

HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION

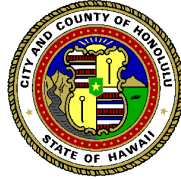
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Minutes of Regular Public Meeting
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium
Wednesday, April 17, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Morton, David Matlin, Craig Nagamine, Debbi Eleneki and Max Hannemann.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Charlotte Nekota, and Butch Galdeira.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Sheldon Hao (HFD), Deputy Fire Chief Jason Samala (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Craig Uchimura (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Mokulehua (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 MARCH 20, 2024. Chair Morton called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of March 20, 2024. Commissioner Nagamine moved and Vice-Chair Matlin 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 April 2024 monthly report handed out at the meeting.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that there were ten (10) peer support activations and briefly discussed it with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao indicated that the department will be adjusting its peer support program to support its members.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned currently there are 83 vacancies within the department and 32 recruits in training which will bring the department's vacancies down to 51.

Fire Chief Hao noted that the department is anticipating 40 recruits in its 117th class and it will commence on July 15, 2024.

Fire Chief Hao discussed spikes in retirements within the department.

Vice-Chair Matlin asked about recruits.

Fire Chief Hao explained the department's promotional and recruitment process and indicated that recruitment is a 2-year cycle.

Fire Chief Hao discussed the department's ongoing recruitment campaign (public service announcements, job fairs, and reaching out to schools).

Chair Morton asked about the department's recruitment cap.

Fire Chief Hao answered the department is looking for specific traits in applicants and explained that the department has been experiencing work shortages like the rest of the country.

Commissioner Nagamine mentioned that everyone in uniform is experiencing shortages.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala spoke on recruitment strategies with the Commission.

Commissioner Hannemann asked about mainland applicants.

Fire Chief Hao answered no, the department is not actively recruiting mainland candidates.

Fire Chief Hao highlighted injuries on page 7 of his monthly report and discussed long-term leave with the Commission. Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department recently held a meeting with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to have a better understanding of its workman compensation process.

Fire Chief Hao explained how the department will be aiding its members by monitoring injuries, adjusting its techniques in training and looking into its wellness and sickness programs.

Fire Chief Hao went over facilities with the Commission and thanked the Commissioners who visited the Waianae Fire Station.

Fire Chief Hao highlighted rescues starting on page 14 of the monthly report and spoke on the removal of Haiku stairs.

Fire Chief Hao went over a complaint received, described on pages 21-22 of the monthly report, with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao briefly spoke on budget and mentioned that budget for FY 25 seems a bit brighter.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala discussed and explained what the City Department of Budget and Fiscal Services' Grant Advance Fund is with the Commission and mentioned that the department received \$500,000.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that these funds were made available only to the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD).

Vice-Chair Matlin asked about the process.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala explained to the Commission.

Assistant Fire Chief Craig Uchimura- Support Services.

Chief Uchimura discussed the department's March recruitment event at the training center and its goal was to have 300 participants.

Chief Uchimura mentioned that 175 – 200 participated and a job fair was on site, with a job shop area included.

Chief Uchimura explained how the department is using recruitment videos on its website, and the kind of traits the department is looking for.

Chief Uchimura briefly touched on past discussions on its live fire training at Kalaeloa and mentioned that the 7th Matson container has arrived and will be locked in place and in a few weeks initial training will begin with Fire Operations running scenarios.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that live fire training has been out of service for 15 – 20 years and that the department is excited to reintroduce this program again with strategy and tactics.

Chief Uchimura mentioned that Brenda Ryan from Malama Ola Health Services reached out to Commissioner Galdeira and asked about offering ceremonies to department personnel who are in hospice.

Fire Chief Hao expressed that this service is a way to show appreciation and currently it's still in the initial stages of discussion.

Chief Uchimura discussed wildland fires and went over the recommendations from the Maui Brush Fire after action report which was passed out at the meeting.

Chief Uchimura shared with the Commission that the department is working with the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) from the Big Island and they will be assisting with coordinating a large land webinar on May 7th, 14th and 21st for 1 ½ hours.

Chief Uchimura mentioned that the department is resurrecting the Oahu Coordinating Group, which was started during Fire Chief Silva's administration and will consist of members from Federal, State, County, and non-government agencies and organizations and could come together to address large brush fires.

Chief Uchimura explained Hawaiian Electric Company's (HECO) public safety power shut-off preventive measures during red flag warnings with the Commission.

Chief Uchimura noted that once the electricity is shut-off, the Board of Water Supply (BWS) will not be able to pump its water.

Chief Uchimura mentioned that implementation could be as soon as this Summer.

Chief Uchimura asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Eleneki asked what social media is the department participating in.

Chief Uchimura answered Facebook, Instagram and You Tube.

Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Mokulehua- Planning and Development.

Chief Mokulehua passed out the 3rd issue (March 2024) of the department's newsletter, Na Lei Kukui, and reviewed it with the Commission.

Chief Mokulehua gave a background on how the newsletter began and mentioned that it's a 5-crew operation involving personnel from different battalions and it falls under the management of Battalion Chief Matthew Nakapuahi.

Chief Mokulehua mentioned that the first issue was released on August 2023 and it's a tri-semester newsletter which covers a four-month period and highlights history, events, chief officer, 1 uniform/civilian person and legends.

Chief Mokulehua went over its fire safety story, pride service and dedication (including promotions, retirements, and class graduations) sections with the Commission.

Chief Mokulehua mentioned that each company receives a hard copy of the newsletter and it's also made available electronically.

Chief Mokulehua mentioned that the department is working on getting copies to its retirees.

Fire Chief Hao spoke on the Legends section (featured in current issue: Retired Assistant Chief Charles Wassman), and mentioned that retirees have reached out to the department and asked if they could have access as to what's going on within the department.

Commissioner Eleneki asked if the department has reached out to others who have worked with these legends.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala acknowledged the Communications Center for their hard work and dedication to the department.

Fire Chief Hao discussed the Honolulu City Council Resolution No. 24-102, to amend the City Charter to in part limit the Commission's appointment of the Fire Chief to a term of five (5) years (but allowing for reappointments).

Vice-Chair Matlin asked if this was pertaining to only HFD.

Fire Chief Hao answered no.

The Commission reviewed the Resolution and voiced their opinions.

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 Hannemann 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. HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION'S 2023 ANNUAL REPORT.

Counsel Ancheta briefly went over the Honolulu Fire Commission's Annual Report process with the Commission.

Fire Chief Hao asked the Commission if they would like assistance from the department.

The Commission selected Commissioner Galdeira to be the lead on the report. Chair Morton mentioned that he will assist Commissioner Galdeira with drafting

VI. COMMENTS ON CITY SALARY COMMISSION'S PROPOSED PAY RAISE FOR THE FIRE CHIEF.

Commissioner Nagamine moved and Vice-Chair Matlin seconded that the Commission go into executive session meeting on this item 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 this matter [HRS Sec. 92-5(a)(4)]. By unanimous vote, the Commission went into executive session at 11:18 a.m. and the regular public meeting reconvened at 11:35 a.m.

Chair Morton mentioned that the Commission will be sending a support letter for the Salary Commission's proposed pay raise for the Fire Chief.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENT: The next monthly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, Commissioner Hannemann moved and Commissioner Nagamine seconded that the meeting be adjourned. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned on April 17, 2024 at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

DENNIS MORTON, Chair