

**Harry Kim**  
Mayor



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## HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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

### **REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES** **June 8, 2005** **Liquor Control Conference Room** **Kona Center Building**

#### **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:**

Gregory Cameron	Kaycie Carter
Marc Farinas	Richard Fong
Laurie Kaneta	Grant Kojima
Diane Noda, Deputy Corporation Counsel	Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Carl Pires	Victor Salis
Beverly Stueber	

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

Commissioner Fergerstrom suggested that the Approval of Minutes, Approval of Written Communications, and the Investigation and Deliberation of Complaints be addressed before proceeding with the rest of the agenda.

All commissioners agreed.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept the May 11, 2005, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Okabe and unanimously carried.

### **APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept communication number 05-010. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hart and unanimously carried.

### **STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** (Open to the Public)

None

### **STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS** (Executive Session)

None

### **INVESTIGATION AND DELIBERATION OF COMPLAINTS**

- HCFC Complaint No. 05-01: Concerning Ms. Lillian Raynor's missing medication.

Ms. Beverly Stueber introduced herself as Lillian Raynor's daughter and caretaker. She explained the reason she filed a complaint on behalf of her mother. On February 25, 2005, Ms. Stueber purchased her mother's prescribed medications. The next morning, her mother began to feel ill. She decided to call 911 and advise them of the situation. Soon after, the paramedics arrived and began to respond to her mother's condition. She left the room to prepare her mother's medical information. When she returned, she witnessed a paramedic pickup, look at, and slip her mother's prescribed medications into his pocket. At that time, she commented, "Thank you for picking those (medications) up. I just got them last night and I haven't reported them on my mother's medication list."

Commissioner Brazier asked if there was a response to her comment.

Ms. Stueber said there was no response.

Ms. Stueber stated that after the paramedics transported her mother to the hospital and left. She inquired with the on-duty nurse if her mother's medications and history were given to them. The nurse replied that she received her mother's history but not the medication. A few days later, concerned with the whereabouts of her mother's medication, Ms. Stueber drove to the Keauhou Fire Station. She spoke with Captain Ishii who questioned the personnel. They remembered seeing the medication, but were unsure of what happened to them.

Ms. Stueber advised the HCFC that she is concerned with the ongoing drug problem in Kona and did not want to be part of creating more illicitness. She hopes that by coming forward she would promote some kind of regimentation and confinement for patients' medications. She wants the Hawai'i County Fire Department to be concerned about missing medication and would like them to find a solution so that this does not recur.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned the monetary value of the medication.

Ms. Stueber replied that it was not a great loss because there was prescription coverage.

Commissioner Fergerstrom advised her that there were means of recouping a loss from the county. If she would like to pursue a claim this can be done through the County Clerk's Office. He suggested that the Fire Administration provide Ms. Stueber assistance in this matter.

Chief Darryl Oliveira agreed to do so.

Ms. Stueber stated that she appreciated his suggestion, but felt a greater concern for the community.

Commissioner Fergerstrom replied that he did not mean to diminish her complaint. He wanted to inform her that she was entitled to financial compensation.

Ms. Stueber thanked him.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if her complaint was against any specific individual.

Ms. Stueber stated that there was a police report and the investigating officer told her that there was an indication of the individual's identity. But because no one saw him take the medication nothing could be done.

Commissioner Maedo asked Chief Oliveira if he would like to respond to Ms. Stueber's complaint.

Chief Oliveira apologized to Ms. Stueber. His reports found that the individual involved was a recruit. The recruit was in EMT training and was not familiar with the procedure of giving the medication to a family member and having them take it to the hospital. The recruit admitted to putting the medication in his pocket and intended to leave it with the hospital staff. After returning to the Fire Station, he realized that it was still in his possession.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD's policy encourages medication to be brought with the patient's family. The HCFD will be emphasizing this policy with personnel.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if there was a location at the station where medication could be placed.

Chief Oliveira replied that this could be established with each ambulance because they have locked cabinets for narcotics and controlled substances.

Commissioner Kudlo suggested that medication be placed in a zip lock bag and labeled with the patient's name, the EMT's name, and the amount contained. The zip lock bag should then be locked up and someone should be responsible for it.

Commissioner Okabe was concerned that the medication was left in the console for several shifts. He recommended that the HCFD review these procedures with the personnel.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Diane Noda informed the commission that she would be working with Chief Oliveira on these procedures. There is also a need to protect personnel from being falsely accused.

Commissioner Hart stated that he worked in this field and understands that the doctors prefer that medications arrive with the patient. This helps familiarize them with another doctor's prescription. Prescriptions left in the ambulance should be documented in the ambulance report. The Captain who is responsible for that command should be held responsible for the medication and for contacting family members.

Commissioner Kudlo was disturbed that the medication was left in the console for two days and the personnel didn't do anything about it. The report showed there was a third bottle. Ms. Stueber's mother was missing two bottles. Therefore, someone else is missing his or her medication. This shows a pattern and the need to tighten up on procedures.

Commissioner Browne asked if the Captains on the three shifts were aware of the medication in the ambulance.

Chief Oliveira answered that they were. He agreed that there is a need to improve this policy.

Commissioner Fergerstrom requested a follow up report on what policies were being contemplated and/or are being implemented to control this type of activity. He is concerned with the casualness of the individuals who observed these vials and disregarded them.

Chief Oliveira said he would provide the commission a report.

Commissioner Maedo moved to sustain HCFC complaint 05-01. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Okabe and unanimously carried.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked the Kailua Fire Station members if they had any input on this situation.

Fire Rescue Specialist Gregory Cameron stated that many patients have multiple medication and the emergency room requests that the paramedics provide this to them.

Fire Equipment Operator Richard Fong mentioned that the patient's medication is treated like other personal items.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if there was documentation on how this is turned over and how the property was accounted for.

Fire Equipment Operator Fong stated that there is a logbook, but he is unsure whether the Captain records any particular item. These items are left in a package with the patient's name. There is a need for public education. If people have a list of their medication it would eliminate the need of transporting them to the hospital.

Commissioner Kudlo suggested a personal inventory list for patient's belongings such as handbags, wallets, medication, and keys. She acknowledged that this would be difficult at an emergency scene.

Fire Rescue Specialist Cameron stated that the personnel are aware of the liabilities involved and would prefer not to deal with personal items. Paramedics are open to being falsely accused. On the other hand, it is necessary to accommodate the patient's needs.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated that there is a need for documentation due to the changes in society.

Fire Rescue Specialist Cameron mentioned that he puts the patient's personal items on the gurney with them. He also communicates to the patient that he will be removing their personal items (jewelry, watch, wallet, etc.) and informs him/her on what he is doing with them. There is a responsibility for the paramedic to communicate with the patient.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the number of calls that involve medication being transported with the patient.

Fires Rescue Specialist Cameron stated that majority of their calls involve medication. If a family member is present, he requests that they gather the patient's medication together in a bag.

Fire Rescue Specialist Cameron mentioned that sometimes medication is not provided to them or sometimes family members are not present. He personally makes an effort to get the person's medication, because it is helpful for a paramedic to know what the patient is taking.

Commissioner Browne stated that the missing medication left at the station for that long concerned him. He commented that the owner needed to be contacted and the Assistant Chief on duty should be responsible for that. The Captains also need to take responsibility for these problems.

Commissioner Fergerstrom concluded that Chief Oliveira would do a follow up report at the next meeting. The commission can share their suggestions and recommendations at that time.

The HCFC thanked Ms. Stueber for coming forward and presenting her complaint.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT/NEW BUSINESS**

- Overview of Rescue Operations by Kailua Fire Station personnel. (Previously placed on the June 8, 2005, agenda as Fire Chief's presentation regarding Operational Functions.)

Captain Grant Kojima introduced himself and his crew, Fire Equipment Operator Richard Fong, Fire Rescue Specialist Greg Cameron and Fire Fighters Victor Salis, Carl Peris, and Mark Farias.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Captain Kojima to explain the difference between a Rescue Specialist and an Operator.

Captain Kojima stated that an Operator operates the Fire apparatus and unit. He is in charge of the vehicle equipment, operations of the fire pump and

maintenance for the vehicles. The Rescue Specialist is trained in rescue operations. Rescue Operations encompass the rescue of individuals who need to be rescued in the ocean or in wild land areas. There are two rescue companies on the island, one in Waiakea and the other in Kailua. Both companies divide the island.

Captain Kojima stated that because the Kailua Fire Station is designated as a Rescue Company, the Captain, Fire Equipment Operator, and Fire Rescue Specialist are all trained for rescue operations and can all perform as Rescue Specialists.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the Rescue Specialist takes the lead in the rescue.

Captain Kojima stated that the Captain is always in charge of the operation and the Rescue Specialist carries out the individual acts of the unit.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if a MICT was a paramedic.

Captain Kojima confirmed that a MICT (Mobile Intensive Care Technician) is a paramedic.

Commissioner Browne questioned if there was a Ladder Company assigned to Kailua.

Captain Kojima replied that they previously did have a Ladder Company assigned. It was damaged and is in the process of being replaced.

Commissioner Browne asked if members would be cross-trained once the ladder or an elevated platform was replaced.

Captain Kojima answered that in the past the Rescue Company was synonymous with the Ladder Company. The Rescue Company has a lot of responsibilities with rescue and he believes that it may be run separately.

Captain Kojima discussed the Rescue Company's many duties. These duties include searching for individuals who are in the ocean (one-mile from shore), searching for lost hikers, hunters, and people who are in distress in areas that are inaccessible by vehicles. These individuals need to be reached by helicopter or hiking. They also respond to motor vehicle accidents where an individual may be pinned inside the vehicle. He mentioned that the HCFD has a rescue boat stationed in Kailua and another in Waiakea. The Kailua Rescue Company covers the area from South Point to Pololu Valley and Waiakea Rescue Company responds to the East Side.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned the number of members in the entire crew.

Captain Kojima answered that they are assigned eight members.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if that was for all shifts.

Captain Kojima replied that it was for each shift.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if there were any GIS (Global Information System) or computer-based mapping systems available to help with search and rescues.

Captain Kojima stated that there was no technology assigned for rescue. There is a program mapped for the Department of Water Supply. He would like this to be expanded and used for rescue.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked how adequate their communications are.

Captain Kojima stated that they are currently waiting on a new radio system.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked how long he was employed with the county.

Captain Kojima stated that he has been employed with the County for 23 years. The HCFD has made a lot of improvements thanks to Chief Oliveira, grant money, and outside sources such as the Sayre Foundation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked him to explain the Sayre Foundation.

Captain Kojima explained that Dr. Frank Sayre was the founder of the Sayre Foundation. The Sayre Foundation was created on behalf of his son who lost his life in a mishap at Pololu Valley. They annually hold fundraisers, and donate proceeds to the HCFD's Rescue Operation.

Commissioner Fergerstrom inquired if their proceeds go to the Rescue Operations in West Hawai'i.

Captain Kojima clarified that it was for the entire island.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if the Sayre Foundation received any community acknowledgement.

Captain Kojima answered that the HCFD has acknowledged them. He was not aware of whether the community had.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated that former Commissioner Ward participated with the Sayre Foundation and kept the HCFC informed of the organization.

Commissioner Maedo suggested that the Public Relations committee members, Commissioners Kudlo and Browne, familiarize themselves with the Sayre Foundation.

The HCFC thanked Captain Kojima and his crew for their presentation.

#### Budget

- FY 2005/06:

Chief Oliveria stated that fire fighting has become more advanced. It is more technologically demanding and more sophisticated for the personnel. The Strategic Plan identifies the additional 104 positions needed to bring the department up to adequate staffing levels. These include additional rescue personnel. The HCFD's goal would be to have the Rescue Company consist of six personnel. At the present time, when they are called out to an incident, the Captain becomes part of the rescue operation and is no longer the incident commander. The staffing increase will provide adequate manpower and resources, maximize safety and the efficiency of the unit. Currently, the Rescue Company is part of an engine company. In the past, it was part of a ladder company, and in the future it will be a stand-alone unit. Presently, when a rescue call is received, the crew has to pick and choose which equipment to take based on the call. Once arriving at the scene, the crew may discover that they may have left something back. This is recognized in the Strategic Plan. Another objective is to have rescue trucks as part of the unit, as a responder and part of the team.

Chief Oliveira thanked Commissioner Fergerstrom for submitting testimony on behalf of the commission to Council Member Virginia Isbel. He explained that Council Member Isbel proposed to have the County Council unfund vacant positions within the HCFD, HCPD, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Public Works. The County Council looked at the Fire Department's last three fiscal year budgets. They noticed that there were positions presumed vacant for a period of three years. These positions identified were three Assistant Chief positions, two Fire Prevention Bureau positions, and four Firefighter positions. Unbeknownst to the County Council was that the HCFD was not filling the Assistant Chief's positions because that was part of the reorganization plan. There were bodies there on temporary assignments. The department fills the recruit positions based on the vacancies that exist

and needs these available salary and wages to catch up with hiring. The Prevention Bureau has people assigned to temporary supervisory positions to gain experience before taking the prevention exam. The four Firefighter positions identified were positions at stations where recruits are to be assigned as part of their training curriculum and training cycle. If the County Council were to unfund these nine positions, it would immediately affect the operations in the department.

Chief Oliveira stated that he provided Council Member Isbel with an overview of the impact on this decision. With the support of the HCFC, she rescinded her proposal. At this time, the County Council and the HCFD have decided to unfund the four fire fighter positions. The County Council will return these positions to the department in July when the new budget begins. It is necessary to request these positions for the next recruit class beginning in September.

Commissioner Fergstrom mentioned that Council Member Isbel informed him that the County Council was in the process of unfunding the four fire fighter positions. She assured him that these funds would be returned to the HCFD when they request them in the future.

Chief Oliveira stated that the County Council approved funding in the amount of \$60,000 to purchase 12 laptops for the department. These laptops will be purchased and used for the transmission of digital data to a wireless system. Eventually there will be a need for more than 12 laptops because there are more than 12 stations. In September, the State may recommend placing the ambulance report forms onto a digital format and initiate a computer based ambulance report form. The next step would be to assign laptops and equipment to the Engine Company for the use of GIS maps.

Commissioner Fergstrom mentioned that he was aware of Police Officers who were frustrated with their computer system. He emphasized that the HCFD make certain their system is functional with their personnel.

Chief Oliveira said that the RMS (Records Management System) committee is the end users and they tap into their peers for feedback.

#### Alternative Funding and Grants

- USFA Grant: Finalizing the bid specification for the modular live fire-training unit (burn trailer). Anticipating bid award by summer.
- FY 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant: No New Updates.
- DOT Safe Highways Grant: Received 67 spineboards and in the process of distributing them to the ambulance unit stations.

- FY 2004 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant: Received notice on May 19, 2005, grant application was not funded. Will be reapplying in October 2005.

#### Capital Improvement Projects

- Pahoia Fire Station: Environmental assessment and the “FONSI” determination were published by the State on May 23, 2005. The architects are drafting the design based on recommendations made by the Fire Department.
- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Completed the internal assessment for the needs of the Divisions and Bureaus. A consolidation of the data will be presented to the architect. Currently, the Department of Public Works is in the process of selecting a design consultant.
- Kalaoa Fire Station: Developers are negotiating with the adjacent landowner for the “sight easement.”

#### Promotions and Hiring

- Fire Radio Dispatcher I: Six Dispatchers began their initial training. Anticipating upgrading them to Dispatcher II within the next eight months.
- Fire Radio Dispatcher III (Supervisors): Interviews and assessments are scheduled for June 22, 2005. Commissioners were welcomed to attend and observe the one-day process.
- Clerk III: Recently conducted and completed open recruitment. The Mayor’s Office and the Department of Finance interviewed six applicants. The selected individual will begin on July 1, 2005, and introduced at the next meeting.

#### Operations Division

- Brush Fires: Experiencing a number of brush fires. In the process of preparing a press release to encourage the public to be cautious because of the change in weather conditions. An investigation of these fires found that one incident was identified as arson related. A stolen vehicle was set on fire in Pohoiki. The cause of the other fires has not been determined.
- Hazardous Materials Technician Training: Sixteen fire fighters will attend a statewide Hazardous Materials Technician Training on June 13 to 24 (chemistry) and July 25 to August 25 (tactics). Establishing a pool of personnel to open up the West Hawai’i HAZMAT Response Team.

#### Prevention Division

- FEST Seminar: Fireworks Education and Safety Training (FEST) seminar was completed on May 17 - 19, 2005. Contracted a Pyro-Technician-Training vendor from Iowa. Participants attended from across the State.

### Training Division

- 31<sup>st</sup> Recruit Class Update: Continuing their clinical portion for EMT-B training. Graduation scheduled for August 20, 2005. Invitations will be sent to commissioners.
- 32<sup>nd</sup> Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Presently in their first responder training. Following with water-safety training.
- Fire Science Program: To commence this fall at the Hawai'i Community College. They will be conducting Wildfire/Wildland Training and an Incident Command course. Currently, there is only one instructor who is teaching in Hilo. The department is seeking instructors for West Hawai'i. The Rural Development Program at HCC is once more offering these courses at no charge. Personnel are encouraged to attend.
- Peer Fitness Recertification Training: Considering implementing a Peer Fitness/Health and Wellness Program through the next Fire Act grant.

### Volunteer Training Division

- Volunteer Fire Chief's Meeting: Held on Saturday, May 14, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., at South Kohala Fire Station. Commissioner Browne attended. The next meeting will be held in September. The location and date will be provided at the next meeting.

### New Projects/Business

- Fire Commission ID Photos: Scheduled for the July 13, 2005, meeting to be held in Hilo.
- CERT (Community Emergency Response Team): The first course delivered in the State of Hawai'i, in South Kona. Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda has been involved with the legalities of this program. Anticipating within the next few months to have the first qualified and certified CERT Team in the State. Firefighter Keola Payao leading this project.
- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Association Conference: Scheduled for November 2005. Former Commissioner Laura Ward has volunteered her assistance. All commissioners are welcomed to participate and assist with this event. The HCFD is inviting all staff and encouraging participation with all the rank and file. This will give them the opportunity to meet with their counterparts and Chief Officers from other departments.
- Reorganization: Anticipating the conversion of six Assistant Chiefs to Battalion Chiefs and establishing two eight hour Assistant Chiefs beginning July 1, 2005.

### Employee/Public Relations

- EMS Week: Held on May 22, 2005, at Liliuokalani Gardens, in Hilo. The commissioners who attended were thanked. 600 participants. Raised approximately \$7000. Proceeds will be divided between a Health Care provider in the community who is being treated for cancer and the Hilo Medical Center Emergency Room's renovations.

- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Pool Splash: Captain Clint Coloma coordinating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual event, at the NAS pool. Potluck event. Invitations will be sent to commissioners.

Commissioner Fergerstrom inquired if there was a helicopter crash.

Chief Oliveira stated that as the Rescue Company and Chopper 2 responded to an ATV accident, they were trying to locate a landing site, they lost power and were forced to perform an emergency landing. The pilot was able to control the landing without any damage to the aircraft and injury to the crew. The helicopter is currently back in service.

Commissioner Browne thanked Chief Oliveira for the Naptha report. He requested to have someone attend a future meeting regarding this incident.

Chief Oliveira responded that he would schedule it for the next meeting.

Commissioner Hart questioned the status of the MICT class on Oahu.

Chief Oliveira stated that they would complete training in November.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned what the present situation was regarding the Kawaihāni Fire Station's diesel exhaust exposure.

Chief Oliveira stated that he contacted the commander at Kawaihāni Fire Station and they discussed what kind of internal measures could be made until more permanent fixes could be made. They considered relocating apparatus and starting the engine outside. He is working with the Safety Director to arrange for a company to do carbon monoxide monitoring at the station.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked where the HCFD would obtain funds for requesting a specialist.

Chief Oliveira replied that it comes from the department's budget. The cost will be \$2000. The department will be bringing in a private contractor because there are no experts within the county system, and a private contractor provides an unbiased validation to personnel.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if they found hazardous car synergetic, would the firefighters be checked for exposure?

Chief Oliveira stated that there is an exposure recording system in the Fire Service, and firefighters document anytime they're exposed to toxins.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if the strategic plan distributed to them at the previous meeting was revised.

Chief Oliveira replied that it was the original, and an amended version would be distributed to them in the near future.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Budget & Finance (Hart/Matsuda) Commissioner Hart informed the commission that former Commissioner Stephen Bowles was on the mainland for a month. He requested that Chief Oliveira provide them with the budget by July. This will allow the commission the opportunity to discuss the budget at the August meeting and have an idea of what will be presented before the County Council in September.
- Office of Management and Staffing (Brazier) Commissioner Brazier mentioned that Commissioner Okabe's name did not appear on the agenda as serving on the Office of Management and Staffing committee. Kaycie will make the correction on the future agendas.

Commissioner Fergerstrom informed the HCFC that the Chairman for the Maui Fire Commission asked what the HCFC's protocol was regarding visiting a Fire Station. He advised him that the HCFC did not have a policy and that Chief Oliveira allows commissioners to visit providing the members do not make promises to the personnel. If commissioners have any comments, questions and concerns, they may address them to the Fire Chief at the Fire Commission's meetings.

- Rules and Policies (Maedo) None
- Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo) Commissioners Kudlo and Browne will discuss their committee and report back at the next meeting.
- Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo) None

### **PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

None

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Collection of folders and documents.
- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Centre, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for July 13, 2005, meeting.
  - HazMat presentation and Barge Fire.
  - Follow up on medication procedures.

Commissioner Okabe requested a list of the Fire Department's positions, descriptions, and salary ranges.

Commissioner Browne asked if it were possible to arrange an orientation ride in Chopper 2.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda replied that she would check into it.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked what the cost was to run Chopper 2.

Chief Oliveira replied that it costs \$300 per hour.

Chief Oliveira stated that he would do an overview and demonstration of the operation at a future meeting. The HCFD does have an upcoming operation at Parker Ranch and could use that as an opportunity to take along any interested members. He will consult with Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda regarding the liabilities involved.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

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KAYCIE A. I. CARTER  
Secretary