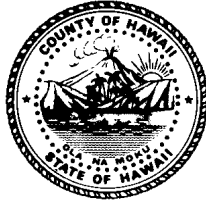


Harry Kim
Mayor



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

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REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES

September 13, 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
James Browne
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Chair
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Tom Brandt
Kaycie Carter
William Morris
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Desmond Wery, Deputy Chief
Noni Sanford
Betsy Tranquilli

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None

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

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bertsch moved to accept the August 9, 2006, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brazier and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget

- FY 2007/08: Will begin working on the next program budget submittal. Scheduled to meet with the Director of Finance to receive instructions. Chief Oliveira will provide more information at the October meeting.

The State recently requested the department submit a four-year plan for its Emergency Medical Services budget. The proposal will include:

- 12 – Emergency Medical Technician positions
- 2 – Life Support Ambulance units
- 6 – District Captain/Supervisor positions
- 1 – Injury Prevention and Safety Officer position
- 1 – Fire Captain position
- 1 – Warehouse Clerk

Also requested, funding for three dispatch positions, and a more comprehensive vehicle replacement program.

Chair Maedo suggested that Chief Oliveira provide an overview of the Hawai'i Fire Department's organizational structure.

In response to Chair Maedo's suggestion, Chief Oliveira stated that he would provide an overview at the next Fire Commission meeting.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2004 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: Anticipating delivery of the burn trailer. Earmarked for October. Once delivered, the department will provide a live demonstration for the commission.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned if there was a time frame to use the grant awards.

Chief Oliveira replied that all grant awards have timetables. However, if the department were unable to meet a deadline, they would request an extension.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Makalei Fire Station: Due to the high volume of projects that Architects Hawaii is committed to, the Department of Public Works selected Kajioka Yamachi Architects, Inc. as the consultant for this project. Recently, Hawai'i Fire Department Projects Manager Nick AhYo reviewed the archeological site report that was included in the original environmental assessment. He does not foresee any problems/issues with subdividing the parcel for the Fire Department. The desired location is along the highway on the access road.
- Pahoehoe Fire Station: Awaiting a resolution for three specific issues. These include: The Department of Transportation's review of the plans for the entrance onto the highway, the Department of Health's review of the plans for the septic system, and the Department of Water Supply's review of the plans for the water system.
- Fire Administration and Support Facility: Projects Manager Nick AhYo is working closely with the design consultants. Anticipating a more accurate fee proposal. Architects Hawaii's ballpark figure is \$1million.
- Central Fire Station: No new updates.
- Central Fire Station-Retrofit Project: No new updates.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the status of the fire service in Kukio.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department submitted another follow-up letter to the Four Seasons management requesting a meeting with the new owners to discuss a possible fire station. The original group consisted of property owners from Kukio, Four Seasons, Kona Village, etc. There was always an expressed interest from them; however, there was neither any money nor a solid commitment to identify a property. Presently, the Fire Department continues to maintain a communication with the landowners.

According to Commissioner Bertsch, he was approached by a number of people regarding this issue. He would like to assist with the development of this program.

Chief Oliveira stated that although he represents the Fire Department, he does not represent the County to solicit, negotiate and acquire land from the landowners. Therefore, the Fire Department will express interest and let the landowners approach the County with their sale proposals.

Commissioner Bertsch said that the landowners appear to be very anxious to move forward with this issue.

Commissioner Browne questioned the size of the brigade and the area to be serviced.

Chief Oliveira replied that at the present time there are two separate volunteer companies, one located at Kona Village and the other at the Four Seasons. Both Kona Village and the Four Seasons have a full complement of approximately 12-15 volunteers, and each has vehicles and equipment. The Fire Department discussed with the Kukio property owners a possible consolidation. The reason is each property owner has expressed interest in creating a volunteer company, and the properties are within a one-mile radius of each other. It makes good management sense to create one unit rather than separate ones. However, there is difficulty with having the property owners commit to supporting one another. Therefore, the department is working with them on this issue. The reason a volunteer unit is created is to serve the community and not for any one-property owners personal interest. If the property owner is only interested in being responsible for and protecting his/her own property, this is considered a brigade.

Due to the increased development of homes, Commissioner Matsuda asked whether the HFD's preferred parcel size of 1-½ acres would be increased.

Chief Oliveira stated that the minimum parcel size is 1-½ acres because it allows for potential to serve the area/community for years to come. The station's design is in excess of 8,000 square feet, and 1-½ acres is enough to build an appropriate size station. Although there is a minimum of 1-½ acres, two acres is preferred so that it can also accommodate other support facilities.

Commissioner Browne asked whether the HFD has a mutual aid agreement with the brigades.

Chief Oliveira replied that the county code refers to both properties as volunteer companies. Due to a change in ownership, this matter needs to be addressed with the Four Seasons establishment. There is a need to determine whether their intent/direction is to become a brigade. If their decision were to become a brigade, they would be removed from the volunteer fire program. At that time, the HFD would discuss with them a mutual aid and co-responsive aid agreement.

Promotions and Hiring

- Internal Recruitments include:
 - **Fire Captain:** Promoted eight Fire Captain positions, effective September 16, 2006.
 - **Fire Equipment Operator:** Promoted eight Fire Equipment Operator positions, effective September 16, 2006. Initiating the next FEO internal

recruitment process. Open enrollment closed on September 8, 2006. The candidate's written exam is scheduled for October.

- Open Recruitment include:
 - **35th and 36th Firefighter recruit class:** Physical agility tests are scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2006. A candidate pool will be identified for each recruit class.

Commissioner Bertsch questioned the number of candidates per class.

Chief Oliveira answered that there were remaining 15 candidates from the last recruit pool. Therefore, the department is hoping to select five more individuals for the 35th recruit class, which will begin in December, 2006. Another 20 candidates will be identified for the 36th recruit class, which is scheduled to begin in June, 2007. The department may also consider candidates from the same candidate pool for the next recruit class scheduled for Fall 2007. The department would like to stay on track with two classes per year, and with 20 individuals per class.

Emergency Operations Division

- Disaster Response protocols: Assistant Chiefs Quince Mento and Clesson Murasaki, and the Battalion Chiefs, are revisiting the current disaster response protocol. Once a hurricane and tsunami occurs, it is necessary to review the internal actions of the department such as, a recall of personnel, and relocating apparatus and equipment. The AC's and BC's will provide an assessment and offer recommendations. If necessary these recommendations will be incorporated into the budget.

Support Services Division

- Fire Auxiliary Services
 - **Fire Radio Dispatcher:** Four new dispatchers will be introduced at the Hawai'i County Fire Commission's October 11, 2006, meeting. They have completed their First Responder class and Emergency Medical Dispatcher training, and will begin on-the-job training later this month.
 - Liability and Accountability Workshop: Recently, Fire Radio Dispatchers participated in a liability and accountability workshop sponsored and conducted by the Office of the Corporation Counsel.

Also, maintaining all certification requirements for the existing Fire Radio Dispatch personnel, which include CPR, EMD and other training programs.

Commissioner Bertsch questioned whether the Fire Commission would be visiting the dispatch center.

Chair Maedo suggested that Chief Oliveira schedule an appropriate time for a visit to the dispatch center.

Chief Oliveira replied that he would confirm a date and relay this information to the members through the Fire Commission's Secretary.

- Assistant Chief Mento is working with the Office of the Corporation Counsel, HELCO and Pacific Wireless, on the relocation of one of the HFD's repeater sites to the Puna Geothermal Site. Previously, a Radio Repeater site went down, basically for maintenance, and is experiencing problems. It was determined that it was situated on private property. At the present time, the landowner would prefer that the county not continue to use his site, which compels the department to look for an alternative repeater site to keep the radio communication site up and running at optimal level. Hopefully, it will be relocated to the Puna Geothermal Plant site.
- Warehouse Bureau: Completed personnel fit-testing and orientation phase of the self-contained breathing apparatus program. Still in the process of acquiring the additional units, tanks, and other accessories. Presently, Deputy Chief Desmond Wery is working with the Department of Civil Defense and the Office of Domestic Preparedness grant to get additional money for the additional components in order to transition the entire department over to the standardized MSA SCBA units.
- Emergency Medical Services Bureau
 - Electronic Patient Care Report: The committee is working with the Department of Data Systems to evaluate the different products/software that vendors have available. Although the State's Department of Health has identified a particular vendor, the HFD's personnel wanted the opportunity to review and compare other products to make sure it is possible to make modifications to the product which the State has already purchased. Laptops are available to utilize the patient care information in electronic format. The goal is to have the system used in the fieldwork with the departments record management system to reduce redundancy of work for the employees and to be more efficient with sharing information among different data centers within the departments own program.
 - Automatic External Defibrillators: Committee is finalizing the training and distribution of the AED's to the Fire Department's engine apparatus. The AED's that will be replaced will be reassigned to the Volunteers, Ocean Safety Lifeguards, Hawai'i Police Department, and possibly some community centers.
- Training Bureau
 - Emergency Medical Technician Training: In response to Commissioner Browne's inquiry at last month's meeting, Chief Oliveira reported that the recruits are required to spend a total number of 680 hours in EMT Basic and Intermediate training.

- 33rd Firefighter Recruit Class: Graduation was held on August 17, 2006. Appreciation was offered to the Commissioners who were able to attend.
- 34th Firefighter Recruit Class: Will begin their Swim Certification portion of the training next week.
- Volunteer Bureau
 - Captain Russell Enriques will be distributing and training the AED's to the Volunteer Companies.
 - Ainaloa Community Association: Captain Enriques met with the Association on September 11, 2006, to discuss the progress on the proposed Ainaloa Volunteer Company establishment. At the present time, a list of prospective candidates is expected from the association's president. Once Captain Enriques receives the list, he will identify when to begin the program and move toward a new volunteer company.
 - Recently, received a letter from Kaohe Homestead Association in the Puna District. This is another rural community that would like to be considered for a volunteer unit. The possibility of a volunteer unit will be discussed with Councilman Gary Safarik.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the number of volunteer units that are in the process of being established.

Chief Oliveira answered that Ainaloa Volunteer Company is the only one at this time.

New Projects/Business

- Project Lifesaver: Held a follow-up meeting. Continuing to make progress. At the present time, the HFD is developing a pilot program plan. The plan involves issuing the project lifesaver wristbands to 10 prospective candidates. The Fire Department is working with the Alzheimer's Association and the Disabilities Council to identify those candidates. The Fire Department's role will be with training the family/caregiver on the program and how to maintain their wristband.
- Fire Science (Rural Development Program): Open to the public for the first time. The department was not given much time to advertise classes to the public because the school could not guarantee the class until early August. Radio announcements were made in order to publicize the classes and approximately two dozen individuals enrolled in the classes. The Fire Department will be meeting with the school to discuss improving advanced notification of future classes.

Chair Maedo inquired on the number of personnel attending classes.

Chief Oliveira answered that there were approximately 12.

Commissioner Browne questioned whether classes were offered in West Hawai'i.

Chief Oliveira replied that presently the classes are offered at the East Hawai'i Campus. The Fire Department is working on securing support, classroom space, and available instructors in West Hawai'i. Also, a concept that will be put into the 2007 Firefighters Act grant is to pursue teleconferencing capabilities.

- Relocation of Fire Administration: On October 19, 2006, the administration office will be moving to the Puainako Town Center, next to Checkers Automotive. Other County offices relocating there include: the Departments of Data Systems, Environmental Management, and Research and Development.

Employee/Public Relations

- 5th Annual KTA/HIUW Bag Brigade: Scheduled for September through October. In the past four years, approximately \$18,000 was raised. The Fire Department will provide the commission a schedule.
- Dream Come True Program: Per Commissioner Okabe's inquiry at last months meeting, Chief Oliveira reported that the program is still active; however, there have been some obstacles/roadblocks due to new management at the Keauhou Shopping Center. Project Coordinator Eric Kunitomo has been trying to work with them. In order to get the program up and running, there is consideration of alternative sites. Also, there is a need for a liaison in East Hawai'i. The last time the program was active was in 2004.
- EMS Week: Recently, a check in the amount of \$3,500 was presented to Hospice of Hilo. The committee will be considering next year's donation recipient. The Fire Commission is welcome to make recommendations.
- 9th Annual Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation Dinner & Award Ceremony: Held on September 2, 2006. This year's 2007 Honorees were Fire Equipment Operator Richard Fong, Fire Rescue Specialist Garrett Kim, and Pilot Paul Darryl. Through the partnership of the Ironman Corporation, a total of \$83,000 was raised and donated to the Hawai'i Fire Department.

Chair Maedo questioned the status of the emission control issue at the Kawaiiani Fire Station.

Chief Oliveira replied that the contractor was identified and Firefighter Neil Yoshioka will be working with the Department of Public Works on the Notice to Proceed.

Chair Maedo questioned the duration.

Chief Oliveira will provide a time estimate at the next meeting.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the status of the integration of the Ocean Safety Lifeguards.

Chief Oliveira replied that a meeting was held with HGEA. The Fire Department's uniform standards, rules and regulations, structure and discipline were conveyed to them. The union understands the goals and objectives of integrating the Ocean Safety Lifeguards. The goal is to align the ocean safety program with public safety. In October, a meeting will be held with members of both Ocean Safety and the Fire Department to answer questions or concerns. This will allow the Fire Department to explain the organizational structure, the chain of command, and how the department acts as a paramilitary organization, which expects discipline and order.

Chair Maedo requested that the commission be informed of the meeting.

Chief Oliveira replied that he would notify the commission.

Commissioner Bertsch asked whether the Fire Department reviewed the Department of Parks and Recreations budget set for the Ocean Safety Lifeguards.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Fire Department is working on a systematic plan for the Ocean Safety program. The budget has been identified and will be focused on in the department's budget proposal to the Mayor. The budget proposal will address needs such as additional positions, replacing vehicles, etc., as part of the overall transition plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Matsuda) Commissioner Matsuda reported that the Salary Commission's September meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum. He requested the Salary Commission's Secretary inform him of the next meeting. He explained that because there are only five Salary Commissioners and one of them was on vacation, it resulted in a lack of a quorum. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October, in Kona. Commissioner Bertsch recommended that Fire Commission Chair Karen Maedo draft a letter to the Office of the Corporation Counsel. The letter should indicate the Fire Commission's frustration with attempting to attend a Salary Commission meeting. Commissioner Matsuda also mentioned that former Commissioner Laura (Ward) Varney will participate at the next Salary Commission meeting.

Office Management and Staffing (Brazier/Okabe) no report

Rules and Policies (Maedo) no report

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo) Commissioner Browne reported that the Waikoloa Village Neighborhood Watch program is scheduled for October.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo) no report

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion regarding arranging an alternative date for the Fire Commission's meetings.

Commissioner Okabe stated that due to a lack of Fire Commission members, the commission should consider an alternate date when meetings are cancelled. He suggested that if a meeting was unable to take place on the scheduled date, the commission could meet on another date that month, as long as the public was given prior notice. This would ensure that monthly meetings were not missed.

Commissioner Bertsch agreed that this issue should be considered.

Commissioner Okabe stated that this is only an issue because of the lack in membership.

Chair Maedo commented that although there were two cancelled meetings, there wasn't anything pressing on the agenda that necessitated a meeting. She does not minimize the need for the monthly meetings. However, if a meeting was cancelled and there was something urgent on the agenda, than an alternate date could be decided. The Fire Commissions agenda is arranged ahead of time; therefore, the commission is aware of important matters.

Commissioner Bertsch commented that the commission is obligated to meet monthly with the Fire Chief. It is unfair to the Fire Chief when meetings are cancelled.

Commissioner Okabe stated that he believes the commission should offer the public an opportunity to bring forth their concerns. The Fire Commission should meet monthly whether there are pressing matters on the agenda or not.

Following a lengthy discussion, Chair Maedo summarized the final motion as follows: Once members inform the Fire Commission Secretary that they are unable to attend and it is apparent that a quorum will not take place, the secretary would contact the members and ask the members if they would want to have a meeting and when they would be available. After confirming a date and reserving a location, the secretary would contact the members to advise

them of the arrangements, providing the seven-day notification issue is addressed.

Chair Maedo asked for a show of hand in favor of the motion.

Ayes: Kudlo, Okabe, Bertsch, and Browne.

Nays: Maedo, Brazier, and Matsuda.

The motion was carried.

- Consideration on the location of the meetings held in West Hawai'i.

Commissioner Browne stated that he is concerned with the parking problem at the Kona Center Building and expects it to get worse with the Driver's License office situated in the same location. He would like the Fire Commission to consider moving its Kona meetings to a different location. He asked Commissioner Bertsch if he had any suggestions on other locations.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that there are a number of areas that have meeting rooms, although not as nice as the current location. He would suggest retaining the same location. However, sometimes the resorts may donate a room if the function includes using their restaurant facilities. His experience with Police Commission was to have their meetings rotated between Hilo, Waimea, and Kona. This breaks the trip up for all parties.

Commissioner Brazier asked Chief Oliveira whether he had any suggestions.

Chief Oliveira stated that although the department has not researched facilities, he assumes that it would most likely come down to a resort facility because there are limited county resources in Kona.

Commissioner Okabe suggested that the commission consider/investigate the idea and bring forth the various suggestions at the next meeting.

Commissioner Kudlo asked whether there was meeting facilities at the Fire Stations.

Chair Maedo stated that the Fire Commission had raised this issue before. However, the Fire Stations do not have meeting facilities.

Commissioner Okabe agreed that there is concern with public parking. There is a two-hour time limit, and in the past a commissioner received a parking ticket.

Noni Sanford asked whether the Fire Commission could meet at its past location at Keauhou Shopping Center.

Chair Maedo stated that former Commissioner Dale Fergerstrom had arranged a contact for that facility through his employment with Kamehameha Estates.

Chief Oliveira stated that he would research and report back to the commission on available facilities in Kona.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, October 11, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Center, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for October 11, 2006, meeting.

Commissioner Bertsch acknowledged Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt for his attendance to the Fire Commission's monthly meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:28 A.M.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary