

REGULAR SESSION

Merit Appeals Board
Hilo Council Chambers
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401
Hilo, Hawai'i
October 30, 2025 (Thursday))

Call to Order (Item 1)

The regular meeting of the Merit Appeals Board, County of Hawai'i, was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Gabriella M. Cabanas, at the Hilo Council Chambers, Hawai'i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, Hilo, Hawai'i, on Thursday, October 30, 2025.

Roll Call – Present

Ms. Gabriella M. Cabanas, Chair
Ms. Suzi Bond, Vice-Chair
Mr. Gilbert J. Aguinaldo, Member
Mr. Daniel “Niel” Thomas, Member

Also Present

Mr. J Yoshimoto, Assistant Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel
Ms. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department
Ms. Dee Ann Sadayasu, Administrative Services Officer II, Human Resources Department
Ms. Tisha Narimatsu, Administrative Services Program Specialist, Human Resources Department
Ms. Leslie Kamahele, Human Resources Program Specialist, Human Resources Department
Ms. Winter Takiue, Human Resources Specialist I, Human Resources Department
Ms. Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter, Human Resources Department

Call to Order (Item 1)

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning, everyone. It is 9 a.m. on this day, October 30th, 2025. We have quorum. All four Board members are present. I am Gabriella Cabanas, Chair of the Merit Appeals Board. Along with me are my fellow Board members—to my immediate left is Ms. Suzi Bond; and to my far left is Mr. Gilbert Aguinaldo—

MR. AGUINALDO: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: —to my far right is Mr. Daniel “Niel” Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And good morning, everyone. And then, to my immediate right, is our Assistant Corporation Counsel, Mr. J Yoshimoto.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Good morning, everyone.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning. And seated in the back of our Board members is Glynis Yamada, our Secretary-Reporter.

MS. YAMADA: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning. Also with us is our Director of Human Resources, Ms. Sommer Tokihiro.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning, Sommer. And I see that you brought staff from the Administrative Services Division.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, good. Welcome, Ladies. And they are Dee Ann Sadayasu, who is the Administrative Services Officer of the Division—trying to think of all the names—Leslie—is it still “Shimabukuro” or you changed the last name to—“Kamahele”—Leslie Kamahele. We have Tisha Narimatsu and Winter Takiue. Got it right? Okay, good. Welcome, nice to see all of you.

Addendum to Agenda (Item 2)

CHR. CABANAS: Looking at the agenda, we don’t have any addendum.

Statements from the Public (Item 3)

CHR. CABANAS: No “Statements from the Public.”

Approval of Minutes (Item 4)

July 18, 2025 (Regular Session); July 18, 2025 (Closed Session - Part 1 of 2); July 18, 2025 (Closed Session – Part 2 of 2)

CHR CABANAS: We are now on approval of our meeting minutes, and we have three for July 18th. We have the regular session and then we have closed session—Part 1 of Part 2, and Part 2 of 2. So, have you all looked and read the meeting minutes? Any comments? Okay, any questions? Okay.

So, may I have a motion to approve all three for July 18th—the regular session and the closed session for Part 1 and Part 2.

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If not, I’ll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to approve the meeting minutes for July 18th, 2025.

Review of Executive Session Minutes

July 18, 2025 (Part 1 of 2); July 18, 2025 (Part 2 of 2) Executive Session: The Merit Appeals Board Anticipates Convening One Or More Executive Meetings Regarding The Above Matters, Pursuant To HRS Sections 92-4 And 92-5(A)(4), For The Purpose Of Consulting With The Board's Attorney On Questions And Issues Pertaining To The Board's Powers, Duties, Privileges, Immunities, And Liabilities. A 2/3 Vote Pursuant To HRS Section 92-4 Is Necessary To Hold An Executive Meeting

CHR. CABANAS: We are now on the review of executive session meeting minutes for July 18 and there were Part 1 and Part 2. Have you all read those meeting minutes? You have? Okay, great.

May I have a motion to approve the executive session meeting minutes for July 18, 2025?

MS. BOND: So moved.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. A second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If not, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to approve the executive session meeting minutes for July 18th, 2025.

Director’s Report (Item 5)

A. Meet and Greet Department of Human Resources Employees: Administrative Services Division

CHR. CABANAS: We are now on the “Director’s Report” and the first thing is a meet and greet staff of the Department of Human Resources, specifically, the Administrative Services Division. Sommer?

(At this time, Ms. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department, came forward.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: Okay. I’d like to call Dee up, to introduce the Administrative Services Division.

(At this time, Ms. Dee Ann Sadayasu, Administrative Services Officer II, Human Resources Department, came forward.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: They’ve been very busy, so I haven’t been able to bring the staff to meet all of you in a prior meeting. They’ve been working hard, so I’m happy to have Dee do an introduction to her division.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning, Dee Ann. Oh, just press the right button—yeah.

MS. SADAYASU: Hi.

CHR. CABANAS: Hi, good morning, Dee Ann.

MS. SADAYASU: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Nice to see you and your staff. I know it’s a busy time. I guess the word is more than busy.

MS. SADAYASU: So, I’m Dee Ann Sadayasu, I’m the Administrative Services Officer. I’ve been with the County for 30-plus years. I’ve been with Human Resources for 20 years.

I’d like to introduce my staff. So, I have Leslie Kamahale, who’s our Human Resources Program Specialist; I have Tisha Narimatsu, who’s our Administrative Services Program Specialist; and I have Winter Takiue, who’s our Human Resources Specialist I.

So, for the Administrative Services Division we oversee and coordinate the administrative and fiscal operations of the department; coordinating activity between Human Resources and the Finance Department when it comes to HR and payroll matters; we administer rules, policies,

procedures for Leave Sharing, Flexible Spending, Family Medical Leave, TDI, and other legally mandated programs.

We also work with agencies that provide benefits to employees. So, that includes the Employees Retirement System for retirement, the Hawai'i Employer Union Health Benefits Trust Fund for our health benefits, and credential for Deferred Compensation.

And then, we also audit personnel transactions—so Personnel Action Forms to ensure compliance with our civil service laws, rules, regulations, policies/procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.

We audit departments and agencies for compliance with laws, rules, policies, and procedures—provide recommendations for improvement, and then we also provide assistance to line departments and agencies in interpreting the laws, rules, regulations, and contract provisions.

CHR. CABANAS: They can come up to the dais.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, do they have a mic.? Oh, okay, go ahead. Oh, thank you.

(At this time, the following Administrative Services Division staff addressed the Board members from the dais, where they were seated: Ms. Tisha Narimatsu, Administrative Services Program Specialist; Ms. Leslie Kamahale, Human Resources Program Specialist; and Ms. Winter Takiue, Human Resources Specialist I, Human Resources Department.)

MS. NARIMATSU: Hi, I'm Tisha. I've been with the County I think about 11 years—10 of which are with HR.

MS. TAKIUE: Hi, good morning—Winter Takiue. I've been with the County since 2012 and I've been with DHR since 2023—so, almost two years come December. Thank you.

MS. KAMAHELE: Good morning, I'm Leslie. I've also been with the County since 2012—so, like, 13 years—and the entire time I've been with Human Resources—Department of Human Resources.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Lots of good historical knowledge there. I'm so grateful for all of these many years of service to the County, but in our department as well.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, having worked with all of them, I know that they're in good hands and they're in excellent hands with Dee Ann. And so, it's great that your division is fully staffed now—is it fully staffed? Not quite—almost, almost—yeah.

MS. SADAYASU: Not quite—almost.

CHR. CABANAS: Not quite. But you have an excellent employee team. So, they're—the County is in good hands.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And Dee didn't say it as part of the description of the role of Admin. Services—but, really, Admin. Services keeps the rest of us in line. So, just ensuring that all the policies and procedures are being followed, and that for every action taken there's a proper authority.

And so, Dee and her team literally have to know a little bit of absolutely everything in applying the appropriate authority, policy, procedure—and problem solving. Because a lot of the—things are—when things fall outside of the boxes that we have been trying to figure out—how to make things work to be in compliant with the rules. So, we really appreciate Dee and her team to help us ensure that we're following all those appropriate rules.

CHR. CABANAS: Very much so. They check everything—whether it is a transfer, promotion, effective date—they catch it. If a line department makes a—you can explain, Dee.

MS. SADAYASU: So, when we get our Personnel Action Forms—so you'll see, like, in the reports, right—what happens is, then we're auditing that. So, we're checking effective dates, like, Gabe mentioned—against, like, the recruitment side to make sure that it matches—making sure the compensation that all the proper procedures were followed, and that we—there's an authority for that action.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. And I know the big, big thing is the new system that you'll go live come January, is that right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes, that's correct. The HR module goes live January 1, 2026, and also at that same time, the payroll module goes live as well.

So, the CoHnect project is taking a lot of time on the part of Admin. Services because they're really doing a lot of testing to make sure that we're fully familiar with HR processes, so we can explain it to our line departments and make sure that we're encountering any defects that need to be fixed by the software developer/implementor. But it's a big project.

So, that CoHnect project actually comes out of Finance and we have one component of it, but it's really Finance software that's going to replace FRESH and covers everything from budget and payroll—and includes HR.

CHR. CABANAS: Board members, do you have any questions for Dee Ann?

MR. THOMAS: Not really a question, just an observation that the report on the vehicle equipment and property damage and so forth, looks like it's getting under control, and it has been reduced considerably since 2021.

MS. TOKIHIRO: That could be. We can discuss that when we get to the Director's Report—

CHR. CABANAS: (Inaudible.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, I'm glad to see the down trend in property damage.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MR. THOMAS: It's down under 100 after being over 200.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. I think some increased security has helped with that as well.

CHR. CABANAS: That would be under another division's report, so we can discuss it—

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: —when we get to that. On the other side of the coin, since the staff are here and we have new Board members—I just would like to have our Board members say a little something about themselves, so that you get to know what their background is. And so, Niel, do you want to start?

MR. THOMAS: Sure. Thank you. I'm—I came from a position on the Board of Appeals in the years of the Kim Administration. And then, Kimo—the new current Mayor, put me on this group and I'm happy to be here.

I moved here from Alaska about 10 years ago. I ran the Human Rights Commission up there and then got into a career of real estate before moving here in 2015. So, big difference in climate, but Hawai'i always was the Alaskan—and still is, the Alaska point where I'm at, I think.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you, Niel. Suzi?

MS. BOND: Okay. Let's see—I'm a four-family, six generation missionary descendent—my family's been here since the 1820's. I was born on Maui, raised on O'ahu, but moved here in '78 and have not left because—forget the rest of it.

I mostly have worked in the volunteer and nonprofit world. I met Gabriella when we were Band Booster parents for all those many years ago. I run an all-volunteer theatre company—the Kilauea Drama and Entertainment Network—KDEN. And I also have spent, since 2008, I've been working disaster recovery with Civil Defense—I'm the Chair of the Hawai'i County Citizen Corp. Council, which is preparedness and response and recovery. We try and be ready ahead of what's going on.

So—and Mitch got me on here because I bitched about some of the hiring practices and so he says, "Well, you should sit on the (inaudible) and then you can do something about it." That's why I'm here.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you, Suzi. Gilbert, your turn.

MR. AGUINALDO: *Aloha*, good morning My name is Gilbert Aguinaldo—born and raised here in Hawai‘i. Lived here all my life, grew up in Puna, and now I reside in Kurtistown. I’m a former graduate of Hawai‘i Community College, second time Alumni Award recipient from the Chancellor of University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. I’m a former Windward Planning Commissioner from Kim Admini—Mayor Kim Administration and I rolled over to Mayor Roth—until they found a replacement for me.

I am an owner for—been in business for 22 years. I, myself, is an employer. I own two construction company here in the State of Hawai‘i, with credentials for electrical and also for general contracting and (inaudible) work. I had the opportunity to be nominated as a Merit Boards of Appeal Commissioner—and here I am today to partake in this wonderful meeting. Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you, Gilbert. As far as myself, I’m Gabriella. I’m retired nearly seven years—come December 1st it will make seven years. And I agreed to serve on the Merit Appeals Board and so my last year will be next year—2026 my term will end.

Basically, that I worked with all of you in HR and so I’m happy to see all of you today. And I wish you well with the new system because I know what it was like with FRESH and—but with Dee Ann at the helm and a great team, I know that you folks will go through it—persevere—and solve any issues that still come up. But you have my heart because it is—it’s huge. Huge. And to have it go online with all the departments—training—continued training—it is way more than a lot. It’s huge. So, you do have my heart with that. Good luck with it and I know you will all persevere.

So, thank you for coming today and bringing the Admin. Services Division staff and its Manager, Sommer.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Thank you. I appreciate the staff’s time. And so, now you can head back and do more CoHnect testing.

MS. SADAYASU: Thank you.

ADMIN. SVCS. STAFF: Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, thank you.

B. MAB Quarterly Reports: July - September 2025 (Administrative Services Division, Classification & Pay Division, Equal Opportunity/Ada Division, Health & Safety Division, Personnel & Organizational Development Division, Recruitment & Examination Division, Workers' Compensation Division)

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so we are still with the “Director’s Report”—and we are now on MAB Quarterly Report for July through September 2025, and all the divisions have submitted their report. Let’s see—it’s the orange tab.

Have you, Board members, read through everything? This is where Niel, you had the question on the County’s vehicle equipment property damage reports.

MR. THOMAS: (Inaudible.)

MS. BOND: Microphone—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, your mic.—

MR. THOMAS: Oh, sorry.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Yes, the report is in the Administrative Services Section—and it shows that since 2022, I think, it’s been cut in half from over 200 incidents to double-digits now in the 90’s.

CHR. CABANAS: No, Its own—its own report.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, towards the back—because there’s the Admin. Services Division, Classification and Pay, the third page is Equal Opportunity/ADA, the fifth page is the equipment—vehicle equipment property damage report.

MR. THOMAS: That’s where it is—yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. So, that comes under “Health and Safety”—Sommer?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. And so, as I mentioned, of course, we’re happy to see those numbers decline. And I think, in part, it could be related to additional security that the County has contracted to, kind of, keep an eye on facilities and vehicles.

MR. THOMAS: I can see why some of these crimes would take place, but why on earth would anybody steal the calibration weights from the Hilo scale—I mean, what are they going to do with them?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No—exactly, right. Yeah—that would be curious to me as well, so I’m not sure unless someone knew how to utilize that. I’m not sure. It’s not as common as, say, someone trying to steal gas or other property from a vehicle.

MR. THOMAS: The weigh station is, I think, is where you go if you’re—if the police are after you and you drive on to the weigh station—and then you get “a weigh,” right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It’s actually the—

MR. THOMAS: It’s a bad joke.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. The scale.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, any other questions, comments for our Director? Okay.

May I have a motion to accept and file the MAB Quarterly Report for July through September 2025?

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. AGUINALDO: I second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? If not, I’ll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to accept and file the MAB Quarterly Report for July through September 2025.

C. MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report: July 2025 (Administrative Services Division, Classification & Pay Division, Equal Opportunity/Ada Division, Health & Safety Division, Labor Relations Division, Personnel & Organizational Development Division, Recruitment & Examination Division, Workers' Compensation Division)

CHR. CABANAS: We are now on the “MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report” for July 2025. Have you all had the opportunity to read through the activity report?

MR. THOMAS: Is that a white tab?

CHR. CABANAS: That is the yellow tab.

MR. THOMAS: Oh.

CHR. CABANAS: It's a general summary of their activities for the month of July—

MR. THOMAS: Got it.

CHR. CABANAS: —by division.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Sorry, that's going to be the month of October—but same concept.

CHR. CABANAS: I'm sorry? Oh, it's supposed to be October?

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Wait, let me look—oh, it does, but on the agenda it says “July.”

MS. YAMADA: I'm sorry.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, so I'm sorry—I was reading that. Okay, so—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: What do I—

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Amend the agenda.

CHR. CABANAS: I need a motion, yeah?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: So, can I have a motion to just amend the “C”—“5) C” to “MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report”—it should read “October.”

MR. THOMAS: So moved to amend the agenda in that—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, I was looking at the agenda as I read it. So, may I have a motion to amend that to “October?”

MS. BOND: So, moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If not, I’ll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to amend the “Monthly Divisional Activity Report” for the month of “October”—2000—on the agenda, as listed, for “October 2025.” The tab is correct.

Okay, any questions for Sommer on the divisional report for October?

MS. BOND: None on the divisional report, but I do have something I wanted to bring up with you.

CHR. CABANAS: Is it related to the ag—divis—

MS. BOND: No, not to the report itself. I just have—after that workshop.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, the one I was not able to attend. Okay. Can she provide a comment, ‘cause it’s not listed on the agenda.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: On the—

CHR. CABANAS: She attended the orientation on October 18th that I was not able—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible) boards and commissions.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—by the Mayor’s Office.

MS. BOND: I mean, I could (inaudible).

MR. YOSHIMOTO: That’s probably later on in the agenda, under—

CHR. CABANAS: Later—“Announcements”—

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —“Announcements.” Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay—“Announcements”—okay?

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, we’ll do it as “Announcements.” Okay. Moving on. Okay, so we are now on Communi—

MS. BOND: Oh, wait, do we need to accept this first?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes. Well, we did a vote to amend it and now it’s to accept it.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So, I do I have a motion to accept the “MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report” for “October 2025?”

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second—but I thought we voted that? I know we voted to amend the agenda, and then did we go to accept the report?

MS. YAMADA: You voted to amend the agenda to—as “October.”

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: Right.

MS. YAMADA: But you didn’t have a motion on the activity report, but you did have one on the quarterly report.

MR. THOMAS: I see. Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, okay, so—

MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so there's a motion. Is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If not, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to accept and file the MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report for October 2025.

Communication(s) (Item 6)

CHR. CABANAS: We have no "Communications."

New Business (Item 7)

CHR. CABANAS: And no "New Business."

Unfinished Business (Item 8)

A. Communication No. 25-07, From Salary Commission Chair Steven Pavao, Dated September 4, 2025, Regarding An Inquiry To The Appointing Authorities Concerning Proposed Salary Adjustments For Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Requests The Merit Appeals Board's Participation In Answering Questions Listed In Their Memorandum Concerning The Department Of Human Resources; *And* Communication No. 25-07.01, Copy Of A Memorandum From Acting Director Of Human Resources, Danny B. Patel, Dated September 26, 2023, Concerning The Salary Commission's Inquiry To The Appointing Authorities Regarding Proposed Salary Adjustments For Fiscal Year 2023-2024. (At The Request Of Chair Gabriella M. Cabanas, This Memorandum Was Distributed At The Meeting.) (Note: The Above Matter Was Discussed At The Merit Appeals Board Meeting Held On September 26, 2025. The Board

Requested The Director Of Human Resources To Address And Provide Information Concerning The Salary Commission’s Request At Their Next Meeting.); And Communication No. 25-07.02, From The Department Of Human Resources Director, Sommer J. Tokihiro, Submitting For The Board’s Review And Approval, A Proposed Draft Memo To The Salary Commission Concerning Their Inquiry To The Appointing Authorities Regarding Proposed Salary Adjustments For Fiscal Year 2025-2026

CHR. CABANAS: We are now on “Unfinished Business.” So, we have three communications that I just read. And thank you, Sommer, for submitting the draft memo for our review, which will go to the Salary Commission concerning the appointing authority’s proposed salary adjustments for fiscal year 2025 to 2026.

And, Board members, if you could please look at the tab that is blue that—

MR. THOMAS: (Inaudible)—the last tab, right?

CHR. CABANAS: The last tab. This is from Sommer. Oh, I’m sorry, it’s not the blue tab—it’s the white tab.

MR. THOMAS: The white tab is the one that has all the recommendations, right?

CHR. CABANAS: But the tabs—

MS. BOND: The white tab is your—is Gabriella’s response.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, because it’s mis-labeled because the white tab shows it’s from Danny, but the memo is what Sommer worked on.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

CHR. CABANAS: And, Sommer, I must say this is a very nice write-up.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: It’s thorough, it’s specific, it addresses issues that the department is faced with—what situations that your department is faced with. And the idea behind that was to give the Salary Commission a good idea—a thorough idea as to what’s involved, what’s happening with the department, and its work with the County departments. So, this is really a good report.

Does anyone have any questions for Sommer regarding the content of this memo? It’s still in draft. We need to approve it, so that it will go forward to the Salary Commission. They’ve already met, but they’re going to meet again on November 17.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

CHR. CABANAS: Correct—yeah, thank you.

MR. THOMAS: So, yes—I'm not sure I can lay my fingers on it, but I think somewhere in the white tab, there is a recommendation for salary modification of the Human Resources Director—and an “x” in there because she's not recommending her own salary increase.

CHR. CABANAS: No. She's just commenting and we will have to agree with it, that it should be equitable—it's her last page, “The salary for the County of Hawai'i's HR director should be equitable and maybe a little more than that of other county human resources directors within the State, when comparing the size of Hawai'i County, as well as the size of the County of Hawai'i's HR department and scope of its responsibility.”

MS. TOKIHIRO: I'll just add to that—that that paragraph was in the letter from the prior submission. So, I didn't change that paragraph at all, I left that. But, again, I wouldn't be commenting on my own salary. So, I left the Board's prior paragraph in there, but that's for you folks to edit.

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: Then, when you get to the blue tab—the final tab, then there is a specific number in there, I believe.

CHR. CABANAS: No.

MR. THOMAS: No?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, in the blue tab, it was the letter that was provided by Danny Patel at the request of the Board in 2023, but that recommendation for the salary was based on the opinion of the Board at that time.

MR. THOMAS: And it didn't say what happened to that recommendation from 2023.

CHR. CABANAS: They approved it—the Salary Commission approved it. It was a 22% increase that this Board recommended.

MR. THOMAS: It said 20% here.

CHR. CABANAS: Is it 20?

MR. THOMAS: Number 7—the previous one—the 2023.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, is it 20—okay, I may have mis-spoken. It's 20%—wait now, I need to look at this a little further. Yes, I'm sorry, I think we talked about 22% but we agreed at 20—a minimum of 20% raise for the HR Director that was back in 2023.

MR. THOMAS: And did that get approved and go in effect?

CHR. CABANAS: Did it, Sommer?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. So, in 2023, the salary adjustments that the Salary Commission agreed upon were the first salary adjustments that had occurred since 2018. And so, that's why the percentages in the 2023 Salary Commission Findings of Fact were larger because there hadn't been any adjustment to salaries for five years.

MR. THOMAS: They were playing catch-up.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, they were.

MR. THOMAS: Just a procedural question—is this a conversation that we typically have in open session?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I will just note, too, that it was a little confusing for me the way the last memo was submitted because the last memo to the Salary Commission, actually, looks like it came from the Department of Human Resources. So, in talking with Glynis I felt it more appropriate that this is actually the Board's memo to the Salary Commission, so we changed that presentation.

So, my intent was to provide the background detail about the operations of the department, but it really is up to the Board as far as the recommendation.

CHR. CABANAS: That is correct.

MR. THOMAS: I think we asked her to draft it for us—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, we did.

MR. THOMAS: —with the understanding that it's our memo.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, we did. And because the letter from the Salary Commission was specifically addressed to me as the Chair, that's why I asked if you could prepare it for our review.

MR. THOMAS: And I think the minutes from the last meeting, when they're published, will reflect that request.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes. Going back to the content of the draft of the memo—Communication number 25-07.02—there were just two things that I just wanted to bring to everyone's attention.

On Page 2 of 2, Number (2)—I think it's just a little typo. there. The second sentence, where it says "Professional"—I think that should be a lower case "p."

MS. BOND: So, you're actually in the white tab still?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Back in the white tab.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Should be a lower case "p," right? Yeah?

And then, and just for clarification because I don't want any—how should I word it—negative interpretation—I'm just going to ask you, Sommer, on page—

MS. YAMADA: I mis-numbered the pages, they're all "Page 2 of 2."

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so let's re-number it. So, Page 1; "Page 2 of 2"; "Page 3 of..."—

MS. BOND: No, but should be "Page 3 of..."—

CHR. CABANAS: Page 3—I don't know what the total is. So, page 3, page 4, page 5, page 6—I didn't catch that either—page 6—page 7 is where I want to stop for a minute, page 7 talks about recruitment. It's under Number 5—yeah, Number 5, major challenges—and then it lists each division—page 5 is on page 6—"What major challenges does the department/agency face?"—and she broke it down really well what each division faces.

So, on page 7, she focuses on "Health and Safety"—Number 2; "Collective Bargaining"—Number 3; and then "Recruitment," Number 4. Okay, under "Recruitment" the second paragraph, it talks about "Today's workforce prioritizes flexibility, work-life balance, and growth opportunities. The pace of government processes and policy implementation often cannot keep up with these evolving expectations, creating a competitive disadvantage in hiring. At the same time"—and it's this part now—"At the same time, economic conditions and political priorities"—that's what I highlighted.

What do you mean by "political priorities" because I don't want that—I don't think we should, as a group, that could be subject to some sort of negative—

MS. BOND: Well, doesn't that refer to, like, the changes in Administrations?

CHR. CABANAS: Then why don't we say that—instead of “political priorities.”

MS. TOKIHIRO: And it's more of a global, broad statement as far as things that can affect the workforce—not—nothing specific. But I can, definitely, see where there might be a concern and so re-wording of that is absolutely at the Board's—

CHR. CABANAS: I'm just—it's not critical of you and what you've done, 'cause this is an outstanding report. It's the word “political” that, kind of, caught my eye.

MS. BOND: Yeah, 'cause “political” is so “political” these days.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, it is—and then I don't want the others to think that “Oh, is HR doing something”—you're not doing that. So, I don't want that to be open to that kind of interpretation.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, understood. 'Cause there's no political influences as far as—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So, “political influences” may affect the workforce in general but it's not affecting our work in HR.

CHR. CABANAS: Unless you take out “political” and just leave “priorities?” Or—

MR. THOMAS: Administrative?

MS. BOND: That's the easiest way to do it.

CHR. CABANAS: You could say “administrative.”

MS. BOND: Then you don't have to—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. BOND: If you don't qualify it.

CHR. CABANAS: Or but then I don't—I don't know. I don't feel we should single out the Administration either.

MS. BOND: “At the same time, economic conditions and priorities shift frequently”—if you just take out the word “political” and leave it with “priorities”—‘cause things do shift—everything shifts, right? The only thing guaranteed—

CHR. CABANAS: I don’t want it to sound like it’s them—do you know what I mean? Do priorities change frequently?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I think in the workforce, in general—yes. I mean, I think that that’s—priorities do shift based on peoples’ needs for—

CHR. CABANAS: ‘Cause if that’s the case, we could say “workforce priorities.”

MS. TOKIHIRO: Does it need a qualifier in front of it?

MS. BOND: Does it need a qualifier?

CHR. CABANAS: No, it doesn’t. It doesn’t.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I’ll leave that to the Board.

CHR. CABANAS: It’s just that, if you get questioned, how would you answer that? Or if any of us are questioned, how will we answer that—that’s where I’m coming from. We need to know what that means.

MS. BOND: What—that “priorities shift.” I mean, it’s—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, because—

MS. BOND: In my world, it depends on what fire is burning the brightest that day and it gets taken—that gets dealt with. So, priorities do shift. Today the administrative staff is doing testing for their new thing, yesterday they were probably checking the numbers for payroll or something. I mean, it’s like, their priorities shift day-to-day depending on what’s going on.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And then, in a general workforce, at one time, the stability of having—or at certain times, like, when we faced difficult economic times we see more priorities or people that want a stable job and are more actively seeking work with the County, whereas, recently, with economic conditions changing—people have not been as interested in government employment as they were at other times—as they, kind of, have ventured out and started their own small businesses, and gotten into social media advertising, and have prioritized more of the flexibility or work-from-home arrangements or things of that nature.

So, I think that we have seen more of the shift in the change in priorities in the general workforce—and these things like work-life balance and things of that nature, so I’ll leave it to the Board—that’s how I would explain it is that it’s changing priorities in the general workforce and their interest in coming to work for the County.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: I'm not as troubled by the word "political" as some might be or would be possible to be. It seems like national politics do filter down to how things happen at the local level, and we're certainly seeing shifts in national priorities that affect the public employee workforce.

That's not to say that any of this is good or bad—that's a matter of one's individual political view of the forces influencing how things are done locally.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, let's—

MS. BOND: I think the word "politics" in general these days is a word to avoid.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, I would agree with that.

MS. BOND: It's just—it's like—what do you call that—igniter of issues.

CHR. CABANAS: Well, can we take about a five or 10-minute recess and think it over. And then, we will continue this conversation in 10-minutes. Is that okay with everyone? Okay, so it's 9:45—so 9:55 we will resume. Okay, let's take a little recess. Thank you.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess at 9:45 a.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened at 9:57 a.m. in open session.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, we are now back in open session from our recess, and looking at the memo that Sommer drafted, there are nine pages. So—

MS. BOND: "Page 7 of 9."

CHR. CABANAS: Yes. So, we are now "Page 7 of 9" pages. Okay, so, going back to that sentence, "at the same time, economic conditions and political priorities shift frequently"—could we re-word it, Sommer, to say, "At the same time, changing economic conditions and priorities shift"—no—"changing economic conditions and priorities further affect workforce stability and labor availability"—would be okay?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, that sounds good.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. "At the same time, changing"—add "changing"—"economic conditions and priorities further affect workforce stability and labor availability"—Glynis, you can have my copy. Okay.

Oh, I'll read it again. "At the same time,"—add "changing"—"economic conditions and priorities further affect workforce stability and labor availability. The result is a challenging environment for recruiting and retaining qualified public servants."

MR. THOMAS: So, the word "frequently," is also—

CHR. CABANAS: I deleted—delete "political"—delete "shift frequently"—and instead of "affecting"—change it to "affect". Everything else is good. It's just that we don't want individuals to poke at the wording, especially how things sometimes develop.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Understood.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—or interpret. Okay.

The next paragraph, "HR"—okay, so this is the second in the—the second thing I was focused on, "HR has changed its recruitment efforts to a more active strategy." Okay. "This results in overtime for staff,"—and then we have the figures of the overtime on the next page.

Please forgive me for asking, but under previous directors depart—under previous—and Dee Ann can attest to that—under previous directors, staff were told to go flex time or change their hours. So, if they had to work overtime—let's say till 8 at night because the department didn't have enough overtime money—change your hours. So if you were going to work till 8 at night, come in later. Has the department looked at that as an option?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. So, that's always what we try and look to first, and I'll just say that the bulk of the overtime in the Department of Human Resources is going to our Admin. Services Division. It is not going to the Recruitment Division.

So, they do things after hours and on weekends and attending career fairs but it's—their overtime is minimal as opposed to what the department's overtime expenses.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, because this paragraph says "its changed its recruitment efforts"—and "This results in overtime for staff"—so, the manager would budget overtime for staff, especially if there's written exams, right, late at night or—does that still occur?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It does not. So, we're able to schedule written exams because we're only administering written exams for police and fire promotionals, so that happens during the workday.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so is that—because it looks like the overtime is for Recruitment with the verbiage in Number 6, the first paragraph of Number 6—when, actually, you're saying that it's for testing of the new system?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Well, the overtime is for the department as a whole.

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So, I'm just clarifying that the majority of the overtime expenses have been related to the CoHnect project.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, if that's—if you find that confusing, the last paragraph under Number 4, could be removed if it causes more questions than answers. You could actually add the—"HR has changed its recruitment efforts to a more active strategy"—you could make that the last sentence of the prior paragraph, and then not get into the rest of it.

CHR. CABANAS: That is okay. It's the—"This results in overtime for staff"—do we need that then?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No. I don't—

CHR. CABANAS: Could we just say that—

MS. TOKIHIRO: I think that that sentence could be removed.

CHR. CABANAS: I mean, the sentence, in itself, is okay. It's the "overtime for staff" because if you look at the next item, the next page, it makes it sound—'cause it says, "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts identified in response to Question number 5"—but Question number 5 is quite a bit of the divisions, but it sounds like it's Recruitment.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, I can understand where you would draw that conclusion, since—

CHR. CABANAS: (Inaudible) add wording in Number 6, "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts identified for the various divisions identified in number 5 above"—something like that. Because, yes, they have been participating more on the weekends at different career fairs, so I know you want to state that they've been more active—yeah, I get it. They've been more active going to more career fairs, but that dollar amount for overtime is not only Recruitment—it's Number 1, 2, 3, 4—listed in Number 5.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It might be—

CHR. CABANAS: Actually, if you—I don't want to tell you what to do but—and when I read this, if the Admin. Services staff are working hours and hours, which I'm pretty sure they're doing as you said—that should be reflected. They need to know that—hey, they're putting heart and soul in getting this HR module up to go live January 1st, 2026—and this is going to be public record, right, J?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: So, anybody looking at it, they'll see, "Wow, Admin. Services, they're putting their heart and soul in this in working a lot of hours"—and you describe it well in Number "5.1" on page 6.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I guess that's where I'm—I guess my recommendation would be to remove the statement about overtime from Number 4, under Number 5—since it's not really addressed for any of the divisions, except Recruitment. So, I would leave the sentence, "HR has changed its recruitment efforts to a more active strategy"—and make that the last sentence in Paragraph 2, under Number 4—and then, I would remove the sentence about overtime.

And then, in Number 6, as you recommended, at the end of the first sentence, maybe that could clarify the challenges of all of the divisions because there have also been overtime expenses for our Classification and Pay Division as well. And so, I think to keep it general without having to go back and edit every section and call out those divisions that are specifically working overtime—I think if you clarify in the first paragraph of Number 6 and keep the response to Number 5 broad without calling out the overtime specific to Recruitment.

MR. THOMAS: Is there a Paragraph 5? Maybe I wrote on top of it.

CHR. CABANAS: No, there's a Number 5.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, I see what you're doing.

CHR. CABANAS: Number 5 on page 6—Number 5 has 1, 2, 3, and 4.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: So—

MR. THOMAS: Oh, I see it. Yes, okay.

CHR. CABANAS: —the last sentence in Number 4, would be, "HR has changed its recruitment efforts to a more active strategy"—and that goes up above to the above paragraph. And then, we're going to delete the rest. Yeah, so we're deleting the—this sentence, "this results in overtime for staff..." da, da, da, da, da—delete that, that's what Sommer has proposed.

And then going on to the next page, page 8, Number 6—the first paragraph, she's identifying the numbers of overtime. So, this amount wasn't budgeted, right, 'cause this is large numbers.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It was budgeted.

CHR. CABANAS: It was.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It was budgeted with the understanding that there was going to be more time spent with the CoHnect project.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so that's good. The 130,000 was also budgeted?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay, great. Okay. So that means that they worked out their plan estimating how much time was going to be involved and overtime, so they had the dollar amount in the budget. Okay, so that's good.

So, can we just maybe modify the last sentence in the first paragraph? "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts identified in response to question number 5 above"—or should we just leave it like that?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I just added a couple of more words. I don't know if the Board would want to amend the sentence as follows, so I have, "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts identified for all divisions of HR as documented in the response to question number 5 above."

CHR. CABANAS: —"...for all divisions of HR..."—

MS. TOKIHIRO: "...as documented in the response to question number 5 above."

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, very good. "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts identified for all divisions of HR as documented in the response to question number 5 above." Is everyone okay with that?

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Any suggestions?

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: We can—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: I mean, we could say "...for all HR divisions."

MS. BOND: Sorry, thank you. I would put that "...for all divisions of HR"—"This significant increase for all divisions of HR reflects the challenges and efforts identified in the response to the questions..."—it's a syntax thing. It's more than—you know what I'm saying?

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I would just clarify, though, that not all divisions are earning overtime.

CHR. CABANAS: Not all.

MS. BOND: For some divisions?

CHR. CABANAS: Why don't we just say "...for those..."—

MS. BOND: "...for many divisions..."

CHR. CABANAS: —"...for the HR divisions identified in question number 5 above."

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: "...for the HR divisions identified in question number 5 above."

MS. BOND: "...for HR divisions..."—yeah. Okay. Okay, so "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts for..."—

CHR. CABANAS: "...for the divisions identified..."

MS. BOND: "...for HR divisions..."

CHR. CABANAS: "...identified in question number 5 above."

MS. TOKIHIRO: I think we're going to need one more reading of that.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, one more reading is fine.

MS. BOND: And one more time for those new studio audience.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts of HR divisions identified in response to question number 5 above"—is that correct? That work for everybody? (Inaudible.) I did mine in pencil, it's all scribbled up—for HR divisions. Does that work for everybody? Sorry, the grammar in me just couldn't go there.

CHR. CABANAS: "The significant increase reflects the challenges and efforts for the HR divisions identified in question number 5 above."

MS. BOND: "...in response to question number 5." Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Period. And it's—then it's okay.

MS. BOND: End of sentence.

CHR. CABANAS: Is that okay, Sommer, with you?

MS. TOKIHIRO: That's fine with me.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, great. Everyone, Board members?

SPEAKER: Agreed.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. And then—okay, so there are nine pages, so we're going to change it to "Page 1 of 9"—well, Page 1—"Page 2 of 9," "Page 3 of 9," "Page 4 of 9," "Page 5 of 9," "6 of 9," "7 of 9," "8 of 9," "9 of 9."

And then, the initials will be instead of Sommer, it would be mine "GMC:"—and then Glynis "gy."

MS. BOND: Who's number is that? Whose phone number is that?

CHR. CABANAS: This is the main office. Okay, now, this is coming from me as the Chair—so, from the Board, actually. Is it okay—they're going to meet November 17th—do I need to go to that meeting?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: It's up to you, Madam Chair.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Okay, we'll see. The last thing is Number 7 on page 8, "On October 30, 2025, the Merit Appeals Board voted to recommend..."—and this is our recommendation—"...for the HR director."

Now, before we even do that, the Salary Commission also listed a progression of increases by year—and where is that?

MS. BOND: It's in the one just before—at the back.

CHR. CABANAS: Behind the red.

MS. BOND: Yeah, at the back, the very last three pages.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay. So, it shows—do you have this—it's Exhibits A—oh, it's all "Exhibit A". So, it's under the red tab. It—this is the memo that was sent to a number of the boards from the Salary Commission. So, in their Exhibit A, they've already, kind of, worked on like a three-and-a-half percent increase effective January 1, 2026.

I'm not sure how they arrived at this other than three-and-a-half percent. Do you, Sommer?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, that was the—through collective bargaining with HGEA, those were the amounts. It's a little different. So, for HGEA employees we have some units that continue to receive step movements, we have other units that suspended step movements—so in the negotiation process we, basically, went to the units and said, “This is the proposal” and it broke out 3.5, 3.79, 4, 4—but the way each of the units is receiving that, is a little bit different, but the total increase is those percentages.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So, there's an increase January 1, 2026; then another increase, 3.79% July 1st, 2026—so two that year; and then another—then a 4% on July 1st, 2027; and then 4% increase on July 1st, 2028.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And the January increase was because there was no adjustment as of July 1, whereas the collective bargaining unit contracts were effective July 1, 2025. So, in the Salary Commission's discussion, their intent with giving the 3.5% January 1 was just to catch-up the executive salaries to the salaries that had already been adjusted July 1 through collective bargaining.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so that the total comes out over, like, a four-year span, close to what—15%. The thing with this is—your highest paid manager salary, does that person come close to the director or deputy salary?

MS. TOKIHIRO: The salary, the base salary—no. But our managers and all staff are able to earn overtime, which the director and deputy are not. So, there can be instances where there would be a subordinate position in the department that would earn more than the director or deputy with overtime taken into account.

So, there's no inversion as far as the base salary, but their ability to earn overtime can make their compensation more.

MR. THOMAS: I'm sure they can't—the Salary Commission can't really predict the future—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: —but how much confidence should we and the public have in the belief that the cost of living will be at or below the total of just over 15% in four years?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I couldn't answer that.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. Their discussion, the Salary Commission's discussion was based on making sure that department heads and deputies received at least the same increases as what occurred through the collective bargaining process.

I believe they are possibly going to have additional discussion on looking at salaries for individual departments and discuss those in more detail.

MS. BOND: You guys aren't union?

CHR. CABANAS: No.

MS. TOKIHIRO: No.

MS. BOND: Okay, just (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: No, they're not.

MS. BOND: Just checking in.

MS. TOKIHIRO: We're appointed—directors and deputy directors are appointed.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.) Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Maybe the question I should ask is whether there is a procedure of the Salary Commission to review this or are they locked into this formula for the next four years? I suppose the cost of living goes up 5% a year for the next two years—and now they're saying, "Whoa, that leaves us not much breathing room for the next two years and we want to go back and review those last two years of increases."

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, I'll defer to J, but I believe that the Salary Commission Rules allow for them to make adjustments as they see fit—as is appropriate. The Salary Commission currently has six members, so they do have quorum, but I believe that there are some members terming out, which was also a concern for them because there had been an issue between 2018 and 2023 where the Commission didn't have quorum—and so, they weren't able to make adjustments.

And so, that was also part of the discussion related to wanting to, kind of, lay out what would happen for the next few years, so that at least there was a start on it in the event that there becomes an issue with having quorum in that Commission.

MR. THOMAS: So, that is what explains the 20% increase—it finally happened when they were ready to play catch-up ball, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: And that—how long were they without a quorum and unable to make any adjustments at all?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I couldn't say exactly, but I believe it was several years.

MR. THOMAS: They missed four years maybe or five—who knows?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I'm not sure, but it was several years.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Well, the thing with this is do you have—or can you obtain the salaries of the directors on the other islands? Do you have that available? Like, what does the director of DHRD receive, the Maui director, the Kaua'i director.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, the Salary Commission was provided with a copy of the salary study that Maui County commissioned last—early last year. I believe that the findings were from March. And so, the Salary Commission was looking at that report for comparisons. I believe the information about the salaries of the other directors—and I think it even looks at nationwide salaries—is in that report.

CHR. CABANAS: Is that something that's available for us to look at?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I believe I can provide the Board with a copy of that salary study.

CHR. CABANAS: 'Cause that would help to see what the other directors are receiving. I mean, the responsibilities are basically the same throughout the State. It's basically the same. Each island has its unique—

MR. AGUINALDO: Challenges, yeah?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. They have their own—they have their unique situations but, basically, the merit system principle is across-the-board throughout the State of Hawai'i. So, our island—the size of it is challenging because we have employees spread out throughout our island.

What concerns me is that seeing your managers may come close to your base salary and with overtime, they'll exceed that, but you could control the overtime so that they don't. However, if it's a big, big, huge project like with the CoHnect project, then that might happen. I don't know how close that person would come to your base salary, but we never want to see subordinates making more than an appointing authority.

MR. AGUINALDO: I agree.

CHR. CABANAS: So, Glynis is going to get a copy of that Maui study so we can look at it. And I think that would help us in providing a recommendation because, right now, when you tally up this HGEA pay increases, it comes out to, like, 15% for four years—for you and—huh?

MR. THOMAS: Fifteen point three, actually.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—for you and the deputy. So, our recommendation in 2023 was the minimum of 20%. But I feel more comfortable—I don't want to just—I don't think we should just say, "Oh, a minimum of 20"—when we don't have more data to look at and compare with the other directors are receiving. Is Maui County paying more than the Hawai'i County director? So, maybe we should pause and wait for Glynis bringing the Maui study report to us.

MR. THOMAS: We should remember that the year that had the 20% increase reflected catching-up—

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: —but not doing anything and we don't know whether that was for four years, five years, or some other number of years. So, if it was for five years, that would be 4% a year which is not inconsistent with what's here. If it was for four years—well, that's—if it was only for three—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. They didn't meet for a number of years.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Because—

MR. AGUINALDO: So, like 3.8% for four years.

MR. THOMAS: Just so I understand what we are being asked—for we're being asked for input to a decision process that the Salary Commission has the legal authority to actually implement.

CHR. CABANAS: That's correct.

MR. THOMAS: They don't have any obligation to take what we say with more than a grain of salt.

CHR. CABANAS: No. But our recommendation should be a solid one in terms of data that we can rely on and that, hopefully, will help them make a proper decision on what salaries the director and deputy should receive.

MR. THOMAS: And how many agencies have been invited to make this input?

CHR. CABANAS: Everyone has been.

MS. BOND: There's a—at the beginning of one of them, there's—

MR. THOMAS: There's—at the beginning one of these I was looking for.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, it's to the Mayor, it's to the Chair of the County Council, it's the Prosecutor—

MS. BOND: The list is on page 2—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, it's to everybody—and all the boards and commissions.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, here it is.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, my goodness—big, long list.

CHR. CABANAS: It's everybody.

MR. THOMAS: So, we're just one of maybe 30 or 40.

MS. BOND: We're just a spit in the bucket.

CHR. CABANAS: But it's important—so let's pause for a little bit and wait for the report from Glynis. Okay, so let's pause. It's recess at 10:30 a.m.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess at 10:30 a.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened at 10:40 a.m. in open session.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you for—thank you, Glynis. And thank you, Sommer, for mentioning that Maui County has done a study—classification and compensation study. The report is a draft report, March 3rd, 2025—and the Salary Commission received this as Communication number 25-01, dated August 28th, 2025.

So, let's be mindful that the Salary Commission has requested our input as to the proposed salary for the Director of Human Resources and the Deputy Director of Human Resources. So, our recommendation, in my opinion, should be a general one. We don't—we shouldn't be giving them a specific dollar amount because that's their job—the Salary Commission's job.

When we added up the percentages that the Salary Commission has outlined using the HGEA salary increases, it comes out to—what did you say, Niel—15.3%—

MR. THOMAS: Yeah, right (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: —over a four-year period. Our recommendation in 2023 was to catch-up with the pay—with the salaries—and our recommendation was a minimum of 20% back in 2023.

We don't want to ever always being catch-up with department head salaries and their deputies because it doesn't help with recruiting department heads and deputies, if the salaries are not competitive. We want qualified—I would think—individuals to spearhead the departments, and when you pay a competitive salary, it's to get quality talent to spearhead—to head a department, to be a department head, to be a deputy.

MR. THOMAS: How many years were we without any pay increases and that led to the 20%—was that five years?

CHR. CABANAS: It could have been at least four years—four to five years I'm thinking. Glynis is going to give a accurate answer.

MR. THOMAS: If it was five years, then it would be—

MS. YAMADA: The last—the salary increase was in 2018; then the next salary increase was in 2023.

MR. THOMAS: So, there was no increase in 2018?

MS. YAMADA: In 2018 there was a salary increase, but not until the next one—until 2023.

MR. THOMAS: So, '19, '20, '21, and '22 was—

CHR. CABANAS: That's like a five-year—

MR. THOMAS: Four—'cause she said there was an increase in 2018. So, there was no increase in '19, no increase in '20, no increase in '21, and then there was an increase in '22—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, so four-year lapse.

SPEAKER: Twenty-three.

MR. THOMAS: Twenty-three—okay.

CHR. CABANAS: So, four-year lapse.

MR. THOMAS: So, a four-year lapse.

CHR. CABANAS: And that was a catch-up,

MR. THOMAS: Which would have been 5% per year.

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: And now we're looking at the possibility of a increase that would be a little over 15%. So, we're lagging here in comparison with the the 2023 increase and, perhaps, those numbers should be reported to the Salary Commission, and our opportunity is either to accompany that—those facts with a recommendation or just say, "Here's what you should know."

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so there's no increase for 2024, there's no increase for 2025, and then their proposal is a 3.5 increase January 1, 2026; and then another one, July of that year. So, it's like a catch-up—is that correct—

MR. THOMAS: So, in the downstream years—four months as the case may be, they're playing catch-up, and not doing it all at once.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, was in 2024—oh, there was an increase in 2024. Okay, so none for 2025.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MR. THOMAS: Maybe what we can do, which is something short of making a specific percentage recommendation is to simply ask the Salary Commission to take the amount of increase that was granted in 2023 as a catch-up percentage per year, and compare it with what their recommendations are coming up—because their recommendations are an annual increases, they're six-month increases.

So, it's a tricky calculation—it's a six-month increase of 3.7%, there's an immediate increase of 3.5%, there's a 3.8% increase six months later—then a whole years goes by and they've got a 4% recommendation, and another six months go by—no, another year goes by—and they have another 4%. So, it's a bit muddy. They have the expertise on all of this. What we don't want or we might not want to see them do, is come out with a recommendation over the course of the next couple of years that's either dramatically higher or lower than 2023 without a clear reason that's—they feel comfortable in defending, so to speak.

It seems like the rate of increase that happened in the years—four years leading up to the 2023 increase should be the same as—the same rate of increase that starts with January of next year and extends through four increases—the last of which is July of '28.

We don't want—we could say that we don't want to see them slowing down and to the extent that they would speed up the rate of increases, they would want to say why they believe that's necessary.

CHR. CABANAS: It's to—it's necessary to recruit and retain qualified leader-type applicants for the department head and deputy positions—and I would go further to state that it should be

progressive. It shouldn't be reactive but proactive, and that we recommend a minimum of 20%, because, right now, their proposal is 15.3%, which—to me as—

MS. BOND: That's over what—four years?

CHR. CABANAS: —over a four-year period—minimum. So, it would be like 5% instead of 3.5, 3.7, 4%, 4%—just make it 5% every year for a minimum of 20. They can figure out the dollar amounts—and, if employees, managers are working a lot of overtime, it gives a little bit more of a cushion between them and the director.

MR. THOMAS: I'm with you on the principles and the merits of this. I'm not sure that we have the facts right because while there's four increases here, one of them happens at a six-month interval.

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MR. THOMAS: So, the first increase is at the beginning of '26.

CHR. CABANAS: And the reason why—

MS. BOND: To play devil's advocate here—

MR. THOMAS: The last of the four increases is the summer of '28.

CHR. CABANAS: Right, it's every new fiscal year. But the reason why I think it's two increases in the year 2026 is they're catching up because in 2025, they didn't have an increase—they had it in 2024.

So, it's like a catch-up. You have two in 2026, one for 2025, one for 2026, and then the next one is July 1st, 2027; and then, again, July 1st, 2028.

MS. BOND: Okay. It's all well and good to be saying that we should keep increase, increase, increase—and this is how it should go. But you got to look back at what their budgets that they're dealing with and the income that they have to (inaudible). They can't just pay salaries because we think it should go up when there's not the money to do it—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MS. BOND: —and the tax paying money is not going to go up these days.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, that's important, but you have to remember that the employees in the HGEA units got—are getting an increase because it was negotiated between management and the union.

And so, therefore, the department heads need—salary needs to be addressed because these employees now—especially the managers and other employees, they’re increasing in salaries and you’re going to keep the department heads salary like that? They’re the ones that make the important decisions—

MS. BOND: I’m not saying that but I—you could—we can put in a recommendation that says that we recommend that there’s a 20% increase—

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MS. BOND: —but I think that it’s—actually, this is not our wheelhouse.

CHR. CABANAS: But they’re asking for input and we need to give input. We need to support the director and the deputy. If we don’t give the input, they can come up with anything they want to and these two positions will not get what we feel is deserving. We see what they go through. They go through a lot.

MR. AGUINALDO: They’re just like non-union, right?

CHR. CABANAS: I don’t know. That’s just my take on it. I know what you’re saying that, yes, this is taxpayer money. I got it. But they’re the ones that have to make the important decisions for the department. They’re the ones that have to talk to other department heads when, “Hey, you’re not doing something right, you’re…”—she got to tell them, “Hey, you have to follow the civil service rule. You have to follow HRS”—they’re the ones that do it.

So, their compensation has to be appropriate—that’s the problem with some of the other positions, they don’t get—they don’t pay them adequately. They don’t—they’re not able to find a licensed engineer to head Public Works—that’s the problem. So, anyway, I’ll leave it at that.

MS. BOND: So, then, what we’re looking at is a recommendation of no less than a 20% over five-year increase—no, over a four-year increase.

CHR. CABANAS: We can, if the Board agrees to that. It was just a suggestion. I feel that, from an HR standpoint, why are we always—not “we”—but why be reactive? Be proactive so you get the quality talent. Otherwise, people don’t want the job. It’s a job of a lot of headaches and a lot of frustration among other things. There’s good times, but there’s also issues and a lot of challenges.

MS. BOND: That can be said of any position in any job.

CHR. CABANAS: Any job, but more so these jobs because they have to deal with the public, they have to deal with the Council, they have to—they’re the ones that have to be there to answer any complaint, any appeal—they’re the appointing authorities.

MS. BOND: And so, bottom line, is we're—we are making a recommendation that they—that there be no less than a 20% increase over a four-year span. Is that correct?

CHR. CABANAS: That was my thoughts. But it's open, on the floor, for discussion—what do the other Board members suggest? What do you suggest? What does Gilbert and Niel suggest? It's not only me. It has to be a Board motion, and a second, and then we vote. But this is—we're just discussing it right now.

MR. THOMAS: Well, let me put my two cents worth in here, and say that I think the Salary Commission hasn't really made a good case for these percentage increases. And the reason I say that is the 2023, 20% increase appears to have been based on four-years. Let's suppose that was really the case. If it was, the math is pretty simple—it was 5% a year.

But it isn't really—when you look at the time value of money. There's the principal—the money now is worth more than money later. If, really, the public employees went four years with no increases at all and then they gave 20%—that's worth less than giving 5% a year because for the first three years you get to spend the 5% extra that came into your bank account. I don't see any analysis from the Salary Commission that makes this point.

Then the Salary Commission comes up with a proposal that we're asked to react to, which is not for four years, it's for three years—the first increase is January 1, of '26; the last increase is July 1, of '28—so it's increases that happened for the years '26, '27, and '28. You see, there's a six-month one mixed in there—there's a July 1, of '26, mixed in there.

So, how does that rate of increase compare with the effective rate of increase that happen in 2023, and has there been any adjustment made for the loss of the time value of money that occurred in 2023 when the amount of increase spread over four-years—was actually spread over four years. So it wasn't really 20% over four years. It was something less than that and somebody—the Salary Commission presument we could do a calculation and point that out and then equate it to what they're proposing to come up with for the next three years.

I don't think these are calculations that we should do here and anything we pick out of the air as a percentage, is hard to jutify because we don't have the facts, we don't have the financial calculations—it's really not our *kuleana* to come up with specific numbers, but I do think we can ask the Salary Commission to make a good case for whatever they propose and to make that case, I thnk they should do it based on the 2023 increase, the loss of the time value of money, and what they're now proposing to come up with in the future.

So, I guess I'm saying the Salary Commission could make a more complete and understandable case for all of us who are being asked to make input.

Sorry, that's a lot of words but I think it captures the difference between picking a number that may come across as being uninformed, as opposed to asking the Salary Commision to make a more clear case to everybody—and that's all.

MR. AGUINALDO: So, we're making just one recommendation and the Salary Commission either can run with it, change it, go up, go down, stay with it. I guess, it's just a recommendation and I feel that our recommendation that we present, it will be in their thoughts, I guess. And it's for them to decide the budget but—however that, it's going to like—'cause we don't know. It's going to be on them.

And, yeah, I think, we just got to just have a fine-line of giving a recommendation versus nothing—then later on, "Oh, we should have."

MS. BOND: But—so the question.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: What is—what do you think we should recommend?

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So, being mindful that they sent this memo out in September from the Salary Commission to everyone, and they said that the objective of this exercise is to secure the best available information in determining whether future salary adjustments should be incorporated into the County's budget. They may represent increases, decreases, or status quo.

And they wanted us to answer the questions which we did—with Sommer's help. She did a really good job in presenting what the department is going through with the various challenges, especially—that's why I felt it was important that she be specific, which she was—so that they can see, "Hey, this is what HR director and deputy has to face, they're working on that big CoHnect project"—okay—Classification and Pay, Recruitment—and what was the other one, there was a fourth one—Health and Safety, I believe.

And so, that—they'll take that into consideration, I hope, and our—it's just our recommendation. They can do whatever they want with it. And, in addition, the other boards and the mayor, and the council—they're going to provide their input. So, the mayor may say, "Hey, status quo"; Liquor Commission may say, "Well, they want an increase"; Police Commission may say "They want an increase." So, the Salary Commission will take all of that into effect.

MR. THOMAS: One thing, the Salary Commission doesn't do—because it's not their *kuleana* is to consider the availability of money to implement whatever increases they do. That's the job of the mayor to pull everything together, make a recommendation to the county council, and the county council's the ultimate decision-maker.

CHR. CABANAS: That's correct. It becomes a balancing act in asking for something, being able to afford it is another thing, and then making a decision as to what the actual increases will be.

And the general public will look at it and say, "Oh, what—more increases for these positions?" But they don't realize that in order to attract the quality talent, you have to pay them at an industry standard, otherwise, you won't get quality applicants and that affects the department.

So, it's a balancing act like anything else, but let's give what we feel is a reasonable input. If you don't feel comfortable with the 20%—that's fine. Pick something else. If you—it adds up to 15.3 you could—we could say, "Keep it at 15%" or "16%"—but we need to give them some idea as to what we feel is adequate and appropriate.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: It makes it really hard because we—you're right, we don't have the data. If we had all of this and other information, it would be—we would feel more comfortable, I think—but we don't have it. The thing is that's their job. The Salary Commission—that's their job to decipher all the figures, comparative data, and come up with something appropriate for the department heads and deputies, and other positions that are listed.

MR. THOMAS: And I'm mindful of what you say about the need for the salary scale, whatever it is in any point in time. In a competitive world where we need to attract good people when openings exist.

CHR. CABANAS: Now, the thing with this is—and this is just me now looking at this—this salary that they have listed here from the Salary Commission is based on the HGEA contracts, the negotiated amount, the pay increase.

But, to me, this is not right because they're applying the HGEA contract for Police, for Fire—when they have their own contracts and it's not completed yet. It's going through their own process for Fire and Police. They shouldn't be doing that. They should be listing and reviewing the salary for the police chief based on SHOPO's negotiation; and Fire, same thing. Don't apply HGEA for Police and Fire—that is not right. They have their own salary schedule and their own negotiated increases.

The same thing for Environmental Management and Public Works—these are licensed engineers. They need to look at the industry standard for these positions for those two departments—that's my take on it. But we're not concerned, right now, with those positions that I mentioned—we're focusing in on the Director of HR and the Deputy.

MR. THOMAS: When this says that they wanted—I'm on page 2 of the September 4 memo that has the chart with the increases—and it says that on the second page, second paragraph, that they want our input by September 15 of this year. Is that a deadline that has come and passed and now—

CHR. CABANAS: No.

MR. THOMAS: No?

CHR. CABANAS: What happened is they sent this knowing that different boards and commissions would be meeting later, including ours. Their next meeting is November 17th.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: So, that's why—

MR. AGUINALDO: We got to decide.

CHR. CABANAS: —we need to get this going so that they can consider our input at their next meeting, which is, like, what—two—two-and-a-half weeks away.

MR. THOMAS: So, am I mistaken in thinking that there's room for them to have presented a more clear case for what they're recommending? I'm struck by your comment, just now, that it's questionable to base these recommendations on on-going negotiations with Fire and Police unions—and that there're not much here that you can hang your hat on and say, “Oh, well, I understand what they're saying” or “No, I don't agree with it”—there's nothing here, except ongoing negotiations that, apparently, are not complete with Fire and Police unions, right?

CHR. CABANAS: That's correct.

MR. THOMAS: What's the timeframe when they need finalize their recommendation, which I guess goes to the mayor? Is there room for us to ask them to make a more clear case for what they recommend? Or can't this stand for another iteration because they're on a deadline and has to produce their results to the mayor sooner than they would be able to come back to us.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, Glynis says she can answer that question.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

MS. YAMADA: The Salary Commission is on a timeline. If we want the raises effective Novem—January 1st, 2026, the Salary Commission needs to have the public hearing on the 17th, and then we'll also have a regular meeting on the 17th, at which time the Commission, if there's any public input, either will revise their Findings of Fact. And then, if so, they will need to meet on the 22nd of December and pass it at that time. If it's not passed at that time, the salary increase will not be effective January 1st, 2026.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you. I can see there's not much wiggle room here for them to make a more clear case to us, and we just have to give it our best shot, right?

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm, that's right.

MR. AGUINALDO: I guess, they may take it—they may go up or may go down.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: And we're just one of many—

CHR. CABANAS: Correct.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yes—

MR. THOMAS: We're being asked or solicited.

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Do we know what other agencies are coming up with?

CHR. CABANAS: No, not that I know of.

MR. THOMAS: Is there a way of—easy way to find out?

CHR. CABANAS: Well, to me it doesn't matter because we're giving input for our two positions—director and deputy—and the others will give their input for theirs. Some of these agencies are small, like, Liquor—they're small. Police, Fire—they have their own contract. They're going to have to make their most educated estimate and provide input.

So, I think we should just be focused—although I mentioned about the engineers and all—that was just my thoughts, but we need to be focused on the director and the deputy. That's why I, kind of, feel that we should give some leeway. Right now, it's 15.3%—but we should give some leeway so that if they are inclined to give more, then give more. Give them more so that we're not reacting—that we're proactive.

MS. BOND: I think that needs to be the statement that we, it—in a—our recommendation is that rather than being reactive to salaries to bring them up to (inaudible), is to be proactive toward salaries—and maybe that it requires that there be over the next 3 years of 20% increases as opposed to the 15%—and do it that way, so that we explain to them why we're saying what we're saying.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: What do you think? Did anybody write that down?

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

MS. BOND: 'Cause I'll never remember it.

CHR. CABANAS: I, myself, liked it.

MR. AGUINALDO: I think the verbiage is—

MS. BOND: Is that good?

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: I liked it.

MR. AGUINALDO: —that is more—

MS. BOND: I have a good one every so often.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Niel, are you on the fence?

MR. THOMAS: Yeah, I understand what is being said around the table here. And I also have to accept that we don't have a lot to go on in terms of the case that the Salary Commission is making for what their tentative recommendations are. So, I guess, in a way, we're free to say whatever we want, right?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: Because they make take it, they may not.

CHR. CABANAS: They may not—

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: —and then, they may. The thing with this is, ideally, they would provide a little bit more data to all of the individuals—to the boards, to the mayor, to the council—to give us a little better solid base to work from. But if we don't ask for the information or even be aware of some of this—reports—we wouldn't even have that. It's asking us cold turkey—that's how I feel.

MR. THOMAS: In a way, though, that's an opportunity if we make a good case for whatever we say.

CHR. CABANAS: True.

MR. THOMAS: Because it—because what we come up with falls into a vacuum of lack of information that they've given us. How are we going to write that?

MS. BOND: Moving forward, and we're asked to make recommendations, it would be nice if we were to be given more information that was pertinent to the thing. Okay, that's two good sentences I've come with. I'm done.

CHR. CABANAS: Nicely said, Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: —“the thing”—yeah, I know.

MR. AGUINALDO: So, we can add that on.

MS. BOND: Add to our recommendation, yeah.

MR. THOMAS: How are we going to write and what are we going to write, to accompany the percentage or dollar or whatever it is—increase that we’re going to recommend?

CHR. CABANAS: Well, it’s going back to—let’s go back to the memo. So, this goes back to page number 7—no, I’m sorry, page 8.

MS. BOND: Of 9.

CHR. CABANAS: Page 8, number 7—and we would include our recommendation here, “On October 30, 2025, the Merit Appeals Board voted to recommend...”—and this is where we put our recommendation.

MR. THOMAS: That’s still—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: —missing piece that—understanding—

CHR. CABANAS: And the justification is—follows a little bit.

MS. BOND: So, the recommendations that we’re making are—one, that we’re looking forward to making—we’re looking—we’re trying to make it so that instead of it being a reactive increase that it be a proactive increase of 20% over the next four years.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: And that in the future when asked these questions, we be given more pertinent information that we can use to determine the—I still don’t know what the word is—J—and stop laughing at me.

CHR. CABANAS: Well—

MR. THOMAS: I think the Salary Commission recommendations here extend over a three-year period, don’t they? If you go back to the pages—

MS. BOND: If they’re asking for our recommendation, that’s the recommendation we’re giving.

MR. THOMAS: We've got recommendations for two increases in '26—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, it's three years.

MR. THOMAS: I think it's three years.

CHR. CABANAS: —2006, 2007, 2008—

MS. BOND: So, that would be 15% over three years.

MR. THOMAS: So, we're talking—if we're talking three years, for a total of 15%, that's 5% a year—as opposed to four.

MS. BOND: So, 15%—

MR. AGUINALDO: Two, three, four—because they put two in one year. Yeah, so—

CHR. CABANAS: But, yeah, they're catching up.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah, so we'll stretch it out to that four years.

CHR. CABANAS: How do—how does the department, Sommer, interpret that?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I'm sorry, how do we interpret what?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, because it's two increases in '26, then '27, '28. The increases for HGEA contracts are over a four-year period—or three-and-a-half-year period?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, the contracts were effective July 1, 2025. So, regardless of when the contract was finalized, the increase was retroactive to July 1, 2025.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: It goes to June 30, 2029.

CHR. CABANAS: So, it's four years.

MR. THOMAS: Four-year contract of how much percentage-wise?

MS. TOKIHIRO: That was the 15.3%, right, over the four years.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: That would be like 3.8% per year, roughly. Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: So, we're saying that the upcoming contracts dating back to last summer are, indeed, four years at 3.8% per year—is that what the figure is, that those contracts represent—the rank and file?

MR. AGUINALDO: I think that figure, Niel, was the one we're going over right now.

MR. THOMAS: Mm-hmm.

MR. AGUINALDO: From January 1st, 2026, and the July 2026—we got that increase and the '27, and '28.

MR. THOMAS: So, again, we're comparing contracts over the next four years that apply to the rank and file, and we're tasked with coming up with a recommendation for the executives. If they're radically out of sync with each other one way or another, there's room for that decision to be questioned, right?

If the managers of these departments aren't getting an increase that's consistent with what the rank and file gets, that's different than having them, kind of, line up with each other—or certainly different than if the managers are getting an increase that's seriously more than the rank and file gets. Maybe that's where we should hang our hat, if we believe that management and the rank and file should have increases they're similar to each other.

CHR. CABANAS: Well, that's the basic premise—

MR. THOMAS: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: —that they follow, but that there should be flexibility for the department heads and deputies because these are—these contracts are for the included employees covered by collective bargaining. Then you have the managers and the Administration, with HR, will set the salary for the middle managers.

MR. THOMAS: Who are in the union or not?

CHR. CABANAS: They're excluded managers.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: They're civil service positions but they're management, so they are not covered by collective bargaining. So, the—and, Sommer, can you help me, 'cause it's been awhile. But by Executive Order—can you explain that—the Executive Order will issue out the salaries for the managers, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. And so, the salary increases that occur through collective bargaining are applied to the salary schedules for excluded managerial employees.

MR. THOMAS: But the mayor, through executive order, could differ from that, right? Or is there an ordinance that says that they're supposed track dollar-for-dollar a percentage point, one to another?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No. He—so, this is where it gets a little tricky. But it is the—so the Salary Commission sets the salaries for department heads and deputies, and collective bargaining dictates included—and then the excluded follows the included.

So, I'm not aware of an ordinance that requires that it be dollar-for-dollar, but it's from what I understand, always been applied that way.

MR. THOMAS: So, we're talking tradition and that's understandable. Okay. So, how would we justify our recommendation for the two positions that are on the list for us to make a recommendation about? How would we justify departing from those collective bargaining agreements? I guess you're saying those collective bargaining agreements aren't final yet.

CHR. CABANAS: Some are.

MR. THOMAS: Some are, some aren't.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. Some are (inaudible) that's—some are—HGEA is final, right, Sommer?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct, except for Bargaining Unit 15, which are Water Safety Officers.

CHR. CABANAS: Fire and Police are not final yet.

MR. THOMAS: So, is that most of the municipal workforce—the ones that are final? Fire and Police are big organizations I know.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. So, I would say that it's about—well, a little more than half is resolved through UPW and HGEA.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: I'm just thinking in allowing a little cushion instead of staying at 15 because it is at 15.3% that we allow a cushion because if there's any manager that is—whose salary is increasing or close to a department head, that we give a cushion between that—those managerial positions and the department head position.

As our director reported this morning, she said with overtime she could have a manager exceed her salary. And so, that's why I thought a cushion—we try to be proactive—a little cushion so that that doesn't happen. It might happen, but we hope that it doesn't happen.

MR. AGUINALDO: I agree because she's going to be capped—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: —and the one below has the freedom to have additional overtime.

CHR. CABANAS: And that CoHnect project is so huge that they have to work overtime—even if they wanted to do the flex time, like how I mentioned—

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: —before. How can she do the flex time because this project needs to go smoothly.

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: And if there's a bug, they need to correct it. And so, she—that person may have to work overtime.

MR. AGUINALDO: Longer.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: To—so that it will—won't affect what's going on in HR and the other departments. It's imperative that it be taken care of. I mean, this project is huge. It's huge. And—

MR. AGUINALDO: I see. Kind of, like, in my terms—how can a supervisor will end up getting less from a journeyman—and the supervisor is above. I agree.

MR. THOMAS: Well, you know, it's not uncommon for much attention to being given to the fact that some employees who work overtime end up with more total dollars in their pocket than their managers.

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

MR. THOMAS: But they worked extra. It's not like the responsibility of the managers changed. And so, I'm not—it's a very popular newspaper headline story—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, but I'm sorry. In all defense, in this case, it is different because this is a new project—

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: —that affects the whole County. They're going to have electronically performed transactions for promotions, transfers, demotions, hires, terminations—that they haven't had in the whole history of this County. It's unique. It's big. It's more than big. I'll say huge because that's what it is.

And the success of that really falls on the burden of that division to make sure that it runs smoothly.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It also includes our Classification and Pay Division as far as getting all the position information into CoHnect and then also our training divisions—the divisions that provide training—all of that is going to be maintained in the system as well.

So, just to add those additional notes because there is—it is a heavy lift for HR across all divisions with the exception of Recruitment only because they're keeping our current recruitment platform—but every other division is impacted significantly and contributing.

MS. BOND: But this is only until it will all rolls out next year. After that, you shouldn't have to be doing all this overtime every single day to get—I mean, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: One would hope not, right—

MS. BOND: Right.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, initially, after rollout I think that there's going to be some continued demands, but I would definitely hope for my staff that they don't have to continue at this pace, but there will be ongoing maintenance of the system going forward—

MS. BOND: Right, but then—

MS. TOKIHIRO: —but I do see the overtime demands decreasing.

MS. BOND: So, here we go again. Ready?

MR. AGUINALDO: Okay, what you got? Suzi, what you got?

MS. BOND: “To be proactive and to create a cushion between managers and department heads, we recommend a 5% per-year increase over the next three years.”

MR. AGUINALDO: “...four years.”

CHR. CABANAS: "...four years."

MS. BOND: "...four years."

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: Whatever.

CHR. CABANAS: So, it becomes a minimum of 20%.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah. And you had the other thing, too.

MS. BOND: I wrote it down this time.

CHR. CABANAS: Very good. Very good, Suzi. So, is there a motion at this point, are we okay with a motion? Niel?

MR. THOMAS: I don't think I have anything more to say on this.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Are we ready for a motion? If so—

MS. BOND: Wait, hold on, let me add—and then, do we want to ask—add to that—"We also ask that in the future, more information be given to the boards to assist in making our recommendation to the Salary Commission."

CHR. CABANAS: I would suggest maybe "data."

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm—"data."

MS. BOND: "...data..."—okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Because—

SPEAKER: That's a good word.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—more data.

MS. BOND: So, anyway, that's—those are good, too.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: So do you want me to put it into one motion? Ready? Are we ready, are we ready to (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: I think they're ready.

MS. BOND: Okay. So, I move that we add into the letter—I don't know where we're going to—where are we putting this?

CHR. CABANAS: Number 7.

MS. BOND: Number 7. "...that we vote to recommend that to be proactive and to create a cushion between the managers and the department head, we recommend the 5% per year increase over the next four years. We also ask that more data be given to boards to assist in making our recommendations in the future." Or do we ask in the future that (inaudible) in the future?

CHR. CABANAS: Can you repeat that again but go slow.

MS. BOND: I thought you got it down—okay. So—

CHR. CABANAS: I'm writing it, but I want to—I know I missed a few things.

MS. BOND: You can have my chicken-scratch. Okay. So, "...the Merit Appeals Board voted that to be proactive and create a cushion between the manager and department head, we recommend that a 5% per year increase"—"that there be a 5% per year increase over the next four years. We also ask that in the future more data be given to the board to assist them in making our recommendations."

CHR. CABANAS: "We also ask that in the future more data..."—

MS. BOND: —"...be given to boards to assist in making recommendations."

CHR. CABANAS: —"...be given to boards..."—

MS. BOND: —"...to assist..."—

CHR. CABANAS: —" to assist..."—

MS. BOND: —" in making recommendations..."—

CHR. CABANAS: —"...in making our recommendations..."—

MS. BOND: No, just "recommendations." We want to take all the (inaudible) out.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: We're suggesting it across-the-board.

CHR. CABANAS: I got it.

MS. BOND: Okay, that's the motion.

CHR. CABANAS: I think I got it.

MS. BOND: Somebody want to second that (inaudible)?

CHR. CABANAS: "On October 30th, 2025, the Merit Appeals Board voted..."—

MS. BOND: —"...that to be proactive..."—that's where it goes in. And then, you can say—we recommend.

CHR. CABANAS: —"...that to be proactive and create a cushion between managers and a department head, a 5% per year increase..."—

MS. BOND: —"...we recommend..."—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh—"...we recommend..."—

MS. BOND: —"...a 5% increase..."—

CHR. CABANAS: —"...we recommend a 5% per year increase over the next four years."

MS. BOND: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: —"...we also ask that in the future, more data be given to boards to assist in making recommendations."

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: Does that fit in the legal world, J? We okay?

CHR. CABANAS: Wait now. I don't know—On October 30th, the Merit Appeals Board voted—we don't say for the HR director and deputy, do we need to put that in?

MS. BOND: Well, we could—you can add that at the end of the sentence—"...over the next four years for the HR director..."—

CHR. CABANAS: —"...for the HR director and deputy positions—and deputy director." Okay, I'm going to read it again.

MS. BOND: And, actually, the whole thing about asking for more data in the future—

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: Could go at the very end, right before we say, thank you very much or we could say thank you very much for—later.

CHR. CABANAS: Well, let's kind of go back a little bit because she has the paragraph following—so how does that tie in. We might need to do some adjustments here.

“On October 30th, 2025, the Merit Appeals Board voted that to be proactive and create a cushion between Managers and a Department Head, we recommend a 5% per year increase over the next four years.”

MS. BOND: “...for the HR Director and her Deputy...”—

CHR. CABANAS: “...for the HR Director and Deputy. We also ask that in the future more data be given to Boards to assist in making recommendations.”

MS. BOND: And then, you could make that another sentence.

CHR. CABANAS: Then the next paragraph would be—“The Board—

MS. BOND: “...discussed...”—

CHR. CABANAS: —“...discussed the following points in arriving at its recommendation for a salary increase.” Okay. Should we have the last bullet?

MS. BOND: Wait, should we actually vote on that?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, I'm sorry. Yes, that's the motion, so may I have a second?

MR. AGUINALDO: I second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion?

MR. THOMAS: May I offer two friendly amendments?

CHR. CABANAS: Sure.

MS. BOND: Friendly—well, only if they're friendly.

MR. THOMAS: First of all, I think we're asked to provide input on what the Salary Commission has given us, which is three years' worth of increases—and if that—if I'm reading that right, I think we're asking for a 5% per year increase over three years, not four years.

MS. BOND: Right—and that's where I started but you guys said “four.”

CHR. CABANAS: If we say “three”—that's only 15%.

MR. THOMAS: No, I'm not changing the annual rate, I'm just saying that the annual rate would apply for the course of three years, not four years.

MR. AGUINALDO: One—

MR. THOMAS: Because of the two increases in one year that they're in here—but we're only talking about 5% increases for '26; 5% for '27; 5% for '28—that's all that we're asked to react to, I think.

MS. BOND: Okay, we can make that three instead of—

CHR. CABANAS: But the salary for rank-and-file were—the contract was from July 1st, 2025, to June 30th, 2029—correct, Sommer? Is that correct?

MS. TOKIHIRO: That's correct.

MR. THOMAS: And the last increase was when?

CHR. CABANAS: 2024.

MR. THOMAS: So, you're saying—

CHR. CABANAS: They didn't get anything in 2025, correct?

MR. THOMAS: So, 2025 is Year 1? All right, so we're talking about 5% increase is for—a retroactive increase for '25?

MS. BOND: Seven '25 to six '29.

CHR. CABANAS: Do we need to explain all of that to them?

MR. AGUINALDO: If you guys don't mind me to interrupt—I see over here, Page 2 of 2, the informational purpose at its meeting held on August 28, 2025, the Salary Commission discussed recent negotiated raises for its members for the next four years—four years.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: All right. Then I'll withdraw that amendment.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah. It says four years.

MS. BOND: You can withdraw that friendly amendment.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

MR. AGUINALDO: So, that's how we came up with the four years. That's why they stacked the two within that timeframe. And, like, we worded it to get moving, but it's technically supposed to be spread out for four years.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you for finding that.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah. So, that was the one—yeah.

MR. THOMAS: And then, the second friendly amendment has to do with asking for more data and this amendment would have it read, "...data comparing the rate of increases in past years to what is recommended..."—

MR. AGUINALDO: That would—yeah.

MR. THOMAS: That's the number we don't have.

MR. AGUINALDO: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: And it would be helpful if they had given it to us.

MR. AGUINALDO: So, it's like moving forward now.

MS. BOND: Comparing the what?

MR. THOMAS: The rate of increases—

MR. AGUINALDO: Increases in the past.

MR. THOMAS: Rate of annual increases in past years, you could have it say.

CHR. CABANAS: I'm sorry, where are we?

MR. THOMAS: It's that last sentence that says requesting from the Salary Commission more data—and the words. "...data regarding rate..."—

MS. BOND: The "...rate of annual increase..."—

MR. THOMAS: —"...rate of annual increases in the past years..."—

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so we also asked that "...in the future, more comparative data..."—

MR. THOMAS: "...more data regarding rates of salary increases in past years..."—

CHR. CABANAS: And can we say—“and other data...”—

MS. BOND: Why not?

CHR. CABANAS: Because it would be helpful to know what the other HR directors in the State earned—not only the salary increases—regarding the rates of salary increases and other data be given to Boards to assist—yeah, to me—

MR. THOMAS: Regarding salaries of comparable positions—is that what you’re saying?

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MR. THOMAS: I just think—

CHR. CABANAS: I mean, we could put it in a parenthesis— “...(rates of salary increases)...”—are we talking about department head/deputy salary increases, salaries of other HR—

MS. BOND: Yeah, make it an example.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: —“...department heads/deputies within the State...”—I mean, that would be so helpful.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah, being specific is all I’m trying to do.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. AGUINALDO: Because after the four years—

MR. THOMAS: And to the word—use of the word “data”—data about what?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes. Yes, good point. Okay. So, we also ask that in the future, more data—

MS. BOND: I like “comparative”—actually, “...more comparative data...”—

CHR. CABANAS: “...more comparative data...”—in parenthesis?

MS. BOND: “i.e.”

CHR. CABANAS: “...i.e. rates of department head/deputy salary increases...”—“...salaries of other jurisdiction...”—

MR. THOMAS: I think you need to have a phrase—“...in past years...”—“...rate of increases in past years...”

MS. BOND: “...increase in past years...” after the parenthesis. Okay, wait—“...comparative data regarding the rate of increases in the past year i.e....”—

MR. THOMAS: “...past years...”—plural.

MS. BOND: Yeah. The “s” fell off the page. I was writing too close to the edge.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, my goodness. Okay, wait now. “...more comparative data (i.e. rates of department head/deputy salary increases, salaries of other jurisdiction HR department heads/deputies, et cetera) be given to boards to assist in making recommendations...”—

MS. BOND: So “...comparative data regarding annual rate of increase in past years...”—and then put your parenthesis.

CHR. CABANAS: Wait, I have parenthesis “...comparative data (i.e...”—

MS. BOND: Yeah, don’t put it there. Put it at the end of the sentence.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh.

MS. BOND: “...in the future, we ask that they add more comparative data...”—that we—wait—“...comparative data be given to the boards...”—no wait—“...more comparative data regarding rate of annual increases in past years be given to the boards to assist in their recommendations.”

So, after past years—I would put that—where the example goes.

CHR. CABANAS: —“...more comparative data of past years...”—

MS. BOND: And that’s where the parenthesis goes.

CHR. CABANAS: There? Example—“(i.e. rates of department head...”—

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. —“...and salaries of other jurisdiction...”—

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: —“...HR department heads/deputies...”—okay—“...be given to the boards to...”—okay.

MS. BOND: This will be—yeah, this will be given—yeah. Okay, that’s the motion. Anybody want to second it?

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so there’s a motion—

MR. THOMAS: Well, if you’re accepting it as a friendly amendment to a motion that’s already been made—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: —and seconded—

MS. BOND: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: —you’re ready for a vote, I think.

CHR. CABANAS: We need to make another motion, right, as amended.

MR. THOMAS: A friendly amendment can be accepted, right?

MS. BOND: Right, J?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yes, but we also need to remember to add in all the other amendments we previously did. So, we can do that by separate motion, after we finish this amendment—you know, the one about the capital “P” and then the page numbers, and all that.

MS. BOND: Oh.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: We can do that after this. I want to keep it—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Focused.

CHR. CABANAS: We need to read it, again? Oh, she has her motion and now we need another motion to amend.

MS. BOND: He added his amendment, so we can now vote on the motion—

MR. THOMAS: She accepted the amendment.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: So, it's in there now, so to speak.

MS. BOND: So—

MR. YOSHIMOTO: There was a second to the—

CHR. CABANAS: No, no second yet.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Okay. So you need a second to the friendly amendment—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —'cause you're amending the amendment.

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MS. BOND: Yes.

MR. AGUINALDO: I make a second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? Thank you.

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

MS. BOND: Don't ask that question.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: With gratefulness—aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to accept and approve the recommendation of the Merit Appeals Board to the Salary Commission for the salary increase for the HR director and deputy director positions.

MS. BOND: Okay, now I move that we accept the other amendments that we made to the letter prior to that first—that were made to the rest of the letter.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Right. So we should probably restate those for the record, so it's clear what the Board (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: Oh, okay.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yeah. You can do it—

CHR. CABANAS: Go page-by-page—and this is going to be dated today, right, Glynis, or tomorrow.

MS. YAMADA: (Inaudible.)

MS. BOND: Okay. I move that we accept the amendment of page 2 of—actually—for the numbering of the pages to include nine pages; and on page 2, the—changing of “Professional” the capital P to a baby “p.”

And I think that's the only other one, right?

CHR. CABANAS: No, no. Keep going. Page 7—

MS. BOND: Oh, page 7—and changing—“HR's changed its recruitment efforts to a more active strategy today's workforce prioritizes flexibility, work life balance and growth opportunities, the basic government processes and policy implementation to often cannot keep up with these evolving expectations creating a competitive disadvantage in hiring. At the same time, changing economic conditions and priorities further affect workforce stability and labor availability. The result is a challenging environment for recruiting and retaining a qualified public servant.”

CHR. CABANAS: The sentence moves up.

MS. BOND: Yeah, that sentence moves up. And we deleted the rest of the paragraph.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: The last paragraph on page 7. On page 8—at the top it says increase challenges and efforts of the HR division—or HR divisions. And at the bottom—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no, it's more than that.

MS. BOND: Oh, no, no—that's it. That's it.

CHR. CABANAS: No, it's more than that. It's "The significant increase reflects the challenges and effort for all..."—"...for the HR divisions..."—

MS. BOND: Oh, that's what it was. Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: —"...identified in Question number 5 above."

MS. BOND: Right. What she said. So that was a motion—anybody want to second that one?

MR. AGUINALDO: I second.

CHR. CABANAS: I have a question as part of the discussion. Going to the last paragraph on page 9—not the last paragraph, but the bullet that start—the salary for the County of Hawaii's HR director—do we still want to keep that?

MS. BOND: Yes. 'Cause we still think it should be a little higher than the other one.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: We want to make sure they're not getting paid less than anybody else—except maybe Honolulu, 'cause it's Honolulu.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah, should leave them.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, we'll leave it.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: And then, the initials changed—

MS. BOND: Oh, and the initials changed—

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: All right, on page 9 there is the initial change to "GMC"—

CHR. CABANAS: Colon "gy"—

MS. BOND: Colon—"gy"—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. YAMADA: Me.

MS. BOND: Oh, Glynis—yeah, we know her. Okay. So, it was moved and seconded. So where are we now?

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, any further discussion?

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

MR. THOMAS: Yes, I agree with everything that's here and I'm going to vote for it. But I do want to record that I'm particularly troubled by the idea that we are sometimes falling victim to the political priorities that exist, has pressures on our decision-makers. That's not enough of an objection to vote against the entire good work of word-smithing that's been done here, but I did want to make that opinion out of it.

CHR. CABANAS: I'm sorry, I'm not following you on that. You're not—what?

MR. THOMAS: All we did was drop the idea that economic conditions and political priorities affect the workforce stability and availability. And I do think that political priorities affect those things. I'm not troubled by removed—I'm, somewhat, troubled by removing it but it's not enough trouble to want me—to have me want to vote against the entire amendment to all the other changes.

CHR. CABANAS: But you do understand why we took it out, right?

MR. THOMAS: I understand your—the opinion of the majority and I just don't share that—that's all.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Okay, anything else? Okay, so we will—

MS. BOND: We need to vote.

CHR. CABANAS: Vote.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to amend our recommendation to the Salary Commission on the recommendation of the Merit Appeals Board concerning the salary for the HR director and the deputy HR director.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, Madam Chair, now that the letter's been amended. Now, we need to vote on the entire document, as amended. 'Cause we just voted on the amendments.

MR. AGUINALDO: Now, the entirety.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yes, right. So, it's one more motion—

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —to vote on the letter—

MS. BOND: I move we accept the letter, as amended.

CHR. CABANAS: As amended. Okay.

MR. AGUINALDO: I second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion?

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

CHR. CABANAS: If not, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried to accept the—

MS. BOND: The letter that we're sending out.

CHR. CABANAS: —the letter that's from the Merit Appeals Board to the Salary Commission regarding the proposed salary adjustments for the HR director and the deputy HR director for fiscal year 2025 to 2026.

MS. BOND: Thank you for all your hard work you put in on that.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you, Sommer. This is a good tool for the Mayor, for the Council, for everyone—and then, right now, especially the Salary Commission. I think this is a good snapshot of what your department is faced with, especially the challenges that you are undergoing.

And for the CoHnect, although they are spending a lot of time and energy, right now, it's going to be ongoing for a while because when you have different personnel changes, more training is involved—there might still be bugs that unfold as time goes by. It's going to—maybe not as much at the onset, but it will be for a while. That was just my own experience with NeoGov and then when we had Fresh. It was awhile. DeeAnn will be very, very busy—and her team—as well as the other department who have HR Reps. So, you folks will be busy for a while, but it's good to progress and take away all that paper.

So, thank you so much. This was a very good report.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Thank you.

MR. AGUINALDO: Go ahead, Niel.

MR. THOMAS: Assuming that the Salary Commission meeting coming up as a public meeting, do we plan on sending our Chair or a representative of our group to that meeting?

CHR. CABANAS: It's November 17th—I was thinking of going, but if you want to authorize me to go, I'll go.

MR. THOMAS: If it's a public meeting, you're certainly authorized, and I would say we would encourage you—or I would anyway.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—I mean, you can attend as well.

MR. AGUINALDO: Where is it going to be?

CHR. CABANAS: In here. I'm not sure about the time. Is it 9:00?

MR. THOMAS: I think if you offer to testify, you may be able to flesh out things that are in this memo that could inspire some questions from the group, and you might be able to give more weight to the opinion of MAB.

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: I could do that.

MR. THOMAS: That you should.

MR. AGUINALDO: I'll make myself available, if I'm free—just to listen.

CHR. CABANAS: It might be long.

MR. THOMAS: Support your (inaudible).

MR. AGUINALDO: Hey, Suzi—

MR. THOMAS: To support her morales.

MR. AGUINALDO: I don't know, wait, let me see.

CHR. CABANAS: The 15th—not the 17th is—is it a Tuesday? Monday, oh boy.

MR. AGUINALDO: Monday. Oh, Lord.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, well, I have it on my calendar. I will go.

MR. AGUINALDO: Okay, good. Then we'll update you, Niel, how's that?

MR. THOMAS: Yeah, the 17th is a bridge tournament for me.

CHR. CABANAS: Is it okay to update everyone after I attend or—I don't want to violate the Sunshine Law or should I just update Glynis.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: You can agendize for the next meeting—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh. Okay.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —because as far as the Board's consideration of this issue today, we've concluded this matter, so it no longer may be before the Board—

CHR. CABANAS: The Board.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —as Board business, right. But you can (inaudible) as a report.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Sounds good. Okay, so thank you on that matter.

SPEAKER: What else we got—

CHR. CABANAS: Let's go back to the agenda. I think most of it is done.

Announcements (Item 9)

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, "Announcements." Suzi, you have something—okay.

MS. BOND: On the 18th of October, I attended the—a workshop that was given for chairs and vice-chairs of boards and commissions. And after listening to comments by some of the people that sit on other boards, I wanted to commend you, Sommer, for your detailed reporting to this Board and for keeping us informed—so well informed on what's going on. Apparently, that's an issue other places.

So, and the other question I have, that I don't know that you might have the thing is—the HLRB meeting that's on November 6th, is that something we're supposed to be—did we get excused from that?

CHR. CABANAS: We received a letter from our Deputy Attorney General Trisha Gibo, and the HLRB meeting is a full hearing concerning the Tony Enriquez matter. She, in her letter, has informed us not to attend the hearing.

MS. BOND: Okay. Oh, good, I'll take it off my calendar, then.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: She will give us a informal update at our November meeting.

MS. BOND: Okay, cool.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, thank you for sharing your announcement. I'm glad that the Board is happy with the reporting. Yeah.

MS. BOND: And very much so.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. Thank you so much. And if your staff provided input to you, please relay our delightful comments to them because I find it was helpful, not only for us, but it will help, hopefully, the Salary Commission with our recommendation for the salary. So, thank you, Sommer—and thank them.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I will. Thank you.

Schedule Next Meeting Date (Item 10)

The Merit Appeals Board Will Convene Its Next Meeting On Friday, November 21, 2025, At 9:00 A.M., At The Hilo Council Chambers, Hawai'i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, Hilo, HI 96720

CHR. CABANAS: Our next meeting date will be on Friday, November 21, 2025, at 9 a.m., at the Hilo Council Chambers, of the Hawai'i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, in Hilo, Hawai'i.

Adjournment (Item 11)

CHR. CABANAS: May I have a motion to adjourn today's meeting?

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Yes?

MS. BOND: Before we do that, can I take us back to the executive minutes—executive session minutes? I don't—there—I, somehow, it went past, and I didn't realize we had voted on it—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, yes, we did.

MS. BOND: —but there is one—just two small corrections that need to be added into it.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, I'm going to need a motion. You want to make a motion, Suzi?

MS. BOND: Oh, I move that we re-visit the executive session minutes for a minute.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Reconsider—and then you need a second and a vote (inaudible)—

MR. AGUINALDO: I second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? If not, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried.

Review of Executive Session Minutes

July 18, 2025 (Part 1 of 2); July 18, 2025 (Part 2 of 2) Executive Session: The Merit Appeals Board Anticipates Convening One Or More Executive Meetings Regarding The Above Matters, Pursuant To HRS Sections 92-4 And 92-5(A)(4), For The Purpose Of Consulting With The Board’s Attorney On Questions And Issues Pertaining To The Board’s Powers, Duties, Privileges, Immunities, And Liabilities. A 2/3 Vote Pursuant To HRS Section 92-4 Is Necessary To Hold An Executive Meeting

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, which executive session meeting?

MS. BOND: The first one—Part 1.

CHR. CABANAS: Part 1, okay.

MS. BOND: Page 7.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: These are really small, *manini* things. The bottom of the page where it says “Cause one of them was about...”—and it says “(inaudible)”—what I had said was, “It was about when I had started with the Board.”

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, ‘cause one of them was “about when I started with the Board?”

MS. BOND: Yeah, instead of “(inaudible)”.

MR. THOMAS: Page 7, I don’t see it.

MS. BOND: On the bottom, the last—very last sentence

MS. YAMADA: Just an explanation, the main reason for “inaudible” is because the microphones weren’t turned on. So, I’m unable to hear what you say and that is the reason why it’s inaudible.

MS. BOND: Okay. Well, I’m not criticizing, I’m just saying, I know what I said.

CHR. CABANAS: So, do I—so what do we do in that case, if it’s—if it was “inaudible”—she knew—she remembers what she said. Do we still make the change?

MR. THOMAS: We give her two demerits.

MS. BOND: And then the other one is really simple. On page 9—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, wait, I'm waiting for the answer. Do we still make the change?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: I would leave it to the Board's discretion because electronically speaking it was not recorded. So, it's not part of the record, but if the members here—'cause I wasn't here at that meeting, so I don't know what happened either. If the Board members can attest that that is what Suzi said she said, then you're good, I think—but I'll leave it to the Board. Sorry, Suzi.

MS. BOND: Nice of you to shove that back in this direction. I mean, that—but—and then the next one is very small on page 9. It's just "What's"—"What's done is done."—not "Was done is done."

CHR. CABANAS: Where is that?

MS. BOND: Mr. Aguinaldo's—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, here—"Was done is done."

MS. BOND: That should be "What's done is done." "W-h-a-t"—

CHR. CABANAS: I don't know, Gilbert, did you say "Was" or "What?"

MR. AGUINALDO: Where are we right now?

CHR. CABANAS: In the middle of the page.

MS. BOND: "It's after the fact already."—"Yeah." "Yeah." "What's done is done."

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.) I don't care.

CHR. CABANAS: (Inaudible.)

MR. AGUINALDO: I'll leave it as that.

MS. BOND: "Was"—

CHR. CABANAS: "Was done is done."

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MS. BOND: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, we'll leave it as that.

MS. BOND: Okay. Then never mind.

CHR. CABANAS: Board, what do you want to do—you want to make the changes or just leave it?

MR. AGUINALDO: Leave them.

CHR. CABANAS: Leave it.

MR. THOMAS: I don't even know where this one is on page 9.

CHR. CABANAS: It's in the middle of the page. "MR. AGUINALDO: Was done is done."

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

MR. THOMAS: I can't find it. I'll leave it to somebody else.

MR. AGUINALDO: Page 9, right about almost halfway, Niel.

MR. THOMAS: I'm in the same document here—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no, not this one. It's the confidential folder.

MS. BOND: (Inaudible) the yellow one.

CHR. CABANAS: (Inaudible).

MR. THOMAS: Oh, it's this here?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, okay. I'm in the wrong church here. Here we are.

CHR. CABANAS: He has "Was done is done"—and she said it should be "What's done is done." But he says leave it.

MR. THOMAS: "He" being?

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo says leave it.

MR. THOMAS: All right.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, we'll leave it.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: All right.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, as far as the "inaudible"—I think we should just leave it at this point.

MS. BOND: Okay, then I withdraw my motion.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Okie-dokie. Thank you.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, you reconsidered saying that we need to vote again on approving the minutes—the executive minutes, right.

MS. BOND: Oh. Okay, I move we approve the executive minutes as they were recorded.

CHR. CABANAS: Is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion?

MR. AGUINALDO: Nope.

CHR. CABANAS: If not, a rollcall vote starting with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Motion carried to accept the executive meeting minutes for July 18th, 2025, as is.

Adjournment

MS. BOND: So, now I move we adjourn.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion?

MR. AGUINALDO: Nope.

CHR. CABANAS: If not, I'll start a rollcall vote with Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Oh, aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

Four ayes. Motion carried. Meeting is adjourned at 12:07 p.m. Thank you, everyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter

APPROVED:

Gabriella M. Cabanas, Chair
Merit Appeals Board