

## ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio  
+1 808-829-4853, 326 840 272# (Dial-in Number)  
**Friday, October 2, 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: Dr Adam Robinson, Director, VAPIHCS  
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. 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. 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 0900 hours

#### **II. MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the September 4, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Mary Kay Hertog. Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Board Members.

### **III. COMMUNICATIONS**

None

### **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

#### **Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits**

Briefed on: Finished Fiscal year 2020 - had an amazing year despite COVID, completed 8900 decisions, public contact team made 4800 calls. Will be submitting a request on October 12<sup>th</sup> for Phase 1 opening, but still no face to face.

#### **Dr Adam Robinson, Director & Ms. Amy Rohlfs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Pacific Island Health Care System-Medical**

Briefed on: Working collaboratively as one VA, moving forward into Phase 2 – will be able to see more veterans face to face, no walk ins still. Telehealth is recommended – 28,000 appointments so far. Prescriptions can be received by mail or drive thru.

Question for Amy

1. Clay Park asked are the social workers still going out to see veterans? Amy answered that she will put Clay in touch with the social worker.
2. Reyn Kaupiko asked if flu shots can be given at urgent cares? Amy answered yes on the outer islands due to region 4, please call ahead to see if they are participating through our Tri West. The VA brought on retail pharmacy due to COVID.

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

Briefed on: Governor's Veteran's Day celebration is cancelled, AARP planning Veterans Day Virtual Program involving all islands, thank you to the Board and HIENG for all your hard work – Received VA grants for cemeteries

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

Briefed on: Kauai Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements - On September 9<sup>th</sup> Assurances and Certifications sent to VA for grant approval (Est. \$5M), September 22<sup>nd</sup> Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs signed grant. Kauai Veterans Cemetery New Columbarium Wall – Construction complete, Final inspection scheduled for October 9<sup>th</sup>. Maui Veterans Cemetery Gravesite Restoration Phase II Project – Construction complete. Awaiting close out documents and final invoice. Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches - On September 9<sup>th</sup> Assurances and Certifications sent to VA for grant

approval (Est. \$1M), September 22nd Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs signed grant. Received a grant for Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery.

#### Question for Wade

1. Mary Kay Hertog asked who does she need to speak with about the redesign that would have to be completed because the design was for \$6M? When will a contractor be selected? Wade answered the \$5M is based upon the bids from the contractors and the selection should be next month.

#### **Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans**

Briefed on: Welcome Dr. Robinson and Thank Dr. Ryder for their support. As of this morning, all of the residents have recovered.

#### Questions for Juan

1. Blair Suzuki asked when does the future management board going to look like? Is there going to be a spot for OVS or the veteran community? Juan answered the Board of Directors is made out of the community members . It includes medical staff as well.
2. Clay Park asked are you contracted by the VA to take care of veterans? Juan answered the process for the state veterans' home is the VA provide 65% of the funding for the construction and per diem for ongoing care. The state veterans' home must follow VA regulations in regard to quality of care.
3. Reyn asked about the board when the other state veteran home is built will there be two separate boards. Juan answered he and Ron were having that discussion.

**Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS** - Not present. Report submitted

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

Briefed on: 4 to 6 services a day with 10 family members max, DOD still providing Honors, restarting interments this weekend, Veteran's Day is going virtual (more to follow), Construction – got approval. Will start in one year

#### Question for Jim

1. Clay park asked are there any restrictions on visiting family members? Jim answered no. (Just follow the COVID guidelines)

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

Briefed on: Passed Mental Health Care Improvement Act –

Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019. Sent a letter to Governor Ige regarding Care Act stimulus and transparency.

**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 – No submitted report.
2. Maui – Mr. Michael Lilly – Report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu – Mr. Blair Suzuki - Report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu – Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - No submitted report.
5. Oahu – Ms. Reyn Kaupiko, Chair - 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
    1. Jim Hison came back with an estimate on the plaque. Jim doesn't want to post the plaque on the memorial itself. He feels it will cover the names.
  - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – No Report

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

Bridget will draft a letter inviting agencies to the meeting.

(Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Oahu Veterans Center)

**XI. ADJOURN - 10:12am**

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder

Attachments