

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, February 4, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

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

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, 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. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the
Pacific
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National
Guard
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative

Absent: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Ms. Donna Shimizu
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Department of Health

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

Vice Chair 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 January 7, 2022 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the January 7, 2022 minutes and Jim Traxler seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: Looking to restart outreach to the neighboring islands, On February 15th, there will be a VBA benefit workshop on Molokai and Kauai and on February 24th on Lanai.

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

Briefed on: VA is creating a new suicide prevention website (<https://www.va.gov/REACH/>) The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) announced the launch of a five-year expansion of the Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC), Medical Foster Home (MFH) and Veteran Directed Care (VDC) programs to increase access to home and community-based services. The Windward CBOC is now accepting patients. New community of care contract in American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands was awarded to Tri-West.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Hiring for Veterans Services Counselors on all islands except for Maui, Involved in Certificate of Need and Public Hearings for the 2nd Veteran's Home.

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

Briefed on:

- HSVC Expansion and Improvements - January 26, 2022: DAGS sent tri-party contract to DOD for execution. T. Iida Contracting will be contractor for this project. Contract will include base bid and all 5 additive alternates.
- Hawaii State Veterans Home - CON Presentations on January 13 and 20 approved. CON presentation for January 27 postponed to February 10. January 24, 2022: House Bill 1893 Introduced relating to the Oahu Regional Health Care System. If approved, the Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home on Oahu will be transferred to the Oahu Regional Health Care System of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation which will be transferred to the Department of Health. February 2, 2022: Informational meeting held with Villages of Kapolei (VOKA) relating to HB 1893 and how assessment negotiations should move forward.

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

Briefed on: COVID-19 testing all residents and staff on Mondays and Thursdays. As of Thursday, no residents or staff tested positive, but awaiting the results of 2 residents. 1st Floor Admission is now open.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Briefed on: Will be starting a promotional video on the success stories on veteran's who found work with the help of the American Job Center. Rapid response with the National Guard.

Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Briefed on: Outdoor gathering restrictions have been lifted. We are able to conduct military honor services. Continuing to plan for the Vietnam Veteran's Commemorative Ceremony on March 29th at 10am, Easter Sunrise Service on April 17th, and Memorial Day Service on May 30th.

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

Briefed on: Senate Veterans Affair committee is taking on legislation to expand healthcare for toxic exposure from 5 to 10 years.

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative

Briefed on: Congressman Kahele was on Kauai to meet with veterans and will be on Maui on Wednesday to meet with the Maui Veterans Council.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

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

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted.
 - Sent a letter to the Mayor a few months ago asking for another full-time employee for the cemetery since it's going to be expanding. On Wednesday, I met with the new employee.
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 Report submitted.
5. Oahu - Ms. Reyn Kaupiko - Report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.
7. Big Island - Mr. Jim Traxler - Report submitted. No additions.
8. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu – No Report submitted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee
 - Will discuss during the working session.
- B. By Laws and Procedures
 - No Report.
- C. Recognition and Awards
 - No Report.
- D. Women's Committee
 - Chair Ellison briefed
 - Meeting held on January 20, 2022
 - Mahalo to Ron Han and Carol Kanayama!!
 - Still planning for the Summit on June 11, 2022
 - Looking for keynote speaker
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 - Projecting April/May 2022 depending on work completion

V. **NEW BUSINESS - None**

VI. **OLD BUSINESS – None**

VII. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

IX. **ADJOURN – 10:40am**

Roxanne Bruhn motioned; Blair Suzuki seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder