

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, August 6, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Jim Traxler
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn

OVS Staff: Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant

Guests: Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA Benefits
Dr. Adam Robinson, Director, VAPIHCS
Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Public Affairs Officer, VAPIHCS
Capt. Shaoyu Lee, Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii
DOD Engineering
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
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

Absent: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Michael Lilly
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Department of Health
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CALL TO ORDER – A Moment of Silence

Blair Suzuki led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Vice Chair Blair Suzuki called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. MINUTES

The Board reviewed the June 4, 2021 and July 2, 2021 minutes. Roxanne Bruhn motioned to accept the June 4, 2021 minutes and Jim Traxler seconded. Roxanne Bruhn motioned to accept the July 2, 2021 minutes and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: Outreach travel to the neighbor islands has been postponed until September due to the increasing number of COVID cases. Secretary (interim) finally ruling on exposure to particular matters in the Gulf War went into effect on August 5, 2021. The Honolulu office was able to grant 30% to a deserving Afghanistan veteran that served in 2011.

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

Briefed on: Support of services for veteran families and for homeless veterans. It is a program for homeless veterans. VA Pacific Islands has received several millions of dollars in grants. US Vets was awarded \$2.9 million, Catholic Charities was awarded \$557K and West Care Guam was awarded \$297K. If you haven't received your vaccine, please call 18002141306 to make appointment. There will be a new Windward VA outpatient clinic will be opening in the Fall. It's going to be in the Castle Medical Building in Kaneohe.

Questions for Dr. Adam Robinson:

1. Carlos Santana asked Dr. Robinson will the lab at the windward location be connected IT wise to the Matsunaga location? Dr. Robinson answered yes.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: The state hiring freeze has been lifted. All state employees are being asked to get vaccinated or test weekly. There are some exceptions. Veteran's Day ceremony is cancelled. Cemetery audits – There will be a hands-on training most likely at the Kaneohe site for all cemetery staff and county personnel.

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

Briefed on:

- Pacific Aviation Museum - Final request of the balance of the GIA has been submitted for reimbursement.
- Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum - Pending Final Report to close the GIA.
- HSVC Expansion and Improvements - July 15, 2021: Allotment Request for the State \$1.0 million has been approved for HSVC Expansion project. August 5, 2021: Bids opened at 2pm for this project.
- Hawaii State Veterans Home - July 9, 2021: DOD submitted comments to HHFDC for the ground 65 years ground lease between HHFDC and DOD. Pending HHFDC review and comments. August 4, 2021: Per July 2021 month report, project is approximately 15% completed. August 5, 2021: Artwork Kickoff meeting with State Foundation on Cultural and the Arts.
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, New Access Road, Expansion and Improvements - DAGS Kauai District coordinating w/ County of Kauai to have contractor relocate irrigation lines. This will be a change order to the project. August 5, 2021: Construction is ~55% complete.
- Lanai Veterans Cemetery Upgrade and Improvements - July 21, 2021: Final payment request for this project anticipated soon. No payment to be made to contractor as liquidated will be assessed and these LDs will take the contractor's remaining contingency.

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

Briefed on: No residents have tested positive for COVID, but 3 staff members tested positive. This is a delta variant spread because it is in the community.

Questions for Juan Babiak

1. Ron Han asked Juan if there is anything, he needs from the Board for VA such as supplies? Juan answered that it depends on the burn rate and he will let everyone know.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add to the report.

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

Briefed on: Good news!! Our 1st \$20 million project up for bid. Expect start to be 1st of the year. Veteran's day is still tracking but depends on the latest COVID restrictions. 4 ceremonies set for September but will likely be cancelled due to COVID.

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

Briefed on: Summit - will start meeting with the full planning team in the next month or two to plan the next one and go over the comments from the hot wash.

Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS – Not present. No submitted report.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

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

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai – Ms. Mary Kay Hertog – Report submitted. No additions.
2. Maui – Mr. Michael Lilly - Report submitted.
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.
7. Big Island – Mr. Jim Traxler – No submitted report.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee
 - No Report.
- B. By Laws and Procedures
 - No Report.
- C. Recognition and Awards
 - No Report.
- D. Women's Committee
 - Trying to get the team together in August
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Rededication of the WWII Memorial - No Report.
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – On Hold

VI. NEW BUSINESS - None

VII. OLD BUSINESS - None

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

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

X. ADJOURN – 10:08am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Jim Traxler seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder