

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 **May 11, 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 Maedo, Vice-Chair
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

Excused: Karen Kudlo

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Kaycie Carter
Glen Honda
Laurie Kaneta
Diane Noda, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Janice Pakele
Desmond Wery, Deputy Chief

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

Commissioner Fergerstrom suggested that the HCFC allow the 32nd Recruit Class to introduce themselves before continuing with the rest of the agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF 32ND RECRUIT CLASS

Clinton K. Baybayan
Christopher O. Carvalho
Daniel K. Dierking
Dustin R. Frechette
Levon E. M. Hall
Mark J. Hepler
Melanie P. Keolanui
T. J. Lawless
Aaron K. Makaimoku
Edward M. McClellan

Jeffer D. Obenchain
William K. Perez, III
Derek J. Sanderson
David L. Schad
Troy K. Schmidt
Eric Shimabukuro
Joseph G. Souza
Duane N. Thompson (Jr.)
Daniel J. Volpe
Thomas C. Wall

All recruits introduced themselves.

The HCFC welcomed them.

Commissioner Browne asked Chief Darryl Oliveira if it was possible for him to observe some of the recruits' training sessions.

Chief Oliveira informed him that the Hawai'i County Fire Department (HCFD) openly allows the Hawai'i County Fire Commission (HCFC) every opportunity to observe anything with the department. He may contact Captain Glen Honda, who will provide him with the recruits' schedule.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Department of Liquor Control Director Janice Pakele thanked Chief Oliveira and Inspector Jack Pacleb for their immediate response to her request due to the physical deterioration of the premises at the Sea Mountain Golf Course. The Liquor Commission was pursuing action to suspend its liquor license. On Monday, May 9, 2005, she emailed Chief Oliveira a request to assign an inspection. The following day, Tuesday, May 10, 2005, she received a report of a Fire Inspection conducted by Inspector Pacleb. Ms. Pakele expressed her appreciation and commended the Fire Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept the April 13, 2005, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hart and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Matsuda moved to accept communication numbers 05-008 and 05-009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brazier and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT/NEW BUSINESS

- Overview of the Fire Department. (Power Point presentation)

Chief Oliveira discussed the HCFD's unique services. The HCFD is the only Fire Department in the State of Hawai'i that has a Volunteer component and which provides ambulance service (Emergency Medical Service). Other unique issues the department is challenged with are geography, climate, population, and water catchment communities.

Chief Oliveira explained how the Strategic Plan helps the department make better decisions regarding where to place resources and how it is determined. The Strategic Plan reflects the goals and objectives of the Fire Department, including Training and Education, the Fire Science Program, the National Fire Academy, Agency Partnerships, Internal Communications, a Records Management System, Safety, and Community Partnerships. Within the department are subcommittees such as Safety, Operational Effectiveness, Financial Effectiveness, etc. Chief Oliveira acknowledged the HCFC's assistance with the Strategic Planning process. The commission shares its views and helps identify the department's strengths and weakness. The HCFD appreciates the commission's recommendations and comments. The commission is encouraged to use the Strategic Plan as a measuring stick on whether the department and administration are achieving their goals and objectives.

Chief Oliveira addressed questions regarding his presentation.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the cost of a volunteer station.

Chief Oliveira stated that when the HCFD establishes a unit of 12 volunteers, the department spends approximately \$60,000 on equipment alone.

Commissioner Okabe asked if employed volunteers were able to leave their jobs and respond to an incident.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD offers the employer written correspondence confirming their volunteer status. Unfortunately, some volunteers are unable to leave their jobs.

Commissioner Okabe asked if paged volunteers would notify the department if they were unable to respond to an incident.

Chief Oliveira replied that when dispatch does not receive acknowledgement, it is assumed that they will not respond to the incident. The only indication that they will respond to a scene is when the volunteer responds on the radio that they are enroute.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated that the volunteers are not necessarily saving the county money. When the volunteers are called, it brings the standard of response time higher.

Chief Oliveira agreed that volunteers augment the paid staff.

Commissioner Fergerstrom said that in most remote areas, there is a response time of two hours. With a Volunteer Fire Station placed in these areas, the volunteers respond to the scene, and are later backed up by the regular firefighters. Volunteers give the HCFD the opportunity to bring their response level higher. The HCFD has an area of 4000 square miles, which makes it difficult to raise this level.

Commissioner Okabe questioned whether the number of volunteers assigned to a Volunteer Fire Station.

Chief Oliveira answered that the minimum is 12 volunteers.

Commissioner Okabe questioned if the volunteers were certified through the Fire Department.

Chief Oliveira stated that there were no existing rules and guidelines for the volunteers. The department is currently in the process of creating this. There needs to be physical fitness standards, consideration of assigning various duties, and performing background checks. The department is liable for these individuals and is examining the volunteer component.

Commissioner Okabe asked if volunteers could be identified at a scene.

Chief Oliveira replied that volunteers were issued the same apparel as regular fire fighters.

Commissioner Browne asked if the HCFD has looked into Homeland Security to increase the protection at the ports.

Chief Oliveira stated that Deputy Chief Wery was working with the State's Office of Domestic Preparedness regarding this issue. Federal money comes from Homeland Security for all Public Safety agencies.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that funds have been available to the department for the past 4 - 5 years. There was a total of 5 - 6 million dollars allocated for the county. It was not designated specifically for harbor protection. Previous funding was used for acquiring various equipment, which helps upgrade the department's services. The State's Department of Land and Natural Resources is working with the Office of Domestic Preparedness involving Homeland Security at the ports.

Commissioner Browne was concerned with incidents causing possible closures at either Hilo or Kawaihae ports. Everything comes to the Big Island through Hilo and Kawaihae, and there is a concern with increasing fire protection for both ports, because closures will impact the public. He asked Chief Oliveira for a report concerning the Naptha fire.

Chief Oliveira stated that Deputy Chief Wery attended a meeting on Oahu and gave a report on the Naptha fire. There is support to lobby the Legislature for providing fire protection at various ports across the state. The Fire Department will provide Commissioner Browne the report concerning that fire.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if the South Kohala Fire Station provides service to the entire coastline and if each hotel has a volunteer crew.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai and Kona Village are the only resorts that have volunteer units. The HCFD is working with those resorts to identify if they are a true volunteer fire company versus a fire brigade, which is dedicated to protecting the actions on private property. The expectation of a volunteer fire company is to provide support to the community.

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

- **Review of the Complaint for Consideration and Investigation form.**

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if there were questions regarding the complaint form.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether a complaint for investigation is a private or internal investigation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom replied that it is an internal investigation.

Commissioner Okabe asked what was meant by an additional investigation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated it is when the commission needs more information from the administration, or if a complainant needs to come back.

This gives the commission the opportunity to take a second look at the complaint.

Commissioner Okabe clarified that if there was an additional investigation and it was necessary to acquire a private investigator; the commission would need to select an investigator and then address the complaint.

Commissioner Fergstrom agreed and stated that the commission is presently using the existing form. If the commission has concerns or finds a need to make adjustments to the form, they may place it on the agenda and discuss it at that time.

- **Review of the Evaluation of the Fire Chief form.**

Commissioner Brazier explained that there are various categories on this form. The individual completing this form rates these categories and fills in his/her point totals. At the bottom of the document is a synthesis of all the point totals and final comments. Each year the appointed commissioners sign and submit this form to the present Chairman, who discusses the evaluation with the Chief.

Commissioner Okabe questioned whether the commission evaluates the Chief individually or as a body.

Commissioner Brazier stated that it is done individually. Each member returns his/her form to the Chair, who is the only one who knows what each member wrote.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the Chair shares the final results with the members.

Commissioner Maedo confirmed that the Chair does.

Commissioner Okabe questioned if the commissioners discuss their views on the evaluation.

Commissioner Fergstrom stated that in the past, the individual evaluations were consistent and there had not been concerns raised by any commissioners. But in the future, if there is a concern by a member, it may be addressed in an executive session.

Commissioner Brazier stated that the commission is fortunate in that the system is working and the Fire Chief has been doing a good job.

Commissioner Maedo stated that the commission is proactive and does not wait for problems to occur. They address each issue as it arises.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if the Fire Chief's evaluations could be emailed to the Chair.

Commissioner Fergerstrom said that the hardcopy should be returned.

Commissioner Okabe asked when the Chief's evaluation occurs.

Commissioner Maedo answered that the Chief's annual evaluation occurs every March.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated that it is critical that the individual commissioners base their evaluation on the Strategic Plan. The Chief provides a monthly report, which allows the commission the opportunity to see if those goals are being met.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the evaluation was discussed with the Chief.

Commissioner Fergerstrom replied that it was.

- **Assignment of committees.**

- **Budget and Finance**

Commissioners Hart and Matsuda volunteered to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee.

- **Office of Management and Staffing**

Commissioner Brazier will be serving on the Office of Management and Staffing Committee.

- **Rules and Policies**

Commissioner Maedo will continue serving on the Rules and Policies Committee.

- **Public Relations**

Kaycie informed the HCFC that Commissioner Kudlo requested that she advise the members of her interest in serving on the Public Relations Committee. Commissioner Browne volunteered to serve on the committee. The members agreed that both Commissioners Kudlo and Browne would serve on the Public Relations Committee.

Commissioner Browne asked if he and Commissioner Kudlo would be allowed to speak outside of meetings without violating the Hawai'i Sunshine Law.

Commissioner Fergstrom answered that two members were able to speak outside of meetings.

- **Training and Education**

The HCFC authorized the addition of a Training and Education Committee. Commissioner Maedo and Brazier volunteered to serve on this committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

The HCFC decided that this issue would be postponed to the August meeting. Commissioner Hart will contact former Commissioner Steven Bowles and make arrangements for him to do an overview of the budget and finance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, June 8, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Kona Center Building, 75-5722 Hanama Place, Suite 1170, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for June 8, 2005, meeting.
 - Fire Chief's presentation regarding Operational Functions.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary