

The Maui News

4 vie to become new director of liquor control

WAILUKU – The names of the four candidates vying for the top post in the county Department of Liquor Control were disclosed Wednesday during a county Liquor Commission meeting.

The candidates, named by a subcommittee of the Liquor Commission, are:

- * Traci Fujita-Villarosa, current deputy director of the department.
- * Glenn Mukai, former deputy director of the department.
- * Layne Silva, liquor control officer, whose father is the person the commission is trying to replace, retired Liquor Control Director Frank Silva.
- * Karilee Yoshizawa, liquor control officer and Mukai's daughter.

The Liquor Commission expects to interview the candidates March 2 and to make a selection during its regular meeting March 9, department officials said. The new director would make \$118,243, according to a legal advertisement.

A subcommittee of the commission was formed and prepared the list of applicants after Frank Silva's retirement as head of the department Nov. 1. The subcommittee's report will be reviewed by the commission during a special meeting Wednesday, when the commission plans to set procedures for the interview process.

"If you look at the list of the candidates, I feel they're all qualified," said Wailuku commissioner William Kennison, who served as chairman of the

subcommittee. “They meet the requirements, and they’re all good people. I feel any one of them would make a fine director.”

Only four applications were received for the position and were reviewed by Kennison, Kula commissioner Roy Umeno and Lahaina commissioner Frank Sylva on Jan. 27. Each applicant has been a resident of Hawaii for over a year and has a minimum of five years experience in law enforcement – at least three years in an administrative capacity.

“I was surprised that we didn’t have more candidates,” Kennison said. “I would think that it’s a good paying job and serves the community, so it would seem like there would be more so I don’t know why. But the requirements are very stringent because it is a very important position.

“The director has a lot of power controlling the sale of liquor in Maui County and has to be able to do a good job.”

The meetings and interviews will be open to the public, though commission officials were unsure if the panel will go into closed executive session at some point during the process.

The subcommittee has been seeking applicants since December, after the commission’s first selection, Dana Souza, a Makawao commission member, declined the job. He was chosen for the post Oct. 7 and again during a special meeting Oct. 28, after critics argued that the initial appointment was inappropriate because the selection of a new director was not on the agenda.

Souza, the son of former department Director Joseph Souza, Silva’s predecessor, formally declined the post in a letter to the commission Oct. 30. He did not offer an explanation.

After Souza declined the position, the commission decided to go through a formal selection process, which included forming a subcommittee to process applications and to forward them to the full commission for final approval.

Kennison said the commission is looking for a director who can supervise and relate to staff, as well as connect with the community and “uphold the laws of the liquor department.”

“I think that’s very, very important because one of the things I’m very concerned about and all the commissioners are concerned about is abuse of liquor – especially with minors,” he said.

Kennison said the series of interviews are expected to take all day, and the commission plans to come up with questions during its special meeting next week.

“We want to make sure that whatever we do, we make it transparent and fair,” he said. “If we ask one candidate a question, then we want to ask all the candidates the same question as much as possible.”

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