

REGULAR SESSION

Merit Appeals Board
Hilo Council Chambers
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401
Hilo, Hawai'i
April 23, 2026 (Thursday)

Call to Order (Item 1)

The regular meeting of the Merit Appeals Board, County of Hawai'i, was called to order at 9:03 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, April 23, 2026.

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
Mr. Elbridge "EZ" Smith, Deputy Attorney General, Department of the Attorney General
(via Zoom)
Ms. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department
Mr. Ryan Thomas, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel
Mr. Demetri Lametti, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel
Mr. Joshua-Joel Ravey, Pipefitter, Department of Water Supply
Mr. Kawika Uyehara, Deputy Chief, Department of Water Supply
Ms. Michelle Simmons, Human Resources Program Specialist, Parks and
Recreation Department
Ms. Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter, Human Resources Department

Call to Order (Item 1)

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning, everyone. The County of Hawai'i Merit Appeals Board meeting is called to order at 9:03 a.m. We are seated in the Hilo Council Chambers of the Hawai'i County Building, at 25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401, in Hilo, Hawai'i.

I'm Gabriella Cabanas, Chair of the Merit Appeals Board. We have quorum today with all four Board members present. To my immediate left is Ms. Suzi Bond.

MS. BOND: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And my far left—Mr. Gilbert Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: *Aloha*, good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: To my far right—is Mr. Daniel "Niel" Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Hello, good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And to my immediate right—is our Assistant Corporation Counsel, Mr. J Yoshimoto.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Good morning, everyone.

CHR. CABANAS: Seated in the back of the Board members is Glynis Yamada, our Secretary-Reporter.

MS. YAMADA: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning. And in the gallery, we have a number of individuals, so I will introduce them now.

From the Office of the Corporation Counsel—Mr. Ryan Thomas and Mr. Demetri Lametti—they are our Deputy Corporation Counsel—excuse me—attorneys; and we also have Mr. Joshua-Joel Ravey from the Department of Water Supply; and we also have our Director of Human Resources, Ms. Sommer Tokihiro; Mr. Kawika Uyehara, the Deputy from Department of Water Supply; and Ms. Michelle Simmons from the Department of Parks and Recreation.

So, good morning to all of you.

Addendum to Agenda (Item 2)

CHR. CABANAS: As far as the addendum to the agenda—we received, yesterday, a correspondence from Mr. Ravey and it is numbered as Communication number 25-09.03—I'm sorry, it's from Corp. Counsel—Mr. Ryan Thomas—concerning the matter before us and the hearing that we will start in a few minutes.

So, I'd like to have a motion to add this communication to our correspondence—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, it's from Mr. Ryan Thomas.

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If not, I'll start a rollcall vote to add it to the agenda, 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.

Four ayes. Motion carried.

Statements from the Public (Item 3)

CHR. CABANAS: Are there any statements to—from the public? None.

9:00 A.M.: HEARING RE COMMUNICATION NO. 25-09

Executive Session: The Merit Appeals Board Anticipates Convening One Or More Executive Meetings Regarding The Matter Listed Below, Pursuant To HRS Sections 92-4, 92-5(a)(2) And 92-5(a)(4), For The Purpose Of Evaluating An Officer Or Employee Of The County Of Hawai'i, Where The Consideration Of Matters Affecting Privacy Will Be Involved And 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 Of The Members Present Pursuant To HRS Section 92-4 Is Necessary To Hold An Executive Meeting.

Communication No. 25-09, Received On November 14, 2025, From Appellant, Appealing A Recruitment And Examination Action By The Hawai'i County Human Resources Department; *And*

Communication No. 25-09.01, Received On January 22, 2026, From Ryan K. Thomas, Deputy Corporation Counsel, On Behalf Of Appellee, Regarding Appellee's Pre-Hearing Statement; Witness List; Exhibit List; Exhibits "A" – "M"; *And*

Communication No. 25-09.02, Received On January 22, 2026, From Appellant, Regarding Appellant's Written Statement And Submission Of Exhibits

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So we will move on to our 9:00 scheduled hearing regarding Communication number 25-09. And, Mr. Ravey, your appeal form indicates you want a closed hearing, is that correct?

(At this time, Mr. Joshua-Joel Ravey, Appellant (Pipefitter, Department of Water Supply); and Mr. Ryan Thomas, Appellee (Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of the Corporation Counsel), came forward.)

MR. RAVEY: Yes, Ma'am.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Thank you. For the record, Mr. Ravey wants a closed hearing.

Okay, so I'm going to read the communications received concerning this hearing.

(At this time, Chair Cabanas proceeded to read into the record, Communication numbers 25-09 through 25-09.02 listed above.)

CHR. CABANAS: And the newest communication that we just approved adding to the agenda is Communication number 25-09.03, from Mr. Ryan K. Thomas, Deputy Corporation Counsel, regarding the matter filed by Joshua-Joel Ravey versus the Department of Water Supply. Okay, and this contains a Supplemental Exhibit "N" and a memo—InterOffice Memo concerning "Changes to Completing Position Descriptions" from the Department of Human Resources.

I'm going to read verbiage regarding an executive session in the event the Board needs to enter into an executive session. So, the Merit Appeals Board anticipates convening one or more executive meetings regarding the matter listed below, pursuant to HRS Sections 92-4, 92-5(a)(2), and 92-5(a)(4) for the purpose of evaluating an officer or employee of the County of Hawai'i where the consideration of matters affecting privacy will be involved and 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 of the members present pursuant to HRS Section 92-4 is necessary to hold an executive meeting.

Before I go any further, and just for the record to explain to everyone, when we have a regular meeting, our Legal Counsel is Mr. J Yoshimoto from the Office of the Corporation Counsel. When we have a hearing, our Legal Counsel comes from the Office of the Attorney General. So, appearing via Zoom is going to be our attorney for the hearing and his name is Elbridge "EZ" Smith. Good morning, Mr. Smith, can you hear me?

(At this time, Mr. Elbridge "EZ" Smith, Deputy Attorney General, Department of the Attorney General, appeared via Zoom.)

MR. SMITH: Good morning. Yes, I can.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, thank you for joining us this morning.

We have other matters listed on the agenda, but we are going to go straight into the hearing. So, I'm going to ask that all parties—if you're a witness to the hearing, if you could step outside and wait outside of the Council Chambers.

So, at this time, may I have a motion to close the meeting, so we can go into the hearing—and it's a closed hearing as requested by the Appellant.

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. We are going to secure the room. Mr. Yoshimoto will also step out—and our attorney, Mr. Smith, will oversee and provide guidance to the Board, as needed.

MR. THOMAS: Chair, should we give an estimate to the people who are leaving, how long we might be at this first stage? I have a feeling it could be long.

CHR. CABANAS: There are a number of witnesses that the County is calling, so I'm not able to give you a definitive time—time period.

MR. RYAN THOMAS: Good morning. Yeah, so if I may assist as far as timing—the County, today, anticipates calling two witnesses and then questioning Mr. Ravey—so, give or take, we should be out here by noon. Thank you.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess at 9:11 a.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened as 12:42 p.m. in open session.

Communication No. 25-09, Received On November 14, 2025, From Appellant, Appealing A Recruitment And Examination Action By The Hawai'i County Human Resources Department; *And*

Communication No. 25-09.01, Received On January 22, 2026, From Ryan K. Thomas, Deputy Corporation Counsel, On Behalf Of Appellee, Regarding Appellee's Pre-Hearing Statement; Witness List; Exhibit List; Exhibits "A" – "M"; *And*

Communication No. 25-09.02, Received On January 22, 2026, From Appellant, Regarding Appellant's Written Statement And Submission Of Exhibits

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So now we are going back in open session to announce our decision in the matter of Mr. Ravey's appeal hearing. Starting—I need a motion.

MS. BOND: I—why?

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no—I don't need a motion.

MS. BOND: We don't need a motion.

MR. AGUINALDO: No?

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, yeah, I do need a motion—

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: —regarding the decision as we made it—

MR. AGUINALDO: Mm-hmm.

CHR. CABANAS: —as discussed in the closed session.

MS. BOND: As—I move that we accept the decision that we made in the closed session to deny the Appellant's appeal, as discussed in closed session. Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion?

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

CHR. CABANAS: If not, Ms. Bond.

MS. BOND: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Mr. Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

CHR. CABANAS: Ms. Cabanas—aye.

I have a question. You said "aye."

MS. BOND: I said "aye" to the motion to say that we deny it. I didn't say that I agreed with it.

CHR. CABANAS: We'll take a recess.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess at 12:44 p.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened at 12:46 p.m. in open session.

CHR. CABANAS: Sorry, Mr. Smith, there's an element of confusion here because Ms. Bond was going to vote—

SPEAKER: She did vote.

CHR. CABANAS: She did vote "aye" now to deny Mr. Ravey's appeal, but earlier in closed session—

MS. BOND: No, my motion was to accept the decision which was to deny this appeal. That was what my motion was. My motion in the open session was to accept the decision to deny his appeal. That doesn't mean—I can vote "yes" that I—on that motion.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, let me get Mr. Smith's legal guidance. Please help us here.

MR. SMITH: Right. The motion is to accept the decision, right—the decisions already been made, so—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay. So, it's okay for her to say "aye?"

MR. SMITH: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. All right, you were right.

MS. BOND: I told you—God, you guys.

CHR. CABANAS: Just to be sure.

MR. SMITH: Yeah—no, it's better to be sure, than not sure.

CHR. CABANAS: That's right.

MS. BOND: That's true.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay—absolutely. Okay, so four ayes, motion carried for the appeal—

MS. YAMADA: You're still in executive session. You still have to get out of executive session.

MS. BOND: No, we didn't move—no. So, go open the door.

CHR. CABANAS: No, no, I'm going forward.

Okay, so four ayes motion carried to deny—to accept the decision to deny the appeal for Mr. Ravey. Thank you, everyone.

Okay, so we're good Mr. Smith. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess as 12:48 p.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened at 1:20 p.m. in open session.

Approval of Minutes (Item 4)

March 20, 2026

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. It is 1:20 p.m. and we are now in open session—back to the agenda of approval of meeting minutes for March 20th, 2026. Board members, have you had the chance to review the meeting minutes?

MR. THOMAS: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Any amendments? I went through the meeting minutes—I have some notes. On page 18—

MR. THOMAS: Eighteen you say?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes. Page 18, it's under the paragraph that I stated—it's the fourth "Chair Cabanas."

MS. BOND: One, two, three, four—under "(Inaudible.)"

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, and then it says, "Yeah, it is. And so, it really rests with the department to do their—they're the ones authorizing the work. Of course, the class specs. are developed by HR"—and then it says, "their HR"—that's not correct—"...their HR..."

MR. THOMAS: is that the HR of some other department?

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: No. 'Cause class specs. are developed by HR.

MS. BOND: Their HR—no—yeah. That is correct because she's—you're talking about each department's HR.

CHR. CABANAS: No, I'm talking about Central HR.

MS. BOND: Oh, that's not the way it reads.

MR. THOMAS: Doesn't the department or HR develop the—

MS. BOND: 'Cause they need to review the prescription—that's (inaudible) position description—and not "prescription."

CHR. CABANAS: Well, that's the position descriptions—of course, the class specs. are developed by HR but they need to review it because the position descriptions are written in accordance with the class spec. "And, as Sommer said, if it changes, then they need to review it because it could be something else"—is that correct?

MS. BOND: Yeah. It is.

CHR. CABANAS: “Of course, the class specs. are developed by HR”—that’s correct.

MS. BOND: You’re talking about the—

CHR. CABANAS: But then, it’s hyphen “their HR”—

MS. BOND: Right, you’re talking about the department’s HR’s—departments H—

MR. THOMAS: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, I see. Okay, so their HR needs to review it.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, okay. So, that’s okay.

And then, the other one was on the next page—19—Mr. Aguinaldo, from the bottom—the first “Mr. Aguinaldo”—“And you guys”—it reads, “to that”—but it should be “do that…”—“And you guys do that, Sommer?” “Sommer, and you guys do that, like, what Gabriella said is like do a field audit?” He’s asking a question.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: So, it should be “do” instead of “to.”

And then, page 21, “Ms. Tokihiro”—one—the second “Ms. Tokihiro”—she said, “I’m going to..”—not “revive” it—“I’m going to remember that. I’m going to have R&E ask, ‘What’s magical about’—I don’t think you said “revive”—I think you said “remember”—yeah. So, take out “revive”—

MS. BOND: Oh, okay—not “revise?”

CHR. CABANAS: It should be “remember.”

MS. YAMADA: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Okay—no, she did say “remember.”

MS. BOND: Oh, yeah, I do—actually, remembered you saying that.

MR. THOMAS: That fits with “What’s magical…”

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. BOND: Yeah, ‘cause that was the magical two years thing we were talking about—

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MS. BOND: —and what makes it magic.

CHR. CABANAS: What makes it magic. Okay, that's all I have.

So may I entertain a motion to accept the amendments made?

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

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Amend it first—okay. Any discussion? No?

MR. AGUINALDO: No.

CHR. CABANAS: 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 meeting minutes, as amended.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: You just amended—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah—just amended. So—

MR. YOSHIMOTO: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: I'm trying to be efficient.

MS. BOND: I couldn't do that as one, huh?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, you just amended the minutes, so now you're going to pass it as (audible).

MS. BOND: Okay. So, I move that we accept the minutes, as amended—

MR. THOMAS: Second, again.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? If not, starting 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.

Director's Report (Item 5)

A. MAB Quarterly Reports: January – March 2026 (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 now we are on the "Director's Report"—MAB Quarterly Reports for January through March 2026. So, Sommer, you may proceed.

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

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, First Quarter of the calendar year and Third Quarter of our fiscal year.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, you all have the report for review, so I'm happy to answer any questions.

MR. THOMAS: When you have mandatory anti-discrimination and harassment training sessions, where's the mandate coming from?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It's a County policy that every employee has to attend that training. So, we've made that a mandatory training for all of our employees. And then, I believe it was last year that we amended that training—and so, we've been re-training all of our employees—all of the supervisors, department heads—so everybody is going through that updated training.

MR. THOMAS: Are you running into any headwinds from the Feds.—the current Administration?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No. No issues, to my knowledge, pertaining to this issue.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Any questions or comments for Sommer regarding this report?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, I can point out that our Classification and Pay Division have an additional position in Classification and Pay now, which has been really helpful in terms of keeping up with the workload.

So, in the quarterly report they noted that during this quarter, they have completed 126 re-description review requests. Re-description reviews are reviews and re-descriptions of Position Descriptions. So, that's one component of what Classification and Pay does, but they also develop new classes of work, they assist departments with re-allocation of positions, and then assist with re-allocation of positions for recruitment purposes.

So, I think we've talked about in the past where due to challenges with the current tight labor market, we recruit for positions at multiple levels so that we can—we can't find an individual that has the experience required at the permanent class of work—we are able to re-allocate down for recruitment purposes, and the department may be able to identify a candidate that has experience that can be built upon through additional training and experience to get back to the permanent class.

So, as we address recruitment challenges, Classification and Pay works closely with them. And so, just one component of that.

And so, part of that is those class spec. amendments that we've been talking about, and then one of my MAB goals is compilation of that database that tracks all of our class specs., and the last time they were amended or reviewed, and position re-descriptions are part of that as well.

MR. THOMAS: So, this is re-description or revision of individual positions?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct.

MR. THOMAS: And what is the rule about when positions get reviewed?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, the County doesn't have a rule. I believe there should be a rule for that. And so—but we have to work to develop a process for that because creation and maintenance of Position Descriptions is delegated to departments, but HR has a key role in overseeing that—and so, we need to make sure that a system is developed for that.

So, last year, I believe in January of 2025 was when I sent out the memo to departments saying that if your position hasn't—if you're coming in for recruitment—because it is a box on the RTF form that acknowledges that a class spec. has been reviewed and the Position Description has been reviewed and is up-to-date.

It's just a checkbox. And so, that needs to be taken a step further, right—and that's where we're—we—the current years—one of the MAB goals is to have that database so we're tracking when the class specs. were last amended. So, we're not just counting on a checkbox where someone can just check the box and it's done. We need a verification of that, right.

And so, I wanted to develop that for class specs. 'cause those are in immediate control of HR—and I think the next layer of that is for Position Descriptions.

MR. THOMAS: I think I heard somewhere—I'm not sure I know where—that there's a practice of not putting up a Position Description until the Position Description itself has been reviewed—that supposed to happen at every couple years?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, the target that—every couple of years is something that I'm working for towards the class specifications. There is no timeframe currently set for the number of years before a position is re-described. But anytime we're recruiting for a position, we want that information to be up-to-date—so that's our first level of check—and that's why that checkbox is on the RTF form because if you're recruiting to fill a position, we should be making sure that everything is up-to-date.

So, when the County went to the new Position Description format in 2016, departments were told, "Update your Position Descriptions and put them on the new form." And we noticed that departments weren't doing it. So, as of January of last year, I believe, I may not be recalling the date correctly—but I sent a memo to all departments that said, "If you come in with a Request to Fill a position and this Position Description is not on the current format, it's being returned to you. We're not even going to recruit."

And so, that stops the—just check the box—we're actually returning it and saying, "No, you must update this before we're going to proceed."

MR. THOMAS: 'Cause, otherwise, it could lead to some kind of case, couldn't it?

CHR. CABANAS: Well, that's what we saw with this hearing today. I mean—

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, potentially, without—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, the box was darkened. So who's checking that? I mean, not to pinpoint anyone in particular but, I mean, yeah, they need to check that, so—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So, a mechanism needs to be established in order to do that. It hasn't existed to-date, but it's important that everything be consistent—and I have found a number of inconsistencies that I want our department to correct. And so, we're actively working as a team to address those issues and ensure consistency.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, good.

MR. AGUINALDO: I guess, sometimes, it's just with the workload, too—when there's so much.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I think it's a—it is a challenge. When we have 800 classes of work—that's a lot for HR to maintain that—but that's just classes of work. Then from a class of work, we have 3,000 positions. And so, a Position Description for each of our 3,000 positions. And so, managing all of that has been a partnership between HR and the departments, because we have all the class specs. but we really defer to departments as far as Position Descriptions because they know what is the actual work being done in their department.

That being said, though, we need to have a mechanism to ensure that oversight—to ensure that we're being able to better partner with departments to say, "This hasn't been updated since whatever date, it needs to be updated"—and it's to everybody's benefit.

We are noticing a lot of the re-description reviews is a good opportunity to update language and give current descriptions of the work that is being performed because even changes in language—words mean different things, to different people—and words mean different things, at different times, and in a different context.

So, just wanting to make sure that what's in a Position Description accurately reflects the work being done.

MR. AGUINALDO: Wow, understood. Eh, J, like what Sommer was just indicating—if they're going re-word it or language—who approves that? Does Corp. Counsel step in, too, and kind of look at the language because on that matter—or it's just going to be—Sommer, is it just—it has—does it fall on you or all the different department heads on the different departments, yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, so it would be HR—

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

MS. TOKIHIRO: —working with departments—

MR. AGUINALDO: The departments.

MS. TOKIHIRO: —and department staff—

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

MS. TOKIHIRO: —to come to agreement on that language and how to describe it. And, certainly, if there was an area where we were unclear or possibly needed guidance—yeah, we're always happy to be able to reach out to the Corporation Counsel to get clarifications, when needed.

MR. AGUINALDO: Oh, good.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so, we did the MAB Quarterly Report. Okay, so are we now on—we are on the MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report. Yeah, did we vote on it? No, we didn't, yeah? Okay, so I—can I have a motion—thank you, Sommer. Can I have a motion to accept and file the MAB Quarterly Report for January through March 2026?

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

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

B. MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report: April 2026 (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: Moving along, we are now on the MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report for April 2026. Have you all read the April report.

MR. THOMAS: Yes, again, on Equal Opportunity—what sort of ADA reasonable accommodation cases do we get?

MS. TOKIHIRO: They're not cases, per se—but they're requests for reasonable accommodation.

MR. THOMAS: That's what I thought, yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So, it's a variety of things based on employee need. So, they submit the request to their department, and then Alika—our ADA Coordinator—works with the department to go through the process.

So, it could be a variety of things, particular—office environment or I couldn't give you any specifics—and I wouldn't want to give specific examples, just for confidentiality purposes, but it's a variety of requests and it's based on employee needs and is something that is verified by a physician.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Under "Equal Opportunity/ADA"—you may have mentioned it, but I can't remember. RFP for the County of Hawai'i Self-Evaluation—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: The self-evaluation is?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, it's going to be an evaluation of all of our programs and activities and to make sure that they're all accessible. So, I believe the facilities evaluation was completed a few years ago, and I believe the federal government suggest that a self-evaluation be done every ten years or so.

But it's a very—we want to make sure that we are comprehensive and that we do it right, so we actually put that to bid, so that we can identify an agency that can help us to evaluate accessibility of all of our programs.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, thank you.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, also, under Equal Opportunity and ADA, the County has been actively working to meet the requirements for accessibility for all things that are posted online. That was to have gone into effect on—today—oh, tomorrow, I'm sorry. But the Department of Justice has extended that deadline for a year because it is a big undertaking. It's been something that we've been actively working on for more than a year and trying to help departments to get training—but then, also, to understand what the implications are.

And so, we've been actively working on it, but it is a—it's a big undertaking. So, looking forward to continuing to actively work on that, so that we can bring everything into compliance by the April 2027 deadline.

CHR. CABANAS: For Classification and Pay, they reviewed and completed 58 intent to adopt new classes of work from other jurisdictions. Wow, that's quite a bit.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It is. And so, that—the challenge of our Classification and Pay Division is they are doing work for our departments, so assisting with these allocation—initial allocation of positions; we're working with departments to create new classes of work as they have operational needs; they're doing the re-allocations down for recruitment, so they're doing that; looking at Position Descriptions.

But also—yes, because we have equal pay for equal work across the State, they're also reviewing anything that is changed by another jurisdiction. So, any new classes of work that are established by another jurisdiction, any changes to existing classes—they are reviewing all of that. They provide feedback, and then they also maintain a spreadsheet across all jurisdictions of which positions are equivalent.

But, that review is actually a great tool for us to use with our own departments because they're always involved in and are reviewing what's happening across the State—what other jurisdictions are adopting or what new titles or how work is being done. And so, that becomes a great resource when meeting with departments, if they have a need, that they can say, "Oh, I think Maui may have had a class of work that might work for this particular situation."

So, it's a great learning tool but it is very time-consuming. Classification and Pay is tasked with a very big and very important role.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Are those new classes in public safety or clerical or just a whole range of positions?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, I don't review the ones that come in from the other jurisdictions, but I'd be happy to ask—I can get that information for you for the next meeting, so that you folks can get an understanding of, kind of, where those new classes fall.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. TOKIHIRO: We are initiating a re-titling, so "Clerk" is, kind of, one of those titles that become a little outdated. And we were actually the last jurisdiction that still had the class title as "Clerk."

And so, we're going to update that across all of our Clerk positions to re-title them to "Office Assistant"—so nothing else is really changing, but I think Office Assistant will better reflect the work that's being done, and when we put those positions out for recruitment, I think we're more likely to maybe be able to get people going, "Oh, that's actually what that role does"—so, even things like that, bringing some of our job titles more current, so that people can better understand what that role is. It's also something that Classification and Pay works on.

MR. THOMAS: Gilbert and Sullivan (inaudible) had a position called "Lord High Poohbah"—do we have that?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Not yet, but I will request it.

MR. THOMAS: It's you.

CHR. CABANAS: Are the typing certifications still required or is that a thing of the past?

MS. TOKIHIRO: For the most part, I think I believe that that's a thing of the past, right—

CHR. CABANAS: It is.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, you must be relieved.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: Workmen's Comp. seems to be—I don't know. It's about the same as last—what is it—the total claim is 250, but in here it's 260 open workmen's comp. claims?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So, it would depend on when the information was—

MS. BOND: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: —pulled. Yeah. But the total number of open claims could vary for a few different reasons. Sometimes we have to re-open a claim, just to pay an outstanding medical bill, so it's not necessarily like an open, active claim. We just are re-opening it to pay that bill. There could've also been a few claims that we received after the Quarterly Report was compiled, but before the monthly report information was compiled, which could account for the discrepancy—I believe is ten, but—

MS. BOND: And it was mostly—the claims review held with Parks and Rec. to discuss their open claims—are there a lot of open claims in Parks and Rec.?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I believe—I haven't—I—it's not that I haven't seen the number, I'm not recalling the number off the top of my head, at this time—but I believe it's probably—it's usually been around 50 to, I think, at the high-end, it was 60 claims that they would have at any given time.

MS. BOND: It's like 20% of the—huh?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. So—but with about 3,000 employees to have 260 claims, the Work Comp. being less than 10% is good. We're very—we're pleased that it's not higher. Of course, we would like it to be "0" but it will never be "0"—

MS. BOND: No, no. What is I-M-P-A-X-X?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, IMPAXX is a company that helps us with compliance with our Medicare requirements. So, for certain—it mostly pertains to settlement of claims when the employees of retirement age—there're some new—some different rules that go into effect for Medicare (inaudible), to ensure that Medicare isn't covering the cost of any treatment related to the Work Comp. claim. So, that company helps us to ensure compliance with the Medicare rules.

MS. BOND: Okay. I didn't know if it was a company or just a crazy acronym, 'cause I'm trying to figure out what the acronym was.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. It's a company name. Yeah.

MS. BOND: An individual, maybe people—and XX—okay, that's all the questions I had.

CHR. CABANAS: Anyone else? If not, I'll entertain a motion to accept and file.

MS. BOND: I move that we accept and file the April report from the Department of—from Sommer.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: It's the MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report for April 2026. Okay, is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? If not, 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.

Communications (Item 6)

CHR. CABANAS: No "Communications."

New Business (Item 7)

CHR. CABANAS: There is no “New Business.”

Unfinished Business (Item 8)

FY 2025-2026 Annual Performance Evaluation Of The Director Of Human Resources (HR) Process; And FY 2025-2026 Human Resources Employee Survey: Proposed Timeline To Distribute Surveys And Deadline For Responses; SurveyMonkey Questions For FY 2025-2026 (Line Department Survey); SurveyMonkey Questions For FY 2025-2026 (Employee Survey); Merit Appeals Board’s Evaluation Tool For The Director Of HR For FY 2025-2026; Define Target Audience/Survey Participants. Executive Session: The Merit Appeals Board Anticipates Convening One Or More Executive Meetings Regarding The Above Matter, Pursuant To HRS Sections 92-4, 92-5(a)(2) And 92-5(a)(4), To Consider The Hire, Evaluation, Dismissal, Or Discipline Of An Officer Or Employee Of The County Of Hawai‘i, Where Considerations Of Matters Affecting Privacy Will Be Involved And 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 Of The Members Present Pursuant To HRS Section 92-4 Is Necessary To Hold An Executive Meeting

CHR. CABANAS: We are now on “Unfinished Business.” The discussion of the Annual Performance Evaluation for Fiscal 2025 to 2026 is in an open session. And in a separate folder that Glynis provided us, we have—it’s in the brown folder and it’s all of the documents that we used last year—for Gilbert, this is going to be your first round or rodeo to help or to evaluate the Director. And this is done in accordance with Hawai‘i state law that the Director is evaluated every June. So, this is in preparation for that evaluation.

The first draft in the folder, the white sheet—Glynis is giving Sommer her folder. So, Sommer, this is the timeline that we usually follow for the Performance Evaluation process—starting in April, which is this month, reviewing the survey questionnaires and/or evaluation forms that we’ve used in the past.

We have tweaked them recently. There’s also a draft cover letter that, as the Chair, Glynis sends out in an email to accompany the survey, and we define who will receive the surveys. And then, in May, the surveys are emailed to the line departments and HR employees, whomever we decide the target group will be, with deadline for response—no later than the end of the month, which is May 29.

So, Glynis has already established the timeline for our review. She sends it out with the deadline for them to respond—May 29th. And proposed email distribution date will be May 21—so we would give them a little over a week to complete the survey forms.

Come June, Glynis extracts the survey results. In the past, Recruitment and Examination Division Manager would extract the NeoGov applicant survey results and forward them to Glynis. I think we decided last year that it really didn’t have much significance for us to continue that, but it’s up to us, if we want to or not.

The Director presents a summary of her goals for Fiscal Year 2025 to 2026, and then she will report on whether her goals were met and why not and—or not—and why they were not met.

MAB discusses with the Director—it's the total aggregate survey responses and any other input received. And in a executive session, MAB discusses the overall rating of whether the Director meets expectations or does not meet expectations, with written notice to follow to the Director.

So, all of that occurs in June. And then in July, the Director identifies her performance goals that she would like to be—that she would like achieved during the next fiscal year. So, she outlines her plan of action to MAB.

And we also review the survey questions for next fiscal year, and we define the target audience and survey participants for the following year.

So, that's basically the cycle. Okay.

MR. THOMAS: Do we get a copy of the Director's goals for the current fiscal year as part of this?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, we do.

MR. THOMAS: So, when do we get that?

CHR. CABANAS: In fact, it's listed here on the golden rod sheet.

MR. THOMAS: I thought it was—the golden rod sheet?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. The golden rod is this one.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, these are the goals?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, these are her goals—Goal 1, 2, and 3—

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: —that she reported on last year. And now, what we're going to is we're going to evaluate on whether she meets it or not based on the survey responses.

MR. THOMAS: And I remember that the survey, last year. I think some of us felt that it was of limited value because of a low response rate.

CHR. CABANAS: It was of value—the one that we thought wasn't really a value was the NeoGov one.

MR. THOMAS: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Because the numbers were really, really small. Let's backtrack a little—so if you look in your folder, we have a yellow sheet and a green sheet. Now, historically, the—this is for Gilbert because he's new.

The yellow sheet is the survey questions that we sent out, through email, and we decided in the past it would go to the department heads and the deputies, and the HR representatives and assistants of the departments—the yellow one.

And what they do is they just number a scale of 1—where it strongly disagrees; where 5 means strongly agrees—and then they answer these questions. Questions 8 and 9 are open-ended questions. And, yes—

MR. THOMAS: Where does it say who gets that one? Where it says line department/agency?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: And then, the green one—

CHR. CABANAS: The green one, I lobbied for. And the reason why—I don't know if you knew that, but I lobbied for it because it pertained to the time that we were audited, prior to the audit.

And how employees, including me, were—how should I word it—we were in a crazy period. And we really didn't have a Bona Fide way to give input in order to rescue ourselves—so to speak. So, anyway, this is where employees now can provide input in an anonymous way.

Providing input on how they feel about the Director's job performance for the fiscal year. So, I'm glad the Board agreed—and as I explained it—you can always ask someone, "Oh, how do you feel? Oh, you look really great today!"—but you don't know how the person feels inside—maybe they have high blood pressure or—I just used an analogy.

Well, that's how it was for our department, and not really having a place to go with our concerns. We just did what we were told to do, up to a point. And then—so this allows—this is, like, a safety net for the employees.

MR. THOMAS: Where does it say who gets this?

CHR. CABANAS: The employees of—to Human Resources.

MR. THOMAS: The HR Department employees?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: This is DHR—

MR. THOMAS: I get it.

CHR. CABANAS: —so they can provide input.

MS. BOND: The—do the other departments do this kind of an evaluation?

CHR. CABANAS: Of what—their department heads?

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: It's up to—well, some departments—

MS. BOND: Look at the look on her face.

CHR. CABANAS: Some departments have Boards, but probably not.

MS. BOND: Probably not?

MS. TOKIHIRO: For appointed department heads that are appointed by the Mayor—it's up to the Mayor how he wants to evaluate performance—but as Gabe mentioned, there are boards and commissions that have—if they're the appointing authority they may have rules or their own process that they follow.

MS. BOND: Oh, okay, just curious. I mean, I know that's not your *kuleana*, so—

CHR. CABANAS: (Inaudible) question.

MR. THOMAS: So, with respect to the line departments, how many people is that?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, we have the numbers. Let's see.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, the blue sheet?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, Glynis does a good job with this.

MR. THOMAS: What sort of response did we—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, it's actually—for the yellow one—it's 23 directors or agency heads, plus 17 deputy directors or administrators, plus 19 HR representatives, and 24 HR assistants.

CHR. CABANAS: It's listed above, Niel.

MR. THOMAS: I see it.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, just slightly—what is that—85 people.

MS. BOND: Like, right now, Animal Control doesn't have a head, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, there is a TA Administrator.

MS. BOND: Oh, there is. Okay.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And then, in the absence of an Administrator, it would be the Managing Director or the Mayor.

MR. THOMAS: And, last year, what was the response rate we got from that big crowd? Was that the one that we got a very weak response?

CHR. CABANAS: It might have been—I can't remember if it was 17—wait, let me look at her report, let me see if she has it.

MS. BOND: There's once when we got only nine respondents.

CHR. CABANAS: No, no, it wasn't that little. And, yet she sends emails out. She sends it with an email and then she sends a week prior to the deadline—she sends a friendly reminder, again, to all of them.

MR. THOMAS: Anybody have any thoughts about how to increase the rate or does this simply indicate that most of these people don't have any contact with HR?

CHR. CABANAS: I would think that they would have contact with HR. I would. I mean, there's a lot of issues, matters—that HR has to work with the departments on, in one way or another.

MR. THOMAS: It's a referendum on the effectiveness of the staff of HR, but this is part of an evaluation of the Director. Now, I know the Director is "the buck stops here" person, but do we really get a response that speaks to that? If all—one of these people who receive this survey, see is the experience—or report on the experience that they had with some lower-level staff person.

CHR. CABANAS: Well—

MR. THOMAS: What does that tell us?

CHR. CABANAS: —keep in mind that when last year's survey went out, a lot of the department heads were new, and they weren't on for very long—

MR. THOMAS: Oh, that's right.

CHR. CABANAS: —they were onboard for maybe four months.

MR. THOMAS: A new Administration.

CHR. CABANAS: Five months? Some maybe even less. But that's why we also send it to their deputy and their HR staff to respond. I was trying to see if I—no, I don't have the numbers here—Glynis would have that.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I do believe that the responses from the departments, the number was low last year, and I would attribute that to—yes, they were very new to their roles and then new to this whole process, so—

MR. THOMAS: Do you have any thoughts on how important it might be to increase that participation?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I always appreciate the feedback that we get. And so, I would be happy to get a response from everyone.

As far as how to accomplish that—I'm not sure. I think you folks discussed last year—should the timeframe in which to have to respond should that be longer—but I don't know that that necessarily affects anything either.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. BOND: If anything, it should be shorter because then it feels like it's something you got to get done.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. Because the longer you give them—

MS. BOND: But—yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: —they wait till the end anyway.

MS. BOND: The longer procrastination last. But I also think, too, that the fact that these people have now been on the job for a while longer will help out, too.

CHR. CABANAS: Mm-hmm.

MS. BOND: And, if not, then the next year we go and take armed guards into every office and say, "Fill this out now."

MR. THOMAS: Do we have a draft of both communication that accompanies this survey when it goes out?

CHR. CABANAS: So, Glynis is passing out copy of the letter that we send out.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, good, I'd like to see that.

CHR. CABANAS: The first letter is to the HR employees, and the second letter is to the line departments.

MR. AGUINALDO: When it sent out to—of different departments and whatnot, is there a follow-up and—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, she sends another email a week before the deadline.

MR. AGUINALDO: Okay.

MS. BOND: That's what these are.

MR. AGUINALDO: Right. And I think it's important, yeah. Procrastinate, they not going do it. If they're not going to do it—but it's a great evaluation—very, very important and good inputs, yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so this—if you look at the sheet, the pink one is for the employees.

MR. AGUINALDO: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: Starting with the second page—it's the first email that she sends out for me. And then, going back to the first page—"A Cheerful Reminder"—again. And then, once we get the surveys, we send a thank you email to them. This is for the employees. And then, we do the same thing for the line departments.

MR. AGUINALDO: That would be on the blue list.

MS. BOND: Yeah. The pink ones

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: So, she does follow through.

MS. BOND: That guilts all the other people that didn't finish it.

MR. THOMAS : I wonder if on the—I'm mostly concerned with the participation rate of the departments—not the Human Resources staff—whether this can, sort of, communicate our interest in hearing not what they think of the performance of the Director, because few of them would ever have direct contact with the Director. So I could see a lot of people setting this aside and saying, "Well, I hardly know who she is." Can we word it such a way that adopts "the buck stops here" philosophy—and ask them in conjunction with—or because we are charged with evaluating the Director, please consider your experiences with any staff person that the Director supervises within her department? I'm not sure how to—quite how to word it, but I'd like to see people feel like, "Well, I did have a contact with so-and-so and that was very successful"—or "I had one experience that I think I'd ought to tell you about because it wasn't so successful."

I just think people are missing from this letter the importance of sharing your experiences with the department, as opposed to just, "Did you have a meeting with the Director—how did it go?"—which is, sort of, what I think this letter maybe received as saying.

CHR. CABANAS: Well, the sheet of questions is of a variety where we ask about the Director, but we also ask about the staff. So, on the yellow sheet, for instance we ask, "Human Resources efficiently assist me doing my job"—that can be anyone in the department; Number 2, "The Director works effectively with me and other members of departmental staff;"—Number 3, "The HR staff address my questions in a timely manner." So, it kind of changes regarding department, director, staff—it's not only—

MS. BOND: So, maybe the title is what needs changing—"Annual Performance Evaluation of the Department of Human Resources and Their Staff"—or something. No?

CHR. CABANAS: By statute, it's the evaluation of the Director.

MS. BOND: Oh, is that—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. BOND: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: Contact—I agree the form does it—the form seems to do it well. It does invite responses that are based on any contact with a department.

So, Susie, you may be on to something that's just a matter of titling it in such a way that encourages people to realize that's really what we're being asked to do (inaudible).

MS. BOND: "Director of HR and Her Staff"—

CHR. CABANAS: Could we do it and add "and Staff"—

MR. THOMAS: Well, it could say something about the Director's leadership of the department.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Because the statute requires the Board to evaluate the Director—so by definition, her job duties oversees the department, but I don't know that qualifying it any further—'cause you're not evaluating the staff, specifically, you're evaluating the Director, right?

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, I think it would add more confusion by adding qualifiers rather than just keeping it simple, because if they don't understand, then they can ask a question—is probably what they're doing. I don't think we've ever had any person ask any questions about what the evaluation is about. So, I don't think it's necessary. I haven't seen any—

SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MS. TOKIHIRO: And I'll just clarify that this Cabinet, all of the Mayor's directors, department heads, agency heads—we all work very closely together. So, yeah, I'll just qualify that—that it's—we regularly meet and discuss and address issues.

CHR. CABANAS: I mean, the only other thing I could think of is to ask—and I'm just thinking out loud now—ask for the Administration to encourage their Cabinet to complete the evaluation. Have it come from the Managing Director since he's responsible for the operations of the departments—that's the only thing I could think of.

MR. THOMAS: I like that.

CHR. CABANAS: And I don't know if they would want to do it, but—

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, because—yeah. I mean, it could just be a little encouraging statement.

MR. THOMAS: I mean, you both could sign it—directed from both of you—but including the Managing Director as the main communicator as opposed to the Chair of the (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah, I mean, what is—it's not hard to fill out this form.

CHR. CABANAS: So, how would we go about doing that?

MR. THOMAS: I can't think of—I think of how many surveys I get. I mean, I walked into a little store, and I looked around a bit—and then, somehow or other, they got my email address—and now I'm getting their surveys and a follow-up survey if you didn't fill out our survey, and I don't even remember who this is from.

I think people are getting survey poofed.

MS. BOND: That's true.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, I think if the Board wanted to do that, then a letter to the Managing Director making the request, I think, is appropriate, 'cause the MD is the one that supervise—

MR. AGUINALDO: (Inaudible.)

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yeah.

MR. AGUINALDO: (Inaudible.)

MS. BOND: (Inaudible.)

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: And getting people to fill out the survey.

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

MR. THOMAS: The survey itself is pretty simple. I don't think that it's a turn-off.

MS. BOND: Yeah, but I have to admit—the survey thing is getting out of control. I mean, every appointment, every—"Did you like us?" "Did you like us?"

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, but in terms of government and job performance, department heads are not asked to evaluate other people, other than the Director of HR.

MS. BOND: So, yeah, so this shouldn't be a survey—

CHR. CABANAS: Police doesn't do it. Fire doesn't do it. Liquor doesn't do it. We do it. Why do we do it? Because we're responsible for the merit system principle, which governs throughout the County of Hawai'i—that's why we do it.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: So, would a letter separate from our letter—a letter maybe going out from the Managing Director ahead of my letter—might work so they know it's coming down or would it be best just to—a statement at the Cab—how often are your Cabinet meetings? Every week?

MS. TOKIHIRO: We meet once a month.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, once a month.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I would not make a statement, on my own behalf, requesting that you folks complete the survey.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no, not you—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah—

CHR. CABANAS: —the Managing Director.

MS. TOKIHIRO: But, if you folks—if the Board wanted to send a separate correspondence to the Managing Director and the Mayor letting them know, “Hey, the survey is going to be going out. We’re hoping for maximum participation from all of your departments. Could you encourage people to complete it”—or whatever. Then, at least, that would be a separate notification.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And then, how they choose to handle that would be up to them.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: You need a motion?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. I’ll entertain a motion.

MS. BOND: So—

CHR. CABANAS: To send a letter—

MS. BOND: I move that we request of the Managing Director that he encourage by via letter—the Cabi—the department heads to participate in the survey—

CHR. CABANAS: Department heads, deputies—

MS. BOND: Whoever—yeah. That big, long list of people, the 17 heads and the—

CHR. CABANAS: And HR representatives/assistants.

MS. BOND: Yeah, department heads, HR representatives, deputy heads—

CHR. CABANAS: Deputies, HR representatives and assistants.

MS. BOND: Okay, that's the one. The deput—the directors, the deputy directors, administrative—assistant administrators, HR representatives, and HR assistants be encouraged to participate in the survey.

CHR. CABANAS: That will be sent out by the Merit Appeals Board.

MS. BOND: That will be sent out by the Merit Appeals Board.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: 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.

Motion carried. Four ayes—motion carried.

Okay, so the timeline that Glynis has indicated here is okay with everyone?

MR. AGUINALDO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, so the letter to the Mayor and the Managing Director would go out several days before—where's your timeline—oh, here. She would send it out May 21—

MR. THOMAS: Well, is there an agenda? Yeah, what's the agenda? Is there an agenda for the Cabinet meetings?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It's less formal. I mean, the Mayor comes up with different topics based on operational needs.

MR. THOMAS: So, maybe ask the Mayor to make mention of it at the next meeting?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, the next Cabinet meeting would be May 4th.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, that's not next week, but the following. Is that a Monday? So, not next week, but the following Monday. So, are you going to do a—draft a letter for us to go out next week?

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you so much—for me—no, not for me to—oh, yeah, for me to sign. Yeah, okay, that's fine. Oh, thank you so much. Okay. And he can bring it up, too, if he wants at the meeting, it's up to him. Okay. Okay, so we got that set.

The questions okay on the yellow sheet and the green sheet? You folks are okay, Niel—okay. And, I guess, that's it.

MS. BOND: So, I move that we approve—

CHR. CABANAS: Wait—yeah, I was just going to do that—we're not done yet.

MS. BOND: Oh, I was going to move to approve the questions for the survey.

CHR. CABANAS: No, not yet. So, the goals on the golden rod sheet, are listed here—Goal 1, 2, 3; and then we match up the questions internally are the alpha. lettering; and the numbers are the line department survey questions—that's how we line it up.

We also send a letter to Sommer requesting the department's budget for the last fiscal year and the upcoming year—the current budget, yeah—last year and current budget report—a copy of your variance report for last fiscal year and your current budget year. So, we need this letter as well. Okay.

So, any comments, concerns about the rating form? What about you, Sommer, did you find it helpful when you—when we gave you the comments and shared with you—was it helpful to you when you went back in your own respective follow-up?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes, very much. It was very helpful. I appreciate, especially, the boxes that you folks provide where it's not just the rating. I mean, there's—there could be a lot behind an answer that has a score of "1" and the same would be true for a score of "5"—and so, I appreciate the text boxes where people can provide their individual comments and not just the numeric ranking.

So, that's helpful to me. All the feedback is helpful.

CHR. CABANAS: Any comments/concerns from the staff when they got their survey?

MS. TOKIHIRO: No one on the staff has discussed the survey with me. Yeah.

So, I generally brought back last year's survey results—indicated some areas of concern. And so, I shared in a general sense with my Management Team, some of those concerns because I want to move forward in finding ways to address those issues and correct things. So—but I haven't—I didn't receive any direct feedback about the survey itself.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Thank you.

Okay, so we are ready, I believe, to have a motion to approve the entire process as we have discussed this afternoon, if you are all okay with it?

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any further 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.

Announcements (Item 9)

CHR. CABANAS: Are there any "Announcements?" No?

Schedule Next Meeting Date (Item 10)

The Merit Appeals Board Will Convene Its Next Meeting On Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 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: The next meeting for the Merit Appeals Board will be Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 9 a.m., at the Hilo Council Chambers, at the Hawai'i County Building, at 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?

MR. THOMAS: So moved.

MS. BOND: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any further discussion? If not, start 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 adjourn today's meeting at 2:26 p.m. Thank you, everyone.

DRAFT

Respectfully submitted,

Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter

APPROVED:

Gabriella M. Cabanas, Chair
Merit Appeals Board