

ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES

Teams Audio
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Friday, October 7, 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. Donna Shimizu
Mr. Jim Traxler
Mr. Michael Lilly
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog

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

Guests: Ms. Amy Rohlf, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands 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 Home
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director,
Department of Human Services
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: Mr. John Lombardo, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
– Benefits
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

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

Roxanne Bruhn 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 October 7, 2022 minutes. Roxanne Bruhn motioned to accept the October 7, 2022 minutes and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mr. John Lombardo, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits - Not present, but submitted a report.

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

Briefed on: Water main break at Tripler - Appointments will be rescheduled

Question for Amy Rohlfs by Mary Kay Hertog:

1. Is Doctor Robinson in the future planning to do more town hall meetings as we did pre pandemic? Amy answered We are actually we have one plan. They're going to be called **community calls** like House calls, community calls. So in addition to a group will have pharmacists, Women's Health. But we're starting this, this one in Guam at the end of the month.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director

Briefed on: Secretary of the VA Hawaii visit, Akaka State Veterans Home is 70% complete, Thanks to Jim Traxler!!! Jim tracks who got involved in a very big community service event that's happening with the US envoy on the 22nd of October.

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

Briefed on:

- West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery (\$4.9M) – Pre-application submitted Expansion and Improvements - Oct. 1, 2022: VA Notification on plans to award \$2.5M grant.
- HSVC Expansion and Improvements, Oahu - September 30, 2022: Construction ~25% complete.
- Hawaii State Veterans Home, Oahu - September 26, 2022: MMCAP Infuse! application approved. Construction ~70% complete through September 2022.
- West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery – Expansion and Improvements - October 1, 2022: Letter from George D. Eisenbach (Director, VA Cemetery Grants Program) to Ronald Han indicating that the VA plans to award a VA grant opportunity up to \$2.5M. (Grant application was for \$4.9M.) Grant Award Notification forthcoming.

- Maui Veterans Cemetery Additional Columbaria Niches - September 16, 2022. Contractor submitted Final Payment Request. Project Construction 100% Complete. VA approved reimbursement for final payment request for construction. Grant to remain open for design / administration cost reimbursement.

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

Briefed on: Yesterday, we did make some changes based on CDC guidance. We're no longer doing or requiring visitors or staff to check in at the front with temperature checks. We still are asking everybody to with symptoms to not come in and to report them and we have procedures in place for staff with regard to what they need to do.

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

Briefed on: Nothing to add to report

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

Briefed on: Veteran's Day ceremony is at 10:00 o'clock this year; about an hour later than usual. Construction is going well. We were granted \$18 million for our next project to take care of some more upgrades and then we have our roads and curbs project.

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

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative – Present. No submitted 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.
 - Veteran's Day ceremony will be held at West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery 11:00, o'clock
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 Chair Komine
 - Nothing to report. Col. Ellison is planning to contact Diane Ramsey to push out a zoom invite to actually conduct a meeting this month.
- E. Project and Events Committee
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event – Briefed by Ron Han
 - Will try to see if I can engage with Jenna Hoen and the Maui Veterans Council for deliberate planning.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

IX. ADJOURN – 10:27am

Roxanne Bruhn motioned; Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder