

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
+1 808-829-4853, 995122965# (Dial-in Number)
Friday, December 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
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
Capt. Shaoyu Lee, Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii
DOD Engineering
Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of
the Pacific
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office

Absent: Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Dr. Adam Robinson, Director, VAPIHCS
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

Michael Lilly led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Chair Bridget Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. MINUTES

The Board reviewed the November 6, 2020 minutes. Harold Bugado motioned to accept seconded by Mary Kay Hertog and Michael Lilly. 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: VA benefits cannot open yet; looking at December 14th as another possible date to move into Phase 1. Operations has not stopped but would like to have some face to face with veterans who can't reach us, On Tuesday, December 8th at 4pm, first virtual benefits workshop for entire Hawaii through WebEx.

Suggestion to Sergio Chao

1. Michael Lily suggested that everyone should get the word out about My Healthy Vet. Veterans can use it to upload their secured documents. Amy Rohlfs will also get the word out.

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

Briefed on: Movement on the Aloha Project - anticipated mid 2023 opening, temporarily moving PRP program into 6 beds into the CLC, New Tele Urgent Care expansion started December 1st, COVID-19 vaccination is coming – just a matter of logistics. There will be a Facebook live townhall. Radio program updates with Rick Hamada– will be at 5:30pm on Tuesdays.

Questions for Amy Rohlfs

1. Mary Kay Hertog asked Amy is there any progress on VA giving or administering COVID 19 test when traveling for appointments? Amy Rohlfs answered that is the trusted partner. Dr. Ryder has been working with the State. The VA must be nationally a trusted partner; not just local.
2. Mary Kay Hertog asked about the community care network. How long is it taking to process the paperwork, so that veterans can continue to see their providers? Amy Rohlfs answered our community care network has been transferred to Care in the Community. The number is 1.800.214.1306 ask for the care in community. Because of the Care Act, veterans must know that they can only have one Primary Care Physician (PCP). They can't have one at VA and one in the community.
3. Ron Han asked about the follow up questions Clay Park posed from the last meeting about the Cohen Center and Delta Dental. Amy Rohlfs answered unfortunately, we do not refer our veterans to Cohen Center. When the VA can provide that service; they are not referring them out into the community. Delta Dental - the VA provides dental to our 100% veterans. We do have a way for our veterans (it's online and will share that link) can register online for a discounted dental plan through Delta Dental.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Thank you to everyone for a successful Henry Kaponu concert!!!
Asked by the Center for Women's Veterans to help with their campaign "I Am Not Invisible Hawaii" – Photoshoot with about 30 women, Hired New Cemetery Operations Manager – Robert (Rob) Lee will start on February 1st. No face-to-face appointments; by telephone or virtual. The blessing for the 2nd State Veterans Home will be in January/February 2021 virtually.

Capt. Shaoyu Lee, Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering

Briefed on: Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum Project – Blessing and ground-breaking was held on November 14, 2020. Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery Upgrades and improvements – scheduled for a kickoff meeting with the VA in December. Hawaii State Veterans Home – on November 24, 2020 Certificate of Need Application submitted to Department of Health. West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery – Expansion and Improvements – Monitoring as it is in the Governor's budget. Maui Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements – On November 24th, DAGS provided required 21-day advance notification to the Makawao Cemetery Association. Hopefully construction will start mid-December. Maui Multi Service Center – OVS preparing department responses to US Senator Mazie Hirono's inquiries on this project.

Questions for Capt. Shaoyu Lee

1. Michael Lily asked do you have any idea where the other location for the Maui Service Center might be? Capt. Lee answered not sure, but maybe Director Han might. Ron Han answered very low-level discussion with Maui College. They are looking at State land.

Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS – Not present, but Chair Bridget Kombine briefed.

Briefed on: Veteran November Unemployment Rate is 6.3%, was 5.9% from previous.

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

Briefed on: Wreaths Across America has cancelled their year ending events. On December 18th, the Punchbowl staff will conduct a private branch of service POW & MIA ceremony on December 18th to honor the fallen. Cemetery is open for gravesite visitation.

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office

Briefed on: Senate Committee approved the Aloha Project awaiting House's approval. Senator's newsletter went out earlier this month, please let me know if you want to be added to the list.

Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans – 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 – Report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu – Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair – 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
 1. Connected with the National Association for Letter Carriers (NALC) on latest quotes. Awaiting responses.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event - No Report

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- January 2021 State Advisory Board Meeting – **Cancelled**. Michael Lily motioned and Harold Bugado seconded. Next meeting will be in February.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

XI. ADJOURN – 9:58am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Harold Bugado seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder

Attachments - None