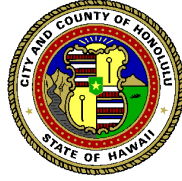


HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION
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CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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CHARLOTTE NEKOTA

BUTCH GALDEIRA

DEBBI ELENKI

MAX HANNEMANN

Minutes of Regular Public Meeting
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium
November 15, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Morton, David Matlin, Charlotte Nekota, Butch Galdeira, and Debbi Eleneki.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Craig Nagamine and Max Hannemann.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Sheldon Kalani Hao (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 OCTOBER 18, 2023. Chair Morton called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of October 18, 2023. Vice-Chair Matlin moved and Commissioner Nekota seconded. There being no further comments or corrections and with a unanimous vote in favor, the Commission approved the minutes.

IV. REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF. Fire Chief Hao briefly went over workforce with the Commission. Details can be found in the October 2023 monthly report handed out at the meeting.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned there are 53 vacancies within the department and come January the department will be hiring 36 fire fighters with vacancies dropping to 17, and a projection of 25 – 35 employees will be retiring at the end of the year.

Fire Chief Hao discussed staffing within the department.

Fire Chief Hao discussed the department's overtime staffing, capturing data on leave and vacancies to the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao went over injuries (due to training), the health and wellness program, and how the department is trying to minimize injuries to the Commission as these are some of the factors on how the department spends its funds.

Commissioner Nekota asked if the recent outbreaks in wildfires increased the department's overtime.

Fire Chief Hao answered no.

Chair Morton asked Fire Chief Hao if he could clarify the FFR I Class data in Section A of the monthly report (page 2).

Fire Chief Hao explained that each county helps the others out.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the contract to furnish and deliver the department's twin-engine helicopter was fully executed on October 31, 2023, and the estimated delivery date is fall 2024.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that its current helicopters have a bucket capacity of holding 100 gallons of water and with the new twin-engine it will hold 300 gallons of water.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is looking towards a purchase of another twin-engine helicopter in the near future.

Fire Chief Hao passed out the department's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 to the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao discussed the department's goals and objectives.

Fire Chief Hao asked the Commission if they had any questions regarding the Mililani Mauka wildfire.

Fire Chief Hao explained that the wildfire had started on October 30, 2023.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that public awareness and media outreach were conducted daily.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department met with the Mayor and its Operations Department. Chair Morton mentioned he felt safe hearing the updated media reports from Fire Chief Hao.

Commissioner Nekota asked how the wildfire started.

Fire Chief Hao answered it's still under investigation.

Commissioner Eleneki asked if there were any Public Information Officer (PIO) sending out information.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned one of its training pilots took an aerial picture and it showed the wildfire could have started on one of the trails.

Fire Chief Hao said after Day 1, it was clear to him that the situation would turn into a multi-agency operation.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the fire started at the intersection of 3 responsible areas.

Fire Chief Hao explained that the responsible areas were Schofield Barracks (east range-military), Mililani Mauka (private land in which HFD is the responsible agency) and the Forestry (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife DOFAW) being the co-op.

Fire Chief Hao explained to the Commission what fire response (military, fish and wildlife services and the Department of Land and Natural Resources) is and explained that fire response areas are color coded by areas.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department transferred its command to the U.S. Department of Interior.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department had asked to set up an Incident Management Team.

Commissioner Eleneki asked if there was partnering with the City's Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and the State.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services does not have the ability to contact the National Guard, everything funnels thru DOFAW.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned because the ordering of resources was not coordinated in an orderly way, it turned into a duplication of assistance.

Commissioner Eleneki asked if there was State representation in the command post or management side.

Fire Chief Hao answered there was only DOFAW.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned by Day 3 coordination got better.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department was on standby and continued to monitor the area.

Commissioner Eleneki asked if the department has an Incident Accident Plan for the events that have happened and if the Commission can review those plans and Findings of the After Action Report.

Commissioner Eleneki expressed that the transfer of command is a concern for her.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department is getting a better understanding of how DEM operates.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is learning what the trigger points are and how resources can get out of its jurisdiction.

Commissioner Eleneki asked about unified effort and knowing who its command staff is.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned what the department learned during the Lahaina incident was air boss aka air traffic and air traffic was headed by Battalion Chief Thurston.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that upon Battalion Chief Thurston's return he coordinated a meeting with all the agencies that provide air services (Guard, Army, contractors and private contractors) to discuss shadowing.

Commissioner Galderia said he watched the press conferences, and he commended the department and Captain Jaimie Song on their communications.

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

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

V. HFD INVESTIGATION ON ALLEGED BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY REGARDING FIRE FIGHTER III PROMOTIONAL INTERVIEWS IN JULY – AUGUST 2023.

Chair Morton briefly discussed to the Commission what took place at the Commission's October 2023 meeting.

Chair Morton asked for Commissioners Nekota and Eleneki's thoughts.

Commissioner Nekota mentioned if the Commission conducts the investigation it would validate what the department has done.

Fire Chief Hao agreed.

Vice-Chair Matlin shared his thoughts on validating the process and having to respond to an anonymous complaint.

Chair Morton mentioned that by conducting it, it would show that the Fire Chief completed his investigation.

Commissioner Galdeira indicated that the Fire Chief's report in October was satisfactory and enough to close this matter.

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned that the only time the Commission should conduct its own investigation is if the Commission feels the report was inadequate.

Commissioner Eleneki mentioned she was satisfied with the Fire Chief's earlier report.

Commissioner Eleneki mentioned that she too would like to validate as it will bring value to the already investigated report, though the Commission has already worked above and beyond for an anonymous complaint.

Chair Morton mentioned forming a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG).

Counsel Ancheta mentioned that the Commission can form a PIG with 2 – 3 members who would investigate outside of the meeting.

Fire Chief Hao explained the promotion process to the Commission and mentioned that the department will be changing how it conducts its interviews.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that anyone who passes the written test will go through this new process.

Chair Morton mentioned that he will table this to the next Commission meeting.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENT: Chair Morton mentioned due to holiday season some of the Commissioners have travel plans and will not be in attendance for December and he would like to hold the next commission meeting on January 17, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. in the Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium (as stated on the Commission's meeting agenda).

Commissioner Galdeira asked Counsel Ancheta if the Police Commission takes a break during the month of December.

Counsel Ancheta answered he did not know.

Commissioner Galdeira asked for a vote.

Commissioner Nekota made a motion to forego the December meeting and reconvene in January. Chair Morton seconded the motion and Vice-Chair Matlin and Commissioners Galdeira and Eleneki opposed.

Chair Morton asked the Commission secretary to reach out to Commissioners Nagamine and Hannemann to see if there will be a quorum for the December meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, Commissioner Nekota moved and Commissioner Eleneki seconded that the meeting be adjourned. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned on November 15, 2023 at 11:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

DENNIS MORTON, Chair