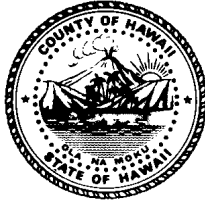


Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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REGULAR SESSION – MINUTES AS AMENDED

September 12, 2007

**Liquor Control Conference Room
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch
Stephen Bowles
Neil Brazier, Chair
James Browne
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo
Wil Okabe
Henry Pomroy
Bill Rosehill

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Tom Brandt
Bill Brillhante, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Kaycie Carter
Laurie Kaneta
Jerry Lum
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Noni Sanford
Betsy Tranquilli

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

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 Okabe moved to accept the August 8, 2007, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maedo and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Oliveira introduced newly promoted Battalion Chief Jerry Lum.

Budget

- FY 2007/08 Budget: Will begin to prepare for FY 08/09 budget. Scheduled to meet with the Finance Department on September 21, 2007, to receive directive from the Mayor. Chief Oliveira will provide more information at the October meeting.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2005 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (Plymo-Vent): Hardware in the stations is installed. Still finishing some modifications on the exhaust systems.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Six Year Capital Improvements Program: A summary of departmental requests listing was disseminated to the Fire Commissioners. The list was approved by the Mayor's Office. The listed funds are not included in the Fire Department's budget; it is part of the County's CIP projects. (See Attachment "A")
- Makalei Fire Station: Moved to the design plan stage. There was a change in ownership. The owner transferred the deed to the Fire Department's partnered corporation and will remain part of the organization.
- Pahoia Fire Station: Construction continuing. Target completion date is May 2008.
- Fire Administration and Support Facility: Awaiting contact by the design consultant to begin preliminary discussions on this project. The HFD sent a formal inquiry to Police Chief Mahuna requesting that the Police Department identify a representative to work with the Fire Department on

this project. It is necessary to address the communication needs of both Fire and Police Department's dispatchers for their new communication center. The Police Department selected Major Henry Tavares to be the liaison.

- Central Fire Station: Received approval for a \$25,000 allotment to conduct an Environmental Assessment. However, it appears that the projected funds may be inadequate. The department is discussing with the Mayor's Office whether to receive new bids or additional funds for the project.
- Central Fire Station Retrofit Project: Currently, the only remaining work to be done is the plastering and painting in the kitchen/dining room.
- Captain Cook Fire Station: Still in design phase for additional apparatus bay. As of yet, no plans were received from consultant. In addition to the expansion of the station, the Department of Public Works is working on addressing the ADA mandate requirements.
- Keaau Fire Station: On August 30, 2007, Projects Manager Desmond Wery met with the Director of Finance, the Police Department, and representatives from Kamehameha Schools to discuss a possible site near Kamehameha Schools – Keaau, in order to acquire and subdivide a parcel for a future Keaau Fire Station.

Promotions and Hiring

Active recruits include:

Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Firefighter Recruit: The Physical Agility test will be conducted on September 29, 2007. Will be testing the top 130 scores. The Fire Commission is welcome to observe.
- Fire Radio Dispatcher I: Completed recruitment. Selected two candidates to fill the existing vacancies. Targeted for hire on November 6, 2007.

Internal Recruitment

- Fire Captain: Opened recruitment on September 4, 2007 and close on September 14, 2007. Expecting at least 20 applicants.
- Introductions: Met Battalion Chief Jerry Lum earlier. Will introduce Battalion Chief Michael Gahan, who filled the Fire Auxiliary Services Officer position, at a future meeting.

Projected Retirements

- An updated report was distributed to the Commission which indicates names of potential retirees, their years of service, where they're assigned, age, and when they are qualified for retirement. Last year there was a record number of 22 retirees.

Emergency Operations Division

- Prescribed Burn Project and Training Opportunity: Tentatively scheduled for September 19-21, 2007, a partnership with Department of Hawaiian Homes Land, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW), U.S. Forestry and Wildlife. Will be conducting a live burn at Mauna Kea, in order to eradicate invasive species and replant more appropriate native species. The date may be rescheduled depending on when the burn plan is approved and the availability of the resources.
- Large Scale Natural Disasters: In order to improve the flow of communication to personnel, the department developed a format and received endorsement by the Mayor's Office and the Civil Defense Agency. The format consists of the department receiving information through the National Weather Service in the EOC. As a result, a situational update will be generated through email to the Fire Stations in order to keep personnel informed. The email will include internal recommendations/directives, such as making sure the equipment is serviced, everything is secured, and will allow the personnel time to take care of their personnel needs in the event that a mandatory recall is required.

Support Services Division

- Fire Auxiliary Services Bureau
 - Assistant Chief Quince Mento is continuing to work with the Statewide Communications Planning Program in conjunction with the State's Civil Defense and the County's Department of Data Systems. Discussions consist of ways to provide for a Statewide Interoperability Plan.
- Warehouse Section
 - Maui Fire Department Support Service personnel visited the warehouse in order to observe and exchange ideas on operations.
 - Continues to work on identifying Personal Protective Equipment and Wildland boots specifications for personnel. Will submit to the Purchasing Division by the end of the month.

Training Bureau

- Operations Section
 - Recruit Training
 - 34th Firefighter Recruit Class: Were given new station assignments on August 1, 2007, for their second of three rotations.
 - 35th Firefighter Recruit Class: Presently in their clinical phase of EMT-B. Targeting completion for November.
 - 36th Firefighter Recruit Class: Presently going through their First Responder course this week. They are half-way through their Fire Essentials Training. Anticipating their EMT training to begin in January.
 - 37th Firefighter Recruit Class: Scheduling their physical agility tests to occur this month. Some candidates who were identified in the

previous recruitment are being scheduled for their COMPASS tests and interviews in October.

Volunteer Section

- Volunteer Chief's Quarterly Meeting: The next meeting will be held on October 27, 2007, at the Puuanahulu Fire Station. Concurrently, there will be an open house and blessing of the new station.
- Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt.
 - In an effort to recruit volunteers, an article was printed in this month's Kau Calendar. The headline read, "Volunteer Fire Departments need help in Kau and Volcano." (See attachment "B") As a result of the article, Station 19 has received three inquiries. An in-house training was conducted on September 9.
 - Volunteers will begin Fire Essential training this month.

Chief Oliveira reported that the department is working with the Office of the Corporation Counsel on finalizing the relocation of the repeater site from Kapoho to Puna Geothermal.

New Projects/Business

- Explorer Program: First pilot program was successful. Met last week with the original group of participants and their parents in order to move them into phase two of the project. The second phase will involve a ride-along on the apparatus in order to expose them to field operations. The department's goal is to gradually expand the program islandwide because it requires a lot of coordination, direction and participation from staff.
- Fire Science Class: A record number of approximately 45 students for two classes participated. Two of the students were career firefighters.
- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Conference: Scheduled for November 15-18, 2007, at the Turtle Bay Resort on Oahu. The Fire Administration will work directly with Commissioners who are interested in attending.

Employee/Public Relations

- Fifth Annual Employees and Awards Dinner: Event was held on August 17, 2007. Appreciation was offered to Commissioners Maedo, Pomroy and Bowles for attending.
- Fire Prevention Week: Scheduled for Saturday, October 13, 2007, from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at Hilo Bayfront. Commissioner Pomroy volunteered to organize the Fire Commission's team in the annual bucket brigade challenge.
- Daniel Robert Sayre Foundation Dinner: Held on September 1, 2007. Commissioners were thanked for attending and showing their support. Two sizeable checks were received that evening, one in the sum of \$39,000 and another in the sum of \$49,000.

Commissioner Bowles expressed his concern regarding the loss of experienced personnel to retirements. It is necessary to maintain the level of service with the EMS Bureau. He questioned whether the department considered occasionally rotating in the retirees.

Chief Oliveira replied that the most viable solution would be to support legislation on approving a deferred retirement option program. This would allow an employee to retire from his/her position and then be retained by the employer up to five years. At the present time, the Fire Department would be in violation of rules and laws if it contracted a retired employee to a civil service position.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante agreed on the legalities involved.

Commissioner Bowles questioned who would pursue the issue with the legislature.

Chief Oliveira replied that the Mayor's Office and the Department of Human Resources submitted testimony in support of the bill. He is unsure which legislator proposed the legislation. The HFD will keep the commission informed of the progress.

Commissioner Bowles stated that the commission would be remiss if it didn't support the Fire Department in this effort.

Regarding the Chief's memorandum to the Captain Cook Fire Station personnel, Commissioner Rosehill inquired about the blueprint that was left at the station.

Chief Oliveira replied that he met with personnel and one individual informed the Chief that the drawing was his suggestion to the consultant. Therefore, the drawing was based on one employee's ideas and suggestions.

Chief Oliveira stated that once a timeline was offered to the department he would provide the Fire Commission with it. Although the department does not currently have funding for the project, he ensured the commission that the personnel input would be included in any future discussions.

Commissioner Kudlo inquired on a land donation by the Pace family.

Chief Oliveira explained that he believes discussions regarding that parcel (located near Konawaena School) were being held with former Councilwoman Virginia Isbell. At this time, he suggested that the Pace family should inform the Mayor's Office that they would like to open discussions on property; especially if the Pace Family has property near Hookena in South Kona because the Fire Department would like to add fire service in that area.

Commissioner Kudlo asked whether there were any issues raised by the recent threat of Hurricane Flossie.

Chief Oliveira commended the County's Emergency Operations Center for their professional performance during Hurricane Flossie.

Commissioner Kudlo stated that she recently joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary and a concern was raised with regards to communication with both Police and Fire. She also mentioned that the Coast Guard has an office at Kailua pier with two full time employees. Commissioner Kudlo suggested that a representative from the Fire Department attend a future Coast Guard Auxiliary meeting.

Chief Oliveira stated that, fortunately, Special Operations Battalion Chief Clint Coloma is in the Coast Guard reserves, and the Chief will advise him to reconnect with the unit in Kona.

Commissioner Kudlo asked whether there would be an Ocean Safety report.

Chief Oliveira replied that Ocean Safety's quarterly statistics was distributed in the commission's packets. He will make an effort to have either Captain Chris Stelfox or John Kapsky attend the commission's meetings. Also, the statistics generated are the Department of Health's data collection. Chief Oliveira will recommend that it be customized.

Commissioner Browne questioned whether there was a volunteer station being established in Kawaihae.

Chief Oliveira replied that he communicated to Councilman Hoffman that there was interest from the Kanehoa Community Association.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the reorganization of positions in the Ocean Safety Division.

Chief Oliveira stated that Battalion Chief Coloma is working with Captain Kapsky on filling positions. There are a number of part-time and temporary employees who would like the opportunity to move to full-time status. A selection process is being conducted.

Commissioner Browne asked if the commission could review the requirements for the Ocean Safety's entry level positions.

Chief Oliveira stated that it has come to their attention that there is very limited availability of first aid, CPR, and water safety classes in order for individuals to achieve the entry level requirements. Therefore, having the Fire Department's trained personnel conduct classes on the weekend is being considered.

Commissioner Bertsch questioned whether the Chief was conducting a "Chief's forum" at various stations. He also inquired on the tracking of the volunteer's call-outs in the Records Management Systems.

Chief Oliveira answered that he is committed to having an open forum quarterly in East and West Hawai'i. Usually, he will hold the West Hawai'i forum at the Kailua Station after the Fire Commission's meeting.

In response to Commissioner Bertsch's inquiry of the volunteer's call-out data, Chief Oliveira stated that the data has been inputted into the master pick list. Therefore, the officers responding to an incident will now grab off the pick list and drop it into the RMS. The volunteer's activity report will be distributed to the commission starting next month.

Commissioner Bertsch suggested that the Fire Commission form a commendation document that will be presented to an individual on behalf of the commission.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Fire Chief's Evaluation form – Changes and Suggestions.

Commissioner Maedo asked if there was any input from the members regarding the Fire Chief Evaluation tool/process and draft document that she and Commissioner Okabe proposed at last month's meeting.

Commissioner Maedo stated that the Fire Department is the one department that has a strategic plan in place. In order for the evaluation tool to become performance-based, the core values need to be looked at. She asked whether the Chief's report should be separate, and if it not be incorporated in the evaluation. An evaluation tool is only as meaningful and appropriate to the extent it enables the commission to foresee ways that the chief can improve. Commissioner Maedo asked Chief Oliveira for input.

Chief Oliveira stated that he feels uncomfortable with providing input on this subject. Although there were challenges and issues last year with soliciting the input from the management divisions sectional leader positions, Chief Oliveira still would like to incorporate their feedback, because they are tasked with disseminating and communicating procedures. Their input is valuable because they are the ones to follow up on the direction of the Chief. Chief Oliveira distributed an evaluation form that the Fire Department uses for general Chief Officer Positions; this form could be used and tweaked to be specific for the Fire Chief's position.

Commissioner Kudlo asked if the rank-and-file's evaluation forms were different.

Chief Oliveira replied that the form distributed would be disseminated to the people from whom the commission would solicit input.

Commissioner Maedo reminded everyone that it is the commission which is tasked with evaluating the Chief. The difficulty comes when the rank and file thinks it's their input that evaluates the chief.

Commissioner Pomroy agreed that the input should only come from the Chief Officers.

Chair Brazier reminded the commission of the poor response it received the last time the commission tried to solicit input from the personnel. He recommended that the method be kept simple.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that when the commission evaluates the Fire Chief, the evaluation is kept confidential. Historically, both Police and Fire Departments have elected to release their evaluation to the public. This is done for public relation purposes. He recommended that the commission use the direction of the strategic plan. Commissioner Bertsch fears that if the commission rates the Fire Chief with "meets expectations," the general public could question why the County of Hawai'i does not have a Fire Chief who "exceeds expectations". Therefore, he strongly recommended that the commission use the last sheet as the evaluation form and the first three sheets as a worksheet. In this way, there would be no numerical or empirical association to the Fire Chief's evaluation.

Chair Brazier suggested that the wording be changed.

Commissioner Bertsch replied that the comments may be interpreted differently by each individual. It is necessary for the commission to make its evaluation unambiguous.

Commissioner Okabe stated that the last page gives the commissioners an opportunity to expand on their comments. A new commissioner would not be able to fill out the last page; however, by using the tool of the first three pages, it would enable a new commissioner to make an evaluation.

Commissioner Maedo asked whether the commission should keep the benchmarks. If not, should the commission keep the format and rely on the Chief's Annual presentation from which the commission can keep that hard data? It is necessary for the commission to substantiate the ongoing employment of the Fire Chief.

Commissioner Bertsch recommended that Chief Oliveira report the status of strategic plan with regards to the budget at the October or November meeting.

Commissioner Bowles expressed his concern regarding the continuity of the process created by the Fire Commission's charter members. The proposed draft lays out a method of maintaining continuity. His apprehension is with new

members not understanding the strategic plan. It is necessary for the Commission to make sure that new members understand the strategic plan.

The Fire Commission timeline for the Fire Chief's Annual Performance evaluation will proceed as follows:

- December – Fire Chief's Annual end-of-the-year presentation and review.
- January – Fire Commission to submit completed evaluation form to Chair.
- March – Chair to submit completed Annual Performance Report to Mayor.

Chair Brazier requested that the Fire Commission review and consider the Fire Chief's draft evaluation form. The commission will continue the discussion at the October meeting and make its decision.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante advised that the commission have a collaborated and summarized version of the Fire Chief's performance evaluation. That product should be forwarded to the Mayor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Kudlo) Commissioner Kudlo suggested that the Fire Department clarify the miscellaneous information in the expenditure report.

Office Management and Staffing (Bertsch) No report.

Rules and Policies (Rosehill) No report.

Public Relations (Pomroy) Commissioner Pomroy met with Chief Oliveira and Deputy Chief Honda to discuss public relations. The Fire Department is working on Fire Prevention Week. Laurie Kaneta will provide Commissioner Pomroy the sponsor's contact information. Commissioner Pomroy will give an update of specific information on the event at next month's meeting. Commissioner Bertsch offered his assistance to Commissioner Pomroy. Commissioner Bertsch requested that Commissioner Pomroy research the idea of distributing a commendation certificate from the commission. Commissioner Pomroy agreed to and will research this issue and report to the commission.

Training and Education (Maedo) No report.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in the Aupuni Center Conference Room, Aupuni Center, 101 Pauahi Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for October 10, 2007, meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary