

HONOLULU FIRE COMMISSION

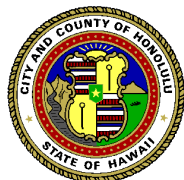
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2023 Annual Report of the Honolulu Fire Commission

The Honolulu Fire Commission (“**Commission**”), a pivotal entity within the Honolulu Fire Department (“**HFD**”), is delighted to present its Annual Report for the year 2023 to the Mayor and City Council. This report underscores the Commission's integral role in the HFD's operations and its achievements throughout the calendar year.

Commission's Powers and Duties:

As outlined in Section 6-1006 of the Revised Charter of the City & County of Honolulu 1973 (Amended 2017 Edition), the Commission is entrusted with several essential powers and duties to ensure the effective functioning of the HFD. These include adopting rules necessary for the conduct of Commission business and reviewing rules for the administration of the HFD, reviewing the annual budget prepared by the Fire Chief, evaluating the HFD's operations, assessing the Fire Chief's performance, reviewing HFD personnel actions, addressing citizen complaints, and submitting an annual report on Commission activities to the Mayor and City Council.

Key Highlights of 2023:

The Commission has made noteworthy strides in fulfilling its responsibilities and enhancing the operations of the HFD in 2023. Some of the key highlights of the year include:

1. Budget Review: The Commission diligently reviewed and provided feedback on the HFD's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 annual budget to ensure fiscal responsibility and alignment with departmental goals.

2. Personnel Actions: The Commission continued to monitor personnel actions and address concerns within the HFD to ensure compliance with established policies and procedures, promoting transparency and accountability.

3. Enhanced Reporting: Building on previous efforts, the Commission worked to enhance the Fire Chief's monthly report by including additional data and information beneficial to the public. This included detailed charts on incidents and personnel vacancies, positive public feedback, and comprehensive budget details.

4. Performance Evaluation: A comprehensive assessment of the Fire Chief's performance for 2023 was conducted by the Commission, culminating in a detailed report submitted to the Mayor and City Council. The relationship between the Fire Chief and the Commission remains robust and transparent, fostering high morale and a sense of approachability and receptiveness within the HFD.

5. Investigation Closures: Following an investigation into allegations regarding a private citizen complaint alleging improper U.S. and State flag placement and position at the Waipahu Fire Station on the 4th of July. The Commission concluded that it was satisfied with Fire Chief Hao's remedy and that the HFD would install locks on its flag poles. Therefore, the claim was "Not Sustained" due to video and witness testimony that the flags were hung upside down by a trespassing private citizen, without the consent of the department. The Commission's decision was made based on a comprehensive review of relevant information provided by the Fire Chief.

The Commission also reviewed a complaint regarding a possible breach of confidentiality regarding Fire Fighter III promotional interviews in July – August 2023. Based on the findings of the Fire Chief and the department's investigation, the Commission voted not to take further action in light of the detailed responses already given by Fire Chief Hao in earlier Commission meetings.

6. Community Engagement: The Commission continued to engage with the community and stakeholders, actively addressing citizen complaints and working towards improving relationships between HFD management and the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA) for the benefit of all parties involved.

7. Department Engagement: We are pleased to report on HFD engagement activities conducted by Commission members. Our efforts to connect with HFD personnel and evaluate various aspects of their operations have been extensive and fruitful. Over the past year, Commission members have demonstrated a high level of engagement by visiting over a dozen HFD stations on Oahu. These visits provided us with valuable insights into the living conditions of our firefighters and the operational dynamics at the grassroots level.

In addition to the station visits, we engaged with key teams within the HFD, including the Helicopter and Rescue, Budget, Facilities, and occupational safety and health administration (OSHA) teams. These interactions allowed us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within each department, enabling us to support their needs better.

Furthermore, our engagement extended to the HFD's Explorers Program, the Mechanic Shop, the Storeroom, the Fire Academy, and the Regional Emergency Depot located at the East Kapolei

Fire Station. These visits were instrumental in broadening our perspective on the diverse functions and facilities that contribute to the HFD's overall effectiveness.

Notably, we also met with the Deputy Director of the City's Department of Facility Maintenance to address the severe backlog of maintenance requests pertaining to HFD facilities. By identifying and prioritizing these maintenance issues, we aim to enhance the safety and efficiency of HFD operations for the benefit of all personnel.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Honolulu Fire Commission remains committed to upholding its duties and responsibilities in overseeing the operations of the Honolulu Fire Department. The Commission acknowledges the dedication of its volunteer Commissioners and staff members in carrying out its functions effectively and looks forward to further enhancing its impact in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Honolulu Fire Commission,

Dennis Morton
Chair, Honolulu Fire Commission