

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

Phone: 961-8316; Fax: 933-1521

Email: Firecomm-agenda@co.hawaii.hi.us

REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **November 12, 2008** **Aupuni Center Conference Room** **Hilo, Hawai'i**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch
Stephen Bowles
Wil Okabe, Chair
Henry Pomroy, Jr.
Kaloa Robinson (10:05 a.m.)
Bill Rosehill

Excused: James Browne
Karen Kudlo

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Tom Brandt
Kaycie Carter
Glen Honda
Laurie Kaneta
Garrett Kim
Bill Brillhante, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Clint Coloma
Gerald Kosaki
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: John Bertsch, Stephen Bowles, James Browne, Karen Kudlo,
Wil Okabe, Henry Pomroy, Jr., Kaloa Robinson, Bill Rosehill

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Pomroy moved to accept the October 8, 2008, regular and executive session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bertsch and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Bertsch moved to accept communication number 08-06. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bowles and unanimously carried.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Equipment Operator Richard Fong introduced the 38th Firefighter Recruit Class. They are:

Christopher J. Alex	Jason H. Habu
West C. Hawthorne	Paul F. Higgins
Roland G. Laliberte	Jeffrey C. E. Maki
Andrew M. Miller	Tyler D. Nagamine
Christopher N. Olayon	Jared P. Spencer
Waylen Y. Towata	

The Fire Commission welcomed them.

Chief Oliveira introduced Kaumana Fire Station's HazMat Officer Captain Gerald Kosaki. Chief Oliveira explained that due to a vacant Training Officer position in the Training Bureau. Fire Equipment Operator Fong was temporarily assigned to the position.

Captain Kosaki expressed his interest in filling the position. He explained his history within the Fire Department.

Fire Rescue Specialist Garrett Kim introduced himself and presented an overview of the Health and Wellness program. He explained that the Fire Department received FEMA's 2008 Assistance to Fire Fighters grant in the amount of \$425,000. The grant was given in order to initiate the program. After one year it will be the Fire Department's responsibility to fund the program. The projected cost is approximately \$531,000. The grant money will pay for HFD's personnel medical screening, training administered by two peer fitness trainers, equipment for each station, and an assessment center held in both East and West Hawai'i.

CHIEF'S REPORT CONTINUED

Budget

- FY 2009/10 Budget: Bureau and Division Heads are reviewing their program budgets and supplemental budget requests. The Mayor's Office issued a status quo directive. No new positions or equipment will be funded. The budget submittal is due to the Department of Finance by November 17, 2008.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2007 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Video Teleconferencing Equipment) Continues to go through the request for proposal special bids process. Received bids on equipment. Will meet with the planning committee.
- FEMA FY 2008 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Health/Wellness program, discussed earlier).
- State Department of Transportation Safe Highways Grant: Received a preliminary notice of approval to purchase DOT/OSHA approved traffic safety vests for all fire fighters and volunteer fire fighters.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Makalei Fire Station: Continues to move forward with the approval of the subdivision plans. On behalf of the Fire Department, the Office of the Corporation Counsel submitted a proposed resolution to the County Council for the acceptance of the donated 2.8 acres of land, which is scheduled to be heard before the County Council on November 21, 2008.
- Pahoia Fire Station: The contractor is proceeding with the retrofit of the wall system. Anticipating the station to be up and running by February 2009.
- Fire Administration and Support Facility: Contractor is working on the Dispatch building floor design changes.
- Central Fire Station: Submitted a documentation request to Housing and Urban Development. Awaiting a response from HUD on the disposition of the property.
- Captain Cook Fire Station: Chief Oliveira met with Commissioner Rosehill, shift officers, personnel, and the general contractor to discuss timelines for the project, minimizing the impact on operations, and preparing for the temporary relocation of the station personnel to the National Park Service Hale Na Opio.

Promotions and Hiring

Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Ocean Safety Division – Report provided by Battalion Chief Clint Coloma.
 - Will be conducting open recruitment for a ½ time Water Safety Officer for South Kohala.

- Will request temporarily filling Water Safety Officer Positions for winter season.
- Isaac Hale Park: Installed temporary tower on October 20 – 21, 2008.
- Boating Safety Class: The department will begin administering a four-hour Boating Safety Awareness class starting with the next recruitment class.

Commissioner Bertsch inquired on the status of Hawai'i County's beach assessment.

Battalion Chief Coloma replied that the assessment is expected to be completed in 2009.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that Battalion Chief Coloma is working on a project that involves a challenging issue at Punaluu Beach Park. Because there is a lot of beach usage and shoreline activity, it is necessary to consider where to install a lifeguard tower. The issue is that the stretch of beach is owned by multiple owners. These owners include the County, State, and private sector. Based on the HFD's preliminary assessment, the best location to install a tower would be on private property.

Internal Recruitment

- Fire Equipment Operator: Assessment Center exercises will be conducted for 35 candidates on December 6 and 7, 2008. The Fire Commission is welcome to attend with the stipulation that they must attend the entire event.

Chief Oliveira explained the assessment center exercises such as testing curriculum, grading procedures, provisions within the Department of Human Resources, and complaint procedures. He mentioned that there are different methods established for individuals who wish to protest an exam. If an individual disputes something on a test, it is best to do it immediately while taking the exam. Otherwise, if a candidate wants to challenge the test, there is also an internal complaint process.

Commissioner Bertsch inquired on who designed the test.

Chief Oliveira replied that the test is purchased by the Department of Human Resources from a vendor on the mainland. The Fire Department provides the Department of Human Resources with a set of its core library. The test company writes the test according to these text books.

Chief Oliveira explained that he was asked by both the union and the membership to review the tests. However, there is a provision within the Department of Human Resources that if an authority figure, such as

himself, is used is used to assist with the developing of a test, that individual's involvement cannot be disclosed.

According to Commissioner Rosehill, the personnel have expressed their concern regarding irrelevant material in tests. For this reason, they feel someone should screen the test and verify that the questions are appropriate.

Commissioner Bertsch inquired on whether it was ever discovered that the questions on the test were not incorporated in the study guides.

Chief Oliveira stated that it was not.

Commissioner Rosehill asked whether a person tested would have the opportunity to review their mistakes.

Chief Oliveira replied that those individuals would not be able to see the answer sheet. However, the test is broken into several subject matter areas, and the HFD has requested that the Department of Human Resources identify the area needing improvement.

Emergency Operations Division

- Kona Airport tri-annual drill: Conducted on November 5, 2008.
- As requested by Commissioner Kudlo, all but six of the Emergency Operations personnel have completed required ICS training (up to ICS 800). The six remaining personnel are on military leave or injury leave, are still on probation.

Support Services Division

Emergency Medical Services Bureau

- 911 Calling Presentation: Conducted for Big Island Stroke Club. Held at Kamana Senior Center on October 3, 2008.

Fire Auxiliary Services

Communications Section

- Table Top Exercise: Held at the Imiloa Dinning Room. Exercise conducted by the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistant Coordinator Doug Harder.
- Auxiliary Services Supervisor Vivian Arai retired after 35 years of service.

Warehouse Section

- Battalion Chief Michael Gahan and Mechanic Glenn Maesato were sent to Maui this month to check on the serviceability of one Seagrave Fire Truck.

Training Bureau Recruit Training

- 37th Recruit Class: Began their EMT-I training on October 13, 2008.
- 38th Recruit Class: Currently in Firefighter I training program.
- CERT Training: Twelve classes were held. Two hundred eleven individuals were trained.

New Projects/Business

- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Association Conference. Chair Wil Okabe and Vice-Chair Steven Bowles attended the 30th Annual HFCA Conference at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua on Maui. The event was held November 6-8, 2008. The Hawai'i Fire Department will host next year's conference at the Hilton Waikoloa Village on November 19-21, 2009.

Chair Okabe and Vice-Chair Bowles reported that the Fire Commission's conference session was informative and helpful to the commissions. Each commission's duties and responsibilities are structured differently. Chair Okabe presented an overview to the commissioners on the Hawai'i Fire Department's extra responsibilities such as the Volunteer section, EMS, the recent addition of the Ocean Safety division. He thanked Secretary Laurie Kaneta for providing a powerpoint for his presentation. A concern that was addressed was the State's residency clause.

Chair Okabe stated that because the Fire Chief's Conference will be held on the Big Island next year. It is necessary that the Hawai'i County Fire Commission organize a similar Fire Commission session.

Chief Oliveira commented that the Fire Chief's Conference held a training session. The Hawai'i Fire Department implemented that process at the conference in 2005. Following that event, it has been incorporated into the conference. The Hawai'i Fire Department intends to expand on the training section at the 2009 conference. This will increase participation from the rank and file.

Volunteer Section

- Continuing with Firefighter I and II training.
- Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt
 - Volunteer Fire Chief's Meeting: Scheduled for November 15, 2008, at Volcano Station, at 10:00 a.m.
 - Participating in the Veteran's Day Parade.
 - CERT Program: Four individuals from Fern Forest have shown interest in the program.
 - Appreciation to Council Members Angel Pilago, Emily Naeole, Dominic Yagong, Bob Jacobson, and Stacy Higa for providing funds to purchase additional equipment.

- Received approval from the Historic Preservation to proceed with the construction of a new building in Fern Forest.

Commissioner Kudlo had previously inquired on the following questions:

- What is the department's "return to work" policy after an injury?

Chief Oliveira replied that when an individual is out on a personal work related injury, their PUC is suspended. Prior to returning to work, those individuals must pass a physical examination with the County physician. Other employees suffering with long-term recovery injuries are offered County job placement with limited work duty.

- What is the department's policy on the rank and file being able to phone the Personnel Section regarding personnel matters?

Chief Oliveira stated that an earlier directive communicated to the rank and file stated that they go through the chain of command when appropriate. However, if it is a "personal matter" they may proceed directly to the Personnel Section by scheduling an appointment. He explained that the reason the administration recommends going through the chain of command is because it is necessary for the supervisor to be aware of issues pertaining to operations.

Commissioner Rosehill replied that he was informed by personnel that they received a directive by email or memorandum that all matters go through the chain of command.

Chief Oliveira stated that all memorandums that deal with department policies are disseminated by his office. Therefore, he will investigate the matter.

Employee/Public Relations

- Fire Prevention Week: Bucket Brigade held on October 11, 2008.
- Dream Come True Program: Presentation by Eric Kunitomo scheduled for December meeting in Kona.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2009 Fire Commission meeting schedule – Reschedule November meeting due to Veteran's Day Holiday.

The Fire Commission agreed to have the November 2009 meeting on Tuesday, November 4, 2009.

- Update on Hawai'i Statewide Fire Commission Meeting.

Chair Okabe stated that the 2009 Fire Commission meeting will be held in Waikoloa.

Chief Oliveira stated that he is a board member of the HFCA and asked whether the commission wants him to suggest that the post island Fire Commission decide when they should meet.

The Fire Commission agreed.

- Distribution of the Annual Fire Chief's Evaluation form.

Commissioner Bowles moved to forward the completed evaluation form to Chair Okabe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bertsch and unanimously carried.

The Fire Commission agreed to send the completed forms to Chair Okabe by December 1. Chair Okabe will compile the evaluations and report the results at the December meeting.

MOTION TO GO TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Bertsch made a motion to consider discipline and charges against employees of the Hawai'i County Fire Department, and to conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Fire Chief, where consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved and a closed session is requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pomroy and unanimously carried.

The regular session ended at 11:55 a.m.

The regular session convened at 12:40 p.m.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS

Commissioner Bertsch made a motion to accept correspondence dated August 3, 2008, August 12, 2008, August 25, 2008, and October 15, 2008. Commissioner Pomroy seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

Chair Okabe stated that correspondence dated August 3 and August 25 will be referred to the Fire Chief.

Chair Okabe reiterated that the Chief's Evaluation form must be completed and forwarded to him by December 1.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Browne) 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 (Kudlo) No report

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hanama Place.
- Set agenda for December 10, 2008, meeting.

Commissioner Bowles requested that Chief Oliveira provide him with a copy of the budget before presenting it to the commission.

At 12:45 p.m., Chief Oliveira requested an executive session to discuss his evaluation.

Commissioner Bertsch made a motion to return to executive session. Commissioner Rosehill seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

Regular session convened at 1:00 p.m.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that the language below executive session should be reconsidered. The Police Commission's agenda allows them to go into executive session if it pertains to personnel matters. It was not necessary to identify the employee or the situation.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante stated that Hawai'i's Sunshine Law clearly requires that specific details be disclosed when moving into executive session. It is necessary that the topics be listed on the agenda.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that it restricts the Fire Chief from bringing forward important matters that developed last minute.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brilhante stated that the purpose of that requirement is to allow the public six days notice and last minute items should not be subject to discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary