

Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

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Deputy Managing
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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 **August 10, 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
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

Excused: Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Lincoln Ashida, Corporation Counsel
Kaycie Carter
Laurie Kaneta
Doug Keown
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Desmond Wery, Deputy Fire 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

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

Commissioner Brazier introduced Hawaiian Paradise Park's Volunteer Fire Chief Doug Keown and thanked him for his service with the Volunteer Division.

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Okabe moved to accept communication number 05-012. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Matsuda and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget

- FY 2005/06: Anticipating a report from the Department of Finance regarding the balance of last fiscal year's budget. A preliminary report will be shared at the next meeting.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- DOT Safe Highways Grants: No new updates.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Pahoia Fire Station: Completing the Special Use permit application process. The next step will be the final plan approval phase.
- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Continuing a preliminary space assessment with the staff in order for the Department of Public Works to start the consultant selection process.
- Kalaoa Fire Station: Office of the Corporation Counsel awaits the dollar amount and review of land title report. An update will be given at the next meeting.
- Central Fire Station: On August 4, 2005, Projects Manager Nick AhYo met with Housing and Community Development Corporation's Kevin Funasaki and Mayor Harry Kim to discuss the necessary steps required before a transfer can take place.

Promotions and Hiring

- Fire Radio Dispatcher III (Supervisors): Karen Bugado, Sandee Muranaka, and Darryl Willis were promoted on July 16, 2005. They will be providing 24-hour supervision to the dispatch personnel. Currently, the

department is working with these individuals on policies and procedures to ensure adequate training and to determine any necessary improvements.

- 33rd Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Selected 20 candidates to begin on September 1, 2005. Family orientation is scheduled for August 26, 2005. Commissioners are welcome to attend.

Commissioner Fergerstrom confirmed that he would attend the 31st Recruit Class graduation ceremony on August 20, 2005.

- Internal Recruitments: Recently posted announcements for Fire Inspector I, Fire Captain, and Fire Equipment Operator.
- Fire Inspectors: As part of the reorganization process, Prevention Inspectors Jack Pacleb and Alan Yagi were reallocated to Captain rank positions.

Operations Division

- Brush Fires: Letters of appreciation will be sent to the different agencies which provided support to the Fire Department. These agencies include the County of Hawai'i's Department of Public Works, Civil Defense Agency, Department of Parks and Recreation, State of Hawai'i's Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and a number of private industries. Also, the community will be thanked for its patience and understanding.

Commissioner Fergerstrom heard that there were hotels that offered their assistance.

Chief Oliveira confirmed that two hotels opened themselves up as evacuation sites and provided refreshments.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Inspector did not determine the cause of the fire because the evidence was either destroyed or blown away. The point of origin was found to be located off the Pu'uanahulu road.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the acreage involved.

Chief Oliveira replied that an estimate of 25,000 acres was made based on the shape and pattern of the burned area. The State conducted a GPS flyover and their estimate was 15,000.

Commissioner Browne asked it were possible to obtain the operations cost figures.

Chief Oliveira replied that he would first be compiling a report for FEMA's reimbursement plan. A report would be provided to the commission at a future meeting.

Commissioner Fergerstrom inquired on whether there were other vulnerable areas in the Waikoloa District.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Department of Public Works helped create a firebreak area along the makai side of Waikoloa Village.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked who owned majority of the burned property.

Chief Oliveira answered that the fire involved properties owned by multi-owners, including Parker Ranch, Waikoloa Village Association, and possibly others.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned who owned the land where the fire originated.

Chief Oliveira replied that it was owned by Parker Ranch.

Commissioner Browne commented that the tactical crew made a textbook stop and performed an outstanding job.

Commissioner Browne mentioned that he spoke with a young man at Station 16, who was working on a project and was charting all the easements around the perimeters of the Waikoloa Village Association. They discussed the different places to mark and having the association put in fire zones. He had his own initiative and put together a map that is displayed on the wall at Station 16. This is something the Firewise program should look at.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD would be working closely with the community and requesting their assistance to clean and maintain the firebreak. The Waikoloa Firewise program has kept it clean and this played a definite role in preventing the fire from spreading and creating more of an impact on the community.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if this information was relayed to the Waikoloa Firewise program.

Chief Oliveira stated that Councilman Hoffman's Firewise Program Coordinator was at the operation and took pictures. He would be coordinating a Firewise workshop in the community and will reinforce the importance and the benefit that project had on the community.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned the possibility of having the County of Hawai'i recognize these individuals' efforts in protecting themselves and their community.

Corporation Counsel Ashida suggested that they request written correspondence from the Mayor, the Fire Chief, or from Councilman Hoffman.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned who would approach and request this from Councilman Hoffman.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated normally Council Members takes it upon themselves to seize the opportunity.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned which district Councilman Hoffman's represented.

Corporation Counsel Ashida replied that he represents District 9.

Commissioner Fergerstrom recommended that Chief Oliveira make a joint effort with the Mayor to do written correspondence.

Commissioner Browne commented that Councilman Hoffman represented his district. Councilman Hoffman contacted him and requested that he keep him informed of the incident.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if there was a need to make a motion to ask Commissioner Browne to contact Councilman Hoffman on behalf of the commission and encourage him to acknowledge these individuals.

Corporation Counsel Ashida answered that this was the Chair's prerogative.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Commissioner Browne if he would make this approach on behalf of the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Browne agreed to do so.

- Fire Fighter I Curriculum: Recently implemented at all fire stations.
- Media Relations Training: The second phase of the media relations training will be held on August 23 & 25, 2005; to incorporate a partnership with the Office of Corporation Counsel on the HIPAA rules and regulations interpretations. Dr. Steven Miura of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo will hold a follow-up training.

Prevention Division

- 4th of July: A total of 48 fireworks permits were issued islandwide.
- Introduction to Structural Fire Protection: Attended by Captains Jack Pacleb and Alan Yagi on August 5, 2005. Sponsored by the Society of

Fire Protection Engineers. President Samuel Dannaway waived the fees; allowing the Prevention Bureau personnel the opportunity to attend.

- Hawai'i Fireworks Seminar: Captains Jack Pacleb and Yagi are scheduled to attend on August 11-12, 2005, on Oahu. A report will be provided at the next meeting.

Training Division

- 31st Recruit Class Update: Graduation is scheduled for August 20, 2005, at Nani Mau Gardens, in Hilo. Commissioner Fergerstrom will be addressing the graduates on behalf of the Fire Commission. The Fire Commission was sent invitations.
- 32nd Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Currently in their driver and station orientation curriculum training. EMT training will begin next month.
- Physical Agility Test: In the process of scheduling the physical agility test for the next prospective group of candidates in September. Copies of the different events were disseminated to the HCFC (See Attachment "A").

Commissioner Okabe questioned the weight of the hose bundle and jackets.

Chief Oliveira answered that the combined weight was approximately 50 lbs.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that the HCFD is moving toward implementing a (CPAT) Candidate Physical Agility Test. This is a standardized physical agility assessment test that includes a series of events that deal with work related skills. Also, it provides an overall performance exam, which tests upper and lower body strength and fitness. This circuit test is being administered among other counties across the country.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether other County Fire Departments were administering the CPAT.

Chief Oliveira replied that it was being administered in the City and County of Honolulu.

Commissioner Okabe questioned if it was being used by other agencies besides the Fire Department.

Chief Oliveira responded that the skills used were fire-based, such as dragging hoses, dragging out a victim, crawling through obstacles, raising a ladder, etc.

Commissioner Okabe inquired whether the HCFD had a training site.

Chief Oliveira stated that the CPAT testing would require a transportability study and a consultant would be sent to identify the demographics of the candidates' schools to learn the emission specific issues of the department. Also, an enclosed arena is recommended. Therefore, the department is considering Afook Chinen Civic Auditorium or the University of Hawai'i's gym.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked when this project would be initiated.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD is shooting for next summer.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned whether the volunteers would be tested.

Chief Oliveira replied that the HCFD would be administering CPAT to all the members of the department. This will allow the department to encourage their personnel to stay physically fit and to identify any deficiencies they may have.

Commissioner Fergerstrom questioned whether the volunteers would be informed and given notice.

Chief Oliveira stated that everyone would be well informed.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the older volunteers.

Chief Oliveira stated that it is not fair to these individuals if they were set up for injury or worse. There is a need to screen them and have them know the physical demands of the job. The HCFD does not want to terminate anyone from the program. Their goal is to phase it in. Volunteers can participate with other areas in the department.

Volunteer Training Division

- Volunteer Chief's Meeting: To be held on September 10, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., at the Ka'imani Drive Pavillion, in the Kona Palisades. Hosted by Volunteer Chief Derrick Domingo.
- Donation of Brush Truck: Offered by the Salinas Fire Department. In the process of obtaining a formal approval from the County Council and will be making arrangements to ship the truck. Earmarked for the Pa'auilo Volunteer Fire Company. 1990 Ford F450 brush truck. Next meeting will have timetable on the delivery through Matson.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked whether there was a process to be followed when accepting donations.

Chief Oliveira replied that there is an ordinance process. First, the donator is acknowledged, which goes on record. Second, the equipment is put into the county's ownership so that it can be maintained and supported. All equipment needs to be compatible and reliable to the needs of the department. The ordinance process is stressed because of safety.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Corporation Counsel Ashida if it were illegal for a county agency to accept donations without going through the ordinance process.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that this was called the resolution process. The County Code requires that the County Council approve any donation that has any value.

Commissioner Browne was informed that Station 16 does not have a flagpole. He questioned whether the HCFD and the County could accept a flagpole donation.

Chief Oliveira replied that the Mayor has reminded the department that numerous Fire Stations do not have flagpoles. This is another prospective project that they are working on.

Commissioner Browne asked if he could be provided with a dollar amount on what the cost would be to acquire a flagpole.

Commissioner Fergerstrom requested that the HCFD provide Commissioner Browne information on the donation process and he could disseminate this information to the rest of the commission.

Commissioner Brazier commented that it's important that donations are screened to ensure that the equipment is useable and appropriate.

Chief Oliveira stated that the administration requests that they be aware of what is being donated. The donor will be put in contact with someone who can assess and evaluate the piece of equipment.

- Pu'uanahulu Volunteer Company: Temporarily relocated their apparatus to a member's residence until a formal agreement is made with the Community Association.
- Miloli'i Volunteer Truck: An investigation was conducted and found that the Miloli'i Volunteers was sent the wrong part and no one advised the shop of this. At this time, the right part has been delivered.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked if the Miloli'i Volunteer Fire Department was dismantled, as was stated in the minutes.

Chief Oliveira replied that the unit is still active, although the training participation has not been the best.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if it was expected that the Miloli'i volunteers install the part.

Chief Oliveira stated that with a lot of their units, it is a common practice that the members perform minor repairs on their vehicles. In this particular case the Volunteer Chief, who is a mechanic, offered to install the part.

Commissioner Fergstrom commented that it was very beneficial to the department that Commissioner Kudlo brought this issue to light.

Emergency Medical Service Division

- MICT Class update: All six students are returning from Oahu on Sunday, August 14, 2005, and will complete the fourth rotation of their internship.

Fire Auxiliary Services

- No New Updates

New Projects/Business

- Kawaihoni Fire Station Diesel Emission Report: Received a report from Kauai Environmental Inc. It was determined that the carbon monoxide levels were below the exposure limit. However, this does not mean that there aren't other by-products of combustion floating around in the air. The HCFD will stay on track in pursuing the emission control project and supporting the stations in developing short-range measures to reduce exposure and minimize affect on the personnel. A recommendation made was to secure the living quarters and office spaces with better sealing around the open spaces of the doors. The Department of Public Works will be assisting the HCFD with this matter.

Employee/Public Relations

- HIUW/KTA Bag Brigade: Kickoff for the 4th annual event will be this weekend at the Waikoloa Village Mart and KTA-Keauhou. Commissioners are welcomed to participate.
- County Fair: Scheduled for September 15-18, 2005. Central Fire Station's personnel contacted Commissioner Kudlo, and they will be taking this opportunity to conduct some type of a public education display.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Hart/Matsuda) Former District 9 Commissioner Stephen Bowles introduced himself and explained that he formerly was assigned to the Budget and Finance committee. Mr. Bowles distributed and explained his Annual Budget Review that he prepared for the HCFC.
(See Attachment "B")

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Chief Oliveira when the budget planning would begin.

Chief Oliveira stated that it would begin in September/October.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Corporation Counsel Ashida if it was okay for the budget committee to work with Chief Oliveira to see what his preliminary proposal would be to the Mayor and the County Council. Also, Commissioner Fergerstrom is concerned that the HCFD's personnel will be aware of the Chief's proposal before it gets to the Mayor and there may be disgruntled employees when their expectations are not met. Chief Oliveira is placed in a difficult position between the Fire Commission, the Mayor and the County Council.

Corporation Counsel Ashida agreed and stated that his advice was that the HCFC follow the County Charter, which is to review the Annual budget prepared by the Fire Chief.

Commissioner Bowles stated that there is a delicate balance. Although the commission is assigned by the Mayor, it is the commission's responsibility to be aware of what the Fire Chief is doing because they appointed him. He encourages the Budget and Finance committee to continue to work with Chief Oliveira on what the strategic plan says and what he is requesting.

Commissioner Fergerstrom clarified with Corporation Counsel Ashida whether it was acceptable for the commission not to be involved with the Chief's dream budget. The commission would only involve themselves with the budget that would be submitted to the Mayor. At that time, they may review the budget to see if it is comparable to the strategic plan.

Corporation Counsel Ashida said that it would be acceptable.

Commissioner Fergerstrom stated a concern is that if something were cut from the budget, the Fire Commission would like to know the reason. At the same time, they would not want to hurt the operational position of the Fire Chief.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that he was not suggesting that they not approach the Mayor or the County Council. There have been past issues with the Police Commission. His advice is that the Mayor and the County Council

keep in mind that they are concerned commissioners and are not acting on behalf of the Fire Chief.

Commissioner Okabe stated that he believes the intent of the commission is to review the overall budget and make recommendations. The Police Commission never worked with the Police Chief on the budget. It was proposed to the commission, and then the commission reviewed it and made recommendations. He does see merit on both sides. The budget committee would need to take the time to work with the Fire Chief if they wanted to continue in this manner. At the same time, there is a rule that commissions not interfere with the administration's operations.

Commissioner Brazier verified that the HCFC's Rules and Regulations Manual states that the commission is to review the budget as presented by the Fire Chief and make recommendations.

Commissioner Fergerstrom asked Chief Oliveira when his budget would be presented to the commission for their review.

Chief Oliveira stated that it would be available before the end of the calendar year.

Commissioner Okabe stated that there is a difference with the Police Commission. It is a big profile commission and the media often attends. A member is often quoted as being the entire commission. Therefore, the members need to be aware of this when they are talking to personnel and the public. For example, when a commissioner visits a Fire Station they are not representing the entire commission. They may listen to concerns of the personnel and return to the commission so that the concerns may be discussed and considered for any possible recommendations.

Commissioner Brazier agreed that commissioners should not make unilateral commitments. They may listen and advise the individual that they will bring their concern forward to the entire commission.

Commissioner Fergerstrom thanked Former Commissioner Stephen Bowles for his presentation.

Mr. Bowles commented that he encourages the commission to keep an open communication with the Fire Chief. In the past, the commission has supported the Fire Chief by going before the Mayor and the County Council. Chief Oliveira has his mission and the commission has its responsibility. It is also necessary that the commission has an element of independence and remain separate from the Mayor.

Commissioner Okabe stated that the purpose of the commission is to remain independent from the Mayor. The Mayor appoints and the County Council confirms. Therefore, the commission is independent in the sense of the selection, the hiring and the firing of the Fire Chief.

Commissioner Fergstrom stated that Mayor Kim has been the most supportive Mayor for the Fire and Police Department. Even if he does decide to cut certain things from the budget, the commission should not see that as being against the Fire Department or detrimental to the Fire Department. The Mayor needs to balance the needs of all the County's departments. However, the HCFC should be able to approach the Mayor if there are any concerns.

Commissioner Hart stated that when the Fire Commission began five years ago, the commission was not familiar with the budget. Chief Oliveira who had just been appointed, was also new to finances. That is the reason why the Fire Commission came out with these guidelines.

Commissioner Fergstrom requested that after Chief Oliveira gets his presentation together, he could present it to the commission and explain how it relates to the strategic plan. At that time, he may also explain to the commission if certain things in the budget do not meet the goals of the strategic plan.

If there were any budget cuts, Commissioner Hart questioned Chief Oliveira if the commission could discuss with him how to consider working it into the supplemental budget.

According to Chief Oliveira the department has always kept the commission informed of what is on the supplemental budget and will continue do so.

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

Rules and Policies (Maedo) No report.

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo) Firewise Demonstration - Ms. Denise Laitnen conducted a demonstration at Station 14. Interest has peaked since the recent brush fires.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo) No report.

NEW BUSINESS

- Budget Review Process by Stephen Bowles and Commissioner Rudy Hart. (Addressed in the committee reports).
- District 6 report by Commissioner Kudlo. (Commissioner Kudlo was unable to attend and the item was postponed).

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Fergerstrom at 11:36 a.m., that the Fire Commission go into executive session to consider discipline and charges against employees of the Hawai'i County Fire Department where consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved and a closed session is requested, and to consult with Corporation Counsel on questions and issues pertaining to the commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities. (Pursuant to HRS 92-5(2) and Hawai'i County Charter Section 13-20(b)).

Commissioner Brazier seconded the motion. Commissioners Matsuda, Okabe, and Hart called ayes. Commissioner Browne called a nay. The motion died due to a lack of a quorum vote.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, September 14, 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 September 14, 2005, meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary