

OPEN SESSION MEETING MINUTES

Board/Commission	Kauai County Fire Commission	Meeting Date	January 17, 2023
Location	Boards and Commissions Conference Room 4444 Rice Street, Līhu‘e, Hawai‘i 96766	Start of Meeting: 2:01 p.m.	Meeting Ended: 3:19 p.m.
Present	Vice Chair Jen Chahanovich; Commissioners: Alfredo Garces Jr., Alfred Levinthol, Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto, and Rodney Yama. Also present: Board & Commissions Office Staff: Support Clerk Mercedes Omo; Administrator Ellen Ching; Office of the County Attorney: Deputy County Attorney Jenna Tatsey, Kauai Fire Department: Fire Chief Michael Gibson and Secretary Soncy Tamashiro. Councilmember Felica Cowden.		
Excused	Commissioners Michael Martinez and Chad Pacheco		
Absent			



SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Meeting Called to Order/Roll Call to ascertain quorum</p>		<p>At 2:01 p.m. Vice Chair Chahanovich called the meeting to order.</p> <p>A roll call ensued, and a quorum was ascertained with Commissioners Alfredo Garces Jr., Alfred Levinthol, Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto, Rodney Yama, and Vice Chair Jen Chahanovich present to conduct business.</p> <p>Ms. Omo noted that Commissioner Chad Pacheco contacted her to let her know that he was unable to attend the meeting.</p>

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Approval of the Fire Commission's Agenda January 17, 2023, meeting</p>		<p>Vice Chair Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to approve the agenda for Fire Commission's January 17, 2023, meeting.</p> <p>There was a motion by Commissioner Alfredo Garces to approve the agenda as circulated. Commissioner Alfred Levinthol seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.</p>
<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair for Calendar Year 2023</p>	<p>Vice Chair Jen Chahanovich opened the nominations for Chair.</p> <p>Commissioner Rodney Yama nominated Vice Chair Chahanovich to the chairmanship. Being that there were no other nominations, Vice Chair Jen Chahanovich accepted the nomination for chair.</p> <p>Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich opened nominations for Vice Chair.</p> <p>Commissioner Alfred Levinthol nominated Commissioner Rodney Yama for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations for Vice Chair from the floor. Commissioner Rodney Yama accepted the nomination. Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to elect Commissioner Rodney Yama as the new Vice Chair for Calendar year 2023.</p>	<p>There was a motion made by Commissioner Rodney Yama to elect Vice Chair Chahanovich as the new Chair for 2023. Commissioner Linda Iwamoto seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, Vice Chair Chahanovich was elected Chair for Calendar Year 2023.</p> <p>There was a motion by Commissioner Alfred Levinthol to elect Commissioner Rodney Yama as the new Vice Chair in 2023. Commissioner Linda Iwamoto seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, Commissioner Rodney Yama was elected Vice Chair for Calendar Year 2023.</p>

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Chair's Announcement	Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich announced that the next Fire Commission meeting will be on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. in the Office of Boards and Commissions Conference Room.	
Public Testimony (Oral testimony will be taken at any time during the meeting)	Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich called for public testimony. Being that there was no one from the public sitting in the audience, Boards and Commissions Administrator Ellen Ching stated for the record that calling for public testimony on any of the agenda items would not be necessary.	
Approval of Minutes		<p>Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to approve or amend the minutes of the Fire Commission's November 22, 2022, open session meeting.</p> <p>There was a motion by Vice Chair-elect Rodney Yama to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2022, open session meeting. Commissioner Alfredo Garces seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as circulated.</p>
Chief's Monthly Bureau Reports & Pertinent Updates	<p>Fire Chief Gibson congratulated Chair Jen Chahanovich and Vice Chair Rodney Yama and then asked the Commissioners if they had any questions regarding the data reflected in his November 2022 Monthly Reports. Being there were no questions from the Commissioners.</p> <p>Fire Chief Gibson turned to his December 2022 Monthly Reports highlighting the promotion of Fire Fighter III Reid Tanita to Battalion Chief. He explained that the promotion created an opening in one of the three (3) platoons and once that particular platoon is recognized Battalion Chief Tanita will be assigned to that platoon.</p>	

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	<p>Chief Gibson stated that with BC Reid Tanita’s promotion and the retirement of Fire Captain Butch Keahiolalo created two (2) fire captains vacancies which will be filled by Firefighter III’s Michael Karratti and Matt Ballard. He explained that part of the Fire Department’s promotion process the Department of Human Resources is working on certifying the last promotional eligibility list and once its finalized, they will be promoting two (2) people to fill the vacancies left by Firefighter III Michael Karratti and Matt Ballard promotions.</p> <p>In effort to fill the eight (8) firefighter vacancies, the Department is conducting firefighter recruitment training and to his understanding roughly 150 potential firefighter candidates showed up to take the physical agility test. The ones who pass will get to move on to the interview phase which will take place the week of February 6, 2023.</p> <p><u>Questions by the Commissioners</u> Chief Gibson, in response to Vice Chair-elect Yama’s questioning, responded that the date of the next academy training is April 1, 2023 followed by a graduation ceremony in Fall. He added that lateral transfers from within the State of Hawai’i are also being accepted and if things works out, they will bring a lot of experience to the organization.</p> <p>Chief Gibson, in response to Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich questioning, clarified that there are eight (8) bonafide vacancies as a result of people being out of work due to some type of injury, the good news is six (6) employees’ will be returning to work real soon.</p>	

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	<p>With no further questions, Chief Gibson continued with his reports stating that according to the grant committee the Department will not be getting a new fire engine anytime soon, but they haven't not given up hope and will be submitting a second grant request before the February 15 deadline. Last month, Assistant Chief Solomon Kanohe went before council to request utilizing monies that were set aside for the eight (8) vacancies to purchase a second fire engine, thanks to his hard work council approved the request, and the Department will be initiating an invitation for bid. Also, in the works for FY 2024 the Department will be initiating another request to purchase a third fire engine for the Department.</p> <p>Regarding partnerships, the Department applied for a Community Wildlife Defense Grant, but they haven't received word on whether their request was approved or not. A second grant request was made by the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. Fire Captain Makepa who took the lead on that helped DHHL to secure the grant in the amount of \$355,000 which will go towards fire mitigation and putting up barriers to keep the public from depositing their unusable vehicles on the Makai side of the highway in Anahola. Also happening is talks between KFD, Councilmember Decosta and other organizations within the state about the feasibility of bringing in goats and cows and placing them in areas around the islands where vegetation is growing out of control. In addition, the Department is working with private AG developers to do controlled burns on the westside of Kauai.</p> <p>The average of Covid 19 cases are 12 a day. No KFD personnel are affected with the exception of one ocean safety personnel who is experiencing respiratory symptoms and has been out on sick leave for a couple of months now.</p> <p>Resources, Air1 turbine engine is due for its 3000 hours maintenance/overhaul. Other significant components that needs attention is Air1 starter hours; originally Air1 began with 2000 starts and now Air1 is down to 5 starts.</p>	

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	<p>During this massive engine overhaul, the Department ordered a back-up engine to replace Air1 engine while the current engine is being overhauled. It will take the maintenance crew a day and a half to complete the task. In addition, the company Airborne helicopter will be providing the Department with a back-up helicopter, however, the services are limited to just landing and loading and will not be used to any cliff or water landings. The cost for everything is \$200,000.</p> <p>KFD's new landing craft has arrived but it has to undergo inspection and clearance before it can be utilized. Lastly, Chief Gibson reported that he is waiting to hear from BLNR (Bureau of Land and Natural Resources) on whether KFD will be able to utilize a portion of land to build a landing pad for Air1 helicopter.</p> <p><u>Administrative Bureau</u> KFD's budget team is hard at work trying to meet the requirements set forth by Managing Director Michael Dahilig and meet the Department's operational expenses. Out of 36 million dollars budget the Administrative Bureau has control of only 3.5 million dollars. The good news is the Department was allowed to increase its budget by 6.5 percent (\$150,000) but all of it will go towards fuel costs. Not included in the 2023/2024 fiscal year budget was a million dollar ask to hire an additional twelve (12) ocean safety officers.</p> <p>Despite of having to transfer funds from the unused salaries budget account to cover the Department's overtime costs and to make-up the shortages on the operations budget the Department is on track.</p> <p><u>Questions by Commissioners</u> In response to Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich questioning, Fire Chief Gibson responded that used engines and pumpers are put up for auction mostly for scrap parts, KFD recoups all of the equipment.</p>	

