

Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

Peter L. Hendricks
Deputy Managing
Director

HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

C/O 25 Aupuni Street #217, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Phone: 961-8316 ; Fax: 933-1521

REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **April 13, 2005** **Liquor Control Conference Room** **Hilo Lagoon Centre**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Fergerstrom at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Neil Brazier
James Browne
Dale Fergerstrom, Chair
Rudolph Hart
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Vice-Chair
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Nick Ahyo
Aaron Arbles
Kaycie Carter
Laurie Kaneta
Diane Noda
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Noni Sanford
Wayne Krug

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: Neil Brazier, James Browne, Dale Fergerstrom, Rudolph Hart, Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Glen Matsuda, Wil Okabe

Newly appointed Hawai'i County Fire Commissioners (HCFC) James Browne, Karen Kudlo, and Wil Okabe were welcomed.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Diane Noda informed the new commissioners that the County Charter and the County Code could be accessed on the County's website at co.hawaii.hi.us. A copy of the County Charter was distributed to the commissioners (see ATTACHMENT "A"). She explained that the HCFC's duties include the selection/removal of the Fire Chief, reviewing and referring complaints, reviewing and making recommendations of the budget, evaluating annually the performance of the Fire Chief, and the review of personnel actions within the department for conformance with the policies under section 7-4.2 of the County Charter. These powers, duties, and functions shall not interfere with the administrative affairs of the department.

Commissioner Fergerstrom suggested that the new members review and familiarize themselves with the HCFC's Rules and Regulations.

Regarding recommendations to the Fire Chief, Commissioner Okabe asked if this would occur in an executive (closed) session.

Commissioner Fergerstrom replied that discussions involving personnel issues would be in executive session. Voting, decisions, and announcements made to the administration need to occur in public.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda suggested that HCFC Secretary Kaycie Carter distribute a copy of the Complaint for Consideration and Investigation form to each of the three new members.

Commissioner Fergerstrom commented that commissioners who have concerns or issues outside of meetings contact him. He will direct those issues to the Fire Chief, and follow up with the members. He requested that each member inform him of his/her emails.

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept the March 9, 2005, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Matsuda and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept communications number 05-006 and 05-007. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hart and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Chief Darryl Oliveira welcomed new Fire Commissioners James Browne, Karen Kudlo, and Wil Okabe. He would like to present an overview of the HCFC, and request that it be placed on the agenda for the May 11, 2005, meeting.

Budget

- FY 2005/06: Budget review was heard before the County Council's Finance Committee on March 29, 2005. Waiting for a final approval.

Commissioner Maedo suggested that Chief Oliveira refer to the testimony submitted to the Finance Committee by former Commissioner Stephen Bowles (see ATTACHMENT "B").

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated that the testimony submitted by Mr. Bowles showed a concern with the strategic planning process. The HCFC recommended to Chief Oliveira that he combine his budget in accordance to the strategic plan. Mr. Bowles presented testimony before the County Council. Commissioner Fergerstrom hopes that the HCFC will be able to continue in the same direction. He requested copies of the Hawai'i County Fire Department's (HCFC) strategic plan be provided to the new commissioners.

Chief Oliveira agreed to do so.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated the commission might advocate various funding projects based on the strategic plan, and Chief Oliveira may propose the HCFC's recommendation to the Mayor and the County Council. The final decision is in the hands of the Council and the Mayor.

Chief Oliveira acknowledged former Commissioner Bowles for his testimony given at the budget hearing held on March 29, 2005. His report and insight were appreciated.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if there was any response from the County Council.

Chief Oliveira stated that there were few questions asked by the County Council. The first reading of the budget will be heard on May 18, 2005. A final approval of the budget will occur before June 1, 2005.

Chief Oliveira commented that when the HCFD is in the process of acquiring funds, they are often viewed favorably by the public and the political arena. This may cause a negative effect on other departments. Therefore, the HCFD tries to be aware of the need to equitably distribute county resources among other departments.

Commissioner Maedo stated that Chief Oliveira is a leader with the budgeting process. His use of a written strategic plan, and performance-based measurements are an example for other departments.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD has identified performance-based measures recognized by industry standards. These include manning levels, acceptable and minimal staffing levels, and equipment standards. The strategic plan is based on measures that are recognized and established by the industries.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD received approval on their supplemental budget request. These items based on the strategic plan included:

○ Increase in Equipment Parts Account	\$ 55,000
○ 2 Battalion Chiefs	\$ 133,294
○ 1 Account Clerk	\$ 23,700
○ Fire Pumper Apparatus (S. Kona)	\$ 490,000
○ Fire Ladder/Aerial Platform	\$ 850,000
○ Fire Brush Truck (S. Kona)	\$ 150,000
Total:	\$1,701,994

Chief Oliveira clarified the misunderstanding regarding the Ocean View Fire Station. The positions were already approved earlier in the year as part of the State's contract with the Fire Department in providing ambulance service. The HCFD is currently receiving seven position numbers. The position numbers were not created in the county system. The state is funding these positions and funds are being transferred to the county.

Alternative Funding & Grants

- USFA Grant: Continuing to obtain bid specification for the approved modular live fire-training unit (burn trailer). Proceeding to move forward

with a purchase. The federal portion is \$301,000; county matched with \$129,000.

- FY 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant: Recently submitted grant application on April 8, 2005. Application seeks to acquire vehicle exhaust extrication systems for all Fire Stations. The device chosen is a plymo-vent system. It will provide a tight seal that attaches to the exhaust and prevents exposure to personnel and the public. Total budget is approximately \$500,000.

Commissioner Browne asked if the HCFD was considering other grants.

Chief Oliveira stated that the staff continuously monitors different grants. Also, the Department of Research and Development helps to keep the HCFD informed of available grants. Unfortunately, the department does not always qualify. He encouraged the commissioners to inform the department if they became aware of future grants.

- DOT Safe Highways Grant: Radio translucent spineboards bid awarded. Recently contacted vendor for beginning the purchasing process. Replacement of the existing spineboards in the ambulance units will improve patient care. The existing spineboards interfered with the examinations and diagnostic tests, due to a metal rod located inside. Anticipating establishing a board replacement/sharing program with the Aquatics section. Captain Mento is currently working on the next DOT grant application and is researching extrication tools such as airbag replacements.

Capital Improvement Projects

Projects Manager/Retired Captain Nick Ahyo made a presentation regarding the HCFD's six ongoing projects.

1. Kalaoa Fire Station: Continuing to address "line of sight" problem that has arisen at the planned entrance point onto the highway. The ability to see traffic on both sides does not meet the requirements of the state. The developer is in the process of obtaining a sight easement from the adjacent landowner. Additional cost issues have been addressed and are currently being reevaluated.

Mr. Ahyo reported that he recently met with the developer and his coordinator on April 1, 2005. They advised him that the original budget compiled in the year 2001 needed to be upgraded to the year 2005. The cost of the project should also include the addition of the police substation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom inquired about the history between the County and the developer.

Mr. Ahyo explained that in 2001, Councilman Curtis Tyler felt the need to have a Fire Station built in Kalaoa. An agreement was made with Bolton Corporation to donate land to the county as part of the fair share requirements that the developer would need to pay the county. This would be a “turn-key” type of Fire Station. The county would release funds to them, and they would in turn design and build the Fire Station. Since then there have been many issues that have caused this project to languish.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if this project was under contract with Bolton Inc., and if there was a possibility for the HCFD to go out for a rebid.

Mr. Ahyo stated that the HCFD feels committed to resolving these issues with Bolton, Inc. The problem is with the public expectation of a Fire Station. Changes at this time would create a firestorm and would set this project back to day one. There would be the need to acquire a new site and develop a new design for the Fire Station. He has inspected alternative sites and found this site to be the most adequate.

Commissioner Browne asked what the timeline was for completion.

Mr. Ahyo replied that he feels optimistic that construction would start by the end of the year, and completed sometime in 2006.

Chief Oliveira commented that the HCFD had anticipated including the haz-mat response into this Fire Station. Unfortunately, the Kalaoa Fire Station will not be built in time, but there are other stations to accommodate this need in West Hawai'i. The haz-mat truck will be delivered this summer.

Mr. Ahyo requested a cost breakdown from the developer. Once he receives this information he will “tie the developer down.”

Commissioner Browne asked if the HCFD was creating a brand new design for this Fire Station.

Mr. Ahyo answered that they would copy the design of the Keauhou Fire Station.

Commissioner Okabe questioned the cost of this project.

Mr. Ahyo stated that the CIP budget that was approved for Kalaoa was \$1.691 million. An additional \$50,000 was allocated out of the fair share account to cover the design of the police substation. They are now

expecting an increase to 2005 dollars, which will also include the addition of the police substation that was not in the original plan.

Commissioner Okabe asked if this was a joint effort with the police department.

Mr. Ahyo stated that this was being approached as a County resource.

2. Paho Fire Station: The publication of the Environmental Assessment was delayed due to an issue with the State's Historical Society. An inspection of a lava tube for any historical value will be conducted. Once this issue is resolved, the department will proceed with receiving a permit to change the zoning. The plans are scheduled for completion in April 2005 and will be submitted to the Planning Department for approval. Anticipating construction in September or October.
3. Fire Administration and Support Facility: Request to acquire five acres of land off the Mohouli extension was approved by the DLNR Board on March 11, 2005. Facility will include administration, communications, training, and other support divisions. Expecting to move forward with the design/plan phase by end of the year. Targeting about three years for completion. Will meet with divisions to ensure needs are met for the future. Using population demographics for the year 2020 to ensure the need for the building to last at least 30 years. Anticipating a design for this facility by summer 2005 and the start of construction sometime in 2006.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned the location of the five acres.

Mr. Ahyo explained that the five acres were located at the Mohouli extension, where Komohana and Mohouli meet. As the road leads to Kaumana on the right hand side, there is a vacant parcel between Sunrise Ridge subdivision and the Mohouli extension.

Commissioner Browne asked where the HCFD receives its demographics.

Mr. Ahyo replied that the HCFD refers to the Planning Department's information and the U.S. census report.

4. Central Fire Station: Currently working with the Housing Community Development Corporation of Hawai'i (HCDCH) which manages the Lanakila Housing. The Lanakila Housing is currently being renovated. The HCFD proposed to acquire 1-1/2 acres of the lower portion (located on the corner of Wailoa Street and Ululani Street). Besides the building's old infrastructure built in 1938, there is an issue of its location in a tidal wave zone. The Lanakila Housing is currently seeking Federal Housing and Urban Development review and an approval to revise its Master Plan. Anticipating March 2006 in obtaining the use of the land.

5. Naalehu Fire Station: The department has identified two parcels that are being considered. Demographics will be researched and proposed to the Mayor for approval. Funding is not scheduled until Fiscal Year 07/08. Anticipating making a presentation to the Mayor by September 2005.
6. Paauilo Volunteer Fire Station: Located on Highway 19, past Paauilo Town. The County acquired land on the Mauka side of the highway. This land was deeded over by the sugar plantation. There is a need to subdivide the property before the HCFD can receive a portion. The Department of Finance is currently researching this matter.

This concluded Mr. Ahyo's presentation to the Fire Commission.

Promotions and Hiring

- Fire Fighter Recruit hiring: 32nd Fire Fighter Recruit class will start on April 18, 2005. A total of 20 recruits, including one female, will be introduced to the Commissioners at next month's meeting. The next recruit class will follow in September.
- 30th Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Promoted to Fire Fighters effective March 16, 2005. Station assignments were received.
- Fire Radio Dispatcher I: Six new dispatchers in orientation, effective March 16, 2005. Presently in First Responder class.
- Fire Radio Dispatcher III (Supervisors): Internal recruitment to promote three new dispatcher supervisors. Closing date of recruitment is April 18, 2005.

Chief Oliveira informed the new Commissioners that members of the commission are welcome to participate in observing the department's promotion process. These include interviews and assessment centers. However, there is a stipulation that they attend the whole process in fairness to all candidates.

Operations Division

- Ocean View Fire Station: Received contract for State funding of fire fighter position numbers with ambulance service, as was earlier discussed by Chief Oliveira.
- Military Fire Fighters: Fire Rescue Specialist David Minor returned to duty on April 2, 2005. Firefighter Recruit Garrett Nishihara returned to the Big Island; he is still on active military duty and plans to return to duty in May. Firefighter Alan AhHeong, Fire Rescue Specialists Michael Kamau and Todd Vincent are presently on Oahu, anticipating their return by summer 2005. Recently deployed and in transit is Firefighter Mark Mangibin, Firefighter Recruit Kilipaki Kanae, and Fire Rescue Specialist James Wilson.
- Weapons of Mass Destruction Radiological/Nuclear Awareness/Responder Training: Recently four haz-mat personnel,

Firefighter Arnold Ferreira and Captains Tracy Yanagi, Ralph Yawata and Jason Gushiken attended a four day training in Nevada.

- Suicide Bomber: Prevention and Interdiction: Held on April 13, 2005, on Oahu: Deputy Chief Desmond Wery, Captains Clint Coloma and Tracy Yanagi, and Firefighter Chris Honda attended.

Prevention Division

- FEST Seminar: Inspector continuing to coordinate Fireworks Education and Safety Training, scheduled for May 2-6, 2005, on the Big Island.

Training Division

- 31st Recruit Class update: Presently in their fourth week of EMT Training. Two recruits were released for not meeting the grade. The department will be researching internally if there are any improvements necessary for the training program.

Chief Oliveira asked if the commission was set on its number of subcommittees. He would like to request that the commission form a Training and Education committee. There are a number of educators on the panel and the department would benefit from their expertise.

Commissioner Okabe asked if individuals who do not pass the EMT training would return to Firefighter status.

Chief Oliveira stated that these individuals were terminated. The condition of the HCFD is that all new employees are required to pass the Firefighter I program and the EMT class. The HCFD is the contract service provider for the ambulance service on the Big Island. It is a mandatory requirement that all new hires be certified to meet this contract.

Commissioner Fergstrom asked if the HCFD was unique in that requirement.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD is the only department in the state that provides ambulance service.

Commissioner Browne asked if recruits were often terminated.

Chief Oliveira answered that it rarely occurs. This was the first time during his administration that there was a need to terminate a recruit for not passing the EMT training. In the past, they have lost recruits due to their expectations of the department not being what they thought it would be.

Commissioner Hart asked how far into EMT training the two recruits were.

Chief Oliveira answered that they were in their third week of training.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked what the duration for EMT training was.

Chief Oliveira stated that EMT training is 20 weeks.

Commissioner Okabe asked if recruits, who passed the Firefighter I portion and then failed the EMT training, would be able to reapply and retake the EMT portion.

Chief Oliveira stated that they would need to go through the whole process.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked what the length of time was from the recruitment phase to becoming an independent firefighter.

Chief Oliveira answered that it takes 18 months. The first 16 weeks entail Firefighter I training, followed by 20 weeks of EMT class. The remainder of the year involves a drivers competency certificate, and haz-mat orientation and awareness training. Other incidental training needs are completed prior to their one-year initial probationary period. They are then considered Firefighter I, which begins a subsequent six-month probationary period, during which time they are rotated among different stations. A comprehensive evaluation process of their skills and abilities will follow.

Volunteer Training Division

Chief Oliveira commented that the HCFD is the only department in the state that has a volunteer component. It is a very critical and essential component of the HCFD. The department cannot service every community adequately without the volunteers. There are presently a total of 24 volunteer stations and 325 volunteer firefighters.

Regarding the landmass, Commissioner Fergerstrom asked how this county compares with others in response time.

Chief Oliveira explained that the HCFD has unique issues. There is a volunteer program, EMS program, and landmass. "There is every climate known to man on this island." The landmass does pose some response issues, which is why the volunteer program is a critical component.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if there was a committee set up to train the volunteer program.

Chief Oliveira replied that there is one Volunteer Training Officer who on a daily basis travels to different stations to train them. Also, each of the

volunteer units has a Chief Officer within their company conduct training. The department's supplemental budget is requesting additional Volunteer Program Training Officers.

Commissioner Okabe asked if volunteer firefighters were trained similarly to regular firefighters.

Chief Oliveira answered that they were not trained in the same manner. Their training is a condensed version of the regular firefighter's recruit training. This will be discussed in his overview of the department at next month's meeting.

Chief Oliveira stated that a number of volunteers will for the first time be participating in the National Fire Academy's Volunteer Incentive program.

Emergency Medical Service Division

- MICT Class update: Students presently on Oahu for six months. There is a need to find short term housing with a six-month lease.
- Medical Director's Contracts: Dr. Lee Fineberg (Hilo Medical Center) on board as medical director. Finalizing the contract for Dr. Richard McDowell (Kona Community Hospital).

Fire Auxiliary Services

- No New Updates

New Projects/Business

- Fire Science 151 & 152 Classes: A total of 61 personnel presently attending Fire Science 152 classes.
- Media Relations Classes: Dr. Stephen Miura, head of Communications at the University of Hawai'i, was introduced to the department by Firefighter Chris Honda. Dr. Miura recently conducted three workshops and surveyed the group. An assessment of the needs of the personnel and their relation with the Media was reviewed. He will proceed to instruct personnel on how to deal with the media. Dr. Miura will be meeting with Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda and other attorneys on legal issues that will be organized as part of the component of the class. The next phase will be to include the media.
- Hawaii Fire Chief's Association Conference: The first committee-planning meeting was held on April 21, 2005. Conference to be held between November 17-20, 2005, at the Fairmont Orchid. Historically, Chief Officers attended from across the state, along with others that desired to come from out of state. This year the HCFC will be opening this up to all rank and file. The HCFC will be invited and kept informed on the status of this event.
- Ocean Safety: Discussions were held with the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding incorporating the Ocean Safety Division into the Fire

Department. Employee survey was disseminated on March 31, to obtain perspectives and views of personnel.

Employee/Public Relations

- 3rd Annual Employee Awards and Recognition Dinner: Held on April 9, 2005, at the Crown Room. Commissioners Fergerstrom, Maedo, Bowles and Varney were thanked for their attendance.
- Mother's Day Rose Project: "Fighting for a Cure" to benefit American Cancer Society. Rose orders being accepted; delivery on May 6th for Mother's Day.
- EMS Week: To be held May 22, 2005, at Liliuokalani Gardens in Hilo. Celebrating 30 years of EMS in the County of Hawai'i. Invitations will be sent to Fire Commissioners. Proceeds will go to charitable organizations.

Commissioner Kudlo inquired on articles she read regarding "burning bans."

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD would like to pursue revising of the county ordinance regarding outdoor burning. There is a concern with health issues and inadequate spacing. The department would like to ban all outdoor burning of rubbish. It is necessary to work closely with the State's Department of Health, Clean Air Division, with the need to tighten up the rules with agriculture burning.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned the frequent residential fires at Ocean View Estates.

Chief Oliveira stated that there is need for a better public education program, especially with communities that have water catchment.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned the status of the Arraujo complaint.

Chief Oliveira stated that the case was closed. Written communication was sent to the Arraujo's advising them that action was taken. The commission will be provided a copy of the correspondence sent.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- HFC complaint procedures – Budget for an independent investigator.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda stated that the commission decided that when a complaint is made, they would consider if they want to have an independent investigation or rely on the Chief's internal investigation. Presently, the commission does not have the budget set up for an independent investigator. If the commission would require an independent

investigator, funds would be requested through the HCFD, and a list of professional service providers may be obtained from the Department of Finance.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda informed the commission that the police commission has a price term agreement with Legal Eyes Investigative and Research Services. This investigator charges \$40 an hour, plus mileage, plus supplies, and has a one-term agreement that was just extended through February 2006.

Commissioner Okabe confirmed that the Police Commission does have an independent investigator. Meanwhile, the Police Department conducts its own internal investigation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if the Police Commission has an independent investigation conducted with every complaint.

Commissioner Okabe replied that it is considered on a case by case basis.

Chief Oliveira commented that the Fire Department offers every complainant the opportunity to bring their complaint to the commission.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Hart) Discussed earlier in the Chief's Report.

Commissioner Maedo inquired about the consideration of an educational workshop with regards to the budget. Mr. Bowles was a great loss to the commission. She hopes that one of the new members may be interested in following his lead.

Commissioner Fergerstrom suggested that a review and assignment of the committees be placed on the agenda. The elected individuals assigned to the Budget and Finance committee may spearhead this workshop.

Office Management and Staffing (Fegerstrom) None

Commissioner Fergerstrom requested that Kaycie send the Chief's Evaluation to the new commissioners. They may review and familiarize themselves with this information. This may be discussed at the next meeting.

Rules and Policies (Maedo) None

Public Relations None

Commissioner Maedo reminded to place the possibility of adding a Training and Education committee to the agenda.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda if adding a new committee should be placed on the agenda.

Commissioner Maedo suggested that this issue of adding a Training and Education committee be placed on the agenda as revisiting current committees and additional committees.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda suggested that since the commission knows that one of the considerations would be to add training and education if that could be listed on the next agenda.

Commissioner Fergerstrom suggested that the new commissioners review and familiarize themselves with the Hawai'i Sunshine Law. Basically, the commission is not allowed to discuss anything in private.

NEW BUSINESS

- Consideration and planning for an educational workshop regarding budget matters.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked to postpone this topic until the commission has selected a budget and finance committee.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., Hilo Lagoon Centre, Liquor Control Conference Room, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for May 11, 2005, meeting.
 - Overview of the Fire Department.
 - Assignment of committees.
 - Consideration on creating a Training and Educational committee.

Commissioner Maedo requested that Kaycie circulate to each member his or her email addresses.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda also suggested that Kaycie inform the Commissioners of her phone number, so that they may inform her if they will not be able to attend a meeting.

Commissioner Maedo advised the new members that the HCFC does meet quarterly in Kona.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary