

## ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio  
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**Friday, June 3, 2022**  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair  
Mr. Jim Traxler  
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn  
Mr. Michael Lilly

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

Guests: Mr. John Lombardo, Acting 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  
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific  
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National  
Guard  
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative

Absent: Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair  
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko  
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog  
Ms. Donna Shimizu  
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS  
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

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

Jim Traxler 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 May 6, 2022 minutes. Jim Traxler motioned to accept the May 6, 2022 minutes and Roxanne Bruhn seconded.

## III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

## IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

### **Mr. John Lombardo, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits**

Briefed on: We met all our driving metrics this last month. We went over our outstanding level targets by about 51 claims and then 62 claims in April. Our Veteran Readiness and Employment (VRE) division had met outstanding level targets for both positive outcomes and job ready decisions.

Outreach events:

- June 14, 2022 & June 28, 2022 - Kona Vet Center from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- June 7, 2022 – Virtual LGBTQ+ event with central office
- June 30, 2022 – Virtual benefits workshop via WebEx

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

Briefed on: The new VA clinic will be called Daniel K. Akaka Department of Veterans Affairs community based outpatient clinic. The US Senate passed Senate Bill 1760 to rename the clinic after the late senator. The new veteran's crisis line will be active in July, and you can dial 988 and then press 1. June 11, 2022 – Women's Virtual Summit.

### **Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director**

Briefed on: New counselor Kenith Scott started here on Oahu. Also, we hired a new counselor for the Island of Kauai. Thank you to everyone who came to the Governor's Memorial Day ceremony!! The governor's challenge for the suicide prevention has finally kicked off. OVS is working with our VA counterparts as a satellite information point to acquire more information about voting registration.

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

Briefed on:

- HSVC Expansion and Improvements, Oahu - June 8, 2022: Preconstruction meeting. June 13, 2022: Date of Authorization to Proceed. Contract Completion time is 420 calendar days. Computed Completion date is August 6, 2023.

- Hawaii State Veterans Home, Oahu - May 19, 2022: Artist Interviews (Kai'ili Kaulukui). Construction 50% complete through May 2022.
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, Phase 2B - May 18, 2022: VA construction inspection. May 25, 2022: VA approved final 3 change orders.
- Maui Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements - May 17, 2022: VA construction inspection.

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

Briefed on: On Tuesday's testing we found one non direct care staff member who was positive for COVID and one positive resident that tested positive within two days in the facility. Yesterday, we had one of our new residents also a new admission who tested positive, awaiting PCR results.

**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: Hawaii has a need for 100 cybersecurity people. Veterans with high security clearance would be perfect.

**Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS – Not Present, but Bridget briefed.**

Briefed on: The regional network is conducting USA jobs in depth training tomorrow, June 4<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 PM HST. The National Veterans Training Institute came out with veteran unemployment rates today for the month of May. It was 2.9%.

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

Briefed on: Good news - construction is proceeding. Bad news - have to put up some more temporary fencing and restrictions. We just got approval for another 18 million for the next project.

**Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'I Kahele Office Representative – Present.**  
No submitted report.

**Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative – Not present.**  
No submitted report.

**Department of Health – Not present.** No submitted report.

## **BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS**

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - No submitted report.
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 - Report submitted. No additions.
5. Oahu - Ms. Reyn Kaupiko – No report submitted.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted.
7. Big Island - Mr. Jim Traxler - Report submitted. No additions.
8. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu - No submitted report.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Legislative Committee
  - No Report.
- B. By Laws and Procedures
  - No Report.
- C. Recognition and Awards
  - No Report.
- D. Women's Committee
  - Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Women's Veterans Summit.
- E. Project and Events Committee
  - 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 – 10:26am**

Roxanne Bruhn motioned; Jim Traxler seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder