

REGULAR SESSION

Merit Appeals Board
Hilo Council Chambers
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street, First Floor, Room 1401
Hilo, Hawai'i
May 12, 2026 (Tuesday)

Call to Order (Item 1)

The regular meeting of the Merit Appeals Board, County of Hawai'i, was called to order at 9:04 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 Tuesday, May 12, 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
Ms. Sommer J. Tokihiro, Director, Human Resources Department
Ms. Trisha C. Gibo, Deputy Attorney General, Department of the Attorney General
(via Zoom)
Ms. Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter, Human Resources Department

Call to Order (Item 1)

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. So the meeting is called to order at 9:04 a.m., the Merit Appeals Board members are present. We have four of us. I'm Gabriella Cabanas, Chair of the Merit Appeals Board. Sitting with me at the Hilo Council Chambers, at the Hawai'i County Building, at 25 Aupuni Street, Room 1401, are Ms. Suzi Bond—

MS. BOND: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: —Vice-Chair—and Mr. Gilbert Aguinaldo.

MR. AGUINALDO: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And Mr. Niel Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And we also have our Assistant Corporation Counsel, Mr. J Yoshimoto.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Good morning, everyone.

CHR. CABANAS: And our Secretary-Reporter, Glynis Yamada.

MS. YAMADA: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Our Human Resources Director, Sommer Tokihiro.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: And our Deputy Attorney General from O'ahu, sitting in via Zoom is Ms. Trisha Gibo.

MS. GIBO: Good morning.

CHR. CABANAS: Good morning, everyone.

Addendum to Agenda (Item 2)

CHR. CABANAS: There's no addendum to the agenda.

Statements from the Public (Item 3)

CHR. CABANAS: No "Statements from the Public."

Approval of Minutes (Item 4)

CHR. CABANAS: No meeting minutes to review and approve.

Director's Report (Item 5)

MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report: May 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: So we are now on the "Director's Report" for MAB's Monthly Divisional Activity Report for the Month of May 2026. So, I'll turn this over to you, Sommer, if you want to highlight anything in the report.

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

MS. TOKIHIRO: Good morning, everyone. It's been another busy month in the Department of Human Resources.

We—last week, Recruitment and Examination Division Manager Stacie, and Danny, and I attended a summit that was hosted by the Department of Research and Development, which was related to workforce. So, it's about connecting employers and agencies that are working with people who are looking for work to, kind of, bridge that workforce gap.

So, when the Mayor initially took office, he assembled an HR Task Force, which has now transitioned to this Workforce Taskforce, which is more of a partnership with Human Resources, and Research and Development, and private employers in the community—to see that, hopefully, build connections. And so—that we're all working from the same understanding of local resources, to develop new programs, new initiatives, internship opportunities, mentorship opportunities—things of that nature. So, we were really happy to be asked to participate. I participated in a panel discussion that featured government as an employer. And so, that was a good event.

The Recruitment and Examination Division has been working with the Police Department on streamlining their application process which, hopefully, will help us to be able to respond to applicants for positions in our Police Department faster.

The current process is that applicants fill out our regular recruitment application through our NeoGov platform. And then, if their name was referred to the Police Department,

they were then given a separate paper application because the Police Department does different background check requirements, et cetera.

And so, what we're working with them to do is to incorporate all of the information in that paper application into our NeoGov template, which will help keep everything all in one place and should, hopefully, help them be able to complete their initial screening faster, get to that background check step faster—so that we can respond to applications quicker and people who are interested in coming to work for the department—get them on board faster.

So, also last week, our Personnel and Organizational Development Division did their Office Support Staff Conference. This was the second annual conference that they did for our clerical support teams in our departments, and the speakers addressed business writing skills. So Sinclair Salas-Ferguson was the instructor for that from our Office of the Corporation Counsel. And then they also brought in Kuakahi Mediation Center to talk about, basically, communication skills—but it was conflict management.

We don't have a whole lot of training opportunities for support staff and opportunities for them to connect outside of the office. So, this office support conference is a great opportunity for them to be able to network with people from other divisions and departments that they might not, otherwise, come into contact with. So, that was exciting to be able to do that again this year.

I think those are—I mean, there's a lot happening as you can tell from the report, and—but those are a couple of the highlights.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay, thank you. Board members, do you have any questions for the Director? No? None. Niel—

MR. THOMAS: I really enjoy having these reports, and I see them as training opportunities for us as Board members. So, my question would have to do with what you've written here on the Classification and Pay Division.

Can you teach me a bit about how the process—what are the checks and balances on the process—how do you decide that a new position, for instance, is necessary? And is it your decision or is there a decision process involving multiple people?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, if a department comes to us with a need—that they're identifying an operational need that we don't currently have a class of work that addresses that, they provide their—I guess their proposal as far as what are the job duties, what is the work that needs to be accomplished.

And our Classification and Pay Division currently has four staff members. So, the Manager, a Specialist, a Program Specialist, and a Technician. And so, they take that information and then they look at all of the classes of work that we currently have. And

then, if there isn't something that, sort of, captures it—they look at classes of work in the other jurisdictions.

So, in Hawai'i, we have equal pay for equal work, and so our classification system follows that of every other jurisdiction. So, we look at existing classes in other jurisdictions to see if there's something that somebody else is using that maybe we could adopt. In some cases, there isn't—and so, we need to create something that's unique.

So, for example, our Animal Control and Protection Agency because we're, I believe, the only County agency that is handling those tasks—we've had to develop new classes of work to address those job tasks that are being done.

So, the checks and balances occur when once we draft a new class specification or what our proposed class specification is—it gets routed to every other jurisdiction for feedback. And so, they—

MR. THOMAS: “Jurisdictions” mean what?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Maui, Kaua'i, City and County of Honolulu—

MR. THOMAS: For them to see what other counties are doing on that work activity?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Correct. To see if they—and to see if they have any concerns about the class as we've proposed it. They'll look at the minimum qualifications, they also look at the assigned pricing that we've provided, and then they provide feedback.

The class specifications are also reviewed by our Recruitment and Examination Division because they would be the ones that are actually screening applications to see if people meet those minimum qualifications. So, it's important to make sure that the Recruitment and Examination Division is really understanding what is being outlined by Classification and Pay in this new class spec.

So, once the position routes for jurisdictional review, then we may make amendments based on feedback from the other counties or it may be adopted as final, at that point. So, ultimately, the creation of new positions or those new class specifications—amendments to class specifications—falls under the authority of the Director—but we don't operate—

MR. THOMAS: The “Director” being you?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Me—yeah. But we don't operate in a silo because of the requirement for equal pay for equal work.

So, it's very much a collaborative effort between Classification and Pay, Recruitment and Examination, our departments—and then, other counties throughout the State.

MR. THOMAS: Do you have to wrestle with situations where your Classification and Pay people, for instance, are not really convinced based on the (inaudible) that presented to them by the department or the requesting agency? Do they—how do they become convinced that a reasonable pool of applicants can be found? I guess, in the back of my head is—are there instances where the supposed new position is really being created for a particular individual in mind?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, to that end, I would just say that when Human Resources works with our departments to talk about operational needs, it's always focused on operational need and not based on individuals.

There are instances where a department's request for something very specific is not something that we feel aligns with whether it's the way that the department structure is set up or that the particular class of work is not equivalent to what would be happening in Hawai'i County. And—kind of a common example is if a department finds a class specification for a position that exist in the City and County of Honolulu and especially when it's like an upper-level management type position, because the scale of the City and County of Honolulu versus the County of Hawai'i is very different.

So, when we are looking at equivalent jurisdictions, we usually consider Maui to be the most comparable to Hawai'i County. Kaua'i County has—they're smaller—they have about half of the number of employees that we do, but we usually scale based on what Maui is using.

So, City and County of Honolulu class specifications sometimes can cause us some challenges—and that has come up recently. And so, what we try and do is sit down with the departments and help them to understand why it wouldn't be comparable—and then propose alternatives and provide the feedback as to why we're recommending it. And then, also provide information about that internal alignment with other departments and how that department structure would be impacted.

So, sometimes people or departments will go, "Well, I want to do this. And so, I'm going to take this task from this division and add it to this. And I'm going take this task from this division and add it here"—not recognizing that once you start moving those tasks, a few different things have to happen. You need to consult with the Union because there may be change of supervision, but then you're also affecting the classification of the position, potentially, that you're taking tasks from because all of the pricing and the classification is based on the job duties. So, once you start removing or moving job duties to a different area of responsibility, there could be other—we'll call them "unintended consequences."

So, it's really important that we work closely with the departments and really engage with them and provide those explanations and opportunities for education and training.

MR. THOMAS: This is all helpful. Thank you. Another topic that creeps into all of this is what you might call (inaudible). How do you—is there a way to identify that this is not enhancing the role or the work of the agency that's requesting a position or a group of positions—but it's really, kind of, expanding the work of a agency without legislative approval or—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes. So, that becomes a slightly tougher question, right. I mean, we can only take the information regarding what the department is saying—is there operational need and then looking at the job duties that they're proposing for whatever position—whether it's a reallocation or an initial position allocation or a new class of work—and then, provide feedback based on our research.

So, in some cases, we may identify through research that such a thing is happening that maybe there's a statutory or regulatory requirement that would seem to be being missed by just creating a position. But we really do rely on our department heads as subject matter experts as far as clarification of roles of an agency or department that may be expanding beyond something that would be required to be addressed through legislation.

MR. THOMAS: So, I see your job is really a challenge because you have to know the substance of everything that every agency does. So, let me ask this and I'll turn it back to you in a moment, thank you.

Is there a private line to you where people can provide input to you without fear—like, somebody says, "Oh, they're trying to create a position and is really questionable need for this"—or they're designing it in a certain way and do you really know and are you taking this into account—and how do people get to you to be sure that you're analyzing the request in a way that's consistent with what people, who work these jobs, are used to doing?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, that's a good question. Departments—certainly, directors, deputy directors—they'll reach out and talk to me directly. There may be people from other departments that would reach out—and the process of allocating a position, reallocating a position, establishing a position—it all involves also approval and work with the Mayor, the Managing Director, and our Department of Finance.

And so, it's—there are multiple opportunities for review and collaboration and discussion, but if people have concerns, they generally will reach out. And if it's not to myself directly, it could be to a member of the Classification and Pay staff, but we still—we always do our due diligence, do our research, and then do our assessment, and come up with a result.

MR. THOMAS: So, I think I hear you saying there is a confidential line to you—what do you do to encourage that sort of thing—I would think it would be useful to you.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, I always try and make myself available to anybody who's reaching out—return all my voicemails the same business day and make sure that I'm always communicating with people. And so, I encourage that kind of communication.

In our Cabinet meetings, always encouraging people to reach out. And this Cabinet group, we got off to a great start in the beginning of the Mayor's term as far as sitting down with all the department heads and working together to have these conversations. I have regular meetings with or standing meetings with the Director of Research and Development, talk to the Finance Director multiple times a week, and so we have a good group.

But with my staff, also, is meeting with departments. I like to attend those meetings so that I can remain informed and, again, always just encourage people to reach out and talk to us, because it's really a team effort.

MR. THOMAS: Last question. Are there any areas in this kind of conversation we've had here where you see—where you would hope for improvement?

MS. TOKOHIRO: I think that there's always room for improvement in that collaboration effort. I mean, I think that there's always more opportunities to share more information and provide more of those learning opportunities, as you mentioned—giving us the opportunity to explain.

Last week we had a meeting with the Fire Department—specific to these Temporary Safer Grant fire fighter positions that we have, because those positions are temporary there're going to be some action for those employees that are going to be a little bit different.

And so, sitting down with them even before they hire the first person to go over all of the things that we need to be mindful of and to say, "Hey, when we're addressing these 12 positions, we really need to take a step back before we just proceed with any action—take a step back, recollect ourselves, remind ourselves that the status of these employees is different, so that we can really be mindful of how we're handling all the personnel actions."

And so, I think that the—there is room for improvement in communication on the front end with departments before something is even happening. Sometimes the first time that we'll hear about something is when it's before Council for approval—for the funding. And we really would like to be involved with departments long before they may come to Council for some type of approval, so that we can help them to understand, "This was—this is what would be involved, this is what we're seeing—whether or not it's an existing

class or a new class”—we can keep them—give them the timelines for any required union consultations, et cetera.

So, that front end proactive approach, I think, helps everybody to understand, be on the same page, be aware of all the different steps that will be involved, be aware of anticipated timelines—so that, then, it doesn't just become, “Well, it's with HR and HR takes forever”—it's, like, there is a process to it. So, let's help you to understand what that process is so that the expectations are aligned with what's actually happening.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you, Professor, I appreciate the orientation.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Thank you for asking.

MR. THOMAS: On the surface, our group is supposed to hear appeals, but I think the context within which a particular case comes up is important to us. I don't know if there's any training that would be appropriate to ask Classification—this group to present to us, but I know any of us who—some of you who've been at this for a lifetime, it seems—some of us have not and maybe there's room for helping us understand the context that these cases bring to us. Thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Good point. I guess if the Board wanted an overview, again, of the various functional areas, we could ask the Director to have her Managers conduct a brief overview, and then whatever questions you may have in their functional area—because there's eight different divisions within the department—you could ask. But then, we have to be mindful that we have appeals coming in certain areas that we shouldn't delve into, so that we're not in conflict—but I think that's possible, if you want an overview.

We're still waiting for the fifth Board position to be filled, and I'm getting quite concerned because we've been waiting, like, two—almost two years for that position to be filled. And, to me, it's important because I'd like to have a full Board of five members—and then, have the overview, so that everyone gets the information.

MR. THOMAS: Is that fifth position, sort of, earmarked for a particular part of the County?

CHR. CABANAS: I understood that it was to be from Kona.

MR. THOMAS: From Kona.

CHR. CABANAS: And I've talked to the Managing Director, myself, because it's been quite long, so—and I've talked to Micah, also—several times. So, they said they're working on it, but—

MR. THOMAS: And they could ask us to make suggestions and try to recruit people, too, I suppose.

CHR. CABANAS: Well, you could refer individuals to apply for various boards and commissions.

MR. THOMAS: Do we see a particular area of expertise that the fifth Board member would be good to bring to this group.

CHR. CABANAS: I'm not sure, I think it's really up to the Administration—

MR. THOMAS: Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: —what they—what they're looking for. I'm not sure.

MR. THOMAS: Okay, thank you.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah, you're welcome.

MS. BOND: I have to say, Micah doesn't duck and cover every time I go anywhere near him. He's like, "No, (inaudible)."

CHR. CABANAS: Anyway—okay, other questions for Sommer? Gilbert, you have any? Suzie, any? I'm just looking at this—so, I noticed the Equal Opportunity, they do monthly anti-discrimination and harassment training. Do—what happens if someone comes to you and say, "I'm getting harassed at work"—or "I'm getting—I have this situation"—what can you do to help them, if anything?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, Alika will provide guidance regarding the policy and then the necessary reporting documentation to complete. And, actually, I did research because it's come up several times where we were talking about the number of complaints or inquiries per month.

And so, I've been looking at the log, and the log encompasses a variety of things. It's not just filing of complaints; it could be inquiries regarding a particular process—like a request for a reasonable accommodation or it could be request for training as well.

So, those are actually when individuals or departments—'cause it's not all employees. It could be departments that are investigating an issue that they're reaching out to Alika for some type of guidance.

So, if an employee was reporting what they consider to be harassment, we would definitely connect them with the appropriate way to file their complaint, so that the allegations could be investigated.

CHR. CABANAS: And the complaint is filed with Alika—with the Manager?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It would be filed with the—it's referred to the department for initial follow-up.

CHR. CABANAS: But what if the situation is within that department?

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, if the employee for some reason felt uncomfortable reporting it to their department, then we have stepped in and we can report it through Alika—and then, we would work with the department to try and address it.

CHR. CABANAS: Has that ever happened?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It has.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay. And what's the remedy to that?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It depends on what the findings of the investigation are. So, in some cases, we have had incidents where there's been violations of the Violence in the Workplace Policy or there could be—I'm not aware of a recent case of harassment—but with the violations of the Violence in the Workplace Policy, then it's up to the appointing authority to determine the discipline.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. The other question I had—I have two questions, really. Going to Classification for the Clerk Series—so we've had, historically, Clerk I, II, and III—so these have been retitled to Office Assistant?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes.

CHR. CABANAS: So, are they all—I guess my question is—let's say a Clerk III is now an Office Assistant—or is it an Office Assistant III?

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes, Office Assistant III.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, we kept the—those—

CHR. CABANAS: You kept the levels.

MS. TOKIHIRO: The steps—yes.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. I got it. Okay. And then, for the Admin. Services Division, I noticed they didn't report on fixing bugs to the system. And I've been hearing some

kickback or some concerns from employees about that—not getting correct pay—and so, can you comment on that? Why didn't she put it in the report?

MS. TOKIHIRO: I think she probably didn't put it in the report because it's something that they just do all day, every day—and so, it's become just so routine. But, yes, the—we are continuing to work on the CoHnect system daily. And the CoHnect system covers a variety of different aspects.

So, there's our module, which is the information in the system that includes your personnel information, the position that you're in, et cetera; but then there's the payroll component, which would address any irregularities in pay; and then our Finance module—so all of our expenses, and how we pay bills, and purchase orders, and budgeting. And so, everything appears to kind of crossover and there is a lot more crossover in CoHnect than there was in the former system.

So, really, addressing problems becomes kind of like peeling back the layers of an onion to figure out where that source is. Is it in the payroll module or is it something that is to be addressed by payroll; or is there something in the HR module that's affecting it. And so, we have—continue to have daily meetings with the Implementor of our system and weekly meetings with different support providers, as we continue to try and iron out some of the bugs and work on getting the reports out that we need.

CHR. CABANAS: I guess what I hear from employees is that they can't see—how can I explain it. They cannot see the track on—they can't—when they're looking at it, they can't see the track for what they're getting paid for. It's not transparent. It's not clear to them as a—just reading whatever—I don't know what the paystub looks like, but it's not clear to them.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It is very different as far as the way that the system reports the information and because we do timecards now on a weekly basis and depending on when the timecard is approved—there are some differences in the way that, say, overtime gets processed or the leave gets processed. It differs compared to how it was done before.

So, I have heard that feedback as well that the tracking is a little bit more difficult on the part of the employees because it's two parts—it's, one, the employee puts in their timecard but it's when their supervisor approves it—and then, what the payroll deadline was. And so, it can be confusing.

CHR. CABANAS: So, it sounds like—this might be more for payroll than HR—but it sounds like they can't decipher or match up the hours worked with the pay. That's what it sounds like. And I don't know, I've never seen it, so I can't comment on that—but they can't understand it. They don't know if they're getting paid correctly—that's the bottom line.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And that's where—that really is a payroll function. So, like, in HR—we're not reporting payroll. We put in the person's position, what is the pay for that position—but, you see, even leave balances, because the system now accrues the leave balances and has that available for employees to see in the system, but all of those things are that payroll component. And so, we have to encourage employees to meet with their department payroll staff so that they can get that clarification and reassurance that their—that their pay is correct.

MS. BOND: I think it's probably the translation between the timecard and the paystub. The timecard says one thing—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MS. BOND: —and the paystub says another (inaudible).

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, and they can't—and then, they're looking at it, they're trying to compute it on their own and it doesn't come out.

MS. BOND: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: For a lack of a better explanation.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. So, that just, kind of, concerns me because transparency should be there for—whether it's HR or payroll—and it sounds like the system setup, which should have been addressed when the RFP was developed, so that when the committee looking at it—that should have been something that is a priority because employees always need to know that they're getting paid correctly and they can track it.

So, that's not really for you but if—that's a concern really.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah, absolutely. And putting together an RFP for a program, kind of, as all-encompassing as this program is—it's quite a challenge in and of itself, right. And so, I mean, I'm not aware of what those bid specs. were, but just for the Board's understanding, you're actually having to identify—"We want the system to provide a pay slip that summarizes what is the employees pay for this duration of time." I mean, and going through every function that the software does to be able to describe what is our requirement from the system. But we're doing it—we do provide—or we provided samples of reports.

So, I know that for the HR module, we provided samples of actual reports that had come from Fresh that we were used to using and said that, "We would like this information. This is a requirement of this system. We need this information from it." But how that information comes out in the new system is not something that we necessarily get to dictate.

So, it's kind of this—we can show—kind of show and tell and put into words and say what we want—but there is some variability and difference as far as what their system can provide. So, they'll say that they're meeting the requirement, but what it looks like for us may be very different.

So, that's part of the learning process, but it's also part of going through it now and saying, "Okay, this is what you've provided but this doesn't work for us, and this is why." And so, then those are the things that we're trying to figure out—are they things where the CoHnect didn't provide it? That Oracle didn't provide it? Or is Oracle providing it and it's in a different form, and now we need to make some adjustments to it.

So, it's—this is going to be the County's system for the next 20-30 years, and this system is very different from Fresh because I call it this living/breathing thing—every month we get patches, every quarter we get updates. And so, like, right now, the staff is actively testing the next set of updates that will be launched over the weekend because we're looking at, "Well, this update is in this area but how does it affect every other action?" And so, the amount of work that goes into it on a continuous basis is really—it's a lot.

So, as part of the presentation next month—when I provide the presentation regarding the MAB goals, you'll get some insights into what the timeline for this project has been, all of the training that we have provided, and then you'll get some snapshots so that you can see what it actually looks like. So—

MS. BOND: And maybe a simple solution could be that payroll does a "How to Read Your Paystub."

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

MS. BOND: How—this is what you wrote down, this is what comes out, how to translate. And, I mean, just a simple one-page explanation might be the best way to go about it. I mean, I know it's not your job but—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah. And I think, as I mentioned, some of that variability to, like, I was just imagining—I filled out my timecard for last week. If I had worked overtime and the payroll cutoff day was on Wednesday—I could've gotten some overtime from last week in the current paycheck and then there may be a lag to the next paycheck for the overtime that was earned Thursday and Friday.

So, I think that kind of education for the employees is where we're having to provide those insights as well because it's all of those things and then the payroll cutoff dates really can impact it as well. So, it's not that the payroll cutoff date is May 15th and May 31st—which is how we get paid. The payroll cutoff dates are odd days in between and so that can affect what's on a paycheck.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. So, I think that's important because employees, as a whole, they need to understand the workings of the system as well.

Be mindful that because we serve on the Merit Appeals Board when we're out and about, people start making comments to us. We're not going up to them—they're coming to us. And it's like—I know if it—I don't know if it's happened to you, but they know me because I'm in HR, so—I was in HR—and so, they come up to me—and I don't know because I'm not working anymore but I can only hear what they're telling me. So, I think that would be very helpful for the employees and also to help—please relay that concern to the payroll division.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes, I will definitely share that with the Director of Finance and so that we can—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, that would be helpful.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: And I think if the employees know that you're actually trying to resolve it or make it clearer to them, they'll feel better because I think, like, some of them feel like they're lost or they're in the dark—they're trying to figure it out on their own and they can't and—I don't know if there's anybody there to help them. I have no idea. So, yeah, if you can, yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I, definitely, will.

CHR. CABANAS: But that's why I was a little taken aback because when I saw Admin. Services Division, it—she didn't mention anything about what's going on, and although it's routine, it's not routine to the employees.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Right.

CHR. CABANAS: Because they're expected to get paid accurately and timely, although this system is what, two weeks behind—you're two weeks behind, right?

MS. TOKIHIRO: It depends—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: So, sometimes—yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: There's overtime or whatever—

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Or TA or whatever it is. So, yeah, I just wanted to bring that up but—okay, very good.

MS. TOKIHIRO: And I can have her differentiate the CoHnect things that we're working on, on the HCM side because we do still have regular meetings to address different issues that are coming up and different challenges that we have, so it wouldn't be this payroll issue—but working with IT to get support addressing user roles, maintaining security.

And then, as I mentioned with the patches and the updates that come out periodically—there's a lot of testing that goes into seeing which modules are going to be impacted. I know this update that is supposed to come out this weekend, it would affect our Work Comp. Division as well as our Personnel and Organizational Development Division because they handle all their training through the online training catalog through this system as well.

Our Work Comp. Division, all of the invoices that are paid for our workers' compensation claims are documented in our claims software and then have to get exported into the system. And then, there's an issue that has to do with notifications that's impacting our Admin. Services Division, to the point where we're evaluating if we're going to take the new update or not because we need to iron out some of those impacts before we just put in the update, which may potentially break some of these notification systems and workflow processes that we have. So, regularly working with IT and our support network for the software to address issues.

CHR. CABANAS: Now, what happens if there is an error that's discovered and then payroll has to go back retro. and make the corrections. So, now the employee is or may get a greater sum and then the impact to that employee is the taxes that are deducted in a greater amount.

MS. TOKIHIRO: It potentially—I couldn't answer that just because that's more of a payroll—that's a payroll question—

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah.

MS. TOKIHIRO: I couldn't—but I could, generally—in a general sense, right—retro pay that would be for an amount that was greater than the salary—yes, the taxes would be deducted proportionately to the amount.

CHR. CABANAS: Right.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yeah.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. So, that's another concern. But, anyway, thank you for listening and relaying that concern back to the Director of Finance.

MS. TOKIHIRO: Yes, I will.

CHR. CABANAS: Okay. Anyone else on the MAB report? Okay, if not, may I have a motion to accept and file the Director's MAB Monthly Divisional Activity Report for the Month of May 2026.

MS. BOND: So moved.

MR. AGUINALDO: I 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. The Director's report for the month of May is approved, and accepted and filed.

Communication(s) Item 6

CHR. CABANAS: We do not have any "Communications."

New Business (Item 7)

CHR. CABANAS: No "New Business."

Unfinished Business (Item 8)

Executive Session: The Merit Appeals Board Anticipates Convening One Or More Executive Meetings Regarding The Matters 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.

The Informational Briefing/Update From Deputy Attorney General Trisha C. Gibo, Is Confidential And Attorney Client Privileged Communication Regarding The Status Of Each Case (Concerning Items A, B, And C).

A. Communication No. 25-06 (And Related Communications), Filed By Employees Of The Police Department Appealing A Classification Or Reclassification Of A Particular Position

B. Communication No. 25-03 (And Related Communications), Filed By Tony M. Enriquez, Appealing An Employment Action Taken Under Chapter 76, HRS

C. Communication No. 25-08, Concerning SCWC Loyola V. County Of Hawai'i

CHR. CABANAS: But we do have "Unfinished Business." And there's a need for us, I think, to go into executive session, so I'm going to read the verbiage for that.

(At this time, Chair Cabanas read into the record the above summaries.)

CHR. CABANAS: So, at this time, may I have a motion for us to go into executive session.

MR. THOMAS: So moved.

MS. BOND: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Thank you. Any discussion? If—yes?

MR. THOMAS: I see on the Zoom link that we have an "Observer"—is that someone who needs to take up something?

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no—she is our Deputy Attorney—

MS. BOND: No, no—the "Observer" just went away.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, the “Observer” just disappeared. Okay.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, I didn’t see that other individual. If—they’re still there?

MS. BOND: No.

MR. THOMAS: No.

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, okay. All righty. So—yeah, because Trisha Gibo is still on Zoom—our Deputy Attorney General. Okay, so—yeah, so I said, “Any discussion”—then you raised the question. So, we’ll start with 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 approved. We will now enter into executive session, and Glynis will secure the Councilroom for the Board. Thank you. Thank you, Sommer.

RECESS: The Chair called for a recess at 9:50 a.m.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened at 10:24 a.m. in open session.

The Informational Briefing/Update From Deputy Attorney General Trisha C. Gibo, Is Confidential And Attorney Client Privileged Communication Regarding The Status Of Each Case (Concerning Items A, B, And C).

A. Communication No. 25-06 (And Related Communications), Filed By Employees Of The Police Department Appealing A Classification Or Reclassification Of A Particular Position

B. Communication No. 25-03 (And Related Communications), Filed By Tony M. Enriquez, Appealing An Employment Action Taken Under Chapter 76, HRS

C. Communication No. 25-08, Concerning SCWC Loyola V. County Of Hawai'i

MS. BOND: I move that we accept and—

CHR. CABANAS: Oh, no, we're in open session.

MS. BOND: Yeah. I move that, as discussed, we accept and file the DAG update listed on the agenda—Deputy Attorney—yeah, that's a DAG—hello, you want acronym, yeah. The Deputy Attorney General's updates, as listed on the agenda.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, we're in open session right now?

CHR. CABANAS: Yes, we are.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: And so, protocol—is Trisha still here?

CHR. CABANAS: No.

MS. BOND: No.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Oh, okay.

CHR. CABANAS: But she agreed to our motion when we discussed—

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Okay, no, no.

MS. BOND: That's why I wrote it down.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: So, generally, in executive session, when you come out, you briefly summarize—

CHR. CABANAS: Yes.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: —you're doing that, right?

CHR. CABANAS: Well, as discussed in executive session.

MR. YOSHIMOTO: Okay, got it.

CHR. CABANAS: Yeah. We are accepting and filing her updates.

MS. BOND: Right. That's what we—yeah, so, that's when I moved—as we disc—as discussed we accept and file the Deputy Attorney General's updates as—that were listed on the agenda.

CHR. CABANAS: Is there a second?

MR. THOMAS: Second.

CHR. CABANAS: Any discussion? If not, I'll start with 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 Deputy Attorney General's update and briefing on the three communications listed—Communication number 25-06, Communication number 25-03, and Communication number 25-08.

Announcements (Item 9)

CHR. CABANAS: Are there any "Announcements?" Okay, no announcements.

Schedule Next Meeting Date (Item 10)

The Merit Appeals Board Will Convene Its Next Meeting On Wednesday, June 24, 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 Merit Appeals Board will convene its next meeting on Wednesday, June 24th, at 9 a.m., at the Hilo Council Chambers of 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?

MS. BOND: So moved.

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 adjourn today's meeting at 10:27 a.m. Thank you, everyone, have a great work week and be safe.

Respectfully submitted,

Glynis Yamada, Secretary-Reporter

APPROVED:

Gabriella M. Cabanas, Chair
Merit Appeals Board