ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, December 3, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members:  Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
               Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
               Mr. Michael Lilly
               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. Katherine Kalama, Assistant Director, VA Pacific Islands Health
          Care System
          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
          Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
          Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaialii Kahele Office Representative
          Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National
          Guard

Absent:  Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
          Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
          Department of Health
          Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CALL TO ORDER – A Moment of Silence
Donna Shimizu 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 December 3, 2021 minutes. Jim Traxler motioned to accept the December 3, 2021 minutes and Roxanne Bruhn seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS
None.

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

Briefed on: Virtual Benefits Workshop on December 16th.

Ms. Katherine Kalama, Assistant Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Pacific Island Health Care System-Medical

Briefed on: December 18th – ACC COVID-19 Booster event. Veterans can call 18002141306 to schedule their booster dose or ask for information about the next booster event.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Congratulations to Reyn Kaupiko on his appointment to the VA Tribal Committee Advisory Board!!! OVS is still conducting virtual appointments.

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

Briefed on:
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, Phase 2B - December 3, 2021: Project construction is ~88% complete. November 23, 2021: Considering 4 changes requested by County. DAGS Kauai District Office has requested change order proposals from the contractor. Will seek VA approval prior to designing/constructing. Completion date for project is now January 2022.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements - DAGS and consultant looking into re-designing/extending sidewalk near memorials. This is expected to become a construction change order. December 3, 2021: Project construction ~60% complete.
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans

Briefed on: Due to staffing issues, patients were consolidated upstairs. We’re hoping to reopen to visitors in a couple of weeks. Asking all visitors to wear face masks.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add. Happy Holidays!!

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations – Office opened December 1st by appointments on Wednesdays through Fridays. Digital assessment - You can get your workforce assessed to determined how digitally literate they are. It is provided for free.

Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific – 6 events over the next few days with 150 World War II Veterans.


Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

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

BOARD MEMBER’S REPORTS

   - Is property being purchased for the veteran’s cemetery? Ron answered not at this time. East Hawaii has enough capacity. We are focused on West Hawaii for capacity issues.
COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Legislative Committee
   • No Report.
B. By Laws and Procedures
   • No Report.
C. Recognition and Awards
   • No Report.
D. Women’s Committee
   • Had a meeting on November 18th
   • Looking at the platform to hold the virtual summit
E. Project and Events Committee
   • Rededication of the WWII Memorial
     1. Ceremony held on Friday, November 12th
     2. Thank you to the National Association of Letters Carriers!!
     3. Roxanne Bruhn motioned to remove this item from the agenda
        and Blair Suzuki & Reyn Kaupiko seconded.
   • Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – No Report.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

IX. ADJOURN – 10:49am
Roxanne Bruhn motioned, and Michael Lilly seconded.

Yolanda Ehure – Recorder