

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio

+1 808-829-4853, 401 950 875# (Dial-in Number)

Friday, September 3, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

- Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Jim Traxler
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Donna Shimizu
- 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
Ms. Thandiwe Nelson-Brooks, Executive Assistant, VAPIHCS
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. Nicole Gray – Representative Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative
- Absent: Mr. Michael Lilly
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
Department of Health
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

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

Chair Bridget Komine 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 August 6, 2021 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the August 6, 2021 minutes and Jim Traxler seconded.

III. **COMMUNICATIONS**

Letter from U.S Representative Ed Case was acknowledged.

IV. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

Briefed on: Still meeting with Veterans virtually and face to face, Had first Survivor's Benefit workshop - 27 attended, No outreach travel due to COVID restrictions

Ms. Thandiwe Nelson-Brooks, Executive Assistant, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Pacific Island Health Care System-Medical

Briefed on: Grant per diem program – Awarded \$1.4 million in grants to US Veteran's initiative in Honolulu starting in September. This grant provides funding for transitional housing and supportive services for veterans that are experiencing homelessness. Launched a new website on August 25th to meet the needs of the veterans, 3rd dose of COVID vaccine available now.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Hiring for a Counselor position on Kauai, Progress is being made on the 2nd Veteran's Home

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

Briefed on:

- Pacific Aviation Museum (PAM) (Learning Laboratory) - Final request for the balance of the GIA has been paid.
- Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, Oahu - Final Report has been submitted.
Closed
- HSVC Expansion and Improvements - August 26, 2021: DAGS confirmed that low bidder for this project is T. Iida Construction. Federal grant amount to be \$5,901,475 for this project. Base bid and all alternates to be covered w/ Federal and State funds.
- Hawaii State Veterans Home - August 5, 2021: Artwork Kickoff meeting with State Foundation on Cultural and the Arts. August 26, 2021: VA approved payment 1b in the amount of \$4,172,624. August 26, 2021: Right of Entry (ROE) Agreement between DOD and HHFDC executed on August 25, 2021. ROE extended from August 31, 2021 to October 31, 2021. This will allow DOD

and HHFDC more time to execute the lease agreement. August 30, 2021: Per SFCA, Expecting approval of the Art Advisory Committee for the Veterans Home by the Board of Commissioners on September 15, 2021.

- Maui Multi Services Center - August 17, 2021: Department of Veterans Affairs issued solicitation to purchase 2-4 acres of land for a new VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic on Maui.

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

Briefed on: Activated outbreak mode – We did routine testing yesterday and one of the direct care staff tested positive for Covid. The staff is vaccinated and non-symptomatic. We are doing testing for all the residents and starting contact tracing. 2nd round of testing on Tuesday and then again on Thursday. Then it will be done twice a week until all clear again. We have reached out to the VA. 94% of staff is vaccinated.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add

Ms. Nicole Gray – Representative Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative

Briefed on: Our office received requests from veterans for assistance to get people out of Afghanistan. We are gathering information and sending it to the Department of State.

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

Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific – Not present. No submitted report.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

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

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative – Not present.

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, 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.
8. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu - First meeting

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee
 - No Report.
- B. By Laws and Procedures
 - No Report.
- C. Recognition and Awards
 - No Report.
- D. Women's Committee
 - Getting organized – OVS counselors have met with Col. Edison
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Rededication of the WWII Memorial
 1. In the process of creating the plaque
 2. After done, will be looking for a place and time for the rededication
 3. The board will be informed prior to the date
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 1. Blessing - Tentatively in early 2022

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No Governor's Veteran Day Ceremony

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

IX. ADJOURN – 10:05am

Roxanne Bruhn motioned, and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder