

REGULAR SESSION

Salary Commission  
Hilo Council Chambers  
Hawai'i County Building  
25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401  
Hilo, Hawai'i  
December 22, 2023 (Friday)

**Call to Order (Item 1)**

The regular meeting of the Salary Commission, County of Hawai'i, was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chair Steven Pavao, at the Hilo Council Chambers, Hawai'i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, Hilo, Hawai'i, on Friday, December 22, 2023.

**Roll Call – Present**

Mr. Steven Pavao, Chair  
Mr. Dawood Y. Farahi, Vice-Chair  
Mr. Jules Dudoit, Member  
Ms. Donala Kawa'auhau, Member  
Ms. Teresa T. Nakama, Member (via ZOOM)  
Ms. Luahiwa Namahoe, Member  
Mr. Sam Nelson, Member  
Mr. Dennis Riordan Member  
Mr. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Ex-Officio Member

**Absent and Excused**

Ms. Judy Greenbaum, Member

**Also Present**

Ms. Dakota "Cody" Frenz, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel  
Mr. Danny B. Patel, Deputy Director, Human Resources Department (via videoconference from the Kona Council Office)  
Ms. Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter, Human Resources Department

Commission members will participate in-person, via ZOOM, or by teleconference. Members of the public may attend this meeting either in-person at the meeting location or via ZOOM. Videoconference available at the Kona Council Office, West Hawai'i Civic Center, 74-54044 Ane Keohokālole Highway, Building A, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i.

**Call to Order (Item 1)**

CHR. PAVAO: Okay, we'll call the meeting of the Hawai'i County Salary Commission to order. First item on the agenda is "Statements from the Public" on agenda items.

For the record, we'll have each Commissioner announce your presence—your name—and we'll start from this end.

MR. RIORDAN: Commissioner Riordan.

MS. KAWA'AUHAU: Commissioner Kawa'auhau.

MR. FARAHI: Dawood Farahi, District 5.

MS. NAMAHOE: Commissioner Namahoe.

MR. NELSON: Commissioner Nelson.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Sommer Tokihiro, Director of Human Resources.

MS. FRENZ: And, for the record, Deputy Corporation Counsel Cody Frenz, on behalf of the Salary Commission. We also have our Secretary Glynis Yamada present. And in on ZOOM, Commissioner Nakama.

MS. NAKAMA: Good morning.

MS. FRENZ: Could you state your name for the record, ma'am?

MS. NAKAMA: Teresa Nakama.

MS. FRENZ: Thank you. And I believe in Kona, we have Deputy Director Patel. Do we have any public testifiers in Kona, Mr. Patel?

MR. PATEL: No testifiers here. Thank you.

MS. FRENZ: Thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: And I'm here, Chair Pavao.

**Statements from the Public (Item 2)**

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. And moving on to our agenda, we'll go to "Statement from the Public" on agenda items.

The person I will call is Kahale, please come up here. Good morning. You can push that button on that panel, on the bottom—yeah, to turn the mic. on. There you go.

MR. TERRY: Can I sit down?

CHR. PAVAO: Yes, please.

MR. TERRY: I'm a little nervous. My legs are shaking already.

MS. FRENZ: And, sir, before you testify—if you could state your name, for the record, and then speak closely into the microphone, so everyone—and our friends on ZOOM can hear as well. Thank you, sir.

MR. TERRY: Thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you.

MR. TERRY: Good morning, my name is Kahalekaiopuna Terry—most people just call me “Kahale.”

I'm here, today, to testify as a sincere citizen with some concerns regarding the mayor's salary increase. I'm not denying that everyone that is—directors and mayor deserves raises, but after speaking, surveying my peers, my co-workers—people around that I meet daily—I think I could roughly—just say, roughly, about 100 people versus 2 people. Two people were for it. Majority of them was against.

I just want to ask the panel or the Commission to take into consideration a little due diligence when making this decision because these raises seem a little out of touch with what we deal with on a daily basis with finances.

How can I say it—but I don't—maybe the next mayor deserves such a big raise. But I truly feel, this mayor, I haven't seen anything prolific or profound that deserves such a significant raise. There's—our roads is terrible—Downtown Hilo is like off-roading now. We have panhandlers on almost every major intersection. I don't see the County outreaching to the homeless people no more—like how we used to.

And the main reason that motivates me when I see we're trying to find qualified leaders or retain qualified leaders—I don't see the mayor as a qualified leader because he owes me and a lot of public servants a lot of money, which I have no idea why he's holding up our money.

If he was—if he demanded us to come out to work during the pandemic, a good leader would release that money to us. And there's a lot of things in the County of Hawai'i that needs to be repaired—and I may not be seeing everything. I don't know what goes on behind the curtains to make this show go on.

So, I'm just asking, again, for the Commission to really compare it to what they're trying to offer to the next—or to this mayor or to the next mayor—and that's pretty much all I have. Thank you, guys, so much for listening.

MS. FRENZ: Do we have any testifiers on our agenda item on ZOOM? If so, please unmute and state your name for the record. May the record reflect no response, Chair. I don't believe we have any additional public testifiers. We have none on ZOOM, we had one in Hilo, we have none from the West Hawai'i Civic Center.

Chair, you can move on to your next agenda item. Thank you.

### **Approval of Minutes (Item 3)**

#### **October 12, 2023 and November 16, 2023**

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CHR. PAVAO: So, we'll move on to the "Approval of Minutes."

#### **October 12, 2023**

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CHR. PAVAO: Yes, we're reviewing the minutes of October 12, 2023, and considering approval of those minutes.

MS. NAMAHOE: Chair, I move to approve them. Are we taking them one-by-one or both?

CHR. PAVAO: One at a time, I think.

MS. NAMAHOE: Okay. Then I move to approve October.

CHR. PAVAO: Is there a second to the motion?

MR. DUDOIT: I second the motion—Commissioner Dudoit.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you.

MS. FRENZ: And just one thing—it is 9:08. And we'll just note, for the record, that Commissioner Dudoit has joined us. Thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: Oh, yes, thank you. And any discussion on the minutes? Hearing none, we'll go ahead and vote. All those in favor of approving the minutes of October 12, 2023, signify by saying aye? Any opposed?

The voice vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Farahi, Dudoit, Kawa‘auhau, Nakama, Namahoe, Nelson, Riordan, and Chair Pavao – 8.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSENT & EXCUSED: Commissioners Greenbaum – 1.

CHR. PAVAO: The motion carried.

### **November 16, 2023**

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CHR. PAVAO: Okay, we’re moving on to the minutes of November 16, 2023. Chair, would entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

MR. NELSON: I’ll make a motion to approve.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. Any second?

MR. FARAHI: (Inaudible.)

CHR. PAVAO: Can you say it through the mic. so that it’s recorded—that you second.

MR. FARAHI: Second.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you. And—okay, it’s been moved and second. Any discussion? Hearing none, we’ll go ahead and vote. All those in favor of approving the minutes of November 16, 2023, signify by saying aye. Opposed?

The voice vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Farahi, Dudoit, Kawa‘auhau, Nakama, Namahoe, Nelson, Riordan, and Chair Pavao – 8.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSENT & EXCUSED: Commissioners Greenbaum – 1.

CHR. PAVAO: Hearing none, the motion is carried.

### **Communication(s) (Item 4)**

CHR. PAVAO: Moving on to the next agenda item, “Communications.” We have none.

### **New Business (Item 5)**

CHR. PAVAO: “New Business”—again, none.

**Unfinished Business (Item 6)**

**Communication No. 23-14: Proposed Findings Of Fact By The 2023 County Of Hawai'i Salary Commission, Dated October 12, 2023. Pursuant To Section 13-28 Of The Hawai'i County Charter (2022), As Amended, The County Of Hawai'i Salary Commission Makes Its Findings In Support Of Its Decision To Adjust The Salaries And Salary Schedule Of Elected And Appointed Officials Of The County Of Hawai'i, To Be Effective January 1, 2024. (A Table Of The Proposed Salary Increases Are Set Forth And Attached As Exhibit "A"); And**

**Communication No. 23-14.01, From Salary Commissioner Dawood Farahi, Dated October 7, 2023, Providing His Comments Concerning The Proposed Findings Of Fact By The 2023 County Of Hawai'i Salary Commission, Dated October 12, 2023. (Note: The Above Matters Were Discussed At The Salary Commission's Meeting Held On October 12, 2023. On November 16, 2023, A Public Hearing Was Held In Hilo Where Members Of The Public Were Given The Opportunity To Participate In-Person Or By Videoconference Or Via ZOOM. The Commission May Adopt Its Salary Adjustment Proposal At Its Meeting Scheduled For December 22, 2023.)**

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CHR. PAVAO: "Unfinished Business" for discussion and appropriate action, is a Communication number 23-14 Proposed Findings of Fact by the 2023 County of Hawai'i Salary Commission, dated October 15, 2023.

MS. FRENZ: Chair, this is Deputy Corporation Counsel Cody Frenz, just read in for the record our entire agenda item. It indicates pursuant to Section 13-28 of the Hawai'i County Charter, as amended, 2022, the County of Hawai'i Salary Commission makes its findings in support of its decision to adjust the salaries and salary schedule of elected and appointed officials of the County of Hawai'i, to be effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

And, for the record, a table of the proposed salary increases, as this Commission has set forth are attached to Communication 2023—or 23-14, as "Exhibit A."

And since we are calling this agenda item, can I once again query—are there any public testifiers as to agenda item Number 6, Unfinished Business, Communication 23-14? I don't see any public testifiers as to this agenda item, now that we're calling it here in Hilo. Deputy Director Patel, any public testifiers as to this agenda item in West Hawai'i Civic Center.

MR. PATEL: No testifiers.

MS. FRENZ: Thank you, sir. Are there any public testifiers via ZOOM for this agenda item, please unmute and indicate your name for the record. Hearing and seeing none, Chair, you can move on.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. So, the Chair would entertain a motion to approve Communication number 23-14.

MS. NAMAHOE: Commissioner Namahoe, I motion to approve the salary increases.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. And a second?

MR. DUDOIT: This is Commissioner Dudoit, I second that.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. It's been moved and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none, we will go ahead and vote.

MS. FRENZ: So, Commissioner Namahoe, just to confirm your motion and the second—'cause I understand it is to approve the Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions—or the Proposed Findings and Exhibit A, proposed salary increases as articulated in Exhibit A. Is that your motion, Commissioner Namahoe?

MS. NAMAHOE: That's correct.

MS. FRENZ: Thank you.

MS. NAMAHOE: Do you need me to read that out?

MS. FRENZ: No.

MS. NAMAHOE: No—okay.

MS. FRENZ: Just confirming that that's, in fact, your motion.

MS. NAMAHOE: Thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. Yeah, let's do a rollcall vote. We can start at this end—your name and your vote.

MR. DUDOIT: Commissioner Dudoit, yes.

MR. RIORDAN: Commissioner Riordan, yes.

MS. KAWA'AUHAU: Commissioner Kawa'auhau, yes.

CHR. PAVAO: Chair Pavao, yes.

MR. FARAHI: Dawood Farahi, yes.

MS. NAMAHOE: Luahiwa Namahoe, yes.

MR. NELSON: Commissioner Nelson, yes.

MS. NAKAMA: Commissioner Nakama, yes.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you. Commissioner Greenbaum has been excused. So, we have approved—we have a majority approve—all voted in favor and no (inaudible). Okay.

So, we'll move on to the next Communication number 23—so, we'll close file on Communication number 23-14 and move on to Communication number 23-14.01.

MS. FRENZ: Vice-Chair Farahi, this is a communication from you, sir, dated October 7, 2023, providing your comments concerning the Proposed Findings of Fact of the 2023 County of Hawai'i Salary Commission, dated October 12, 2023.

Vice-Chair Farahi, do you have any additional commentary regarding this communication, sir, or would you—are you prepared to close communication?

MR. FARAH: I guess the addition that we strongly recommend that this Commission, we can (inaudible) once a year, so the issues are resolved and the people are fairly treated and fairly compensated.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you. Okay. So, then we'll close Communication number 23-14.01.

### **Announcements (Item 7)**

CHR. PAVAO: Moving on to the next agenda item is “Announcements.” Any announcements?

### **Schedule Next Meeting Date (Item 8)**

CHR. PAVAO: And then, so hearing no announcements, we'll move on to Number 8, our schedule next meeting in January. We have a tentative date scheduled—okay, so our next meeting is January 17<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m., here at the Hilo Council Chambers. And then, again, of course, it'll be available via ZOOM. That's the next meeting—is January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10 a.m. Okay.

Okay, so one item we're adding to the agenda for January is to establish the salary for the new position—for the new department who was created by the County Council.

MS. FRENZ: That's correct, Chair. Specifically, I believe you're asking to calendar for our January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10 a.m., agenda—a new agenda item—setting of the salary for the newly created Director of the Office of Sustainability, Climate, Equity, and Resilience—also known as “OSCER” position.

It's a new department created by the County of Hawai'i, County Council. There's an Interim Director and this Commission needs to set the salary for that new director position.

So, are you asking to agendize that for January, sir?

CHR. PAVAO: Yes. Okay.

MR. NELSON: Related to that new salary—could I ask if the Human Resource Department—that meeting, if they would recommend what they think the salary for that position should be. If they could bring that to the meeting. If there'd be, like, salary surveys or what they think—what would be a comparable salary for that position?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, we can definitely provide some research information for you to begin the discussion.

CHR. PAVAO: Albeit it'll be very helpful. Thank you. Okay.

MR. FARAH: So, if the Acting Director is available, I would like to hear from him what it is that he looks into the future and the number of employees in that division—if he's going to give us that, right—in the proposed budget for that—you will give us that, too, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. We could reach out to the Interim Administrator to be here and provide more background information.

MR. FARAH: And that would include the job description?

MS. FRENZ: This is Deputy Corporation Counsel Cody Frenz. So, yes, Vice-Chair Farahi, I have actually already forwarded to this Commission the Position Description for the Director the Administrator of the new OSCER position. And it's—the Interim Director is a female and we can ask her to join us at our upcoming hearing in January, so you can hear from her as well.

CHR. PAVAO: That'll be helpful. Thank you. Okay, anything else in regards to our next meeting in January?

**Adjournment (Item 9)**

CHR. PAVAO: Otherwise, we'll adjourn. Motion to adjourn?

MR. RIORDAN: I would like to say something.

CHR. PAVAO: Yes.

MR. RIORDAN: I would like to thank our testifier for coming in today and taking the time out of his day to give us his opinion on what was happening. So, thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: Thank you.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. RIORDAN: Commissioner Riordan, motion to adjourn.

CHR. PAVAO: Second?

MR. FARAHI: Definitely, second.

CHR. PAVAO: All those in favor of adjourning, signify by saying aye. Any opposed?

The voice vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Farahi, Dudoit, Kawa‘auhau, Nakama, Namahoe, Nelson, Riordan,  
and Chair Pavao – 8.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSENT & EXCUSED: Commissioners Greenbaum – 1.

CHR. PAVAO: We are officially adjourned. Thank you very much. Happy Holidays. Nine-eighteen—we’re officially adjourned at 9:18 a.m. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter

APPROVED:

Steven Pavao, Chair  
Salary Commission