

REGULAR SESSION

Salary Commission  
Hilo Council Chambers  
Hawai'i County Building  
25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401  
Hilo, Hawai'i  
November 17, 2025 (Monday)

**Call to Order (Item 1)**

The regular meeting of the Salary Commission, County of Hawai'i, was called to order at 10:42 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 Monday, November 17, 2025.

**Roll Call – Present**

Mr. Steven Pavao, Chair  
Ms. Donala Kawa'auhau, Vice-Chair  
Mr. Jules Dudoit, Member  
Ms. Luahiwa Namahoe, Member  
Mr. Sam Nelson, Member  
Mr. Dennis Riordan, Member  
Ms. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Ex-Officio Member

**Also Present**

Ms. Dakota "Cody" Frenz, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel  
Ms. Jamie Martines, Human Resources Manager II, Human Resources Department  
Ms. Michele Lamkin, Human Resources Program Specialist, Human Resources Department  
Ms. Kim Kailipaka, Human Resources Technician I, Human Resources Department  
Mr. Lance Matsumoto, Clerk III, Human Resources Department  
Ms. Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter, Human Resources Department

**Call to Order (Item 1)**

CHR. PAVAO: We'll call the meeting to order. And we'll go on to our approval of minutes—so, we'll call to order, and we'll start with, again, with the names of each member. You can announce your names please.

MR. DUDOIT: Commissioner Jules Dudoit.

MR. RIORDAN: Commissioner Riordan.

MS. NAMAHOE: Commissioner Namahoe.

CHR. PAVAO: Commissioner Pavao.

MS. KAWA'AUHAU: Commissioner Kawa'auhau.

MR. NELSON: Commissioner Nelson.

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

MS. FRENZ: And also present is Deputy Corporation Counsel Cody Frenz, myself, on behalf of the Salary Commission—and our Secretary Glynis Yamada.

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

CHR. PAVAO: Okay, and then “Statements from the Public” on our meeting agenda items. Anybody in Kona for statements from the public.

MR. RUEDY: No testifiers here in Kona.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. Any statements from the public here in regards to our agenda—Dell Otsuka, did you want to say more?

MS. FRENZ: And at the outset, if you could identify yourself and tell us what agenda item you're testifying on. Thank you.

MS. OTSUKA: Hello, again—Dell Otsuka, agenda Item 6B, number 9—and I forgot to mention that recognizing our—basing your salaries on performance by each director would be better served because there are some directors that do well—but for the Department of Environmental Management they have three AOC's out APA—and as I mentioned before, the cost for that will be at least a billion dollars to take care of that once those are compiled to.

So, what the Department of Environmental Management—there were so many issues—and sat on Boar—sat on the Commission. And it bothered me, the amount of—well, if you went—I went to all the transfer station—visited the three wastewater plants here. Went to look at a lot of

the pump stations. I live in Keaukaha, so we have the main pump station. So everything that comes through the pump stations in Hilo comes there, goes back to the wastewater plant to be treated, and comes back out. And so, all I'm saying is, every department should be held accountable for the contracts or the projects that are not being done, or the work is not being done that is compromising the safety of everybody—really.

So, that's why I don't think that every department should have the same raise that the next—and the only way you're going to measure that is to set goals and standards for each department based on the projects that they have to fulfill. And until you do that, it's hard to justify their position, if they cannot fulfill what is their obligations is to the departments that they serve. And a lot of it is—it's like a silo within the County—different departments are not talking to each other—like with the Environmental Management.

I live in Keaukaha, Hawaiian Homes took care of the—part of the sewer hookup for Desha Avenue—we're talking seven places. They had a massive job to broaden the road, they laid the pipes—the Department of Water Supply had to come in to lay theirs 'cause they were all old, too. It took a month to get a permit from them. And then, four more months to have inspections done.

So, I'm just saying, we cannot treat every department the same. And so, they shouldn't—so the raises should be appropriate to the (inaudible).

Okay, thank you so much. And, again, I appreciate what you do. I do. Thank you.

CHR. PAVAO: Anybody else on Zoom for public testimony? Seeing and hearing none, we'll move on to "Approval of Minutes."

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

#### **August 28, 2025**

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CHR. PAVAO: So, we are not approving August 28<sup>th</sup>?

MS. FRENZ: This is DCC Cody. So, we—this body approved the minutes of August 28, 2025, at its last meeting—that should have been our September minutes but, inadvertently, August was put there.

So, because of that, we will pass that at your regular meeting in December, we will approve September and then, presumably, the minutes from this meeting in December.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay, so we'll suspend the approval of minutes until our next meeting on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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

CHR. PAVAO: “Communications”—none.

**New Business (Item 5)**

CHR. PAVAO: “New Business” for discussion and appropriate action—having none.

**Unfinished Business (Item 6)**

**Review Of Existing “Pay Plan For Executives And Elected Officials” To Include Discussion And Consideration Of Ideas For Adjustments To Future Salaries Of Executives And Officials:**

**Communication No. 25-06, From Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department, Received On November 6, 2025, Submitting Information Regarding The Current Number Of Employees And The Current Number Of Funded Positions For Each Department; and**

**Communication No. 25-07, From Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department, Received On November 7, 2025, Submitting Information Regarding The Salaries For Employees Where Inversion Exists Between The Deputy Department Heads And Their Subordinates**

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CHR. PAVAO: “Unfinished Business” for discussion and appropriate action. Review of the existing Pay Plan for executives and elected officials to include discussion and consideration of ideas for adjustments for future salaries of executives and officials.

Any comments? There’s two different communications, Communication number 25-06—you should all have that in your binder—and Communication number 25-07—again, that’s also in your binders.

And any comments or questions?

MR. NELSON: Yeah, this is Nelson. Can I ask a question about the inversion. I guess, can you explain that. I’m trying to understand—so, they got, like the Deputy Chief of Police, there’s listed a monthly salary 15,639; and then the salary of Ees, whose salary is 15,987—and which numbers—

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, two subordinate positions under the Deputy Police Chief earn a salary of \$15,987.00 per month; and the Deputy Police Chief’s salary is currently \$15,639.00 per month.

MR. NELSON: So, those are inversions after the arbitration?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No.

MR. NELSON: No.

MS. TOKIHIRO: The arbitration award was issued but has not yet been approved by all legislative bodies, so any salaries related to that arbitration award have not been adjusted yet.

MR. NELSON: Okay. So, this is irrespective of that, so right now—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes.

MR. NELSON: Okay. All right. And that the only positions that are in that are the Deputy Chief of Police and the Deputy Director of Public Works. Everybody else is below the level.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

MS. TOKIHIRO: You're welcome.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay, any other questions or comments?

**A) Communication No. 25-04, From Salary Commission Chair Steven Pavao, Dated September 4, 2025, Regarding Their Inquiry To The Appointing Authorities Concerning Proposed Salary Adjustments For Department Heads And Deputies. The Salary Commission Is Proposing To Mirror The Hawai'i Government Employees Association (HGEA) Salary Increases For The Next Four Years: 3.5% Increase, Effective January 1, 2026; 3.79% Increase, Effective July 1, 2026; 4% Increase, Effective July 1, 2027; And 4% Increase, Effective July 1, 2028 (See Exhibit "A") (Note: Communication Numbers 25-04.01 Through 25-04.03 Were Received And Filed At The Salary Commission Meeting Held On September 24, 2025); and Communication No. 25-04.04, From Renee N. C. Schoen, Corporation Counsel, Office Of The Corporation Counsel, Dated September 24, 2025, Responding To The Salary Commission's Inquiry Dated September 4, 2025; And Communication No. 25-04.05, From Rick Robinson, Chair, Police Commission, Dated September 24, 2025, Responding To The Salary Commission's Inquiry Dated September 4, 2025; And Communication No. 25-04.06, From Gabriella M. Cabanas, Chair, And Members Of The Merit Appeals Board, Dated November 10, 2025, Responding To The Salary Commission's Inquiry Dated September 4, 2025**

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CHR. PAVAO: Next we'll go on to "A" Communication number 25-04, 25-04.04, 25-04.05, and 25-04.06. Okay, any comments or questions?

**B) Communication No. 25-05.01: Proposed Findings Of Fact By The 2025 County Of Hawai'i Salary Commission, Dated August 28, 2025(Pursuant To Section 13-28 Of The Hawai'i County Charter (2024), 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, 2026. (A Table Of The Proposed Salary Increases Are Set Forth And Attached As Exhibit "A."; And Communication No. 25-05.02, From D. Kim Cobb-Adams, Dated October 14, 2025, In Opposition To Salary Increases/Adjustments; *And* Communication No. 25-05.03, From Gloria Kobayashi, Raymond Kobayashi, Gail A. Miyashiro, Kay Y. Shintani, And Merle K. Lai, Dated November 4, 2025, In Opposition To The Raises**

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CHR. PAVAO: Moving on to "B" Communication number 25-05.01, 25-05.02, 25-05.03.

**Announcements (Item 7)**

CHR. PAVAO: Any "Announcements."

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

CHR. PAVAO: Schedule for our next meeting—the Salary Commission will convene the next meeting Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, 10 a.m., at the Hilo County Council Chambers, Hawai'i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720.

MS. NAMAHOE: Commissioner Namahoe, I'd like to make a motion that we close the communications in this file, respective to today's agenda.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. Is there a second to close communications?

MS. KAWA'AUHAU: Kawa'auhau, second.

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. Any comments? If not, we'll go ahead and vote. All those in favor of closing communications, signify by saying aye. Any opposed?

The voice vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Dudoit, Kawa'auhau, Namahoe, Nelson, Riordan,  
and Chair Pavao – 6.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSENT & EXCUSED: None.

CHR. PAVAO: Motion carried.

**Adjournment (Item 10)**

CHR. PAVAO: Okay. So, “Adjournment.”

So, our next scheduled meeting, again, is December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10 a.m., here at the Hawai‘i County Council Chambers—Hilo County Council Chambers, Hawai‘i County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. RIORDAN: Commissioner Riordan, I motion we adjourn.

CHR. PAVAO: A second?

MR. DUDOIT: Dudoit, second.

CHR. PAVAO: It’s been moved and seconded we adjourn this meeting. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Any opposed?

The voice vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Dudoit, Kawa‘auhau, Namahoe, Nelson, Riordan,  
and Chair Pavao – 6.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSENT & EXCUSED: None.

CHR. PAVAO: Motion carried. Thank you. Meeting adjourned. (The meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.)

Respectfully submitted,

Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter

APPROVED:

Steven Pavao, Chair  
Salary Commission