

Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
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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 **September 14, 2005** **Liquor Control Conference Room** **Kona Center Building**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Maedo at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Neil Brazier
James Browne
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo
Glen Matsuda (10:10 a.m.)
Wil Okabe

Excused: Dale Fergerstrom
Rudolph Hart

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Kaycie Carter
Chad Hundley and Family
Laurie Kaneta
William Morris
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Frank and Laura Sayre
Laura Varney

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)

None

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Brazier made a motion to amend the approved July 13, 2005, regular session minutes and to accept the August 10, 2005, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Okabe and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept communication number 05-013. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Okabe and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget

- FY 2006/07: Recently received notification from the Department of Finance - FY 2006/07 budget documents are due in their office by November 30, 2005. Chief Oliveira will discuss the budget with the commission at the October and November meetings.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- Bid process for the fire-training unit (burn trailer) has been completed; anticipating bids to open sometime this month. The Fire Commission will be advised of the status at the October meeting.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Pahoia Fire Station: The Planning Commission approved the special use permit. However, the Department of Transportation and the Planning Commission are concerned about where the best access point onto the property will be. The construction is estimated at a total of 4.3 million dollars; an additional \$800,000 will be requested for the planning design and preliminary stage of the contract.

Commissioner Brazier asked who would make the final decision regarding the entrance to the property.

Chief Oliveira answered that it would be a unified decision between the State's Department of Transportation, the Hawai'i County Fire Department (HCFD), the Department of Public Works and the engineering personnel.

- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Projects Manager Nick AhYo continues to collect data regarding the staff's needs and the State's requirements. Mr. AhYo consulted the County's Ocean Safety Division regarding incorporating the lifeguards into the Fire Department. The Fire Department supports and plans for a merge sometime in the future.

Commissioner Browne questioned if the lifeguards would be sworn employees.

Chief Oliveira stated that these issues are being addressed with the Department of Parks and Recreation's Ocean Safety Division, and with the lifeguard's union. These issues include the swearing in of the employees, their training, the parameters involved, and their career advancement opportunities. It will be necessary to change the organizational structure of the Fire Department when incorporating the lifeguards.

Chief Oliveira stated that the project is being spearheaded by West Hawai'i's Ocean Safety Division Captain Chris Stelfox. He is putting together a strategic plan for that section of their department. Their discussions have included resource needs, organizational structure, and a consideration to change the job specification and classification.

Commissioner Browne commented that the level of service would increase once the lifeguards are incorporated.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Fire Department wants to proceed with this cautiously. He advised the Ocean Safety Division that the merge would not be an answer to their budget woes. Although the Ocean Safety Lifeguards would be incorporated into the Fire Department, it is necessary to distribute funds to all the required sections of its department.

Commissioner Browne asked when the merge would be initiated.

Chief Oliveira stated that because the HCFD has recently put into effect the reorganization of its department, they informed the County Council that their goal with incorporating the lifeguards would take approximately two – three years.

- Kalaoa Fire Station: Will be meeting with the Planning Department to establish possible alternatives for this project. The HCFD has not been informed on whether the sight distance issue was resolved. Therefore, the HCFD would like to meet with the developer to identify if this project is a priority or if it has taken a backseat to other commitments they may have. However, this property is more affordable than others identified. There have been promises made to the community on creating service for that area, and the county may consider purchasing another property. The cost should not dictate the service that is necessary and the communities needs. The HCFC will be updated on the status of this project at the October 12, 2005, meeting.
- Central Fire Station: Project Manager Nick AhYo submitted an overview to the Housing and Community Development Corporation on how a Fire Station would provide security and services to a community. There was a request to consider establishing a community meeting room into that facility.
- Central Fire Station-Retrofit Project: A consultant was brought in to assess the roof repairs. Presently, the HCFD will be going before the County Council to request \$390,000 for either roof repairs or possibly a roof replacement. This will allow the department to maintain service to downtown Hilo, which is a critical area. It will also create safe and comfortable living quarters for the personnel until a new station can be built.

Promotions and Hiring

- 33rd Fire Fighter Recruit Class: A class of 17 recruits started on September 1, 2005. The HCFD intended to hire 20 candidates. Unfortunately, one candidate was unable to complete his medical screening prior to the hire date. On the first day of class, another candidate came forward with a document from his physician stating that he suffered an injury and was unable to participate in the physical requirements of the class, which is a key component of the training and the curriculum. On the second day of class a third candidate came forward and identified his limitations. All three individuals will be considered for the spring class providing they meet and pass the medical screening and physical requirements.

Commissioner Maedo inquired if there were alternates for the class.

Chief Oliveira stated that this was done once but was not successful, due to the employer costs, which involve the medical screening, drug testing, hearing testing, x-rays etc. The HCFD acknowledges that it's a problem when on the first day of class they are short three recruits. However, once class starts, it is difficult to bring someone in because the individual(s) will be behind in the orientation and some of their first day curriculum activities.

- Internal Recruitment: Internal recruitment examinations are scheduled this month for Fire Inspector, Fire Captain and Fire Equipment Operator positions. The applications will be processed and preparations for the written exams and assessments will follow. Internal recruitment for Assistant Fire Chief and Battalion Chief positions will close on September 16, 2005; an assessment center will be administered to all qualified applicants.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the number of applicants.

Chief Oliveira stated that certain positions have more response. Based on the pool of qualified applicants there were 10 applicants for Fire Inspector; approximately 20-30 applicants for Fire Captain; and 70 applicants for Fire Equipment Operator.

Commissioner Browne inquired on the number of vacancies for Battalion Chiefs.

Chief Oliveira stated that because of the departments reorganization, there was a total of six Battalion Operation Chief's positions and one Support Services Administrative Assistant Chief's position.

Commissioner Browne questioned when the assessment center would occur.

Chief Oliveira stated that it would occur the week of October 12.

Commissioner Matsuda asked what the Battalion Chief's minimum requirements were.

Chief Oliveira stated that there is a minimum of two years of service as a Fire Captain.

Operations Division

- Brush Fires: Since the Lalamilo and Akoni Pule Fires, there have been a number of critiques. Many comments were to be better trained with an incident command system. The HCFD will provide training to the Department of Public Works and some partner agencies. Also, anticipating a partnership with the Department of Public Works on training the Bulldoze Operations. This will include the ability to coordinate firebreaks and manage heavy equipment. The State's Division of Forestry and Wildlife has administered classes in the past; therefore, the Fire Department would like to arrange a partnership with them and provide classes to private vendors. The department is committed to implementing an incident command system for these incidents. This will involve having

a dedicated incident commander and allowing staff officers to delegate tasks and duties. These tasks include bringing in additional resources, providing meals and refreshments for the individuals on the scene, keeping track of work hours, and relaying information to the Department of Civil Defense and the media.

Commissioner Browne was informed that the media questioned a photographer regarding the incident. The photographer explained to them that he was not a firefighter. He was also told by a firefighter that the HCFD in the past had a Public Information Officer (PIO) and suggested that the department bring him back on contract.

Chief Oliveira stated that would be a consideration. However, the department cannot be sure how busy he would be.

Commissioner Browne stated that it's important for the media to have a contact person.

Chief Oliveira commented that the commanders refer the media to the Department of Civil Defense for information. Nevertheless, the reporters still continue to approach the incident commanders because they prefer to receive comments from someone at the scene.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD's cost on the Lalamilo Fire was approximately \$135,000 and the Akoni Pule Fire was approximately \$66,000. He will provide a cost breakdown to the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the source of funds when emergencies occur.

Chief Oliveira stated that most of the funds come from the department's operating budget.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that as a result of the brush fires there would be the following meetings:

1. September 19, 2005 – Large landowners and leasees. This meeting will be to discuss developing proactive measures such as creating firebreaks in specific areas, and identifying points of access.
 2. September 27, 2005 – American Technologies. This meeting will assist the HCFD with identifying clear areas to pre-designate points of access, roads, and firebreaks.
- Media Relations Training: A presentation and an instruction session was held with the Office of Corporation Counsel, regarding the HIPAA law and

public right-to-know. Dr. Miura will conduct the next training phase and instruct personnel on how to interact with the media.

- Computer Aided Management of Emergency Operations (CAMEO): On August 22-23, 2005, a total of 13 personnel attended a computer-based system designed to access HazMat information. Part of its software component included a mapping process that projects the range in which a gaseous form product would spread throughout the community.

Prevention Division

- Hawaii Fireworks Seminar: Captains Pacleb and Yagi attended the Hawaii Fireworks Seminar on Oahu, August 11-12, 2005. Other agencies which attended were Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, OSHA, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and U.S. Army and Coast Guard personnel.

Training Division

- 31st Recruit Class Update: Graduation was held on August 20, 2005, at Nani Mau Gardens, in Hilo. Presently in the first phase of their Firefighter I probationary period. Appreciation was extended to the commissioners who were able to attend.
- 32nd Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Recently began EMT training (20 weeks) on September 6, 2005. At the present time, they are undergoing the didactic portion.
- 33rd Fire Fighter Recruit Class: Started on September 1, 2005. Recruits will be introduced at the Fire Commission's October meeting.
- Live Burn Exercise: Held on August 31, 2005, in Papaikou. The donated home allowed both 31st and 32nd Recruit classes the opportunity to receive hands on live fire training.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if the public is notified when this type of activity occurs.

Chief Oliveira replied that the media is notified.

Volunteer Training Division

- Recognition Luncheon: The following three Retired Hawaiian Paradise Park's Volunteer Firefighters were honored:
 1. Manuel Martinez - 23 years
 2. Albert Maldonado - 17 years
 3. Ken Mooney - 20 years

Commissioner Brazier asked who financed the event.

Chief Oliveira answered that most of it was donated.

Commissioner Browne asked Chief Oliveira to elaborate on what the future requirements of the volunteers would be.

Chief Oliveira stated that a physical agility test would be phased in. There is a need to screen the volunteers and have them know the physical demands of the job. It is not fair to these individuals if they were set up for injury or worse. Just as individuals who are interested in becoming paid firefighters are turned away when they are unable to perform physically, the volunteers must meet the same Firefighter I standards. This includes meeting the academic standards, drug testing and driver training. It is necessary to ensure a safe department and provide adequate service for the public.

Commissioner Kudlo noticed how closely both the paid and volunteer firefighters work in Ocean View. She agreed that drug testing should be administered to volunteers. These individuals need to be held accountable because they acquire department issued trucks and equipment.

Commissioner Browne asked if volunteers were paged when an incident occurs.

Chief Oliveira answered that they were.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned why there were separate stations in Volcano.

Chief Oliveira answered that the HCFD took over the services when the military pulled out and it was on the only facility available. The goal for the department is to get off the park property and put a fire station in the community and incorporate it with the volunteers. The intent is not to disband the volunteer station; it is to have them be a part of the paid unit.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the volunteers' physical agility test would be similar as the recruits.

Chief Oliveira stated that the same standards would be used for both.

Commissioner Okabe asked how the union feels regarding volunteer firefighters. If the volunteer program is successful, could it eventually become more cost-effective to have volunteers versus the actual paid firefighters.

Chief Oliveira stated that it is important to have a good communication with the union. This prevents any negative impact. One thing to remember is that with the volunteer program, there is no guaranteed response. It is community driven to have an immediate response time of a service. The union's concerns are not just the security of jobs but it's the level of training and safety. That is where other issues come up. The paid and volunteer firefighter need to work side by side to equally support each other and back up one another.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the budget was set up to project the amount of volunteers.

Chief Oliveira stated that there was an operation cost for the volunteer program. What is not projected is if a community wants to create a volunteer program in their district. The process to establish a volunteer unit is to go through the Council representative for that district. The HCFD then points out whether they will support a unit in their district. This will start a cost that was not budgeted and will need to be accounted for either through a reapportion of funds or new funds through the council. Once its established, the station will identify the operating costs to sustain it for the fiscal year.

Commissioner Browne stated that as the population increases, the call volume goes up and the volunteers cannot take the volume of calls. In his 21 years of service, he saw Ventura County go from volunteer to all paid. The population increases the desire for an all paid staff.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether a volunteer would be required to go through the recruit training again.

Chief Oliveira stated that it is a competitive process by the Department of Civil Service rules. Once the program is in place and there is a recognized curriculum being administered to the volunteers, the department will give these individuals credit toward the competitive process.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether the department had volunteers who became paid firefighters.

Chief Oliveira stated that this had occurred and those individuals did go through the entire process again. Recently, one of the three individuals who did not make it to this class was a volunteer who did not pass the medical screening.

Commissioner Matsuda asked if the individual had a problem swimming and could not make the time limit, would there be some kind of help to assist the individual to meet that certain criteria?

Chief Oliveira stated that each component of the exam is based on a pass and fail basis. The individuals are informed of what the physical components are. Most individuals who fail do not train.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether the test was a national performance test or if it was only administered on the Big Island.

Chief Oliveira stated that it was administered on the Big Island, Maui and Kauai. As mentioned at the last meeting, the candidate physical ability test (CPAT) is

being administered on Oahu. The HCFD would like to head toward this direction because it is a more nationally recognized test.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether lifeguards or other positions were certified with CPR and first aid training through the American Red Cross.

Chief Oliveira stated that the HCFD water safety component is a mixture of both the American Red Cross and the U.S. Lifeguard Association courses. The rest of the HCFD's courses are done through the American Heart Association, which falls in line with the EMS program because they go through the Health Care provider course.

Commissioner Okabe asked if the individual would need to be certified every year through the American Heart Association.

Chief Oliveira stated that it was a two-year certificate.

- Volunteer Chief's Meeting: Held on September 10, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., at the Kaiminani Drive Pavillion. Chief Oliveira was unable to attend due to his attendance at the Health Care in Hawaii conference on Oahu. Anticipating a follow up report by Captain Russell Enriques who did attend.
- National Fire Academy: Chief Doug Keown and Susan Maguilla are presently attending the Fire Academy. Prior to their departure, the Fire Academy informed them that there would be a special ceremony in honor of the September 11 tragedies. They were invited to participate and were issued dress uniforms for the program. The HCFD is proud to have them represent the department and Hawai'i. The HCFD is looking forward to hearing from them regarding this program.
- Donation of Brush Truck: Offered by the Salinas Fire Department. Truck scheduled to arrive at Hilo Pier on September 16, 2005. Will be placed in service at the Paauilo Volunteer Fire Company.

Emergency Medical Service Division

- MICT Class returned to the Big Island and is scheduled to be completed on November 4, 2005.

Fire Auxiliary Services Division

- Dispatchers: Continuing to make progress with the six new Dispatchers. Three will complete their probationary period on September 16, 2005. A request to the Department of Civil Services' Mike Ben was made in order to extend the probationary period for the three remaining dispatchers because there is a need for more time to develop their skills and abilities. Part of the skill development is for the dispatchers to be exposed to certain types of incidents. There is no guarantee to exposure in emergency operations. There is a need to give them the opportunity to be

exposed to emergency operations. This is essential to have them effectively work independently.

New Projects/Business

- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Association Conference: Scheduled for November 17-20, 2005. Application packets will be sent to the Fire Commission. The confirmed speaker for Friday is the National Fire Academy's Superintendent Dr. Denis O'Neal. Saturday's confirmed speaker is Senator Daniel Inouye. Mayor Harry Kim will address the conference on Friday and introduce Senator Inouye on Saturday. Other speakers include Western Fire Chief's Association's President and Tualatin Valley Fire Chief Jeffrey Johnson, International Association of Fire Chief's Tim Reilly, and National Fire Protection Association's Ray Bizal. Also, LN Curtis and Elkhart Brass are two vendors that will be providing interactive demonstrations and displays. Vendors are aware that they are not there to sell anything, just to provide information and testing.

Commissioner Okabe asked where this event would take place.

Chief Oliveira stated that the event will take place at the Fairmont Orchid at Mauna Lani.

Commissioner Okabe asked if this event was held annually.

Chief Oliveira stated that it's an annual conference that moves from island to island. Every four years it is held on the Big Island.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the number of vendors.

Chief Oliveira stated that last year there were 50.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that this year's conference will be open to all rank and file.

- Flag Pole: As requested at last month's meeting; xeroxed catalog page was provided for the commissioners. (See Attachment "A").

Employee/Public Relations

- 8th Annual Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation Dinner & Auction: To be held this Saturday, September 17, 2005, at the Four Seasons Resort – Hualalai.

Former Commissioner Laura Varney, (formerly known as Laura Ward), explained that Dr. Frank and Laura Sayre have been running the Sayre Foundation for eight years. Years ago, they lost their son in a tragedy and

realized that the Fire Department was lacking in rescue equipment. Since then, they have been raising money for the department to buy needed rescue equipment. Honoree Firefighter Chad Hundley is unable to attend the event this year. Therefore, the Sayre's would like to make the presentation to him today.

Laura Sayre stated the Sayre Foundation gives this special award to heroes. The first responders are people who rush in when everyone else is rushing out. They cannot begin to thank these individuals for their dedication and courage. On August 26, 1997, they witnessed their courage and bravery when their son fell off a cliff at Pololu Valley. It took the Fire rescue 10 hours to recover him. These individuals took tremendous lengths to recover him and risked their own lives. The Sayre's are very dedicated to supporting them and to honoring them annually. One of this year's 2005 honorees is Firefighter Chad Hundley.

Firefighter Chad Hundley thanked the Sayre Foundation and stated that he was honored to receive this award. He also thanked his family for giving him the inspiration and support.

The Hawai'i County Fire Commission congratulated Firefighter Hundley.

Dr. Frank Sayre asked Chief Oliveira if he would explain the incident that Firefighter Hundley was involved in.

Chief Oliveira explained that on May 14, 2005, Firefighter Hundley was part of a three-man crew on Chopper 2. They responded to an ATV accident and were trying to locate a landing site. The pilot experienced a mechanical failure on the aircraft and lost total engine power. At this time they were forced to perform an emergency landing. Although there was potential for a crash, these individuals remained calm. The reason he chose to have these individuals honored was because they are a proud example of the professionalism of the HCFD. These individuals experience risks daily. They have shown that they were well trained and conducted themselves in a professional manner.

Mrs. Hundley thanked the Sayre Foundation, the HCFD, and HCFC for honoring her husband.

On behalf of the Fire Commission, Commissioner Maedo thanked the Sayre Foundation for their support of the HCFD.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Hart/Matsuda)

- Chief Oliveira will discuss the budget at the October meeting.

Office Management and Staffing (Brazier/Okabe) No report

Rules and Policies (Maedo) No report

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo)

- Hawai'i County Fair scheduled for September 15-18, 2005. The HCFD will inform the HCFC if they need any assistance with the event.
- Sayre Foundation Dinner scheduled for September 17, 2005.
- Volcano Firewise meeting scheduled for this evening, September 14, 2005.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo)

- Commissioner Maedo requested a copy of the Firefighter I curriculum.

NEW BUSINESS

- Fire Prevention Week: Scheduled for October 15, 2005, 12:00 p.m., at Hilo Bayfront. Commissioners Matsuda, Kudlo, Okabe, and Maedo agreed to participate and will bring family members. Commissioner Browne informed the commission that he was unable to attend. Commissioner Brazier was unsure and will notify Commissioner Maedo.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned whether the Fire Department would notify the public that the one-year grace period is over for mailbox numbers. Would the newspapers be contacted?

Commissioner Maedo suggested that Commissioner Kudlo handle this for the HCFD.

Chief Oliveira said okay.

Commissioner Browne asked whom he could contact to set up the show and tell committee.

Chief Oliveira suggested that Commissioner Browne route any requests for public displays directly to the administration so that they may keep track of them.

Commissioner Browne agreed to do so and will keep the commission informed.

Commissioner Maedo stated that Corporation Counsel Ashida sent written communication regarding the commissions parameters. There are guidelines they must follow.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, October 12, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Centre, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for October 12, 2005, meeting.
 - Introduction of 33rd Fire Fighter Recruit class.
 - Annual Budget Review by Chief Darryl Oliveira.
 - Organization presentation by Deputy Chief Desmond Wery.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary