

**ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES  
MINUTES**

Skype Audio  
+1 (808) 829-4853, 464258226# (Dial-in Number)  
**Friday, May 1, 2020**  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

Board Members: Ms. Ann Greenlee, Chair  
Ms. Bridget Komine, Vice Chair  
Mr. Michael Lilly  
Mr. Clay Park  
Mr. Harold Bugado  
Mr. Michael Lilly  
Mr. Jim Traxler  
Mr. Wilbert Pereira

OVS Staff: Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director  
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant  
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary

Ex-Officios: Dr. Kathryn Ryder, Acting Director, VAPIHCS

Guests: Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA Benefits  
CPT Shaoyu Lee, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering  
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans  
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific  
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office

Absent: Ms. Chelsea Fernandez  
Department of Health  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Oahu Veterans Center

**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CALL TO ORDER – A Moment of Silence**

Chair Ann Greenlee led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

**II. MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the April 3, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Wilbert Pereira. Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Board Members.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS**

None

#### **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

##### **Dr. Kathryn Ryder, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Pacific Island Health Care System-Medical -**

Briefed on: Status of PPE – No issue, All staff are required to wear a mask in the building, CLC working hard in case there is an outbreak, All veterans can receive their COVID test for free and if they receive a bill; they can submit it to the VA, decline in people who is seeking mental health care – Will be during more outreach

##### Questions for Dr. Ryder

1. Clay Park asked have you noticed the reporting for domestic violence with veterans? Is it up? And what are the veteran suicide numbers up again? Dr. Ryder answered in terms of domestic calls I have not heard locally in our veteran population that we're getting more domestic violence calls. (We might find that when people are returning to face to face with their providers) I will have our social workers investigate that, so we can do better outreach. In terms of suicide locally, I have not seen an increase, but we have seen an increase in calls. Our suicide prevention coordinator is working hard doing outreach.

##### **Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA– Benefits -**

Briefed on: Full telework, no date yet on reopening, but is expecting 25% of the workforce to return when that date is set. Performance targets (claims) met for the month of April, have less than 10,000 legacy appeals, looking for Voc. Rehab staff in Hilo

##### Questions for Sergio

1. Clay Park asked how long does it take the VA when they request for the veteran's records from the archive? How long does it take before the VA gets it? Sergio answered before COVID-19 it depends on what you're requesting. DD214 was pretty quick; less than a week. Right now, things have slowed down significantly so instead of a week maybe taking a month.
2. Clay said he was referring to medical records? Sergio answered he wasn't aware, but usually within one week. Depending on what kind of claims it is.

##### **Mr. Ron Han, Director, OVS -**

Briefed on: Staff doing rotational shift work, State hiring freeze, State summit possibly pushed back to 2022, 2<sup>nd</sup> round for cemetery inspection is slated for August 2020, State Veterans Home still moving forward, Cancelled Memorial Day Ceremony

##### Questions for Ron

1. Carlos Santana asked which position on the board needs to be filled? Ron answered Ann leaving her post; that's one out of Oahu, then Clay leaving his post; that's one out of Oahu, Wilbert leaving his post; that's one out of Kauai, and Chelsey leaving her post that's one out of Maui. Spoke with Michael Lily earlier we would like to have him replace Chesley on Maui. There is some interest on

Kauai from one female applicant. There have been two other formal submissions for applicants from male applicants. We would need another female applicant on Oahu if Mary Kay accepts on Kauai.

**CPT Shaoyu Lee, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering**

Briefed on: Hawaii State Veterans Home – still awaiting guidance and the project is shovel ready, West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery – non-potable water well – Cancelled due to unavailable VA funding, but is planning on incorporating this project in the expansion project, Kauai Veterans Cemetery - New Columbarium Wall – waiting on the contract execution also is simultaneously working on the Kauai expansion project with DAGs. Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches – design is ongoing

**Mr. Juan Babiak, Liaison, Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home in Hilo**

Briefed on: Revised plans for isolating any residents with COVID symptoms, 3 staff and 3 residents with negative COVID tests, falls are down for the month of April

**Director Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS-**

Briefed on: 100% Teleworking

**Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific**

Briefed on: All events for Memorial Day have been cancelled, Vietnam Veteran recognition week last month, so we are looking likely to include in the Veteran's Day timeframe, Families are choosing not to do interments at this time, which may create a backlog for cemeteries. This is due because of full-service restrictions.

**Department of Health** – Not present. No submitted report.

**Department of Human Service** - Not present. No submitted report.

**Department of Labor and Industrial Relations** - Not present. No submitted report.

**Oahu Veterans Centers-** Not present. No submitted report.

**V. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS**

1. Kauai – Mr. Wilbert Pereira – No submitted report.
2. Maui – Ms. Chelsea Fernandez – No submitted report.
3. Oahu – Mr. Michael Lilly - No submitted report.
4. Oahu – Mr. Clay Park - No submitted report.

5. Oahu – Ms. Bridget Komine - No submitted report.
6. Oahu – Ms. Ann Greenlee, Chair - No submitted report.
7. Big Island – Mr. Harold Bugado - No submitted report.
8. Big Island – Mr. Jim Traxler - No submitted report.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Legislative Committee**

- Carlos Santana added that the VA made a decision recently to eliminate the 48-hour review process on claims by accredited representatives. Next week Sen. Tester is going to introduce legislation to reinstate that to make it mandatory.

### **B. By Laws and Procedures**

No report.

### **C. Recognition and Awards**

No report.

### **D. Women’s Committee**

- a. No Report.

### **E. Project and Events Committee**

- a. Rededication of the WWII Memorial in 2020
  - NALC is committed to follow through with the project.
  - Working on quote with Jimmy H.
  - No contractor found yet
- b. Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – No Report

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

## **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **X. WORKING SESSION – OVS / Advisory Board Issues / Ideas**

## **XI. ADJOURN – 10:02am** (Clay motioned and Harold seconded)

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder  
Attachments