

MINUTES
BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
Thursday, December 21, 2023

The Board of Water Supply, County of Kaua'i, met in a regular meeting in Līhu'e on Thursday, December 21, 2023. Chair Kurt Akamine called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. The following Board members were present:

BOARD:

Mr. Kurt Akamine, *Chair*
Ms. Julie Simonton, *Vice Chair*
Ms. Micah Finnila (*remote*)
Mr. Troy Tanigawa (*remote*)
Mr. Larry Dill (*entered at 10:12 am; remote*)

EXCUSED:

Mr. Ka'aina Hull
Mr. Tom Shigemoto

Quorum was achieved with 4 members present at Roll Call.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, January 25, 2024

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved with no objections

MEETING MINUTES

1. Regular Board Meeting – November 16, 2023
2. Executive Session – November 16, 2023

The meeting minutes were approved with no objections.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

None received.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion and Possible Action on Manager's Annual Evaluation timeline, process, and criteria (*Deferred from October 19, 2023 meeting*)

Vice-Chair Simonton moved to defer Old Business Item 1. to the January 25, 2024 meeting, seconded by Ms. Finnila; with no objections, motion carried with 4 Ayes.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Confirmation of Board Committee appointments for 2024

Staff noted a revision to the submitted appointments removing Ka'aina Hull from the Rules Committee as he is already appointed to the Finance Committee and adding Kurt Akamine to the Rules Committee as Chair.

Board member Tanigawa moved to confirm the Board Committee appointments for 2024, as amended, seconded by Ms. Simonton; with no objections, motion carried with 4 Ayes.

STAFF REPORTS

1. Fiscal:
 - a. Monthly dashboard
 - b. Budget Report for November 2023

Waterworks Controller Renee Yadao provided a summary of the Fiscal dashboard and budget report submitted, noting that overtime has continued to increase as they are in the middle of their audit cycle. She anticipates this will continue to increase as they will be starting the meter transponder replacements soon. Ms. Yadao noted they will be losing one of their key employees at the end of the month, who was dedicated to the billing team, and her absence will hit hard at the end of January as they are competing for time with the transponder replacement. She thanked Ryan Smith and his East and West crews who replaced over 600 transponders within a 2-week timeframe and expressed her appreciation for their assistance in addressing this issue.

Manager Tait added that the work being done by the Operations crews that Ms. Yadao mentioned was planned to be outsourced, but with Fiscal being now fully staffed, and with the Operations crew, they have made a significant dent in the backlog and is expected to continue though it is above and beyond their normal workload.

Board member Finnila stated she has received inquiries about the transponders and the back-billing on the West side. A lot of concern was expressed about the invoices they were receiving and how they are calculated. It was asked that more PR information be provided to help them better understand how far back they are being billed. Ms. Yadao has been working with Jonell in PR, who created a pamphlet that is being handed out to walk-in customers and is included with the billing statements for the month of November. This pamphlet explains what is happening, and what is to come; however, each situation is different with many contributing factors, so the Customer Service Reps have done a tremendous job in providing more detailed explanations to our customers.

Chair Akamine asked if it is possible that some of the back bills will remain uncollectable. Ms. Yadao explained between the time the transponder failed to when they could get to the actual billing, they can only bill for 6-months which results in revenue loss. After that, it becomes a good-will credit to show the customer that DOW is adjusting the bill because it is not the fault of the customer. Additionally, they offer a payment plan if the customer is unable to pay the full bill.

Vice-Chair Simonton asked whether customers on auto bill payment who receives a reconciled bill that drastically increases, do we automatically take that full amount, or do we make arrangements with the customer. Ms. Yadao stated there is a cap on how much can be withdrawn, and the billing team do their best to notify the customer in advance.

2. Operations – Monthly dashboard

Assistant Chief of Operations Ryan Smith provided a summary of the Operations dashboard, highlighting that they have a new Pipefitter Helper starting in January, but are losing a Welder to retirement. He noted that the first phase of the meter change-out went well, and they identified things they can improve on in the next round. It's been a great collaborative effort between Fiscal and Operations.

3. Engineering – Monthly dashboard

Engineering Division Head Jason Kagimoto provided a summary of the Engineering dashboard, noting that they have hired a Civil Engineer I under Water Resources and Planning which has been a big help. The collaboration between the two sections have been going well. Overtime is still high as they continue to work to keep up with all of their projects with their limited staff.

CIP Project Highlights

- Hanalei replacement of water mains for fire-flow needs are at the point of sending out the drawings for signatures and are on the verge of issuing that for bid in the next few weeks.

- Kapaa Homesteads Pump and Controls – will be going out for bid in the next couple of weeks
- Puupilo Tank Rehabilitation – Reviewing draft assessment report and preparing to budget and move forward in the next fiscal year
- Kuamoo Water Main Replacement – geotechnical borings were done; project continuing to move forward
- Wailua Homesteads Tank – consultant finalizing draft PER; planning to budget for and move into design phase in the next fiscal year

Water Resources and Planning continues to catch up with subdivision applications, ARU/ADU clearances, building permits, etc. daily with the end-of-year goal being to have a 2-to-3-week response time.

DOW Project Highlights

- KWUDP Update – Mr. Kagimoto, along with Deputy Manager Hinazumi, attended a board meeting for the Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) to provide a briefing and update on the Water Use and Development Plan. Some of the feedback received will be incorporated into future plan updates
- Water System Improvements Plan (WSIP) – currently working on updating CIP project list, and will hold subsequent public meetings
- Lead and Copper Rule Revisions – material inventory has been finalized and will be moving forward with the necessary field work to identify what was not verifiable by desktop analysis; field work is planned to start in January

4. Administration:

a. Monthly dashboard

b. Public Relations – updates on Public Notices & Announcements, Community Outreach & Education, and Upcoming Events

Information and Education Specialist Jonell Kaohelaulii thanked Board member Micah Finnila for informing her about the career fair held at Kauai High School in November, which DOW was able to participate in, and thanked the Engineering staff for assisting. Ms. Kaohelaulii introduced the new Public Information Specialist Ani Turner, who joined the DOW team last month, and will be assisting with various conservation programs and PR.

c. Human Resources – updates on Personnel Vacancies

Manager Tait provided an overview of the vacancy pie chart, noting that a couple of much needed support positions will be posted for the Administration division. Fiscal will be losing a crucial staff member at the end of the month, and they will be recruiting for that position. Fiscal is currently reorganizing. Operations is doing double duty with the transponder/meter replacements in addition to their normal day-to-day work. The biggest need is currently in Engineering and will likely remain that way in the near future.

Chair Akamine asked how the budget would look if we filled all of the vacant positions. Manager Tait explained that there would be a huge shift in the premium fees we are currently paying consultants would instead be paying for salaries, which is what he has been trying to get across to COK DHR.

d. Information Technology – Monthly update

IT Manager Wayne Takabayashi provided a brief summary of the Corrective Action Plan submitted. He stated that the vulnerability report will be delivered by the consultant on a regular schedule of either every quarter, or every 2 months. For the security awareness plan, Mr.

Takabayashi met with Mike Hartig at COK IT who shared how they have set up their security awareness plan, so DOW IT will now have to plan out the type of training and testing to provide to our team. Training curriculum and first results should be complete by late January or early February.

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

TOPICS FOR NEXT BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY MEETING: (January)

TOPICS FOR FUTURE BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY MEETING

1. Employees of the Year Resolutions
2. CIP Update

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 92-4 and § 92-5(a)(4) and § 92-5(a)(6), the purposes of this executive session are to consult with the Board's attorney on this matter as it pertains to the Board's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities and to consider sensitive matters related to public safety or security.
2. Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Sections 92-4, 92-5(a)(3), and 92-5(a)(4), the purpose of this Executive Session is to deliberate on the acquisition of public property, specifically, property identified by tax map key: 4-3-018-001 and for the Board to consult with the Board's attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the Board's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities as they relate to this agenda item.

Board member Simonton moved to defer Executive Session Item 2. to the January 25, 2023 meeting, seconded by Ms. Finnila; with no objections, motion carried with 4 Ayes.

Board member Larry Dill entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Board member Troy Tanigawa left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 10:13 a.m.

The Board resumed in open session at 11:18 a.m.

In accordance with Act 19 Relating to Public Agency Meetings, Chair Akamine reported that the Board was provided updates on the Department's current IT challenges, and the Board's various liabilities as it relates to cyber security. No action was taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cherisse Zaima
Commission Support Clerk