

HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION

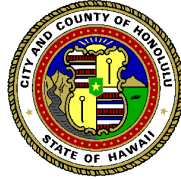
Komikina Kinai Ahi o Honolulu

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Phone: (808) 723-7321 Fax: (808) 723-7397

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



DENNIS MORTON
CHAIR
LĀLĀ

DAVID MATLIN
VICE-CHAIR
HOPE LĀLĀ

CRAIG NAGAMINE

CHARLOTTE NEKOTA

BUTCH GALDEIRA

DEBBI ELENKI

MAX HANNEMANN

Minutes of Regular Public Meeting
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium
February 21, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Morton, Craig Nagamine, Charlotte Nekota, Butch Galdeira, Debby Eleneki and Max Hannemann.

MEMBER EXCUSED: David Matlin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Sheldon Kalani Hao (HFD), Deputy Fire Chief Jason Samala (HFD), Brian Ancheta (Department of the Corporation Counsel), and Nadine Murata (Commission Secretary).

II. PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON ALL AGENDA ITEMS. Chair Morton asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to give public testimony. There was none.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2024. Chair Morton called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of January 17, 2024. Commissioner Eleneki mentioned a name change on page 2 last paragraph regarding Christmas decorating it should read, "Commissioner Matlin" and not Commissioner Hannemann. Commissioner Nekota moved and Commissioner Hannemann seconded. There being no further comments or corrections and with a unanimous vote in favor, the Commission approved the corrected minutes.

IV. REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF. Fire Chief Hao briefly went over workforce with the Commission. Details can be found in the January 2024 monthly report handed out at the meeting.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned there are 117 vacancies within the department and currently there are 2 recruit classes and one will be graduating at the end of March 2024.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department will be hiring 68 fire fighters with vacancies dropping to 49.

Fire Chief Hao went over injuries and mentioned that there are approximately 58 personnel who are on long-term leave.

Commissioner Hannemann asked Fire Chief Hao to define long-term.

Fire Chief Hao answered 6 weeks or more.

Commissioner Nekota asked what is the pay for someone who is on long-term leave and if its more than 1 year what is their documentation.

Fire Chief Hao answered personnel will receive their same salary and documentation is something that the department is working on with the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

Fire Chief Hao discussed staffing within the department and mentioned that 70 personnel will retire during this calendar year and the department is planning for upcoming recruit classes to minimize vacancies.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned projected recruit classes is projected anywhere between 3 and 6 months to produce 75 – 80 per year with no age cap.

Commissioner Eleneki asked how many are ranked personnel.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that he will get that information to the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that there are some who want to take on administrative roles and currently there are no vacancies.

Commissioner Nekota asked if DHR is working with the department and if the department has reached out to the Mayor's office.

Fire Chief Hao answered that the department has not reached out to the Mayor's office and is currently working with DHR.

Commissioner Hannemann asked if the department has reached out to other departments to see how they are handling it.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned that OSHA will be updating its wellness program.

Commissioner Nagamine asked the average age for recruits.

Fire Chief Hao answered late 20's.

Commissioner Nekota asked what is the required age.

Fire Chief Hao answered 18.

Commissioner Eleneki spoke on pilot programs as "Can You Take the Heat" which targets women candidates.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned that the department has revisit it and target date to reintroduce it is tentatively set on April.

Fire Chief Hao discussed future recruitment dates with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that DHR will be sending out information in March, and April will be the month where applications will be accepted.

Fire Chief Hao discussed the department's recruitment strategy and is hopeful that it will yield more applicants.

Commissioner Galdeira asked if the Fire Explorers program could help educate.

Fire Chief Hao went over how the department is communicating with the public/media.

Fire Chief Hao went over injuries and informed the Commission that it is working with the department's OSHA group and is currently working on prevention strategies.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that its OSHA group currently sends out monthly exercise regime to its members.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is trying to minimize injuries and focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

Fire Chief Hao went over facilities with the Commission and mentioned that the Waianae Fire Station interior improvement project will be completed at the end of March 2024.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department is working on securing a 5-year contract with the State of Hawaii for its aircraft hangar which will be relocated to Kalaeloa.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is currently working on securing land for its Pearl City and Waialua stations.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala discussed the helicopter rescue incident on the Big Island with the Commission and assured the Commission that an incident like that would not occur here in Honolulu.

Fire Chief Hao briefly discussed equipment and budget with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department and Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA) met and discussed the upcoming Hawaii Fire Chiefs Association's Annual Conference and the HFD's 2024 plans.

Fire Chief Hao briefly went over internal/external stakeholder matters with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao went over a slackline incident that occurred at the North Shore. Fire Chief Hao mentioned it was a concern for the department as the slackline was unpermitted, unmarked and dangerous for the department's rescue helicopter. Fire Chief Hao mentioned that he had reached out to the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

Commissioner Nekota asked if the department had made a statement.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes there was a media release.

Fire Chief Hao asked the Commission if they would like the department to discuss and go over how the budget is done within the department.

Commissioner Galdeira answered if the department could give a simple view of how it works.

Commissioner Nekota suggested putting it in the Fire Chief's report.

Chair Morton asked if there were any further questions or comments. There was none.

Chair Morton asked for a motion to accept Fire Chief Hao's report. Commissioner Nekota moved and Commissioner Nagamine seconded. There being no further comments or corrections and with a unanimous vote in favor, the Commission accepted the report.

V. ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE FIRE CHIEF.

Counsel Ancheta noted that the State of Office of Information Practices (OIP) had issued Opinion No. F24-04, which held that (1) the Commission's group evaluation of the Fire Chief are subject to public disclosure, but (2) the Commission's *individual* evaluation of the Fire Chief can be withheld for privacy reasons.

Commissioner Nekota moved and Vice-Chair Morton seconded that the Commission go into executive session regarding the annual evaluation of the Fire Chief to “consider the hire, evaluation, dismissal, or discipline of an officer or employee where consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved” [HRS Sec. 92-5(a)(2)] and to “consult with the board’s attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the board’s powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities” with regard to these matters [HRS Sec. 92-5(a)(4)]. By unanimous vote, the Commission went into executive session at 11:14 a.m. and the regular public meeting reconvened at 11:42 a.m.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENT: The next monthly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, Commissioner Nekota moved and Commissioner Hannemann seconded that the meeting be adjourned. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned on February 21, 2024 at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

DENNIS MORTON, Chair