

**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, August 2, 2024

ATTENDANCE

- Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. Michael Lilly
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
- OVS Staff: Lt. Col. John Alamodin, 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. Jenifer Delemont, Public Affairs Specialist, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering
Ms. Kauai 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, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative
- Absent: 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

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

Michael Lilly led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Vice Chair Blair Suzuki called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board reviewed the August 2, 2024 agenda. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the August 2, 2024 agenda as written and Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn seconded.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 5, 2024

The Board reviewed the July 5, 2024 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the July 5, 2024 minutes and Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn seconded.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: Outreach events are still being held. We are still recruiting for a Public Contact Rep for the Island of Maui. One staff member is going there for one week to help out.

Ms. Jenifer Delemont, Public Affairs Specialist, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical

Briefed on: On August 5th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the Kona CBOC will be having an open house for veterans to come for a PACT Act workshop and open house. On August 10th from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM, the Akaka Clinic will be hosting a Summer Vet Festival. There will be an ohana open market where cost free groceries will be given to active duty and veterans. VA is still working to update the other than honorable discharges and working to register veterans under the PACT Act.

Question from Mary Kay Hertog from Kauai:

We had one of our two doctors retire a couple weeks ago. Any movement on hiring his replacement or getting any kind of contenders to be interviewed for it by chance? Answer: Yes, they absolutely post those positions immediately. We will probably have to bring someone from off island for now. I can check with HR and have Amy report back the next meeting if there isn't someone hired as to where they're at.

Lt. Col. John Alamodin, Director, OVS

Briefed on: Maui Veterans Home - Governor signed Senate Bill 2037 this month with our legislative liaison. On August 1st, the Akaka State Veterans Home was turned over to HHSC projected to open (receive veterans) will be January 2025. Met with National Cemeteries Administration on July 31st and discussed status reports on particular cemeteries that still are on an improvement plan. They are East Hawaii 1 and 2 on Hawaii Island. I'll be meeting with the deputy and Deputy director of the Parks and Recreation today regarding status on the improvement items.

Mr. 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: Recruited 7 Nurse Aides last month. We had 12 admissions and 11 discharges. The current census is at 60. We received our formal VA survey results (annual survey). We incurred 2 one life safety and one administration. We are at 0 COVID cases right now.

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

Briefed on: No Report or Update.

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

Briefed on: The summer EBT for eligible children (families that are receiving snap benefits with eligible children) don't need to apply. But families that receive the national free and reduced lunch, we'll need to apply by Sunday, August 4th. As of July 31st, there are 9 veterans at the Pu'uhonua o Nēnē, the temporary shelter on Maui.

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, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Briefed on: No Report or Update.

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative

Briefed on: It is in district work period. Rep. Tokuda will be out and about. She is planning to attend several VA events.

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative - Not present. No submitted report.

VII. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - No report submitted. No additions.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - No report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - Report submitted. No additions.
5. Oahu - Mr. Reyn Kaupiko – No report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.

VIII. 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 - No Report or Update

IX. ADJOURN – 9:27 am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn seconded.
Yolanda Ehere – Recorder