

MINUTES  
BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY  
**Thursday July 20, 2023**

The Board of Water Supply, County of Kaua‘i, met in a regular meeting in Līhu'e on Thursday, July 20, 2023. Chair Kurt Akamine called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The following Board members were present:

**BOARD:**

Mr. Kurt Akamine, *Chair*  
Mr. Larry Dill  
Ms. Micah Finnila  
Mr. Ka‘aina Hull (*entered at 9:35 a.m. Remote*)  
Mr. Tom Shigemoto  
Mr. Troy Tanigawa

**EXCUSED:**

Ms. Julie Simonton, *Vice Chair*

Quorum was achieved with **5** members present at Roll Call.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, August 17, 2023

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**The agenda was approved with no objections.**

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

1. Regular Board Meeting – June 15, 2023

**The meeting minutes were approved with no objections.**

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discussion and Adoption of Resolution No. 23-10, Farewell to Neal Iseri (Retiree), Lead Electronics Tradesperson, Operations Division

**Resolution No. 23-10 was adopted by the Board.**

**STAFF REPORTS**

1. Fiscal:
  - a. Monthly dashboard
  - b. Budget Report for May 2023
  - c. Quarterly BAB Statement

Waterworks Controller Renee Yadao provided a summary of the Fiscal Division Dashboard, Monthly Budget Report, and Quarterly BAB Statement. She highlighted that all Fiscal positions have been filled with the exception of the Account Clerk position which will remain on hold until they determine the need. There is one Customer Service Representative scheduled to start on August 1, and an Accountant II will start on August 16. Ms. Yadao introduced the new Assistant Waterworks Controller Sherri Silva

## 2. Operations – Monthly dashboard

Assistant Chief of Operations Ryan Smith provided a summary of the Operations monthly dashboard, highlighting the addition of a new Water Service Investigator and have just finished interviews for Pipefitter helper. There are additional candidates about to be tested for Pipefitter Helper, Lead Electrician, and Helper positions. They will be posting the position for the Lead Electronics Tradesperson position that retiree Neal Iseri just vacated.

## 3. Engineering – Monthly dashboard

Engineering Division Chief Jason Kagimoto provided a summary of the Operations Division monthly dashboard highlighting the recent hiring of 2 new Microbiologists. They are still in the same situation with trying to hire civil engineers which is their biggest area of need. They do have a new intern that will be with Engineering for 2 months. Mr. Kagimoto provided an overview of Engineering's Quarterly update.

## 4. Administration:

- a. Monthly dashboard
- b. Public Relations – updates on Public Notices & Announcements, Community Outreach & Education, and Upcoming Events
- c. Human Resources – updates on Personnel Vacancies
- d. Information Technology – updates on Corrective Action Plan

Deputy Manager Michael Hinazumi provided an overview of the Administration Division sections, noting that Administration continues to have staffing challenges and is currently 40% vacant. They are currently looking at methods of reorganization and changing of duties as well as recruitment to fill those positions. He expressed his appreciation to staff members in all 3 divisions who have come forward to help beyond their current scope of duties. Overtime is currently exceeding what was anticipated due to these staffing shortages. Mr. Hinazumi reminded the Board that Project Wet is coming up in September.

Board member Finnilla stated that she is hearing a continuing theme of HR and recruitment being an issue and asked if it would be appropriate to invite HR to come and speak to the Board about their processes. Chair Akamine stated that he and Board member Shigemoto did have an opportunity to speak with the Mayor, and subsequently with DHR and could perhaps provide an update on those conversations at the next meeting.

## 5. Manager and Chief Engineer – Required communications to the Board, and update of Department activities

Deputy Manager Michael Hinazumi provided a summary of the Manager and Chief Engineer's monthly update. Board member Shigemoto asked how the hiring process is going with the other divisions. Mr. Hinazumi stated that the lack of Engineering candidates has resulted in a shortfall not only with the County, but also the State. The current compensation methodology does not promote competitive rates to recruit outside engineers. Mr. Shigemoto acknowledged that the County may not be able to compete salary-wise, but the County has a lot of benefits that private sector doesn't offer. He asked if those benefits are emphasized with potential candidates to which Mr. Hinazumi stated yes, they are emphasized. However, the pay disparity is often still

hugely detrimental. For example, a Civil Engineer position would be offered approximately \$50,000/year, where private sector is offering upwards of \$70,000. Another benefit the private sector has over the County is allowing for remote work which many candidates consider a great benefit. Mr. Hinazumi added that all of DOW's engineering positions are listed as continuous recruitment so that they can receive applications at any given time. Chair Akamine commented that his understanding is that roughly 80% of the County's compensation is benefits (paid holidays, paid vacation and sick leave, etc.) and asked Ms. Finnila how that compares to the private sector. Ms. Finnila stated that the County does have very nice benefits packages, and private sector generally provides between 5 and 7 percent which could equate to around \$15 – 20,000 on top of base salary. Ms. Finnila added that while working from home can be desirable, she feels that a position like engineering would benefit from working with colleagues in person and hopes we can make adjustments to make people want to come back to working in the office.

**TOPICS FOR NEXT BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY MEETING:**

1. Discussion and Possible action to determine criteria for Annual Evaluation of the Manager and Chief Engineer

**TOPICS FOR FUTURE BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY MEETING**

1. Water Systems Investment Plan Briefing *(July/August)*
2. CIP Update

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §92-7(a), the Board may, when deemed necessary, hold an executive session on any agenda item without written public notice if the Executive Session was not anticipated in advance. Any such executive session shall be held pursuant to HRS §92-4 and shall be limited to those items described in HRS §92-5(a).

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cherisse Zaima  
Commission Support Clerk