

Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

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Deputy Managing
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HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

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REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **December 14, 2005** **Liquor Control Conference Room** **Kona Center Building**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Neil Brazier
Rudolph Hart
Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo
Glen Matsuda (10:07 a.m.)
Wil Okabe

Excused: James Browne
Dale Fergerstrom

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Kaycie Carter
Laurie Kaneta
Quince Mento, Assistant Chief
Desmond Wery, Deputy Fire Chief

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (Open to the Public)

None

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commissioners: Neil Brazier, James Browne, Dale Fergerstrom, Rudolph Hart, Karen Kudlo
Karen Maedo, Glen Matsuda, Wil Okabe

STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Executive Session)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Brazier moved to accept the November 9, 2005, regular session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hart and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Deputy Chief Desmond Wery informed the Hawai'i County Fire Commission that Chief Darryl Oliveira was attending the State Fire Council and HFFA negotiation meetings on Oahu. He and Assistant Chief Quince Mento would be presenting the Chief's report.

Budget

- FY 2006/07: Submitted a status quo program budget of \$28,300,150. Although the program budget submittal is status quo, allowances for increases for inflationary costs were allowed; i.e., fuel and utilities. The supplemental budget submittal request was provided to the commission. (see Attachment "A")

Commissioner Kudlo asked whether the supplemental budget was submitted to the County Council.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that the supplemental budget is first submitted and reviewed by the Department of Finance. The Department of Finance would then make recommendations to the Mayor, who makes his selections, and then a program budget is proposed to the County Council.

Commissioner Brazier asked whether this year's supplemental budget was similar to last year's.

Secretary Laurie Kaneta answered that it was less.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned the System Analyst's duties.

Deputy Chief Wery answered that the System Analyst's primary responsibility will be with the department's Records Management System. The HCFD anticipates the expansion of its data systems. It is necessary

to have a full-time position dedicated to the department's programs, such as the electronic ambulance reports, etc.

Commissioner Kudlo inquired about the responsibilities of the Projects Manager.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that at the present time, retired Captain Nick AhYo is the part-time Projects Manager. He manages and monitors the HCFD's Capital Improvement Projects.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned whether the HCFD Prevention Bureau's Fireworks Clerk/Auditor is a newly-created position.

Deputy Chief Wery explained that due to the fireworks ordinance past a few years ago, the HCFD created the Fireworks Clerk/Auditor position. However, the department was unable to fill that position until now.

Commissioner Maedo questioned whether the individual would need to pass the civil service requirements and then be incorporated into the department's program budget.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that the position was already established and would be partially funded through the fireworks revenue.

Regarding the Training Bureau, Commissioner Kudlo asked whether the HCFD would be requesting assistance for Captain Russell Enriques.

Deputy Chief Wery answered that the department is requesting a Fire Training Captain and two Fire Equipment Operator Driver Trainers, one of whom will be committed to the volunteer training.

Commissioner Okabe asked whether the travel increase of \$7,560 estimated for the commission to attend the Hawai'i Fire Chief's Conference included the cost for all commissioners.

Ms. Kaneta answered that it did.

Commissioner Okabe questioned where next year's conference would be held.

Ms. Kaneta answered that it would be held on Kauai.

Commissioner Okabe inquired about the two nine-passenger vans requested in the supplemental budget.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that the two nine-passenger vans requested would be an addition and eventually be a replacement to the high mileage vans that are currently being used.

Commissioner Kudlo mentioned that she was informed that an individual wanted to donate an ATV to the Fire Department and questioned what the protocol was for the department to ask for community donations.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that the HCFD does not feel that it would be appropriate to solicit donations. The County is responsible to provide for its needs.

Commissioner Maedo commented that although the Fire Department is grateful for donations, when the department accepts donations it agrees to maintain the apparatus and replace it when it breaks. There is a process when accepting donations.

Deputy Chief Wery explained that all donations need to be formally accepted through the County Council. Even the Sayre Foundation's fundraisers need to be approved.

Alternative Funding and Grants

- FEMA FY 2005 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: Fire Fighters Neil Yoshioka and Gene Nakashima are assessing the needs of the various stations around the island. On November 22, 2005, the County Council approved and accepted the grant money for the plymo-vent emission control system. The grant award is for \$507,520 (Federal share 80% or \$406,016; County share 20% or \$101,504).
- FEMA FY 2004 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: Chief Oliveira, the Department of Finance, and Deputy Corporation Counsel Craig Masuda attended an appeal hearing on December 1, 2005, on Oahu. A vendor contested the bid for the fire-burn trailer and filed an appeal through the State's Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Although the vendor had a lower bid, he had exceptions; therefore, he was not awarded the bid. The bid was instead awarded to a vendor that had no exceptions to the contract. The contesting of the bid has delayed the process and the department is awaiting a decision from the hearing officer.

Commissioner Brazier questioned the vendor's "exception".

Deputy Chief Wery explained that there are certain requirements when a contract is presented. There is a general clause that is established on all county contracts. The clause provides a one-percent penalty if a product is not delivered within a certain time frame. The vendor took an exception to this clause and wanted to cap it.

Commissioner Matsuda asked how the appeal process was handled.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that he was unsure of the process and would follow up on it. A hearing officer at the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs heard the entire appeal and will inform the Fire Department of his/her decision.

Commissioner Maedo questioned whether there was a deadline to acquire the grant money.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that there is deadline set for February 2006. If the grant award is jeopardized due to the delay, the HCFD will pursue an extension.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that Chief Oliveira expressed a positive experience regarding the appeal hearing. There is a need for the department to improve on how the grants are written and have them be more definitive.

- 2006 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Assistant Chief Quince Mento is in the process of submitting two grant proposals:
 1. A replacement apparatus for the Pahoa Fire Station.
 2. A tanker for the Pahala Fire Station.Submittals are due by early January 2006.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Pahoa Fire Station: Final plans are being routed to the departments for comments. There was a need to change the apparatus bay height to a 14 feet clearance bay door. Expecting to break ground next year.
- Fire Administration & Support Facility: Projects Manager Nick AhYo continues to work on data for dispatch and training. Funding for the design will be available after January 2006.
- Kalaoa Fire Station: Projects Manager Nick AhYo and Planning Department's Roy Takemoto met with the Developer Dan Bolton. Mr. Bolton assigned a new Projects Manager. A cost data is expected from him by the first week of January 2006. Mr. Bolton indicated that the subdivision was sold and therefore he is not obligated to the county. The one-acre property was agreed to be donated and may now need to be purchased. The HCFD did not budget for the property, and as a result, this project may be jeopardized. Therefore, it may be necessary for the HCFD to consider other alternatives.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned what other alternatives were being considered.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that a new site is being considered. The HCFD looks for State and private properties. The department is working with the Mayor's Office, which is in negotiations with the Makalei Golf Course.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned whether the Fire Department would need to go back to square one if the issue was not resolved.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that the plans were designed specifically for that parcel.

Deputy Chief Wery explained that initially Mr. Bolton was to develop a subdivision that involved fair share costs, which needed to be paid to the county. In lieu of those actual money payments, he opted to provide the county with a specific parcel that adjoined the subdivision. In exchange, the Fire Department would contract him to develop the Fire Station. He still is prepared to build the Fire Station; however, there remains the issue for the cost of the property.

Commissioner Maedo questioned whether the new owner would have an obligation.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that the new owner might opt to pay the fair share costs.

Commissioner Maedo commented that there were numerous issues involved with the property and an alternative site may be more desirable.

Deputy Chief Wery agreed.

- Central Fire Station: No new update.
- Central Fire Station-Retrofit Project: Currently, the roof repair's design plans are being printed for distribution and comments. The County Council passed the second reading for funding the \$390,000 project. Due to a malfunction, the second apparatus bay door went out of service. This compromises the security of the station because both doors need to be repaired. Although a number of station renovations and repairs are necessary, there is a need to prioritize them based on the impact on service delivery, security and safety.
- Paauilo Volunteer Fire Station: No new updates.

Promotions and Hiring

- Internal Recruitments: Chief officer promotions are completed. The department will be proceeding with Captain, Fire Equipment Operator, and Fire Prevention Inspector promotions.

Emergency Operations Division

- Emergency Operations Division: Resulting from the six Captain promotions to Battalion Chiefs, effective December 1, 2005, the department has observed improvements in its management of the personnel out in the field. The Battalion Chiefs will be introduced to commission at next month's meeting.
- Brush Fires: The following brush fires occurred:
 - Kuakini/Hualalai: 15 to 20 acres. Although there was still some burning logs (keawe), the scene has been secured.
 - Cane Haul Road, Pahala: 10 acres. Started in remote area about two miles above Pahala town; the scene has been secured.
 - Wood Valley, Ka'u: 3-5 acres; the scene has been secured.
 - Maile Street, Pahala: 5 acres. Presently ongoing. This scene was problematic and involved abandoned cars and trash in the area. Continuing with mop-up operations.

Although the cause has not been determined, fires are suspicious in nature. Individuals were seen running from the Kuakini/Hualalai fire and other fires occurred in close time frames of each other. Also, there were visual reports of multiple fires being set. Two fires were set in an access area that prevented the HCFD's apparatus from getting to the area where the main fire was set. The Hawai'i County Police Department is investigating the incidents.

Commissioner Okabe questioned if all investigations were conducted by the HCPD.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that investigations were conducted by the HCPD; however, the HCFD's Fire Prevention Bureau assists in obtaining evidence.

Commissioner Okabe inquired on the penalties imposed on minors.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that he was unsure of the penalty for arson. He will look further into it and inform the commission at a later date.

Commissioner Okabe questioned whether the charges were universal for all islands or would depend on the county. The public should be informed of the penalties involved. To deter arson, it is necessary to have parents liable for the minor.

Support Services Division

Assistant Chief Mento provided the Support Services report. He explained that the HCFD consolidated its EMS, Fire Prevention, Training, and, Auxiliary Service Divisions.

Assistant Chief Mento mentioned that after serving 31 years in the Fire Department, Battalion Chief Curtis Matsui will be retiring at the end of the month. The department will be selecting his replacement in the near future.

- Auxiliary Services: Three sections of the Auxiliary Services include the Maintenance shop, the Fire Communications Control Center and the Warehouse. The Maintenance Shop will be filling a mechanic position. The Fire Communications Control Center has four vacant dispatcher positions and hopes to fill these positions by March 2006. The Warehouse is waiting on equipment that will supply all Stations the same equipment and provide each individual his/her own facemask. They are looking for creative solutions with moving supplies around the island.
- Fire Prevention Bureau: Permits are being sold at three sites on the island (Hilo, Kona, and Waimea.) In the past, the Fire Department partnered with vendors and allowed them to sell the fireworks permits. Although this was a highly successful program and beneficial to the department, another jurisdiction did not appreciate it and the Hawai'i County Fire Department was informed that State law requires that permits be sold and issued only by the Fire Department. The department will be working with the State Legislature in order to change the law.
- Training Bureau: The 33rd Fire Fighter recruit class will begin their driver training next week and finish in January 2006. The 32nd Fire Fighter recruit class is presently doing their classroom portion EMT-I for the next two weeks. They will thereafter begin their medic portion.
- EMS Bureau: On December 12, 2005, Chief Oliveira hosted a meeting with all of the State's EMS providers, which included the City and County of Honolulu's American Medical Response and Hawai'i Air Ambulance, Inc. The forum discussed mutual problems such as shortage of MICT's, training issues, etc. Another meeting will be held in January 2006. In addition, the department has 20 Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) that are being upgraded. These models will replace the existing ones.

Commissioner Kudlo questioned the protocol involved with replacing equipment such as tires.

Assistant Chief Mento stated that there are contracted vendors located throughout the island who provide those types of service. However, larger items are repaired by the Fire Department's mechanics.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the procedure involved with issuing a fireworks permit.

Assistant Chief Mento stated that the interested individual would fill out a form and present it to the Fire Department's personnel. At that time, the Fire Department's personnel will collect the individual's payment and issue the permit.

Commissioner Matsuda questioned the number of clerks that will be issuing the fireworks permits.

Ms. Kaneta replied that the department will have four clerks in Hilo, one in Waimea, and two in Kona.

Assistant Chief Mento stated that the department will be using overtime personnel to issue the permits.

Commissioner Okabe questioned whether the vendors could distribute the permits without collecting the money.

Assistant Chief Mento replied that legally it is not acceptable.

Commissioner Okabe questioned the location of the permit sales.

Ms. Kaneta replied that permits will be sold in Hilo, at the County Building, in the Elections Office Conference Room.

Deputy Chief Wery continued with the following reports:

New Projects/Business

- Hawaii Fire Chief's Association Conference: Appreciation was expressed to Fire Commissioners James Browne, Karen Kudlo, and Karen Maedo for attending the conference.

Commissioner Maedo stated that it was an impressive event. She acknowledged Laurie Kaneta for her hard work.

Deputy Chief Wery stated that the conference was a tremendous success and the Department received many favorable comments. This was the first year that it included interactive vendor presentations. On account of its success, it may be continued at next year's event in Kauai.

Commissioner Kudlo commented that it was interesting to hear about the other department's operations.

Commissioner Maedo stated that she was impressed with Chief Oliveira's presentation.

- Fire Science – Spring 2006: Recently announced to the personnel that two classes will be offered at the Hawaii Community College. These classes include the Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface and Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior. Individuals will receive three credits per class. The registration fee will be funded through the Rural Development Program grant.

A total of 19 Firefighters attended the fall 2005 Incident Command and Disaster Control class. All students passed and received 3 credits.

