

High Country Chapter, MOAA

Secretary's Report – Board of Directors Meeting

September 1, 2026

South End Brewing, Boone, North Carolina

Attendance

Present In Person:

Frederick “Fred” Schmitt, CAPT, USCG (Ret)

Adam Greene, LTC, USA

George Brudzinski, LtCol, USMC (Ret)

David Hollis, LTC, USA (Ret)

Lisa Ninnis, MAJ, USAF (Fmr)

Dinah Pinney, MAJ, USAF (Ret)

Present via Zoom:

Mary “Frankie” Groff

James “Jim” Fisher, CAPT, USN (Ret)

Absent:

Melanie Trado, MAJ, USAR

Patsy Alley, Surviving Spouse Representative

With President Melanie Trado absent, First Vice President Fred Schmitt presided. A quorum was present. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation by Jim Fisher.

1. Secretary's Report

The August 2026 Secretary's Report was presented for approval.

Dinah Pinney moved to approve the Secretary's Report. Fred Schmitt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2. Treasurer's Report

George Brudzinski presented the Treasurer's Report.

The chapter received a **\$2,500 contribution from Blood, Sweat & Gears**, significantly exceeding the \$1,000 anticipated in the chapter budget and placing the chapter in a stronger financial position.

George also reviewed the financial results from the August General Membership Meeting. Thirty-nine paid guests attended compared with 35 budgeted. Following catering issues involving missing food and supplies, the Peddlin' Pig acknowledged the problems and reduced its invoice. The adjustment resulted in an approximately **\$240.51 net profit from the GMM**.

The chapter's certificate of deposit is scheduled to mature in **November 2026**.

3. Legislative Affairs

Adam Greene presented the September Legislative Affairs Update and discussed the expanded format being used to provide members with federal, state, and regional policy information.

The September update identified several significant issues for members to monitor, including the federal fiscal-year funding deadline, the Army leadership transition following the resignation of Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll, unresolved veterans legislation, MOAA's 2026–2028 resolutions, Rep. Chuck Edwards' decision not to seek reelection, the newly enacted North Carolina state budget, and regional housing affordability.

The Board discussed the limited number of members accessing legislative information through the chapter website and Facebook page. Members agreed that the Legislative Affairs product should be distributed directly to chapter members to improve readership and support timely engagement with elected officials.

The Board also discussed accompanying the detailed update with a shorter one-page summary or table of contents so members can quickly identify issues of interest.

George Brudzinski moved to authorize Adam Greene to distribute the Legislative Affairs Update directly by email to all chapter members, accompanied by a one-page summary/table of contents. Fred Schmitt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The full Legislative Affairs Update will also continue to be maintained on the chapter website as an archive and reference resource.

4. August General Membership Meeting After-Action Review

The Board reviewed the August General Membership Meeting.

Despite several catering problems, the outdoor meeting format was generally considered successful. The Peddlin' Pig apologized for the issues and provided a discount reflecting the problems with the order. The Board agreed that the vendor remained a viable option for future events of a similar format rather than discontinuing the relationship based on a single problematic experience.

The Board also discussed the advantages and limitations of outdoor venues and will continue evaluating meeting locations based on season, accessibility, parking, and program requirements.

5. October 8 General Membership Meeting

The next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for **October 8, 2026, at the Dan'l Boone Inn**. The Board agreed to continue using the upstairs private room.

George Brudzinski will distribute a **save-the-date announcement**, with additional meeting details to follow.

Efforts to secure a senior Appalachian State administrator as the featured speaker had not produced a commitment. The Chancellor had declined the October invitation, while outreach to the Provost and Vice Chancellor J.J. Brown remained pending.

Given the approaching meeting date, the Board agreed to move forward with inviting **David Jackson** to serve as the featured guest speaker rather than delay while awaiting additional responses from Appalachian State.

6. Breakfast on the Mountain

The Board discussed the New River Chapter's **Breakfast on the Mountain**, scheduled for **September 28 at 11:00 a.m. at Mount Jefferson State Natural Area**.

Information about the event will be included with upcoming chapter communications, including the October GMM save-the-date announcement.

7. American Legion Post 130 Collaboration

The Board continued discussion of possible collaboration with Boone American Legion Post 130.

Potential areas discussed included future use of the Legion facility for HCCMOAA events, mutual promotion of activities, information-sharing, recruiting, and possible future fundraising collaboration.

The Board agreed there was no immediate need for a formal arrangement. Informal discussions with Legion representatives will continue. For the foreseeable future, the Board will also continue meeting at restaurants rather than moving monthly Board meetings to the Legion facility.

The Board discussed the possibility of establishing an HCCMOAA information table at a future Legion breakfast but did not make a commitment to do so.

Subsequent Coordination

Following the Board meeting, Adam attended a Post 130 meeting and spoke with Commander Finley to better understand the organization and identify possible opportunities for cooperation.

Post 130 currently reports **118 members**, although approximately **11 members attended the meeting**. The Post has approximately **\$12,000 in the bank** and continues to face longstanding membership and participation challenges, particularly as its membership ages.

One of the more significant discussions concerned the future of **The Hut and the property**. The Post is forming a committee to consider its options, including the possibility of selling the property to the Town of Boone and leasing the facility back. No decision has been made.

The facility itself has greater usable capacity than previously understood. Without changing the existing setup, it can seat more than 50 people and already includes space configured for a head table and buffet line. This could make the facility useful for future veteran-focused meetings, programs, or collaborative events.

The Post conducts its meetings somewhat more formally than HCCMOAA, but much of its internal communication and coordination appears to occur during monthly meetings. As a result, substantive proposals involving Post 130 may be more effectively advanced by requesting placement on a future meeting agenda rather than relying solely on informal follow-up between meetings.

Adam also raised broader coordination among local veteran and military organizations and cited the use of a joint coordinating chair among military organizations in Yadkin County as one possible model. Discussion reflected limited awareness of some other veteran organizations' current activities, reinforcing the potential value of stronger communication among active organizations in the High Country.

Adam discussed possible cooperation with Commander Finley but **made no commitments on behalf of HCCMOAA**. The intent remains to build the relationship and identify practical opportunities involving outreach, visibility, recruiting, coordination, and service to the veteran community.

One correction was also identified following the Board meeting: Post 130's breakfast schedule appears to run approximately **April through October**, rather than March through November as previously understood.

8. Veterans Memorial Bench

George Brudzinski provided an update on the proposed HCCMOAA veterans bench near the Boone Veterans Memorial.

The Town of Boone has been supportive of the proposal and indicated that a separate permit would not be required for the contemplated placement. A potential location has been identified near the memorial, facing King Street between the memorial area and Town Hall.

George has requested quotes from multiple vendors. Several potential donors have also expressed interest in supporting the project.

The Board will defer a final decision until vendor pricing and possible funding sources are known.

9. Civic and Community Outreach

Adam presented the developing HCCMOAA civic and community outreach initiative.

The purpose is to increase awareness of MOAA and HCCMOAA among civic, fraternal, veteran, and community organizations throughout the High Country while identifying opportunities for cooperation.

The presentations are intended to explain:

- MOAA's national advocacy mission;
- HCCMOAA's local advocacy, fellowship, and community activities;
- The relationship between MOAA National and the local chapter;
- HCCMOAA's support for veterans, military families, scholarships, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other community activities; and
- Areas where HCCMOAA and other community organizations may have overlapping interests or service opportunities.

The presentations are **not intended primarily as membership or fundraising pitches**, although increased awareness may create future opportunities for both.

The Board supported continuation of the outreach initiative.

Adam and David Hollis are confirmed to represent HCCMOAA at the **Boone Area Lions Club meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at noon at the Lois E. Harrill Senior Center in Boone.** The presentation will use PowerPoint and will focus on MOAA's national mission, HCCMOAA's local role, and opportunities for greater coordination among community organizations.

Adam is also pursuing presentations with Rotary and other civic and fraternal organizations throughout the region. The outreach presentation will continue to be refined to reduce repetition, better explain MOAA's national scale and credibility, and allow sections to be tailored to the interests of each host organization.

The Board also discussed including a low-key opportunity for organizations wishing to support HCCMOAA programs such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and scholarships.

10. MOAA Affiliate Module

The Board discussed management of MOAA's **Affiliate Module**, formerly known as the Committee Module.

Frankie Groff currently maintains the system and will meet with Adam to review its functions, membership records, available reports, and maintenance requirements.

The intent is for Adam, as Secretary, to become familiar with the system and share responsibility for maintaining chapter information while retaining more than one chapter officer with access.

Frankie also reported that MOAA National has made available lists of national MOAA members who are not affiliated with local chapters. She will sort the North Carolina information to identify members located in **Watauga, Avery, and Mitchell Counties** for possible chapter outreach.

11. Future Membership Initiatives

Adam discussed several concepts concerning future MOAA membership and long-term organizational health.

These included exploring greater inclusion of military spouses and considering additional pathways for future officers participating in commissioning programs such as ROTC and OCS.

Adam will initially pursue these ideas with MOAA National **as an individual member rather than as a formal HCCMOAA proposal** and will provide feedback to the Board.

If any concept reaches the point where formal chapter endorsement or action would be useful, it can return to the Board for consideration.

12. Future Fundraiser

The Board held a preliminary discussion concerning the chapter's next major fundraiser, tentatively targeted for the **March–April 2027 timeframe**.

Options discussed included continuing the traditional pancake breakfast, expanding the breakfast format, moving toward a brunch, or replacing the breakfast with a spaghetti dinner or similar event.

Members discussed the success of the American Legion breakfast and whether HCCMOAA should differentiate its fundraiser rather than compete with another established breakfast program.

No decision was made.

The Board generally agreed that changes should be made incrementally rather than simultaneously changing the event format, venue, and other major variables.

The fundraiser will remain an open item for future discussion.

13. Veterans Day Ceremony

Initial planning began for the **Wednesday, November 11, 2026 Veterans Day ceremony** at the Boone Mall Veterans Memorial. The ceremony is planned for **10:00 a.m.**

The Boone Mall remains the preferred venue. However, the Board discussed ongoing skylight construction and the possibility that repairs may not be completed by Veterans Day.

Fred Schmitt will contact Boone Mall management regarding the status of the work and confirm whether the traditional ceremony location will be available. He will also begin coordination with the **Watauga Community Band**.

Alternative venues were discussed as contingency options should the mall become unavailable.

The Board also discussed the need to secure a guest speaker. Adam will pursue potential speakers with meaningful connections to military service, veterans, or the High Country.

Subsequent Speaker Outreach

Following the meeting, Adam began exploring the availability of former Secretary of the Army **Dan Driscoll** as a potential Veterans Day guest speaker. Driscoll is a Boone native, Army veteran, and former Secretary of the Army.

Adam's colleague **Ryan Reynolds**, who attended high school with Driscoll, agreed to reach out through their mutual friend group to determine whether Driscoll may be available and interested.

If Driscoll is available, HCCMOAA will follow up with additional ceremony information and a formal invitation.

14. Cemetery Veterans Decal Inspection

The Board discussed conducting an October inspection of veterans' grave decals at the cemetery in preparation for the November flag-placement period.

A Saturday date will be selected after the October 8 GMM, taking weather conditions into consideration. Volunteers will be requested from the chapter to assist with the inspection.

15. Closing

Fred Schmitt thanked Adam Greene for the research and background work supporting the Legislative Affairs program, civic and community outreach, and membership initiatives.

With no additional business requiring Board action, the meeting concluded following completion of Board business.