

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio

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Friday, September 4, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

- Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. Harold Bugado
Mr. Jim Traxler
Mr. Michael Lilly
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: Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Representing the Director, VAPIHCS
Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA Benefits
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii
DOD Engineering
Mr. David Astin, Administrative Officer, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office
- Absent: Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans
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 0902 hours.

II. **MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the August 7, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Jim Traxler. 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 September is Suicide Prevention month, Get the flu shot – is very important this year, September 9 -10 – Virtual Statewide Conference (Homelessness Veterans)

Questions for Amy

1. Yolanda Ehere asked Amy what's the latest procedure for getting an ID card? Amy answered Army Garrison - Leilehua Golf Course.
2. Mary Kay Hertog asked if the flu shot information applies to all the Hawaiian Islands. Amy answered Yes – Region 4.
3. Clay Park asked for the ID Cards is that only for the veterans or spouses as well? Amy answered that depends if they are the caregiver. If so, they (spouse) will need a controlled access pass (CAP Card).

Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, representing VBA Benefits

Briefed on: Hired Vocational Rehab Counselor in Hilo, Still closed to face to face appointments, Virtual interviews in July were 833 - please encourage veterans to utilize the virtual interviews.

Questions for Sergio

1. Bridget Komine asked Sergio if an active duty service member passes away from COVID would that be consider a service-connected disability and would his dependent spouse be able to apply for the Disability Indemnity Compensation? Sergio answered yes, the spouse would be able to apply. As for service-connection is granted for permanent disabilities, unless there are some residuals from COVID that are permanent.

Mr. Ron Han, Director, OVS

Briefed on: 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the End of WWII – Thank Jim Traxler! Veteran's Day for Oahu – planning to go more virtual. More details to come.

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

Briefed on: Kauai Veterans Cemetery, New Access Road- Bid opened date on

August 20th. 7 bids received and 6 within budget (\$5.4M) DAGS is vetting bids. Kauai Veterans Cemetery – New Columbaria Wall – Construction is 75% completed and is expected to be completed by late September. Maui Veterans Cemetery Gravesite Restoration – August 28th Phase 4 accepted and contractor relived of maintenance of grass in Phase 4 area. Approved contractor's request to install concrete pads beneath where difficult to grow grass. Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches – August 13th construction bids opened, and 7 bids received and all within budget (\$1.3M) DAGS is vetting bids.

Mr. Juan Babiak, Liaison, Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home in Hilo – Not present, but Ron Han gave update

Briefed on: State's first and only Veteran's Home is getting hit hard with COVID, In the last two weeks this started with a random check. Since March, they have lockdown visitors and the daycare center. There is constant testing.

Mr. David Astin, Administrative Officer, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Briefed on: Continuing the interments under new lockdown order, more to follow on Veteran's Day celebration

Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office – Present. No Report.

Director Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS - Not present, Chair Bridget Komine gave update

Briefed on: Veteran unemployment rate was down from 8% to 6.6%

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
 - 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. Ron said DAGS is on working on the estimates for the plaque.
 2. Follow up will happen this afternoon.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 1. No Update

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

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

None

XI. ADJOURN – 9:43am

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder
Attachments