



MICHELLE PESCAIA
Chairperson
FAITH KAHALE SAITO
Vice Chair

DAWN N.S. CHANG
'ĀNELA EVANS
SAUMALU MATAAFA
BENTON KEALII PANG, Ph.D
KEONI SOUZA

Michael K. Nāho'opi'i
Executive Director

KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA
KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
KŌMIKINA MĀLAMA KAHO'OLAWE

811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku, HI 96793
Telephone (808) 243-5020 Fax (808) 243-5885
Website: <http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov>

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

10:30 am

In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 132
Honolulu, HI

Meeting recording located at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbYa0BsydlU>

COMMISSION MEMBERS

PRESENT: Michelle Pescaia, Chair (attended remotely); Faith Kahale Saito, Vice-Chair; Dawn Chang; Saumalu Mataafa (attended remotely); Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D (attended remotely; joined at 1:49 pm) ; Justin Keoni Souza (attended remotely)

EXCUSED: 'Ānela Evans

KIRC STAFF: Michael Nāho'opi'i, Executive Director (ED); Daniel Morris, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) (attended remotely); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC); Carmela Noneza, GIS Specialist (GIS) (attended remotely); Ashley Razo, Public Information Specialist (PIS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM)(attended remotely); James Bruch, Natural Resources Specialist III (NRS III) (attended remotely)

IN PERSON

GUESTS: Keoni Fairbanks

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 am pm. Roll call was conducted, and quorum was established with five Commissioners.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of June 26, 2024 Regular Commission Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Chang moved to approve the minutes of June 26, 2024 as submitted. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Chair Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Vice Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye

Approved 2/26/2025

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made at this time.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Review and Approve Legislative Positions for 2025 Session

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed what happened during the last legislative session. The KIRC received \$400,000 as part of permanent funding. Staff would be asking for three different items at the next legislative session.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the first request would be for CIP funding for Phase II of the Kihei Education and Operations Center. The request would be for: \$350,000 for planning, \$3,000,000 for design and \$900,000 for construction. The total request would be \$4,250,000. The construction portion would be to expand the current boathouse to include additional workspace and boat storage as well as a small educational pavilion and restroom. Staff had a bid out to architects for an update on the construction cost estimates. Staff will start communicating with members of House Finance Committee as well as Representative Amato who represents Kihei to see if she would include this request on her list of CIP projects. Staff will communicate with the Ways and Means Committee for continuation of their support from last session.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the second request would be a request for funding for a Ocean Resources Specialist (ORS) II position. Currently, general funds support the Ocean Program Resources Manager and one Ocean Resources Specialist position. The second ORS is currently funded through grants.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that Senator Inouye requested that the KIRC submit a bill for funding for a replacement for the ‘Ohua. Staff estimated that the cost would be \$1.2 million. This would include shipping and as well as additional equipment and supplies necessary to operate the vessel, such as life jackets, mooring lines. Staff will request that Senator Inouye introduce it as special legislation outside of the administration’s requested budget.

Commissioner Mataafa as if there was a timeline for the Kihei Education and Operations Center, specifically if ED Nāho‘opi‘i anticipated to begin construction during the next fiscal year or still at the design stage. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the next stage would be to construct a pavilion next to the boat house along a three-biennium timeline. This request and construction would be for this coming biennium. Originally staff planned a two-year construction project, but in consulting with legislators it was determined to be more feasible to break up the construction phases. The next biennium stage would be construction of the shell of a building to include the office so that staff could move in and also establish bays to include the museum, the community, the art gallery and the rest of the parts building, . Staff would also be seeking funding from other sources—such as

the County of Maui to help construct the portion of the building to be used as a community center, and federal funding to help with the museum. The staff estimated that construction costs have increased by 30% since the last estimate. It was estimated that the construction cost would be \$40-45 million for the entire project. The staff also estimated that the construction would take eight years for the entire construction project.

Vice-Chair Saito asked if the replacement vessel would exactly be the same as the 'Ōhūa. ED Nāho'opi'i responded it would be similar but that it would be made more for open ocean crossing with hardening up of the hull and strengthening the keel. It will be a landing craft and may have actuators, actual arms instead of cables.

ED Nāho'opi'i suggested that Fish and Wildlife may have funding available for this building. Commissioner Pang noted that the Fish and Wildlife does not usually fund construction of buildings, but it can fund programs, restoration, erosion control and coral reef restoration.

MOTION: Commissioner Souza moved to approve the legislative positions for 2025 Session. Vice Chair Saito seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Chair Pescaia-aye; Vice Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

B. Authorize Executive Director to extend Base Camp Contract with Dawson, Inc. For FY26

ED Nāho'opi'i Explained that this was the first extension of the base camp contract. Staff was encumbering funding earlier so that it cannot be taken away at the end of legislative session. The extension shows an increase of \$24,000 which was part of 3% salary increase which was originally written into the original proposal.

Commissioner Mataafa asked what the funding source for this extension was. ED Nāho'opi'i responded that general funds with a combination of grant reimbursements would be used. Staff include fixed costs which include the costs of operating the 'Ōhūa and Base Camp for volunteer accesses to work on these projects. The cost is generally 20%-30% of the grant proposal. There were no non-reimbursable funds from the KIRC Trust Fund being used for this contract. Therefore, it does not affect the balance of the KIRC Trust Fund.

Commissioner Mataafa asked how many staff were at Base Camp. ED Nāho'opi'i responded there a total of five people, four support staff and one cook.

Additionally, some office staff at Dawson charge time to this contract to process payroll, etc. All four positions pay are scheduled to increase by 3%.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if another salary increase was expected for FY27. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that he was unsure; that it was tied to the cost of the living. Commissioner Mataafa asked if the salary increase was also 3% in the previous contract. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that it was higher but there were fewer people. The 3% may not be straight salary but also include fringe costs.

Chair Pescaia asked if the KIRC should anticipate inflation regarding food and supplies. ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated no because they are reimbursable.

Commissioner Pang asked how contingency funds were used in the past. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that contingency funds were used for additional projects related to Base Camp such as the reverse osmosis (RO) system repair when contractors are needed and rebuilding and reinstalling clivuses. Commissioner Pang asked if Dawson work on other parts of the islands. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded affirmatively.

Vice Chair Saito asked if \$20,000 was a sufficient amount for contingency. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded it was sufficient for now without tying up additional funds.

MOTION: Vice Chair Saito moved to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Dawson Solutions, LLC Base Camp Management contract in the amount of \$558,041.61, for the period May 15, 2025 through May 14, 2026. Commissioner Chang seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Chair Pescaia-aye; Vice Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

C. Authorize the Executive Director to solicit, select and award Communications Contract for FY26

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the communications contract was previously awarded and extended to Harmer. The scope of work remained the same as the previous award period. There was an increase in the cost of the contract due to the increase in radio relay which requires more maintenance, additional radios are needed by the KIRC and PKO. The contract would be funded by general funds.

MOTION: Commissioner Souza moved to authorize the Executive Director to award the Communications Contract to Harmer Radio and Electronics, Inc. In the amount of the \$74,876.77 for the period May

1, 2025 through April 30, 2026. Commissioner Chang seconded motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Chair Pescaia-aye; Vice Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

D. Review and Approve Redescription of the Cultural Resources Project Coordinator (CRPC) Position to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) Project Management Coordinator Position

ED Nāho‘opi‘i provided the background of the CRPC position which had been vacant for several years. He added that there was a slim chance that a qualified candidate would be hired for this position and have been notified that it would be up for elimination this year.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained staff was proposing to redescribe the authorized and funded position rather than have it be eliminated in the next biennium budget. The staff believed that the KIRC would be more likely to find someone to assist with the management of grant projects. He explained that the person would work directly under the Executive Director and would work with all three programs—Ocean, Restoration and Culture. This person would help to implement projects in all three programs and would be the other half of the grant program. Currently the PIS writes the grant proposals, and the reporting is done by both the programs and the PIS. However, the staff currently lacks analysis of technical data of current grant projects and interpretation that data. This information would help in applying for future grants. The KIRC Project Management Coordinator would assist in the field as needed, take over projects that currently do not have a leader and also help coordinate the money side. Additionally, this person would collect and analyze data and perhaps look for a more integrated approach. An additional challenge has been tracking grant payments through various grant portals as well as through DLNR Fiscal to confirm that they are applied to the correct special funds accounts which then have to transferred to the KIRC trust fund account. The coordinator will also oversee this portion of the grants. ED Nāho‘opi‘i clarified that the coordinator would also help work on Culture Program projects as needed but would not be focused solely on Culture Program projects. Staff was hoping to apply project management principles such as project scheduling, timelines, and critical path.

Chair Pescaia explained that there are two resource management types: natural and cultural, meaning that a resource remains natural until somebody manipulates it and then it becomes a cultural resource. When the general community hear culture specialists, people think of Hawaiian practices that are associated with ‘ōiwi kanaka so they do not realize that the term cultural was a technical term. When these two programs were side by side, there should be equitable support and resources for them because the integrity of the entire management of

Kaho‘olawe hinges on the evaluation, treatment, and management of all these resources on the same plane. She understood that there was difficulty statewide in recruiting qualified people to staff in this sector. She wanted to share this mana‘o with the rest of the Commission to process what this transition means. The KIRC was considering broadening the scope of this position, but also recognizing it was one position that had been dedicated to cultural resources and there are all these natural resource positions and programming with funding in place. Is it that expansion of the position was compromising the position?

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained this was discussed before and there has been difficulty in filling the position under the current position description. He noted that the person would spend a lot of time in the Culture Program because there are a lot of tasks to be done. By making the position broader the person will do a little bit of everything in other programs.

Commissioner Chang commented that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) was having difficulty with filling positions, but the DLNR was also moving in the direction of having better coordination and collaboration. Her view was that this approach did seem to be consistent with an integrated approach of management as well as an efficient way of monitoring grants and better position the KIRC to receive more grants. Initially, when she read this memo and proposed position description, she was a little concerned that the KIRC was doing away with cultural specialist, upon further review it was clear that this position was designed to be more of an integration of the various programs together. She acknowledged that the position description needed to meet current needs. Her inclination was to support this recommendation.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that as the person worked with other programs, this would encourage the other programs to help support cultural projects.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if redescribing the position would result in more people applying for it and if there was a salary change commensurate with the redescription. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the salary was increased by 20% and the redescription would attract more applicants.

Vice Chair Saito asked who redescribed the position. ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated only he was involved in the redescription. Vice Chair Saito asked if any elements of the culture resource position that were taken out in this redescription. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that other duties were increased from 5% to 10%. In the past the CRPC was the single point of contact with the PKO the person would be the Point of Contact (POC) with the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO). Currently the Volunteer Coordinator was the POC and that worked very well. The coordinator will not need to have a Hawaiian Studies degree, but staff will be looking for a person with some type of cultural background. The position would call for a four-year college degree. The person would have to possess a working

knowledge of Hawaiian natural history, Hawaiian resource management and a broad level of natural, ocean and native Hawaiian cultural resource management principles and practices based upon a background of professional training and experiences. The position was a blend of technical resource management and a cultural resource project coordinator.

Chair Pescaia was concerned that if the cultural resource management expertise was being removed from the required skills would the person have access to training such as historic preservation training; was there a development plan because cultural resource management was critical to land management? It was important that the cleanup and restoration projects have the lens of all the archaeological and historical sites. This might be an opportunity to bring that expertise back to management and planning. She asked if there was a plan to build a formal structure for subject matter experts so that this person could rely specifically on those experts. She cited as an example, someone coming in as a marine resource expert or coming in as a coordinator who works with other marine resource specialists to make sure staff was developing projects in a very informed way.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that he knew that the person would most likely not have experience with HRS 6E-106 even if they come from a Hawaiian cultural practice background. He noted that there was community training about 6E provided by State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) as well as on-line training. He added that there were some experts on 6E-106 who were on Maui that he would refer this person to. ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that there were other people like Nancy McMahon with whom he has a working relationship. Chair Pescaia was happy to hear that because some of these background elements were removed from the original job description. She wanted to make sure that the pilina (relationship) was formalized so that relationship can continue beyond ED Nāho‘opi‘i’s tenure. She wanted to set the person up for success and ensure all that support was a formal entitlement for anyone in that position. She noted that in government, when people vacate their roles, the system falls apart. She wanted to ensure that this plan was articulated in writing. She wanted to make sure that the recruited person was not in over their head and walk away a year later.

Commission Chang added that there were weekly DLNR administrators’ meetings. The KIRC had access to DLNR internal resources whether it was SHPD, Commission on Water Resources Management (CWRM), or Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). She urged ED Nāho‘opi‘i to utilize those resources which he does such as when additional monies were available. She would also welcome a very intentional deliberate training program. She also noted that there was a new SHPD administrator, Jessica Puff, who was trying to establish a training program through SHPD. The KIRC would have an open invitation to utilize it once it was open as well as any other resources/experts within DLNR.

Chair Pescaia thanked Commissioner Chang and requested the above discussion to be on the record for the sake of transparency.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated it was difficult and daunting to recruit for the CRPC position. Chair Pescaia agreed that it was daunting which was why she was emphasizing the support that was available.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the staff eliminated the singular point person aspect out of the job description and made it more for a broader team player.

Commissioner Mataafa stated that he was actively listening to the discussion, He appreciated the strategy. He stated that the job description encompassed a lot of Chair Pescaia’s concerns. Once the person was hired then the mentoring, tutoring and engagement could start. He acknowledged all the different aspects of the discussion.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that the position description was only the first draft and additional items could be added if requested by the Commission.

Vice Chair Saito requested that staff send the original CRPC position description to the Commissioners for potential feedback. ED Nāho‘opi‘i agreed to do so.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) office had reviewed the position of description yet. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that he wanted to get the Commission’s authorization prior to submitting the final version to DHRD.

Chair Pescaia clarified this action item was to allow the Commission to entertain whether or not to redescribe this position and allow ED Nāho‘opi‘i to rewrite it.

MOTION: Commissioner Chang moved to authorize the KIRC Executive Director to redescribe the Cultural Resources Project Coordinator position description as the Resource Project Management Coordinator. Commissioner Pang seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Chair Pescaia-aye; Vice Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Executive Director's Report

1. Status Update on Budget, Finance and Funding: Review Expenditure Report and Budget Variances

ED Nāho'opi'i referred the Commission to the expense report up to August 2024 included in the Commission packet and reported that there was no variance. He also reported that the KIRC was on track regarding expenditures. He also stated that the staff would be submitting a revised budget to include a new grant of \$100,000 from the County of Maui and the DOH6 grant at a future meeting.

2. Status Update on Plans, Policies and Procedures: Review Long Range Schedule

ED Nāho'opi'i referred the Commission to the long-range schedule included in the Commission packet. He noted that there would be two back-to-back accesses in October. The Rain Ceremony would also be conducted on Kaho'olawe. There would be no accesses in November.

3. Status Update on Administration, Staffing and Personnel: Report on Status of Current Commissioner's Appointments; Report on Commissioner's Term expiring at end of FY2024; Report on New KIRC Staff hires and recruitments

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the terms of Commissioner Evans and Pang ended on June 30, 2024 and both were eligible to serve another term. Commissioner Evans will not apply for a renewed term. She would continue serve as holdover until the end of the next session. The PKO was aware that it needed to recommend another person to the governor to occupy that seat. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs will be sending a request to renew Commissioner Pang's term.

ED Nāho'opi'i reported that Ross Kamimoto was hired as the new Volunteer Coordinator. He started last week.

ED Nāho'opi'i also announced that NRS Lyman Abbott would be retiring at the end of October 2024 after 21 years with the KIRC. Staff had already recruited and interviewed candidates for his replacement and have made an offer in Kale'a Paiva.

4. Status Update on Capital Improvements, Reserve operations and Logistics: Update on, KIRC vessel, 'Ōhua, Repairs and Update on Base Camp Capital Improvement Project (CIP)

ED Nāho'opi'i reported that Dawson would be starting on CIP projects including re-roofing, re-plumbing, fixing a leak in the main pipeline as well as creating secondary tank as a backup. He also explained that Dawson will be bringing out an electrician to Kaho'olawe to examine the camp electrical overhead

distribution. The camp was originally wired for three phase which was more than needed for current use. Staff was trying to determine if the camp should be rewired to single Phase 120 or 440 put single phase. The KIRC still had \$130,000 in CIP funding which had been encumbered but not dedicated to any project.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that three KIRC accesses next summer will be dedicated to the rebuilding of the mua, a traditional platform, at Honokanai‘a to mark the 50th anniversary of the landing in Kūheia during the protest landings. The KIRC has agreed to have KIRC volunteers dedicate half a day or a day to provide support in the rebuilding of the mua. PKO would be sending out a project manager with KIRC staff to help coordinate those activities.

Commissioner Pang asked if the water system repair and potential electrical rewiring fall under the contingency category. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that there was \$500,000 in CIP funding and under the scope of the funding’s first half included the roofing, the plumbing, and the boardwalk replacement, costing \$132,000. There was a balance of \$120,000 and the electrical rewiring would be covered under that balance He also noted that these CIP projects were funded by CIP funding and separate from general operating funds.

Commissioner Mataafa was excused at 2:00 pm

VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

A. Status Update on Current Commission/Administration Projects

1. KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project (IMLS4)

This project was completed. PIS Razo reported that the final reporting for this project which includes photos which IMLS was hoping to feature in their press releases and future publications and social media. ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that all expenditures were billed and the money was received into a special fund but still needed to be transferred into the KIRC Trust Fund account.

2. Going Mobile: Upgrading the Technological Infrastructure of Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (IMLS5)

GIS Noneza reported that there were not many changes and that users were still getting familiar with the higher security levels when using their laptops. She also reported that she was still working with DLNR/IT to set up the PV camera app to function on staff laptops.

3. Sharing the Stories of Kahoolawe’s Past, Present and Future (HTA)

PIS Razo reported that the KIRC has received and spent the total amount of \$35,500 from this contract grant. A television display was installed showcasing the future Kihei Education and Operations Center with ED Nāho‘opi‘i’s voiceover. It was near the exhibit’s exit. There was also a call to action for donation for the center. The printed update in the commission packet included a mockup of the wall which was being renovated. Staff and the Maui Ocean Center (MOC) were waiting for the final graphic boards and

photos to be delivered the MOC. Staff anticipated that exhibit renovation would be completed within the next three to four weeks.

B. Status Update on Current Restoration Projects

1. Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration on Kaho‘olawe, HI (NAWCA-Wetlands)

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that buffel grass and kiawe were removed from the Keanakeiki site. On Google Earth one can see the difference between where the kiawe trees were removed, creating an open gap and where there were still kiawe trees. In the open gap one can see the cressa and ‘aki‘aki grasses filling in the gap. Most of these were not planted—they grew naturally. They stabilized the dune. The area under the kiawe trees was still sandy. A larger chipper was needed to be moved to island via a heavy lift helicopter.

2. Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project (Kanaloa Plant Working Group)

NRS Bruch reported there were 16 plants in three nurseries. There new funding to build a nursery for the kanaloa plant at the Olinda Rare Plant Facility. The working group was still seeking funding for the other nurseries as well.

3. Kamōhio Watershed Restoration Project 2023-2026 Phase I, Department of Health (DOH 6)

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that there was still no contact from the DOH and the KIRC was still waiting for a MOA (Memorandum of Agreement).

C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Grant Projects:

1. Coastal Wetland Restoration of Kahoolawe, HI, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (CWC)

ORPM Tokishi reported that the KIRC just received an extension due to the delay in the hiring the ORS. Every deliverable was accomplished. Plants continue to be planting. So far, 30,000 have been planted, more than what was required in the grant project.

Commissioner Pang asked if staff had seen any birds coming back to the ponding water. ORMP Tokishi responded not yet in this specific wetland area.

2. Developing a Digital Application for the Collection of Kilo ‘Ike Pili (IMLS 6)

ORMP Tokishi reported that staff was filling in the database and actively sharing it with the PKO representatives. The Ocean Program attended the Hawai‘i Conservation Conference through this funding.

3. Update on Potential Turtle Nest

ORMP Tokishi thanked the Commission for its support and approval of the honu excavations. He stated that it was a huge success and celebration. There were successful hatchings. This was the first time there was a documented and confirmed honu nesting on Kaho‘olawe through his research. There were a couple of references, but nothing confirmed. Just by chance, there was an unexpected hatching that same evening next to the original nest. There were a

total of 71 eggs in that nest and the excavation group were able to save two babies that would not have survived had the group not excavated. There was a 100% success rate of that nest with the rescue of the two babies. The people in the excavation group who had nesting experience stated they had never seen a 100% success rate. He thanked the Commission for the recommendation of working with Lopaka Aiwohi. It was good to work with him. They continue to communicate regarding future projects. Staff showed a short video of the two hatchlings entering the ocean.

VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS

ED Nāho‘opi‘i suggested that the next KIRC meeting be held in January 2025 after the start of the legislative session. Staff would also be submitting a revised budget and PKO access dates for the year for the approval.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:18 pm.