

# AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE ADVISORY BOARD

## Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Monday, September 18, 2023

830 Punchbowl Street, Room 329

### MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

DATE: Monday, September 18, 2023

TIME: 1:30pm – 3:30pm

#### Board Members Present:

Jade Butay, Chair, (Director, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations [DLIR])

Representative Mark Nakashima

David Fuertes (Representative of Farmers)

Sharon Hurd, (Chairperson, Department of Agriculture)

Bruce Mathews, (University of Hawaii at Hilo)

Brian Miyamoto, (Hawaii Farm Bureau - for Randy Cabral)

Troy Sueoka (Representing the Superintendent - Department of Education)

#### Board Members Excused:

Anna Wieczorek, (Interim Dean and Director - UH Manoa CTAHR)

#### Staff:

Maricar Pilotin-Freitas

Staff, DLIR, WDD

Leila Shar

Staff, DLIR, WDD

Jay Ishibashi

Staff, DLIR, WDD

#### Guest:

Norman Arancon

University of Hawaii at Hilo

Carlos Labasan Severson

Castle High School

Jackie Freitas

Leilehua High School

Ken Kajihara

Waipahu Intermediate School

Maliekekaimaika “Kai” Ward

Molokai High School

Jennifer Makuakane

Ka’u High School

Sherry Tenn

Waipahu High School

## **I. Call to Order and Introductions**

With a quorum of members present, the meeting was called to order by Chair Butay at 1:38 p.m.

Chair Butay welcomed and thanked the Board members, emphasizing that their collaboration has been a key to the success of the Board and assisting the agriculture industry. The Board members and meeting participants introduced themselves to Chair Butay and to those in attendance.

The Board asked Representative Mark Nakashima if he would like to address the Board. Representative Nakashima thanked the Board for their continued support and help with the agriculture industry and the development of the agricultural workforce.

## **II. November 16, 2022 Board Minutes**

The draft of the minutes of last Board meeting (November 16, 2022) were reviewed and voted on for acceptance by the Board. There were no edits by Board members to any of the items in the document. Board member Brian Miyamoto motioned for approval of the November 16, 2022 Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board meeting minutes and Board member Bruce Mathews seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the November 16, 2022 Board meeting.

## **III. FY2023 Project Updates**

Jay Ishibashi noted that many of the projects are not complete and are still in progress.

- A. "Agriculture Mentorship at UH Hilo" (UH Hilo) Norman Arancon thanked the Board for suggesting the approval of the project. The mentoring program was started earlier this year and has three UH Hilo agricultural students mentoring two Waiakea High Schools on Mondays and Wednesdays. The program is doing very well with the students primarily helping in the campus garden. The students should be completing their required hours by mid-October.
- B. "Sustainable Food Growing Systems & Land Management (DOE/Castle High School) Carlos Severson thanked the Board for the grant. Last year the focus was on developing the capacity for students to grow herbs, fruit trees and layout plans for landscaping to remove invasive species. The biggest benefit was to have students work in smaller teams in individual beds. It is important to the program to not only have the students grow the food but to develop leadership (planning, communication, teamwork, collaboration, marketing and sales) skills.
- C. "Animals on the Farm" (DOE - Leilehua High School) – Jackie Freitas thanked the Board for the recommendation for the grant and provided an update of the current project. The funding is helping to provide feed and supplies for the animals on site. The school is working on aviaries and a storage unit to house the supplies and equipment for the animals. Board member Brian Miyamoto asked if she was able to purchase the 40ft container that she requested (no, did not acquire the funding); and asked if the department of Education allows donations. Board member David Fuertes will share information with Jackie on possible resources to acquire the 40ft containers.
- D. "Hawaii Future Farmers of America College Careers and Leadership Program" (Waipahu Intermediate School) – Ken Kajihara spoke on behalf of the Waipahu Intermediate School FFA program. Although there was interest at the beginning of the last school year, the desired overall middle school participation did not materialize. However, the project was able to send thirty students from Waipahu Intermediate School to the FFA State Conference in March 2023. Of the 30 students 24 qualified to enter the National FFA conference career development events in November. Also, highlights for the Waipahu Intermediate FFA students at the State conference: Fifteen students qualified for the National FFA Agriscience Fair, the State Extemporaneous Public Speaking Winner (National qualifier), and the State

Creed Recitation Winner (National qualifier) Ken Kajihara read one of the testimonials from one of the participating students expressing thanks for the opportunity to pursue her passion in the field of agriculture. Board member Brian Miyamoto was a judge at the conference and was amazed by the quality of the Waipahu Intermediate students and the conference participants as a whole. Ken Kajihara also shared some data regarding agriculture participation in the public schools – in 2021 3255 public school students were enrolled in agriculture programs statewide and increased to 4185 in the next year; and FFA paid membership went from a pandemic low 340 in 2021 to 585 last year. Board member Sharon Hurd asked if part of the funding was used to purchase the FFA jackets for the students and according to Ken – they could have but opted to send more students to the State conference. Board member David Fuertes commended the efforts of Waipahu Intermediate and High School for their effort in promoting agriculture in school to which Ken Kajihara credited Superintendent Hayashi for leading the way by creating the academies and the Board for helping to keep the Department of Education (DOE) agriculture programs and FFA programs alive. Board member Brian Miyamoto and several other board members also credited Representative Nakashima for continuing to push for the development of the agriculture pipeline.

- E. “Growing Connection” (DOE – Molokai High School) – Kai Ward provided a brief summary of this year’s project thus far. The program was that was able to work with the school’s digital media teacher to introduce the agriculture students to marketing and labeling as part of the curriculum (farm to market). The project also had two Hawaiian Emersion students join the program for the first time who created their own rose oil as part of their project. The Board fully funded the project to continue the value-added concept and as a part of that – the program prepared the students to contribute to the community and as an example, had the students participate in the island foodbank distribution. The students pulled kalo from the field, prepped, packaged, and labeled the produce for distribution.
- F. “Chicken Farming and Composting” (Waipahu High School)  
Sherry Tenn reported that their efforts have been delayed due to having to move the program into the newly constructed building at Waipahu High School which houses several academies including the National Resources Academy program. The project just started purchasing equipment and supplies for the chicken farm initiative. The plan is to use the funding to have the students experience chicken farm production primarily egg production and as a byproduct - to use the chicken waste for composting. The Board shared the difficulties in egg production and chicken waste composting; and Board member Hurd offered to send information on the rules for egg production (inspections, selling etc.).
- G. “Ka’u Global Learning Lab” – Jennifer Makuakane reported the following:  
The goal and objectives of the program were to continue working to produce fresh fruits and vegetables to support food security in Ka’u. From November 2022 through August 2023 the students harvested 5925 pounds of fresh produce with over eighteen different types such as beans, carrots, and daikon. The crops were

distributed to groups such as the Naalehu Resilience Hub and the Pahala Senior Citizens Club and other members of the Ka'u community.

#### **IV. FY 2024 Proposal Review and Recommendation for Budget Allocation**

Jay Ishibashi shared that having the DOE schools submit proposals to close to the beginning of the school year made it difficult for many of the schools to prepare and submit proposals during that time frame and if funding is still available in the future – the proposal submittal deadline will be pushed back to later in the fall semester.

The Board proceeded to review the proposals submitted for FY 24 funding and develop recommendations for the DLIR Director.

Board member Bruce Mathews recommended that the Board look to suggest supporting the DOE schools over the UH system proposals as they have greater access to funding. Board member Brian Miyamoto concurred and recommended fully funding the DOE school proposals and reducing the UH proposals.

The review and recommendation by the Board was as follows:

- A. “Ka’u Global Learning Lab” (DOE/Ka’u High School and Pahala Elementary School) – The Board agreed to recommend fully funding the Ka’u High School proposal.
- B. “GoFarm Hawaii: A Statewide Farmer Development Initiative” (University of Hawaii) – the Board recommended to not fund the proposal citing the number viable proposals, the limited funding available and the program’s ability to acquire funds.
- C. “Wetland Taro, Food & Tea Crops & Lei Flowers (DOE/Castle High School) After review the Board recommended to fully fund the proposal.
- D. “Farm to Market at UH Hilo” (UH Hilo) The Board discussed and recommended to partially fund the proposal noting the possible underperformance, the number viable proposals, the limited funding available and the program’s ability to acquire funds.
- E. “Value-Added Agricultural Workforce Exploration” (UH Leeward Community College) The Board discussed and recommended to partially fund the proposal noting the number viable proposals, the limited funding available and the program’s ability to acquire funds.
- F. “Building and Exceptional Agriculture Workforce” (DOE/Waipahu High School) the Board recommended to fully funding the proposal.
- G. “Plant Propagation” (DOE/Leilehua High School) – The Board recommended fully funding the proposal.

Board member Brian Miyamoto moved and Board member David Fuertes seconded a blanket motion recommending fully funding the Department of Education school (Ka’u High School and Pahala Elementary School; Castle High School; Waipahu High School and Leilehua High School) proposals. The Board voted in favor of the motion, recommending the fully funding of the DOE school proposals (Board member Troy Sueoka recused).

Board member Brian Miyamoto moved and Board member David Fuertes seconded motions (each proposal voted on separately) to recommend reducing the UH Hilo proposal, reducing the Leeward Community College proposal and to not fund the U.H. GoFarm Hawaii proposal. The

Board voted in favor of the motions (taken separately) recommending the reduction in funding of UH Hilo and Leeward Community College and not funding the UH GoFarm Hawaii proposal. (Board Member Bruce Mathews recused).

**V. Announcements and Updates**

Board member Sharon Hurd thanked the DLIR for the Hale Imua program – the Department of Agriculture has several interns through the program.

Maricar Pilotin Freitas reported that DLIR is moving to replicate the existing programs with the Waipahu High School academies in five other schools throughout the state.

**VI. Next Meeting**

The Board agreed to schedule the next meeting after the beginning of the next fiscal year to discuss FY25 funding if appropriated by the Legislature.

**VII. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned by Chair Butay at 3:20p.m.