

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
EASTERN DIVISION
Case No.: 4:22-CV-33-BO

HANK BLAND, KENDELL)
JACKSON, LUETTA INNIS, for)
themselves and all others similarly)
situated,)
)
Plaintiffs,)
)
v.)
)
CAROLINA LEASE MANAGEMENT)
GROUP, LLC, CTH RENTALS, LLC,)
and OLD HICKORY BUILDINGS,)
LLC,)
)
Defendants.)
_____)

**ORDER GRANTING MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS
SETTLEMENT AND MOTION FOR ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS AND
PAYMENT OF CLASS REPRESENTATIVES' AWARDS**

This matter comes before this Court on Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement, ECF Nos. 106, 107, and Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Costs, and Payment of Class Representatives' Awards, ECF Nos. 104, 105.

WHEREAS, on July 24, 2025, this Court entered an Order Granting Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement, Certifying the Class for Purposes of Settlement, and Directing Notice to the Class, ECF No. 103 ("Preliminary Approval Order"), certifying the class, preliminarily approving the proposed settlement of this action pursuant to the terms of the Class Action Settlement

Agreement, ECF No. 100-1 ("Settlement Agreement" or "Settlement"), and directing that notice be given to the members of the Class;

WHEREAS, the capitalized terms herein shall have the same meaning as in the Settlement Agreement, ECF No. 100-1;

WHEREAS, the Court finds that the Class should be and hereby is finally certified as set forth in the Preliminary Approval Order and the Settlement Agreement;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Parties' plan for providing notice to the Class (the "Notice Plan"), the Class was notified by first-class mail and posting on the internet of the terms of the proposed Settlement and of a Final Approval Hearing to determine, *inter alia*, whether the terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement are fair, reasonable, and adequate for the release and whether to dismiss the Released Claims against Carolina Lease Management Group, LLC, and CTH Rentals, LLC; and

WHEREAS, a Final Approval Hearing was held on October 28, 2025. Prior thereto, on October 14, 2025, Plaintiffs submitted the declaration of Mark Unkefer of American Legal Claim Services, LLC, attesting to the completion of the Notice Plan. As is set forth in that declaration, no Class Member has submitted a request to be excluded from the Settlement and no Class Member has objected to the Settlement;

WHEREAS, the Court finds that the Wounded Warrior Project, Inc., maintains programs assisting veterans and veterans' families' financial needs

including counseling, education, and other services and its charitable work in this area has a nexus to the instant lawsuit and that Wounded Warriors Project, Inc. is an appropriate *cy pres* recipient for any unclaimed settlement funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, having considered the written submissions and after hearing oral argument at the fairness hearing on October 28, 2025, the Court hereby GRANTS Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement, ECF Nos. 106, 107, and Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Costs and Payment of Class Representatives' Awards, ECF Nos. 104, 105, for the reasons set forth therein and hereby ORDERS as follows:

1. The Court hereby finally approves in all respects the settlement as set forth in the Settlement Agreement, ECF No. 100-1, and finds that the Settlement is, in all respects, fair, reasonable, and adequate, and is in the best interests of the Verified Settlement Class.

2. The Court further finds that the mailing of the Class Notice and the other provisions of the notice plan satisfy the requirements of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the requirements of due process.

3. The Effective Date of the Settlement Agreement will be the latter of (a) the expiration of three business days after the time to file a motion to alter or amend both this Final Approval Order and the Final Approval Order entered by the court in *Carolina Lease Management Group, LLC v. Greene*, No. 21-cv-134-510 (Jones Cty. Sup. Ct., N.C.) ("*Greene*"), without any such motion having been filed; (b) the expiration of three business days after the time in which to appeal both this

Final Approval Order and the Final Approval Order entered in *Greene*, without any such appeal having been filed; and (c) if any such motion or appeal is filed, three business days after determination of said motion or appeal that allows consummation of the Settlement.

4. By reason of the Settlement, the Court hereby enters final judgment in this matter and all claims alleged by Plaintiffs are dismissed with prejudice as of the Effective Date, as defined by this Order. This final judgment is contingent on a like order being entered in *Greene*.

5. Each Verified Settlement Class Member shall be bound by the Agreement, including that each Verified Settlement Class Member releases Carolina Lease Management Group, LLC, and CTH Rentals, LLC, from any and all claims that were raised in this case, as set forth in the Settlement Agreement.

6. The Court retains exclusive jurisdiction of all matters relating to the interpretation, administration, implementation, effectuation, and enforcement of this Agreement.

7. The Court hereby orders that attorneys' fees and costs for Class Counsel be awarded in the amount of \$2,309,448.53, and awards \$10,000.00 each to Hank Bland, Luetta Inniss, and Kendall Jackson, to be paid from the Settlement Fund, in recognition of their service to the class in pursuing this action. Other than as specified herein, the Parties shall bear their own costs and expenses.

8. The Settlement Administrator, American Legal Claim Services, LLC, shall complete administration of the class by making the payments approved by this Order in accordance with the Settlement Agreement.

9. If funds remain from unclaimed or uncashed checks that are sufficient to make it economically reasonable to make a second round of distributions, the Settlement Administrator will make a second round of distributions to those Verified Class Members who cashed their initial checks. After the time expires for Verified Class Members to cash their initial distribution checks, Plaintiffs shall inform the Court of the total number of Class Members who cashed their checks and the amount remaining as undistributed funds, so that the Court can make the determination regarding economic feasibility. If the funds are insufficient for this purpose, or if any funds are uncashed after a second distribution, then the Settlement Administrator shall disburse the remaining funds to the non-profit organization Wounded Warrior Project, Inc., EIN 20-2370934, 4899 Belfort Road, Jacksonville, Florida 32256.

10. This Order is contingent upon a similar order being entered in *Greene* finally approving a class action settlement of that matter as referenced in the Settlement Agreement. Class Counsel is directed to submit a notice to the Court and proposed Final Judgment upon entry of an order approving the class action settlement in *Greene*, whereupon the Court will enter final judgment herein.

SO ORDERED, This 7 day of November, 2025.


TERRENCE W. BOYLE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE