

**Harry Kim**  
Mayor



**Dixie Kaetsu**  
Managing Director

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Deputy Managing Director

## HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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### **REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES** **July 11, 2007** **Aupuni Center Conference Room**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

#### **ROLL CALL**

#### **PRESENT:**

John Bertsch (10:05 a.m.)  
Stephen Bowles  
Neil Brazier, Chair  
James Browne  
Karen Kudlo  
Karen Maedo  
Wil Okabe  
Henry Pomroy, Jr.  
Bill Rosehill

A quorum was present.

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Tom Brandt  
Bill Brillhante, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Kaycie Carter  
Terrie Henderson  
Glen Honda, Deputy Fire Chief  
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief  
Noni Sanford

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Commissioners: John Bertsch, Stephen Bowles, Neil Brazier, James Browne,  
Karen Kudlo, Karen Maedo, Wil Okabe, Henry Pomroy, Jr., Bill Rosehill

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

None

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept the June 13, 2007, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kudlo and unanimously carried.

## **APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept communication number 07-012. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kudlo and unanimously carried.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

### Budget

- FY 2007/08 Budget: Disseminated copies of FY 07/08 budget to Commissioners. In the process of working on the next program budget proposal. Will be keeping the Commissioners updated on the progress.

### Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2005 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Plymo-Vent) Expecting the system to be completed by July 13, 2007.
- State Department of Transportation Highway Safety Grant: Awaiting the status on grant proposal of \$29,500 for the purchase of three electronic message boards. The boards will provide early notification to motorists of road closures.

### Capital Improvement Projects

- Makalei Fire Station: Projects Manager Desmond Wery is presently meeting with the Mayor's Office and the developer regarding off-site improvements.
- Pahoia Fire Station: Apparatus bay is framed. The dorm and living quarters framing will begin today, July 11, 2007. Also started the construction on the fuel station. The foreman advised the HFD that the project is back on schedule.
- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Design contract is being routed for execution.
- Central Fire Station: Presently, the Mayor's Office is in communication with the State Housing and Urban Development Office for the purpose of conducting an Environmental Assessment.
- Central Fire Station Retrofit Project: Recently, personnel raised their concerns to Chief Oliveira regarding demolition debris left in one of the

station's living quarters. As a result, the dorm will be closed off and the personnel will be relocated to the second dorm.

Chief Oliveira stated that it is necessary that the administration improve on its awareness of the risks and impact renovations have on employees.

- Captain Cook Fire Station: Continuing to meet with the design consultant. Chief Oliveira explained to two Captains the personnel's concerns, and assured them that although architects may show up to inspect the property, there is no solid plan to date.

Promotions and Hiring  
Active recruits include:

#### Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Firefighter Recruit Open Recruitment: Recruitment closed with Department of Human Resources on June 26, 2007.
- 36<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit class slated to begin on July 16, 2007. Total of 17 recruits to be hired.
- Fire Radio Dispatcher I: Recently received the certification list for the two vacancies.

#### Internal Recruitment

- Battalion Chiefs (Emergency Operations and Special Operations): Promoted Captain Aaron Arbles to the Emergency Operations position and Captain Clint Coloma to the Special Operations position on June 16, 2007.

#### Emergency Operations Division

- Brush Fires
  - Waikoloa brush fire: Occurred on July 1, 2007. It affected 9,300 acres. The Fire Department is working closely with the Police Department on the investigation. Arson is suspected.
- Hazard Mitigation Project  
In anticipation of the Fourth of July holiday and the summer's dry conditions, the Fire Department conducted an aggressive and proactive last minute campaign to inform the public of the potential risk of fire. The Department of Public Works manufactured 30 signs overnight. The State Highway Division posted 21 of the signs and the Fire Department posted the remaining nine signs. The signs were posted in specific areas that are prone to brush fires.
- Public Education
  - Flyers were attached to fireworks permits.
  - Posters for vendor sites.

- Community outreach through on-site interaction at specific locations in the communities.
- Fourth of July
  - One fireworks-related injury; relatively minor injury.

#### Support Services Division

- Fire Auxiliary Services Bureau
- Communication Section
  - Assistant Chief Mento has been working with the Dispatch Supervisors in order to prepare them to conduct interviews and candidate selections.

#### Emergency Medical Services Bureau

- Battalion Chief Ralph Yawata on board effective July 18, 2007. Met with the different medical facilities and personnel in order to get acquainted with the EMS program. State EMS Director Dr. Linda Rosen will introduce Battalion Chief Yawata to the EMS Advisory Committee on July 19, 2007.

#### Training Bureau

- Operations Section
  - Recruit Training
  - 34<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Currently enrolled in HazMat Tech class from June 18-29, 2007.
  - 35<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Presently enrolled in EMT-B didactic training.
  - 36<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Will begin on June 16, 2007.
  - 37<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Targeting start date for December 2007 or January 2008.
- On-Line Training:
  - Fire Instructor II class scheduled for July 9-13, 2007.
  - Chevron Petroleum Fire Protection Course scheduled for July 9-13, 2007, at the Honolulu Fire Department Training Center.

#### Volunteer Section

- West Hawai'i
  - Captain Henry DeSa, who replaced Ralph Yawata, is getting acquainted with the West Hawai'i Volunteers. Trained 10 Companies, 96 personnel. Continues to work closely with Captain Clyde Komatsu to further build and develop the Volunteer program.

Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt.

- Volunteer Chiefs' Quarterly Meeting: To be held on July 21, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., at the Ocean View Fire Station. Details will be provided on the Hawai'i Volunteer Fire Chief's Association website.

Chief Brandt stated that prior to the meeting, Commissioner Bowles inquired as to whether there was a Volunteer incident report. In response to his question, Chief Brandt said that there is a report. However, it is not available on a regular basis. He will begin providing a monthly report so that the community and the commission are informed of the number of Volunteer responses.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that Assistant Chief Quince Mento is compiling that information into the Records Management System. Once the information is gathered, a monthly report will be provided to the commission.

- HELCO Training Class: Very informative training class held in June.

On behalf of the paid staff, Chief Oliveira extended their appreciation to the Volunteers for their support and assistance with the recent brushfires.

#### New Projects/Business

- Explorer Program: Pilot program began on June 30, 2007. Meetings are held every Saturday at the Fire Department's Training Room. There is a total of twelve students enrolled. The HFD will make arrangements for the students to be introduced to the commission at a future meeting.
- Ocean Safety Integration: Battalion Chief Clint Coloma is meeting with management and personnel to improve communication. It is necessary to identify if there are any issues before implementing changes.

#### Employee/Public Relations

- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Employees and Awards Dinner: Scheduled for Friday, August 17, 2007, at Hilo Meishoin. Invitations were sent to the Fire Commission.
- EMS Week: Finalized the program proceeds. The event generated \$4,500 to be donated to the Easter Seals of Hawaii Early Intervention Program.
- Hawai'i Island United Way: 2007 campaign is set to kickoff, with the Fire Department as a pacesetter company.

Commissioner Bowles questioned whether the Fire Department was tracking its personnel's ages and their retirement status.

Chief Oliveira replied that he has a spreadsheet that shows the ages and breakdown of the department, and will provide this report at the next meeting.

He explained that the department acknowledges that it does have a young workforce and loses a lot of experience due to retirement. The department has recognized a trend; the employees are retiring with years of service rather than age. The HFD has actively supported legislation that would try to address this issue and will continue to submit testimony. Both the Fire and Police Department have a vested interest because both departments rely on experience.

Commissioner Bowles requested that the Fire Commission be included in that endeavor.

Commissioner Okabe questioned why Ocean Safety Division's budget shows zero funds.

Chief Oliveira answered that the expenditure report does not show actual budget. There is a line item budget for the Ocean Safety Division, which will be provided to the commission.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether there were position ranks among the Ocean Safety personnel.

Chief Oliveira replied that there is the Water Safety Officer I and II positions, which are the beach lifeguards. The Water Safety Officer III is a Lieutenant position and Water Safety Officer IV is Captain Position.

Commissioner Okabe questioned what union they would belong to.

Chief Oliveira answered that they will remain members of the HGEA union.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned whether the Fire Commission would hear complaints and concerns brought forward by the public.

Chief Oliveira replied that all complaints of misconduct against any member of the Fire Department may be filed with the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Pomroy questioned whether personnel will be able to transfer laterally between Ocean Safety and Emergency Operations.

Chief Oliveira answered that both are special fields and it is required that all individuals use the open recruitment process.

Commissioner Pomroy inquired on what the response was regarding the Firefighter I open recruitment.

Chief Oliveira replied that he will request the numbers from the Department of Human Resources.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether there were discussions among the Fire Chiefs on implementing a program for the State with regard to having a common standard for interdepartmental transfers.

Chief Oliveira replied that it was discussed with the State Fire Council. Whenever the department is involved in the collective bargaining process, it is discussed with the union. The biggest issue that needs to be addressed is certification. The Fire Department's standards require that all members are EMT's. Therefore, a transfer would be less qualified.

Commissioner Rosehill expressed his concern and commented that he senses frustration regarding communication with Captain Cook Fire Station's personnel.

Chief Oliveira agreed that the department can always improve on communication. However, communication goes both ways. The Fire Department sends communication out through meetings with the staff, commission, and open membership. He attends meetings in East and West Hawai'i quarterly and participation is extremely poor.

Chief Oliveira stated that he believes the reaction to what is happening in Captain Cook reflects premature panic. The design consultant visited the property in order to survey the site. It is difficult for the design consultant to survey a project without going to the site to measure.

Commissioner Rosehill responded that the surveyor had plans which showed ten stalls on the south side of the station and asked how those design concepts were conceived.

Chief Oliveira replied that the personnel were looking at the design consultant's preliminary proposal, which the administration has yet to see.

Commission Rosehill reiterated that he doesn't understand how they would come up with a design without speaking with the Fire Administration.

Chief Oliveira explained that the design consultant was asked to help figure out if it is possible to build an additional apparatus bay to support a large apparatus, minimize vehicle reversing from roadway to station, maintain or improve employee parking, and maintain diesel fueling capability.

Commissioner Maedo commented that the Commission needs to remember that communication is a two-way street. The Stations have direct lines to the administration. The Commission needs to reinforce the notion that all communication is going to be 50 percent if the receiver does not know about it.

Commissioner Bertsch commended the Fire Department on how it handled the recent brush fires. Also, the State Forestry and Wildlife Division and the National

Fire Service, which donated the “Hot Shot Crew”, have done a wonderful job in backing up the Fire Department. He recommended that the County and the HFD send letters of appreciation to them.

In regards to the issue on communication, Commissioner Bertsch said the rank and file likes to share their ideas with the Commission. If a Commissioner hears an issue that he/she feels requires the Chief’s attention, the Commissioner should advise that individual that the Fire Chief is available 24/7 and he is the easiest man to get in touch with.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Budget & Finance (Kudlo)

Commissioner Kudlo inquired on the Financial and Expenditure Report.

Office Management and Staffing (Bertsch) No report.

Rules and Policies (Rosehill) No report.

Public Relations (Pomroy) No report.

Training and Education (Maedo)

Commissioner Maedo inquired on the status of the Firefighter II curriculum.

Chief Oliveira replied that the Training Bureau is working on it.

Chair Brazier requested that the Commission revisit the Fire Chief’s evaluation form. The commission will entertain any suggestions or recommendations at the next meeting.

Commissioner Maedo and Okabe will present a draft to the commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Bertsch asked Chief Oliveira if he would arrange for the Fire Commission to meet with the Civil Defense Administrator Troy Kindred for the purpose of reviewing what type of preparations the County has in effect for future disasters.

Chief Oliveira agreed to do so.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, August 8, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for August 8, 2007, meeting

Commissioner Bertsch recommended that the Fire Commission visit the Emergency Operations Center.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

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KAYCIE A. I. CARTER  
Secretary