

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
+1 808-829-4853, 181671097# (Dial-in Number)

Friday, August 5, 2022

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
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. Chris McNair, Acting Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits
Dr. Adam Robinson, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs –
Pacific Island Health Care System – Medical
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii
DOD Engineering
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans
Mr. Gene Maestas, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of
the Pacific
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army
National Guard
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congressman Kaiali'i Kahele Office Representative
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

Absent: Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
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

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, Chair Bridget Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. MINUTES

The Board reviewed the July 1, 2022 minutes. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned to accept the July 1, 2022 minutes and Donna Shimizu seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mr. Chris McNair, Acting Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits

Briefed on: Outreach extended to the shelters on Oahu. Front doors are opened here at Tripler. We're seeing people on both scheduled and unscheduled. 808-433-0505 is no longer a working number, please call 1-800-827-1000.

Outreach events

- Maui Vet Center Staff (Molokai) - August 25, 2022 from 9am to 1:30pm.
- Lanai Senior Center - August 18, 2022 from 8:30am to 1:30pm.
- Monthly visits to Barber's Point.

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

Briefed on: A new Tele-health Atlas site located at Ocean View Community Center on the Big Island. Traveling veteran coordinator contact number – 808-838-6591 and 808-433-0202. August is National immunization month. If you are calling 988, if you say you are a veteran when you call, you'll get with a VA responder.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: John Condello, our senior counselor for over 18 years is retiring on August 31st. Thank you to Jim Traxler and Bob Strickland in Kona for meeting with Major General Hara and Brigadier General Logan for a special visit to the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery. \$5 million project for the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery, Kaneohe is starting today (08/05/22).

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

Briefed on:

- HSVC Expansion and Improvements, Oahu - On site construction expected to start on August 15, 2022.
- Hawaii State Veterans Home, Oahu - Construction 63% complete through July 2022.
- West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery - July 29, 2022: TAG and DAG site visit with Mr. Robert Strickland and LTC Jim Traxler. OVS coordinating with Hawaii County on hours of operation and maintenance support.
- Kauai Veterans Cemetery, Phase 2B - Consultant, contractor, and County of Kauai working to resolve low pressure to newly installed irrigation system.
- Lana'i Veterans Cemetery - Reviewing possible WWII Memorial to honor the 100th Infantry Battalion by artist Wendell Kahoohalahala.

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

Briefed on: We're running into our capacity at 60 for our current census. Adjusting pay level to increase staffing.

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

Briefed on: We're continuing to hire cemetery caretakers. We have two positions that remain open. We were able to repatriate a USS Oklahoma previous unknown yesterday (08/04/22).

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

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

Briefed on: The PACT Act will be signed on Monday by President Biden.

Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director, Department of Human Services – Not present, but submitted a report.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations – Not present.
No submitted report.

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

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 - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - No 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 - 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 – Briefed by Col. Ellison
 - Next Meeting in August.
 - Possible planning for next year's 2023 summit.
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event
 - It is nearly complete. There are a couple of change order items that are being worked on, specifically the walkway for the memorials.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

IX. ADJOURN – 10:19am

Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned; Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder