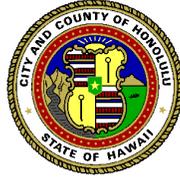


HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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CHAIR

ARNOLD WONG  
VICE CHAIR

DR. JOSEPH W.C. YOUNG

MAX HANNEMANN

CHARLOTTE NEKOTA

STEPHANIE LEE

Minutes of Regular Public Meeting  
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters  
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium  
Wednesday, March 1, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Wataru called the regular meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Wataru, Dr. Joseph Young, Max Hannemann, and Charlotte Nekota.

MEMBER EXCUSED: Arnold Wong.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Manuel Neves (HFD), Deputy Fire Chief Lionel Camara Jr. (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Scott Lawton (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Socrates Bratakos (HFD), Battalion Chief Howard Naone (HFD), Battalion Chief Jim Skellington (HFD), Battalion Chief Sheldon Hao (HFD), Battalion Chief Keith Yasue (HFD), Battalion Chief Wayne Masuda (HFD), Battalion Chief Jason Samana (HFD), Battalion Chief Paul Kato (HFD), Battalion Chief Jarin Wong (HFD), Battalion Chief Ryan Young (HFD), Andrew Fukuda (HFFA), Jolyn Prieto (HFFA), Jordan Chouljian (OnTrac Partners), Paul Hoshino (Corporation Counsel), Randall Ishikawa (Corporation Counsel), and Nadine Murata.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Chair Wataru asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to make a public testimony. Andrew Fukuda from the Honolulu Fire Fighters Association distributed binders to the Commission for their review for the upcoming evaluation of the Fire Chief.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2017: Chair Wataru called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the regular public meeting of February 8, 2017.

There being no further comments or corrections the minutes were approved as circulated.

REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF: Chief Neves reported on the following:

1. Battalion Chiefs Interviews. Chief Neves indicated that the department has selected two new Battalion Chiefs and the positions for Battalion Chiefs are now filled. Battalion Chiefs Samana and Masuda gave a brief description about themselves.
2. Collective Bargaining Agreement Meetings.
3. Harvey House Site Visit. Chief Neves indicated that the property is considering to turning it over to the City. HFD has expressed their interest on the property for a future training site.
4. HFD Staff Meeting.
5. HFD Station Visitations (1/862).
6. Mayor's State of the City Address.
7. Meeting with the Council Chair Emeritus Ernie Martin.
8. Meeting with the Department of Corporation Counsel.
9. Meeting with the Department of Transportation Services. Chief Neves updated the Commission on the progress of the aircraft hangar.
10. Meeting with Fire Commissioner Stefanie Lee. Chief Neves noted that the department had a meet and greet.
11. Meetings with Hawaiian Electric Company Representatives. Chief Neves thanked Commissioner Hannemann for the safety presentation.
12. Meetings with Senators Breene Harimoto and Clarence Nishihara, the State Librarian, and the Departments of Design and Construction and Parks and Recreation. Chief Neves indicated that the department is trying to secure the site next to the Pearl City library for a future Pearl City fire station.
13. Meeting with various City Councilmember's regarding Bill 2. Chief Neves went over Bill 2 regarding live Christmas trees and indicated that the department opposes the bill.

14. Monthly meeting with the Managing Director.

15. Swear-in for Commissioner Charlotte Nekota. Chief Neves mentioned that the department participated in the swearing in for Commissioner Nekota.

The Fire Chief also reported on the following:

1. During the month of February, HFD received 1 complimentary correspondence, and no complaint.
2. Chief Neves informed the Commission of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Fire Fighters Recruit Graduation on April 6, 2017, at 11 a.m. at the Hawaii Okinawa Center's Legacy Ballroom.
3. Chief Neves had each member of the executive staff give a brief description of their section's recent activities

Deputy Fire Chief Lionel Camara Jr.- Chief Camara welcomed Commissioner Nekota and indicated that he has made himself available 24/7 to the union to increase communications.

Assistant Fire Chief Scott Lawton- Administrative Services. Chief Lawton highlighted on a project regarding a grant that Battalion Chief Masuda secured in FEMA funding for a rescue boat. This boat will be equipped with CBRNE (Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) detection and side scan sonar capabilities. It will be used in ocean rescue responses and any man made events at Honolulu Harbor. Chief Lawton noted that a request made by Chief Neves is to have the grant allow HFD to have a fire monitor. Currently the department is working with purchasing

Chair Wataru asked when the boat will be in operation and where is it being purchased. Chief Lawton indicated August 31, 2018, and purchasing location is still being determined.

Assistant Fire Chief Socrates Bratakos- Support Services. Chief Bratakos updated the Commissioners on the State and City legislation and Chief Bratakos went over the cancer presumption bill. Commissioner Nekota asked for the bill number, Chief Bratakos indicated that he will get that to her.

Chief Bratakos also mentioned that the department is following several building codes and the main code that the department is working on is the sprinkler code and Act 83. Chief Bratakos went over Act 83 with the Commission which prohibits counties from mandating sprinklers in new residential homes and indicated that this shouldn't be a permanent bill as there are concerns about residential care home. HFFA has been supportive of the cancer presumption and sprinkler bill.

