

OPEN SESSION MEETING MINUTES

Board or Commission		Kauai Police Commission	Meeting Date	May 22, 2026
Location	4444 Rice Street, Moikeha Meeting Room 2A/2B, Līhu'e, Hawai'i 96766		Start of Meeting: 9:00 a.m.	End of Meeting: 10:16 a.m.
Present	Chair Laurie Yoshida; Vice Chair Mary K. Hertog; Commissioners Mia Ako, John Calma, Lisa Knutson (arrived at 9:04 a.m.), and Walton Hong. Also present: Boards and Commissions Staff: Administrator Ellen Ching, Support Clerk Mercedes Omo, and Office of the County Attorney Deputy County Attorney Kimberly Torigoe. Office of the Chief of Police Rudy Tai; Deputy Police Chief Mark Ozaki; Assistant Police Chief Elliott Ke; Chief's Secretary Kim Tamaoka; Captain Roderick Green; Employees of the Month: Sergeant Shawn Hanna and Joseph Himonagla. Officer Tyler Henshaw was at training and could not attend the meeting. Also present were members of the Kauai Police Department rank and file. Public members: Laycie Williams and members of her family.			
Excused				
Absent				

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Meeting Called to Order/Roll Call to ascertain quorum	At 9:00 a.m., Chair Yoshida called the Police Commission meeting of May 22, 2026, to order. A roll call was held, and a quorum of five (5) Commissioners was ascertained. Staff noted that Commissioner Knutson was running late and will be here as soon as she can.	
Approval of Agenda	Chair Yoshida called for approval of the agenda.	A motion was made by Vice Chair Hertog to approve the agenda. Commissioner Ako seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved.
Chair's Announcement	- The next Monthly Meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 27, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the same meeting room, Moikeha 2A/2B, with an Executive Session to follow. Please note that the schedule is subject to change. - In honor of Memorial Day, a time of remembrance and reflection, Chair Yoshida requested a moment of silence to honor the	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	sacrifices of those who gave their lives for this Country. She noted that Memorial Day honors the fallen, while Veterans Day honors all who have served or are still serving in the military. Chair Yoshida specially acknowledged veterans Vice Chair Mary K. Hertog, a retired Air Force Major General, and Kevin Mince, a retired Marine, by presenting each with an orchid lei and thanking them for their service. She also acknowledged all the veterans in the audience.	
Public Testimony	Chair Yoshida offered the public an opportunity to provide testimony on any agenda item, though none did so at this time. She noted that she would invite public testimony again throughout the meeting. <i>*At 9:04 a.m., Commissioner Knutson entered the room.</i>	
Recognition for Kauai Police Department Employees of the Month, May 2026	The Department, along with the Commission, recognized Sergeant Shawn Hanna, Officer Joseph Russell Himongala, and Officer Tyler Henshaw from KPD's Traffic Safety Section for their exceptional investigative work involving a 2025 fatal traffic incident in Lihue. On February 12, 2025, a pedestrian traveling toward Nawiliwili Road near Nokekula Street was fatally struck by a vehicle. An investigation was conducted on February 13, 2025, and the hit-and-run driver was identified and arrested. The suspect is currently awaiting trial for Negligent Homicide in the Second Degree and Collisions involving death or serious bodily injury. Chief Tai said he was impressed by the work those officers did, as well as by the other officers who responded to the scene. In law enforcement,	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	there's often a discussion about how to investigate, but those officers truly cared about what happened and made sure to meet with the family. The investigation took a lot of work and required careful attention to detail. They also showed compassion and wanted to recognize it. He then presented the officers with an orchid lei and a certificate honoring their exemplary and outstanding service, acknowledging not only their work securing evidence and making an arrest but also their engagement with the grieving family. The Commissioners thanked Sergeant Shawn Hanna, Officer Joseph Himongala, and Officer Tyler Henshaw for their work. They praised the officers for showing compassion, working diligently, and being thorough throughout the investigation. They also praised the officers for treating the family with empathy and respect, conducting a careful investigation, and providing emotional support. Opportunities for public testimony were offered by Chair Yoshida. Lacey Williams, the victim's sister, Kailon Sloan Cohen Tyndzik, addressed the Commission, offering heartfelt thanks to the officers for their meticulous and compassionate work. She acknowledged the officers' swift action and thorough investigation, which provided the family with answers and accountability. Williams expressed disappointment with the plea deal offered to the suspect (capped at 5 years), feeling it did not	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	match the crime's severity or the quality of the investigation. She also noted a desire to improve relations with the police department and bridge any existing gaps. The family's public recognition included the submission of a retroactive commendation letter, which was presented at the Commission's April 24, 2026, meeting. Chair Yoshida asked whether anyone in the public wished to testify; receiving no further comments beyond Ms. Williams' testimony, she asked Sergeant Hanna, Officer Himongala, and Henshaw if they wanted to say a few words, but they declined.	
Recess	At 9:15 a.m., Chair Yoshida called for a recess for photos and congratulations. At 9:22 a.m., Chair Yoshida called the meeting back to order.	
Approval of Minutes April 24, 2026, Meeting	Chair Yoshida asked the Commissioners if they had any corrections to the minutes. If none, she would ask for a motion to approve them as distributed.	A motion was made by Commissioner Hong to approve the minutes as distributed. Commissioner Ako seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.
Chief's Monthly Report April 2026	○ Office of the Chief – Notable Highlights, Special Projects, Community Engagement, Significant Meetings, Public Information Officer. ○ Support Services Bureau, Criminal Investigations Division, and Field Operations Division – Budget Summary Estimate, Personnel Status, Recruitment Status, DARE Classes, KPAL Programs, Training Provided by Outside Agency: Off-Island, Training Provided by Kaa'i Police Department, Training Provided by Outside Agency: On-Island, Firearms Registered, Handgun Applications, Long Gun Applications, Licenses to Carry Applications, Crime Scene and	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	Laboratory Section - Biometric Identification Facial and Ten Print, Crime Scene and Laboratory Section - Call Out Lab Request, YTD Death Statistics, Person Crimes Section Statistics, Person Crimes Section Enforcement, Property Crimes Section Statistics, Property Crimes Section Enforcement, Property Crimes Section Types, and Vice Section Statistics. ○ Preliminary Point & Time Data – Crime Summary and Activity Summary. ○ Agency Statistics – Calls for Service/Incident Summary, Citation Summary, Arrest Summary, Legal Services, Warrant Type – All Divisions, and Warrant Tracking – All Divisions. Chair Yoshida turned to the Commissioners, inviting them to ask questions or share their thoughts on the data in Chief Tai's Monthly Reports, but none were offered. Police Chief Tai highlighted progress in hiring, noting that three new hires are pending and that vacancies have fallen from double digits to about six or seven. This was viewed as a significant improvement after months of elevated vacancy rates. There was no public testimony in the Chief's Monthly Reports.	
Correspondence	• Email dated May 14, 2026, received by the Office of Boards and Commissions from Rolando Yagin, requesting that the Kauai Police Commission contact the Hawaii Attorney General, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate former Kauai Police Department Officer Barry DeBlake for murder or manslaughter at Lihue Airport.	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	Chair Yoshida acknowledged receipt of the email and asked the public whether they wished to testify. There was no response. Chair Yoshida stated that, after consulting the Office of the County Attorney, Mr. Yagin's request falls outside the Police Commission's authority under Kauai County law. The next step is to receive the correspondence.	A motion was made by Commissioner Ako to receive the correspondence dated May 14, 2026, from Mr. Rolando Yagin. Commissioner Calma seconded the motion. The motion carried 6:0.
Business OS KPC 2026-6	<u>Discussion, deliberation, and possible action on recommendations to revise the Kauai Police Commission Rules on Administrative Practice and Procedure. (Deferred on March 27, 2026.)</u> Chair Yoshida said each commissioner should have a copy of the current rules that were approved in 2018. She now would like to turn to Vice Chair Hertog to update the Commission on the status of the rule change process. Vice Chair Hertog reported that she, Kevin Mince, Deputy County Attorney Kimberly Torigoe, Administrator Ellen Ching, and Support Clerk Mercedes Omo have met twice, most recently yesterday afternoon, and have another meeting scheduled. She stated that they are not done with the rules and have reviewed them line by line, rule by rule, to make the approval process easier when it comes time for the Commissioners' approval. She noted that Rules 4, 10, and 11 remain under review. For today, she asked the Commission to focus solely on the Police Chief evaluation process outlined in Rule 4. During their rule-change meeting, they	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	identified two options for evaluating the chief of police: either leave the current evaluation process in place, which most Commissioners agree is awkward, or replace it with a new one. They're proposing to streamline the evaluation process, with no probationary period for the police chief. As of now, the chief of police receives evaluations at different times. They're recommending two options: 1) maintain the current evaluation process (including a 6-month review) or 2) streamline the annual evaluation by eliminating the 6-month review and aligning it with the fiscal year and the chief's goals and objectives. Vice Chair Hertog explained that the current evaluation process requires each commissioner to submit a written evaluation, using the police chief's evaluation form, to the B&C staff. The staff would then have to compile all the evaluation comments into a single evaluation form, a task that was sometimes difficult, especially when commissioners' comments differed widely. What they are proposing is to develop, with input from the chief of police, a self-evaluation form based on the goals and critical tasks outlined by the Commission for the chief of police. They have seen a sample self-evaluation form that they can customize for KPD, or, if Police Chief Tai has one that he's used or seen before, they're certainly happy to look at it. She explained that the first step in this self-evaluation process is for the chief of police to complete the self-evaluation form for a specific period, submit it to the Commissioners in advance, and present it to the body in open session. The Commission will then have an opportunity to provide verbal input on the police chief's self-evaluation and goals, thereby	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	streamlining the evaluation process. For the second step, the Commission will need to determine who should compile the evaluation results; the options are the chair, the vice chair, or the Boards and Commissions Administrator. The selected person will prepare a Composite Evaluation Report, which will be presented to the Commissioners for approval and discussion in open session. Once approved, the Composite Evaluation Report will be sent to the police chief. She noted that they did not discuss any details at the rule-changing meetings because the evaluation form had not yet been developed. Again, there are two decision points today: either stick with the current evaluation process as set forth in the Commission's rules or adopt a new evaluation process that uses a self-evaluation form. If the Commission adopts the new evaluation process using the self-evaluation form, it will need to decide who will compile the Composite Evaluation Report. The options are the chair, the vice chair, or the administrator of the boards and commissions. As a suggestion, they recommend eliminating the 6-month evaluation process and that the chief gets a first-year evaluation after 12 months, which is in the current rule. The Commission would try to tie it to the fiscal year and align it with the goals Chief Tai submitted to the Commission. Basically, the Commission needs to decide whether to streamline the police chief evaluation process or retain the current one. Chair Yoshida believed the 6-month evaluation was inadequate and a waste of time and effort for all involved. Commissioner Hong said he would move to eliminate the 6-month evaluation process and streamline it through self-evaluation. Commissioner Ako said she would second Commissioner Hong's motion. It was noted that no further formal motion	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	was required at this stage; further drafting and input will continue. The Commissioners also debated the trade-off between flexibility and responsibility in assigning the compilation task, ultimately favoring flexibility for future commissions. Again, no formal motion was required at this stage. Since there was no public testimony, Chair Yoshida called for a motion to defer the matter to the next meeting.	Commissioner Hong moved to defer the matter to the next meeting. Commissioner Ako seconded the motion. The motion carried 6:0.
OS KPC 2026-7	<u>Discussion and possible action on Goals and Objectives for the period from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, for the Chief of Police.</u> <i>(Deferred on April 24, 2026)</i> ▪ Chief Tai submitted his Goals and Objectives in a letter dated May 15, 2026, for the Commission's review and consideration. ▪ Commissioner Hong requested adding a goal to improve relationships between collective bargaining units and the administration, citing past challenges. Chief Tai said he would revise his goals and objectives and submit them to Ms. Ching for distribution to the Commissioners. ▪ Discussion included how to measure progress toward goals such as employee morale (potential use of Gallup polls) and operational efficiency.	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	▪ The commission ultimately approved the goals, incorporating the suggested edit to improve relationships between the administration and the collective bargaining unit. There was no public testimony about this item.	
Executive Session	Under the Hawai'i Revised Statutes §§ 92-4, 92-5 (a) (2) and (4), the purpose of this executive session is for the Commission to review and discuss charges brought against an officer in the Kauai Police Department, with consideration of matters affecting privacy, provided that if the individual concerned requests an open meeting, an open meeting shall be held; and to consult with its attorney on issues related to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities as they may relate to these matters:	Chair Yoshida called upon Deputy County Attorney Kimberly Torigoe to read the Hawaii Revised Statutes to enter Executive Session. At 9:45 a.m., Deputy County Attorney Torigoe read the Hawaii Revised Statutes.
ES KPC 2026-1	<u>Regular Monthly updates by Chief of Police Rudy Tai or his designated Representative related to the Office of Professional Standards, Monthly Report on the status and/or disposition of a formal notarized citizen complaints that were filed with the Kauai Police Commission and referred to the Office of the Chief for disposition and/or report back to the Police Commission.</u> • Discussion and possible action on Notarized Citizen Complaint 2026-1, received by the Office of Boards and Commissions on February 28, 2026. The incident occurred on February 4, 2026. The complainant alleges that after being physically assaulted, the responding officers were dismissive, showed favoritism toward the business establishment, and mocked the complainant after emergency medical services personnel left the scene. The next day, the complainant called KPD and asked the assigned officer to	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	meet them at the Mahelona emergency room. The assigned officer stated that the complainant might have choked themselves. (Referred to the Office of the Chief for investigation on April 24, 2026)	
ES KPC 2026-2	<u>Regular Monthly updates by Chief of Police Rudy Tai or his designated representative of any significant adverse incidents/events involving personnel in the Kauai Police Department that could potentially impact the County, the Police Commission, and the Kauai Police Department.</u> (Nothing to Report) After Deputy County Attorney Torigoe finished reading the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Chair Yoshida called for public testimony on any items listed under the Executive Session agenda. Since there were no testifiers, Chair Yoshida called for a motion to enter the Executive Session.	A motion was made by Commissioner Hong to enter the Executive Session. Vice Chair Hertog seconded the motion. At 9:47 a.m., the Commission entered the Executive Session.
Return to Open Session. Ratify the actions taken in Executive Session	At 10:11 a.m., the Commission reconvened in the Open Session Chair Yoshida asked Deputy County Attorney Kimberly Torigoe to read the Executive Session Report under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 92-4(b). <u>ES KPC 2026-1:</u> The Commission received a Report from Lieutenant Kevin Gras of the Office of Professional Standards to Chief of Police Rudy Tai regarding the OPS Monthly Report for May 2026 and the investigative findings on the formal, citizen-notarized complaint KPC 2026-1. The Commission voted to deem the allegations as follows: Allegation 1:	

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	Officers dismissed the complainant and favored the business. Unfounded. Allegation 2: Officers failed to make an arrest and, through inaction, contributed to violence against the complainant. Unfounded. Allegation 3: Officers mocked the complainant after the emergency personnel services left the scene. Unfounded. Allegation 4: The officer suggested the complainant choked himself to the point of losing consciousness. Unfounded. Allegation 5: Sustained lasting physical/psychological injuries because of the incident. Unfounded. All votes were unanimous, and each motion carried on its respective allegation. The discussion is not subject to disclosure because disclosure would defeat the purpose of the Executive Session under §HRS 92-5 (a) (2). Regarding the Formal Notarized Citizen Complaint KPC 2026-2, the investigation is ongoing. No detailed report or discussion was presented during this session.	Chair Yoshida called for a motion to ratify the actions taken in the Executive Session. A motion was made by Commissioner Hong to ratify the actions taken in the Executive Session.

SUBJECT	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	<u>ES KPC 2026-2:</u> No Report. No discussion. No action.	Commissioner Calma seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously 6:0.
Adjournment	There being no further business, Chair Yoshida called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.	A motion was made by Commissioner Hong to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Calma seconded the motion. At 10:17 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: _____
Mercedes Omo, Staff Support Clerk

Reviewed and Approved by: _____
Laurie Yoshida, Chair

(x) Approved as circulated on June 26, 2026.

() Approved as amended. See minutes of _____ meeting.