

**ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES
MINUTES**

Skype Audio

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Friday, June 5, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

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

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

Ex-Officios: Ms. Amy Rohlf, Representing the 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. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Officer, 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 0902 hours. Chair Greenlee introduced our newest Board Member, Mr. Blair Suzuki.

II. MINUTES

The Board reviewed the May 1, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Michael Lilly. Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Board Members.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Ms. Amy Rohlf, Representing the Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Pacific Island Health Care System-Medical

Briefed on: Cautiously reopening more on June 15th, seeing most veterans through Telehealth and phone, opened up “Park Clinic” – where you can come through in your vehicle to get prescriptions or immunizations. Masks are required for everyone. No visitors, children or service animals will be allowed. Must have a medical approved assistant when visiting the hospital; if not VHA will provide one. June 9th – Facebook Townhall

Questions for Amy

1. Blair Suzuki asked when people call for an appointment is that the first touch point of getting this information if they don't already know it or are the offices reaching out to people that have existing appointments coming up to explain this process to them? Amy answered we are calling every veteran who has an appointment directly. A live person will be giving them an update and all the protocol step by step. Veterans will be also be given a phone number to call when they check in and they can't come any earlier than 15 minutes.
2. Clay Park asked when is the new director coming? Amy answered any moment now. Congressional notification is happening.

Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA– Benefits

Briefed on: VBA is on full telework but is working on 3 phases to bring workers back. Phase 1 is to bring up to 25% of the workforce back; still no face to face with veterans. Requirement to wear a mask at all times when in the building. CMP exams – possibly starting June 15th

Questions for Sergio

1. Clay Park asked what is your percentage of people still working from home? Sergio answered 100%.
2. Carlos Santana asked is there a percentage for Phase 2? Sergio answered up to 50%. Phase 3 is when we bring everyone back in and go to what will be the new norm.

Mr. Ron Han, Director, OVS

Briefed on: OVS has brought in staff since the beginning of April and doing strictly teleconferencing for the foreseeable future. The 2nd State Veterans Home CIP project is on the governor's desk for signature. Changes with regard to the cemetery services for committal and military honors will be restarting June 9th.

CPT Shaoyu Lee, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering

Briefed on: Pacific Aviation Museum - Due to pandemic, contractors are unable to cross the bridge to Ford Island resulting in construction delays. Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery - working with VA to update their grant application to \$10 million, Hawaii State Veterans Home - project can start no later than this year, East Hawaii Veterans Cemetery - Work has been done awaiting the closeout, West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery – construction is almost complete, Kauai Veterans Cemetery – New Columbarium Wall – Construction is going to start shortly, Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches – Working with DAGs in completing the design so that the construction can start.

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

Briefed on: COVID update – signed an agreement to have clinical labs provide supplies protecting all staff and residents, Adult Day Healthcare remains shutdown

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

Briefed on: 100% teleworking through June

Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Officer, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Briefed on: Will begin committal services next week Tuesday, June 9th, Will continue military honors when available, contacting all families that did direct interments, notified all funeral homes so they can pass on the information as well.

Questions for Gene

1. Carlos Santana asked are you onsite or working from home? Gene answered I'm onsite when needed.

Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office - Present.

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

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee
 - No Report
- B. By Laws and Procedures
 - No Report.
- C. Recognition and Awards
 - No Report.
- D. Women's Committee
 - No Report.
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Rededication of the WWII Memorial in 2020
 1. Still trying to find a vendor that would fix the lettering. Jim Hisono is still working on it. Bridget asked the board if they want to move forward with the project before the National Association of Letter Carriers comes in 2021?
 2. Bridget motioned to have a discuss and Clay seconded.
 3. During the discussion, Ann recommended the Board not put it off until 2021. She proposed giving Mr. Hison another 4-6 weeks to find a vendor. If not, we develop a plan that we go back to the Association of Letter Carriers and make sure they're okay with it. Develop a plan B that does not include cleaning off the names and revamping that. We get the plaque done and move forward.
 4. Harold motioned and Jim seconded Ann's recommendation.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – Still on hold until 2021
 1. Michael Lily will take the lead since Chelsea's term ended.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ron and the Board thanked all the retiring board members – Ann, Clay, Wilbert and Chelsea.

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

XI. **ADJOURN** – 10:03am

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder
Attachments