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## HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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### **REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES** **November 14, 2007** **Aupuni Center Conference Room**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

#### **ROLL CALL**

#### **PRESENT:**

John Bertsch  
Stephen Bowles  
James Browne  
Neil Brazier, Chair  
Karen Maedo  
Wil Okabe  
Henry Pomroy  
Bill Rosehill

Excused: Karen Kudlo

A quorum was present.

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Tom Brandt  
Kaycie Carter  
John Kapsky  
Brandon Gonzalez, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Laurie Kaneta  
Glen Honda, Deputy Fire Chief

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Commissioners: John Bertsch, Stephen Bowles, Neil Brazier, James Browne,  
Karen Kudlo, Karen Maedo, Wil Okabe, Henry Pomroy, Jr., Bill Rosehill

## **STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** (Open to the Public)

None

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Okabe moved to accept the October 10, 2007, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maedo and unanimously carried.

## **APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Maedo moved to accept communication number 07-017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bowles and unanimously carried.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Deputy Chief Glen Honda provided the Chief's report to the Fire Commission due to Chief Oliveira's absence. Chief Oliveira is on Oahu for a HCC Fire Advisory Board meeting and HFCA Board meeting.

### Budget

- FY 2007/08 Budget: Met with the Division heads to finalize and submit the program and supplemental budget to the Department of Finance. The deadline is November 15, 2007. An update will be provided at next month's meeting.

### Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2005 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Plymo-Vent) The project was finalized and closed out. Appreciation was extended to Firefighter Neil Yoshioka for spearheading the project.
- FEMA FY 2007 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant: Opened on October 22, 2007. The Strategic Planning Public Education/Relations committee is working to refine and resubmit the grant proposal for the safety and education trailer. Deadline for submittal is November 30.
- Fireman's Fund Grant: Recently received \$18,000 to be used for training curriculum, libraries in stations, and Fire Equipment Operator and Fire Company Officer training. Also, training curriculum will be extended to the volunteers.

### Capital Improvement Projects

- Makalei Fire Station: Met with KYA Design Group on November 13, 2007, to review the site plans. A few modifications were made to enhance the station. Therefore, they will submit another schematic to include those changes.

- Pahoia Fire Station: Construction is continuing and target date of completion is May 2008.
- Fire Administration and Support Facility: On October 18, 2007, a kick-off meeting was held with Anbe, Aruga, Ishizu Architects design consultant and their civil, mechanical, electrical, environmental assessment personnel. Also in attendance were the Telecom sub-contractors and representatives from the County's Department of Public Works, Department of Data Systems and the Fire and Police Department. The lead project architect is Harold Inouye. Project requirements include master planning site to include Fire Admin Building, Emergency Dispatch Building, Fire Training Building, Museum, Covered Training Area, Warehouse and Fire Station. The consultant will subdivide five acres from a State parcel located along the Mohouli extension. The initial timeline for the design is estimated to be approximately 12 to 14 months. The contract was executed on August 31, 2007; therefore, a design is expected by May 2008.
- Central Fire Station: The Department of Public Works is currently negotiating a contract for the design consultant to include the Environmental Assessment.
- Central Fire Station Retrofit Project: Received a discrepancy punch list on November 1, 2007, from Architects Pacific and forwarded it to Beach Side Roofing, who is the project's general contractor. The most significant inconsistency was with the reinstallation of the solar panels. The ball valves, air vents and conduit need to be installed and the thermocouple wire needs to be replaced. Regarding the plaster work in the kitchen/dining room, it is yet to be determined whether the job will be bid out or if the County carpenter shop will be doing the job. Daren Kodani will be discussing the matter with the Carpenter Shop, and the Fire Department awaits their decision.
- Captain Cook Fire Station: Submitted input regarding preliminary schematic to Department of Public Works' David Yamamoto on October 15, 2007. Requested that a turning radius be included in order to demonstrate accessibility to the new apparatus bay. A meeting is scheduled with the station's personnel for 10:00 a.m., on November 27, 2007, to discuss the project.
- Keaau Fire Station: The meeting scheduled for November 2, 2007, with Mayor Harry Kim, Harry Yada, Fire and Police representatives and Kamehameha Schools was rescheduled to November 28, 2007. The meeting scheduled is to discuss whether Kamehameha Schools is interested in working with the County on the development of a Fire/Police complex, because the desired property is located and currently owned by Kamehameha Schools.
- Honokaa Fire Station: Notification was sent to the Mayor's Office and the Department of Finance on the possibility that Kamehameha Schools may be considering negotiations with the County in obtaining property in the

Honokaa area. The Mayor's Office has given approval for the Fire Department to assist Harry Yada with the discussions.

Promotions and Hiring  
Active recruits include:

#### Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Firefighter Recruit: Currently, the 37<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class candidates are undergoing medical screening. Their start date is tentatively scheduled for January 1, 2008. The 38<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class candidates submitted their applications and are presently under review. Their tentative hire date is July 2008.
- Ocean Safety: Department of Human Resources will be conducting open-competitive recruitments for two temporary Water Safety Officer I positions.

Captain John Kapsky reported that the Ocean Safety division wants to activate two temporary positions to cover permanent vacancies; two ½ time positions in Kona, and one ¾ time position in Hilo. The department is requesting the positions be upgraded to full time in its supplemental budget. They would like to fill its infrastructure staffing from the bottom up. Another consideration is to create three lieutenant positions islandwide for Puna, Hilo, and Kona. These positions would be line foreman supervisor positions.

Captain Kapsky advised the commission that the Ocean Safety Division is in the process of placing a lifeguard tower at Pohoiki Beach Park. It is necessary to situate the tower closer to the new park area in order to move swimmers away from the boat ramp. These topics will be discussed at a public meeting scheduled for this evening (November 14, 2007) at the Pahoa Community Center, at 6:00 p.m.

Captain Kapsky informed the commission that the department was requesting an upgrade to its coverage at Carlsmith Beach Park from weekends/holidays to seven days a week in its supplemental budget. This would require three full time positions. He also stated that there are approximately 11 items on the supplementary budget which totaled \$771,074.

Commissioner Browne questioned the whether the County or a resort owned Anaehoomalu Bay.

Captain Kapsky answered that it is not a County beach.

Deputy Chief Honda explained that a hotel cannot own a beach. However, presently, there are no proposals for a tower there.

Captain Kapsky stated that the Ocean Safety Division is targeting two areas on the west side that need additional towers. They are Kua Bay and Hapuna Beach.

Commissioner Okabe inquired on the full time lifeguard's salary.

Captain Kapsky answered that the Water Safety Officer I position begins at \$15.61 an hour. The Water Safety Officer II position \$16.91 an hour.

Commissioner Okabe questioned whether the lifeguard's pay was an issue in generating interest in the positions.

Captain Kapsky replied that it was a concern. However, the pay is standardized statewide.

Commissioner Okabe questioned the lifeguards' years of service.

Captain Kapsky answered that their length of service is the same as the Police and Fire Department, which is 25 years.

Commissioner Browne asked whether Captain Kapsky would establish an eligible list for employment.

Captain Kapsky stated that there is an open recruitment with the Department of Human Resources. Once the recruitment list meets a certain limit, Ocean Safety Division will conduct an agility test. After completing the agility test, the candidates would then be considered for employment.

#### Internal Recruitment

- Fire Captain: The written examinations were administered and the candidates will be receiving their results. The next phase will be to arrange their assessment center.
- Fire Apparatus Trainer: Received applications and they are currently being screened by Human Resources.
- Fire Radio Dispatchers: The two selected candidates are scheduled to begin on November 16.

#### Emergency Operations Division

- Prescribed Burn Project and Training Opportunity: Once again, the project was postponed due to weather conditions and also because some individuals were sent to California to assist with the recent brush fires.
- School Inspections: Line companies are continuing their school inspections.

#### Support Services Division

- Fire Auxiliary Services Bureau

- Communication Section
  - Dispatchers and Battalion Chief Michael Gahan met with Akimeka representatives in order to add district boundary layers on the CAD map system.
  - Battalion Chief Gahan participated in a phone conference discussion regarding the new Avehicle Locators purchased for fire vehicles. Receiving approximately 50 from the Police Department.
  - Assistant Chief Mento and Battalion Chief Gahan met with Michael Green of BAE Systems, who is introducing a product that would bridge communications gaps for all radios at emergency scenes.
  - Battalion Chief Gahan attended Fire Communications Officer Training on Oahu.

#### Warehouse

- Received 32 new sets of turnout gear.
- Received 27 new computers for the fire stations.
- Issued 330 new ESS goggles for firefighters on line.

#### Maintenance Shop Section

- Continuing two apparatus refurbishment projects.
  1. HFD 374 Brush Truck 15 – Installing a new tank.

#### Other projects

- Started radio charger installation project
- Heavy Rescue Committee is looking into obtaining two heavy rescues, one for Waiakea and one for Kona. Funds were requested in the budget.
- HFD 416- Refurbish pump and cabs system.
- Received a Kubota ATV-pump ordered by the Sayre Foundation.

#### Emergency Medical Services Bureau

- Five Medical Intensive Care Technicians Interns completed their training. The remaining four MICT's interns will complete their training in December. Once they receive their National Registry testing, they will be able to fill MICT vacancies.
- ePCR Committee met in order to discuss the release of the EMStat 5 module. Currently using the EMStat 4 module. Also, distributed eight new Dell laptops to some medic units.
- Battalion Chief Ralph Yawata and Captain Tracy Yanagi attended two conferences in October.
  1. Emergency Preparedness for the Disabled Population.
  2. Rural Health Association – Shortages of medical services in the rural setting.
- MICT Retraining conducted for all shifts which included a "Taser Orientation" presented by the Hawai'i Police Department.

- Nine personnel have shown interest for the January 14, 2008, MICT class.
- October Base Station Meeting featured speakers from the Department of Health who focused on the “Introduction to Avian and Pandemic Influenza.”

#### Training Bureau

- 35<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Completed their clinical portion of EMT-I classroom didactics. Their graduation is scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, at 10:30 a.m., at Nani Mau Gardens.
- 36<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Successfully completed their HazMat and Aquatics Competency courses and are now certified at the HazMat Operations and American Red Cross Lifeguards level. At this time, they are currently in driver training and will proceed onto EMT-B in January.
- 37<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Recruit Class: Currently planning course curriculum for projected starting date of January 2, 2008.
- Explorer Program: Currently, in the second stage of the program, which involves engine ride-a-longs. The Second Explorer class started on October 13, 2007, with 10 boys and one girl. Classes are being conducted at the Training Bureau for the next five consecutive Saturdays. Their graduation is scheduled for November 17, 2007.

#### Volunteer Section

- Puuanahulu Volunteer Company: Official blessing and opening of the station was held on October 27, 2007. Appreciation was offered to Commissioner Bowles for his attendance.
- Volunteer Incident Reports: With the inclusion of volunteer incident responses in the Record Management System, the Fire Department is now able to provide its monthly statistical data as shown on this month’s Chief’s report. (See Attachment “A”)
- West Hawai’i
  - Trained 11 Companies – 80 Volunteers in Firefighter 1, Chapter 1, Joint C-2 training with paid personnel, and working on bid specification for Company 14A tanker.
- East Hawai’i
  - Trained 11 Companies – 50 Volunteers in Firefighter 1, Chapter 1. Working on bid specification for a Fern Acres garage.
- Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt.
  - Volunteer Chiefs’ Quarterly Meeting: To be held on Saturday, January 19, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., at Station 7B Kona.

#### Support Services Other Activities

- Working with the Civil Defense Agency, Hawai’i Police Department, Department of Data Systems and the State Civil Defense Agency on a Statewide interoperability plan. Assistant Chief Mento traveled to Oahu

and presented the Hawai'i County's interoperability plan, and Hawai'i County stands to gain approximately 1.6 million dollars for communication improvements. One of those improvements is called Radio over Internet Protocol, and a representative from Pacific Wireless conducted a demonstration of the system.

- Collaborating with the Civil Defense Agency, Hawai'i Police Department, Department of Data Systems and MACRO Engineering to develop a Countywide Communications plan. Phase 1 of the proposal was submitted to the County. Irrespective of the direction the County wishes to take regarding its radio systems, a very expensive (\$10,000,000) upgrade would be required in the next 5-10 years because of the FCCC requirements.
- Working with HELCO and the Office of the Corporation Counsel to gain access/easement to Wailuku River via Manaolana Street for the purpose of fire pump testing. There is one neighbor who opposed the plan; therefore, a meeting will be held to address his concern.

#### New Projects/Business

- Community Emergency Response Training (CERT): Reinitiated the program approximately five months ago. Fire Department personnel have trained communities at Hawaiian Ocean View Estates, Pahoia, and Puako. This weekend they will begin training in Volcano, and they are currently conducting training in North Kona at Kahakai Elementary.

#### Employee/Public Relations

- Fire Prevention Week: Held on Saturday, October 13, 2007, at Hilo Bayfront.
- Veterans Day Parade: Fire Equipment Operator David Minor participated in the planning committee for the parade that was held in Hilo on November 10.

Commissioner Bowles asked whether the Fire Department had decided to build a new entry to the Makalei Fire Station.

Deputy Chief Honda replied that they would not because the design has incorporated the existing water tank road.

Commissioner Bowles asked whether a site was chosen for the Honokaa Fire Station.

Deputy Chief Honda stated that the site of interest is a 200-300 acre parcel owned by Bishop Estates.

Commissioner Bowles asked for a description of the heavy rescue vehicle.

Deputy Chief Honda explained that the HFD uses light rescue vehicles (F550) with an attached utility box. The department wants to incorporate heavy rescue

technology in order allow the personnel to take all of their equipment with them when responding to a call. Although these vehicles look similar to the HazMat trucks, they are more capable of accommodating all types of incidents.

Commissioner Bowles inquired on when the updated strategic plan would be presented to the commission.

Deputy Chief Honda replied that he believes that Chief Oliveira is preparing it for the December meeting.

Commissioner Rosehill asked whether the Captain Cook Station's personnel were notified of the meeting scheduled on November 27.

Deputy Chief Honda replied that they were.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Consideration for an Annual Statewide Fire Commission Conference. (Deferred from October 10, 2007, meeting.)

Commissioner Browne stated that he is in favor of the meetings, with the understanding that it is not at the expense of the commission.

Chair Brazier asked Secretary Laurie Kaneta whether funds were allocated for the commission.

Ms. Kaneta replied that the funds were included in the supplemental budget.

Commissioner Maedo stated that although it is not included in the existing budget, it was part of the supplemental budget. The commission may need to make a decision whether to pursue the matter with the Chief.

Commissioner Bertsch clarified that the question was whether the Commission is willing to participate or endorse a Statewide Fire Commission Conference. If the commission decides in favor of the conference, then it will need to seek funding.

Commissioner Maedo stated that it is necessary that it clearly be understood that once the conference occurs in Hawai'i County, the commission at that time would be responsible to plan and arrange the event.

Commissioner Bertsch inquired on the Local Emergency Planning Committee and asked for details on the committee.

Deputy Chief Honda replied that they deal with HazMat responses.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that after reviewing the overall budget of the Fire Department, the department is nearly approaching \$35,000,000 annually. If \$600-\$700 were allocated for a commissioner to attend the conference, it would amount to \$5,400 or a thousand of a percent of the overall budget. It is necessary to maintain the commission's knowledge and leadership, and these funds would be well spent.

Commissioner Okabe stated that the Fire Commission is basically a new commission within Hawai'i County. If the Fire Commission follows the lead of the Police Commission, the funds would need to be a line item request in the Fire Department's budget. Therefore, the recommendation should be made with the Fire Chief. Because this is considered a type of professional development for Fire Commissioners, the funds would need to be requested in the upcoming budget. He also stated that he previously spoke with Corporation Counsel Lincoln Ashida who advised him that it is the intent of the County to have the Fire Commission follow the direction of the Police Commission. The Police Commission meets annually and their conference is coordinated with the Police Chief's Annual Conference.

Commissioner Maedo agreed that the conference should be a parallel to the Chief's Conference. She suggested that the commission begin by sending the Chair and/or Co-Chair, and then increase attendance.

Commissioner Bertsch said that his experience with the Police Commission and their conference is that it was designed to help the commission develop professionally, and involved speakers that were relevant to the commission's duties. He made a motion to send a letter supporting a Fire Commission's Conference.

Commissioner Maedo asked to amend the motion to add that the conference be aligned with the Fire Chief's Annual Conference.

Commissioner Pomroy seconded Commissioner Bertsch's motion.  
Discussion: Commissioner Bowles agreed with Commissioner Maedo that the letter state that the Fire Commission conference be attached to the Fire Chief's conference. In addition, he would like to recommend that the Fire Chief put in a line item for per diem.

Commissioner Bertsch clarified that his motion is to decide whether the commission supports the conference.

Commissioner Maedo agreed with Commissioner Bertsch that it is two separate issues. Therefore, she withdrew her amendment.

The Fire Commission requested that Commissioner Bertsch repeat and clarify the motion.

Commissioner Bertsch moved that the Hawaii County Fire Commission support a statewide commissioner's conference. Commissioner Pomroy seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

Commissioner Maedo suggested that the Hawaii County Fire Commission's letter to Maui Fire Commissioner Denise Laitinen state that the conference be planned in connection with the Fire Chief's Annual Conference.

Commissioner Bertsch will draft the letter and email it to the commission.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Budget & Finance (Kudlo) No report.

Office Management and Staffing (Bertsch) No report

Rules and Policies (Rosehill) No report.

Public Relations (Pomroy) No report.

Training and Education (Maedo) No report

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Arson Investigations – overview of procedures/actions

Commissioner Bowles stated that he requested to have the topic addressed because he feels that commissioners who live in West Hawai'i are concerned over the recent events. He does not feel that the commission is being kept informed from within the department, and commissioners are frequently questioned and they deserve to be updated.

Deputy Chief Honda stated that at this time the Fire Department is not privy to any information from any outside agency. There is an established task force to assist with an investigation with the Police Department.

Commissioner Bowles questioned whether there was an internal investigation.

Deputy Chief Honda replied that the Prevention Division has not released a report.

Commissioner Bowles stated that it is necessary for the department to be very concerned about arson. It's necessary to be proactive rather than reactive.

Commissioner Maedo mentioned that the Fire Chief submitted a letter to the editor of the Hawai'i Tribune Herald. He thanked all the agencies and individuals with this particular incident. In the letter he appealed to the community for information on arson set fires. The Commission needs to keep in mind that the Fire Department investigates the start of the fire. The Police Department is the investigating agency.

Commissioner Bowles stated that he, as a commissioner, is not satisfied with the way it is pursued. He wants to raise the level of importance.

Deputy Chief Honda stated that he would relay his concerns to the Chief.

- Decide on an alternate date for June 11, (*Kamehameha Day*), 2008, meeting.

The Commission requested the meeting be set for the following Wednesday, June 18, 2007.

Commissioner Browne made a motion to announce the date for the meeting at the December meeting. Commissioner Okabe seconded the motion and it was unanimously carried.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 12, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Kona Center Building, 75-5722 Hanama Place, Suite 1170, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for December 12, 2007, meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

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KAYCIE A. I. CARTER  
Secretary