

MINUTES
Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood
Regular Meeting
May 16, 2017

Commissioners Present:

Carl Makino (Interim Chairman), Alan Sunio, Shannon Carrier (Maui), Alex Harris, Kawika Riley

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Chet Adessa, Administrative Asst to Commission

Others Present:

Steve Backinoff (Kauai Fatherhood Council); Robert Layer (Kauai Fatherhood Council); Mark Jeffers (Men's Conference Kauai); Fernando Sevri (The Mankind Project and Boys to Men Mentoring); Brian Alston (Kauai Fatherhood Council); Greg Horn (Kauai Fatherhood Council); Jeffrey Jacklick (Kauai Child and Family Services)

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm in the Department of Human Services' BESSD Office, 4473 Pahee Street, Lihue, Kauai by Interim Chairman Makino. The Commissioners present constituted a quorum.

II. Public Testimony: There were no testimonies from the public.

III. Approval of Minutes from the April 18, 2017: Commissioner Carrier moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harris and unanimously carried.

IV. Discussion: Community Forum with Kauai's Fatherhood Program Leaders

- a. Chairman Makino welcomed the Kauai Fatherhood Council and others, providing a brief overview of the Commission. He expressed the Commission's appreciation to those present for their testimony and to Mr. Alston for being the Kauai liaison in setting up this meeting.

Robert Layer informed about the Kauai Fatherhood Council which was established by the Mayor of Kauai and the Kauai Fire Chief. He also provided information on Kauai's Mankind Project and the Boys to Men Mentoring program. He stated that the Fatherhood Council provides an opportunity for fathers and men in general to express their personal issues in a confidential environment.

Chair Makino asked what specific programs are needed and issues facing Kauai's fatherhood population. Mr. Layer explained that many of their participants come from dysfunctional families so issues seem to center around helping them overcome these early hardships and to become better fathers. Commissioner Shannon commended the Council for their successful annual conference which can serve as a model for other islands.

Fernando Sevri expressed concerns that the funds needed to sustain the Council are always a challenge. He then provided information on the Boys to Men Mentoring Program. The young men are referred to the program from Kauai's middle and high schools. The program is currently held at the local schools. The program is funded primarily by grants and local fund raising activities. The group consists of adult mentors allowing young men to talk about personal issues freely and in a confidential setting.

Steve Backinoff informed about his voluntary work at Kapa`a Elementary School where he tutors students and tries to get more fathers to become engaged in the schools.

Mark Jeffries spoke about a nonprofit organization that helps children through the performing arts. He spoke about his TV show, “Dad’s Day Celebration,” which airs on OC16. He also informed about a documentary entitled, “Birth of a Family” that conveys the message as to the importance of the fathers; role in young families.

Greg Horn spoke about the “Men Circle.” There are over 100 men Kauai-wide involved in this group.

Jeffrey Jacklick spoke about how Child and Family Services is involved with an Immigrant Resource Center. He explained that many of the clients are Marshallese men who are struggling with domestic violence. He added that much of their problems stem from the fact that they are no longer in their home culture where Marshallese fathers are not typically involved with the families as much as mothers. More concerning is the fact that domestic violence in Marshallese families is more tolerated than in western cultures. This presents a dissonance for the men.

Brian Alston spoke about the history of the Council and explained that there are many relationship issues and high male suicide rate on Kauai. He added that the Kauai Men’s Conference was such a success that they plan to continue this annual event.

Following a brief discussion on how the Commission can support the efforts on Kauai, Chairman Makino thanked those in attendance for their input. He assured that as the Commission moves to formulate its initiatives that it will take into consideration the suggestions and concerns presented.

Chair Makino declared a brief recess and reconvened at 5 PM.

V. Reports.

- a. Budget. This item was deferred to the next meeting due to lack of time.

VI. Commission/Public Generated Issues:

VII. Adjournment: There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm. The next meeting will be held on June 20, 2017 at DHS unless otherwise determined.

Prepared and Submitted by:

Date: June 30, 2017

Chet Adessa, Administrative Asst to the Commission

Approved by the Commission: _____