

**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, October 4, 2024

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Mr. James Hussey
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog

OVS Staff: Mr. John Alamodin, Director
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant
Ms. Andrea Barringer, Veterans Services Counselor

Guests: Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits
Ms. Amy Rohlf, Public Affairs Officer, 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
Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director, Department of Human Services
Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative

Absent: Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

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

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

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF September 6, 2024

The Board reviewed the September 6, 2024 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motioned to accept the September 6, 2024 minutes and Blair Suzuki seconded.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

None

V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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

Briefed on: Still looking to hire a public contact outreach specialist on Maui. In the meantime, we will continue to make monthly trips that are a weeklong to Maui to fill that gap until we get that position filled. On August 9th, VBA launched claims predator fraud prevention communication campaign. This helps provide veterans some tools to make sure that they're not being taken advantage by unlawfully charging veterans a fee to help them file their VA claim benefits. The website is www.vsafe.gov. This is where veterans and stakeholders can go on to the website and find great tools and resources.

Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical

Briefed on: Flu and COVID vaccines are available at all CBOC. At the ACC on 21st and 25th, there will be a medication take back event. Optometry and Dental are now opened at the Akaka clinic.

Mr. John Alamodin, Director, OVS

Briefed on: The current Finance Committee chair and his staff Representative Yamashita came to visit the Akaka home. Had a follow up meeting yesterday regarding a site and under consideration as previously reported, University of Hawaii, Mali College, another site that is being considered is in the Pulehunui district, adjacent to where the current Kahohano Hano army is for the National Guard. On September 21st, I attended the quarterly meeting for the Governor's challenge on suicide prevention.

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

Briefed on: Had meeting with the County of Maui to discuss water and sewer issues for the two sites that we're looking at for the Maui Veteran's Home.

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

Briefed on: Prepping for our annual CMS survey.

Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health

Briefed on: No updates

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

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

Briefed on: No access into columbarium courts 1 through 5 due to the construction. Funding was approved for our Millennium Project. We are planning to raise and align grave markers and also plant new grass and some of the various sections of the cemetery. Completed the joint ceremony in honoring the 100th and the 442nd.

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

Senator Mazie Hirono’s Office Representative - Not present. No submitted report.

VI. BOARD MEMBER’S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - No report submitted. No additions.
2. West Hawaii – Mr. James Hussey - 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. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - No report submitted. No additions.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. New committee assignments discussion

Committee	Board Member or Staff
Legislative Committee	Blair Suzuki
By Laws and Procedures	Mary Kay Hertog
Recognition and Awards	Leave open to next meeting.
Women's Committee	OVS Staff Andrea Barringer
Projects and Events Committee	Leave open to next meeting.

- 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 changes on submitted report.
- E. Projects and Events Committee - No Report or Update

VIII. ADJOURN – 9:27 am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Blair Suzuki seconded.
Yolanda Ehere – Recorder