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Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler Army Medical Center)
459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819

Friday, May 5, 2023

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members:

Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. Jim Traxler
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Donna Shimizu
Mr. Michael Lilly

OVS Staff:

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

Guests:

Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Benefits
Ms. Katie Kalama, Assistant Director, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System
- Medical
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director,
Department of Human Services
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Absent:

Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD
Engineering
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National Guard

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 March 3, 2023 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the march 3, 2023 minutes and Jim Traxler seconded.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits

Briefed on: May 9th - Pact Act Workshop in Kona with 5 Counselors and self. Native American Direct loan program - Veterans who closed on their in ADL loan honor after March 13th will automatically receive the 2.5% interest rate for the life of their loan, and then any veterans who currently have an in ADL loan with an interest rate of 3.5% or higher are we'll be able to refinance their loan to take advantage of the lower rate.

Ms. Katie Kalama, Assistant Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Pacific Island Health Care System – Medical

Briefed on: Celebrating Nurse's Month (May), Started a campaign on May 3rd to support homeless veterans, so for the next few weeks we will be collecting donations. Pact Act registration and community call on the Island of Maui on May 12th and 13th.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director OVS

Briefed on: State Legislation ended yesterday. The RFP is out, and people are very interested about being the operator and administrator for the Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home. Preapplication award grant is in the system for the third state Veterans Home on Maui.

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

Briefed on: Not present, but report submitted.

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

Briefed on: Census is 60. We're getting a lot of admission from Hilo Medical, but they are short term. Focused on increasing sources of referrals for our building.

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

Briefed on: No additions or changes on submitted report.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Briefed on: Not present, but Chair Komine briefed. there were 28 federal agencies and 604 job seekers, including 154 veterans and transitioning service members.

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

Briefed on: National veterans unemployment rate is 2.2% while the civilian rate is 3.4%.

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

Briefed on: The first phase of our Rd paving project is completed. Port 14, called Barry and Port 14 is scheduled to be completed at the end of July, so that is good news that will provide us with another 3400 niches for urns. We continue to disinter unknowns from World War II and the Korean War.

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative - Not 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.

V. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted. No additions.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - Report submitted.
 - a. April 30th, I was a keynote speak at a candlelight vigil that done every year for the 42 Maui veterans who died during the Vietnam War.
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 - No report submitted.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee –No Report or Update
- B. By Laws and Procedures — No Report or Update
- C. Recognition and Awards –No Report or Update
- D. Women's Committee — No Report or Update
- E. Projects and Events Committee-
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event Update- Michael Lilly
 1. Still working with the county.

VII. ADJOURN – 9:45am

Michael Lilly motioned, and Donna Shimizu seconded.

Yam Yi Lee – Recorder