

HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION

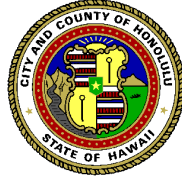
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CHARLOTTE NEKOTA

BUTCH GALDEIRA

DEBBI ELENKI

MAX HANNEMANN

Minutes of Regular Public Meeting
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium
Thursday, October 19, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Morton, David Matlin, Craig Nagamine, and Butch Galdeira.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Charlotte Nekota, Debbi Eleneki, and Max Hannemann.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Sheldon Hao (HFD), Deputy Fire Chief Jason Samala (HFD), Eric Irwin (Ethics Commission), James Schaedel (Councilmember Okimoto's office), 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 SEPTEMBER 21, 2023. Chair Morton called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of September 21, 2023. Commissioner Nagamine moved and Commissioner Galdeira seconded. There being no further comments or corrections and with a unanimous vote in favor, the Commission approved the minutes.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2023. Chair Morton called for any comments or corrections to the executive session minutes of September 21, 2023. Commissioner Nagamine moved and Commissioner Galdeira seconded. There being no further comments or corrections and with a unanimous vote in favor, the Commission approved the executive session minutes.

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

Fire Chief Hao mentioned there are 89 vacancies and 39 recruits in training.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned by the end of the year vacancies within the department will be at 50.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department will start its new recruit class in January with 37 fire fighter recruits.

Fire Chief Hao briefly went over staffing and its projected outlook for next year.

Fire Chief Hao went over fire operations with the Commission and briefly discussed hands-on realistic training.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is working with the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) to obtain a list of developers and landowners and reaching out to them to use their structures for training before demolishing.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the department is currently using the Auto Source property for 40 days of training before demolition, the property belongs to Kamehameha estates and the developer is the Kobayashi Group.

Fire Chief Hao asked if the Commission is interested they are more than welcome to observe its training.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned public awareness and media outreach.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the departments focus is low rise apartments and its training techniques/skills will be preparing them for basic firefighting skill observation.

Chair Morton asked what kind of training.

Fire Chief Hao answered hose bundle drop and focusing on hose drop evolutions and its different techniques and victim removal.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned its live fire prop will be arriving within a few months and discussed its 5 year agreement with the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM) in Kalaeloa.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned adjustments with its industrial injuries.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that he has reached out to its safety and health office and asked them to review the techniques used and if cause could be due to personnel's physical fitness.

Commissioner Nagamine mentioned data analytics and suggested that this is something the department could look into.

Fire Chief Hao went over Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with the Commission.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala discussed Post Maui WUI plan with the Commission and mentioned the department has completed assessing areas of high risk.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala discussed responding/preparedness and enforcing fire code, getting other departments involved.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned the department has been working with the DPP and State of Hawaii's (State) Department of Transportation (DOT) on identifying possible firebreak areas to be cleared.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned tomorrow will be its first day of meeting as a City working group to develop long term plans.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned the department has held meetings with the Board of Water Supply (BWS), Hawaiian Electric (HE) and the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO).

Deputy Fire Chief Samala discussed identifying ignition sources and the roles the department will play.

Commissioner Nagamine asked what WUI is.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala answered they are a non-profit agency and is made up of scientist.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned a table top exercise at Makakilo and the department will be using a mix matrix.

Commissioner Nagamine suggested reaching out to District Council Members.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department's apparatus' now have QR Codes and it will direct you to its website.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned 2024 Hawaii Fire Chiefs Association Annual Conference to the Commission.

Deputy Fire Chief Samala mentioned briefly about the departments Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned that he and Vice-Chair Matlin completed their tour of stations.

Commissioner Galdeira recommended inviting Council Members to have a field day so they may have a better understanding on how the department operates.

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned enforcing fire codes and follow up on violations.

Fire Chief Hao briefly spoke on creating a State Fire Marshall with the Commission.

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

VI. HONOLULU ETHICS COMMISSION PRESENTATION: Financial Disclosure process, deadline and filing requirements for Fire Commissioners.

Mr. Irwin from the Honolulu Ethics Commission past out handouts relating to filing requirements.

Mr. Irwin discussed compliance/past filings and its enforcement.

Mr. Irwin went over transparency and confidentiality.

Mr. Irwin went over due dates and mentioned 2023 financial disclosure should be filed in January 2024.

Mr. Irwin discussed filing procedures and that past mailing/emailing will not be accepted.

Mr. Irwin asked the Commission to reach out should they have any questions.

Chair Morton asked if there were any questions.

Vice-Chair Matlin asked if this is similar to the State.

Commissioner Galdeira asked if this is an annual thing and if email reminders will be sent out.

VII. HFD INVESTIGATION ON POSSIBLE BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY REGARDING FIRE FIGHER III PROMOTIONAL INTERVIEWS IN JULY – AUGUST 2023.

Commissioner Nagamine suggested fact finding and figure out who will be the liaison to the department.

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned that the department has already conducted its investigation.

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned he would like to have the department explain.

Commissioner Nagamine shared his thoughts while protecting those of interest.

Chair Morton asked Counsel Ancheta if the Commission can ask Fire Chief Hao questions.

Chair Morton asked Fire Chief Hao if he received this complaint.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes.

Fire Chief Hao explained how the department received the complaint.

Chair Morton asked what day was it received.

Fire Chief Hao answered September 7th.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that he and Deputy Fire Chief Samala created these interview questions prior to him becoming Fire Chief.

Fire Chief Hao explained that the department put a freeze on the promotion and reached out to Fire Operations and conducted an investigation on delivering/panelist for interviews.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned due to lack of credibility the department proceeded with its promotion.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that the department did its best and is confident with its findings.

Commissioner Nagamine voiced his concerns and asked how the Commission is going to collect facts.

Commissioner Galdeira voiced his concerns and indicated that the department has already conducted its findings.

Chair Morton asked Counsel Ancheta if he can ask Fire Chief Hao questions, Counsel Ancheta commented that the Commission has the option to go into executive session should privacy come into play.

Vice-Chair Matlin mentioned he does not want to entertain anonymous complaints in the future.

Counsel Ancheta went over Commission's duties with the Commission.

Vice-Chair Matlin mentioned evaluate the process.

Chair Morton asked Fire Chief Hao if he feels comfortable answering questions.

Fire Chief Hao answered yes.

Chair Morton asked Fire Chief Hao if the "exact questions" was emailed to Station 40.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned the questions that was emailed to Station 40 was the first 3 questions that was on the mock.

Chair Morton asked if this questions was the “exact” same questions that was on the interview.

Fire Chief Hao answered the first questions is always the same.

Commissioner Galdeira asked Fire Chief Hao to be clear about standard questions.

Fire Chief Hao answered not verbatim.

Fire Chief Hao explain how the department conducts interviews and mentioned that it will be moving towards interview to hands-on.

Chair Morton asked was the wording exact.

Fire Chief Hao answered the category is the same, the second question was asked but in a different way.

Chair Morton asked if the person giving the mock interview in the real interview.

Fire Chief Hao answered no.

Chair Morton asked if the panelist are given the questions on the day of the interview.

Fire Chief Hao answered no. Fire Chief Hao mentioned that when the panelist came the department would make adjustments so make sure it was written in a proper way.

Chair Morton asked about digital data and who sent it to Station 40 was he part of the panel.

Fire Chief Hao answered no.

Chair Morton asked why wasn't this complaint shared with the Commission in the September meeting.

Fire Chief Hao mentioned that he reached out to Commissioner Eleneki.

Fire Chief Hao asked the Commission what kind of complaints the Commission would like to be informed of as the department receives numerous complaints.

Chair Morton if there was any questions. There was none.

Chair Morton made a motion that the Commission should form a committee to investigate this complaint.

Commissioner Nagamine and Chair Morton voted for and Vice-Chair Matlin and Commissioner Galdeira voted against.

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

Commissioner Galdeira mentioned that he propose that the Chair/Vice-Chair be at the 200 Club to recognize individuals.

Chair Morton mentioned that due to it being a third party event it's up to the discretion of the department.

Deputy Fire Chief concurred.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENT: The next monthly Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. in the Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, Commissioner Nagamine moved and Commissioner Galdeira seconded that the meeting be adjourned. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned on October 19, 2023 at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

DENNIS MORTON, Chair