ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
+1 808-829-4853, 789 731 723# (Dial-in Number)
Friday, November 5, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. Jim Traxler
Mr. Michael Lilly
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Donna Shimizu

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

Guests: Mr. Sergio Chao, Director, VBA Benefits
Dr. Adam Robinson, Director, 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. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Absent: Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office
Department of Health

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 October 1, 2021 minutes. Roxanne Bruhn motioned to accept seconded by Mary Kay Hertog. 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: 7 New Hires joining on Monday including a counselor for Maui, Counselor for American Samoa is here with us this week for training, Webex workshops will continue due to COVID-19 and the next one for Oahu is November 18th, providing training National Guard service members so they can learn about their VA benefits on November 9th.

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

Briefed on: Continuing to do booster vaccines for Moderna, Vaccine (Booster) event on Saturday, November 6th at 8am. Please continue to do the public health measures, back online - The Million Veterans' Program is a VA national research program and it’s a way we get DNA samples from veterans to help learn about gene, lifestyle and military exposure effects on health and wellness. Windward Clinic opening at the end of the month.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: No physical service for Veteran's Day. We will have a small wreath laying ceremony. VA audits - November 15-17th Hilo then going to Maui, August 2022 there will be another full audit.

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

Briefed on:
- HSVC Expansion and Improvements, Oahu - October 28, 2021: DAGS notified us that TCG Construction protested the award to T. lida Construction and that DAGS's AG agreed with the TCG protest. DAGS will now award project to TCG and not T. lida
- Hawaii State Veterans Home, Oahu - October 20, 2021: Virtual meeting w/ Villages of Kapolei Association to discuss association dues from the HSVH. Art Advisory Committee Orientation Meeting scheduled for November 19, 2021. October 26, 2021: Project construction ~22% complete.
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, Phase 2B - November 1, 2021: Project construction is 78% complete.
- County of Maui - October 27, 2021: Received letter from DAGS Comptroller stating that, due to staffing shortages, their Maui District Office can no longer support the construction management of our Maui County projects.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements - Project construction is 96% complete.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches - October 1, 2021: Project construction is 40% complete.
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans

Briefed on: Had a great survey, started flu shots for residents and staff

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

Briefed on: Nothing additional to add.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Briefed on: Virtual Apprenticeship Celebration Week – November 15th -19th

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

Briefed on: November unemployment rate for 4.6% and veterans 3.9%

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

Briefed on: Veteran’s Day Ceremony will be virtual, physically starting the columbaria expansion project in December, New Assistant Director Lance started. Safety issue- homeless in the cemetery

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office – Not Present.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

V. BOARD MEMBER’S REPORTS


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  
- Chair Col. Pamela Ellison, Anne Matute, Diane Ramsey in attendance  
- Saturday, June 11, 2022 – Tentative virtual conference  
- Women Veteran’s Survey – out on November 16th  

E. Project and Events Committee  
- Rededication of the WWII Memorial  
  1. Good News!!! Friday, November 12, 2021 Ceremony  
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – Delayed  

VII. **NEW BUSINESS** - None  

VIII. **OLD BUSINESS** - None  

IX. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** - None  

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

XI. **Adjourn** – 10:31am  
Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Roxanne Bruhn seconded.  

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder  
Attachments - None