

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, November 6, 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

Guest Briefers: Dr. Adam Robinson, Director, VAPIHCS
Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Representing the Director, VAPIHCS
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
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office

Absent 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**
Mary Kay Hertog led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Chair Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours

- II. **MINUTES**
The Board reviewed the October 2, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Blair Suzuki. 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: Considering reopening to the public starting on Nov. 30th by appointment only. This will be a very controlled group at first. Virtual interviews are picking up; will be placing an ad in the newspaper to improve it even more. The Virtual Benefits Workshop planned for Hawaii is tentatively scheduled for 12/8/20.

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

Briefed on: Good News – The Aloha Project which is the Aloha Clinic major lease project will be awarded in December. The new 66,000 sq. ft. clinic will be located in West Oahu. Beneficiary travel service self service system is now online. This is a way for beneficiaries to submit their receipts and claims virtually. Their refunds will be expedited; it will take about 5 days. Flu shots and COVID testing can be done via drive thru; please call ahead. New Veteran Orientation is now virtual. November 7th from 9am to 1pm there will be a veteran service event at the Waialua Community Center - 66-434 Kamehameha Hwy, Haleiwa, HI 96712.

Question for Dr. Robinson and Amy

1. Clay Park asked has anyone from the Cohen Veterans Network and those in charge contacted the leaders of the VA mental health? If yes, do you believe the veterans will receive quality services? Is there any plan in place to evaluate the services?
2. Clay Park also asked did anyone notify veterans about Delta Dental?
 - Dr. Robinson will get back to Clay with all the answers and brief the board next meeting. Ron will provide some information to Amy about the Cohen Veterans Network as they were at the Veterans Summit 2019.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Still no face to face – all telehealth appointments, good responses for VA cemetery grant approvals, Governor's Veteran's Day ceremony officially cancelled, Virtual concert in partnership with AARP will be held on Nov. 28th at 5pm with Henry Kaponu as the live entertainer – Will be on Zoom and YouTube

CPT Shaoyu Lee, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering

Briefed on: Grant Pre-Applications – Submitted two grants this past summer and both got funded – Maui Veterans Cemetery & Kauai Veterans Cemetery. Also put in an application for West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery awaiting the state match. Grant in Aid Projects – Civil Air Patrol – Due to COVID, audit suspended until further notice. Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Oahu – Payment issued in October 2020 and there is still a remaining balance. HSVC Upgrades and Improvements – Received notification and will be moving forward. Project Kick-off meeting is scheduled for December 15th. Hawaii State Veterans Home – October 6th – Construction award letter sent to Nan. Inc. Total lump sum bid price is \$75.5M. On October 23rd, Provided Certificate of Need (CON) application comments to DAGS. DAGS and consultant working on completing application. West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery- On September 30th, this project is ranked #57 – Group 2 on VA 2021 Priority List. Est. VA grant is \$4.9M and HIENG requested State match. Kauai Veterans cemetery, New Access Road – October 26th, Low bidder (TCG) letter of protest was sustained. TCG will be awarded construction contract. Kauai Veterans Cemetery – New Columbaria Wall - October 27th final inspection was held. Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches – October 12 the award letter for construction issued to F&H Construction.

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

Briefed on: Management contract changing on January 1st, Memorial service scheduled on November 11th for the families that lost loved ones due to outbreak, CMS – due expect to be designated as a focus survey facility.

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

Briefed on: Grants for Homeless Veterans – if anyone knows a veteran that is at risk or in jeopardy of being homeless in the next 60 days – HVRP grants can help with that.

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

Briefed on: Major construction planned for 2021 improving roads, electrical system, water system, new restrooms, etc. No public ceremony for Veteran's Day, very important restrictions for funerals – only 10 family members or friends, must use face covering and adhere to social distancing rules. Only have one in-ground casket gravesite available.

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office

Briefed on: Tracking the Aloha Project, Newsletter will be out today

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 - No submitted report.
6. Big Island – Mr. Harold Bugado - Report submitted.
 - 3 events that will be happening on Veteran's Day. (November 7th at 10am - Veteran's Day Parade, 11am -Virtual Veteran's Day ceremony broadcast from Hilo Veterans Cemetery #1, 1pm - Virtual Veteran's Day ceremony at Kilauea Military Camp)
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. Ron will try to reconnect with the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) to get the quote requirements and keeping it outside of the actual memorial itself.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 1. Ron said once the Maui project is completed there will be a dedication event for all of the projects that were accomplished.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Blair Suzuki asked if the letters were sent out for the departments that haven't been showing up? Ron answered letters have been drafted but need to get all the department heads information. Hopefully can be put together next week.

XI. ADJOURN – 10:01am

Harold Bugado motioned to adjourn seconded by Mary Kay Hertog.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder
Attachments