Chief Bratakos mentioned the department has been following the fireworks legislation and indicated that it has not been moving vary far with measures that control and ban fireworks.

Chief Bratakos indicated that the department has been presenting testimony on various bills.

#### SURVEY OF FIREFIGHTERS AND DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES:

Chair Wataru asked Chief Neves for his input on the survey. Chief Neves indicated that he is very pleased with the report as it indicated a lot of strengths and the purpose of this survey was to measure and increase the involvement of the personnel within the department and let personnel know the direction the department is heading with objections that are currently set forth in the strategic plan.

Chief Neves noted that the department wanted to give HFD personnel a voice and to provide opportunities for improvements. Chief Neves indicated that many of the comments were constructive.

Chief Neves mentioned that they will continue to work on the relationship with the union.

Chief Neves indicated that the department had a strategy and tactics team meeting and will be moving forward with improvements.

Chair Wataru ask Mr. Chouljian if the fire fighters level was broken down or was it by rank and file. Mr. Chouljian mentioned that the response was not broken down but they were asked specifically about their direct supervisors.

Mr. Chouljian added that there's an opportunity for improvement in morale. Positives were materials, equipment, advancement, promotion, training, and leadership skills. However, 36% were dissatisfied with the department's morale. Mr. Chouljian expressed that it's due to the strained relationship with the union. Commissioner Young asked if they had made comments. Mr. Chouljian indicated that it was noted that they have the tools but are distracted by the tension between administration and the union.

Chair Wataru noted that when it comes to morale, the department has what they need, but needs an improved working environment. Mr. Chouljian agreed, it's all the constant bickering.

Commission Young asked how many people were involved in conducting this survey. Mr. Chouljian noted it was his firm and Commissioners Hannemann and Castillo had participated. Neither management nor union leadership had the opportunity to see the questions in advance.

Mr. Chouljian passed out a summary sheet. Commissioner Nekota asked how many firefighters responded. Mr. Chouljian answered just a little over 20% and noted that the union had earlier sent out a memo to its members not to respond.

Commissioner Young noted that Mr. Lee was open with the participating with the survey and questioned about the memo being sent out. Mr. Chouljian responded that maybe Mr. Lee wanted to review the questions before it went out.

Mr. Chouljian recommended to better understand the opinions of the members a survey should take place every 18 months or annually to find out the needs of the people, and if they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

Commissioner Hannemann asked how many reminder emails were sent out to the employees. Mr. Chouljian answered 4 reminders.

Commissioner Young asked how to improve morale. Mr. Chouljian answered by improving the relationship between the union and administration.

Mr. Hoshino introduced himself and asked Mr. Chouljian if he was asked by the Commission to come up with the survey questions, about his experience in preparing these surveys, and if it's done on a national level. Mr. Chouljian gave a brief description of him-self and indicated that these surveys are modeled after a Gala 15 which is 15 questions, employee based geared towards the company.

Chair Wataru told Mr. Hoshino that this survey was generated by the Fire Chief and not the Commission and that the Commission participated with the questions. Mr. Hoshino asked if the Chief was able to review the questions. Chair Wataru indicated both the union and the department did not get a chance to review the questions.

Mr. Hoshino asked Mr. Chouljian whether morale is a common problem across the nation with respect to administration and rank and file. Mr. Chouljian noted not too much with the rank and file but the strain between union leadership and management is not uncommon. Mr. Hoshino asked if the survey was specific to national fire departments and their union counterparts. Mr. Chouljian indicated that this is specifically geared towards HFD.

Mr. Hoshino asked the Commission if he may have a chance to review the binders that were passed out. Counsel Ishikawa indicated that these are public records.

Commissioner Hannemann asked if the union could provide a copy to the Chief since it's a public record. Mr. Fukuda indicated yes, he could provide one for them.

Chair Wataru asked Counsel Ishikawa that anything given in this meeting is of public record. Counsel Ishikawa answered yes, it is public record.

Commissioner Hannemann expressed his insight on the survey and gave recommendations on following up with the employees and thanking them for participating and addressing any concerns that were made.

Chair Wataru went over 3 questions pertaining to the Chief based on the survey and asked Chief Neves what his perception was on his score. Chief Neves indicated that the scores are a positive,

but there is room for improvements. Chief Neves mentioned because the survey was positive, but the morale issue fell low.

Chief Neves mentioned that there are opportunities that need to be worked on as well as relationship.

Commissioner Hannemann asked when was the last survey conducted and if morale has gone up or down. Chief Neves mentioned that the last survey conducted was a long time ago.

Chief Neves expressed that the survey reflects that personnel are happy with their work.

Chair Wataru indicated that the department does a great job but has a hard time trying to understand the neutrals ratings in the survey. Mr. Chouljian re explained the ratings to the Commission.

#### ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE FIRE CHIEF:

Commissioner Hannemann moved and Commissioner Nekota seconded the motion that the Commission go into Executive Session “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)]. The motion passed unanimously. The Commission went into Executive Session at 3:10 p.m. and the regular public meeting reconvened at 3:51 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The next regular meeting will be held on April 19, 2017, at 1:00 p.m., at the HFD auditorium.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

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JAMES WATARU, Chair