

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio

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Friday, May 7, 2021

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
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Mr. Michael Lilly
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
- 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, Public Affairs Officer, 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
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director,
Department of Human Services
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of
the Pacific
Mr. Carlos Santana - Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
- Absent:** Department of Health
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

- I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CALL TO ORDER -A Moment of Silence
Roxanne Bruhn 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 March 5, 2021 minutes. Michael Lilly motioned to accept the minutes and Blair Suzuki seconded. The Board reviewed the April 9, 2021 minutes. Bridget Komine found one error (duplicate question) on Page 2 Question 2 under Questions for Chris McNair.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Letter from Congressman Case addressed to Bridget mentioned under concurrent receipt about feedback received from her and many constituents regarding the cosponsoring of H.R. 303, H.R.333 and H.R. 1282 For the record, she did not provide any feedback.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: Virtual interviews and face to face interviews by appointment only are still ongoing. Last month (April) exceeded 1000 interviews. This is Public Service Recognition Week and wanted to recognize VA staff, Ron Han, and the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery.

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

Briefed on: COVID Vaccine update - 12,251 for veterans and staff as of April 26th, Vaccine Events - May 15th Ke'ehi Lagoon and May 19th Laie Foodland Parking Lot

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Moving forward to the next legislative year, budget also moving forward but has not been signed off yet, Will be filling one counselor position here on Oahu, there will be a virtual State Veteran's Summit in partnership with MRP in June. On Memorial Day, there will be a concert with the 111th Band and Blessing and Groundbreaking for the 2nd Veterans Home.

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

Briefed on:

- Pacific Aviation Museum (PAM) (Learning Laboratory) - April 2021, MOA Supplemental No. 3 (12-month) extension to lapse 6/30/2022 approved.
- HSVC Upgrades and Improvements -April 15, 2021: 65% design review conducted virtually. April 22, 2021: Request for Concurrence on Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act Determination sent to Office of Hawaiian Affairs and O'ahu Island Burial Council.

- Hawaii State Veterans Home, Oahu - April 8, 2021: Notice to Proceed issued to Nan, Inc. for the ordering of approved materials. April 8, 2021: Notice to Proceed issued to Nan, Inc. for Grading Work. Authorization to Proceed is April 12, 2021. Computed Overall Completion Date is April 11, 2023. April 22, 2021: Virtual Pre-Construction Meeting Held. April 26, 2021: Start date for healthcare coordinator, Tommy Driskill. April 26, 2021: Meeting w/ HHFDC, DOD, B&F, DAGS to discuss project/ project terms. May 4, 2021: Weekly OAC meetings conducted by construction manager Bowers & Kubota
- West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery, Additional Columbaria Units -April 27, 2021 -VA (Tom Paquelet} approved contractor's (Kaikor Construction} final invoice for project. Contractor to receive final payment within 2 weeks. Final reimbursement (admin fees, etc.) and grant close-out request shall be submitted to VA in the future.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches - April 21, 2021: Notice to Proceed Issued to F&H Construction. Authorization to Proceed Date is May 03, 2021. Computed Completion Date is December 08, 2021. Contract Amount is \$787,000.00. April 29, 2021: County of Maui approved DAGS's request for exemption from building and plumbing permitting requirements.

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

Briefed on: Next Wednesday will be 14 days post since one of the staff tested positive for COVID at Kaiser for an unrelated reason. On Monday, we are scheduled for our 3rd round of COVID testing for residents and staff. Providing all testing is negative, we will accept new admissions again on Wednesday.

Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director, Department of Human Services

Briefed on: Due to the pandemic, General assistance was reduced because there was not enough money for everyone that was applying. It is state-funded and it has been restored as of May and June. There will be retro pay for those who had their benefits reduced. Emergency Broadband Benefit- more information to come.

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

Briefed on: Veteran's unemployment rate for April is 5.2%.

Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Briefed on: Administration building is still closed. All the planning for interments is done virtually via phone, email, or fax. We have opened the public information center because visitors are coming back. Memorial Day - there will be a virtual ceremony, but

the Boy Scouts will be placing flags throughout the cemetery. When we started disinterment's there were 388 unknowns, but 350 have been identified.

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

Briefed on: Veteran's State Summit planning continues - the current plan is 6 weekly sessions starting on June 22nd with each being 60-90 minutes long with different topics. VA Home Loan Guarantee Program - If your home is destroyed by a natural disaster, you won't have to pay the higher rate, but you will get the first-time home buyer's rate.

Department of Health - Not present. No submitted report.

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations - Not present. No submitted report.

V. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted. 1 update
 - Veteran Russell Maeda was selected as Kauai County Outstanding Older American. He was selected because of all his volunteer work.
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 - No submitted report.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.
7. Big Island - Mr. Harold Bugado - Report submitted. No additions.
8. Big Island - Mr. Jim Traxler - Report submitted. No additions.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee
 - Nothing to add
- 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 WW11 Memorial
 1. Plaque has been approved and is being manufactured now.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event - See Wade Ishii's Brief on page 3.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- John Bond emails - Interest in Kalaeloa. The Board agreed to send a written correspondence to Mr. Bond. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to respond to Mr. Bond in written correspondence and Roxanne Bruhn seconded.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS - None

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Harold Bugado last meeting in June.

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

- The Board will discuss what information is needed from each agency and the purpose for asking for it.

XI. ADJOURN -10:29am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Harold Bugado seconded.

Yolanda Ehere- Recorder