



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY
Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Hybrid In-Person & Virtual Meeting

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT:

George Kam (Chair), Mike White (Vice-Chair), David Arakawa, Dylan Ching (Zoom), Keone Downing, Mahina Duarte, Stephanie Iona, James McCully, Sherry Menor-McNamara, Ben Rafter, Sig Zane (Zoom)

MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Kimberly Agas

HTA STAFF PRESENT:

John De Fries, Daniel Nāho'opi'i, Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Isaac Choy, Caroline Anderson, Ilihia Gionson, Jadie Goo, Maka Casson-Fisher, Carole Hagihara, Talon Kishi

GUESTS:

Laci Goshi, Jennifer Chun, Erin Khan, Nathan Kam, Patrick Dugan, Kylie Butts, John Monahan, Jeffrey Eslinger, Lei-Ann Field, Kara Imai, Sterling Wong, Teri Orton, Mari Tait, Brian Dunkel, Andrew Gomes, Daryl Huff, Jessica Lani Rich, Bobbie Okamoto

LEGAL COUNSEL:

John Cole

1. Call to Order

Chair Kam called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call to Announce Name of Participating Board Members and to Identify Who Else is Present with Board Member if Location is Nonpublic

Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and all members were confirmed in attendance except for Ms. Agas, who was excused. Members who attended via Zoom were by themselves.

3. Opening Cultural Protocol

Mr. Casson-Fisher did the opening cultural protocol, a mele written by Edith Kanaka'ole "E Hō Mai."

Chair Kam said agenda item 4 – Report of the legislative permitted interaction group on the 2023 legislative session – would be postponed to the May 25th regular Board meeting. Chair Kam asked for a motion to change the meeting agenda. Mr. McCully made the motion, and Mr. White seconded. Chair Gionson did a roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Kam asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the personnel and budgets. Mr. White made the motion, and Mr. McCully seconded. Chair Gionson did a roll call, and the motion passed unanimously. The people attending the Executive Sessions were all the Board members and Mr. De Fries only. All other HTA staff members and the public are excused from the meeting room.

[Executive Session]

4. Report of the Legislative Permitted Interaction Group on the 2023 Legislative Session

Mr. Cole said that in the Executive Session, they had some follow-up on personnel issues, some of which were addressed in the March 30 BOD meeting. They also discussed budget matters in the current situation with the legislation budget bill and processes they made need to go through for budgeting purposes.

5. Discussion and/or Action Regarding the HTA FY 2023 and FY 2024 Budget***

Mr. Nāho'opi'i said there was no follow-up action for that item.

6. Update on RFP 23-03 US Brand Management and Marketing***

Mr. Ka'anā'anā said they issued addendum 6 to RFP 23-03, which extended the notice of award to May 22. Mr. Nāho'opi'i said the staff is requesting a motion to approve RFP 23-03 funding at the base amount stated in the RFP. Mr. White made a motion, and Ms. Duarte seconded. Mr. Arakawa asked if the amounts were approved prior, and if the contracts said they were subject to funding, and Mr. Nāho'opi'i confirmed this. Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Update on RFP 23-08 Destination Stewardship***

Ms. Anderson reported that the staff issued addendum number 3, extending the RFP notice of the award to May 22. Mr. Nāho'opi'i said the staff would like to request a motion to approve RFP 23-08 destination stewardship funding at the base amount stated in the RFP. Mr. White made a motion, and Mr. McCully seconded. Mr. Arakawa asked if the amounts were previously approved, and he wanted to clarify that all the contracts were subject to funding. Mr. Nāho'opi'i confirmed that as correct. Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Update of Any Other Active or Planned Solicitations in FY 2023***

Mr. Ka'anā'anā said the RFP 23-02 for the Canada MMA, addendum 2 was also issued, extending the notice of award date to May 22. There were no questions. Mr. Nāho'opi'i said the staff requested a motion to approve RFP 23-02 funding at the base amount stated in the RFP.

Mr. White made a motion, and Mr. Ching seconded. Mr. Arakawa asked if the amounts were previously approved and wanted to clarify that all the contracts were subject to funding. Mr. Nāho'opi'i confirmed that as correct.

Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Kam said there was testimony from Ms. Lani Rich, on behalf of VASH (Visitor Aloha Society of Hawai'i). VASH helps visitors in crisis. Since the Board was addressing the tourism budget, she said the VASH budget was cut, and she asked the Board if they could restore it to the original budget as it was for the last couple of years. The reason is that Hawai'i is about culture; part of that culture is love and kindness. Love and kindness also extend when visitors come to Hawai'i. She said Dr. Tarlow, a tourism expert, praised Hawai'i and the HTA because internationally, Hawai'i is the only state with a modern program that takes care of their tourists when something happens or if they suffer a loss. Hawai'i is internationally renowned for this. She mentioned a few incidents where VASH helped make a difference. She shared a testimony of one of their visitors whose wife was assaulted. She said they take a negative situation and give their aloha and love. Ms. Lani Rich played the video testimony from the husband. She also showed some newspaper clippings, including the article titled, "Visitor Society comforts family of hiking victim." She elaborated on the article. She said they will continue to take care of their visitors. She closed off by inviting everyone in the room to join her when she helped the next visitor. She said she would not abandon the visitors.

Mr. White thanked VASH as he said they had been amazing at helping visitors, etc. He said the surviving spouse or family of the victims always leave feeling loved and all their needs are taken care of. He thanked Ms. Lani Rich. Chair Kam thanked Ms. Lani Rich as well.

9. Discussion and Action on the Creation of a Governance Study Permitted Interactive Group for the Purpose of Developing the Governance, Strategic Organization, and Business Review Process Study

Mr. Nāho'opi'i said that at the previous meeting in April, the Board approved a motion to have the staff move forward with a governance strategic organization design and business process review study. The staff recommends that the Board form a permitted interaction group to assist in developing a plan of action for the study. The group will allow selecting Board members to meet to discuss the governance study outside sunshine requirements. They can also talk to others outside the Board to gather information. They will then present back to the Board their findings. At the third meeting, the Board can take additional action: the presentation of the RFP or the scope of work for the RFP, which the Board can then approve.

Mr. Arakawa said that for the proposed deliverables, Mr. Nāho'opi'i could consider identifying other government agencies, such as sister state agencies, federal and county agencies that the HTA needs to work with, so the destination management and branding efforts can benefit from working with the government agencies. He said they should also identify stakeholders in the industry and get their input. He said they could also have a standing agenda item where the departments can give presentations related to what they are doing for tourism. He said DOT and DLNR were a part of the HTA Board at one time. The last session, DBEDT also became part of the HTA Board. He asked Chair Kam to extend an invitation to the various departments that the HTA works with.

Mr. Nāho'opi'i said the staff requested a motion to create a governance study permitted interaction group. Chair Kam made a motion, and Mr. McCully seconded. Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Discussion and Action on the Assignment of Board Members to the Governance Study Permitted Interactive Group. This Agenda Item is Dependent on the Approval of the Creation of the Governance Study Permitted Interaction Group.

Chair Kam said the agenda item is dependent on the approval of the creation of the governance study permitted interaction group. He recommended that they have Ms. Iona as the chair, Ms. Duarte as a vice-chair, Mr. McCully, Mr. White, Mr. Downing, and himself on the PIG. Mr. Arakawa said he would be willing to serve.

Chair Kam asked for a motion. Mr. White made a motion, and Mr. McCully seconded. Mr. Gionson did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Chair Kam made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Kam adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sheillane Reyes
Recorder