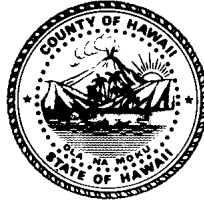


Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

C/O 25 Aupuni Street #217, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Phone: 961-8316 ; Fax: 933-1521

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REGULAR SESSION – MINUTES AS AMENDED

June 14, 2006

**Liquor Control Conference Room
Kona Center Building**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Maedo at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch
Neil Brazier, Vice-Chair
James Browne
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Chair
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Nick AhYo
Kaycie Carter
Laurie Kaneta
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Betsy Tranquilli

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: John Bertsch, Neil Brazier, James Browne, Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Glen Matsuda, Wil Okabe

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Matsuda moved to accept the April 12, 2006, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brazier and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept communication numbers 06-007 to 06-010. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browne and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget

- FY 2006/07: The department's budget was approved by the County Council and is awaiting final approval by the Mayor. Included in the budget are the following positions:
 - 1 – Account Clerk
 - 1 – Information Systems Analyst IV (funded through Data Systems)
 - 1 – Fire Captain (Volunteer Training)
 - 1 – Fire Equipment Operator (Driver Trainer)
 - 1 – Battalion Chief (Special Operations)
 - 1 - Part Time Projects Manager

Alternative Funding and Grants

- U.S. Fire Administration Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: No new updates to report.
- Department of Transportation-Safe Highways Grant: Will be submitting an application to purchase roadside safety items such as generators, lights, and reflective banners. The total grant package is approximately \$30,000.

Capital Improvement Projects – Report provided by Projects Manager Nick AhYo

- Makalei Fire Station: A fee proposal is expected from Architects Hawai'i by the end of the week. Once received, the department will follow with the environmental assessment phase.
- Pahoehoe Fire Station: The bids opened on May 11, 2006. Isemoto Contracting submitted the lowest bid for 4.8 million dollars. The Hawai'i Fire Department originally had 4.3 million dollars in appropriation. With the assistance of

Council Members Virginia Isbel and Gary Safarik, the department received an additional 1 million dollars for the project. The extra half million dollars was given to cover anticipated changes.

Commissioner Brazier questioned when the project would be completed.

Projects Manager Nick AhYo estimated that groundbreaking would take place by October 1, 2006, and the project should be completed in a year.

- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Projects Manager Nick AhYo finalized and submitted the data to the Department of Public Works on May 31, 2006. Awaiting their review and selection of a design consultant.
- Central Fire Station: The Mayor's Office completed the Hawai'i Community Development Corporation of Hawai'i's requirements. A meeting was held to approve the transfer proposal to the county. The data was sent to the Federal Government's Department of Housing & Urban Development for their approval of the transfer.

Chair Maedo questioned when the approval was expected.

Projects Manager Nick AhYo estimated that it would probably occur by the end of the year.

Promotions and Hiring

- Internal Recruitments: Active recruits include the following:
 1. Fire Prevention Inspector (3 vacancies): Assessment scheduled for June 14 and 19, 2006.
 2. Fire Equipment Operator: Assessment held on June 7, 2006.
 3. Fire Rescue Specialist: Six individuals were promoted effective June 6, 2006. Currently, all positions are filled and rescue companies are working with a full staff.
- Open Recruitments: Firefighter recruit interviews were held for the 34th recruit class. Targeting July 1, 2006, as their hire date. In order to expedite the hiring process, the interview panel worked through the Memorial Day weekend to interview 100 candidates.

Regarding the Fire Captain promotions, Commissioner Browne asked how many individuals passed the written exam.

Chief Oliveira estimated that there were 8. He will confirm this number and provide the HCFC with a more accurate figure.

Chair Maedo asked whether there were procedures that dictate when interviews could be held.

Chief Oliveira replied that there are not.

Chair Maedo questioned whether it was normal practice to have interviews on weekends and holidays.

Chief Oliveira answered that interviews occasionally occur on weekends; however, interviews on holidays are uncommon. The HFD makes every effort to be cost conscious. In this case, there were several reasons to expedite the interview process. The recruits needed to begin by July, and there were considerations as to where to hold the interview and the availability of the interview panel members.

Chair Maedo questioned the overtime involved.

Chief Oliveira explained that the interview panel was comprised of 24-hour employees who only get extra holiday pay during their 24-hour shifts. There was no additional cost other than their straight overtime, which they would have received anyway.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned Dennis Branco's reinstatement.

Chief Oliveira explained that Mr. Branco was a former dispatcher who could no longer meet the requirements of the job due to an injury/illness. Therefore, he was placed in the County's Department of Civil Services Job Placement Program. However, due to unsuccessful completion of the program he has returned to original position on paid leave.

Commissioner Kudlo inquired on whether there was anything special to report on female Firefighter Melanie Keolanui.

Chief Oliveira reported that all female Firefighters are being utilized to promote and market female interest in a career with the fire service.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned the two-dollar premium offered to the one-man stations.

Chief Oliveira replied that the HFD has been operating with one-man stations for more than 25-30 years. When Chief Oliveira became part of the organization in 1980, there were three one-man stations located in Laupahoehoe, North Kohala, and the other in Kawaihae. Over the years, the Kawaihae Station became the South Kohala Station (Station 14) and the Laupahoehoe Station remained a one-man station. Additionally, Waikoloa, Ocean View, and Paradise Park opened up as one-man stations. The one-man stations were staffed with one Fire Equipment Operator per shift. With the continuous insistence of the current administration and a partnership with the union, along with the Fire Commission's support, the administration was successful; the County Council approved 12 additional Firefighter positions in

2004. However, by doing so, the FEO's were asked to take on supervisory roles, which is normally the role of a Fire Captain. Therefore, because these individuals were being asked to take on duties and assignments outside their class of work, the right course of action was to compensate them with a two-dollar hour supervisory premium. This was not created as a permanent fix, but only as a means to compensate these individuals until an increase in staff and a proper complement at those stations are established.

Commissioner Browne stated that he received feedback that there were disgruntled employees who were unaware of the two-dollar premium and only learned about it six days after it went into effect.

Chief Oliveira replied that both the HFD and the union accept their responsibility with not having better communication with its members regarding the plan. The department will be scheduling emergency meetings to explain the plan.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether Chief Oliveira received any calls/concerns regarding this issue.

Chief Oliveira replied that he had not. The one call he received was from someone at a one-man station who wanted to express his appreciation.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned when the Captain positions at the one-man stations would be filled.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department continues to request those positions in the supplemental budget. The HFD is making progress. The Mayor and the County Council have expressed their support; however, there is a need to fill vacancies before creating new ones.

Commissioner Bertsch asked whether the FEO's at the fully manned stations, who are temporarily assigned as acting Chiefs, qualify for the two-dollar hour premium.

Chief Oliveira replied that what Commissioner Bertsch was referring to was a temporary assignment. The FEO's at those stations are temporarily assigned to actual positions. In order for it to be called a temporary assignment, that person needs to be assigned to another position number that is already funded. In the one-man stations, there is no position to be temporarily assigned to. The premium plan was created because the one-man station's drivers are not relinquishing their driver responsibility, they are still drivers, but are being asked to take on supervisory duties.

Commissioner Kudlo asked whether individuals who were taking on the supervisory roles receive credit for having this type of responsibility.

Chief Oliveira stated that he is aware that the Maui Fire Department gives credit to their personnel. Thus far, the remaining Fire Departments do not, because not everyone has an equitable opportunity for temporary assignments. On the other hand, the HFD will take into consideration these additional duties when an individual is being interviewed for a higher position.

- Fire Radio Dispatchers: Will be working towards filling three permanent and one temporary position beginning July 17, 2006.
- Battalion Chief: Battalion Chief Paul Paiva retired effective June 1, 2006.

Emergency Operations Division

- No new updates to report.

Support Services Division

- Warehouse: Will begin the process of fit testing personnel for their breathing apparatus face masks this week. Once completed, will begin the distribution and training of new MSA breathing apparatus to all line companies. Appreciation to Vivian Akine, Firefighter Gene Nakashima, and Captains Craig Nagamine and Jerry Lum for coordinating the training.
- Maintenance Shop: Recently filled the last position at the mechanic shop, which is now fully staffed. However, it is still necessary to increase staffing due to the Fire Department's fast-growing fleet. Also, under consideration is having a roving mechanic who would go to various stations and help maintain the vehicles. Traditionally, the station personnel were responsible to maintain the apparatus.

EMS Bureau:

- Laptops: Recently received approval for the purchase of 15 laptops. These laptops will support Patient Care Reporting (PCR) software that will replace the paper ambulance report forms.

Training Bureau:

- Volunteer Section: Thanks to Councilman Angel Pilago who transferred \$30,000 dollars from his discretionary fund to support operations at the Pu'uanaulu and Kalaoa Volunteer stations.
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- Other Support Division Activities: A used, but in very good condition, type 42 Fire Engine was recently donated to the County by the USDA Forest Service. Another type 42 engine is scheduled to be donated by the State's Department of Forestry and Wildlife.

New Projects/Business

- Ironman Donation: Through the Sayre Foundation, Ironman will make a donation of about \$42,000 to the department for equipment.

- Charter Amendment: Submitted a request to adopt “Hawai’i Fire Department” as the official title of the department. The department’s identity was formalized in 1892 as the “Hilo Volunteer Fire Department.” In 1905, Hawai’i was established as a County. The department and its title continued to evolve through the years and have been referred to by various names. This bill would ensure standardization and recognition of the department’s name.
- 2006 Legislature
- HB 1833 (Fireworks Permits): Act 54 signed into law by Governor Lingle on May 1, 2006. Vendors are willing to follow the rules and were instrumental in supporting testimony.
- SB 218 (MICT Stipend): Submitted to Governor Lingle on May 8, 2006. (To offset the hardships incurred by students who desire to participate in MICT training program. If approved, will designate 10 students per year, who are public or private EMT’s and currently do not have access to a training stipend program. Dollar amount remains unspecified. Effective July 1, 2006, if approved by Governor Lingle.
- SB 3146 (Appropriation for Emergency Medical Services): This bill did not make it out of conference committee hearings.
- SB 2667 (Clarifies fireworks terminology to be consistent with Federal law and repeals and amends definitions): Signed by Governor Lingle on June 9, 2006.
- Media Relations: Media-Fire Department meeting held on April 27, 2006, at the Hawai’i Community College. Representatives from West Hawaii Today, The Honolulu Advertiser, and the Hawaii Star Bulletin attended. Good discussion and foundation to building interactive working relationship and partnerships.
- Captain Cook Open House: Per Commissioner Kudlo’s suggestion, the HFD is considering targeting Fire Prevention Week (October 8-14) for the open house. Commissioners are welcomed to participate.
- Relocation of Fire Administration: Due to the renovations that will be taking place at the County building, the Administrative office will be moving to the former Veteran’s Administration building located across the Police Station on Ululani Street. Building scheduled to close in October for approximately two years.

Employee/Public Relations

- Mother’s Day Rose Project for American Cancer Society: The 4th Annual event was a tremendous success. Appreciation to coordinators, Firefighter Shane Paulos, Gabriel Sasaki and Patrick Springer. Raised \$4,073 for American Cancer Society. A record number of bouquets were assembled and delivered. The HFD would like to expand this project to West Hawai’i. Unfortunately, no one has volunteered to take the lead.
- EMS Week: 6th Annual EMS Week held on Sunday, May 28, 2006 at Liliuokalani Gardens. All proceeds to benefit Hospice of Hilo.

Commissioner Kudlo inquired on the status of the Ocean View ambulance.

Chief Oliveira replied that Deputy Corporation Counsel Diane Noda is working with Bruce Coates on the agreement. The Carrus Foundation will be sending written correspondence that supports the donation of the ambulance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Matsuda)

- ✓ Committee findings on the comparison of all other Counties Fire Department administrations' salaries.

Commissioner Matsuda distributed a salary comparison of the counties' annual budgets, the Fire Chiefs' salaries, number of employees, services provided, etc. (See Attachment's "A-1, A-2") Also distributed was the Hawaii County Fire Department's actual wages for Fire Captains and EM for FY 04-05, which includes overtime. (See Attachment "B")

Commissioner Matsuda reported that at least eight of the Fire Captains are currently making more than the Fire Chief. Additionally, four Fire Captains are making more than the Deputy Fire Chief. There is a definite disparity in the salary ranges for the Fire Chief and the Deputy Fire Chief compared to their subordinates. Commissioner Matsuda stated that he is concerned that individuals will not be motivated for advancement. In order to bring this issue forward to the Salary Commission, he attended their meeting and inquired on what the process would be. The Salary Commission will inform him of its next meeting. However, before attending the next Salary Commission's meeting, he would like to receive more information and be better prepared on what to propose.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that the Fire Commission cannot tell the Salary Commission what they would like the Fire Chief's salary to be. The Fire Commission needs to provide the Salary Commission as much information as possible and may suggest what they feel is equitable. The information that Commissioner Matsuda distributed should be presented to them for their consideration.

Commissioner Okabe suggested that a presentation should be made with a poster board. He feels that the comparison should be made between Honolulu and the Big Island. The strategy should not only be the magnitude of the island but also the responsibilities involved. The first thing to point out is the responsibilities of personnel and the size of the Big Island in comparison of the other counties.

Commissioner Browne commented that the HFD is unique in that it provides Emergency Medical Services.

Chair Maedo stated that this is an opportunity to educate people and to promote the department by informing them of the differences. She recommended that the base pay be listed separately.

Commissioner Okabe recommended that what also needs to be pointed out is that the last time this issue was addressed, the pay may have been comparable. However, as the years passed, the rank and file due to collective bargaining negotiations received increases in their salaries. The Chief's salary remains the same until the issue is raised with the commission.

Chair Maedo stated that the Fire Commission needs to present a factual picture and take the opportunity to educate the Salary Commission about the differences that exist with each county.

Commissioner Matsuda asked Ms. Kaneta if she were able to provide a listing with the base pay separate.

Ms. Kaneta replied that she would provide the information.

Office Management and Staffing (Brazier/Okabe): No report.

Rules and Policies (Maedo): No report.

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo): No report.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo): No report.

NEW BUSINESS

None

Commissioner Browne asked whether it would be possible for the commission to meet in West Hawai'i at Station 14.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department would accommodate the commission's wishes with regard to different locations.

Commissioner Browne commented that the commission does not get to hear from the firefighters, and someone suggested having the meetings at a Fire Station.

Chair Maedo stated that commission represents the public, and the meetings are open to all firefighters. If the commission meets at a Fire Station, it takes away the

concept that the commission is the taxpayer's representatives. The Firefighters are encouraged to attend the meeting whether it is held in Hilo or Kona.

Commissioner Brazier stated that there were no guarantees that firefighters would attend whether they change the location or not. To have the meeting held in relatively central locations is appropriate.

Chief Oliveira said that the decision to change the location would be up to the commission. The HFD would accommodate their desire and look into a resort or a community center.

Chair Maedo replied that the commission needs to be sensitive to cost issues because it is a concern for taxpayers. In the past, the members met at a resort; however, if a quorum is not present, as with last month's meeting, it would be a loss in expense.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, July 12, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Centre Building, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for July 12, 2006, meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary