

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

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

Friday, September 1, 2023

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

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn

OVS Staff: BG Bruce Oliveira, Interim Director
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary
Mr. Jonathan Kimura, Veterans' Services Coordinator

Guests: Ms. Donna Shimizu, Former Board Member
Mr. Andrew Hervieux, Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits
Ms. Amy Rohlfs, 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 - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Mr. David Liao, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Absent: Mr. Michael Lilly
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National Guard

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

Mary Kay Hertog led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Chair Bridget Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Colonel Ronald P. Han, Jr. passed away on Sunday, August 20th, 2023. Ron was the patriot in every sense of the word, and he led a life of service he loved and served his country in the United States Air Force and in the Hawaii Air National Guard. He will truly be missed.
- On August 30th, Governor Green designated retired Brigadier General Bruce Oliveira to perform the duties of the director of the Office of Veteran Services.
- Big Island Rep Donna Shimizu, resigned from the state Advisory Board on August 4th, was her last meeting. Chair Bridget Komine publicly thanked her for her service to the board and for everything that she does in your veteran community.

III. MINUTES

The Board reviewed the August 4, 2023 minutes. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned to accept the August 4, 2023 minutes and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

None

V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mr. Andrew Hervieux, Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits

Briefed on: Question from Mary Kay Hertog: I understand prior to the pandemic QTC reps would travel to the neighbor islands and conduct medical exams to see if veterans were eligible for VA compensation. Is there any chance that will be reinstated?

Answer: VBA can request appointments on the island where the veteran resides, with a rationale for the request at the time of the examination request. We are working with our national examination office to approve CMP services on the neighboring islands, and they are aware of the situation and our examining solutions to resolve this issue.

Ms. Amy Rohlf, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System - Medical

Briefed on: September 6th - Job Fair at the Oahu Vet Center. September 7th & 8th – PACT ACT Community Call from 10am to 6pm at the Arc in Hilo.

Mr. Jonathan Kimura, Veterans' Services Coordinator, OVS

Briefed on: Recruitment for Veterans Service Counselors still ongoing.

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 – Present, but phone not working.

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

Mr. David Liao, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Briefed on: Applied for federal aid for the Maui wildfires – It's a \$21 million grant to help support the services.

Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific - Present.
No submitted report.

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative - Present. No submitted report.

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative - Present. No submitted report.

Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS - Present, No submitted report.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

VI. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - Not present. No submitted report.
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 – Report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee –No Report or Update
- B. By Laws and Procedures -- No Report or Update
- C. Recognition and Awards –Will review at the next meeting.
- 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

VIII. ADJOURN – 9:45 am

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

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder