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**Phone Conference ID: 360 453 336#**  
Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler Army Medical Center)  
459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819  
**Friday, January 2, 2026**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members:**

Mr. Blair Suzuki, Chair  
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog, Vice Chair  
Mr. James Hussey  
Ms. Bridget Komine  
Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn

**OVS Staff:**

Ms. Yolanda Ehere Secretary  
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant

**Guests:**

Mr. Maurice Martin, Community Outreach Coordinator/Interim Public Affairs Officer,  
VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical  
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering  
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Family Resource Center Coordinator,  
Department of Human Services  
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS  
Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific

**Absent:**

Mr. Aris Banaag  
Mr. John Alamodin, Director  
Mr. William Kyereme, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits  
Maj. Shaoyu Lee, Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering  
Ms. Kauai Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home  
Ms. Libby Pyo, Liaison Officer, Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home  
Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health  
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative  
Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

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

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

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA OF JANUARY 2, 2026**

The Board reviewed January 2, 2026 agenda. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motion to approve the agenda. Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2025**

The Board reviewed December 5, 2025 minutes. James Hussey motion to approve the minutes as written. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn seconded.

**V. COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Mr. William Kyereme, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits – Not present. No submitted report.**

**Mr. Maurice Martin, Community Outreach Coordinator /Interim Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical**

Briefed on: We will be at Waldor Hills at UH West this month for healthcare enrollments and also we will be having a town hall in Kona on January 27th.

**Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary, OVS – In John’s absence**

Briefed on: Meeting with Maui county’s Mayor office on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> regarding 3<sup>rd</sup> veterans home on Maui and NCA visit is at the end of the month.

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

Briefed on: We have directly heard from the VA that we will be receiving a grant opportunity for the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery. They don't know how much it is for yet, so we're working with DAGS. The grant opportunity will be sent to Director John Alamodon and then we'll have two weeks from when he receives it to either accept or decline. We're working with DAGS to see if we can actually accept because there are some permit issues and things that may take some time in order to be ready in order for us to accept the grant.

**Ms. Kauai Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home Relations - Not present. No submitted report.**

**Ms. Libby Pyo, Liaison Officer, Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home - Not present. No submitted report.**

**Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health - Not present. No submitted report.**

**Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Family Resource Center Coordinator, Department of Human Services - Present and no additions to the report.**

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

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

Briefed on: The program year 26th HVRP homeless veteran Reintegration program funding announcement is projected to be out on grants.gov this month at toward the end of the month.

**Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific – Present. No submitted report.**

**Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative - Not present. No submitted report.**

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

## **VII. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS**

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog, Vice Chair – No report submitted. No additions.
2. West Hawaii - James Hussey - No report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine - No report submitted. No additions
5. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - No report submitted. No additions.
6. Maui - Mr. Aris Banaag - No report submitted. No additions.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

Hawaii State Advisory Board on Veterans' Services – Strategic Goals

1. Ensure Hawaii's veteran memorials are properly maintained as dignified, respectful spaces that honor the service and sacrifice of veterans.

Objective: Determine agency/entity responsible and encourage accountability to conduct oversight and maintenance of memorials.

**Action Item:** Director Alamodin is planning to meet with the TAG's office. Chair Blair Suzuki to follow up with Director Alamodin.

2. Fully Staff the State Advisory Board

Objective: Recruit and confirm 4 of 9 board members to effectively represent and advocate for veterans statewide (ensuring geographic and female quotas are met).

**Action Item:** Yolanda will ask Jayme to place a flyer on the website and social media outlets. Yolanda will forward the flyer to board members for recruitment.

3. Support Priority Veteran Legislation

Objective: Identify and advocate for legislation that reflects the pressing needs, rights, and interests of Hawaii's veteran community.

**Action Item:** Chair Blair Suzuki will reach out to legislators who proposed bills for veterans to see if they could reintroduce the bills.

- Parkinson's Registry for Hawaii Veterans
- For-profit organizations charging veterans to file claims

4. Strengthen the Hawaii Veteran Network

Objective: Engage, connect, and empower veterans through outreach to VSOs and veteran networks across all islands.

## **X. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Legislative Committee – No Report or Update
  - Legislative session starts on the third Wednesday of this month.
  - February & March is when we will start seeing some bills.
- B. By Laws and Procedures – No Report or Update
- C. Recognition and Awards – No Report or Update
- D. Projects and Events Committee - No Report or Update

## **XI. ADJOURN – 9:32 am**

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