

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, July 1, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Ms. Donna Shimizu
Mr. Jim Traxler
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
Ms. Amy Rohlfs, 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
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. Jim Horton, Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

Absent: Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National
Guard

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 June 3, 2022 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the June 3, 2022 minutes and Jim Traxler seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: We met all of our driving metrics again this month. As of June 20th, employees are back in the office. VBA had passed the rare cancers presumptive and then some of the environmental exposure presumptive ailments. We have processed over 30,000 of those environmental exposure presumptive claims. As of June 27th, 28,000 of those claims have been granted. It's about a 75.2% grant rate. But as of June 27th, we have received 202 claims of rare cancers that are presumptive. 162 of those are currently pending and 19 out of the 30 completed were granted which represents a 63.3% grant rate.

Outreach events:

- July 12, 2022 & July 26, 2022 - Kona Vets Center
- July 14, 2022 - US Vets event - Barbara's point
- July 14, 2022 – on Lanai
- July 19, 2022 - on Molokai
- July 28, 2022 – Hawaii/America Samoa Virtual Workshop

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

Briefed on: Kauai CBOC is closed today because of an electrical fire. On July 5th, Dennis Fujii will be receiving the Medal of Honor from President Biden. It was for his heroism during the Vietnam War. New podcast called VAPIHCS Talk Story – you can go on any podcast platform to find it. Appointments are still available face to face and virtual. Clinics are closed on Monday.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: OVS is working with our VA and our State Elections Office counterparts to use the OVS offices as satellite information points to acquire more information about voting registration. Neighbor island – please send me or Yolanda pictures from your Memorial Day events.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add.

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

Briefed on: We're on our third cycle of no new COVID positive staff or residents' cases.

**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: On Wednesday, the Department of Labor Workforce Development Division did have a closing ceremony for 2 pilot projects - Summer Youth Program and IT Internship Program.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add.

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

Briefed on: We're in the preliminary stages in trying to get inscribed markers for our graves here in a timelier manner. We're in discussions, with the national level to get a local contract put in place here on Oahu, which would then obviously make the distribution of those markers out to the other islands much quicker.

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

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

Briefed on: Some DC staff will be here in August and will be spending a day on the Big Island. We'll be reaching out to some folks on the Big Island to see what they can do to maximize their visit. The Senate passed the PACT act which expands VA benefits for toxic exposure issues. The House had passed a version previously and then sent it to the Senate. The Senate made some amendments and passed it. It now goes back to the House to see if the House agrees with those proposed amendments.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - No submitted report. No additions.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - No submitted report. 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 – No 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 submitted report. 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
 - Held on Saturday, June 11th, 2022, Women's Veterans Summit.
 - Bridget briefed - It was a very informative session.
 - Most all the sessions were presented by the VA and a lot of wonderful resources out there for women veterans.
- 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 – 10:24am

Donna Shimizu motioned; Michael Lilly seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder