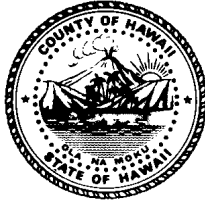


William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

HAWAI'I COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

C/O 25 Aupuni Street #217, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

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REGULAR SESSION - MINUTES **February 11, 2009** **Aupuni Center Conference Room** **Hilo, Hawai'i**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

John Bertsch, Chair
Stephen Bowles
James Browne
Henry Pomroy, Jr.
Bill Rosehill

Excused: Karen Kudlo
Wil Okabe
Kaloa Robinson

A quorum was present.

ALSO PRESENT:

Molly Lugo, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Tom Brandt
Kaycie Carter
Michael Gahan
Laurie Kaneta
Gerald Makino
Darryl Oliveira, Fire Chief
Noni Sanford

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 FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Pomroy moved to accept the January 14, 2009, regular and executive session minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bowles and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget

Chief Oliveira introduced Accountant Gerald Makino, who was present to answer questions and concerns that the commission may have regarding the budget.

Commissioner Bowles mentioned that he met with Deputy Managing Director Bill Takaba who was concerned with two budget items regarding travel and overtime.

Mr. Makino explained that travel is an essential need for the department because there are not many training opportunities on the Big Island.

Chief Oliveira commented that although the department will continue to provide training opportunities, it may consider reducing the frequency and volume of travel. However, as far as travel expenditures are concerned, nearly all of their out of state travel is subsidized by the Federal government.

Mr. Makino clarified a few of the budget line items for the commission.

- FY 2009/10 Budget: The proposed 9.8% reduction in OCE accounts for FY 2009-10 was submitted to the Department of Finance. The cost saving measures will not have any impact on operations. The Fire Department will be presenting its budget to the County Council on March 30, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Bertsch inquired on the Fire Department's overtime.

Chief Oliveira replied that the department continues to have manpower shortage in the field. The department hired two recruit classes to fill the

existing vacancies. A decline in overtime will occur as recruits are assigned to positions.

Chair Bertsch inquired on the status of the Fleet Management Program.

Chief Oliveira stated that the Fire Department's (two) strategic planning committees created a fleet replacement and maintenance program by accessing available expenses in the County's (FRESH) Fiscal Resources Enterprise Software for Hawai'i. A database was established by researching invoices, bills, charges, etc. The database will keep an accurate analysis on the maintenance and longevity of the vehicle. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Chair Bertsch suggested that an overview of the Fleet Replacement Program be deferred to the next meeting held in Hilo.

Commissioner Bowles questioned whether it is possible to discriminate how the overtime is allocated.

Chief Oliveira explained that overtime accumulates when there are incidents, and when employees transport equipment, supplies, and important material that require prompt attention. The Fire Department is trying to identify and minimize what needs to be delivered by hand versus the mail.

Commissioner Bowles commented that it is necessary for the entire department to be conscientious regarding efficiency.

Chair Bertsch questioned whether the Battalion Chiefs could transfer equipment and material.

Chief Oliveira answered that they do for the most part.

Commissioner Browne questioned the number of vacancies in the department.

Chief Oliveira replied that there are nine vacancies not including upcoming retirements. His budget proposal defers hiring for the nine vacancies as a cost saving measure. The nine vacancies will not have an adverse affect on operations.

Chief Oliveira informed the Fire Commission of a number of Legislative proposals that will have a substantial impact on the Fire Department. These issues deal with the benefits for current employees. HB 1719 involves withholding medical benefits from public employees who retire after June 30, 2009, until they reach Medicare retirement age. This will result in earlier retirements.

Chair Bertsch stated that Commissioner Bowles notified him of HB 1722 and HB1724 which have similar constraints. They were not aware of HB 1719.

Chief Oliveira stated that he is submitting testimony opposing the bill.

Commissioner Bowles suggested that the Fire Commission submit testimony.

Chair Bertsch recommended meeting with the Mayor to discuss this matter. Also, it would be prudent to research the origin of the bill.

Chief Oliveira stated that HFD Secretary Laurie Kaneta can provide that information.

Regarding HB 1719, Commissioner Bowles made a motion to authorize Chairman John Bertsch to submit testimony on behalf of the Fire Commission to the Legislature. It should state that the members of the Fire Commission do not consider the bill appropriate for the health and safety of the community because it jeopardizes the staffing of the Hawai'i Fire Department. Commissioner Rosehill seconded the motion. Discussion: Chair Bertsch stated that it is necessary that the Fire Commission empower the Chair to send appropriate testimony.

Commissioner Browne questioned whether a draft could be distributed to the commission via email for approval.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Lugo advised that the commission cannot have a discussion outside of the meeting. However, it can be distributed via email and the members may individually email their comments back to the Chair.

Commissioner Rosehill asked whether it would be appropriate to include HB 1722 and HB 1724.

Commissioner Bowles amended the motion to include HB 1722 and HB 1724. The motion was unanimously carried.

Fire Chief Oliveira stated that the department will inform the commission of the bill status.

Alternative Funding and Grants:

- FEMA FY 2007 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: (Video Teleconferencing Equipment) Contracts to Audio Visual Company and Sears have been finalized. Scheduled to meet with two vendors in order to move forward with implementation and deployment of the equipment. Polycom equipment was originally designated for 18 sites. It has since decreased to 16 sites. These sites are designated for 13 fire stations; the other three are designated for the Dispatch, Training and Fire

Administration buildings. The two stations eliminated were at Laupahoehoe and Paradise Park stations.

Chief Oliveira stated that some stations do not have the infrastructure to accommodate the connectivity. These stations include Kohala, HOVE, and Hilo-Kawailani Station. His goal is to bring all stations on-line.

- FEMA FY 2008 Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant: Peer Fitness Trainer class held on January 26-30, 2009. Waiting on bid award for equipment and medical screening.

Capital Improvement Projects:

- Makalei Fire Station: Awaiting Dedication Deed from property owner. Special Use Permit application has been submitted to Planning and is being processed. Final Plans are being reviewed by the Project Engineer with the Department of Public Works. This project is included in the Federal Economic Stimulus package submitted by the County.
- Pahoia Fire Station: Windows were delivered and installed. Interior features are being completed. Targeting March for the opening.
- Fire Administration and Support Facility: Continuing design development of plans.
- Central Fire Station: Still awaiting status of disposition from HUD office in Chicago.
- Captain Cook Fire Station: Work progressing with ADA and hazard abatement. Targeting easement completion for February 27, 2009. Anticipating renovations to be completed by April. Requesting change order to include painting of kitchen, office, and the driveway and parking area.

Promotions and Hiring

Open-Competitive Recruitment

- Ocean Safety: In order to hire four temporary positions for summer season, a physical agility assessment exercise is scheduled for March 4, 2009.

Internal Recruitment

- Fire Captain: Applications have been received and are being screened. Awaiting submittal of additional documentation (missing information). Written examination is scheduled for March 18, 2009. The assessment center scheduled for April 23 and 24, 2009.

Emergency Operations Division

- Upcoming Civil Support Team HazMat training scheduled for March.

Chair Bertsch suggested participation by the volunteers.

- American Forest Management: Battalion Chiefs, and Assistant Chiefs will meet with representatives to work a number of issues relating to eucalyptus forest along the Hamakua Coast.
- Tsunami Drill: Held on January 27, 2009. Dispatch and warehouse will be changing internal procedures.

Ocean Safety

- Captain Chris Stelfox is teaching a U.S. Lifesaving Association water safety class for the firefighters. Firefighters are required to take the USLA course to qualify to take a rescue promotion and participate in a rescue examination.

Support Services Division

Emergency Medical Services Bureau

- Continues inventory of EMS supplies/medications.
- Five MICT Interns completed their KCC curriculum and received their temporary EMTP license. They are waiting for the National Registry testing to be held on Oahu on February 15, 2009.

Fire Auxiliary Services

Communication Section

- Continuing to move forward with the relocation of radio site from Kapoho to the Puna Geothermal site.

Warehouse Section

- Battalion Chief Gahan is working with the Department of Public Works to improve the capacity and the configuration of the warehouse.

Mechanic Shop

- Fleet management project moving forward.
- Apparatus and equipment repair: 80 total repairs/service; 24 of these repairs were road service calls or trouble calls.

Training Bureau

- 38th Firefighter Recruit class: Continuing with firefighter essentials. EMT class is tentatively scheduled to begin in April.
- 37th Firefighter Recruit class: As of February 16, they will be receiving 24-hour assignments. These are not permanent assignments. These are their transitional assignments as they go through their new probationary period of six months.

Volunteer Section

- Report provided by Volunteer Fire Chief Tom Brandt.
 - Volunteer Fire Chief's meeting: Scheduled for February 24, 2009, at Laupahoehoe Station, at 10:00 a.m.
 - Participated in the Tsunami Drill on January 27, 2009.

Chief Oliveira mentioned that he was approached by Councilman Yagong, who would like to establish a recognition program for the volunteers.

Prevention Bureau

- On February 10, 2009, the Prevention Bureau and Fireworks Auditor met with various vendors to discuss the regulations, and the Legislative proposals relating to fireworks.
- Met with Downtown Improvement Association to develop a preliminary inspection with a self inspection report checklist.
- Working on internal recruitment for two Fire Prevention Captains.

New Projects/Business

- 2009 State Legislature: Monitoring various Legislation proposals. These include fireworks, fire inspection requirements, background screening, and retirement. A copy of home rule legislation introduced in House by Representative Faye Hanohano (HB 966) and Senate by Senator Dwight Takamine (SB 1123) was distributed to the commission.
- Replacement of Chopper 1: Went before standardization committee to provide testimony to receive approval on January 29, 2009.
- Reuse a Shoe Project: Recycling program sponsored by Nike. Partnership with Department of Education and Environmental Management. Campaign targeted for April. Fire Stations are collection sites.
- Hawai'i Fire Chief's Association Conference 2009: To be held at the Hilton Waikoloa Village, November 19-21, 2009. Trying to partner with the National firefighters foundation.

Employee/Public Relations

- American Heart Association Heart Walk: To be held on February 14, 2009, at 8:00 a.m., at Liliuokalani Gardens.
- American Red Cross Hats Off Campaign: On March 14, 2009, at KTA Puainako and WalMart-Kona.
- Fire Commission Binder: Binder will be distributed to all members of the Fire Commission. It will include maps of all stations, statistical summary 2002-2008; number of units/personnel; etc.

A 5-minute recess was taken at 11:15 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS

- Request from Fire Chief for the Commission's recommendations on how the Department should respond to anonymous complaints. **(Deferred)**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Warehouse Familiarization trip to 466 Kinoole Street, Hilo, for the purpose of observing operations. Trip will take place upon conclusion of other items on the agenda. (Deferred, not enough members were able to attend.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To consider a continued evaluation of an employee of the Hawai'i County Fire Department where consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved and a closed session is requested, and to consult with Corporation Counsel on questions and issues pertaining to the commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities. (Pursuant to HRS 92-5 (a)(2) and(a)(4) and Hawai'i County Charter Section 13-20(b).

- **ANNUAL FIRE CHIEF EVALUATION – REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

Deputy Corporation Counsel Lugo suggested that if members would like to recommend changes to the letter drafted by former Chair Okabe they may email the Fire Commission Secretary who will compile those comments and forward them to the present Chair.

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.

Chair Bertsch stated that the assignment of the committees will remain the same until new members are appointed. Also, it may be necessary to consider eliminating committees that are irrelevant to the Fire Commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 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 March 11, 2009, meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

KAYCIE A. I. CARTER
Secretary