

**William P. Kenoi**  
Mayor



**John M. Bertsch**  
Chairman

**Bill Rosehill**  
Vice-Chairman

## HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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

Phone: 961-8317; Fax: 933-1521

Email: Firecomm-agenda@co.hawaii.hi.us

### **REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES**

**July 8, 2009**

**Aupuni Center Conference Room**

**Hilo, Hawai'i**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Deputy Corporation Counsel Bill Brillhante recommended that the Fire Commission's present members appoint a temporary Vice-Chair to call the meeting to order. The temporary Vice-Chair will conduct the meeting until Chair Bertsch arrives.

Commissioner Robinson made a motion to appoint Commissioner Bowles as temporary Vice-Chair. Commissioner Pomroy seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

The meeting was called to order by temporary Vice-Chair Bowles at 10:05 a.m. He introduced reappointed Fire Commissioner Louis Kaiwi.

#### **ROLL CALL**

##### **PRESENT:**

John Bertsch, Chair (10:10 a.m.)

Stephen Bowles

James Browne

Louis Kaiwi

Henry Pomroy, Jr.

Kaloa Robinson

Excused: Bill Rosehill

A quorum was present.

*Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer*

Commissioners: John Bertsch, Stephen Bowles, James Browne, Louis Kaiwi  
Henry Pomroy, Jr., Kaloa Robinson, Bill Rosehill

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Toni Bello  
Bill Brilhante, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Tom Brandt  
Kaycie Carter  
Glen Honda, Deputy Fire Chief  
Laurie Kaneta  
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief  
Noni Sanford

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

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

At 10:10 a.m., Chair Bertsch arrived and continued the meeting.

Commissioner Browne moved to accept the June 10, 2009, regular and executive session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pomroy and unanimously carried.

**APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Bowles moved to accept communication No. 09-03 and 09-04. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browne and unanimously carried.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Oliveira welcomed the return of both Commissioners Kaiwi and Pomroy.

Budget

- FY 2009/10 Budget: The department is closing out its expenditures and purchase orders for the fiscal year.
- Replacement of Search and Rescue Helicopter: The Fire Department, Office of the Corporation Counsel, and Department of Finance-Purchasing Division negotiated with the vendor (MacDonald Douglas) for a five percent reduction in the cost. There was a proposal made to trade in Chopper 1 and apply the amount to the cost of the new aircraft. However, since the appraised value of Chopper 1 was below the market value, Chief Oliveira met with the Mayor and Managing Director and it was decided that HFD pursue an out right purchase for the new helicopter and keep the existing aircraft for either a future sale or strip it for parts.

Commissioner Bowles questioned the timeline of the purchase.

Chief Oliveira stated that it would take approximately a year for construction and delivery.

Chair Bertsch inquired on whether the aircraft was custom built.

Chief Oliveira replied that the Fire Department requires specific needs in the aircraft such as the avionics, configuration, etc.

Chair Bertsch questioned whether an assessment was conducted on the retrofit expense of Chopper 1.

Chief Oliveira answered that an assessment was conducted and it would cost the County of Hawai'i approximately \$800,000 to retrofit the 28 year-old existing aircraft.

Chair Bertsch questioned if there was a possibility to keep Chopper 1 reserved and airworthy as opposed to stripping it for parts.

Chief Oliveira replied that aircrafts cost more to maintain if they are not in operation. In addition, the department does not have the pilot staff or the maintenance cost to keep the aircraft as a reserve.

Commissioner Kaoiwi inquired on the number of pilots employed.

Chief Oliveira stated that the pilots are contracted through a private vendor called Rotor Wing. There are three pilots assigned to Chopper 1 in East Hawai'i and four pilots assigned to the aircraft in South Kohala.

#### Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2007 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Video Teleconferencing Equipment) Installing and testing equipment. Expecting to have the equipment up and running by the end of the month.
- FEMA FY 2008 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Health/Wellness program, total budget is \$531,203). Equipment is being delivered. Finalized contract for the diagnostic services in East and West Hawai'i.
- FY 2009 Assistance to Fire Fighters Fire Station Construction: Submitted application for Makalei Fire Station's construction costs. Grant deadline is July 10, 2009.

Chair Bertsch questioned whether other projects were considered.

Chief Oliveira replied that the grant is project specific. Also, there is a cap for each type of project. The Department of Public Works Engineer suggested that Central Fire Station's retrofit project be considered.

However, there are strict guidelines that prohibit construction prior to the grant award which is targeted for September 2010.

#### Capital Improvement Projects

- Pahoia Fire Station: On July 6, 2009, the Department of Public Works' Project Inspector emailed Chief Oliveira informing him that he will be arranging an on-site inspection to finalize the Certificate of Occupancy.

Chair Bertsch inquired on whether there would be a formal blessing for the station.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department is scheduling a community event with Councilwoman Naeole and the Mayor's Office.

#### Promotions and Hiring

##### Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Fire Fighter Recruit: Currently, interviews and compass tests are being arranged for prospective hires. Tentatively interviews have been scheduled for July 15 - 21, 2009. Targeting class to begin in January 2010.

##### Internal Recruitment

- Assistant Fire Chiefs: Two positions to fill.
- Battalion Chiefs: Two individuals retired on June 30, 2009.
- Fire Hazardous Materials Specialist: Reallocation targeted for August 2009.
- Accountant IV: Interviews will be conducted.

Chief Oliveira stated that the department will be filling other vacancies which include a Special Operations Battalion Chief, Prevention Inspector, and additional Fire Captains and Fire Equipment Operators.

#### Ocean Safety Division

- An update will be provided at next month's meeting on the status of the Hapuna truck.
- Water Safety Officer Sean Gallagher proposed scheduling a fundraiser in Kona to purchase equipment for Kahalu'u and La'aloa Beach Parks Ocean Safety program and for a firefighter who is battling cancer. Chief Oliveira met with the Office of the Corporation Counsel and both the Ocean Safety Captain and WSO Gallagher to discuss the legalities.

#### Volunteer Section

Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt.

- Volcano Fourth of July parade. Company 19A participated in the parade.
- Hawai'i Volunteer Fire Chief's Association meeting: Date to be advised on HVFCA website ([www.HVFCA.net](http://www.HVFCA.net)).

- Ainaloa Volunteer Company: Received truck and in operation.
- Volcano Volunteer Company: New Water Tank purchased.

Commissioner Pomroy introduced Ms. Toni Bello who informed the Fire Commission that there will be a Volunteer Firefighter Recognition Dinner held on July 31, 2009, at Kulaimano Community Center. Funding was provided through Councilman Dominic Yagong's Office. Unfortunately, funding was not available for all districts. Ms. Bello distributed maps to the Fire Commission.

#### New Projects/Business

- Human Resources Filming Project: The Department of Human Resources received a grant through the Department of Research and Development to create two informational videos. The videos will inform the public of the expectations and requirements for Firefighter Recruit and Water Safety Officer Positions. The video will be broadcasted on government channels and possibly streamed into movie theatres.

#### Employee/Public Relations

- American Cancer Society Relay for Life: Participating with other County departments at the Puainako Town Center in American Cancer Society's Relay for Life on July 18-19, 2009. Commissioners are welcome to participate and join the Hawai'i Fire Department's team.

Regarding the new Snorkel/Ladder truck at Mauna Lani, Commissioner Kaiwi stated that people are concerned that the truck is not capable of servicing the mauka side of the Kohala Mountain road. He asked whether the Fire Department would consider purchasing an additional (small) truck that could be utilized in that area.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department is trying to replace vehicles on a regular basis for both paid and volunteer staff. The Kohala Ranch community helped to coordinate a tremendous fundraiser in an effort to acquire a water tanker brush vehicle. Once that vehicle arrives, it will add to the department's resources and assets in that district. Also, Chief Oliveira stated that the department is trying to reassign another tanker to North Kohala. It will replace the (older) existing one.

Chief Oliveira stated it is necessary to improve the department's overall vehicle inventory because some vehicles are outdated. The HFD has been successful in obtaining surplus vehicles from the State. As earlier mentioned by Volunteer Fire Chief Brandt, Ainaloa Volunteers started with a State surplus vehicle. There will be another surplus vehicle assigned to Pu'uanaulu.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the Waikoloa Village meeting.

Chief Oliveira replied that it is necessary to wait on the status of the roads before arranging a meeting with the community.

Regarding Firefighter recruitment, Chair Bertsch questioned whether there were advantages offered to volunteers who are interested in becoming paid firefighters. He also inquired on incentives offered across the country to volunteers.

Chief Oliveira stated that a point system that would offer credit to a volunteer has not been developed or adopted. Currently, the HFD encourages volunteers to emphasize their experience and knowledge during the interview process.

According to Chief Oliveira, there are incentives such as real property tax breaks for volunteers. He did share this information with former Director of Finance Bill Takaba who is currently the County of Hawai'i's Managing Director. Chief Oliveira will revisit the subject with him.

Chair Bertsch suggested that it may be necessary to consider revising the Fire Commission's agenda items because it limits their discussions. Previously, he discussed with Chief Oliveira toning down the specifics on the agenda in order to broaden the commission's ability to direct a conversation to another area.

Chief Oliveira stated that originally the agenda was created so that topics were specific and clear. He asked that Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante confer with the members on whether the agenda may be broadened to allow more subject matter or latitude.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante stated that the reason it is necessary to have a criteria in place is because the Fire Commission meetings are public meetings and under HRS 92F it is required that the public be given notice on the topics that will be discussed. This allows the public the opportunity to attend the meeting and provide public testimony.

Chair Bertsch stated that the present agenda is fairly broad yet comprehensive. He asked Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante whether this agenda limits the commission from diving into more specifics.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante recommended that the commission consider listing general broad topics such as budget, alternative funding and grants, capital improvements projects, etc. This will allow the discussion to expand further.

Commissioner Bowles asked Chief Oliveira if there were other topics that needed to be included.

Chief Oliveira inquired on whether the Fire Commission wishes to hear from other staff members.

According to Chair Bertsch, the Police Chief selects a few of his Assistant Chiefs to report to the Police Commission on matters pertaining to their field of expertise. The Fire Commission will leave this decision to the discretion of the Fire Chief.

Chief Oliveira replied that this would benefit both the HFD and the commission. The commission can become familiar with the department's Chief Officers and the Chief Officers will gain experience in public speaking.

Commissioner Bowles agreed that the agenda should list more generic headings.

Chair Bertsch stated that he wanted to address this issue because two of the largest benefactors for the Fire Department (Ironman and the Sayre Foundation) attended the Kona meeting and their testimony needed to be restrained because it was not listed on the agenda.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the status of the teleconferencing.

Chief Oliveira replied that the Department of Data Systems is working with Hawaiian Telcom and Audio/Visual to get the components active and on-line. The Fire Commission will be notified of the broadcast date.

Commissioner Browne questioned whether the Fire Commission meetings could be teleconferenced.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante stated that the public would need to be invited and informed of the locations.

Chief Oliveira added that if the public is invited the location requires ADA compliance and the teleconferencing would need to include closed-captions.

Commissioner Kaoiwi questioned the status of the future telecommunication center on Mohouli Street.

Chief Oliveira answered that funds are appropriated for just the design of the building.

Chief Oliveira informed the Fire Commission that the administration office will be relocating to the renovated County Building. It will temporarily be located in the former Police Commission's section of the building.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The Fire Department distributed orientation binders to the commission.

Chair Bertsch requested that a listing of the Volunteer station be included in the binder.

Chief Oliveira stated that the once the binders are distributed to the commission it becomes a public document. Therefore, the department did not want to include the list of phone contacts for the volunteers because it is private information.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante informed the members that on July 7, 2009, Mayor Nominee Scott Stabo received committee approval by County Council. His nomination is now scheduled for full County Council approval on July 22, 2009. Once Mr. Stabo is confirmed, Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante will arrange a meeting to review the Fire Commission rules and regulations, Hawai'i Sunshine Law, etc.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Warehouse Familiarization trip to 466 Kinoole Street, Hilo, for the purpose of observing operations. Trip will take place upon conclusion of other items on the agenda.

Commissioner Bowles made a motion to postpone the warehouse indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browne.

Discussion: Chair Bertsch encouraged the commission to visit the Fire Stations in their districts.

Commissioner Bowles suggested that Fire Commission consider holding its monthly meetings at various stations.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante stated that the only legal requirement would be to give public notice. Also, regarding the earlier discussion about teleconferencing the meeting, Deputy Corporation Counsel explained that boards are authorized to hold meetings by video conferencing. However, the meeting must be terminated if both audio and video communications cannot be maintained at all of the videoconference locations.

Chair Bertsch requested that a revised agenda be proposed at next month's meeting. He suggested listing Incident Reports as a topic.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Budget & Finance (Bowles) No report.

Office Management and Staffing (Bertsch) No report.

Rules and Policies (Rosehill) No report.

Public Relations (Pomroy/Bertsch/Browne) No report.

Training and Education (Bertsch) No report.


### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in the Aupuni Center Conference Room, Aupuni Center, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for August 12, 2009, meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:15 a.m., Commissioner Browne made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kaiwi seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

SUBMITTED BY:

  
KAYCIE A. I. CARTER  
Secretary