FY 2024-2025 Work Plan was completed by Staff, reviewed and approved by FloridaCommerce leadership and delivered to the Governor, the Senate President and Speaker of the House on its due date of February 1, 2024. This report will be available on the FDSTF website at present time: <https://selectflorida.org/military-defense/florida-defense-support-task/>. Once the website has transitioned over to the FloridaCommerce site, it will live here: <https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

Military & Defense Update

Tim MacGregor discussed:

Staff continues working on the Economic Impact Study, the Military Benefits Guide, the Strategic Plan and the Spousal Licensing Reciprocity Matrix.

Staff is keeping track of about one hundred pieces of military/defense and veteran focused legislation.

- HB 1407 / SB 1720 – Marine Encroachment on Military Installations, the House and Senate versions of the bill have been voted favorably amongst the three (3) committees. In the House it's been added to the second reading calendar and in the Senate, it's been placed on the special-order calendar for February 21st.
- HB 1239 / SB 328 – Affordable Housing, the bills amending the Live Local Act. Both bills are broad in nature, but very narrowly focused on their amendments towards military installations. The language that affects the impacts on military installations includes the provision that a proposed development located within one quarter mile of a military installation as identified in section 163.3175(2) may not be administratively approved, each county shall maintain on its website a policy containing procedures and expectations for administrative of approval pursuant to this subsection. Those amendments have been included in a much broader package of amendments.
- HB 1419 / SB 1420 – Department of Commerce. The House version has met favorably, unanimously in two (2) committees and has been made identical to the Senate version. The Senate bill has also met favorably, unanimously in two (2) committees and is in the Rules Committee.

The TF currently has approximately \$600,000 in unspent funds that will be transferred from Enterprise Florida to an escrow account at FloridaCommerce. Agreements will need to be drawn up between FloridaCommerce and the Treasury and will be available for the TF to award once all agreements have been executed.

Staff has recently completed a review on the Military Base Protection Program as requested by the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). That report is circulating through FloridaCommerce's leadership for review and approval prior to submission to OPPAGA.

He and **Ray Collins** are preparing to attend the Association of Defense Community's Defense Communities National Summit in April in Washington, DC.

<https://jobs.myflorida.com/> has added the job posting for the manager of the Defense Infrastructure and Reinvestment grant programs, previously managed by **Cory Strickland** who has moved to another department at FloridaCommerce. The posting closes on February 19th. Please contact **Tim MacGregor** if anyone is interested in discussing this position.

The March TF Meeting will be on Thursday, March 21st in Panama City. A social with Bay County's Military Affairs Committee will be held the night prior and after the meeting, the TF will tour Tyndall AFB. Upcoming meetings will be April 18th via Zoom and May 16th in Tallahassee in conjunction with the FDA meeting the day prior, May 15th.

III. Agenda Item IV: Public Comment

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife/Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Coordinator, submitted the following for public comment:

The Northwest Florida and the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscapes will be hiring Resilience Specialists through funding from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services to coordinate with partners to develop and implement funding proposals for resilience projects in these two sentinel landscapes.

The Readiness and Recreation Initiative is a new grant program administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that provides funding from the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) programs for local governments to apply for grants to purchase and develop land for public outdoor recreation that would benefit military personnel and the public. Just in the past week, the National Park Service (NPS) expanded the eligibility for proposals to their Readiness and Recreation Initiative grant program to include the entire geographies of all Sentinel Landscapes. Please note that REPI dollars can be used as federal match so the \$40M funding that REPI is providing to the NPS may serve as local match for awarded proposals. The REPI Program and National Park Service will host a 2024 Readiness and Recreation Initiative Help Session Webinar on February 28th from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM EST. Potential applicants and others may learn more about the opportunity, ask questions, and workshop potential projects. Please follow this link to [Join the 2024 Readiness and Recreation Initiative Help Session](#). Florida's cycle opening and deadline dates is 3/15/24 to 4/15/24.

The REPI Program awarded \$1.3M of additional funding to the Tyndall Coastal Resilience Project. The project includes four (4) initial nature-based solutions designed to enhance the resilience of coastal habitats along the Tyndall Air Force Base shoreline. The 2024 REPI Program funds will be dedicated to project construction and post-construction monitoring. Collectively, the projects are expected to attenuate wave height and energy during operational day-to-day conditions, protect approximately 7,000 linear feet of shoreline from erosion, enhance over 80 acres of existing shoreline habitats such as seagrass meadows and salt marshes, provide new substrate for oyster settlement, and support marine species adaptation to sea level rise. The project is being led by The Nature Conservancy with partnering support from Jacobs, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, University of Florida Center for Coastal Solutions, and the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program.

DOD's REPI Program awarded the Avon Park Air Force Range in partnership with Archbold Biological Station (ABS) a FY 2024 REPI Challenge award fire management for enhanced resilience in the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape. This \$704,000 REPI award is being matched with \$1.1M in partner funding to increased controlled burning will limit installation infrastructure and operational exposure to wildfires while improving the condition of several fire-dependent ecosystems on which many at-risk species including Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Florida Grasshopper Sparrows, and Eastern Indigo Snakes depend. This project will fund an ecosystem restoration team to build regional capacity for fire management within the Sentinel Landscape. Partners with APAFR and ABS are: Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Conservation Florida, the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. To learn more about this year project and the 16 other REPI Challenge funding recipients, explore the 2024 REPI Challenge Story Map for additional project highlights, partnerships, and funding information.

Ray Collins added that Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment, Brendan Owens will conduct an off-camera, on-the-record media roundtable on Zoom today, February 15, at 11:30 AM EST. Mr. Owens will discuss the Department's Resilient & Healthy Defense Communities Strategy. For those wishing to join the media roundtable, please RSVP to osd.pentagon.pa.list.dpo-atl@mail.mil by 10:30 AM EST.

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 AM EST.

This meeting can be viewed on The Florida Channel:
<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/2-15-24-florida-defense-support-task-force/>

Final Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force

Minutes for the Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting #123 on Thursday, April 18, 2024

The Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) held a publicly noticed meeting on Zoom at 9:00 AM EDT – 11:07 AM EDT. For Agenda: See Page 3.

Task Force Members Present:

Tom Neubauer, Bay Defense Alliance, Vice Chairman
Brigadier General Chip Diehl, USAF (Ret)
Major General Richard Haddad, USAF (Ret)
Rear Admiral Don Quinn, USN (Ret)
Ms. Kay Rasmussen, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC)
Commissioner Jim Scholl, Monroe County
Mr. Jamal Sowell, Indelible Solutions
Representative Patt Maney
The Honorable Thomas Bowman
*Major General James Hartsell, USMC (Ret), Executive Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA); *MajGen Hartsell has been designated an ex-officio non-voting member of the Direct Support Organization that will replace the FDSTF when the Governor signs SB 1420 so we include him now as a future member awaiting gubernatorial signature.

Task Force Members Absent:

Senator Tom Wright, Chairman
Major General John Haas, USA, The Adjutant General (TAG) of Florida
Representative Tyler Sirois
Mr. Reeves Valentine, Lockheed Martin

Speakers Present:

Kellie Jo Kilberg, Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Chair

Others Present:

Colonel Jason Hunt, Florida Army National Guard
Sue Burke, Office of Monroe County Commissioner Jim Scholl
Lee Cardice, Cardice Audio Visual Services
Dale Ketcham, Space Florida
Tyler Nolen, Northeast Florida Planning Council
Sheila McNamara, Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Dave Murzin, 850 Consulting LLC
Jenifer Rupert, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Brooke Trawick-Gilbert, Bay Defense Alliance
Joe Marino, Veterans Florida
Buck MacLaughlin, Avon Park Air Force Range
Niki Welge, FloridaCommerce
Debi Graham, Greater Pensacola Chamber
Rick Miller, Florida Defense Alliance
Cory Zapata, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, Florida Defense Alliance
Joe Follick, Veterans Florida
Katie Allan

The Florida Channel

Staff Present:

Tim MacGregor, Director, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce; Executive Director, FDSTF

Ray Collins, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce

Takesha Ware, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce

Chris Weller, Office of Military and Defense, FloridaCommerce



Florida Defense Support Task Force – Meeting #123
Zoom Meeting
AGENDA for April 18, 2024

Please contact the Military & Defense Team for Zoom Webinar information.

KEY:
(I) = Information, (D) = Discussion, (A) = Action

All Times are listed in Eastern Standard Time (EST)

- 9:00 – 9:05 Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions..... Chairman **(I)**
- 9:05 – 9:15 Old Business.....Chairman **(A) / (I)**
 - Approval of Minutes Chairman **(A)**
 - TF Grants and Contracts Status Tim MacGregor **(I)**
- 9:15 – 10:45 New Business.....Chairman **(I)**
 - TF Member Reports
 - Florida Defense Alliance Update Kellie Jo Kilberg **(I)**
 - Proposed FY 24-25 FDSTF/DSO Budget Tim MacGregor **(D) / (A)**
 - FY 24-25 Grants Slate Tim MacGregor **(D) / (A)**
 - FY 24-25 Grant Process Overview Ray Collins **(I) / (D)**
 - Direct Support Organization Name Tim MacGregor **(I) / (D)**
 - Military & Defense Update Tim MacGregor **(I)**
- 10:45 – 11:00 Public Comment.....Chairman

Reminder – Upcoming Meeting Dates:

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| May 16, 2024 | Tallahassee (24-25 Grants) / FDA | Jun 2024 | NO MEETING |
| Jul 18, 2024 | Jacksonville NS Mayport | Aug 15, 2024 | Electronically/ Telephonically |
| Sep 19, 2024 | Doral U.S. Southern Command | Oct 17, 2024 | Electronically/ Telephonically |
| Nov 21, 2024 | Orlando Lockheed Martin / FDA | Dec 2024 | NO MEETING |

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer began the meeting at 9:00 AM EST.

I. Agenda Item I: Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer welcomed everyone connected via Zoom and watching on the Florida Channel to the Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) meeting. He asked **Tim MacGregor** to call the roll of TF members. He asked all public comments to be emailed to Ray Collins at Ray.Collins@commerce.fl.gov to be read into the record at the conclusion of the meeting. He reminded the TF that the meeting is governed by the Sunshine Law

II. Agenda Item II: Old Business

Approval of Minutes

The Task Force Members decided to defer approval of the March 2024 minutes until the May 2024 meeting.

Task Force Grants and Contracts Status

Tim MacGregor provided a brief overview on current TF contracts and grants; a more detailed log will be provided at the May meeting.

We had a recent phone call with our contacts from the Roosevelt Group, and they are continuing to polish the Strategic Plan. I anticipate we'll see that in the next couple of weeks, and we will bring that up and discuss that with the Task Force. The intent is then to use that as part of the background information as we inform the preparation of the Direct Support Organization, and for the remainder of the Grants. We have some ongoing behind the scenes work since, as you know, we don't have a dedicated Grants Manager any longer, so we are getting ourselves and Takesha trained up to get into the details on those. I've been very thankful we've had some help from within the Economic Development Division for one of our representatives who was helping us ensure that we get payments out. We'll ensure that we have more detail to present for subsequent meetings.

III. Agenda Item III: New Business

Task Force Member Reports

Brigadier General Chip Diehl updated that MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) is anticipating high turnover this summer and they had great community support for the Tampa Bay Air Fest.

Colonel Jason Hunt, for **Major General John Haas, Florida National Guard (FLNG)**, reported that the Florida National Guard (FLNG) remains engaged both overseas and domestically, continuing to support operational deployments with over 100 Soldiers and Airmen deployed in and around Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East.

They continue their domestic operations, supporting the Florida Department of Corrections with just over 500 Soldiers in 13 facilities across Northwest Florida and just over 50 Soldiers in South Florida supporting local authorities with aviation support on the ongoing migration mission.

Additionally, they are preparing their second iteration a small contingent of Soldiers and Airmen who will provide State Active-Duty support to the southwest border, working directly with and in support of the Texas National Guard.

Reported that Major General John Haas will be traveling to D.C. in a few weeks to meet with the Congressional delegation on their legislative priorities; continue to grow the force, establish the Space National Guard duty status, reform health care for all, also retention of State active duty reimbursement fund.

He thanked the TF members for their continued support and the opportunity to give an update on their national platform.

Major General Richard Haddad briefed the following:

SOCOM [Special Operations Command] Annual or the Global SOF [Special Operations Forces] Week will be on the 6th through the 10th of May. It's an opportunity to communicate with industry leaders on opportunities to meet with government entities and partner nation acquisition reps.

Avon Park: The staff at the Deployed Unit Complex (DUC) hosted approximately 170 Civil Air Patrol cadets and staff from squadrons across Florida in support of the Air Fest that was conducted on the 27th through the 30th of March which General Diehl talked about.

DUC facilities were used for civil air control, command and control as well as an assembly/bivouac site. Civil Air Patrol cadets participated in air show set up, tear down, staff static displays and VIP areas and assisted with the overall air show communications, first response and safety.

Monday, April 8, Avon Park Staff, in conjunction with members of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, hosted a visit by the Florida Department of Commerce as the first stop in a Florida Heartland tour, including Highlands, Glades, Okeechobee, and De Soto counties. Key attendees were Florida Senator Erin Grall, District 29, as well as the Florida Secretary of Commerce, J. Alex Kelly. The focus of the Heartland tour, was to learn about and assess rural county commerce and economic opportunity. Discussion included Avon Park Mission brief, briefings on Avon Park 2010 Joint Land Use Study, and the 2024 Compatible Use Plan. mission sustainment, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration, (REPI) program, Military Installation Resilience Review and the Avon Park overall economic impact to the region as a follow up to last month's update. The Jaded Thunder exercise went very well, including excellent feedback by Avon Park from the participating units. Jaded Thunder, ongoing this week is an agile combat employment exercise, led by the 23rd Wing at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia.

Avon Park Staff is working with a Central Florida Regional planning council on multiple projects, including an ongoing review of the final draft of Avon Park's Compatible Use Plan which will update the 2010 Joint Land Use Study as part of the ongoing Military Installation Resilience Review.

Tuesday, April 16th was the first Technical Advisory Committee meeting. It set the stage for an in-person tabletop exercise scheduled for Wednesday, 24 April; to cover planning scenarios on wildfire, flooding, resilience hazards that affect the range and local community, in addition to assisting with interviewing and hiring of a new resilience coordinator for the Avon Park Sentinel Landscape. Northwest Florida and Avon Park are the first two central landscapes to be awarded this additional position in partnership with the Legacy group and The Sentinel Landscape Federal Coordinating Committee.

Representative Patt Maney remarks:

In May several Legislators and several members of the House will visit the southwest border to see what the Florida National Guard, the Florida State Guard and the Highway Patrol are doing out there. A short trip one afternoon out one day, that he believes will be educational, and looks forward to it.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer remarks:

Publicly thanked Colonel Robert Bartlett, who's the Chief of Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Natural Disaster recovery Division, who led the tour through the base and the division. They were able to see basically how that base is coming out of the ground. Also thanked General Nordhouse for authorizing the tour of the 601st Air and Space Operations Center. It was a great day and a great opportunity for us to see a lot of new things that were going on. Of course, the base is growing we've added additional F-35's and when they finish out the 95th Fighter Squadron, and they'll stand up to the next one. Next week there'll be eight teams of civil engineers from across the Air Force, they'll face the kind of ultimate test of readiness. The competition takes place at the Silver

Flag site at Tyndall, and it goes from April 24th through 28th. It will be attended by the Air Force Chief of Staff, General David Alvin and just a reminder again that the 4th and 5th of May the Air Force Thunderbirds will be the main attraction at the Gulf Coast Salute, which is at Panama City Beach. We expect about 200,000 people to show up for that event.

Admiral Don Quinn briefed on the following:

We're up to 82 TH-73 Thrasher aircraft going eventually to 130 at NAS [Naval Air Station] Whiting Field. We are down now to 92 TH-57s so this is really the key point in that transition. Commander Naval Air Training is watching with bated breath the great work with REPI and with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to restore that preserve habitat around Outlying Field Choctaw continues, but that is going very well with ultimately a final sum of about \$6 million dollars in network. Some great environmental work out there, Whiting Field is in the final stages of doing their Inter Governmental Support Agreements with the city and the county, and that's good for all concerned, more efficient and saves money.

So going well there, the Military Installation Resiliency Review for both Whiting and for Pensacola continues on. There's some good progress being made in that effort. Whiting can meet with some folks to talk about the Live Local Act and look for both opportunities and risks. So there's some active awareness there and working pretty hard to make sure that there's no mission impact. But yet the act yields what the Legislature hoped in terms of improved housing availability. Down at Pensacola they're up to about 65% in the hurricane salary repairs, and two MILCON-like projects where they converted to MILCON are well in work.

The first Blue Angels practice of the year was a problem of riches. It was a Chamber of Commerce Day, spring break. I think half the State of Tennessee was here so when they tried to go in the back gate it was gridlock, and the folks that live along that road didn't appreciate it. So, the county and the base are working that. They've got a lot of things in place, but as more people attend as always, that'll wind down. There's a marquee that was paid for with the DIG [Defense Infrastructure Grants] basically to help inform people with that.

Congressman Scott Franklin will be up here visiting. He's a former naval aviator, so I think he's looking to provide supporting fires, relative to MILCON here in Pensacola. That's all good. One of our cutters that's based out of here, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Walnut, is off on about a month and a half of migrant support ops down south and I think I mentioned it before, but it's looking very well good to get to SRM [Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization] money in 2024 to start repair of hangar 3260, which was condemned after [Hurricane] Sally. That is a kind of a precursor to getting to a new hangar when they go to tear down the old hangar. They need to move those folks somewhere, and they'll go over into 3260. But there's also an immediate improvement and mission because the intermediate maintenance that used to be based out of the hangars scattered all over the southeast affecting both Training Air Wing 6 and the Blue Angels here.

The land exchange we talked about over in Bronson Field is going well, that'll ultimately result in a fire station for another fire station on the west side of the city which is sorely needed. That is progressing. Well, living shoreline project, that's all. All the planning and all that is done just waiting for State of Florida, Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Protection to release the permits in early May, and then the project will move to the county for a solicitation for people to work. But that'll regain about, regain and protect about three miles of shoreline which was pretty damaged by Hurricane Sally. A lot of the utilities run along that area, so that's a good thing.

We'll see all the aviation flags in the neighborhood headed down this way the first week in May, so that'll be a busy week when they meet here for their annual training session and looking forward to seeing a lot of those folks, former shipmates. Pensacola and Navy Days here, 17th to 19th May. Like Whiting, IGSA [Intergovernmental Support Agreement]. Things are moving along with the county and the city here. So, hoping for some good things by the end of this fiscal year signed up there and then I think I mentioned it before, but the SECNAV has formally approved commissioning the USS Richard McCool, LPD 29 here on 7 September. She'll arrive on the 30th of August with two Ship to Shore Connectors. What to most of us more seasoned folks would refer to as LCX the Hovercraft. So hopefully, we can get them to tour around the Escambia base so the taxpayers here can see what they pay for, but they'll be picking them up over by Tom over in Panama City.

Kay Rasmussen briefed the following:

Acknowledgement to Chris Weller for filling in as Grant Manager for Defense Reinvestment Grants in the absence of a Grant Manager being onboard. He's done a great job and has been very responsive when I had to ask a question. So, Chris, thank you very much for that.

I hated to miss the meeting last month. The Tri-County Defense Support Initiatives Committee, the DSI that I manage, we were in Washington, D.C. at that time. As you all know, the DSI writes a military priorities point paper each year, which basically is our strategic plan if you will. It identifies our top priorities for the Tri-County area that we're going to be advocating for. So we were in D.C. meeting with our Congressional Delegation and some Pentagon leaders on the topics within that point paper. Interestingly enough, I know that Representative Dunn participated in the morning session at the meeting last month via Zoom that was on Thursday, and on Wednesday we were in his office, talking with him regarding our priorities in response and in connection to the priorities for the Tri-County area here in Northwest Florida. In regards to our point paper, we also submitted all the NDA and Appropriation forms that are affiliated with those asks, so that has all been accomplished.

I have previously shared that an industry day was held here outside the West Gate of Eglin Air Force base for a 98 acre development RFP [Request for Proposal] that is on the street. Responses have been received, and that's looking very promising to be moved forward. However, there has been a time delay, and that timeline has been pushed out a little bit further but it is continuing to move forward and is very promising. We're really excited to be able to have that Enhanced Use Lease opportunity outside the West Gate for aviation defense technology industry development. At the last meeting and last couple of meetings, I have talked about the proposed Highway 98 collector road in Okaloosa County, and this proposed collector road, as you all recall, would be a primary solution, one of many for congestion west of Hurlburt Field. The congestion to Hurlburt Field is unfortunately, providing a very negative impact to mission readiness, and Lieutenant General Bauernfeind has come out and said that he is holding round tables to find solutions. This collector road would be a great first step and a major part of the solution. Okaloosa county is moving forward with a PD&E [Project Development and Environment] design study. And then the 96th Test Wing is also concurrently conducting a mission impact analysis to construct this collector road and the intent would be to pull neighborhood traffic off of Highway 98 around a school that is located there. So very promising that we're going to fast track that initiative and start getting some solutions to that negative impact to Hurlburt missions.

At the last meeting that I participated in which was in February I had brought forward the challenge of the locality rate, pay and needing to find solutions on how to get Eglin maybe classified as its own geographic area as opposed to just "Other." And in that discussion other task force members chimed in and said, Yep, that's a problem for us as well. So I was also up in D.C. for the Association of Defense Communities Conference National Summit. I just got back from that and you know, following my back-to-back D.C. trips, I'm still digging into that Locality Rate Pay discussion point, and I plan to bring that forward to staff and get it on an agenda here in the near future for us to discuss collectively and hopefully, we can get some solutions for the areas that need it here in the State of Florida.

My closing comments, I'll just share that the Army 7th Special Forces Group that has control of the site Camp Bull Simons on the north end of the Eglin Land Reservation. Back in February, throughout the month, they were conducting very targeted combat training skills and weapons training and throughout the month they're on the Eglin range and that is the purpose of that range. It is an active bombing range and there's live detonations going on pretty much at all times. So the 7th Special Forces Group, also FYI in June they will be holding their Red Empire Week and during that timeframe they will be opening up the cantonment site Camp Bull Simons, for families the civilians, leadership and the community to come in and get a better idea of what the 7th Forces does and interface with them to help build those relationships moving forward, to help support one another. Thank you.

Commissioner Jim Scholl briefed the following:

We had a visit from Lieutenant Governor Nuñez a week and a half ago, she came down here to Sigsbee Charter School and got to tour the school and interact with a couple of the classes. Primarily our sixth-grade class that the science class they were working on building cardboard boats. And I don't mean little models, I mean big, full size, row boats. So they were learning about boat building and displacement and buoyancy, and

all those things, and they took those boats out to the Army Dive School here on Fleming Key, with support of the Coast Guard. They were able to operate the boats that they built, and out of 14 boats, only two of them sank. A good lesson learned for them, and marine engineering, as well as good community support by the Coast Guard and the Army.

Early this month, they hosted the Southeast Region and the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA). The Mid-Atlantic Southeast Region attended their annual meeting, hosted by Sigsbee Charter School. The principal Eli Jannes and her staff did an amazing job highlighting the issues of education, primarily there at Sigsbee on the base. We discussed the Public Schools on Military Installations grant funds, which General Diehl knows for Eglin and Key West were zeroed out this year. So I had the opportunity to bring that up with the group. Hopefully, we'll get some traction to get the funding restored, we'll keep our priority on that list.

Another thing as far as community outreach goes. Our adversary squadron down here, Fighter Composite Squadron 111, The Sundowners, have started a program with Sigsbee school, where they do a pilot for a day program with the 7th and 8th grade students, they get to go out there and spend the day getting an opportunity to climb in the airplane They look at the helicopters out on the base, and all of that. And then the real highlight is, we do have an F-5 simulator out there at the squadron, and they put the kids in the simulator and let them fly the airplane and that's gone over very well. So both VFC-111 and the school are looking forward to continuing that program. Other than that, the operations are continuous and valuable; mission, deployment, certification training and we'll just keep that going.

Jamal Sowell briefed the following:

Navy Region Southeast, Change of Command scheduled for May 23rd. Rear Admiral Ian Johnson will be relieved by Rear Admiral Select John Hewitt over in NS [Naval Station] Mayport on 17th of May.

NS Mayport will be hosting a memorial ceremony to honor the crew members who died during the attack on the USS Stark. The attack occurred 17th of May in 1987, when 2 Iraqi anti-ship missiles struck the ship while on patrol in the Arabian Gulf. Every year on the 17th of May, NS Mayport, home port of The USS Stark, holds a memorial ceremony in honor. This year marks the 37th Anniversary of the attack in which 37 U.S. Service members were killed. Florida State, Senator Clay Yarborough and Florida State Representative Kiyam Michael will be attending this ceremony on NAS Jax.

NAS Jax recently completed a five-year Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative and a Congressional program known as our REPI Project. Which restricted use of easements over the entirety of the Timuquana Country Club in Jacksonville, Florida. This 300 Acre Country Club shares a 1.26 mile fence line along the northern boundary of NAS Jacksonville, and is underneath the NAS Jacksonville aircraft traffic pattern, and inside high noise contours. This project would not have been possible without the support of the Task Force providing grant money to the City of Jacksonville to match the Navy. Our REPI funds prevent future development on the Country Club and prohibit multi-family residential development which is not compatible with air operations, and also limits the height of any compatible development as to not pose a safety or a flight concern for our air crews.

Major General James Hartsell

Well, I am an ex-officio member in waiting for confirmation for the budget to be signed.

This past Monday I was honored Semper Fi, Always Faithful, to put on my dress blues, the Marine Corps haircut, and I went to the Arlington National Cemetery, and I was the flag presenting officer on behalf of the Commandant of the Marine Corps for a 1968 Marine, an A-6 jet fighter pilot, who had been shot down over North Vietnam. I had all the background where formerly JPAC [Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command], now DPCC [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency], has been doing the work on the crash site and DNA analysis and all of that. Finally, after all these years they were able to change him from MIA [Missing in Action] to KIA [Killed in Action]. We buried him in Arlington National Cemetery for the first time in America, right down the hill from the tomb of the unknown, literally right down the hill in the Military Honor section. His brother was the one that I handed the flag to. His brother, an 85-year-old, I believe, nonveteran from Indiana, is Courtney Burgess's

father, Senator Danny Burgess's wife, and they had asked me a year ago, when they started this whole process, if I could participate? And I said, yes, I can get into my blues.

And as it turned out, the Commandant knew that I was going, so he asked me, "Hey, Hammer, would you like to be the flag presenter?" And I said, of course and so the Commandant sent the President's Own Band, the ones in the red that play at all the state functions. They came and performed with a platoon from 8th and I, the Silent Drill Team. God gave us the most beautiful morning, with all the cherry blossoms and red buds and dogwoods, 72 degrees. It was perfect, in fact, I went back to the Commandant's Assistant Commandant, who was a former A-6 pilot, and I said, Hey, it was flawless, absolutely flawless. I'm back in Tampa, but those are the kind of things that I sent out to a number of people. I will get it to y'all as well to be shared, because that's what we need to think about; America. We need to remind ourselves that we're a great country, we are always faithful to our fallen and to their families. That's what we do. Florida sets that standard, I honestly believe it. With everything going on in our nation that people are focused on, there's good things that we need to focus on as well.

Ben Albritton called me because I sent it after midnight last night on purpose, so people would wake up and see it. He said, General, I just want you to know you've made my day, and my morning, so sorry to ramble, but it's worth the heart and head connection to do that for us we couldn't be busier. And that's a wonderful thing. Our budget has gone super for this past year with FDVA legislation has been phenomenal. Thank you for the legislators that have helped us with that.

The Flags of Honor motorcycle group who comes every April and goes around as veterans, and they carry American flags that they roll around and show places, and they take it to Arlington National Cemetery to place there, and they go to all of our Gold Star Family monuments in Florida. They're rolling through our State right now, and they've added for the second year in a row to stop by our state veterans nursing homes. They've been going to all of my homes going in, seeing our veterans. It's been phenomenal this evening. They will be at MacDill Park downtown Tampa, at the Woody Williams Goldstar Monument. I'm going to go down there and join them tomorrow. Lord willing, looking at the weather, I'm going to get on my Harley, and I'm going to arrive with them from the Franklin Preparatory Boys School, where there's another Gold Star monument up to Crystal River, Florida, because the Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall is in Crystal River at their Memorial Park. And we're going to go up there to recognize Vietnam veterans specifically on a ride back. Then on Saturday, drive over, not on a motorcycle, but in a truck to the Iraq and Afghanistan War Memorial dedication ceremony. Several U.S. Congressmen are going to be at it, but it's the first of its kind in the nation. It's a large black marble monument for Iraq and Afghanistan. OIF, OEF Veterans who were from Florida, Florida citizens who died, 360 plus names, are etched in gold on that black marble.

I did the ramp ceremonies in Afghanistan for several names on that plaque. So, I'm going to be speaking with a number of others. So those are just, that's what I get to do, and it's a blessing for me to do that.

I'll throw out real quick next week. I'm going to Jacksonville for the people covering that part of our great State, because I'm joining the VA Secretary, Dennis McDonald, Cabinet member for the newly opening Jacksonville VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) ribbon cutting ceremony.

That afternoon I'm going to the Five Star Homeless Veterans Center, the Cohen Veterans Network's Clinic, and the Womens' Veterans Center with Dee Quaranta to visit them. On Wednesday morning, K-9s For Warriors is having a ribbon cutting for their new veterinary clinic that they got State appropriated funding and other money for, only to drive to Tallahassee next Wednesday night for the Gubernatorial Fellows Reception in the Mansion with the Governor and First Lady, to then drive to Daytona Beach that night for another ribbon cutting for another CBOC and then to go back to Tallahassee for the Hero's Reception and the Governor's Mansion Friday night.

So that was great. I got called yesterday from Mark Vantry, Support the Troops. Great American I've worked with for years. He asked General, do you know any World War II veterans? I said, Yes, I've got some in my State Veteran Nursing Homes. He goes, "Well, we need one to do the puck drop" on a Saturday night, the 27th, when the Tampa Bay lightning are playing the Florida Panthers in the playoffs, and they wanted a World War II veteran. Well, I have a 101-year-Old World War II veteran, a resident of our Baldomero Lopez Nursing Home in Pasco County. He was a tail gunner in a bomber in World War II and survived that. And I'm going to put on the

dress blues again with another haircut, and I'm going to escort him out on the ice, those are wonderful things. So let's not forget that we're doing great things, and that's why we have this support group. You know, this Task Force to be renamed does things for our active duty and the transitioning and what they're doing because we want them to stay in Florida, and I just so appreciate you. And I was blessed to be able to be added to this group. So, thank you. Sorry to ramble, but it's been a wonderful couple of weeks, and I've got another good week-and-a-half coming.

III. *Florida Defense Alliance Update:*

Kellie Jo Kilberg reports a reminder that April is the Month of the Military Child. Many of our schools that have Purple Star School designations have different activities going on throughout the month. Recognizing these military children.

We have more than about 16,000 military children in the State of Florida that are directly impacted by military deployments of at least one parent or more and of course, this month is to shine a beacon on their sacrifices, dedication and commitment that goes into being a child in a military family. So they do a lot of moving around, but they bring a lot of benefits to other students in their school districts, just from their experiences that they've had around, of course, the U.S. and the country, and the world.

So we recognize all of them, and we recognize all of our School Liaison Officers there that work diligently to make sure the transition for those military families is as smooth as possible, that those students are not at a deficit for that.

In our May meeting we're going to have the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military, Community and Family Policy, be one of our panelists. We are encouraging any of our Task Force members to attend and learn more about economic security issues faced by our military families. And join us on May 15th.

The Family Support Working Group also plans to have more of a focus on the impacts and drivers of economic insecurity for military families during the upcoming year.

If any of you know of food banks in your area that cater to military families, please let Kathleen Nestor know. We are going to have both Jacksonville and Tampa at our meeting in May sharing their best practices, but we're still collecting information from Northwest Florida, Central, Florida, and South Florida. So, if you know of anything that's out there, any programs that you may have, please let Kathleen know about that.

Moving on to Mission Assurance and Growth Working Group, since the Task Force meeting in March, related legislation, the Governor has signed, in the last two to three weeks, include Senate Bill 1720, which is the Marine Encroachment on Military Operations, and that's just an update to Florida statute 163.3175, and then also Senate Bill 968 which is the Spaceport Territory legislation, and we really do appreciate the Task Force's support for the legislation that the FDA put forward on other topics for our main meeting. We will have a panel on best practices for Intergovernmental Agreements and we think that's just as important as we move forward. More opportunities will come forward, so we'll be looking at best practices on that, and also a discussion on the need for SCIFS in the State we have a deficit on SCIFS in the State and for the military needs that we have there.

