

**Marine Corps Family Team Building
Quarterly Council Board Meeting Minutes: 17 November 09
Globe & Anchor, Camp Foster (0912-1036)**

Voting Members Present

Michael Jackson, MCFTB Director, Chair
Cathe Robling, Family Readiness Program Advisor, III MEF
Dennise Loftesnes, FRO, III MEF
Sergeant Major Daniel Fierle, Senior Enlisted Representative, III MEF
Chris Ulrich, FRO, MCB Camp S.D. Butler/H&S BN
Stacey Zebb, FRO, 3D MARDIV
Frank Fay, FRO, 1ST MAW
Cindy Fox, Family Readiness Program Advisor, 1ST MAW
Colonel Brent Goddard, CG Representative, 3D MLG
Kelly Goddard, Family Readiness Program Advisor, 3D MLG
Sharon Damren, Family Readiness Program Advisor, 31ST MEU

Voting Members Not Present

Commanding General/Officer Representative (CO or XO):
• MCB Camp S.D. Butler/H&S BN
• 3D MARDIV
• 1ST MAW
Senior Chaplain MCB Camp S.D. Butler
Family Readiness Program Advisor:
• MCB Camp S.D. Butler/H&S BN
• 3D MARDIV

Quorum Present? Yes.

Others Present

Sergeant Major Cevet Adams, MCBJ/MCB
Sergeant Major Mario Marquez, MWHS 1
Barbara Lilley, FRO, MWHS 1
Diana Mizell, School Liaison Officer, MCB
Tolondra Johnson, FRO, 5TH ANGLICO
Major Derek Bibby, 5TH ANGLICO
Richard Palma, FRO, 31ST MEU
Don Delatte, FRO, 12TH MAR REG
Michelle Arellano, FRO, H&HS
Salina McBride, PSC, MCCS
Shandra Hardy, FRO, HQBN
Alex Miller, FRO, III MHG
Lauren Eastmead, FRO, 3D INTEL BN
Rob Moreno, FRO, MWCS 18
Monica Woods, FRO, VMGR 152
Lieutenant Colonel Paul Patrick, CO, VMGR 152
Laura Patrick, CO's Spouse, VMGR 152
Kevin Lathrop, FRO, HMM 265
Bert Griffith, Semper Fit, MCCS
Dawn Payne, FRO, CLR 35
Amanda Daniels, FRO, MWSG 17
Sean McPherson, XO, MWSG 17
Tina Smilie, Lifelong Learning, MCCS
Ron Appling, FRO, HMM 262
Susan Hulsey, FRO, MACG 18
Stephanie Taber, FRO, CLR 37

Others Present Continued

Stacy DeSerio-Ellis, New Parent Support, MCCS
Terry Burmester, FRO, 3D MLG
Jacqueline Arrieta, FRO, 7TH COMM
Lieutenant Colonel Terry Baggett, CO, H&HS
Cindy Reiter, FRO, CLB 31
Commander Randal Craft, CREDO, MCB
Jocelyn McNair, FRO, 3D MED BN
Steve Hatfield, Community Service Coordinator, MCCS
Debra Sparkman, FRO, CLR 3
Lieutenant Commander Muhiyyaldin Ibn-Noel, Chaplain, CLR 3/CLB 4
Lieutenant Colonel Greg Feroldi, XO, MAG 36
Nicole Morrill, New Parent Support, MCCS
Joann Ninneman-Nakama, Community Service Coordinator, MCCS
Cheryl Collins, FRO, 9TH ESB
Jeff Fisher, FRO, MWSS 172
Patricia Fierle, Command Team Member, III MEF
John Velker, Substance Abuse Program, MCCS
Josette Knapp, FRO, MAG 36

Proceedings

The Marine Corps Family Team Building Council was called to order at 0912. The Chair, Michael Jackson, welcomed all attendees and asked that all cell phones be silenced. A special thank you was mentioned in honor of all the volunteers and participants for this year's Family Readiness Expo. Lastly, the new Family Readiness Council Charter purpose was read aloud by Michael Jackson to council attendees. He reminded everyone that it took nearly one year for the charter to be finalized, and that if any amendments to the charter are desired, please send him an e-mail with your suggestions.

Approval of Minutes

The council was given an opportunity to review the meeting minutes from 27 March 2009. There were no additional amendments voiced.

New Business – MCFTB Chief

- 1. MARFORPAC Conference Recap:** The chair went TAD to MARFORPAC with Mr. Saldana to review funding. Discussions included Unit specific requirements for childcare funding during events that fall under the Unit but are coordinated through MCFTB, such as Pre-Deployment Briefs. This is still under review and an official response has not been released. TAD funding for FROs, sustainment funding for office supplies, and blackberry considerations are also still under review. As soon as a final word is received it will be passed along to everyone. Another issue explored at the conference was whether or not the \$25 per Marine was a sufficient amount of money to maintain Family Readiness programs and functions. It was determined by all present at the conference that this allotment is enough to sustain their program.
- 2. Unit Family Readiness Fund (UFRF) Delegation Letters:** As we move transition to the new procedures involved with processing UFRF requests it is important for each Unit to have a delegation letter(s) for those individuals who the CO would like to sign off on requests. Please remember that there is a \$300 cap on all requests for reimbursements.
- 3. Mass Communication Tool (MCT) Spreadsheet Version 2 Training Update:** There is a requirement that everyone is trained by 31 October. We met the mark by having approximately 90% of the FROs trained.
- 4. UFRF Changes:** The Unit Family Readiness Order is being worked on so that guidance will be clear for FROs and their Command Teams to refer to whenever they are determining how to utilize their UFRF.

Comment from Colonel Goddard – I think the \$25 per Marine issue should be reviewed further. The money might or might not be sufficient depending on the size of the Unit.

Question from Shandra Hardy - What role will MCFTB now play in the processing of UFRF funds?

Answer from Michael Jackson – MCFTB will only serve as a liaison to AMO. We will not be in the business of approving or denying requests. However, it needs to be understood that the FRO and their Command will bear the burden of working with the MSC Comptroller or MSC SJA to determine if a request fall within the parameters of what is “acceptable.” If advice is requested on specific requests, I will be happy to provide it.

Question from Barbara Lilley – In the meantime with MCFTB still play a role in approving/denying requests?

Answer from Michael Jackson – No. This is effective immediately.

Comment from Colonel Goddard – MCFTB will still play a role until all of the Commanding Officers are trained by MCFTB on the specific guidelines regarding UFRF. So, technically MCFTB is not out of the loop all together.

Comment from Chris Ulrich – The guidance for UFRF was written vaguely on purpose in order to allow flexibility in how funds are spent.

Comment from Colonel Goddard – COs just don’t want to feel boxed in with money that is ours to spend.

Comment from Sergeant Major Fierle – We do want to stay within the parameters of what is legal.

5. Family Readiness Day Expo: The Expo had 835 participants. The commercial was released last night. The event was a huge success and we are hoping to surpass what we accomplished this year at the next year’s Expo. Thank you again for your participation.

6. Team Building Workshop: After MARFORPAC released a survey to gauge the status of our FROs and MCFTB staff, a 56 page report was produced with the results. Based on these results, it was determined with the help of Mrs. Robling and the III MEF FRO, Denise Loftesnes, that we would have a team building function.

Comment from Denise Loftesnes – In conjunction with Mrs. Robling it was decided that we would have a get-together to celebrate our positions and learn to trust and work well with each other. We are bringing in a surprise guest of honor to help make the event fun and exciting for everyone.

Comment from Mrs. Robling – We are very excited to bring this opportunity to you all.

7. Quantico Family Readiness Conference Update: The conference was conducted on 2 November. Manpower Reserve will continue to review the reimbursement process for volunteer mileage. Pendleton is specifically having a problem with this issue because most of their volunteers travel a great distance from their homes to the base and back. The Family Readiness Assessment Tool (FRAT) is still on hold for MARFORPAC, however, the rest of the Marine Corps has moved forward with utilizing the survey tool. A survey was sent out to Commanders on potential enhancements to the FRAT. Headquarters is working on bringing in experts to be a part of the Course Curriculum Review Board to look over our training materials and make improvements to them. There will be more information on this in the near future. Little discussion was provided regarding the “Voice of the Volunteer.” The Rosetta Stone tarp updates were provided. They also reviewed the statistics regarding former Marines and their unemployment numbers within the national unemployment rate.

8. Command Suite Equipment: Headquarters agrees that the provision of MCCA equipment should be provided for Family Readiness Functions as a best practice Marine Corps wide.

Comment from Mrs. Robling – They are trying to make these items free of cost for everyone.

Question from Col Goddard – Are we in Okinawa going to be expected to share with other stations like Guam? We need to know that information and we need you (Michael Jackson) to look into that.

Question from Deb Sparkman – Have any decisions been made regarding what events will be MCFTB or the Commands expense to host?

Answer from Michael Jackson – There is still no formal guidance regarding this decision, but I imagine that we will receive that guidance by the end of the year.

Comment and Question from Deb Sparkman – The \$25 is sufficient for those areas within the Marine Corps where events such as Pre-Deployment Briefs are hosted by MCFTB with regards to expenses for food and childcare. Is that going to be taken into consideration especially with holiday events coming up? We are all going to be looking for additional support such as sponsorship.

Comment from Michael Jackson – Remember that sponsorship has to be requested 90 days in advance and the items provided are only “in kind” at this time.

Question and Comment from Mrs. Fox – Are issues going to be addressed such as the lack of use for the MCT? We feel sometimes that our issues are not being heard.

Comment from Denise Loftesnes – Word is being passed to HQMC that this tool is not user friendly. However, we need to have someone actually use it in order to legitimately make a complaint.

Comment from Mrs. Fox – We have FROs who are attempting to use the tool. I understand that sometimes FROs are making excuses for their lack of use, but there are some legitimate complaints about the system simply not working.

Comment from Col Goddard – Beth Freeman spent hours attempting to use the tool to futility.

Comment and Question from Denise Loftesnes – This is an item that will be on the AIRS checklist so it is advisable to all FROs that you at least attempt to use it because you will be inspected on it. Please give us your stories and personal experiences with the tool so that we can take these issues to HQMC. Has anyone successfully used it?

Comment from Tolondra Johnson – It works great for me. I have about 200 Marines loaded into the system.

Comment from Denise Loftesnes – The smaller units have more success with the tool, but the larger units of 1500 plus Marines are having a more difficult time.

Comment from Mrs. Robling – A lot of FROs are utilizing their deputy FRO to input their information into the tool.

Question from Mrs. Goddard – What is the training involved in being a Deputy FRO?

Comment from Michael Jackson – It is the same training that the FRO goes through.

Question from Chris Ulrich – Can anyone receive the training?

Answer from Michael Jackson – Yes.

Comment from Stephanie Taber – A lot of assistants are willing to go through the training to input data into the MCT and remember that you do not need a CAC card to enter data into an MS Excel spreadsheet.

Comment from Cheryl Collins – Every volunteer must receive PII training in order to have access to personal information. I've found that my volunteers are eager to serve during deployments, but as soon as the Marine returns home my volunteers disappear and understandably so. Because of this I'm looking into getting an assistant.

9. **Military Spouses Residency Relief Act:** Military Spouses have a new Act that was passed on 11 Nov to allow them to change their residency to match the residency of their active duty spouse.

New Business – Marine and Family Services

1. **Military Spouse Career Advancement Account Program by Lorrie Lewis:** Everyone has received a hand-out regarding this topic. It is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) through Military One Source. It will provide military spouses with financial assistance for tuition in order to get certified in the career path of their choice. It will not cover books, supplies, fees, childcare, etc... An individual account can be established online. If a desired school is not listed on the website then there is a process that can be gone through to add that school to the list. This is a scholarship based fund, therefore, taxes will not be applied. Our local colleges are participating in this program.

Question from Barbara Lilley – Are participating spouses allowed to still participate in SOC? Yes.

Comment from Mrs. Fox – I understand that SOC is only applicable if you transfer from one SOC school to another is that true.

Answer from Lorrie Lewis – Yes, that is true.

Question from Tausha Killinger – Would spouses who are prior service qualify?

Answer from Lorrie Lewis – Yes.

2. **Holiday Food Voucher Program by Erica Vaughn:** This is open to all Marines with dependents. The rank of E5 must have at least 2 dependents and the ranks of E4 and below must have at least 1 dependent. Over 900 vouchers were given out last year, and we have already begun cutting checks for this year's program. All forms are available online. Nominations are being accepted.

Question from Denise Loftesnes – How do you go about nominating a family for this program?

