



Hope Bennett, Chair  
Caroline Kunitake, Vice-Chair  
Jennifer Li Dotson, Member  
Valerie Lam, Member  
Raven Sevilleja, Member  
Helen Stewart, Member  
Renee Sonobe Hong, Ex-Officio

# Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women *Kōmike Kāko 'o Wāhine o ke Kalana 'o Honolulu*

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

925 Dillingham Boulevard, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

## MEETING MINUTES

Friday, November 1, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Kapālama Hale, Conference Room 277

925 Dillingham Boulevard, Honolulu, Hawai'i

Via ZOOM

### 1. Call to Order

Committee Members present: Hope Bennett, Caroline Kunitake, Jennifer Li Dotson, Valerie Lam, Helen Stewart and Ex-Officio Member Renee Sonobe Hong

Committee Members absent: Raven Sevilleja

Staff Resources Personnel for the Committee present at the meeting:

Shane Akagi, Administrator, DCS, Office of Grants Management (OGM)

Lauren Jagla, DCS/OGM

Spenser Kunishige, DCS/OGM

Tammy Ngo, DCS/OGM

Blessing Quon, DCS/OGM

Marsha Tamura, DCS/OGM

Kathleen Kelly, Deputy Corporation Counsel, assigned to the Committee

The meeting of the Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women (HCCSW) was called to order by Chair Hope Bennett (Chair) at 1:08 p.m.

### 2. Approval of Minutes: October 4, 2024 Meeting

Chair Bennett asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 4, 2024 Meeting. Vice-Chair Kunitake made the motion, Member Stewart seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

3. Public Testimony on all Agenda Items

There was no oral (in person or online) testimony or written testimony for this meeting.

4. Testimony/Comments from Department Agencies

Mr. Akagi updated the Committee on his work with the Grants in Aid process and the Department of Emergency Management. He also provided information about Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

Mr. Akagi announced Member Sevilleja's resignation from HCCSW and confirmed that the Managing Directors Office has been notified of this and other upcoming vacancies. He requested that Committee Members inform OGM staff of their plans to renew their terms to ensure proper updates for filling positions. Vice-Chair Kunitake and Member Stewart confirmed they will not renew their terms once they end.

5. Paid Family Leave Project - Updates from Committee Members

Vice-Chair Kunitake stated that the Paid Family Leave poll will be finalized in January 2025. When the results are ready, DCS's Public Information Officer will post the poll results on HCCSW website and will be including the results of the poll in the newsletter that is sent to all County employees. Vice-Chair Kunitake shared that Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) is having monthly meetings for individuals who are interested in supporting Paid Family Leave. Chair Bennett thanked Vice-Chair Kunitake for helping the Committee follow through with this project.

6. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Letter of Support for the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Chair Bennett shared that she believed that someone has accepted the position of the Executive Director for the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women so the Committee will not be sending a letter of support at this time. She stated she hopes to have more information next month and would be interested in having that person join HCCSW for a future meeting.

7. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Following and Supporting Bills During the Legislative Session

Ms. Kelly shared that in respect to Paid Family Leave, beside the survey and letter of support, Committee Members can meet with legislators and other Committee Chair's to share the Data. She stated two to three members can be appointed for that. If three members, they would break into a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG). She

stated the Members would be identified then they can talk about the scope of their authority which would be preparing testimony, letters of support, compiling data, meeting with legislator staff or legislators to explain and support data and to coordinate with HCAN and other supporters of Paid Family Leave. Ms. Kelly also stated that for other measures where the Committee might want to submit testimony supporting things that the Committee has supported as a policy matter, they can do the same thing where they would appoint two to three members to track and support initiatives on issues and topics that the Committee has identified. Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Kelly for the information and stated that the Committee can go through that process of appointing members and decide which option would be the best route for them at a future meeting.

#### 8. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Area of Focus for Upcoming Year

Chair Bennett opened a discussion about potential areas of focus for the Committee in the upcoming year and proposed topics for exploration. She encouraged the Committee Members to share their interests and suggest areas for research where the Committee may be able to fill gaps. Vice-Chair Kunitake emphasized the need to focus on developing women as leaders. Member Stewart and Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong agreed on that point and believe that starting leadership training as early as middle school would be beneficial. Chair Bennett suggested that the Commission explore potential community partners who are already doing this work, especially in schools, to build on existing initiatives. Member Dotson highlighted the effectiveness of dashboards in promoting accountability in gender equity which could be used amongst all Honolulu County Commissions. She also shared that a topic she is interested in is pay wage equity.

Chair Bennett encouraged the Committee to continue to brainstorm and share additional ideas for the upcoming meeting's agenda, emphasizing a focus on pay equity, accountability, and leadership development. Chair Bennett stated further exploration of these topics will be continued in the next meeting.

#### 9. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Succession Planning for Committee Members

Chair Bennett discussed the process for filling vacancies, asking how Members could refer candidates. Mr. Akagi explained that interested candidates should submit their resume and contact information to him for forwarding to the chief of staff. Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong emphasized the chief of staff's interest in receiving recommendations.

Vice-Chair Kunitake highlighted Hawai'i County's Commission on the Status of Women as an example of structured membership terms to maintain continuity and suggested reducing meeting frequency to six times a year, skipping less ideal months like December and summer months. She stressed the importance of ensuring quorum and timely decisions, especially for budgeting. She also noted that

with anticipated disasters, government budgets will likely focus on mitigation and recovery, making it crucial to fully utilize allocated funds to remain a priority in future budgets.

Member Lam joined the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Chair Bennett stated that the Committee can look into supporting staggered terms to avoid simultaneous retirements. Member Stewart suggested aligning succession planning with key sectors, ensuring representation for county priorities like children or education issues. Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong inquired about the possibility of staggering terms under current regulations. Ms. Kelly and Mr. Akagi explained that the initial 4-year terms are fixed by statute, with potential flexibility for staggered terms in second appointments, though aligning terms with the Mayor's Office makes it challenging.

#### 10. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Frequency of Committee Meetings

Chair Bennett noted that while the Commission is expected to meet monthly, it is permitted to meet every other month. She suggested this change could make participation more appealing by reducing the time commitment but acknowledged it might complicate timely budget spending and project execution. She asked for the Committee's feedback on whether this adjustment would ease commitments for current members and attract more volunteers or hinder the Commission's effectiveness. While acknowledging the schedule benefit, Member Lam expressed concern that meeting every other month could hinder the Committee's progress, as gaps in meetings might slow momentum and limit opportunities to move projects forward. Chair Bennett agreed with the points raised and wondered if meetings could be adjusted on a case-by-case basis, such as skipping a meeting if it's not necessary. Ms. Kelly confirmed that the Committee has the flexibility to adjust meetings as needed. Member Stewart suggested a compromise of meeting monthly except for December and June. Chair Bennett agreed, proposing that the Committee meet monthly with the understanding that December and one summer meeting would typically be skipped, allowing flexibility to adjust if needed.

#### 11. FOR DISCUSSION: Agenda Setting for the Next Meeting

Chair Bennett stated that she will work with OGM staff on the next meeting's agenda and encouraged the Committee to share their ideas or topics that they may want on the upcoming meeting's agenda. She recapped some of the topics talked about during this meeting such as pay equity, accountability, and leadership development.

#### 12. Next Meeting: To Be Determined

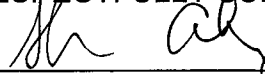
The Committee agreed to skip the December 6, 2024 meeting and schedule the next

meeting in January. OGM staff will send a poll to the Committee Members for the next HCCSW meeting.

13. Adjournment

With no further items on the agenda, Chair Bennett adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



SHANE AKAGI, OGM Administrator

DATE

1/17/2025

APPROVED:



HOPE BENNETT, Chair