Employee/Public Relations

- 4th Annual Great Tricycle Race: Held on November 26, 2005, to benefit East Hawaii Coalition for the Homeless.
- Holiday Decorations at County Building: The County of Hawai'i hosted an open house on Tuesday, December 13, 2005, at 5:30 p.m.
- Station Decorating Contest: The Relief Association is sponsoring a station-decorating contest. The judging will take place next week. At the present time, only three stations are competing.

Commissioner Kudlo asked what the prizes were.

Deputy Chief Wery replied that it was monetary prizes that had a value of \$150 for 1st place, \$90 for 2nd place, and \$30 for 3rd place.

- Holiday/Retirees Luncheon: Scheduled for Tuesday, December 27, 2005, at the Fire Administration's Conference Room, between 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. A potluck event to honor twelve retirees. All commissioners were welcomed to attend.

(Meeting was temporarily interrupted; Deputy Chief Wery and Assistant Chief Mento assisted an individual who fell outside the premises.)

Deputy Chief Wery acknowledged Rudy Hart for his service as a Fire Commissioner. A lei and a thank you gift were presented to him

Commissioner Maedo also thanked him on behalf of the commission.

Commissioner Hart stated that he enjoyed the opportunity of serving on the Fire Commission and feels proud of being part of the original members. He believes the Fire Commission made an ideal choice when choosing Fire Chief Darryl Oliveira. Also, he admired Chief Oliveira's decision to appoint Deputy Chief Wery as his second in command. In addition, the Hawai'i County Fire Commission was fortunate that Corporation Counsel Lincoln Ashida took the commission under his wing. The Fire Commission is an outstanding commission and he hopes that new members will feel the same way and continue to support the Chief.

Commissioner Maedo acknowledged another original member of the Fire Commission, Chair Dale Fergstrom, for his years of service as a member of the Fire Commission. She advised the members that at 10:07 a.m., the Mayor's Office relayed a message that Chair Fergstrom was unable to attend.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance (Hart/Matsuda) No report.

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

Rules and Policies (Maedo) No report.

Public Relations (Browne/Kudlo) Commissioner Kudlo informed the commission that Firewise Coordinator Denise Laitnen was relocating to Hilo. Commissioner Kudlo is eager to be working closely with Ms. Laitnen on the Firewise Program.

Training and Education (Brazier/Maedo) No report.

NEW BUSINESS

- Collection of the Fire Chief's evaluation forms. Commissioner Maedo collected the Fire Chief's evaluations from the members who were present. Kaycie Carter will forward them to Chair Fergerstrom. He will compile them and present a report to the commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Maedo mentioned that in light of what the media released regarding the Honolulu Police Chief, she wanted the commission to discuss the merits/demerits of soliciting the rank and file. Although the Fire Commission hires the Fire Chief and retains his services through its evaluation, the commission tries to consider the view of the rank and file. At the present time, the commission's evaluation process does not solicit the rank and file.

Commissioner Maedo asked whether the commission would like to consider soliciting the rank and file.

Commissioner Brazier stated that he communicates with the rank and file occasionally and keeps their opinions and observations in mind when evaluating the Fire Chief.

Commissioner Hart stated that the rank and file can approach their union representative with issues. He does visit the stations and normally hears good comments.

Commissioner Brazier stated that he consistently hears good, favorable comments from the rank and file.

Commissioner Matsuda stated that the Fire Chief keeps the commission abreast of what is going on.

Commissioner Kudlo stated that the Fire Chief is doing a good job. It is necessary for the members to keep their ears and eyes open to the rank and file.

Commissioner Maedo stated that the rank and file should be able to approach the Fire Chief with their concerns.

Regarding the situation in Honolulu, Commissioner Okabe believes there is a communication breakdown between the rank and file and the union. There are several instances when a union representative attended the Fire Commissions meetings. He feels that the Fire Fighters Union representative should attend future meetings and inform the commission, in an executive session, if there were any concerns. Some commissioners may not be privy to the opinion of the rank and file at the Fire Stations, but in light of what happened in Honolulu, communication is essential.

Commissioner Maedo stated that she would discuss with Deputy Corporation Counsel Noda the presence of a Union Representative in an executive session.

- Election of officers for 2006.

Commissioner Hart moved to nominate Karen Maedo as Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kudlo and unanimously carried.

Commissioner Hart made a motion to nominate Neil Brazier as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kudlo and unanimously carried.

Chair Karen Maedo and Vice-Chair Neil Brazier were elected for 2006.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., in the Liquor Control Conference Room, Hilo Lagoon Centre, 101 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i.

- Set agenda for January 11, 2006, meeting.
 - Unfinished Business – Update on the Fire Chief’s evaluation.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary