

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ETHICS  
COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

In the Matter of the Petition by

[REDACTED]

Petitioner.

PETITION NO. 2025-03

INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINION

Initial Review: January 28, 2025

INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINION

By Petition dated January 13, 2025, with the Hawai'i County Board of Ethics (hereinafter "the Board"), Petitioner [REDACTED] (hereinafter referred to as "Petitioner") who is employed as a [REDACTED] with the County of Hawai'i [REDACTED] requested an Informal Advisory Opinion from the Board regarding application of section 2-83, Fair Treatment, of the Hawaii County Code. Petitioner sought guidance as to whether Petitioner could attend and accept the payment of travel and accommodation expenses related to a trip to Japan facilitated and financed by HM-A, a Japan-based organization dedicated to supporting athletics and cultural exchange.

At its duly noticed meeting on January 28, 2025, in a closed hearing, the Board reviewed and considered the above-captioned Petition pursuant to Rule 4 of the *Rules and Practice and Procedure of the Board of Ethics*. Petitioner identified she is employed fulltime by the County of Hawai'i [REDACTED]. Petitioner explained the extent of her present [REDACTED] position and her duties relating to the county collaborative event, the Hawai'i International Futsal Cup. Petitioner explained that the extent of the relationship that the

Japanese organization HM-A has with the County is generally and specifically to the annual Hawai'i International Futsal Cup.

The Board, having deliberated and considered and giving appropriate weight to the testimony and evidence submitted by the Petitioner, and having considered the arguments presented, hereby renders the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

1. To the extent that any of these Findings of Fact are Conclusions of Law, they are to be so construed.

##### A. The Petition

2. Petitioner is an employee of the County of Hawai'i [REDACTED]

3. Petitioner's present duties as [REDACTED] overseeing all recreation programs, facilities and personnel on Hawai'i Island, including large-scale event management as the Hawai'i International Futsal Cup (HIFC).

4. HIFC is a collaborative event between the County of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Futsal, the WeGo! Foundation, and HM-A, a Japan-based organization dedicated to supporting athletics and cultural exchange.

5. HM-A offered for four youth athletes and two adult chaperones from the County of Hawai'i, and two event/tournament directors a trip to Japan to facilitate athletic and cultural exchange between the County of Hawai'i and Japan. HM-A would be covering flight and hotel accommodations, partial ground transportation, and meals during organized activities.

6. The youth athletes and chaperones will engage in clinics with the semi-professional Zott Waseda Futsal Club and practice sessions with youth futsal teams and a youth futsal academy in Japan. All participants would be attending the Futsal All Japan Championship tournament.

7. The two event/tournament directors will be provided the opportunity for professional development by being able to learn about the operations of large-scale futsal events, which could be utilized in growing and enhancing the operations of the HIFC tournament.

8. Petitioner would be accepting this invitation by HM-A as an event/tournament director for the County of Hawai'i [REDACTED]

9. The Board finds that the proposed trip would fulfill a public purpose and benefit the County by expanding the County's impact in a positive outlet, providing new opportunities for children of the county to engage in sports, and would broaden the County's relation and outreach with Japan as a sister city.

#### B. Board's Ruling

10. Based on the evidence and testimony presented, the Board finds that there is no Code of Ethics violation or conflict of interest for the Petitioner to attend the trip to Japan.

11. Board Member Eric Allende moved that the Board find that there is no violation of the Code of Ethics and no conflict of interest under the Hawai'i County Code of Ethics for the Petitioner's proposed trip to Japan.

12. Board Member Lisa Fukumitsu seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 in favor, 0 against.

#### CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based upon the evidence presented and the Board's review of the Hawai'i County Code of Ethics and the *Rules and Practice and Procedure of the Board of Ethics*, the Board finds and concludes that the Petitioner, in her professional capacity as [REDACTED] of the County of Hawai'i [REDACTED] can attend the aforementioned trip to Japan that will be provided for and paid in part by HM-A.

ORDER

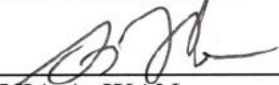
Pursuant to Board Rule 4.9, this Informal Advisory Opinion shall be filed and a copy shall be sent to the Petitioner.

Dated: Hilo, Hawai'i, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

BOARD OF ETHICS, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

By   
RACHEL SHORT  
Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGALITY:

  
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SYLVIA A. WAN  
Deputy Corporation Counsel

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