

MINUTES OF THE
MAUI COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

DATE: March 17, 1966

PLACE: Board Chambers, Wailuku, Maui

CALL TO ORDER: 1:31 P.M.

PRESIDING: Douglas Sodetani, Chairman

MEMBERS PRESENT: Douglas Sodetani, Chairman
Emil Balthazar
William F. Crockett, Vice-Chairman
Shiro Hokama
Nadao Honda
Harry Kobayashi
George Kondo
Paul Pladera
Keith Tester
James Ushijima
Charles C. Young, Research Assistant

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Cornwell Friel

OTHERS PRESENT: Department of Public Works:
Masao Sone, County Engineer
Shigeru Sano, Deputy County Engineer
Soon Oak Lee, Supervisor
John M. Fernandez, Highway Construction
and Maintenance Superintendent
Bill Chang, Accountant III
Samuel Wong, Business Manager, Division
of Administrative Services
Takeo Ono, Personnel Assistant

Fire Department:
Alexander Oana, Fire Chief
Thomas Noda, Deputy Fire Chief

Others:
Robert Johnson, Advertiser Reporter
Richard Kibe, Administrative Assistant
to the Chairman and Executive Officer

ROLL CALL:

There were 10 members present at the regular meeting of the Maui County Charter Commission on March 17, 1966.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no communications.

LITERATURE:

Copies of the "Charter of the City and County of Honolulu" and "State and Local Government Relationships in the State of Hawaii" were circulated to the members.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:

Instead of discussing any business at this time, we proceeded with our meeting with the representatives of the Department of Public Works and Fire Department.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Fire Department:

Representing the Fire Department were Alexander Oana, Fire Chief, and Thomas Noda, Deputy Fire Chief.

Chief Oana mentioned in a brief opening remark that the Fire Department is under the authority and control of the Chairman and Executive Officer and Board of Supervisors. Their primary function is fire protection and other emergency work, but namely to provide fire protection entirely for the County of Maui. There are 56 employees--one chief, one deputy, and 54 men. There are four paid fire stations in operation, three on Maui and one on Molokai. As an emergency unit, they operate an ambulance in Lahaina. They work on a 24 hour basis and working hours are set by law. There are 288 hours within a 28 day period. The salaries are set by civil service, except for the chief, which is an appointed position. The chief and deputy are appointed. The men are under the rules and regulations of the civil service. The department has set up operational procedures to have some sort of a guide line for the men to follow in regard to duties and responsibilities. The hiring of new employees are strictly done by the board and not by the administration of the department.

During the questioning and answering period, Chief Oana mentioned that he had no reaction or any comments as to the manner in which the fire chief was appointed. The previous proposed charter mentioned that the fire chief shall be appointed and removed by the mayor. However, he felt that the fire chief and deputy chief should be under civil service status.

The fire department in Lanai is a separate matter as there is a volunteer fire department which was created by ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Oana mentioned that there are four paid stations which are located as follows: Wailuku, Paia, Lahaina and Molokai.

The Fire Chief felt that the fire department should not be under the police department, and Mr. Noda felt that the fire department should have its own commission. When questioned as to whether the fire department should be under the Public Works Department, Mr. Oana objected to it in that the various functions were unrelated. The fire department at the present time is administered wholly by the Chairman and Executive Officer of the County of Maui and the Board of Supervisors. He does not have any right to hire without the approval of the Board of Supervisors nor take any disciplinary action without first consulting with the Chairman's office. Rules and regulations pertaining to his department must be presented to the Board of Supervisors and approved by same.

The Fire Chief also commented that in working with the fire department for 20 years, he had never had the opportunity to appoint any person on his own.

In preparing his annual budget, the Fire Chief does not make any breakdown as to the specific reasons why appropriation should be granted in relation to the possibility of saving any money with the people of the County in protecting their property, or reduction in insurance rates. The estimated budget for last year was \$500,000.00, and the total fire loss in 1964 was \$175,000.00, in 1963 - \$149,000.00. Of this fire loss, 50% was grass fires, brush fires and car fires. Preventive work was very little because of lack of personnel. Education to the schools and private groups are being made on a very limited scale, and they take active part in the participation during fire prevention week.

Mr. Noda mentioned that Maui County Fire Department is handicapped as the Island of Maui has only three stations. Imagine the long run they have to make to stop or spread any fire. In 1965, there were approximately 21 dwellings which reported fire losses. The Fire Chief mentioned that it is difficult to ascertain whether these homes could be saved; however, the commission should look in the light that because the fire department prevented fire from spreading, other homes surrounding the area were saved.

The State Fire Marshal makes many of the rules and regulations and codes pertaining to the buildings (multiple stories) and as Deputy Fire Marshal, it is his duty to go over the plans of the buildings as well as check the buildings during construction and make annual inspections of these buildings.

When questioned as to whether he was familiar with the provisions of the previous proposed charter of 1964 regarding the fire department, Fire Chief Oana mentioned that he is not familiar. Questioned as to whether the personnel of the fire department are taking their annual physical examinations at the county's expense, the Fire Chief mentioned that he did not know anything whether such policy has been approved by the County of Maui.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr. Oana and Mr. Noda for their appearances before the commission and for the information they have provided to the commission.

Department of Public Works:

Mr. Sone did not make a formal presentation as he felt that by the question and answer period, the commission can get more information about his department.

Mr. Sone read the law pertaining to the Public Works Department. There are seven divisions within the Public Works Department (Administrative Services, Sewers, Highways, Buildings, Automotive Service, Plans and Garbage Divisions).

Questioned as to whether the Parks and Playground should be under the Public Works, Mr. Sone felt that as to the new improvements and maintenance, the Public Works can handle; however, when it comes to recreation it is a specialized field that does not come within the realm of the Public Works.

It is Mr. Sone's contention that the mayor should appoint the head of the Public Works Department with confirmation by the Board of Supervisors. He also felt that with the four year term, the Public Works engineer can set up a better long-range program which will be of benefit to the County of Maui. As a professional man, it would not affect the individual too much when the new engineer should take over as an appointee of the mayor. He would be without a position because it is his feeling that the experience and knowledge gained by the Public Works Engineer during that period is invaluable, and that the same could be used in either his private practice or working for a big concern.

Mr. Sone feels that a licensed professional engineer with a background of some responsible administrative experience should be the main qualification for such an appointee. The head of the department is often times called upon to render technical assistance to his subordinate, and in any major area of dispute or discussion, the professional engineer can speak up with some knowledge of the problem and be better able to control any engineering or construction problems.

Mr. Sone feels that the deputy county engineer should be exempt from civil service as it would be easier for him to work with his deputy. At present, the County Engineer reports to the Board of Supervisors and sometimes directly to the Public Works Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

Questioned as to whether purchasing within the division should be taken out and placed in the centralized purchasing and the finance departments, Mr. Sone felt that this would be impractical as many items that may need immediate attention must go through a long drawn out process, and the delay may cause undue hardship and often times money. At the present time, the Public Works Department has approximately 260 employees. As a result of Act 97, there would be about 30 personnel affected who would be transferred to the State, and should the State transfer the maintenance of roads to the County, his personnel will increase by more than the 30 that he loses.

The fuel tax collected by the County of Maui--100% is used in the division of highways. In the Island of Lanai, we do have surplus in the highway tax as it has been made by special ordinance that any money collected in Lanai must be spent in Lanai; however, in Molokai, because of its size, it has to be subsidized by the County.

The relationship between the Public Works Department and the Board of Supervisors has been very good as many of the budget requests have been approved. Also, the department has excellent relationship with the State Division of Highways.

Mr. Sone and his staff explained some of the possibilities of improvement, districts, highway funds and other services that his department provides.

Since there were no further questions by the members of the Charter Commission, the Chairman thanked Mr. Sone and his staff for taking time out to present their informative report.

OLD BUSINESS:

The mailing list of various organizations on Maui was brought to the attention of the Charter Commission members. Any additions or omissions of names were to be made to Charles Young. The Chairman stated that organizations, such as baseball, bowling and country clubs, are eliminated since their primary purpose deals with sports.

NEW BUSINESS:

Charles Young, Research Assistant for the Charter Commission, was asked by the Chairman to write a brief resume of his doings since the Charter Commission was organized.

The Chairman stated that he had received a call from Dick Mawson, Manager of Radio Station KMVI, to appear on a round table discussion regarding the Charter. The Chairman appointed Emil Balthazar, William Crockett and himself to appear on the program.

The Chairman stated that after the various hearings with the organizations and department heads are completed, he would like to have the Commission determine whether a Charter should be formulated or not, and also, to have people from the University of Hawaii (like Dr. Kosaki) and members of the Legislative Reference Bureau to come before the Charter Commission and present their ideas to the members. Chairman also stated that he would like to get together with the other two counties - Kauai and Hawaii - and exchange ideas. He stated that he had written to the Counties of Kauai and Hawaii requesting 15 copies of their proposed charter.

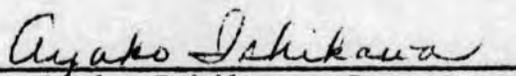
ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

March 24, 1966, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Chambers with the Planning Director, Planning and Traffic Commission.

Respectfully submitted,


Ayako Ishikawa, Secretary