

**ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES  
MINUTES**

**Teams Audio**

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**Friday, August 7, 2020**

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

- Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair  
Mr. Harold Bugado  
Mr. Jim Traxler  
Mr. Michael Lilly  
Mr. Blair Suzuki  
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko  
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
- OVS Staff: Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director  
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant  
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary
- Guests: Dr. Kathryn Ryder, Acting Director, VAPIHCS  
Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager, VBA Benefits  
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD  
Engineering  
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans  
Mr. James Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific  
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office
- Absent: Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS  
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 Bridget Komine led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, called the meeting to order at 0901 hours.

**II. MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the July 10, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Blair Suzuki. Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Board Members.

### **III. COMMUNICATIONS**

Ronald Han explained to the new board members that they will be receiving the Oath of Office.

### **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

Briefed on: New Director starting on August 17<sup>th</sup>, increased face to face appointments within specialty care, received COVID money and used it in hiring new staff to support the CLC and hired an infectious disease doctor and other staff.

#### **Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager, representing VBA Benefits**

Briefed on: Regional office is still closed but implemented a virtual interview system. Created a call system where the veterans can leave their contact details and a benefits counselor will contact them back in two hours. Looking at ways to expand to virtual benefit briefs, Still at Phase zero so no face to face

#### **Questions for Chris**

1. Bridget Komine asked Chris to respond in writing to Blair and Reyn's questions in the advisory board report. Chris answered he will be providing a response by the next meeting.
2. Blair asked has any CARES Act money been specifically earmarked for increasing veteran services. Chris will get back to you on anything specifically. Ron also answered on the State side we haven't seen anything specifically earmarked for increasing veteran services.

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

Briefed on: Working with Punchbowl on the sensitivities to the 10-person rule that went back into effect, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the End of WWII – events are still on from August 28<sup>th</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup>, if you know any WWII veterans who would like to participate please contact me directly, 75<sup>th</sup> committee would like to sponsor them even if they are from the neighbor islands.

#### **Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering**

Briefed on: Pacific Aviation Museum – Balance remains at \$266K, Civil Air Patrol- Due to rising COVID cases audit pushed back to late August, Hawaii State Veterans Home – July 31<sup>st</sup> DAGS accepted delegation of expenditure authority for \$26M in general obligation bond funds for construction and equipment, West Hawaii Veteran Cemetery, Additional Columbaria Units – July 30<sup>th</sup> project acceptance notice issued and is 100% completed, Kauai Veterans

Cemetery, New Access Road- Final Design completed and project is out to bid. Bid opening date is August 20<sup>th</sup>, Maui Veterans Cemetery Gravesite Restoration – July 13<sup>th</sup> punch list for Phase 4 and Alternate #1 sent to contractor. Contractor to fix punch -list items and maintain grassy areas for 90 days until September 28, 2020, Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches – July 14<sup>th</sup> final design completed and is out for bid. Bids due August 13<sup>th</sup>

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

Briefed on: Liberty dialysis had one case. A staff member traveled and came back to work without being tested. Had a meeting with Liberty dialysis to discuss their process and procedures going forward. Met with all the long-term care facilities in Hilo. Been testing staff and have weekly random testing.

**Mr. James Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific – Present. No submitted report.**

**Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office**

Briefed on: Sending out the Senator's quarterly newsletter this afternoon.

**Director Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS - Not present. No submitted report.**

**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 – Ms. Mary Kay Hertog – Report submitted. No additions
2. Maui – Mr. Michael Lilly – No submitted report.
3. Oahu – Mr. Blair Suzuki - Report submitted. No additions
4. Oahu – Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - No submitted report.
5. Oahu – Ms. Reyn Kaupiko - Report submitted. No additions
6. Big Island – Mr. Harold Bugado - Report submitted. No additions.
7. Big Island – Mr. Jim Traxler - Report submitted. No additions.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Legislative Committee
  - No Report
- B. By Laws and Procedures
  - Vacant
- 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. Bridget contacted National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) about their funding, and they are still willing to finance any efforts the Board come up with.
    2. The plaque requirement is pared down and the only requirement is the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) take care of the plaque at this time
    3. Could not find a suitable contractor to do the meticulous work needed to bring out the names on the memorial.
  - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
    1. No Update

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

## **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

Position/ Committee	Name
Chair	Bridget Komine
Vice Chair	Blair Suzuki
By Laws and Procedures	Reyn Kaupiko/ Mary Kay Hertog
Legislative Committee	Michael Lilly/ Blair Suzuki
Recognitions and Awards	Harold Bugado/ Jim Traxler
Women's Committee	Bridget Komine/ New Oahu Member/ Mary Kay Hertog
Project and Events	Blair Suzuki

- Harold Bugado motioned to nominate Bridget Komine and Blair Suzuki as the Chair and Vice Chair. Jim Traxler seconded. Motion unanimously accepted by the Board Members.
- Blair Suzuki motioned to nominate Reyn Kaupiko as By Laws Committee Chair. Bridget Komine seconded. Motion unanimously accepted by the Board Members.

**XI. ADJOURN – 9:41am**

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder  
Attachments