

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

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VICE CHAIR  
DR. JOSEPH W.C. YOUNG  
MAX HANNEMANN  
CHARLOTTE NEKOTA  
STEFANIE LEE  
WILLIAM HONG

Minutes of Regular Public Meeting  
Honolulu Fire Department Headquarters  
Honolulu Fire Department Auditorium  
Wednesday, October 11 2017

**DRAFT**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Wataru, Arnold Wong, Dr. Joseph Young, Charlotte Nekota, Stefanie Lee, and William Hong.

MEMBER EXCUSED: Max Hannemann.

IN ATTENDANCE: Fire Chief Manuel Neves (HFD), Deputy Fire Chief Lionel Camara Jr. (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Scott Lawton (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Ron Rico (HFD), Chief Socrates Bratakos (HFD), Assistant Fire Chief Nathan Ramos (HFD), Battalion Chief Jeff Hooker (HFD), Battalion Chief Lance Gasper (HFD), Bobby Lee (HFFA), Aaron Lenchanko (HFFA) Celeste Nip (HFFA), Jolyn Prieto (HFFA), Paul Hoshino (Corporation Counsel), Randall Ishikawa (Corporation Counsel), and Nadine Murata.

Vice Chair Wong suggested to Chair Wataru if item number 6 on the agenda could be moved towards the end of the regular session as it should be discussed in executive session. Chair Wataru asked if there were any objection, there were none, Chair Wataru then moved item number 6 to the end of the agenda.

II. PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Bobby Lee, President of the Honolulu Fire Fighters Association passed out a power point presentation and highlighted several topics which included misleading statements from HFD, improper handling of asbestos exposed PPEs, major safety incidents, and HFD police report

Mr. Lee discussed HFDs leadership and its misleading statements regarding the proper procedures regarding the handling of asbestos-exposed PPEs and questioned HFD's policies and procedures as to why only one company had bagged their PPEs and equipment at the scene and other companies had bagged it at the station or at the end of their shift.

Mr. Lee questioned if it was due to unclear policy and procedures, inadequate training, or lack of leadership.

Mr. Lee also indicated that the union is still waiting for the investigative report of the September 2, 2016, helicopter accident.

Mr. Lee went over the Marco Polo timeline and noted that the Department of Health did confirm presence of asbestos.

Mr. Lee questioned if the department was aware of the presence of asbestos and if HFD had tested PPEs, apparatus, equipment, and fire stations for asbestos.

Mr. Lee went over three major incidents regarding a fire fighters death, helicopter incident, and the Marco Polo fire and asked if HFD is dedicated to keeping its personnel safe.

Mr. Lee briefly went over a police report regarding confidential information being leaked with document access codes and believes that Chief Neves had filed a false report to scare its members from speaking.

Mr. Lee mentioned the union will be filing a complaint asking the Commission to conduct an investigation regarding this report.

Chair Wataru asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Chair Wataru asked if there was anyone else from the public who would also like to give testimony, there were none and Chair Wataru thanked Mr. Lee for his testimony.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2017: Chair Wataru called for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the regular public meeting of September 20, 2017. There being no further comments or corrections the minutes were approved as circulated.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2017: Chair Wataru called for any comments or corrections to the executive session minutes of September 20, 2017. There being no further comments or corrections the minutes were approved as circulated.

V. REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF: Chief Neves passed out this monthly report and highlighted the following:

1. Battalion Chief interviews. Chief Neves indicated the department conducted interviews and selections were made.
2. City Council hearing. Chief Neves mentioned that the department continues to work on Bill 69 regarding retrofit of high rise buildings without sprinklers and continue to work on the resolution to put together a residential fire committee and work on recommendations to retrofit or not to retrofit high rise buildings.
3. HFD promotion ceremony. Chief Neves thanked Commissioners Young and Lee for attending. Promoted were two Battalion Chiefs, one Captain, helicopter pilot and 36 fire fighter III's.
4. Hawaii Labor Relations Board hearing. Chief Neves attended a hearing at Circuit Court to appeal the rapid intervention training dispute from the Hawaii Relations Board and the decision was in favor of HFD.
5. Mayor's awards program. Chief Neves mentioned that the department has named a fire fighter, manager, and civilian of the year. A ceremony will be held to recognize these individuals.
6. Meetings with the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. Chief Neves mentioned that the department conducts monthly meetings to address areas of concerns or improvements.
7. Residential Fire Safety Advisory Committee meeting. Chief Neves mentioned that the committee is ready to make recommendations to City Council. Commissioner Hong asked if issues could be discussed. Chief Neves explained the duties of the Fire Safety Advisory Committee and indicated that they are broken into two groups. One group works on codes issues and the other finds financial incentives to support the retrofit. Chief Neves noted that not all high rises will be needing retrofitting as some will be deemed safe then others. Commissioner Hong asked when the committee is meeting with Council. Chief Neves answered, "Tomorrow" and indicated that he is hopeful that the Council will agree with their findings. Commissioner Young asked if asbestos is present does the department just enter the building. Chief Neves mentioned that the department enters fires with the highest level of protection assuming the worst scenario and the decontamination process is based upon this worst case scenario.

The Fire Chief also reported on the following:

1. During the month of October, HFD received 1 complimentary correspondence, and no complaints.

2. Chief Neves had each member of the executive staff give a brief description of their section's recent activities.
3. Chief Neves indicated that The 200 Club luncheon will be held on October 20, 2017, at 11 a.m. at the Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki.
4. Chief Neves mentioned an upcoming Commendation Ceremony to be held on November 9, 2017, at 10 a.m. at the Charles H. Thurston Fire Training Center.

Deputy Fire Chief Lionel Camara Jr.- Chief Camara indicated that he had participated on an ongoing City procurement discussion on how to improve the purchasing process. Chief Camara explained the purchasing process and how the master agreements can be used statewide with other county agencies. Vice Chair Wong asked about the West Coast. Chief Lawton indicated that the department utilizes the West Coast and cva's are purchased through them.

Assistant Fire Chief Scott Lawton- Administrative Services. Chief Lawton spoke about the Battalion Chief interviews and noted that the department currently has two Battalion Chiefs and recently Battalion Chief Kato has transferred to 2<sup>nd</sup> watch and Chief Gaspar was recently promoted to take Chief Kato's place. Chief Lawton also mentioned that Battalion Chief Ryan Young had retired at the end of September and Chief Hooker who was a fire investigator has also been promoted to take his place.

Assistant Fire Chief Socrates Bratakos- Support Services. Chief Bratakos spoke about the annual training and Target Solutions which is a computer training class. First responders and emergency medical technicians also go through hazardous material incident management training. The State will be assisting HFD in fire hose handling training at Sand Island.

Commissioner Hong asked about computer training. Chief Bratakos indicated that computer training takes the place of lectures, test, and quizzes which is customized to their own pace and because of this the department is able to train more for physical skills.

Commissioner Young ask if all buildings have asbestos 5 years and older. Chief Bratakos noted that buildings built before 1980 are likely to contain some asbestos and mentioned that many chemicals are released when there's a fire in a building.

Vice Chair Wong asked about training at Ward Warehouse. Chief Rico indicated that it was something arranged by near-by companies and fire fighters.

Assistant Fire Chief Nathan Ramos- Planning and Development. Chief Ramos gave the Commission and overview of the Fire Communication Center and mentioned recent promotions it had made. Currently the Communications Center is comprised with 27 personnel's.

Vice Chair Wong asked Chief Rico about numbers in regards to responses. Chief Rico mentioned that numbers have remained the same with medical responses being greater than fire incidents.

Chair Wataru mentioned to Chief Neves that there was no report regarding the Marco Polo incident and after hearing Mr. Lee's testimony the Commission may have some questions.

Commissioner Nekota asked about changing policy procedures for the MCC and if a public hearing is required. Chief Neves answered, "No" and mentioned that internal policies and procedures do not go to public hearing.

Commissioner Nekota asked if the Commission has any input. Chief Neves mentioned if the department decides to make any changes to its policies and procedures, it will inform the Commission.

Commissioner Nekota asked about the police report and its status. Chief Neves asked if it could be discussed in executive session.

Vice Chair Wong asked when the Marco Polo report will be ready. Chief Neves indicated within a week.

Chair Wataru asked Chief Neves who in HFD made the statement, "No violations of policies and procedures regarding the bagging of PPE's occurred." Mr. Lee noted it was HFD's spokesperson.

Vice Chair Wong asked if there was anything being done to check for asbestos at stations and equipment. Counsel Hoshino indicated that this matter can be discussed in executive session.

Commissioner Hong asked if the department would have done anything different after learning about the Marco Polo incident. Chief Neves noted that the department has been reaching out and other departments have been sending the department ideas as well as equipment that they use. The department will soon be testing some of those equipment. A post handling class on hand held hoses will be conducted to help with fighting fires.

Vice Chair Wong asked if the department has a forecast as to how much more money will it be needing for additional equipment. Chief Neves mentioned that the department is working with the City on their budget.

Chair Wataru spoke about the July 25<sup>th</sup> timeline regarding the Department of Health confirming asbestos and why the department waited 16 days. Chief Neves noted that discussion can be made in executive session as it is still under litigation.

IV. HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION RULES: Vice Chair Wong passed out drafted rules and noted that this is the Commission's rules and not the fire department's and indicated in the past, the Commission relied on its Charter for decision making.

Counsel Ishikawa noted these are draft rules that are going to be considered by the Commission and there will be a public hearing process with public input.

Counsel Ishikawa noted that any testimony will be taken into consideration and the Commission will determine what rules will be adopted.

Vice Chair Wong made a motion to move the proposed commission rules to public hearing and Commissioner Hong seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. REVIEW OF ACTION INVOLVING CONDUCT OF FIRE PERSONNEL AT FIRE SCENE FOR CONFORMANCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT POLICES.

VI. REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS AT FIRE SCENE FOR PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FIRE CHIEF.

EXECUTIVE SESSION- Commissioner Wong moved and Commissioner Nekota second that the Commission go into executive session regarding the above two matters "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 3:13 p.m. and the regular public meeting reconvened at 5:07 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The next meeting will be held on November 15, 2017, at 2:00 p.m., at the HFD auditorium.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nadine Murata, Secretary.

APPROVED:

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JAMES WATARU, Chair