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Description automatically generated with medium confidenceHAWAI`I STATE - COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD (HS-COF)**

**Friday, December 13, 2024**

**Time:  10:00 AM**

**Location**: Windward Community College, Hale Na’auao, Room 125, Kaneohe, HI 96744

**Meeting Minutes**

**Recorded Meeting Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIN85CZ46O4**

**Meeting Call to Order: 10:08 AM**

**MISSION Statement**

**[From Chapter 577E, Hawaii Revised Statutes] The mission of the Hawaii State - Commission on Fatherhood (HS-COF) is to promote healthy family relationships by emphasizing the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to state agencies and makes recommendations on programs, services, contracts, policies and laws relating to children and families.**

1. **Introductions and Rollcall (1:23-5:05)**

**Commissioners Present**

Jeff Esmond, Chair

Allen Cardines

Marty Oliphant, Vice-Chair

Brian Alston

Neel Chauhan

**Commissioner(s) Not Present**

Alan Sunio

**Ex-Officios Absent:**

Director of Human Services

Superintendent of Education

Director of Health

Attorney General

Director of Public Safety

Executive Director Office of Youth Services

**Deputy Attorneys General Sunshine Law monitors**

Deputy Erin Yamashiro

**Guests**

Mark Augustine (Maui)

1. **Community shares or concerns (5:06)**

None

1. **Member Updates (5:49)**

None

1. **Ongoing Business and Updates (6:15-9:44)**

a. Community shares or concerns - None

b. Commissioner position update (6:15-8:03)

i. Commissioner Esmond expresses his frustration with getting two Commissioner applicants through interim appointment. Senate office is giving conflicting information with governor’s board office. He shares that there is a total of three applicants, the third being Mark Augustine for Maui and expresses his intent to push these applications forward.

c. 0.5 FTE Admin Position update (8:18-8:45)

ii. Commissioner Esmond sh ares that there are no applications currently coming in for the Admin Position.

d. Officer nominations and elections (8:46-9:05)

iii. Commissioner Esmond shares that the Commission has not yet held officer nominations or elections for the current fiscal year.

e. Periodic Newsletter (9:06-9:44)

iv. Commissioner Esmond explains that Commissioner Alston is preparing the newsletters and shares the challenges of distributing the newsletter. Commissioner Esmond asks to put the newsletter on hold until the admin position is filled. He expresses his frustration in not being able to get the newsletter out more aside from posting on the website.

1. **Current Fiscal Year Initiatives (9:45-47:16)**
2. Community shares or concerns –
   1. None (9:45)

b. Current fiscal year initiatives (10:05-)

a. Strategic Plan and objectives (10:05-47:16)

i. Commissioner Esmond turns conversation towards the other commissioners and shares that Commissioner Alston has put together a strategic plan to be shared at the next meeting. Commissioner Oliphant asks clarifying questions:

a. How long should the plan be for?

b. Will the commissioners be working among themselves or if they will be getting a facilitator to assist?

ii. Commissioner Esmond clarifies that he is looking for general ideas. Commissioner Chauhan asks if there are historic strategic plans to review and Commissioner Oliphant states that he has not seen one, however it would be a good place to start. Commissioner Alston shares that he looked into National concerns for men to identify the needs and issues of men/fathers for the state and country and how that might pertain to those on the islands. From there he created a summary and plans to narrow it down into a 1–3-year strategic plan. In doing so, he shares that he has had a chance to review almost 30 websites of Commission on Fatherhood in America and where the Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood stands in terms of the others. He further states that this can be turned into ideas on how it relates to this Commission and what the commission might be able to do moving forward.

iii. Deputy Erin Yamashiro reminds the commissioners of what is allowed and what is not allowed when talking to each other outside of scheduled meetings. Commissioner Esmond agrees that although the strategic plan should be a long-term plan, he also wants to achieve something within the fiscal year. Commissioner Oliphant responds that the commission cannot do everything and suggests prioritizing the top four things to focus on. Commissioner Cardines states the importance of identifying and prioritizing deliverable achievements/tasks rather than tackling all 9 objectives at once. He also shares his conversation with HPD and plans to have them present their concerns and how the commission can help or respond. Mark Augustine inquires about what the top risk factors are and Commissioner Cardines shares that the top factors include homelessness, sex trafficking, and domestic violence.

iv. Commissioner Chauhan asks how we can increase awareness so that people are aware of the kind of resources there are and how the commission can help and guide and also how the commission can increase online presence through social media.

ii. Annual Awards (47:17-1:01:09)

1. Aloha Father of the Year Awards
   * 1. Commissioner Esmond explains that the commission is required to do the father of the year award.
2. Parent-Friendly Business of the Year Award
   * 1. Commissioner Esmond explains that the commission is also required to do the business of the year award and expresses that this award has been a struggle in the past. Commissioner Oliphant suggests putting out deadlines and soliciting the public for nominations. He also suggests putting together and distributing a statement and to maybe add it to the newsletter. Commissioner Esmond also clarifies that he interprets this as a business that is parent-friendly to work in terms of leave etc.

iii. Sponsorship Awards

- Commission Esmond clarifies that this award is for any local

nonprofit that has a father related activity/service and does not have to be a one-time event, it can be an ongoing service.

c. Outreach Events (1:01:10

i. Fatherhood Commission Luncheon (1:01:11-1:01:25)

*- Proposed by Commissioner Sunio, tabled until next meeting due to Sunio’s absence*

ii. Proposal for a periodic informal online gathering of fatherhood commissioners nationwide (1:01:26-1:12:07)

1. Presented by Commissioner Alston: Quarterly online meeting with commissions nationwide. Each commission would get 2 minutes to provide an update. This would ideally promote the ability to collaborate, share guest speakers, and help the commissions to advocate for those who need help.
2. Details to be presented as a proposal for next meeting (January)

d. Budget Review (1:12:08-1:14:49)

i. Prior Fiscal Year

a. Commissioner Esmond expresses his frustration in working with the DHS finance office and shares that there is no update yet.

ii. New Fiscal year

1. Commissioner Esmond explains that the Sponsorship awards for the Prior Fiscal year were not honored, so it is being pulled out of the New Fiscal year budget.

**VI. Legislative Update** (1:14:50-

1. Legislative Priorities for the Commission (1:14:50-1:17:28)
   1. Commissioner Esmond asks fellow commissioners to look into potential subjects for discussion and possible testimony submissions for next meeting.
2. Legislative Opening Day – January 15, 2025 (1:17:29-1:18:39)
   1. Commissioner Esmond shares about the previous Legislative Opening Day and asks those were are able and interested to meet at the Capitol and join in.
3. Handout for legislators (1:18:40-1:20:54)
   1. Commissioner Esmond talks about the old handout and expresses that it needs to be updated (ie. postcard that lists objectives of COF). Commissioner Alston builds on this and talks about capturing the holiday spirit in the handout. He suggests drafting and putting the ideas on the agenda for next meeting.

d. Act 156, SLH 2023 Task Force on Parentage Laws (1:21:14-1:27:26)

a. Commissioner Esmond shares about the Task Force, which is dissolving on December 31st. He explains that they update laws relating to birth certificates in instances where there is a question of who qualifies as dad when there is a single mom as well as in surrogacy and adoption. Commissioner Esmond shares the topic of IVF and the question of whether the egg/sperm donor should be identifiable when the donor conceived person becomes an adult.

**VII. Professional Development** (1:27:30-1:28:02)

1. Opportunities – discussion and brainstorming
   1. Commissioner Esmond asks fellow commissioners to note down opportunities related to commission to keep in agenda

**VIII. Upcoming Meetings (generally 3rd Friday each month 10:00 AM) (1:28:03-1:29:40)**

a. Next Meetings

i. January 10 or 17, 2025

ii. February 17, 2025

iii. March 14, 2025

**IX. Conclusion (Vote) (1:29:48-1:39:00)**

1. Final Thoughts and Holiday Season Wishes (1:29:48-1:38:23)
   1. Commissioner Cardines shares about the Operation Blue Lake Christmas and about the problems the west side of the island faces due to the absence of fathers. He shares his belief that it is important that fathers take their rightful place in their homes, organizations, and communities and hopes that the commission can get involved. Commissioner Alston, Commissioner Oliphant, and Commissioner Chauhan share their holiday wishes. Mark Augustine expresses his gratitude to be apart of the commission as a guest and briefly talks about dealing with gangs in California and how it shows that men want to be apart of something and how we can turn that into something positive that benefits the community. Commissioner Esmond shares about the parades he has been apart of and the positive experiences from them.
2. Vote to Adjourn (1:38:31-1:39:00)

**Adjourn Meeting – Motion by Jeff Esmond, Seconded by Marty Oliphant, Unanimous (1:38:31)**