Answer from Erica Vaughn – The entire process is spelled out on our website.

Question from Jacqueline Arrieta – I'm a new FRO and I would like to know how to appropriately get this word out to my families?

Answer from Tausha Killinger – I would send an e-mail out to all of your families with the specifics for the program and then have them contact their appropriate unit representative to be submitted for a voucher.

Comment from Sergeant Major Adams – These vouchers have a 6 month shelf life.

Comment from Colonel Goddard – This program is not a form of welfare. This program is very anonymous and is not considered a handout.

New Business – Additional Items

Comment from Sergeant Major Adams – Newcomer's Orientation is moving to the community center upon the closure of the Globe & Anchor. Unfortunately sponsors are not providing accurate information to new families.

Childcare is an issue at the orientation because the sponsor is not informing them of the CDC. Sponsors who are assigned to families need to have a family of their own in order to understand what a family new to Okinawa needs. As a solution to the childcare problem we are suggesting that the active duty spouse attend the initial brief and then the dependent spouse attends the next week. This is just a proposal, but serves as an example of how we are looking to improve the program.

Question from Denise Loftesnes – Have you thought about having the active duty spouse attend in the morning and the dependent spouse in the afternoon?

Question from Cheryl Collins – Have we gotten approval yet on the MSC FROs attending the orientation in order to introduce the Family Readiness Program and get families in touch with their respective FRO?

Comment from Denise Loftesnes – This issue has been resolved. The MSC FROs will be implementing this soon.

Motion from Mrs. Goddard – I would like to make a motion that Major General Krusa-Dossin approve adding an MSC FRO to the Newcomer Orientation agenda so that they can brief the families for 5-10 minutes on our program and pass along the contact information for their respective FRO.

Comment from Denise Loftesnes – I second that.

Comment from Sergeant Major Fierle – We need to present Major General Krusa-Dossin with an outline of what it going to be presented at the orientation by the MSC FRO. A deadline for topics needs to be established before this motion is sent forward. Let's establish the deadline for 15 December (**Action Item**).

Show of Hands – Unanimous vote in favor of the motion.

Comment from Nicole Morrell – I am in charge of the New Parent Support Program. We are working hard to get up and running. We are hoping to have Baby Boot Camp established by the end of the month. Right now we are focusing on home visits. Please call us at the counseling center at 645-2915 to schedule visits. We are accepting referrals for Baby Boot Camp and home visits. The explanation for the gap in the program is that the Marine Corps decided to make the program official and as with all new programs there are guidelines that need to be established. We are also wanting to get play mornings and parenting classes established. We are recruiting social workers and nurses with experience dealing with children. So if you know anyone who qualifies, please send them to the MCCA Human Resource website to apply.

Comment and Question from Mrs. Goddard – One of the challenges for this program was being flexible with the full-time/part-time status. Is MCCA willing to entertain those qualified individuals who only want part-time jobs?

Answer from Nicole Morrell – This is not an MCCA decision. This is from HQMC and their desire is to have full-time experienced applicants. Unfortunately, they are not willing to budge on these requirements. This is something that I am willing to bring up with HQMC for further consideration.

Question from Shandra Hardy – It was brought to my attention that FROs are only allowed to have toys for sponsorship. Is it possible for us to get certificates to MCCA facilities instead?

Answer from Michael Jackson – There is a summit coming up that might review that issue, but for now this is not an option.

Comment from Diana Mizell – I wanted to introduce herself as the new School Liaison Officer. There is a page online that anyone can access to find out more information about my position. Also my telephone number is 645-3205.

Comment from Colonel Goddard – I know that a lot of work went into creating the council charter. Today was more informational, but I think in the future we need to identify agenda items up front, staff them appropriately, and then have discussions about these items at the council.

Answer from Michael Jackson – Prior to every council meeting we send out a call for agenda items, we have had no agenda items submitted for the past three councils from anyone, so communication is necessary in order to accomplish this.

Meeting Adjourned By: Michael Jackson at 1036

Assessment of Meeting: Well Received

Minutes Submitted By: Mandy Davis

Next Council Meeting: Michael Jackson asked the audience to remain flexible with the next council meeting.

Michael F. Jackson
1 Dec 2009

Minutes Approved By: Michael Jackson