

Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes
September 29, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Robert Ward called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Robert Ward, Amos Meyers, Liz Hultman-Salfen, Doug Espejo, Benjamin Watai, John Fernandez, and Billie Keawekane

Absent and excused: Kate Ahia-Doi and Myles Miyasato

A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Espejo moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Watai seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fernandez moved to approve the minutes of February 28, 2008, Commissioner Watai seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Jessie Gacula, dba Islandwide Taxi, was not present at the last two meetings and his application was deferred. Mr. Gacula has submitted a letter stating he is no longer interested in applying for a certificate.

Commissioner Ward moved to remove Mr. Gacula's application, seconded by Commissioner Fernandez. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Applications for New Certificates of Public Convenience

1. Milyn Isidro, Ermerlinda Isidro and Jonathan Isidro, dba Golden Taxi, applied for three certificates.

Motion to approved by Commissioner Hultman-Salfen, second by Commissioner Keawekane. Motion carried.

2. Hermingildo Rafol applied for one certificate. Mr. Rafol was not present and a motion was made to defer the application until Mr. Rafol can attend in person by Commissioner Espejo, second by Commissioner Meyers. Motion carried.

Commissioner Watai moved to approve the certificate, Commissioner Meyers seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

3. Leny Inocencio Tica applied for three certificates. Mr. Brown stated that two of Ms. Tica's applications are actually to transfer certificates from her mom, Fe Inocencio who currently operates CH010 & CH155, to Ms. Tica. Fe Inocencio was also present. The third certificate will be a new certificate. Commissioner Ward inquired about her experience. Ms. Tica stated she has been driving for six (6) months. Her mom and dad will still be helping her along until she feels comfortable with the business.

Commissioner Espejo moved to approve the two transfers of certificates, and approve the additional certificate. Commissioner Fernandez seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Brillhante stated to let the record show that Ms. Salfen is present and she abstained from voting on the last issue.

4. Roberto Gedaria applied for two certificates. Mr. Brown recommended that Mr. Gedaria's applications be approved. Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Gedaria if he knew what percentages of taxis are in West Hawaii. Mr. Gedaria stated he realizes there are many taxis in service but still feels the need for more taxis.

Commissioner Ward moved to approve the certificates, Commissioner Fernandez seconded, the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Hearing on Revocation of the following Certificate of Public Conveniences

1. CH026 – Marina Taxi. Mr. Brown stated that he received a letter from Mr. Melvin Oandasan asking that CH026 be revoked as he no longer wishes to operate a taxi.

Commissioner Ward moved to revoke the certificate, Commissioner Fernandez seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

2. CH324 to CH327 – Kunewa's Taxi & Tours. Gordon Kunewa was not present. For clarification, Mr. Brillhante explained that notification was sent to Mr. Kunewa but he did not acknowledge receipt of letter. Mr. Brown stated that ever since these licenses were approved back in October, 2007, Mr. Kunewa has asked for several extensions which were granted. When the deadline of the last extension Mr. Kunewa received came due, Mr. Kunewa did not have his paperwork, his licenses were placed on the February 28, 2008, agenda for revocation. Mr. Kunewa did attend that meeting and introduced a letter from Larry Pascual, the Hilo taxi meter installer, stating that Mr. Pascual had some difficulties installing the meters. The commissioners granted Mr. Kunewa, an extra 30-days to turn in his paperwork. Mr. Kunewa did not turn in his paperwork in time and requested additional

time. Mr. Brown told Mr. Kunewa that he was given many extensions and that no more would be given and his licenses will be up for revocation. Mr. Brillhante stated to the commissioners that since Mr. Kunewa was present at the last meeting and was told that he had an additional 30 days to get his paperwork turned in to Mass Transit, and he did not do so, then that would be sufficient grounds to revoke the licenses.

Commissioner Watai moved to revoke certificates CH324, 325, 326, and 327, Commissioner Ward seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

TAXI INVESTIGATIONS

The transit office uses Vic Vierra & Associates to handle taxi investigations and on occasions, Hele-On Bus investigations. Mr. Vierra turns in a monthly report to the office and on the report it would state if any violations occurred. In his report dated March, 2008, he observed a taxi on March 11, 2008, with a dome reading Jackie's Taxi with CH296 on its back bumper. CH296 belongs to Karl Kunewa of Kunewa's Taxi & Tours; Jackie's Taxi does not exist which means

1) Karl Kunewa knowingly lets Jackie's Taxi operate his vehicle; and 2) Whoever is operating Jackie's Taxi is in violation as this operator has no license to operate a taxicab. Mr. Brown stated that he has spoken with Karl Kunewa regarding this infraction and told Mr. Kunewa to remove Jackie's taxi dome from his vehicle and if he is caught with it on again, he would go before the commission and possibly be fined up to \$500.00. Mr. Brown stated he has not received any reports of a Jackie's Taxi seen in Hilo. Commissioner Ahia-Doi asked if the investigators can have more power to give citations to those taxis that are in violation. Mr. Brown stated that he is currently working with Mr. Brillhante in changing the County Code to reflect that.

TRANSIT ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Brown stated that with the cost of fuel rising, the transit office will be holding meetings with taxicab owners in Kona and in Hilo to discuss raising the meter rates. The last meter rate hike was in 2005. The last time a meter rate hike was proposed, the Kona side did not want one and the Hilo side did. Both sides compromised with a small increase. Once both sides agree to what type of increase, we will hold a transportation commission meeting to discuss the results of the meetings. After agreement, it will go before the Administration and County Council for approval.

With gas prices rising every few days, Hele-On buses ridership is increasing. More County workers are riding the buses instead of driving their cars. We have added on extra Pahoia routes, started a Keaukaha route, a Kohala/Waimea Kona route, and an Intra Waimea shuttle. We would like to add Saturday service on several routes, and add more routes to our Intra-Kona schedule. Our buses are full on the Hilo/South Kohala routes. The 4:55 bus from Hilo to South Kohala is currently contracted out to Polynesian Adventure and the 11:15 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Hilo to South Kohala buses are contracted out to Jack's Tours.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: - None

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Ward at 11:30 a.m.



Thomas Brown, Transit Administrator



Kate Ahia-Doi, Chairwoman