

**STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES'  
ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES**

Microsoft Teams meeting  
**Join on your computer, mobile app, or room device**  
[Click here to join the meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 239 352 956 170  
Passcode: cCMAp9  
[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)  
**Or call in (audio only)**  
[+1 808-829-4853,470605296#](#) United States, Honolulu  
Phone Conference ID: 470 605 296#  
Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler Army Medical Center)  
459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819  
**Friday, June 2, 2023**  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members:**

Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair  
Mr. Jim Traxler  
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn  
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:**

Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager,  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits  
Ms. Katie Kalama, Assistant Director, 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  
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS  
Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the  
Pacific

**Absent:**

Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair  
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 May 5, 2023 minutes. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned to accept the May 5, 2023 minutes and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

III. **COMMUNICATIONS**

None

IV. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits**

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

**Ms. Katie Kalama, Assistant Director, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System - Medical**

Briefed on: The primary care option is now at Spark Matsunaga, which is open on Saturdays. Our primary care clinic is open on Saturdays from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM .

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

Briefed on: Thank You so very much to all the folks that helped with their Memorial Day services throughout the state. For Jim Traxler, this more likely to be his last meeting. He's going to term out with the eight years with the state Advisory Board. He's done phenomenal work.

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

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

Briefed on: Our census is at 67 and we're staffed for 72

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

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

Briefed on: The unemployment rate went down to 2.3% for veterans versus 3.4% for the general public.

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

Briefed on: Construction is starting to wind down over here. Memorial weekend, visitation was probably medium as compared to previous years. On June 25th at 10:00, the Korean War commemoration ceremony will take place.

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

**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. 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
  - I just want to emphasize that this has been a very rewarding experience for me, and I hate to be leaving and I'm just totally impressed by the people I've been able to work with and by the support we get from OVS, but I wanted to tell Ron right now there is an application in to replace me.
8. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu - No report submitted.
  - Hilo had their first ever memorial service for the National Guard remembrance on Thursday, May 25th, and it was attended by about 60 people, and we made front page of the Hawaii Tribune Herald.

#### **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. No Report or Update

#### **VII. ADJOURN – 9:42 am**

Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned, and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder