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Office of Veterans’ Services

(Tripler Army Medical Center)

459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103

Honolulu, HI 96819

**Friday, July 5, 2024**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair

Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair

Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn

Ms. Mary Kay Hertog

OVS Staff: Lt. Col. John Alamodin, Director

Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary

Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant

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

Mr. Henry Villarrial, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System –

Medical

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

Ms. Kaui Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu

 State Veterans Home

Col. (ret) Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health

Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director,

Department of Human Services

Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative

Absent: Mr. Michael Lilly

 Mr. Reyn Kaupiko

 Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

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

Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office Representative

Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer, Hawaii Army National Guard

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

Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Chair Bridget Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

1. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF June 7, 2024**

The Board reviewed the June 7, 2024 minutes. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned to accept the June 7, 2024 minutes and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

1. **COMMUNICATIONS**

None

1. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

Briefed on: Maui VBA hired a benefits counselor but will continue to make the monthly weeklong visits in the interim. Hilo VBA hired a vocational rehabilitation counselor that will be starting on July 15th.

**Mr. Henry Villarrial, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System –**

**Medical**

Briefed on: Other than honorable discharge changes took effect on June 26th and it amends regulations regarding characters of discharge, and it expands access to care to some of the veterans who had other than honorable discharges. The PACT Act reached it’s 1 million related compensation claims. A new larger location in Kailua Kona will be opening in July. There will be an open house on August 7th from 10am to 2pm. On August 10th from 12pm to 4pm, there will be a VET Fest at Daniel K. Akaka Clinic. All are welcome to come.

**Lt. Col. John Alamodin, Director, OVS**

Briefed on: On July 15th, there will be a DOD strategic planning meeting to discuss the bills for the next legislative session. On June 27th, there was a site visit to the Akaka Veterans Home. There will be a sculpture of the late Senator in front of the port cochere.

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report

**Ms. Kaui Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home**

Briefed on: We completed our annual VA survey last week; will update it at the next meeting. There were no clinical findings. Good news on the staffing challenges - we started our second cohort of CNAs on Monday and there are a total of seven nurse aid students.

**Col. (ret) Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health**

Briefed on: Introduced himself to the group

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

**Human Services**

Briefed on: No changes on 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.

**Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific**

Briefed on: There is some construction happening and courts 1 through 5 are restricted to visitors at this time.

Question from Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - Can you give further details about the “found” burial headstones found in Palolo? Lance answered that most of the markers are actually temporary markers and actually concrete. There is a bid out now to remove the remaining from the house safely.

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

**Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office Representative –** Not Present. No submitted report.

1. **BOARD MEMBER’S REPORTS**
2. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted.
* Update – On July 1st, the third cohort for the astride program which inspires veteran entrepreneurship graduated. This is an 8-week course. The Top 4 veterans presented the best ideas to start a business where they split $10,000 in prize money.
1. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - No report submitted.
2. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Mr. Reyn Kaupiko – No report submitted.
5. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.
6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
7. Legislative Committee – No Report or Update
8. By Laws and Procedures - No Report or Update
9. Recognition and Awards – No Report or Update
10. Women's Committee - No Report or Update
11. Projects and Events Committee - No Report or Update
12. **ADJOURN – 9:27 am**

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

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder