

**VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, February 16, 2006**  
**County Council Room and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**Present**

**Members**

Denny Austen  
Penny Fox  
Richard Highley  
Roy Hinokawa  
Louis Kaoiwi  
Morris Kihara  
George Mukai  
Patrick Pavao  
Gilbert Sampaia  
Hideo Segawa

**Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)**

**Members**

Richard Stevens

**Guests (Kona)**

Manuel Delos Santos  
Antonio Gaspar  
Herb Lum  
Joe Pretsch  
Lee Pretsch

**Guests (Hilo)**

Boss Hanato  
Minoru Hanato  
Carolle Brulee

**Ex-Officio (Hilo)**

Patricia Engelhard, Director, P&R  
Keith Ribbentrop, OVS

**Also Present (Hilo)**

Nathalie Santos, Secretary

**Absent**

Don D. Bennett  
Paul Johnston  
Wendall Kekumu  
George Yamamoto

**CALL TO ORDER**

- Chairman Richard Highly called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm

### **STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No Statements from the Public.

### **PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2005**

- The minutes of the November 17, 2005 meeting were approved as submitted.

### **REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD**

#### **Hawaii Island Representative Mr. Herring Kalua**

#### **Veterans Cemetery III – West Hawaii – Funding Update**

Mr. Herring Kalua reported that Mr. Ralph Morita of DAGS would be working with OVS (Office of Veterans Services) and various departments relating to Veterans Cemeteries. They're working on trying to encumber the million dollars for West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery III. The \$25,000 for the design will be increased to \$275,000 to improve and enlarge the plan they have now. They're also working with legislators for additional funding.

#### **Veterans Cemeteries I and II - Columbariums**

Mr. Kalua asked if someone could take him to Veterans Cemeteries I and II to look at niche concerns relating to the Columbariums so he can report back at the next State Veterans Advisory Committee Meeting.

#### **Graveliners**

Member Louis Kaiwi asked Mr. Kalua if there has been a request to the legislature to order graveliners for the rest of the cemeteries.

Mr. Kalua responded that he's not aware of anything during this legislative session.

Mr. Kaiwi said that during a meeting in the P&R Conference Room last year he asked Colonel Cruickshank about getting graveliners for all of the cemeteries. He believes that Kaneohe has liners and Kona will be getting them, but would like to know about Maui, Kauai and East Hawaii, they should also be entitled, since we're not second class veterans.

Mr. Kalua will address the liners, he has heard that West Hawaii will be getting them, but has not heard about anywhere else. Director Engelhard said that Kona is the most critical because the sides cave in.

Chairman Highley said he would send correspondence directly to Mr. Kalua on future matters.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **VETERANS CEMETERY II – EXPANSION PROJECT**

Director Engelhard said there has been no further progress, there is a nice man weeding all the time trying to get rid of the sleeping grass. The County will not accept the project until that is complete.

Member Penny Fox asked if the roof has been replaced since the addition is a different color. Director Engelhard will check on that.

### **VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII**

#### **(Reforestation Project)**

Vice Chairman Richard Stevens reported that the third major planting was held on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 140 volunteers showed up. There are some pretty big trees covering about ½ the hill now turning it into instant forest. The solar electric fence is keeping the goats out and the irrigation system nurturing plants. Everything going well as far as the return of the Hawaiian forest. **The next planting will be held on April 7<sup>th</sup>** and will feature participation of students from some of the area schools and the usual adults.

Vice Chairman Stevens reported that a greenhouse, black cinder and plants would be purchased with the funding received from the County. The greenhouse should arrive around the middle of March. He also said mahalo to P&R personnel June, Dee Ann and Director Engelhard for their assistance with funding process.

Chairman Highley said that we received appropriation of funds to proceed with purchasing fencing.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **HAWAII COUNTY CODE AMENDMENTS**

#### **Hawaii County Veterans Advisory Committee – Chapter 15-62 Membership**

#### **Military Order of the Purple Heart (Delete Chapter Number in the Code)**

Director Engelhard explained that the way Chapter 15 Section 62 (Membership) is written, the Military Order of the Purple Heart lists a specific Chapter (Chapter 731) as the recognized chapter of Hilo. Chairman Highley said that now the Military Order of the Purple Heart organization has changed to the Big Island and the charter was reissued.

Director Engelhard said that in order to correct the County Code, we would prefer if it just said Military Order of the Purple Heart and drop Chapter portion so that representatives could be appointed islandwide.

**Motion**

Members voted unanimously to change the Hawaii County Code Chapter 15-62 Membership to just state Military Order of the Purple Heart representing all MOPH members on the Big Island.

**Korean War Veterans Association**

Director Engelhard said that up until now the Korean War Veterans have not been assigned a specific slot as the other organizations. Korean War Veterans have been filling an Independent slot. Since we're changing the law, we will now recognize the Korean War Veterans Association and remove an Independent slot. Number of Members will remain at sixteen.

**Motion**

Members voted unanimously to change one of the Independent slots in the Hawaii County Code Chapter 15-62 to be assigned to the Korean War Veterans Association.

**MEETING WITH CINDY EVANS AND OVS TO BE SCHEDULED  
REGARDING VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII**

Chairman Highley reported that he visited Colonel Cruickshank on Oahu and was told there would be a meeting between the new engineers, Representative Cindy Evans, himself and Director Patricia Engelhard. Chairman Highley wrote a letter to Representative Cindy Evans and asked that the veterans be informed of the meeting. Copies were sent to various Veterans organizations and Director Engelhard.

**LETTERS FOR COMMITTEE**

Chairman Highley shared that he would be happy to write letters for members concerning issues relating to this committee.

**FUNDING FROM THE STATE FOR MAINTENANCE OF VETERANS  
CEMETERIES**

Member Louis Kaiwi shared the importance that we request additional funds from the State to maintain the three cemeteries on this island.

Director Engelhard said that for many many years we have asked the legislature for additional funding and have constantly been denied. The State continues to give the County only \$22,500 although the cost to maintain all three cemeteries is now in excess of \$100,000.

**Motion**

Member Louis Kaiwi made a motion and Patrick Pavao seconded the motion to request additional maintenance funds to operate all three Big Island Cemeteries.

### **Discussion**

Director Engelhard suggested that the letter be sent to Representative Cindy Evans. Member Patrick Pavao asked why the State doesn't include a funding request for neighbor islands when they put in their request for the Oahu Cemetery. Keith Ribbentrop said that the Director of Veterans Services position has been that the counties get together and submit a bill independently.

Member Patrick Pavao asked Keith Ribbentrop why the Director submits the bill for the State Cemetery in Honolulu. Keith responded that Colonel Cruickshank does because it's a County Cemetery.

Member Patrick Pavao said that the Oahu Cemetery is operating under State rules and regulations. When they built that cemetery, they requested state funds to match federal funds. When we expanded here, we received federal funds, but nothing from the State since those funds lapsed. He recommends that the State put a package together to request maintenance funds for all of the cemeteries throughout the state including the neighbor islands.

Keith Ribbentrop said that the Director's position is that the Counties try to get together and make a request.

Member Patrick Pavao said that although he understands his position, it hasn't worked so maybe they should try something different. We've tried it individually and collectively with the neighbor islands and it hasn't worked. Operation costs and demands have grown, but the state has continually paid \$22,500 for years. He asked how much the state is receiving for operating the Oahu cemetery.

Keith Ribbentrop estimates that the state is receiving \$700,000.

Member Louis Kaiwi said Kauai and Maui are receiving \$12,000 and they received that amount because the Big Island received an increase to \$22,500. No one from Kauai and Maui did anything about it, he pleaded for the additional funding.

Member Patrick Pavao said that the \$22,500 is part of the OVS budget and suggests Keith increases his budget. Keith responded that he no longer has a separate budget. Patrick again said he would like the state to help obtain additional funding for the neighbor island cemeteries and asked for Keith's help.

Director Engelhard said it's probably too late to submit anything for this legislative session, but we can still ask for the additional funds to make the \$100,000.

Member Louis Kaiwi suggested that Chairman Highley find out from Herring Kalua who the Chairman of Government Affairs is and send a copy to him.

Member Patrick Pavao would like the letter to emphasize that there was only one cemetery, but now the Big Island has three. The amount of acreage has tripled which should justify additional funds for maintenance. He suggested that Chairman Highley work with Director Engelhard to obtain cost info to include in letter and that a copy be sent to all of our Big Island Legislators.

### **Motion Passed**

Members voted unanimously to have Chairman Highley send a letter to the legislature requesting additional funds, a total of \$100,000 increasing from the \$22,500 the County now receives from the State to maintain all three cemeteries on the Big Island.

### **VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII**

#### **Cemetery Hours**

Chairman Richard Highley said there is a big complaint that the West Hawaii Cemetery is only open from 8 am to 12 noon. He asked the hours of the Hilo Cemeteries and Director Engelhard responded that they are open from 7am to 7pm. Chairman Highley said that many people are unable to just stop by in West Hawaii, including tourists who visit cemeteries wherever they travel.

Director Engelhard will check on cost to have a security service lock gate in order to extend hours and close at a later time. She said that could be expensive due to the distance of the cemetery from other facilities and from Kailua.

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

#### **NEW DIRECTOR - OVS**

Keith Ribbentrop announced that Mr. Reed of the Indianapolis, Indiana Regional Office Department of Veterans Affairs has been appointed as Director of the Honolulu Office effective March 1<sup>ST</sup>. He is a disabled Vietnam Veteran, holds a Purple Heart, served in the United States Marine Corp, received all of his education including his graduate degree through Chapter 31, and worked his way through the VA system starting as a Vocational Rehab Counselor. Effective March 3<sup>r<sup>d</sup></sup>, Mr. Jim Correli, the Acting Director will step down and retire.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. in the Hawai'i County Councilroom and video-conferencing at the Kona Mayor's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nathalie Santos*

Secretary