Later this afternoon, the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) Notice of Funding Opportunity is open and completed proposals must be submitted through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by June 17th. They will have a webinar this afternoon from 3:00 to 4:00 Eastern time, and that web link will go live later here this afternoon. That's the sum of the DCIP program.

Since 2021 Florida has received seven grants for more than \$30 million dollars. I will tell you that Navy Region Southeast has been doing really good. Out of those seven, six of them are theirs. From Pensacola to Jacksonville, they include parking aprons, taxiways, fire stations, water mains, offshore reef breakwater programs, as well as increased wastewater capacity.

Eglin did receive one in 2022, and it was over in Walton County for a fire station over in that area to help with wildland fires. So anyhow, it's a big program I'm hoping again, with as the MIRR's and their reports come out

and the projects that come out of the MIRRs, that we will have more projects shovel ready to apply for DCIP grants and that we'll have more projects throughout the rest of the state. But that, Sir, is my report for today and I look forward to any questions.

IV. Proposed FY 24-25 FDSTF/DSO Budget

Tim MacGregor briefed: In the current legislative proposal that's unsigned, for the Task Force there is an appropriation of \$2 million dollars, and it has been the case in current Statute 288.987, covering the Task Force and as is touched on in the Senate Bill (SB) 1420, establishing the DSO. There is the ability to use up to \$250,000 for staff benefits and administrative expenses. So, one of the things I want to point out is that now that we, as the Task Force staff, are members of Commerce, all of our benefits and salaries are paid for by the Department of Commerce. Right now, the current use of any of that administrative money is really, used for reimbursing Task Force members for travel. We spend money for the audio-visual contracts when we run the Task Force meetings. So next year, right now we are again on tap for a \$2 million dollar appropriation.

The SB 1420 language still talks about \$250,000, and my suggestion, is that by the new Senate Bill 1420 stipulations, the Task Force may choose on its own to hire additional staff, or if there's a discussion between the DSO and the Department of Commerce, perhaps have one or more of the current staff members become DSO employees, in which case that budget would be available. So again, right now, we, our staff, our salaries, benefits, are paid for entirely by the Department of Commerce.

Also in the provisions of Senate Bill 1420, which I'm still in the process of trying to learn about, the DSO can raise money. So we will see how that plays out. I've had a chance to have some early early discussions, and I intend to have several more with other DSOs and what the concept of raising money, what that entails. So while the current appropriation, yet to be signed by the Governor, is \$2 million dollars, that number may fluctuate during the course of the upcoming months, particularly after the bill is signed and enacted. That amount allotted to staff and benefits may change if the DSO desires, and depending on how the notion of raising funds comes up, it may actually go up again. That's assuming the appropriation itself remains just at \$2 million dollars. All that said, based on the current appropriation of \$2 million, with the idea that we want to potentially carve out up to 250,000. And again, some of that is what we use for reimbursing Task Force members to attend the meetings.

Being on the safe side, just setting that \$250,000 aside, plus a little bit of a buffer, I would throw out to the Task Force to consider the number \$1.6 million as a going in position for how many, and for the total amount of grants the Task Force may wish to award. As we'll talk about in a little bit more detail, and then Ray's going to give us a detailed overview of the Grants process right now, as you all are seeing in the materials that we've previously sent you and that are included in the current book. The total requested amount for grants for this coming cycle is just south of \$3.2 million. So that right in and of itself, that's \$1.2 million more than our entire budget. So the Task Force, as we go through this process will need to make the decision of, if we fund a specific number of grants in total for the full amount of their request, and that we make sure that those total amounts don't exceed our budget available. And again, I would throw out using as a planning consideration \$1.6 million or whether the Task Force goes to some of those grant applicants and requests from them, "well, we know that you asked for X number, \$500,000, let's say, would you be willing to accept a lesser amount?" so that at the end of the award process the Task Force may choose to award multiple grants, just not for the current amount that they've requested, but that the total at the end of the day doesn't go any greater than again, \$1.6 million is my going in position. Our current proposed budget from the legislature is up to \$2 million. That's that is my big picture overview of the Task Force budget as we lead into the grants slate.

V. FY 24-25 Grants Slate

Tim MacGregor briefed: It will be important for us is as we transition, and as we get a general sense, a better sense of how the DSO mechanics will play out that will go to the Task Force members, or later to be DSO Board of Directors and get a sense of your funding priorities. So for the money that we have in the appropriation and any potential money that would come in or be raised based on what the DSO allows, "what are your priorities," so that we that we have something that the Task Force/Board of Directors of the DSO has voted on to use as a template to compare future budget requests or ideas for expenditures against what the stated and

approved list of budget priorities is. Mr. Chair, that sums up my Task Force/DSO budget overview and basic intro into the grants slate before I turn it over to Ray, and he's going to go through a fairly detailed discussion of the process just as a highlight.

You'll see that we have a total of nine requests. Do any Task Force members have questions on any of the nine candidates? I won't necessarily read everything that's in that summary sheet, but if you have any questions on those, this is the same slate that we discussed in our Closed Session as part of our previous meeting. And with that Mr. Chair, at least initially back to you before we go through the rest of the presentation.

Tim discussed the nine applicants for the upcoming grant funding.

Made a motion to invite all nine to the May meeting for presentations. General Haddad made a motion to move and all were in favor.

Presentations will be 15 minutes followed by five minutes of Q&A. Applicants will have the opportunity to present in person or remotely.

VI. FY 24-25 Grant Process Overview

Ray Collins briefed a presentation of the Grants process.

VII. Direct Support Organization Name

Tim MacGregor discussed the Top three name selections for the Task Force renaming. Presented the top three based off responses received from the suggestions. Opened the discussion amongst the Task Force for any additional input. The Task Force members added two additional names to be considered in the vote.

Following this, each Task Force Member present ranked from 1-5 the presented names, with the lowest scored name being the winner. After all members present ranked their choices, "Florida Defense Support Commission" was the name with the strongest support.

Kay Rasmussen made the motion to adopt "Florida Defense Support Commission" as the name for the DSO and Representative Patt Maney Seconded. All voted in favor of the name change to "Florida Defense Support Commission".

Military & Defense Update

Tim MacGregor introduced Takesha Ware, retired United States Navy First Class Petty Officer, as the newest member to the Military and Defense Team.

He continued that Ray and he went to the Association of Defense Communities National Summit last weekend that Ms. Rasmussen was there. Admiral Quinn saw several other members that have joined us on from our various military communities. Very good conference as usual. As part of that, we had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with some folks from the office of the Secretary of Defense and then I went out with our Director of Legislative Affairs, Mary Clare Futch, up to Capitol Hill. We had a Congressional Delegation breakfast, with other CODEL represented at the ADC, and at our Florida table, along with me and our Director of Legislative Affairs, we had representatives from several offices, including Congressman Franklin, Senator Rubio, and some others. That breakfast was primarily sponsored by the Association of Defense Communities, and they were the primary speakers, but we did have the chance to chat during and following the meal with our CODEL staff members. When that event was over, Mary Clare and I met with staffers in the offices of Congresswoman Cammack, and Congressman Gimenez.

During those conversations, as well as what we had with our one on one with the Secretary Defense Staff, the main points that we highlighted are some of the common themes, and I didn't hit each one of these points with each one of those people. But the main points that I highlighted involved the issues around housing that we've discussed as a Task Force. For example, down in Key West. Schools, Public Schools on Military Installations. I

brought that one up specifically and talked about MacDill, Eglin, Tyndall. We talked about our concerns with the DHA [Defense Health Agency] With the DHA and some of the impacts that some of the reapportionment is going to have. Very specifically brought up some of the Key West BAH [Basic Allowance for Housing] and how we appreciate OSD support in particular, on relooking at how some of the BAH rates are allocated; Key West, of specific note, because it's such an outlier with its being lumped in with Miami-Dade.

Other issues that we talked about included encroachment, childcare, the National Guard reapportionment. How that's been just problematic for Florida for quite some time, and then at least once mentioned spouse reciprocity, and certainly, as we talked to the staffers, we reemphasized that we appreciated their support for things dealing with the military communities.

And again overall, very positive meetings that we had with them. We had a meeting, along with other leadership from the Florida Department of Commerce, with the Commander of JIATF [Joint Interagency Task Force]-South, Rear Admiral Fedor. I and at least one other Florida Commerce staff member and possibly leadership, are going to be going down to Key West in May to hear more about some of the issues they've had with housing, hiring, etc. The Secretary is very interested in learning more about what the Department can do to help out the folks around JIATF-South, but clearly there's a wider audience down there to work with as well.

We talked about the DIG and DRG [Defense Reinvestment Grant] internally, we are still in the process of moving the Task Force's budget from where it has resided in state accounts into an escrow account. Should be fairly transparent to the outside, but big things that will help us with down the road is a little bit more freedom to spend the money as well as it can stay in an interest bearing account. So I will keep you posted as that progresses. SB 1420 establishes several formal relationships between the DSO, soon to be known as the Florida Defense Support Commission and other organizations. So you recall, I briefed, that I attended the Veterans Florida board meeting, otherwise known as, Florida Is For Veterans Incorporated; I attended their board meeting in Jacksonville a month or so ago, just to help establish and further build some of those formal relationships.

And then earlier this week, I went over to Department of Education, met with two of their senior Deputy and Vice Chancellors. SB 1420 establishes a more formal relationship, to talk about a lot of the things that they're already doing. They've done a great job, and this is really just getting us over there.

Lastly, just highlighting our next couple of meetings. Next month, May 15th and 16th, the 15th will be the Florida Defense Alliance meeting here in Tallahassee. We'll be at the Four Points again and the 16th will be the Task Force meeting in person. And as we've talked about, we will be voting on grants, and we'll be giving you the scoring matrix in the very near future and then, after that next meeting, there is no meeting in June and our meeting in July will be in Jacksonville, and we anticipate a visit out to NS Mayport as part of that meeting.

IV. Agenda Item IV: Public Comment

No public comments during this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM EST.

This meeting can be viewed on The Florida Channel: [4/18/24 Florida Defense Support Task Force - The Florida Channel](#)

Final Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force

Minutes for the Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting #124 on Thursday, May 16, 2024

The Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) held a publicly noticed meeting at the Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown at 9:00 AM EDT – 12:08 PM EDT. For Agenda: See Page 3.

Task Force Members Present:

Senator Tom Wright, Chairman
Representative Patt Maney
Tom Neubauer, Bay Defense Alliance, Vice Chairman
Brigadier General Chip Diehl, USAF, (Ret)
Rear Admiral Don Quinn, USN, (Ret)
Ms. Kay Rasmussen, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC)
Major General Richard Haddad, USAF, (Ret)
Mr. Reeves Valentine, Lockheed Martin

Task Force Members Present via ZOOM:

The Honorable Thomas Bowman
Major General John Haas, USA, The Adjutant General (TAG) of Florida
Commissioner Jim Scholl, Monroe County

Task Force Members Absent:

Representative Tyler Sirois
Mr. Jamal Sowell, Indelible Solutions

Speakers Present:

Secretary J. Alex Kelly, FloridaCommerce
Kellie Jo Kilberg, Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Chair
Major General James Hartsell, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)

Others Present in Person:

John Kiriazes, UCF Florida Space Institute
Robert Brown, University of Central Florida (UCF) Florida Space Institute
Nicholas Pisano, SNA Software LLC
Col Terry McCaffrey, USAF (Ret.), Civil Air Patrol
Michelle Griggs, Florida First Capital Finance Corporation
Tyler Nolen, NEFRC
Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Kassebaum, 125 Fighter Wing
Cindy Simerly, Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
Harrison Conyers, City of Jacksonville
Josh Cockrell, Clay County
Buck MacLaughlin, Avon Park Air Force Range
COL Jason Hunt, FL National Guard
Debi Graham, Northwest Florida Defense Coalition
Jennifer Codo-Salisbury
Cory Zapata, Department of Environmental Protection
Jim Philpitt, SOCOM J5

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife
Mohamed Khabou, University of West Florida
Neal Finkelstein, Nation Center for Simulation
Michael Aller, Florida Makes
Matthew Corby, DMV Camp Blanding
The Florida Channel

Others Present via ZOOM:

Katie Allan, Bay Defense Alliance
Sue Burke, Office of Commissioner Jim Scholl
Dave Dahl, Navy Region Southeast
Mark McManus, Navy Region Southeast
Sheila McNamara, Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC)
Rick Miller, South Florida Defense Alliance/FDA

Staff Present:

Tim MacGregor, Director, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Ray Collins, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Takesha Ware, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce
Deena Alani, Office of Military & Defense, FloridaCommerce



Florida Defense Support Task Force – Meeting #124
Four Points by Sheraton Tallahassee Downtown
316 W. Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301
AGENDA for May 16, 2024

Please contact the Military & Defense Team for Zoom Webinar information.

KEY:
(I) = Information
(D) = Discussion
(A) = Action

All Times are listed in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

- 9:00 – 9:05 Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions..... Chairman **(I)**
- 9:05 – 9:15 Old Business..... Chairman **(A) / (I)**
 - Approval of Minutes Chairman **(A)**
 - TF Grants, Contracts and Budget Status Tim MacGregor **(I)**
- 9:15 – 11:40 New Business..... Chairman **(I)**
 - Florida Defense Alliance Update Kellie Jo Kilberg **(I)**
 - Military & Defense Update Tim MacGregor **(I)**
 - FY 2023-2024 Grant Presentations
 - Tampa Bay Defense Alliance Maj Gen L. Martin/K. Nestor **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Polk County T. Biel **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Santa Rosa Board of County Commissioners S. Ogletree **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - University of West Florida Dr. M. Khabou/G. Billman **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Clay County Development Authority J. Cockrell **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Military Child Education Coalition C. Simerly **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Central Florida Regional Planning Council J. Codo-Salisbury/B. MacLaughlin **(I) / (D) / (A)**
 - Northeast Florida Regional Council **(A)**
- 11:40 – 11:45 Public Comment..... Chairman
- 12:00 – 1:15 Closed Session..... Chairman
- 1:30 – 1:45 Public Meeting Reconvenes for Grants vote..... Chairman

Reminder – Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Jun 2024 **NO MEETING**
- Jul 18, 2024 Jacksonville | NS Mayport
- Aug 15, 2024 Virtual
- Sep 19, 2024 Doral | US Southern Command
- Oct 17, 2024 Virtual
- Nov 21, 2024 Orlando | Lockheed Martin / FDA
- Dec 2024 **NO MEETING**

Chairman, Senator Tom Wright began the meeting at 9:00 AM EST.

I. Agenda Item I: Welcome, Roll Call, Introductions

Chairman, Senator Tom Wright welcomed everyone in person and on the Florida Channel to the Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF or TF) meeting. He welcomed FloridaCommerce **Secretary J. Alex Kelly** to the meeting and asked everyone join as he led the Pledge of Allegiance. **Tim MacGregor** called the roll of TF members.

Chairman, Senator Tom Wright acknowledged past Military and Defense Staff who were present. Thanking them for their contributions to the workforce.

Chairman, Senator Tom Wright asked all public comments to be emailed to Ray Collins at Ray.Collins@commerce.fl.gov to be read into the record at the conclusion of the meeting. He reminded the TF that the meeting is governed by the Sunshine Law

II. Agenda Item II: Old Business

Approval of Minutes

*A quorum being present, **Chairman, Senator Tom Wright** asked for corrections to the April 18, 2024 TF meeting minutes. Noting no changes, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. **Rear Admiral Don Quinn** made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by **Ms. Kay Rasmussen**, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.*

Task Force Grants and Contracts Status

Tim MacGregor reported on contracts and grants updates:

Out of our \$3,000,000 appropriation last year, we have obligated and or executed just over \$803,000. We had a total commitment of approximately 2.35 million for grants for last year. Majority of the money that we have executed from those grants were different expenses that we had for task force meetings to include paying for the rooms, the audio-visual services, etc., some task force travel that's built into that and members compensation and the reimbursement for attending. Things you'll see the list of the grants down there and roughly how much has been obligated and or executed for those in terms specifically of the contracts and grants.

Just a couple updates we have we as we saw Kathy Ferguson from Roosevelt Group was participating in the Florida Defense Alliance meeting yesterday. They've been working diligently on the strategic plan. It's gone back and forth between us several times. The Roosevelt Group has it now, and they're still work finalizing some corrections. They will get that back to us.

We have routed our economic impact study, through our economic analysis folks at Commerce and it's looking good. As it continues to route through our staff and leadership, we hope to see that one in the not-too-distant future. So those are those are the big ones that are out there.

The Military Benefits Guide is still in works with the Matrix Design group; we are making progress on that one as well. We have not had any additional continuing services contracts this year since those publications. We had an appropriation of \$3,000,000. It says \$3,067,000 as budgeted, but as a reminder, the statute allows up to \$250,000 for staff pay, benefits and administrative expenses. You all voted on that, but that was before HB 5 became active. None of that money has been spent for pay and benefits. Out of the \$250,000, there's still a

significant portion of that is left. It may appear like we've budgeted for over our appropriation, but we just haven't adjusted that yet, specifically with some of the administrative expenses because those are covered by Commerce now. In July's meeting when the Commission is up and running and we've completed the transition of some of the Task Force funds into an escrow account, there will be a newer, updated, and more detailed budget for you all to view. One last side note to that, the initial deposit into the escrow account from EFI money, is a check for just South of \$600,000. That's going to be the seed money for that escrow account, which is older Task Force money in EFI that will come over to us. And with that, Sir, that concludes my update.

Agenda Item III: New Business

FloridaCommerce Overview

Secretary J. Alex Kelly presented on Florida's support of the military, defense and veterans to include topics to include economic impact, areas of investment, the Governor's focus and investment on military and defense and current legislation as it pertains to House Bill 1419 and Senate Bill 1420.

The presentation slides can be found here:

<https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-economic-development/office-of-military-and-defense>

Task Force Member Reports

Brigadier General Chip Diehl briefed: Thanked Secretary Kelly for his recent visit to MacDill Air Force Base. It was a whirlwind visit. He was in, out, around and toured everything. We appreciated it. Secondly MacDill is in changing command season, coming up the Wing Commander is changing out in mid-July. Support Group and some other groups, but it's a change of command season down at MacDill for the summer. The last thing, on behalf of all of us, I think is everybody should remember Memorial Day is coming up. Plan to remember, General Hartsell is out everywhere on behalf of our veterans, Thank you Sir. But all of us just take a moment to remember Memorial Day. Thank you.

Colonel Jason Hunt on behalf General Haas briefed: We still have no change to our Federal Mission, 125 Soldiers and Airmen deployed to CENTCOM, EUCOM and AFRICOM, and no significant changes to our State Mission. We still have 489 Florida Soldiers and Airmen on state active duty. 20 in Texas at Operation Lone Star and 410 in our Department of Corrections, and then 62 down in Marathon supporting the migration support. On the Legislative side, Governor DeSantis, on 3 May signed and sent a letter to the Secretary of Air Force opposing the Air Force's Legislative Proposal 480, the legislative proposal that would transfer all space-centric Air National Guard personnel to the Space Force. Lastly General Haas traveled to D.C. last week 8 and 9 May and met with 14 members whom all opposed Legislative Proposal 480. So good, good trip up to D.C. That's all I have.

Major General Richard Haddad briefed: Couple of things. First, starting with Air Force Special Operations Command, yesterday's Presidential nomination to the Senate included Lieutenant General Tony Bauernfeind, who's the commander of AFSOC. He will be moving to be the Superintendent at the Air Force Academy, and Brigadier General Michael E Connolly the AFSOC Director of Operations will move to be the Commander. He's going from a One Star to a Three Star position.

On a sadder note, at AFSOC last week, senior Airman Roger Fortson an AC-130 Gunner stationed at Hurlburt was shot and killed during an incident involving a sheriff's deputy. The deputy was placed on paid administrative leave while a formal investigation is being conducted.

Switching over to Special Operations Command last week, I had the pleasure of attending the Retired Senior Leaders Conference for the beginning of SOF Week, which was last week. One topic that a retired Army

General brought up is pertinent to what we've been discussing here, the Childcare Center for the 7th Special Forces Group up in the Panhandle. The SOCOM Commander stated that it was being worked during the discussion, but also one comment that was made was the fact that they were considering moving the 7th Special Forces Group out of the Panhandle. More to follow on that topic, and I know that our folks up in the Panhandle are addressing that issue. SOF Week, May 6th through 10th in Tampa, brought in delegates from more than 79 nations to include King Abdullah from Jordan, along with the current and retired senior military leaders. This is a rare opportunity to bring together a brilliant, proud group of innovators in industry, academia and national security who are all ready to solve the tough problems along with international partners.

Avon Park is hosting the Florida Advanced Training Range (FATR), which we are intimately involved with good grants, and they are conducting a demonstration starting on the 13th through the 24th of May. A planned start date of 6 May was delayed because of a frequency transmitter approval with the FAA, but they have the approval, and they are underway. We look forward to seeing what the results of that test conclude. Avon Park has a Change of Command on 2 August where Lieutenant Colonel Albert "Popeye" Chang will take over for Lieutenant Colonel Ryan. Lastly, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council continues to work with Avon Park staff, OLDCC and community stakeholders on the Military Installation Resilience Review. Subject to your questions, that's all I have, thank you.

Representative Patt Maney via Zoom: Memorial Day week, I'm going to be part of a six-person, non taxpayer funded, fact finding trip to Eagle Pass from Florida. We're going to go down and see what the Florida National Guard, the Florida State Guard, FHP and Fish and Wildlife Conservation Corps Officers are going to be doing. It's a three-day trip, but one day there; it's kind of hard to get into Eagle Pass, that's what we're up to. And I'll get back to you on what I see our National Guard soldiers doing and State Guard doing and that's my short report.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Tom Neubauer: A couple of things. When you're building the base of the future, you attract a lot of interest from senior leaders and recently we had General Alvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force visit Tyndall Air Force Base. The Silver Flag readiness exercise was attended by the Chief and next week General Kenneth Wilsbach, the new ACC Commander, will be at the installation as well.

Mention that Bay District Schools has committed to \$84,000,000 to build a new K8 school on Tyndall and they've just about settled on their location for it. Hopefully that school will be completed about the time that the base is finished under construction. Recently, the Thunderbirds were the main feature for an air show in our area. We haven't had an air show since 2017. Because of the direction of the base, it was held at Panama City Beach and about 250,000 people attending that and Admiral Quinn, you're right. Having an air show on the beach is a big deal and attracts a lot of people. It was outstanding, had about 20 Air Force, Navy, and civilian demonstration teams at that event. Also, we've learned that Gulf County, is planning an airport about 24 miles southeast of Tyndall's runway, and that's something that will probably be on the agenda the next 18 months to two years. We'll have probably some impact on the air picture around Tyndall. The Navy Support Activity Panama City and Tyndall Air Force Base leadership have put together a panel that worked out well with about 250 military members present to discuss things like healthcare, daycare, housing availability, the BAH issues that are affecting both bases, schools, school safety, crime and the Chamber of Commerce and other groups have taken on some of these projects expeditiously, particularly the healthcare issue and the childcare issue. That's my report, and if there's no questions. Thanks, Sir.

Honorable Mr. Thomas Bowman reported: I've been honored to be invited to be the keynote speaker at Florida National Cemetery on Memorial Day. No other report, thank you.

Rear Admiral Don Quinn reported: On the Air Force side, the Navy Aviation Flag Officers retired and active were in Pensacola last week along with the museum symposium with the new Air Boss. That was a very successful discussion, Whiting in FY24 due to the work of our delegation that the construction of the new hangar has been pulled forward a year so that foundational work is ongoing. The Navy has received plenty of

repair money for '24. We'll see where they allocate it relative to hanger repairs in Pensacola, but Representative Gaetz is waiting for answers there. The Navy went through a thing with the T-45s relative to blades again, but I'm happy to report that they're back up to about 118 airplanes and they need 120 to do all the student training, so that's that. They look like they've recovered from that, but they're going to have to dig out of about a 3000. sortie divot now, because of those airplanes being grounded for a while. And the commissioning is still on track, we believe it's going to be 7 September waiting for a piece of paper from SECNAV so we can go public with all the details in terms of what our plan is going to be in that regard. And the Navy announced that for the Blue Angel's Homecoming air show in early November, both the Blues and the Thunderbirds will be there. So, if you're interested in being in traffic, come on over that first week. It should be a great weekend. Thanks.

Ms. Kay Rasmussen highlighted a couple of things, A2 County Housing Summit was held in Okaloosa County the focus was on Okaloosa and Walton Counties housing need and the focus was what is referred to as the missing middle. For our area, it supports our military members, their families and then our essential workforce workers. It was an informative summit, different partnerships and funding opportunities were identified as potential solutions to provide housing for this missing middle. Most of us here are dealing with the same problem you've heard me mention previously about an EUL opportunity referred to as the North Nine in Okaloosa County, just South of the Eglin reservation, but north of the main base. This is approximately 275 acres that are in negotiations right now between Okaloosa County and Eglin Air Force Base, 96th Test Wing and AFPAC. They are finalizing those negotiations. This will be a mixed-use and housing development. So very desirable and we look forward to seeing that come to fruition.

My organization, One Okaloosa Economic Development Council, hosted an annual TeCMEN Industry Day. A summit that is focused on STEM industrial base, attracting businesses growing that industry base and the workforce. The defense contractors were there and developing that workforce to support the Eglin and Hurlburt missions. Brigadier General Geraghty was our keynote speaker, he focused on the discussion of the great power competition. We are looking at the current and future mission needs.

I hosted a panel was hosted that focused on the future defense workforce and this discussion focused on the needs inside and outside the fence. Outside the fence, again being the defense contractors that support and enable the missions on the installations to come to fruition. Highway 98 you've heard me mention that before west of Hurlburt Field, congestion is a negative impact to 1 SOW. That and has been identified as a critical need to the Commanders and in particular, Lieutenant General Bauernfeind, and an answer, a solution, has been identified as a critical immediate need, and that's the Collector Road that would be built west of Hurlburt Field, north of Highway 98 and it would get neighborhood traffic off of 98. The second part of the solution would be widening Highway 98 in Florida. DOT is looking at that and that's the second component. The Collector Rd the county is conducting an EIS and they are they are finalizing that it will be a County Road. Eglin, 96th Test Wing is finalizing their mission, impact analysis and Okaloosa County is stating that they have all the funds required and available in order to start construction once the preliminary essential work is done with the EIS and then mission impact.

You've heard me reference the Enhanced Use Lease opportunity for 98 acres outside the west gate of Eglin Air Force Base. The RFP was released. This would be for an industrial research campus, and we've had, the 96th Test Wing has had, multiple responses to that. The due date for the deadline has been pushed to July 1st. So, we are looking for that to come to fruition.

The last thing that I will mention is the locality rate pay that's been mentioned a couple of different times. As you know, I'm trying to dig into that puzzle, if you will. And readily available as information saying that to have your own geographic area designated, there must be an identified 10% disparity between the military pay and the civilian pay for that installation. And that's, you know, clear and they use the information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But the key here is understanding comparisons. Exactly what data are they comparing? And that's not as clear. So, I'm trying to figure that one out. There is a second option to get a locality rate pay designation, and that is for Congress to engage. So, your congressional member can take action. I am also investigating that to see if that's ever been successful and if so, where and how did that go down so. Once I get all that information, I'll certainly report back, so thank you.

Mr. Reeves Valentine briefed: A couple of things on NSA Orlando. The Military Installation Resiliency Plan for both the Space Coast and NSA Orlando and progress continues with workshops and as those things are underway also have been talking about the encroachment study around the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Okahumpka and again, that encroachment study continues.

Money is being put to good use from the National Center for Simulation. CEO George Cheros and the NCS hosted the Orlando Economic Partnership leadership fly-in last month where they advocated for the region's priorities, particularly around Modeling, Simulation and Technology. Which are such a great industrial driver and partnership between industry, academia, and the military. They were able to meet with the congressional delegation, discuss the latest MS&T trends, strengthen relationships, and build support for the MS&T priorities.

Lastly, last month the tech accelerator Plug and Play opened Neo City for semiconductors. This is a really important component for aerospace and defense and certainly onshoring that critical capability is important for our national security. The semiconductor industry through research, training and manufacturing will happen in this facility down in Kissimmee. That is all my comments. Chairman, thank you.

Commissioner Jim Scholl briefed: On the 5th of June, Joint Interagency Task Force South is going to have a change of command. Admiral Mark Fedor will be relieved by Rear Admiral Joanne Burdian. You know that Joint-Interagency Task Force South is SOUTHCOM's eyes and ears for all avenues of smuggling into the United States. It's not just drugs, its people, it's everything else that can move, so a very important command down here. Senator Roger Marshall, from Kansas, visited Naval Air Station Key West at the encouragement of Senator Rick Scott. Senator Marshall, served in the US Army and is a junior senator there, but very interested in military installations and their contribution to our defense and especially the training of units down here in Key West.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council gave a briefing to the Monroe County Commission on the recently completed Military Installation Resiliency Review, the first one to be completed in Florida. There are other planning councils around the state, that are undertaking studies on the installations in those areas; but very interesting, very comprehensive and I'd certainly like to thank Rick Miller from the Defense Alliance down here and everybody else who worked diligently to get this done. There's a lot of good information in there and we're going to work with all the agencies that have grant funds to support resiliency and see if we can leverage those dollars into hardening the base here. That's it for me down here in Key West.

Chairman Senator Tom Wright briefed: The ribbon on a new VA clinic in Daytona Beach. It is the 5th largest clinic in the world. When we did the groundbreaking 2 1/2 years ago, I asked the General that was there, "What services will be available?" His answer was basically if we don't have it, it doesn't exist. So, we're going to have every service available for our much deserving veterans, God bless them all.

I'm putting to my office, to put together a group of senators that are involved. Victor Torres, Danny Burgess and I, will be making a trip up to DC, to try and find a way to get our National Guard level increased from the 12,000 to the 22,000 as we've probably talked about before, it's based on a 1958 census.1958! Also speak about pay disparity. Senator Rubio and Senator Scott are going to be helping us up there and of course, Congressman Waltz, Congressman Mills, all our strong military people are all saying yes, they want to help. It's important because our men and women serving now are living, sometimes 35 to 50 miles away from their bases, just to find rent low enough to be able to live. Just like our Hometown Heroes Program that we have, it's not right. It's just not right that these people are not able to afford a decent place to live while they're serving this country. So. That's my report, but I would like to ask Kay if she would just tell the group the importance of building this road of near Highway 98, because I'm aware of it, but I don't know if everybody is aware of what the need is.

Kay Rasmussen remarks: Highway 98 is the thoroughfare of the Panhandle. You know it comes all the way across Eglin Air Force Base, the largest Air Force installation in the world and takes up 50% of the landmass of Okaloosa County approximately 25 to 30% of both Santa Rosa County and Walton County. Only two roads going east and west, and that would be Interstate 10 and Highway 98. Hurlburt Field's main gate is located on

Highway 98 and the traffic congestion with just the regular population, if you will, during rush hour trying to get to work, then you add the installation members and then you add in tourists during tourist season and we used to have what we would, you know, call a shoulder season where we didn't have tourists and that is not really the case anymore. We are pretty much all year round a tourist community. The congestion is ridiculous. It is stopped. I'm not talking, you know, slow. It is stopped and the previous commanders have come forward to address this.

The current Lieutenant General Bauernfeind he has, you know, officially said this is a negative impact to my mission here at 1 SOW. And our response time for the Members to get to their point to respond to a need is severely compromised. So there has been a lot of discussions, summits, work to identify potential solutions. And like I said this what has been identified as a what is referred to as a collector road.

In Okaloosa County, there is an elementary school that is right on Highway 98. So, in addition to all that I just said, the school zone for the elementary school severely slows down traffic. And then you have family members that are going to pick up kids or drop off kids, also adding to the traffic and then the buses. There are just not adequate words to describe it.

But the idea for this Collector Rd. that would be in Okaloosa County would be located behind north of Hwy. 98 behind several neighborhoods around this elementary school, and they want it on the South side of the Eglin range. Eglin Air Force Base, 96 Test Wing needs to provide an easy to allow for this road to go through the Eglin range so there would be a need to move some essential telemetry that is there, and Eglin Air Force Base is willing to do that. They said yes, we will do that in support of the 1 SOW and the need and the critical missions there. They are all on board. Okaloosa County is on board. Like I said, it will be a County Road. County has funding to pay for this. They are just going through all the preliminary required steps before they can start construction. So that involves the EIS which is underway and to be finalized soon. 96th Test Wing, DoD is providing the mission impact analysis. It is projected that there will be no negative findings there so that they would be able to move forward. Once those two analyses are completed and they get the go ahead, then Okaloosa County will jump in and once the easement is provided by the 96th and the required telemetry is moved we'll move forward with that Collector Rd. which will be behind the neighborhoods to pull all of that school traffic and neighborhood traffic off of Highway 98. So, it won't solve it, but it will definitely help.

Secretary Alex Kelly briefed: Thank you for the opportunity. Quick updates I had an opportunity to be at that Neo City event; speak at that event. I think a really important point to note about semiconductors, which as you noted, a pivotal component, Part 2, a lot of military and defense related industries. Thanks to the Governor's leadership, the Legislature supports grants done through the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Department of Commerce. The State of Florida has put forward about a two-year period, \$391 million in almost entirely workforce related training and education. For the semiconductor industry, leaders like the University of Florida and the University of Central Florida have been pivotal.

I spent time recently at Avon Park Air Force Range and NSA Orlando. Incredible synergy, by the way, at NSA Orlando with UCF, Tyndall Air Force Base, and the team in Santa Rosa County. We spent some time right next to Whiting Field at Whiting Aviation Park. A couple of common points that have come up with every base. Number one; incredible thanks and grateful appreciation at every base from the Governor to the legislature, this Task Force, the work you do, the partners of this Task Force, FDVA, DMA, Veterans Florida. Every single base, it comes up; the appreciation for the different grants that come through all the respective agencies and the support, and it comes up too. This is a positive of Florida. Maybe something that's different for other parts of the country but it comes up at every single base. Obviously, many members of our military have experience in other States and at every base it comes up that this is the only state that just universally has a synergy with all its base community. You see the base communities and the bases themselves that's not the case in other parts of the country, but it's an incredible testament to all the work here.

Pretty soon Tim and I leave for a trip to work on long term community recovery, which includes housing, we'll be visiting the Joint Interagency Task Force South to talk about housing. Specifically, as it is a critical issue, we've

done housing grants around some of our base communities, but you know, at the end of the day, we're just chasing a bigger problem than just what a few grants will solve.

Thanks very much in part to the work of Tim and Ray, our last \$2,000,000 in Defense Infrastructure Grants closing out those for the year. This is a \$7,000,000 grant program. We have made awards to the City of Jacksonville for a lot of resiliency issues in Northeast Florida, to the Space Coast, EDC and the City of Cocoa. I just want to highlight two of those last two. Big thanks to our partners at Space Florida, and the City of Cocoa grant has to do with water infrastructure improvements to get ready for the growth that's going to occur at Patrick Space Force Base.

Just one last thing. You know two, maybe two last things, I want to pick up on the point about Terry McCaffrey. What was said earlier? Comment was true. And Senate Bill 1420, in so many ways really codifies the work and the partnership that this Task Force and Terry really so much thanks to you, this Task Force has really exceeded the statutory mandate. And so, I think now the Statute now reflects the work that this Task Force and the partners like FDVA and DMA and others have grown into. And again, Terry, great to see you and big thanks.

Last thing we're already preparing for the Veterans Workforce Summit, which will be again in October this year. But you know how those things are. You plan early to build out a great agenda. If there are any suggestions and ideas and I know many of us will be there, if there are any suggestions or ideas for veteran's workforce issues, now is a great time to bring those to us and get those radar screen so we can build out a great agenda. Thank you, Chairman.

Major General James S. Hartsell: Good morning, chairman, everybody, distinguished council. I'm looking forward to seeing 1420 signed and an opportunity to be a part of this; officially a part of it. Our Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has had a wonderful year. Just an outstanding year for what we're doing for our veterans, families, and survivors; always like to mention that.

We have great opportunities that we're looking forward to the budget being signed and having our bills that we're very interested in being signed by the governor to just do a few wonderful things. It's the right thing to do and it's a compassionate thing to do. As an example, that we're going to be able to allow, once the bills are signed, to allow spouses who need skilled nursing care, to live in the same state veteran nursing home with their spouses. Most of them will be women. They'll be coming in to live with their husbands, spouses.

Right now, our eligibility is veteran Florida citizens. If the spouse wasn't a veteran, they couldn't live with him, so they had to live in two separate nursing homes. And that's sad. But this has been passed working with Senators Burgess and Collins, many other great senators like Senator Wright, to get this through the legislature. The Governor's fully on board to get this to where these spouses can live with their loved ones toward the end of their life. And I'm really looking forward to doing it. They can't wait to visit some of those couples. It's going to be wonderful.

That's just a personal heart kind of thing that the Florida Department Veterans does. Where our benefits, our nursing homes, our claims examiners and what we now call State Veterans Service Officers continue to work hard because the largest and migration of veterans and their families continues to be to our great state. More veterans are moving to Florida than to any other state. We all live here. We know why. It's all I've been talking about; some of the things that we do for our veterans and our military members. So, it's a great responsibility that I have, and I love doing it and I'm just proud to be part of soon this organization. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Kellie Jo Killberg FDA Meeting recap:

Thank you, Sir, and it's a pleasure to be with you. Happy birthday to you and thank you to the Task Force, soon to be Commission.

Thank you to Tom Neubauer for sponsoring our refreshments yesterday. Since we are without the sponsorships, we couldn't have refreshments. Tom, thank you for stepping up and doing that. The Task Force once again had a full agenda full of what I always call those light bulb moments, Aha moments of where we are identifying gaps, challenges, and opportunities.

Our discussion showed us the power of partnerships where building collaborative relationships to develop creative and value-added engagements that are seeking innovative solutions. And if nothing else, I will always say this about Florida. Our partnerships are top of the game, and without those partnerships, we wouldn't have some of the activities we have going, but those partnerships bring a lot of dollars to the state. We maximize and leverage down to the penny for the state of Florida for some of these initiatives.

Our agenda included a legislative update. Our first panel focus on economic security for military families. The panelists were Marla Batista with the Bautista project, Harrison Conyers from Jacksonville Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, David Julian with the Department of Defense Office of Military Community and Family Policy, and Senator Jay Collins, a retired Army Green Beret. We discussed food insecurity and I think a lot of people always just think if you're in the military, you're paid very well. What they don't realize is a lot of our enlisted personnel face food insecurity, and we're relying a lot on food banks and other partnerships to come together. I know Jacksonville has a food bank twice a month, and in Tampa, they have quite a partnership going where they're dealing with food insecurity. The food includes fresh meats, milks, cheese, the bread. I mean, they literally are going down the line. But in addition to that, they also are looking at again, when you're looking at food insecurity, their families that are watching every dollar. In Tampa, they also have a program where those families can go in and get gifts so that their kids can go to birthday parties. Let's think about this. You want to have connectivity in your community and these individuals that are sacrificing for us or having to go there to get the gift. We all looked again at, you know, food insecurity.

We also looked at the cost of housing, insurance, childcare, spousal employment, the BAH issues there, this is such a passionate group of individuals that work together to pull resources for the enlisted families and just kind of another. You know, kind of some data points for junior enlisted, 29% of them at some point will face food insecurity, 14% will experience very low food insecurity and 10% will experience very high food insecurity. The DoD numbers include 45% of E1's through E4 have food insecurity, 31% of E5 through E6 have food insecurity and 16% of senior enlisted have food insecurity, so again this is a big topic that we're looking at. We're looking at across the state, how we can do a little bit more with consistency, the different groups that are out there, whether it's United Way and Mission United. But what are the other groups that are out there that are military families know where to go but do it in such a way that they don't have to lose their pride to go find resources?

Mission Assurance and Growth Working Group had a panel discussion on what's next for SCIF space and I know Neal was here, there he is, that was lively discussion. It's not something that you would think about, but we have the discussion on SCIFs and to really look at that as an economic development issue since we have a lack of SCIF space here in the state of Florida, which leads to a lack of competition from and for our small businesses, defense businesses. And just to kind of bring it into perspective here, SCIF space is \$1200 to \$1400 a square foot to build, so, our small businesses cannot afford to build this. Our primes and our large defense contractors have SCIF space and I'm sure there are times when you're bringing in your partners for some of those meetings, but for a lot of the meetings, even to bid on a project, you have to go to a SCIF, and we just don't have enough of that. Kathleen Ferguson gave us some best examples of St. Louis, Missouri has built a SCIF resort of 75,000 square feet. It's called the Globe Building and what's unique about this is they have locations within this for single seat space. If again you're a small business, there's a SCIF for the single seat and then also for small team group space. Nooks in Arlington, VA is developing what they're calling

classified space or service space, so it's more of an as needed. What we did here and Kay, you probably already know this Eglin needs about 500,000 square feet of SCIF space because they have about another 4000 coming.

There is discussion about a SCIF and a box trailer, kind of what the Air Force is looking at, how do we acquire on-demand space? Louisiana has a National Research Park that they have developed to the Air Force standard of 7200 square feet, so you know, as we're looking at some of this, it again from an economic development perspective, how do we in the state of Florida develop those spaces?

But something else to think about on that, and have talked about this, individuals like even in Central Florida because UCF does have some SCIF space but not nearly enough. We have businesses that have contracts in the state of Florida, but they're flying on Mondays to Wright-Pat.

Spending the week in Wright-Pat because of the SCIF space there and then flying. Eventually you will see those contracts just go up to Wright-Pat because, why are they living here when they can go there? And so, you'll see the migration of jobs, and this is something we really need to pay attention to. Of course, you know, just building a SCIF is one thing. But of course, the SCIF needs 24-hour security. During the build, after the build, people that come into this SCIF, it takes up to two years to get their clearance and they have to maintain that clearance to get entrance into that building. These are just all things that we need to think about, you know, are there buildings we can repurpose to help save on some of the costs? And then really kind of look at our university system and really kind of start pulling them in to this discussion on building SCIFs, so lively discussion. I thank, Neal, for pulling that all together and his panel.

Next, we had a discussion on interlocal agreements, Governmental local agreements featuring Whiting Field and Debbie Graham put that together for us and looked at kind of the success of Santa Rosa County, Whiting Field, the City of Milton; just discussing how the shareholder engagement is coming together, looking at shared services, both going both ways. So not only are the city and the county bringing something to Whiting Field, but Whiting field is also. Part of that and just, you know, looking at those cost savings and what's going to be next.

And Next up and then during our breakout sessions, we heard from Eric Sherman, our DoD State Liaison Officer, about the many successes that he has witnessed over the 19 years he's been in that position and just how I mean, it was more than 6 pages, front and back, of things here in the state of Florida we have done over the last 19 years. We also recognized him and celebrated him on his retirement. That's coming up in the fall. And David Julian had brought a letter and a coin from the Assistant Secretary of Defense to recognize him on that.

We discussed, and I know I and Representative Maney will be meeting to discuss, the issue of concurrent juvenile jurisdiction. There are now 12 states that have joined that particular legislation. They are Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Maine, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Virginia and Wyoming. So, we're looking forward to working on that legislative session next in the next legislative session.

We're looking forward to, in June, the family Cafe in Orlando, and this is where the Florida military families. Special needs Network comes together, and they look at those opportunities to assist families with special needs. But this year we're also having a track for our military families that have Exceptional Family Members. And then we're also working with the vendors to discuss those issues that are unique to military families and all. And we're going to be doing a survey with them there in Orlando just to get a better idea where the opportunities and challenges are.

Mission Assurance discussed many, many, many things. So, I'm going to keep it short because I know we got to get going here. But just kind of highlighting, discussing the MIRR's and I just want to kind of come back to that. By next week, Northeast Florida will have signed on for theirs. That brings 6 MIRR's to the state of Florida, all through our partnerships with the regional councils.

So, Secretary Kelly and Senator Wright, talking about partnerships, what we do at the Florida Defense Alliance is we look for opportunities to partner and to bring resources to the state. And I will tell you, through the MIRR, this is going to be a lot of different pots of money that we're going to be able to leverage and bring to the state and address those needs so that we're hardened for what disasters may come our way and whatever climate change comes into the future. And I think one of our next steps in it, as these reports come out, is developing that matrix because I'm a very visual person. So, it's great to have reports and we all discuss them when we're done. But just doing reports and not doing anything with them isn't enough. So, we're going to be working with Dr. Brooks and the Office of Resiliency, but really looking at that matrix from the six different reports and seeing where are the commonalities? Where can DEP step up or the different agencies within the state of Florida? What other agencies are out there nationally that we can be working with to address?

But to really also think about, because if they've gone through the process of the murder. They should get extra points and go to the head of the line because they have been vetted for state dollars. So, this isn't just pie in the sky. These are projects that have been vetted and we need to prioritize them and get them in the right funnel. And in addition to that one, we're talking about partnerships. And I know we got Jennifer and Buck here, but we have two Sentinel Landscapes in the state. Hopefully we'll have a third soon with Northeast Florida, again bringing many different pots of money and grants and opportunities to the state of Florida. And I know Jennifer and Buck have had some interesting, just out-of-the-box, thinking with partnerships that they can come in and deal with projects, encroachment and just your whole species part of this; you know, resiliency.

And so again, I just want to thank our local partners because without all that you do, we would never know of the opportunities, but we would also never know about the challenges we need to address or the gaps. And I think when again, when you're looking at food insecurity. That's, you know, those are the gaps we never think about. And as Marla has said yesterday for food insecurity, the math isn't matching. I mean the math isn't matching here, people. There are just not dollars for some of those. But again, from what we do here in the state of Florida, we're looking at how do we leverage the state dollars, local dollars, regional dollars, you know, federal dollars and I think we do a really good job here and I don't think we tell the story enough.

And my final comment and I'm excited about the fact that DIG will have \$7,000,000. DRG will have 3 million. The Task Force will still have two and the opportunity for the Commission to go after other grants and things. But let's put this in perspective. That's \$12 million in this next legislative session. The military impact for the state of Florida is \$102 billion. We get 12 million for a \$102 billion industry. We leveraged that 12 million unbelievably, but let's keep that in perspective. Our state has a dynamic military and defense. If we could probably do a little more of investment without there being any questions, I'm happy to be here and share. Thank you to all the partners. Thank you to Chip and general household for coming yesterday and for showing up later in the afternoon. We appreciate you attending our meetings and being there and sharing your wisdom. And again, thank you Tom for sponsoring. Thank you.

Military & Defense Update

Tim MacGregor discussed:

I want to specifically mention and thank the staff of my Office of Military Defense. We have a couple here with us right now. Ray Collins and Takesha Ware also helping us out Deena Alani. And then Chris Weller, who's in a class back at Commerce. As many of you know, Tallahassee got hammered. Pretty hard by our tornado just six days ago to include it looks like three of them. Two of them were EF 2s. If any of you've seen a video that's floating around social media lately, it says downtown Tallahassee tornado from a parking garage. That was literally across the street from the Department of Commerce that happened on Friday. We had more storms rolling Monday, so yet our staff in conjunction with several others from the Department of Commerce has pulled off some amazing work putting together yesterday's Defense Alliance meeting and today's Task Force meeting. So great thank you to them, to all the folks that are helping run the city of Tallahassee. Bird's Aphrodisiac is the place that we go to. These are folks that are still in the throes of recovering from a significant natural disaster. I think at one point we've seen reports of hundreds of homes destroyed and are

severely damaged, 500 power poles down. You wouldn't be able to tell it by some of the cleanup that's been done around here locally. And I will tell you the incredible kudos to the folks of Tallahassee and Leon County Power, the utility crews, the partner crews that are come in from out of state to help us out phenomenal work and on behalf of the Department of Commerce Under Secretary Kelly's leadership.

Many folks don't know. The department deploys folks during times of natural disaster. And this time, we're deploying to our own hometown. So there are members of the Department of Commerce that are out there pounding the pavement every day helping hand out supplies, but reaching out to the businesses and residents saying what can we do to help you out? What? What kind of assistance can we provide you, and to include many of our coworkers that share our office spaces? So we're very grateful for that.

And short and sweet, we are continuing to press forward with establishing all the paperwork that goes up involved with setting up the Florida Defense Support Commission. Again, Under Secretary Kelly's leadership, the staff has done a great job helping us out. We've just looked at some articles of incorporation from a legal standpoint, we'll be the Florida Defense Support Commission, comma, Incorporated, but we'll still be known colloquially as the Commission and that work continues. So we will keep you all apprised to that. And then with that, Senator, that concludes my remarks here.

Task Force Grant Presentations:

Maj Gen L Martin briefed on behalf **Tampa Bay Defense Alliance** that covers an eight county area with approximately 5 million residents, 175,500 defense related jobs, 27% of the veterans in the state reside in the area and defense related activities make up 10% of the regional impact. The role of the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance in our region is to act as a convener and an accelerator for organizations to coordinate together and the completion of this inventory and assessment would allow us to do that job better. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$125,000.

Gail Sharpe/Buck McLaughlin: briefed on behalf of **Polk County & Avon Park**. To protect natural resources to ensure compatible land use in and around the range, which is really for the encroachment prevention and sustainability of the Avon Park Air Force Range. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$500,000.

Shannon Ogletree: briefed on behalf of **Santa Rosa Board of County Commissioners** for the Sally Port Gate at Whiting Field. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$488,500.

Mohammed Kabul/Greg Billman: **University of West Florida** the Dean for the College of Science and Engineering at University of West Florida. Our partner Greg Pullman, CEO of Security Clearance Consortium company doing business as security to present our proposal for security clearance and cyber security readiness for Florida defense workforce development. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$480,075.

Josh Cockrell briefed on behalf of **Clay County Development Authority** the executive director of the Clay County Development Authority, which is an independent special district consisting of A10 member board appointed by the governor to support, promote and facilitate economic development. While serving as a lead public development finance agency in Clay County. This grant will help facilitate our training capability growth within the boundaries as well as we're taking safeguard current flora and fauna and the operations itself. So from future development activities. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$500,000.

Cindy Simerly briefed on behalf of the **Military Child Education Coalition** It's mission it is to educate, advocate and collaborate to resolve educational challenges associated with the military lifestyle. Our mission is that every child, every military child, is college ready. We're proposing three, 2-day summits, including the family centric programs you see here. Focus on STEM and early literacy and what we'll do is work with our local

installation leadership MIC3 reps and community members. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$101,334.

Jennifer Coto Salisbury/LT Col J. Kassebaum briefed on behalf of **Central Florida Regional Planning Council/Northeast Florida Regional Council** for a project to upgrade training aids on Avon Park AFR and in the NE Florida Training Range. We've requested an amount of from the Task Force of \$424,279.

Agenda Item IV: Public Comment:

Kent Wimmer:

Good morning. I work for Defenders of Wildlife. I'm the Coordinator of the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape, so I wanted to provide you a brief update with what's going on with our partners in the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape. We've had nine preproposals submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation by our partners.

Two of the projects, the Air Force and The Nature Conservancy, submitted a proposal for coastal resilience at Tyndall Air Force Base in Okaloosa County, and the Air Force and TNC have applied for a living shoreline project around an eroding section of US 98 on Okaloosa Island. There's been three projects proposed for wetland restoration for endangered flatwood salamanders: two near Eglin, one near and under the Tyndall Flyway. The Saint Andrews/St. Joe Estuary program is submitting 2 proposals for implementing living shoreline projects in the Saint Andrews Bay Area. Apalachicola Regional Planning Council has a proposal for a US 98 Living Shoreline project in Franklin County along Apalachicola Bay. The Florida Trail Association has put in a proposal to build a section of the Florida National Scenic Trail that would complement the Build the Connector to the Trail Bridge over the Yellow River and provide access to and from Eglin Air Force Base. There's going to be two proposals submitted to the Natural Resource Conservation Service. One proposal would be by Conservation Florida and would be primarily for agricultural easements in Santa Rosa County, so protecting land around that line, landing fields and NAS Whiting Field. The other RCPP Regional Conservation Partnership Program would be by Tall Timbers. They're expanding their reach into all the way west to the Apalachicola River, so that gets us into the Tyndall Air Force Base flyways. And there would focus on conservation easements and land stewards.

Some good news. Our partner, Legacy Works Group, has hired a resilience specialist. This person will begin July 1 in Northwest Florida. This person was hired to provide capacity to help our partners identify projects, help prepare proposals and help attract more land or more federal and state dollars for land conservation projects in the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape. It's a wonderful hire. She's originally from Northwest Florida, 15 years working for the Nature Conservancy up in South Carolina doing these resilience projects. So that was a wonderful coup for us there.

Just yesterday, 5 new Sentinel Landscapes were announced; one in Northeastern New Mexico, the Great Salt Lake, Utah; Hawaii, Kitani Ridge; in Pennsylvania; and the Mohave Desert in California. Unfortunately, Northeast Florida was not designated this year as a Sentinel Landscape. I know my partners with Avon Park and me and Northwest Florida, we will continue to support their proposals in the future and hopefully they will be designated.

Lastly, the northwest Florida Emerald Coast Regional Council is sponsoring a Military Installation Resilience Review and they are currently developing their project descriptions this summer. In August, they will release those to the public for comment and for approval. These are all Military Installation Resilience Review projects to help our communities and our bases be more resilient in the face of climate change. Thank you very much on behalf of the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape. Those projects that were submitted, we hope you fund them, thank you.

Senator Wright: And thanks to all of you applicants that made great presentations today. As we stated earlier, we'll join adjourned close soon. The open meeting and then go into a closed session. That said, please stick

around and we will reconvene the open meeting to hold a vote on the grant awards. Before that, Task Force members, please complete your score sheets.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM EDT

The meeting reconvened at 1:30 PM EDT

V. Agenda Item VI: Public Meeting Reconvenes for Grants Vote

A quorum being present, **Chairman, Senator Tom Wright** asked for a motion to approve grant funding for FY 2024-2025.

A motion was made by **Ms. Kay Rasmussen** to fund the slate of FY 2024-2025 grants as follows:

- Tampa Bay Defense Alliance, \$50,000
 - Polk County, \$500,000
 - Clay County Development Authority, \$500,000
 - University of West Florida, \$320,210
- Total \$1,370,210

The motion was seconded by **Mr. Tom Neubauer**, all were in favor and the grants were approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 PM EDT

This meeting can be viewed on The Florida Channel:

<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/5-16-24-florida-defense-support-task-force/>