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	<p>In response, to Commissioner Alfred Levinthol’s questioning, Fire Chief Gibson responded that KFD has two (2) mechanics.</p> <p>In response, to Vice Chair-elect Rodney Yama’s questioning, Fire Chief Gibson responded that in FY 2024 KFD would not have any salary savings to cover any new hires.</p> <p>Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich commented that in theory wouldn’t the hiring of the additional 8 personnel and the 6 employees who’s out on sick leave coming back to work decrease the Department’s overtime costs significantly to which Fire Chief Gibson yes.</p> <p>In response to Commissioner Alfredo Garces questioning, Fire Chief Gibson responded that the union contract that went into effect on July 1, 2022, during the first year there were zero increases, but because of the new three-year collective bargaining contract agreement the union members will receive their first increase on July 1, 2023, then on July 1, 2025 the union members will receive an additional 4% increase.</p> <p><u>Fire Operations Bureau</u> The bureau finished the 2022 year with 7221 calls - 17% higher from the year before. The biggest calls for service was in EMS at 4,801 calls compared to 4222 in FY 20-21. Search for lost person 124 compared to 75 in FY 20-21. Water rescue 56 compared to 42 in FY 20-21.</p> <p><u>Fire Prevention Bureau</u> Both Fire Chief Gibson and Fire Captain Makepa spent time with Wildfire Management Organization to come up with a firefighter protection plan. In addition, the bureau has been busy conducting school inspections, public safety events, they even participated with the Lights on Rice Christmas Parade, the Waimea Town Christmas Parade and the County’s annual Spooktacular event last</p>	

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	<p>October.</p> <p><u>Fire Training Bureau</u> The bureau has conducted EMS refresher training and CPR certification training. Other training included a two-week in-house Hazmat technical training conducted by the Department's own hazmat trainers.</p> <p><u>Ocean Safety Bureau</u> Three lifeguard tower decks located at the South Pond in Hanapēpē, Pinetree's in Kilauea and at the Hā'ena state beach have become unsafe for the lifeguards to walk on, but with the approval of CIP money a year ago, the Department was able to purchase three (3) new decks to replace worn-out decks at the three lifeguard towers. Being that the Hā'ena lifeguard tower deck is far worse than the other two decks work to install the new decks will begin soon, and that the cost for each deck is \$15,000.00 compared to having to purchase a brand-new tower at \$100,000 which does not include shipping.</p> <p>Chief Gibson shared that he had a conversation with Maui Fire Chief Brad Ventura and was told that his department was faced with the same dilemma in terms of finding a bid under \$100,000 for the towers, long story short, Maui is looking at building their lifeguard towers using wood knowing that they would have to replace the towers every four to five years which would overall be cost effective.</p> <p><u>Goal #1 – Develop a Standard Response Time Coverage.</u> In effort to boost its response time KFD has conducted USLA Keystone standardized water rescue training. The program covers; responder safety, activation of response system, scene safety, hazard recognition, and information gathering.</p>	

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	<p><u>Goal #2 – Develop a Policy Management Process.</u> As reported last month, the finalized policy was submitted to the Hawai‘i Firefighters Association for review. Because the policy mirrored the Maui Fire Department’s rules and regulations the Kauai Fire Department had to make adjustments to fit the Department’s standards and expectations.</p> <p><u>Goal #3 – Identify Career Development Pathway.</u> A committee of eleven (11) firefighters of various ranks came together to help develop a fair and consistent standardized way of optimizing the promotion process based on the employee (s) job or tenure, skillset that matches the minimum requirements of the new role and personal motivation and willingness for change and responsibilities. Although they made good progress there’s one category that needed to be fixed and so the committee will reconvene again to address it and once they address the issue the Department of Human Resources will be called in to provide their input.</p> <p>This year, KFD will host a training which will give its firefighters an opportunity to be exposed to other ideas. Due to financial constraints the Department’s travel budget was cut so having the ability to host the training on Kauai is huge. Fire Chief Gibson noted that he will continue to fight to increase the Department’s travel training budget.</p> <p>In response, to Commissioner Alfredo Garces’s questioning, Chief Gibson responded that they are always on the lookout for any grant opportunities related to training.</p> <p>With no further questions by the Commissioners, Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to receive the Chief’s Monthly Reports.</p>	<p>There was a motion made by Commissioner Levinthol to receive Fire Chief Gibson’s Monthly Reports. Commissioner Iwamoto seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the Chief’s Monthly Reports were received for the record.</p>

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<p>Business KFC 2023-1</p>	<p><u>Recap by Commissioners Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto and Rodney Yama on the 2022 Hawai‘i Fire Chiefs Association Conference that was held from December 14 -18, 2022, on Hawai‘i Island.</u></p> <p>Recap given by Vice Chair-elect Rodney Yama:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conference was a huge success. • Thanked Commissioner Kaauwai-Iwamoto for introducing him to the other conference attendees. It gave him the opportunity to network and ask questions on firefighting. • The agenda featured a different topic. When conducting a fire investigation keep an open mind. Being a scientist when handling a fire, a firefighter need to minimize by its cutting oxygen source. • Both he and Commissioner Kaauwai-Iwamoto attended all sessions. The speakers were great. There was one particular speaker he thought was extra dynamic because he pointed out what type of qualities makes a good leader and that being a good leader, your subordinates will follow you anywhere. • The job of a firefighter is stressful. It doesn’t matter what rank a person is at. • One of the highlights of the conference was meeting the new fire recruits. <p>Recap by Commissioner Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges they faced due bad weather which caused flight delay, lack of a pilot due to not being allowed to fly after a certain amount flight hours, getting to their hotel o O‘ahu for overnight stay – no taxis were available. • The presenters at the conference were all dynamic. 	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Executive Session</p>	<p><u>ES KFC 2023-1 Pursuant to Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (“H.R.S”) § 92-4 and § 92-5(a)(2), the purpose of this Executive Session is for the Commission to discuss and decision-making on the results of Fire Chief Michael Gibson’s six- month performance evaluation for the period of June 16, 2022 to December 2022.</u></p>	<p>At 2:57 p.m., Boards and Commissions Administrator Ellen Ching read the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes to take the meeting into Executive Session.</p> <p>Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to enter Executive Session.</p> <p>There was a motion made by Commissioner Alfredo Garces to enter Executive Session. Vice Chair-elect Rodney Yama seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the motion carried 5:0.</p> <p>At 2:58 p.m. the Commissioner’s entered Executive Session.</p>
<p>Return to Open Session to ratify the action taken in Executive Session.</p>	<p>At 3:18 p.m. the Commissioners returned to Open Session.</p> <p>Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to ratify the action taken in Executive Session.</p>	<p>There was a motion made by Commissioner Alfredo Garces to ratify the action taken for item ES KFD 2023-1 in Executive Session. Commissioner Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the motion carried 5:0.</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>There being no further business to conduct, Chair-elect Jen Chahanovich sought a motion to adjourn the meeting.</p>	<p>There was a motion made by Vice Chair-elect Rodney Yama to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Alfredo Garces seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the meeting</p>

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
		adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Mercedes Omo, Staff Support Clerk

Reviewed and Approved by: _____
Jen Chahanovich , Chair-elect

- (x) Approved as circulated on March 21, 2023
- () Approved as amended. See minutes of _____ meeting.