



City of Virginia Beach

Military Economic Development Advisory Committee

2024-2025 Annual Report to City Council

Chair: RADM (Ret) Phil Olson

Date: August 31, 2025

Executive Summary

During the fiscal year covering the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, the Military Economic Development Advisory Committee volunteers and liaisons

- Met 6 times, 3 of which were joint meetings with Norfolk and Portsmouth MEDAC.

Our most significant accomplishments are detailed below, along with recommendations for your consideration.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Military Economic Development Advisory Committee is to serve as an advisory agency to the Virginia Beach City Council to enhance the coordination efforts with local military base commanders and their various installation tenants.

Accomplishment of Goals and Objectives

Over the past fiscal year, the agency, through its appointed volunteers and its liaisons, worked on the following key matters in furtherance of its mission:

1. Fort Wool public access and seabird relocation support

- a. In 2020, visitor access to Fort Wool was suspended to use the island as a seabird sanctuary when nesting areas formerly available on Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (HRBT) property became unavailable due to the HRBT expansion effort.
 - b. The US Army Corps of Engineers has begun efforts toward constructing a new habitat, in the form of a new artificial island for seabird habitation. It was the understanding of interested parties at the time that a better long-term solution for wildlife habitat would be found, and that Fort Wool would in the future be returned to visitation status, this has yet to be accomplished.
 - c. The Virginia Beach Military Economic Development Advisory Committee registered our support for the completion of the key step to complete the new artificial island and encourage the subsequent actions needed to reopen public visitation to Fort Wool. The Virginia Beach MEDAC, Norfolk MEDAC and Portsmouth Military Affairs sent letters of Endorsement of Plans and Programs to eleven installations, state of Virginia organizations and municipalities across the region to Restore Public Access to Historic Fort Wool.
- 2. Continued support to assist Portsmouth MEDAC organization
 - a. Including Portsmouth Military Affairs group in the Joint MEDAC endeavors with Norfolk.
 - b. Quarterly joint meeting organization to promote fluid understanding of the goals throughout Hampton Road's Military Economic Development Advisory Committees.
- 3. Outreach to Navy and other Military Commands
 - a. While members of MEDAC did not conduct site visits to NAS Oceana or JEB Little Creek-Fort Story in 2024-2025, the installation Commanding Officers and their Community Plans and Liaison Officers were regular attendees at MEDAC meetings and provided updates. Site visits impose a security and logistical burden on the installations; additionally, Commonwealth of Virginia public notification requirements made productive and effective site visits difficult.
 - b. With several former NAS Oceana and JEBLCFS Commanding Officers serving as members of MEDAC, engagement between the Committee and the installations continues to be healthy and robust.

4. Workforce Development

- a. Virginia Beach Economic Development (VBED) actively supports the military community with a range of workforce initiatives and resources for small businesses. Last year, programs such as Thrive @ The HIVE provided free co-working space, mentorship, and business training to active-duty service members, veterans, and military spouses. In partnership with Virginia Wesleyan University, the city also helped deliver training and certification opportunities. Additionally, Virginia Beach offered small business grants and SWaM assistance to help veteran-owned businesses expand and succeed.
- b. Last year, VBED took part in the 757 Career Summits hosted by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, as well as Veteran Employment Centers at NAS Oceana, Norfolk Naval Station, Fort Eustis, and Little Creek. These summits served as effective platforms for Virginia Beach's diverse industry employers—especially those in the defense and maritime sectors—to connect with a targeted talent pipeline and engage directly with military personnel transitioning to civilian careers.

5. The annual Virginia Governor's Housing Conference (VAGHC) was held in Virginia Beach for the first time ever in November 2024. The VAGHC has a broad range of attendees from many professional sectors including nonprofit organizations, foundations and other philanthropic donors, affordable housing developers, economic developers, local government elected officials, design professionals, financial institutions, government agencies, private developers, real estate professionals, educational institutions, trade organizations, community-based and faith-based organizations, and public housing providers. The conference consistently attracts more than 900 affordable housing advocates, providers and policy makers to discuss a host of important issues affecting all Virginians. This year the conference drew more than 1100 participants, the largest conference held to date.

- a. As part of the planning efforts each year, the VAGHC highlights the local community and this year the conference highlighted the Military Economic Development Committee (MEDAC). The MEDAC are established to enhance the coordination with the local military base commanders and their various installation tenants, and this year the MEDAC panel addressed the history and function of the council, as well as council efforts around affordable housing, workforce development and homelessness.
- b. Among the six panelists were Virginia Beach MEDAC members Charles Kubic, RADM (ret), and Fenton Priest, RADM (ret). The panel was well

received and most of the participants left impressed by what the MEDAC does and its' impact on the community.

Membership and Attendance

The attendance report is attached

The volunteer hours report is attached

Financial Report (N/A)

This agency in an advisory committee that does not need nor have a budget

Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year

- Continue collaboration with Norfolk and Portsmouth MEDAC
- Command Briefings and Military Outreach

Recommendations to City Council

The Military Economic Development Advisory Committee respectfully requests the continued support of the Virginia Beach City Council on the Committee's strategic military affairs engagement and business community development initiatives and efforts through City Council direction and with the assistance of the City's Department of Economic Development.

Closing

Should you have any questions or desire a formal City Council briefing from our agency, please contact Phil Olson, MEDAC Chair at prolson@cox.net and or the City Staff Liaison, Ihsane Mouak at imouak@vbgov.com & MEDAC City Staff Recording Admin, Vicki Kelley at vkelly@vbgov.com

City of Virginia Beach

Military Economic Advisory Committee

2025 Attendance Record

Members Attendance

Name	Term Expires:	July 22 nd	Sep 23 rd Joint	Nov 25 th	Total Present
Baan, Andy CAPT	2/9/2028	N/A	N/A	P	1/3
Barbrey, Lawrence L. MCPO	2/29/2028	P	E	P	2/3
Chope, Christopher W. CAPT	2/29/2028	P	E	A	1/3
Cummings, John J. CAPT	2/28/2026	E	E	E	0/3
Curtis, William E. CAPT	2/28/2026	P/V	P	P	3/3
Gemmill, Mark RADM	2/29/2028	P/V	A	P	2/3
Heckelman, Loren V. CAPT	2/29/2028	P	E	P	2/3
Herbert, Robert CAPT	2/29/2028	P	E	A	1/3
Holmes, Robert L. CAPT	2/28/2030	E	P	P/V	2/3
Katz, Robert D. RADM Vice-Chair	2/29/2028	P/V	P	P	3/3
Keplinger, Eric L. VBDA	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Kubic, Charles R. RADM	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Nosal, Gregory RADM	2/28/2027	P	P	P/V	3/3
Olson, Phillip RADM Chair	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Owens, Kathleen CDR	2/29/2028	P/V	E	P	2/3
Priest, Fenton RADM	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Schager, Louis J. CAPT	2/28/2030	E	E	P	1/3
Smith, Robert E. CAPT	2/29/2028	P/V	A	R	1/3
Stuppard, Charles CAPT	2/28/2027	P	E	P/V	1/3
This row indicates if there was a quorum; total number of members in person/total number of appointed members		15/18	8/18	15/18	

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Canceled (C)

City Council and staff liaisons should be marked either P or P/V, if not in attendance, the block should be blank

If commissioners participate P/V, it must be annotated in the minutes where they remotely participated from and the reason – does not apply to City Council or staff liaisons.

Meetings lacking a quorum of members attending in person should be designated with an asterisk (*)

City of Virginia Beach
Military Economic Advisory Committee
2025 Attendance Record

Members Attendance

Name	Term Expires:	Jan 27 th	Mar 24 th Joint	May 19 th Joint	Total Present
Baan, Andy CAPT	2/9/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Barbrey, Lawrence L. MCPO	2/29/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Chope, Christoper W. CAPT	2/29/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Cummings, John J. CAPT	2/28/2026	A	A	P	1/3
Curtis, William E. CAPT	2/28/2026	P	A	P	2/3
Gemmill, Mark RADM	2/29/2028	P	A	P/V	2/3
Heckelman, Loren V. CAPT	2/29/2028	P/V	A	P	2/3
Herbert, Robert CAPT	2/29/2028	P	A	A	1/3
Holmes, Robert L. CAPT	2/28/2030	P	P	P	3/3
Katz, Robert D. RADM Vice-Chair	2/29/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Keplinger, Eric L. VBDA	2/29/2028	P	P	A	2/3
Kubic, Charles R. RADM	2/29/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Nosal, Gregory RADM	2/28/2027	P	A	P	2/3
Olson, Phillip RADM Chair	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Owens, Kathleen CDR	2/29/2028	P	P	P	3/3
Priest, Fenton RADM	2/29/2028	P	A	P	2/3
Schager, Louis J. CAPT	2/28/2030	A	A	P	1/3
Smith, Robert E. CAPT	2/29/2028	R	R	R	N/A
Stuppard, Charles CAPT	2/28/2027	P	P	P	3/3
This row indicates if there was a quorum; total number of members in person/total number of appointed members		16/18	5/18	16/18	

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Canceled (C)

City Council and staff liaisons should be marked either P or P/V, if not in attendance, the block should be blank

If commissioners participate P/V, it must be annotated in the minutes where they remotely participated from and the reason – does not apply to City Council or staff liaisons.

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City of Virginia Beach
Military Economic Development Advisory Committee (MEDAC)
2024-2025 Volunteer Hours

Name	July 2024	Sept 2024	Nov 2024	Jan 2025	Mar 2025	May 2025	Total
Baan, Andy			1.5	1.5		1.5	4.5
Barbery, Lawrence L	1.5		1.5	1.5		1.5	6
Chope, Christopher W	1.5			1.5		1.5	4.5
Cummings, John						1.5	1.5
Curtis, William	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	7.5
Gemmill, Mark	1.5		1.5	1.5		1.5	6
Heckelman, Loren V	1.5		1.5	1.5		1.5	6
Herbert, Robert (Steve)	1.5			1.5			3
Holmes, Robert		1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.5
Katz, Robert D.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	7.5
Keplinger, Eric	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		7.5
Kubic, Charles	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	7.5
Nosal, Gregory	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	7.5
Olson, Phil	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	9
Owens, Kathy	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.5
Priest, Fenton	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	7.5
Schager, Lous J			1.5			1.5	3
Smith, Robert	1.5						1.5
Stuppard, Charles	1.5		1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.5
Total Hours							112.5

A total of 112.5 Volunteer hours from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025