

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



John M. Bertsch
Chairman

Bill Rosehill
Vice-Chairman

HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **October 14, 2009** **Aupuni Center Conference Room** **Hilo, Hawai'i**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bertsch at 10:03 a.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch, Chair
Stephen Bowles
Henry Pomroy, Jr.
Kaloa Robinson
Bill Rosehill
Scott Stabo

Absent: James Browne
Excused: Louis Kaiwi

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Robert Belcher
Kaycie Carter
John Kapsky
Molly Lugo, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Noni Sanford
Chris Stellfox

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: John Bertsch, Stephen Bowles, James Browne, Louis Kaiwi
Henry Pomroy, Jr., Kaloa Robinson, Bill Rosehill, Scott Stabo

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Pomroy moved to accept the September 9, 2009, regular session minutes. Correction: Chair Bertsch commented that on page 4 the acronym RMS stands for Records Management System and not Rescue Medical Services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robinson and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Oliveira introduced the Hawai'i Fire Department's new Accountant IV Robert Belcher.

Budget

- FY 2010/11 Budget: Mayor's budget directives meeting held on September 14, 2009. Budget submittal due on November 16, 2009.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2007 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (VTC Equipment): The VTC system is in operation and being used across the island for meetings, training, and also the Chief's forum in West Hawai'i.
- FEMA FY 2008 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Health/wellness program) Uniformed personnel are completing blood and lab work and will follow-up with a consultation with the nurse practitioner.
- FY 2009 Assistance to Fire Fighters Fire Station Construction: Received notification of award on October 2, 2009 for \$4.1 million towards the construction of the Makalei Fire Station. The Fire Department is required to report to FEMA on the status of the project.

Capital Improvement Projects:

- Makalei Fire Station: Final plans are being reviewed. The Department of Public Works Engineer is working with the design consultant. The bid for construction will go out by the end of the year.
- Pahoehoe Fire Station: Received the keys to the station. In the process of coordinating the move to the station by the end of the month. A formal blessing and dedication will be in November.

- Administration and Support Facility: A public forum was held. Residents raised their concerns regarding the radio transmission tower on the site. Chief Oliveira will meet with the design consultants, which include the Architect, Pacific Wireless Communications, the County's Department of Data Systems, Civil Defense Agency, and the Police Department. They will discuss alternatives on the placement of the tower. Chief Oliveira intends to discuss an implementation of radio over internet protocol being used across the country. If the internet is used as a means of moving the radio communication it would allow the Fire Department to leave the infrastructure at the public safety complex and provide internet connectivity to the site (preferably underground).
- Central Fire Station: Received an informal notice from the Department of Housing and Urban Development that the 1.8 acre parcel on the corner of Wailoa and Ululani Street will be transferred over to the County.

Promotions and Hiring:

- Open-Competitive Recruitment
 - Firefighter Recruitment: Letters were sent to the candidates informing them that they will be notified by November 2009. Hire date is targeted for March 2010.
- Internal Recruitments
 - Assistant Chief/Battalion Chief promotions: Completed assessment center. Positions will be filled effective October 16, 2009. The selected officers will be introduced at the November meeting. Chief Oliveira acknowledged Commissioner Kaiwi's participation at the assessment center.
 - Fire HazMat Specialist promotion: Vacancies were filled effective October 1, 2009.

Emergency Operations Section

- Prescribed Burn Project: The gorse eradication project at Mauna Kea was successful. The Phos-chek (fire retardant) was used for the first time in Hawai'i. Pilots and personnel were pleased with the effectiveness of the product. The department is conducting a cost comparison on the product.

Ocean Safety Division

- Report by Captain John Kapsky.
- Promotions and Hiring
 - East Hawai'i: One full time vacancy.
 - West Hawai'i: No vacancies.
 - Punalu'u Beach Park: Two ½ time positions were funded and vacancies will be filled soon.
- Old Business/New Business
 - Lifeguard Towers: The three towers are expected to arrive on October 22, 2009. Installation is expected for Isaac Hale Beach Park

Chair Bertsch inquired on whether there were any plans for the old towers.

Captain Kapsky replied that he was unaware of any plans.

- University of Hawai'i at Hilo Safety Orientation: Captain Kapsky and Fire Rescue Specialist Jeff Loo administered two one-hour safety orientation sessions to new students. These sessions are to caution newcomers of the potential hazards at Big Island's beaches, rivers, shorelines, and with dangers involving hiking. Captain Kapsky is collaborating with the UHH's personnel in order to mandate the orientation.
- Daniel Sayre Foundation Awards and Recognition Dinner: Held on Saturday, September 5, 2009. Three East Hawai'i Water Safety Officers received awards.

Chair Bertsch inquired on whether there were statistics on incidents involving college students.

Captain Kapsky replied that many incidents are associated with all newcomers to the island and not just limited to college students.

Chief Oliveira concurred the college students are just a targeted group that Ocean Safety can easily congregate.

Captain Kapsky informed the commission that Ocean Safety has made attempts to work with the airline industry in order to educate newcomers through safety videos. However, these attempts have been unsuccessful.

Commissioner Bowles asked whether there were safety brochures distributed at Big Island hotels.

Captain Kapsky answered that there are brochures being circulated.

Support Services Division
Emergency Medical Services Bureau

- 2009 National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians Paramedic of the Year: Fire Fighter Chris Honda was selected and will be honored at the national awards program on October 27, 2009, in Atlanta. The Fire Commission will honor Firefighter Honda at next month's meeting.

- American Medical Response: The Fire Department is trying to expand its partnership with AMS in order to improve service to the community. The integration of the MRA incident system is going very well. The department is collecting statistics and a report will be provided to the Fire Commission. A training session will be coordinated in order to improve the computer based system for dispatchers. It will allow them to provide pre-arrival medical instructions and also allow them to triage the calls. Presently, the dispatchers are using a card system (flow chart).

Training Bureau

- 38th Firefighter Recruit Class: Graduation ceremony took place on September 19, 2009. They are completing driver training and will be receiving their station assignments shortly.

Volunteer Section

- Hawai'i Volunteer Fire Chief's Association meeting: Held on September 12, 2009, Station 14A (North Kohala Ranch).
- Ainaloa Volunteer Company: Dedication and service began on September 26, 2009.
- Report by Noni Sanford.
- Fire Essential and CERT training continuing.
- Volunteer Fire Chief's Association election: Tom Brandt was reelected as the Volunteer Fire Chief.

New Projects/Business

- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Association Conference update: There is a possibility that U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran may be a keynote speaker. Another keynote speaker will be Attorney James Juneau who will be making a presentation on "The Ten Commandments of Apparatus Safety."

Chief Oliveira stated that Lieutenant Governor Duke Aiona will be attending and regretfully Dr. O'Neil, Superintendent of the National Fire Academy will not.

Accountant Robert Belcher reported that the Mayor's directives were shared with the County departments. Presently, the Fire Department is in the middle of the budget process and will be submitting his budget to the Department of Finance by the November deadline.

Commissioner Rosehill mentioned that a few months ago there was a bomb scare at the Kona Walmart. General Manager John Yates informed Commissioner Rosehill that he was very impressed with Captain Sean Sommers professionalism.

Chair Bertsch inquired on Fire Prevention Week.

Chief Oliveira answered that Fire Prevention Week was held in Kona and it was a successful event. Lowes store has committed to being involved again next year. There is consideration on having the annual event begin on one side of the island and finish on the other.

Chair Bertsch will email the Fire Department's Secretary a request for a list of staff members who assisted in the event. On behalf of the Fire Commission, he would like to send them correspondence thanking them for their efforts.

Chief Oliveira acknowledged FRS Garret Nishihara and Firefighter Lyle Tamaribuchi for coordinating the event.

NEW BUSINESS

- Assignment of Committees.

- **Budget and Finance**

Commissioner Bowles will continue on the Budget and Finance Committee.

- **Office Management and Staffing**

Commissioner Bertsch will continue to serve on the Office Management and Staffing Committee.

- **Rules and Policies**

Commissioner Rosehill will continue to serve on the Rules and Policies Committee.

- **Public Relations**

Commissioners Pomroy, Bertsch, and Browne will continue to serve on the Public Relations Committee.

- **Training and Education**

Commissioner Bertsch will continue to serve on the Training and Education Committee.

All committees will remain the same; Chair Bertsch advised the members that if they would like to serve on a committee they can inform him later.

Chair Bertsch recommended that the commission agendaize a preliminary Chief evaluation discussion for the November meeting. He would like the Fire Commission to go into an executive session with the Fire Chief. At that time, they could have an open dialogue with the Fire Chief. This will enable each member in filling out the evaluation form. At the conclusion of that meeting the commission can formulate and compile their final recommendations for the December meeting.

Commissioner Bowles asked whether the forms would be distributed in advance.

Chair Bertsch replied that the forms should be available at the November meeting.

Commissioner Bowles commented that the Fire Commission will soon be facing a transition of officers and new commissioners simultaneously. He asked whether there was any news regarding the Fire Commission's vacancies.

According to Chair Bertsch, the Mayor is actively recruiting to fill the commission's vacancies.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Fire Commission Orientation Binder – Introduction (draft) letter.

Chair Bertsch disseminated a draft letter which will be reviewed by the members. The Fire Commission placed the draft letter on the agenda for the November meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Bowles) No report.

Office Management and Staffing (Bertsch) No report.

Rules and Policies (Rosehill) No report.

Public Relations (Pomroy/Bertsch/Browne) No report.

Training and Education (Bertsch) No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., in the Aupuni Center Conference Room, Aupuni Center, 101 Pauahi Street, Hilo, Hawai'i. **Note: Meeting rescheduled a week earlier due to Veteran's Day Holiday.**

- Set agenda for November 4, 2009, meeting.
 - Nomination/Election of Officers.
 - Fire Commission Orientation Binder – Introduction (draft) letter.
 - Chief’s Evaluation Process – Review of forms and procedures.
 - Introduction of Assistant Chiefs and Battalion Chiefs recently promoted.
 - Recognition of EMT – Paramedic of the Year – Chris Honda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 11:05 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
SECRETARY