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HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **December 13, 2006** **Liquor Control Conference Room** **Kona Center Building**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch
Neil Brazier
James Browne
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Chair
Glen Matsuda
Wil Okabe

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Stephen Bowles
Tom Brandt
Kaycie Carter
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
John Whitman

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: John Bertsch, Neil Brazier, James Browne, Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Glen Matsuda, Wil Okabe

The Hawaii County Fire Commission acknowledged the firefighters for their efforts on October 15, 2006, following the earthquake.

Chair Maedo presented outgoing Fire Commissioner Glen Matsuda with a Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor Harry Kim.

Chair Maedo welcomed back charter member Stephen Bowles, who was recently appointed by the County Council to return to the Fire Commission.

Chair Maedo called for a brief recess so that Fire Commission Secretary Kaycie Carter could return from making copies of additional documents that pertained to HCFC Complaint No. 06-01.

Meeting resumed at 10:08 a.m.

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept the October 11, 2006, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browne and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept communication numbers 06-018 to 06-027. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Matsuda and unanimously carried.

After reviewing the additional documents provided by Firefighter John Whitman, Chair Maedo asked Firefighter Whitman if he would prefer that HCFC Complaint No. 06-01 be heard in open or closed session.

Firefighter Whitman replied that an open session was acceptable.

Firefighter Whitman explained that complainant Mr. Paul Funn is his neighbor. Their dispute is a civil matter. He was not on-duty and their issue does not involve the Fire Department.

Commissioner Bertsch asked Firefighter Whitman whether he was at anytime on-duty or in uniform when the confrontations occurred.

Firefighter Whitman replied that he was not.

Commissioner Kudlo made a motion to accept documents provided by Firefighter Whitman. These included Temporary Restraining Order No. 35506-1-056 H, a mediation session agreement with the West Hawai'i Mediation Center, and the Hawai'i County Police Department's Miscellaneous Service Sheet, that provided a synopsis of the problem. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brazier and unanimously carried.

Commissioner Kudlo made a motion that HCFC Complaint No. 06-01 is unfounded. Firefighter Whitman was off-duty and not acting under the authority of the Fire Department, and the complaint was not within the jurisdiction of the Fire Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bertsch and unanimously carried.

Chief Oliveira presented Commissioner Matsuda with a gift and thanked him for his valued support over the years.

CHIEF'S REPORT

- October 15, 2006, earthquake: Responded to 30 relatively minor calls considering the magnitude of the earthquake. An individual who fell out of bed and broke an arm suffered the most severe injury. County department heads are required to report immediately after an earthquake (no matter what magnitude) to the Emergency Operations Center. This is to determine the impact. The Fire Department's role is to coordinate mutual aid and response with other public safety agencies. The department is in the process of revisiting all of its internal disaster response plans. Appreciation was expressed for the Fire Department's West Hawai'i personnel who put their own personal needs aside to come to work and respond to the needs of the community.

Commissioner Browne questioned the age of the EOC building.

Chief Oliveira replied that although he was unsure of the exact age of the building, it is a relatively new building with regards to building codes/standards.

Budget

- FY 2007/08 Budget: Submitted both program and supplemental budgets to the Department of Finance. After meeting with the Mayor and the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding the integration of the Ocean Safety Lifeguard program, it was determined that the supplemental

budget should be amended in order to assure funding for an additional Account Clerk position. A copy of the comprehensive supplemental budget will be provided at the next Fire Commission meeting.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2005 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (Plymo-Vent): Electrical drawings are being completed. Equipment has been delivered. Tail pipe adapters are being installed by Mechanic Shop.
- FEMA FY 2004 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (Burn Trailer): The trailer was delivered and inspected. The department will schedule a live demonstration for the Fire Commission in February.
- FEMA FY 2006 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (Wildland Boots): The department received notification on December 12, 2006, that it did not receive the grant. The department will look into its own budget in order to determine whether it is able to purchase these types of boots for its personnel.
- FEMA FY 2006 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant: Application must be submitted by January 12, 2007, to purchase the public education trailer. The department is specifically targeting elementary school students and the elderly. Strategic planning committee solicited and received interest from the rank and file to volunteer to be Public Education trainers.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Makalei Fire Station: Recently submitted an allotment request for the amount of \$15,000 to complete the design plan for the project. Received the consultant's fee proposal cost for \$567,112.
- Pahoia Fire Station: Department of Public Works has projected the groundbreaking to begin January 2007.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned whether the Makalei and Pahoia Fire Stations are on schedule.

Chief Oliveira replied that both stations are behind schedule. As mentioned in previous meetings, the Makalei Station initially began prior to his administration. The Pahoia Fire Station has experienced many delays that were unfortunate and could not be foreseen.

- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Received funding for the design. Anticipating construction to start November 2008. Recently relocated to the Puainako Town Center. Since moving five times within the past five years, the administration is looking forward to having a permanent location. The complex will include facilities for administration, training, and communication (dispatch center). Both Police and Fire Departments need to upgrade their dispatch centers. In order to minimize expense, a joint project between Fire and Police to share the same building is being considered.

- Central Fire Station: No new updates.
- Central Fire Station Retrofit Project: Department of Public Works is working with contractors to establish a Notice to Proceed.
- Captain Cook Station: In order to provide the station with another apparatus, the department is working on an expansion to include another bay.
- Paauilo Volunteer Station: Will be meeting with the Department of Public Works on December 14, 2006, to discuss the parcel. An update will be provided at the January 10, 2007, meeting.

Promotions and Hiring

- Open-competitive recruitment
Fire Fighter Recruit: The 35th Fire Fighter recruit class began on December 1, 2006. Recruits to be introduced at next month's meeting. Presently working with the Department of Human Resources to schedule a second agility test for January 20, 2007, in order to identify additional candidates for each of the summer and fall classes.

Commissioner Bertsch questioned whether the second agility test would be open to previous candidates who did not pass it.

Chief Oliveira answered that the Department of Human Resources makes it available to the next block of applicants that have passed and qualify.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the number of applicants.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department has noticed a gradual decline in applicants. This could be attributed to other job opportunities. The construction industry is doing well. Also, the HFD is very open about background screening, guidelines, and drug testing.

- Internal recruitment
Fire Equipment Operator: The commission will be notified of the date of the assessment center. The commissioners are welcome to participate; however, they must attend all three days.

Emergency Operations Division

- HIOSH inspection: Recently completed the cursory HIOSH compliance check. HIOSH inspector provided a detailed report. Battalion Chiefs are working with the various station commanders and the unit supervisors to avoid any violations.

Support Services Division

- Fire Auxiliary Services
 - Fire Communication Center: Assistant Chief Quince Mento is working with the Police Department to implement the Wireless 911 Project.

Full implementation of wireless 911 is expected by the end of May 2007.

Commissioner Matsuda asked whether the program would affect new and old model cellular phones.

Commissioner Bertsch responded that it is the communication signal rather than the phone.

Chief Oliveira reported that Pacific Wireless Communications is changing Hawai'i County over to a new microwave communication system during the months of November and December. The changeover should improve the quality and reliability of radio communications islandwide. He will provide a detailed report at next month's meeting.

Warehouse Section

- Finalizing the MSA distribution to the stations.
- Equipment for E-19 (Volcano) and E-21 (Kalaoa) has been inventoried and is ready to be put on board their respective trucks.
- Currently distributing eight air bag sets purchased through the 2006 Hawai'i Department of Transportation Safe Highways Grant. Sets will be issued to Keauhou, South Kohala, Kaumana, Waiakea, Kailua and Waikoloa Fire Stations as upgrades to older sets. Sets will be issued to Kawaiiani and Pahoa Fire stations as new inventory.

Maintenance Shop Section

- Received new apparatus. Mechanics are service testing and checking equipment. The new apparatus include five 4x4 crew cab pick up trucks. These trucks will be used to tow the air compressors, rescue boats, and urban search and rescue trailers.

Emergency Medical Services

- Ambulance Report Forms: Training was conducted last week. Instructor training will take place on December 14. Going live on January 1, 2007.

New Projects/Business

- Temporary Relocation of the Fire Administration Office: Relocated to the Puainako Town Center next to Checkers Automotive.

Public Education/Relations

- Puna Drowning: The mother of the victim expressed her appreciation to rescue personnel for the recovery of his body. She will be working with the Sayre Foundation to provide donations from the mainland.
- Christmas decorating contests at fire stations.

Chief Oliveira asked whether the Fire Commission would consider hearing from students who ride along with the Fire Department personnel. These students could share with the commission their experiences.

The Fire Commission welcomes their attendance.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether Chief Oliveira had any comments with regards to the court case involving the incident with Keaau High School.

Chief Oliveira replied that he felt confident that there was no equipment failure. What bystanders perceived may not have been an accurate portrayal of what took place. Although the County was not found liable, the Fire Department will consider reviewing policies and procedures.

Commissioner Okabe suggested that the Fire Department and the public schools plan together their emergency procedures.

Chief Oliveira stated the Fire Department has an excellent working relationship with the Department of Education.

Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt reported that the next Volunteer Fire Chief's meeting will be on January 13, 2006, at the Aupuni Center Conference Room. This event will be hosted by the County Council. Councilman Dominic Yagong will be coordinating the event.

Commissioner Bertsch questioned whether there were any objections to him contacting Captain Dennis Iyo regarding the status of the Citizens Recognition Program.

There being none, Commissioner Bertsch will report back with his findings.

Commissioner Bertsch inquired on the whether the commission would visit the dispatch center in January.

Chief Oliveira suggested that the January meeting be held at the Fire Department's training room, and after the meeting, the commission could walk over to the dispatch center.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda stated that it would be all right to hold the meeting there. However, the room needs to accommodate the public.

Chief Oliveira replied that it would be open to the public.

Commissioner Bertsch asked whether the department maintained an inventory list of the status of their apparatus.

Chief Oliveira replied that there is an inventory list. Assistant Chief Mento and the mechanic shop maintain the list and the status of the vehicles.

Regarding the Chief's end of the year report that he will share at the January meeting, Chair Maedo reminded the Fire Commission that although she may not be the Fire Commission's Chair for 2007, she is responsible for collecting the Chief's evaluation forms. Once hearing his report, the members can evaluate his performance and return the evaluation form to her.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Action on arranging an alternate date for Fire Commission meetings.

Commissioner Okabe made a motion that when a quorum is not present at the Fire Commission's monthly meeting, an alternate meeting would be arranged for the following Wednesday. Commissioner Browne seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Matsuda): Commissioners Matsuda and Bertsch attended the Salary Commission's meeting. Commissioner Matsuda presented the Fire Commission's view on why the Fire Chief should receive a pay increase. In his presentation he described and compared the Hawai'i County's Fire Chief's responsibilities and duties to other Fire Chiefs statewide. The Salary Commission will not have a December meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10 in Hilo, which will coincide with the Fire Commission meeting. Commissioner Matsuda is waiting to hear from the Salary Commission's Chair as to whether the Fire Commission's proposal will be put on the agenda and discussed at their January meeting. The Salary Commission is working on a pay matrix of assignment plus the amount of time served. The members just voted in this standard pay rate program for all department heads. According to the Salary Commission, the Fire Commission should request that the Fire Chief's standard pay be increased every two years.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda suggested that the Fire Commission Chair's written request be placed on the Salary Commission's agenda.

Commissioner Okabe stated that the Fire Chief and Police Chief must be categorized differently on the matrix. These positions are not comparable to other department heads because they oversee more employees than other department heads.

Commissioner Bertsch responded that he believes the Salary Commission understood that concept, which was presented by the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Bertsch stated that he would like this matter to remain an open item on the Salary Commission's agenda, and requested that a formal letter be sent by the Fire Commission's Chair.

Chair Maedo agreed to submit written correspondence to the Salary Commission. Commissioner Bertsch will assist in drafting a letter.

The Fire Commission agreed that Commissioner Bertsch will attend the Salary Commission's January meeting.

Office Management and Staffing (Brazier/Okabe) No report.

Rules and Policies (Maedo) No report.

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo) Commissioner Kudlo informed the commission that the Ocean View Community Center was experiencing problems retaining volunteers. The volunteers quit because they were required to give their Social Security Numbers.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo) No report

NEW BUSINESS

- Election of Officers for 2007

Commissioner Browne moved to nominate Commissioner John Bertsch as Chair.

Commissioner Matsuda moved to nominate Commissioner Neil Brazier as Chair.

Chair Maedo called for a show of hands.

Commissioners' Okabe, Bertsch, and Browne raised their hands in favor of Commissioner Bertsch.

Commissioners' Kudlo, Maedo, Matsuda, and Brazier raised their hands in favor of Commissioner Brazier.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda stated that per County Charter Section 13-4, five votes are needed to make any action valid.

The Fire Commission conducted a secret ballot, which resulted in the same outcome.

The Fire Commission agreed to postpone the vote until the January meeting.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., in Central Fire Station's Training Room, 466 Kinoole Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.
- Set agenda for January 10, meeting.
 - 2006 End of the year report by Fire Chief Darryl Oliveira.
 - Election of Officers for 2007.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary