



NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY

An Authority of the State of Hawaii attached to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

**January 20, 2026
1:00 p.m.**

**An Interactive Conference Technology Meeting was held at
NELHA OceanView Conference Room
Hale Iako Building
73-970 Makako Bay Drive
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
and via Zoom Video Conferencing Software.**

Members/Designees in Attendance

Noelani Kalipi (Gov. Appointee/Chair)
Cyd Miyashiro (Gov. Appointee/Vice Chair)
Gordon Bruce (Gov. Appointee)
Alan Hilton (RAC Chair)
Dennis Lin (County of Hawaii)
Dave Molinaro (DBEDT Director Office)
Neil Sims (Tenant Representative)
Nathan Tsao (Tenant Representative)
Manu Tupper (DLNR)
Dr. Chad Walton (University of Hawaii)
Dr. John Wiltshire (RAC Secretary)

Board Members Not Attending and Excused

Jaclyn Kaina (HTDC)

Guests/Staff Present

Laurence Sombardier (NELHA)
Keith Olson (NELHA)
Alexander Leonard (NELHA)
Bryan Babbitt (NELHA)
Faustine Edge (NELHA)
Pam Madden (NELHA)
Rae Nguyen (NELHA)
Jennifer Rasmussen (NELHA)
John Cole (AG)
Brian Williams (Infrasound Laboratory, University of Hawaii)
Sandra Gibson (Kona Salt Farm)
Jen Johnson (Cyanotech)
Ben Martin (Global OTEC)
Jaime Matsukawa (Shrimp Improvement Systems)
Jeff Zimpher (National Park Services)

Full Board meeting recording available at:

Part A <https://youtu.be/si9UWT9nVfE> Part B <https://youtu.be/pLPuNQqfZ6E>

- **Item 1. (1:03 p.m.) Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Cyd Miyashiro (Vice Chair Miyashiro) at 1:03 p.m. Vice Chair Miyashiro asked Deputy Director Laurence Sombardier (DD Sombardier) for a roll call of Board members and NELHA staff. Reference to Act 220. Eleven members present and two excused.

Chair Kalipi joined the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

- **Item 2. (1:09 p.m. video run time - Part A 0:00:04) Approval of NELHA Board Directors' November 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes.**

Vice Chair Miyashiro opened this item for discussion. Director Sims moved to approve the November 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes, and the motion was seconded by Director Tsao (1:09 p.m. video run time 0:00:04). The minutes were approved. (11-0) (1:10 p.m. video run time 0:00:27).

- **Item 3. (1:10 p.m. video run time - Part A 0:00:35) Public Testimony.**

Chair Kalipi opened the floor to any Public Testimony or any open items not on the agenda. No one came forward.

- **Item 4a. Old Business (1:11 p.m. video run time - Part A 0:06:01). Update and discussion regarding the Amended Complaint Filed by Keahole Point Hatcheries LLC on October 28, 2025*.**

Chair Kalipi stated they will be discussing this item in Executive Session to consult with the Board's Deputy Attorney General (AG) Cole on issues pertaining to the Board's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities pursuant to HRS § 92-5, subsection (a)(4). Director Sims made the motion to move to Executive Session, Director Tsao seconded the motion (1:11 p.m. Video Part A run time 0:01:48). The motion passed (11-0) and Directors went into Executive Session at 1:11 p.m. (video run time, Part A 0:01:56).

The Board Directors returned from Executive Session at 1:21 p.m. (video run time - Part B, 00:00:09). Deputy Attorney General John Cole (AG Cole) summarized the session discussion (video run time – Part B, 00:00:23).

- **Item 5. New Business.**

- a. Discussion and Decision-Making regarding the Request by State of Hawaii School Facilities for Approval in Concept for Early Learning Center. 1:21 p.m. (video run

time – Part B 0:01:11).

State of Hawaii School Facilities requested this item be removed from our agenda after NELHA published it by requirement of Sunshine Laws.

- b. Create a Special Investigative Committee for the purpose of preparing and delivering to the Board the performance evaluation of the NELHA Executive Director.** (1:21 p.m. video run time – Part B 0:1:22).

Chair Kalipi opened this agenda item and asked for volunteers to the Special Investigative Committee (SIC). Chair Kalipi, Vice Chair Miyashiro and Director Walton volunteered to serve on the committee. Director Sims motioned to approve the SIC for the purpose of preparing and delivering to the Board the performance evaluation for the NELHA Executive Director. SIC members are Chair Kalipi, Vice Chair Miyashiro and Director Walton. Director Lin seconded the motion (1:23 p.m., video run time-Part B 0:05:16). The motion carried 11-0 (1:27 p.m., video run time – Part B 0:05:32).

- **Item 6a. Financial Report. (1:27 p.m. video run time – Part B 0:05:44) Approval and Decision Making.**

DD Sombardier presented the Finance Report. Board Directors and the Public were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss.

- **Item 7. Executive Director’s Informational Status Report on ongoing projects including: 2026 Legislative session, FY26 budget planning, research campus leases, new leases under discussion; water quality and seawater system maintenance; offshore deep seawater pipe removal planning and design; regional seawater air conditioning planning and design; new potable water supply update; aquaculture accelerator and investment fund initiative; grant applications; new Mauka Research Campus; renewable distributed energy resources initiative for microgrid; and, solar desalination; contracts and agreements including master plan and EIS update.* (1:32 p.m. video run time – Part B 0:09:48).**

DD Sombardier gave the Board and Public the Status Report on ongoing projects. Board Directors and the Public were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss.

- **Item 8. (1:57 p.m. video run time – Part B 0:36:03) Announcements**

a. Date of the next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

- **Item 9. (1:58 p.m. video run time – Part B 0:36:12) Adjournment.**

Chair Kalipi adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m. (video runtime 0:36:12).

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