

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, March 4, 2022
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
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
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. Amy Rohlf, Public Affairs Officer, 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. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
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. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
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 February 4, 2022 minutes. Blair Suzuki motioned to accept the February 4, 2022 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: Happy to host the first travel board since the start of the pandemic. The judge will try to come back in May depending on the number of cases. VBA outreach workshops on Molokai/Kauai on March 15th and on Lanai March 22nd

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

Briefed on: The Tripler trolley schedule changed. There will be a VA van/shuttle that will run every 30 mins at the top and bottom of the hour. There will be a temporary stop to face to face services on Molokai. Services will transition to virtual telephone and telehealth. March 10th – there will be a blood drive at the ACC.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Thank You to everyone who has submitted written testimony for various bills! The biggest one for us is the HB1893 which is the migration of the Daniel Akaka State Veterans home into the Hawaii Health Systems Corp. The initial set of committee hearings passed unanimously for the migration. Cemetery training on Oahu set up for March 28th - April 1st at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery. September 12th -16th – next Compliance Inspection.

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

Briefed on:

- Hawaii State Veterans Home - February 10, 2022: 3rd Certificate of Need (CON) public hearing session cancelled. Official CON approval letter from State Health Planning & Development Agency (SHPDA) received 2/15/2022. February 24, 2022: Briefing to DOH and Oahu Region, HHSC on project status and HB1893 concerns. Construction 37% completed through Jan. 2022.
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, Phase 2B - February 19, 2022: Request to VA for approval of 3 additional change orders relating to new irrigation system. February 23, 2022: Contractor's request to DAGS to No Cost Time Extension to 3/3/22 on project due to delay in delivery of benches and trash cans. (Original

project completion date was Oct. 19, '21.) February 28, 2022: VA approved request for 3 additional change orders. Not to exceed \$13,985.

- Lanai Veterans Cemetery Upgrade and Improvements - February 24, 2022: OVS submitted request to VA to close the grant for this project.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbarium Niches - February 11, 2022: Project construction ~95% complete.

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

Briefed on: 18 staff did test positive for COVID-19, but no one had any serious symptoms that required any special care. Thank you to the staff for doing a great job at infectious control none of it was passed on to the residents.

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

Briefed on: Staff is still working on the homeless veterans' statistics.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Briefed on: DLIR building has been open to the public since March 1st, but Wednesday – Friday is the only time walk-ins are accepted for unemployment insurance division; Monday and Tuesday are by phone only.

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

Briefed on: The state has an opening for Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist. 3.2% unemployment rate for veterans nationally, there are no state numbers available.

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

Briefed on: Columbaria expansion construction is still moving forward. Ceremonies are back in full swing.

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

Briefed on: Senate passed legislation on burn pits.

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

Department of Health – 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. No additions.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - Report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - Report submitted. No additions.
5. Oahu - Ms. Reyn Kaupiko - Report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted.
7. Big Island - Mr. Jim Traxler - Report submitted. No additions.
8. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu - Report submitted. No additions.

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 Ellison briefed on –
 - Saturday, June 11th, 2022, Women's Veterans Summit.
 - Working on the Save the Date draft with Amy
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 - Ron briefed that they have some change orders, so it will be delayed a bit.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

IX. ADJOURN – 9:51am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, Donna Shimizu and Blair Suzuki seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder