

**HAWAI‘I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES
October 13, 2004
Liquor Control Conference Room
Hilo Lagoon Centre**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

Stephen Bowles
Neil Brazier, Chair
Rudolph Hart
Karen Maedo
Glen Matsuda
Laura Ward
Clifford (Joe) Whitney

A quorum was present.

Excused: Dale Fergerstrom

ALSO PRESENT:

Lincoln Ashida, Corporation Counsel
Kaycie Carter
Ann Ignacio
Laurie Kaneta
Louis Kaiwi
Brent Matsuda
Barbara G. Matthews
Gay Matthews
Lucille Mossman
Del Pranke
Martha Rodillas
Noni Sanford
Ron Sanford
Lillian Sarsfield
Desmond Wery, Deputy Fire Chief

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Corporation Counsel Lincoln Ashida addressed the public on making statements to the commission in either open or executive session.

Mr. Del Pranke and Ms. Lucille Mossman stated that they both favored making a statement in open session.

Commissioner Brazier asked Mr. Pranke to begin with his statement.

Mr. Del Pranke introduced himself and explained that he had attended the meeting to speak in regards to HFC complaint 04-01. His friend Ms. Lucille Mossman phoned him about her unpleasant incident at a gas station. She informed him that she was “verbally abused” by a man who she assumed was a firefighter, because his vehicle displayed fireman stickers. Ms. Mossman called Chief Darryl Oliveira to report the incident. Within a half-hour Chief Oliveira arrived and reviewed the gas station's videotape in order to identify that person. Mr. Pranke stated that he was very pleased to learn that the person was not a county firefighter. He commended Chief Oliveira for handling this incident in such a “fantastic” way. He also expressed to the HFC that this is another “superb example” on how the HFD operates so efficiently.

Ms. Lucille Mossman stated that although the incident was an appalling situation, she was very satisfied by the actions taken. She was pleased to know that it was not a county firefighter. She thanked the HFC for allowing her to make a statement.

Commissioner Brazier apologized to Ms. Mossman for her unfortunate incident and thanked her for coming forward to allow the situation to be investigated and resolved.

APPROVAL OF MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Commissioner Maedo made a motion to correct the minutes of the September 8, 2004, regular session. The correction to page 5, regarding paragraph 11, should state “that if a minimum score becomes a reality then the candidate should know before hand what that score was”. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion was amended to reflect the change and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Bowles moved to accept communication numbers 04-053 through 04-070. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maedo and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Deputy Chief Desmond Wery stated that Chief Oliveira was unable to attend and that he would be standing in for him.

Deputy Chief Wery introduced the HFD's two new employees, Dispatcher Lillian Sarsfield, and Personnel Management Specialist Ann Ignacio.

Commissioner Bowles asked if Dispatcher Lillian Sarsfield had any previous experience.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that Ms. Sarsfield was previously a dispatcher for the Hawai'i Police Department. He also commented that Ms. Ignacio was previously a Personnel Manager at the Department of Public Works.

The HFC welcomed them both.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that the HFC would be issued their ID cards after the meeting.

Budget

- Currently working on the submittal of Fiscal Year 2005-06, which is due to the Department of Finance by November 22, 2004. The priority of the HFD is to maintain the current service delivery requirements, and working on the submittal of the supplemental budget. The department will be pushing for additional support personnel with (Training Division, Volunteer Training, Administration, and reorganization.). In order to expedite training, the focus needs to be on expanding the division. The University of Hawai'i has notified the HFD that that they are unable to keep up with the EMS first response teams' needs. The department is working on developing its own class using personnel who have been trained to be instructors.

Alternative Funding & Grants

- DOT-Safe Community Highway Safety Grant: Firefighter Neil Yoshioka submitted a grant application to initiate the process for funding award of \$10,000 to purchase 50 radio translucent spine boards.
- DOT-Safe Community Highway Safety Grant: Received two sets of extrication tools from last year's grant award, and completed the training of personnel. Extrication tools will be put on the apparatus at Kaumana and Kawaiiani Stations to enable the HFD to revise a response assignment for a rescue truck down at the Waiakea Station that currently is responding to all auto accidents.
- Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness: Submitted an on-line application to acquire a mobile fire and safety education program trailer under the 2004 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. The requested funding total of \$110,744 was for a 35-foot trailer unit, shipping costs, and a one-ton pick up truck. The grant submittal period closed on September 30, 2004. A total of \$27.5 million will be awarded nationwide.
- USFA Grant: No new update in regards to the Fire Act Grant submitted for a mobile training prop for a fire based scenario training (\$430,000). As of

October 1, 2004, there were 3,194 grants awarded totaling \$246 million. Expecting a total of about 8,000 grants to be awarded totaling \$750 million.

- FYI: Prior USFA Grant Submittals
 - 2003:** The grant submitted was unsuccessful in obtaining 80 portable radios, modifications to fire stations (plymo-vent), 20 new SCBA's & upgrade of 84 SCBA's. Total grant was \$424,600.
 - 2002:** The grant submitted was successful in obtaining Firefighter I/II Training Curriculum, Thermal Imaging Cameras, NFPA 1041 Train-the-Trainer and Driver Operator Program training; liquid propane live fire Christmas tree prop. Total grant was \$218,497.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Puna Public Safety Complex: No new updates.
- Pahoia Fire Station: Governor Linda Lingle signed an executive order transferring the proposed property to the County. Architects Hawai'i has been awarded the contract to be the design consultant. Plans will include the Police Substation and future projects with the Mayor.
- Fire Administration: Met with Mayor Kim, who requested more details on the plans and the projected land usage in regards to property on Komohana Street intersection, Mohouli extension and the Sunrise Ridge subdivision. Currently developing a proposal to be resubmitted for his approval.
- Kalaoa Fire Station: Close to finalizing the contract with owner Mr. Dan Bolton to determine exactly where the station will be situated. Mr. Bolton's attorney is in the process of providing the Office of the Corporation Counsel with a "property title" to indicate that they have control and ownership.

Promotions and Hiring

- Dispatcher III Promotions: Internal recruitment opened for three positions effective October 11-22, 2004.
- Departmental Personnel Clerk: Upgraded position from Clerk III. EMS Clerk Judy Kaeo will be promoted effective November 1, 2004. She will be working with Personnel Management Specialist Ann Ignacio within the personnel section of the Administration.
- FEO/Captains Promotions: An explanation of the internal recruitment procedures was provided. (See Attachment "A") Promotions were conducted on September 20-21, 2004. A survey was given to the candidates following the completion of the assessment center. Received many positive comments.

Operations Division

- Brush Fires: A total of 47 brush fires occurred between September 1-21, 2004, from South Point to West Hawai'i. The department is aware that some fires were suspicious in nature and will be monitoring that. A briefing was conducted with Assistant Fire Chiefs, Department of Public Works personnel and the Civil Defense Agency on October 1, 2004.
- Community Groups for Homeland Security Training: This program is part of the Hawai'i Community Resource Center. The objective is to get members of various

organizations to be able to provide immediate response time for disasters. The HFD is taking a lead in providing instructors for the Community Emergency Response Team. Firefighter Keola Payao was sent to the mainland to receive instructor training. He has trained 12 personnel to be certified instructors.

- Situational Exercises - 93rd Civil Support Team: Currently the HFD is participating in a three day situational training exercise administered by the Hawai'i National Guard personnel. This training is designed to deal with Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Aether Fire RMS User Conference: Fire Equipment Officer Charles Whittle and Laurine Carvalho from the Department of Data Systems attended a conference on October 11-13, 2004, in San Antonio, Texas. The focus of this training is to incorporate additional modules into the present Records Management Systems.

Prevention Division

- Uniform Fire Code: Met with the Office of the Corporation Counsel to complete and adopt UFC 1997 Fire Code. Once finalized, inspectors will be able to enforce codes consistently throughout the state.

Training Division

- Recruit Class Updates: 30th Recruit Class recently completed the clinical portion of the EMT basic training and began the EMT-Intermediate training program, which should be completed in December. The 31st Recruit Class is currently in its 11th week of training. They recently completed their "Hazwopper" training and are presently undergoing water safety training in Kona.

Volunteer Division

- Driver Training: Approximately 85 percent of volunteer personnel have completed the classroom portion of their driver training. The next process is to complete their 40 hours of training, to receive certification.

EMS Division

- Ocean View Ambulance Service: In the process of working on BLS service at the Ocean View station. Continuing to get station and ambulance in order.
- MICT Class: Scheduled to begin on November 1, 2004, the class consists of seven candidates. A one-year training will be completed in November 2005.

Fire Auxiliary Services

- Hawai'i Insurance Bureau: Presently working with HIB to conduct a reassessment or reclassification of the Public Classification Guide for North and South Kohala districts. Recently reassessed the Hilo district, which resulted in a lower rating that benefits the community.

New Projects/Business

- 2nd Annual Statewide Municipal Attorney's Conference: Chief Darryl Oliveira attended the conference held on September 23-24, 2004, in Waikoloa,

sponsored by the Office of the Corporation Counsel. Sessions included training in discipline and procurement. Chief Oliveira is interested in providing a more in-depth training on discipline for HFD personnel.

- 2004 State of Hawai'i Ocean Safety Conference: Chief Darryl Oliveira attended the "United in Purpose" conference held on September 30, 2004, on Kauai. The Department of Parks and Recreation would like to incorporate ocean safety within the HFD. The HFD would like to resolve personnel issues before taking on new divisions. Therefore, they will proceed with this program cautiously.

Public Relations

- Fire Prevention Week: Scheduled for October 23, 2004, at the Old Kona Airport between 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The HFC was sent invitations and encouraged to attend the event.
- 3rd Annual KTA-HIUW Bag Brigade: Completed the sixth and final bag brigade at KTA Puainako on Saturday, October 9, 2004. Raised \$4,403.80 to benefit Hawai'i Island United Way.
- 7th Annual Daniel Sayre Foundation Dinner: Held on September 11, 2004, at Four Seasons Resort Hualalai. A total of \$40,000 was raised and donated to the Hawai'i Fire Department, which is in the process of developing a plan and a proposal for the disbursement of funds.

Commissioner Brazier asked if there were any final questions for Deputy Chief Wery.

Commissioner Bowles suggested that the Expenditure Status Report be adjusted by adding a column for the requested budget under the strategic plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

After a lengthy discussion, Corporation Counsel Lincoln Ashida explained rules regarding term limits, staggered terms, and appointment for a second term, so that all the Commissioners were satisfied that they clearly understood.

The HFC agreed that the issue was resolved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Budget & Finance (Bowles/Hart)** None
- **Office Management and Staffing (Ferberstrom)** None
- **Rules and Policies (Maedo)** None
- **Public Relations (Ward)**
 1. Commissioner Ward stated that she got a letter from Denise Laitinen, Head of the Firewise Organization in Hawai'i. The letter commended Kohala by the Sea for achieving recognition as part of the National Firewise Community USA

program. The letter acknowledged them as the 50th community in the Country to achieve this status. Commissioner Ward would like to ask Ms. Laitinen to attend an upcoming HFC meeting so that she may give some background on this organization. Ms. Laitinen is a new member to the Fire Commission in Maui, and her appointment with the Firewise Organization is a National position.

2. 7th Annual Daniel Sayre Foundation Dinner on September 11, 2004, at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai. In previous years the amount given had gone from, \$10,000 in 2002, \$18,000 in 2003, and this year, \$40,000.

NEW BUSINESS

None

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that before going to Executive Session to discuss HFC complaint 04-02, he assumed that the HFC had questions for him (such as liabilities, duties, responsibilities, and etc.)

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that the HFC could dispense with HFC complaint 04-01, in public session. After hearing Mr. Pranke's and Ms. Mossman's statements this was a case where the complainant presumed that the individual was a County Firefighter, but it was proven to everyone's satisfaction that it was not a county employee. The HFC rules provide four possible dispositions for complaints made against the HFD personnel. He recommended that they classify this complaint as unfounded, which is defined, as a complaint not based on fact and which had not occurred.

Commissioner Ward asked if they needed to make a motion for that.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated it was not necessary because the individual was not a county employee and there were insufficient facts.

Commissioner Bowles suggested that they wait for the Action on the Executive Session Matters.

Commissioner Ward asked if the individuals involved with HFC complaint 04-02 would be given a chance to make a statement.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that they were allowed to make statements during the public statement portion of the meeting or at the Chair's discretion.

Commissioner Brazier asked Mrs. Barbara Mathews if she would like to offer any statement before the HFC goes into executive session.

Ms. Gay Mathews answered for her mother and said that she was there on behalf of her mother and they both would like to make a statement.

Commissioner Brazier asked Mrs. Barbara Mathews how she would like this issue resolved.

Mrs. Barbara Mathews stated that she did not want to see one employee bring down the reputation of the whole department. By reporting this incident she hoped something could be done to correct the matter with this particular employee. She assured the HFC that she is not a vindictive person and would not go after a person for no reason.

Commissioner Brazier asked Mrs. Mathews if she would be satisfied with this matter being handled internally within the department.

Mrs. Mathews stated that she would.

Ms. Gay Mathews stated that she is the CEO of the North Hawai'i Community Federal Credit Union. She has also received complaints about the same individual at the Credit Union. When it happened to her mother, which "hit closer to home," she picked up the phone and called Chief Oliveira. She praised Chief Oliveira and the HFD for their response and professional assistance in this matter.

Commissioner Brazier thanked them for attending the meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Bowles at 11:04 a.m. and seconded by Commissioner Hart that the Hawai'i Fire Commission go into executive session pursuant to Section 92-5(2), Hawai'i Revised Statutes and Section 13-20(b), Hawai'i County Charter. The motion was unanimously carried.

The regular session ended at 11:04 a.m. and a short recess of 5 minutes was taken.

Executive session started at 11:09 a.m.

Regular session resumed at 11:27 a.m.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTER

Commissioner Ward moved that HFC complaint 04-01 is unfounded. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Maedo and unanimously carried.

Commissioner Bowles moved that HFC complaint 04-02, is sustained. A roll call vote was taken to sustain HFC complaint 04-02.

YES

NO

Bowles
Brazier
Hart
Maedo
Ward
Whitney

A total of six ayes were counted and the motion was passed.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Corporation Counsel Ashida asked Firefighter Brent Matsuda if he would like to make a statement to the HFC.

Mr. Matsuda replied that he would.

Corporation Counsel Ashida stated that it was brought to his attention that Mr. Matsuda was given legal advice that it was not in his best interest to make a statement to the HFC.

Mr. Matsuda stated that he was advised by Union Representatives not to show up to these proceedings. He discussed with Chief Oliveira the issue of this complaint and advised him that there was nothing derogatory said to the complainant and that it was a personal matter.

Mr. Matsuda stated that this issue began about four years ago. He was dealing with a family hardship and had been going through the court system. An attorney from Waimea named Ms. Edith Kawai was given his case, and he owed her a bill of \$1500 and at that time he was experiencing a financial strain. He asked with Ms. Kawai if he could make monthly payments to her in the amount of \$50.00. She advised him that her secretary, Mr. Mo Mathews, would contact him about making that payment arrangement. He was appalled to get a "rude" letter from Mr. Mathews that stated that they would not approve of monthly payments. His attorney, Ms. Kay Iopa, advised him to pay them \$50 a month anyway. This way they could not garnish his paycheck. Finally, he was financially able to pay them and gave his attorney a check to pay them off. The next day he ran into Mrs. Mathews and he explained to her that his feeling was hurt at the way he was treated by her husband. He was not looking to harass them. He only wanted to express his feelings to her. He knows he is a firefighter but is also a human being.

Commissioner Maedo asked Mr. Matsuda if he denied saying anything that was written in Mrs. Mathews statement.

Mr. Matsuda stated that he denies saying anything derogatory.

Commissioner Bowles stated that the HFC has a difficult task of voting whether a complaint should be investigated further. The HFC had adequate reason with this complaint that it be sustained, especially in light of the police report.

Mr. Matsuda stated that he understood the HFC's decision.

Commissioner Brazier thanked Mr. Matsuda for coming forward and giving a statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. at the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Centre, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for November 10, 2004, meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Brazier adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary