

# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, ETHICS, AND TRANSPARENCY COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

## MINUTES

July 1, 2025

Online Only via Teams

**CONVENE:** 1:32 p.m.

**PRESENT:** VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Chair  
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Vice-Chair  
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member  
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member  
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member (In 1:32 p.m.)  
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member  
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member  
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member

**EXCUSED:** VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member

**STAFF:**

Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst  
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney  
Maria Leon, Committee Secretary  
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk  
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office  
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office  
Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office  
Buddy Almeida, Council Aide, Makawao-Ha‘ikū-Pā‘ia Residency Area Office

**ADMIN.:**

Christie Trenholme, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel  
Yukari Murakami, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel  
Jody Yoshida, Boards and Commissions Liaison, Office of the Mayor  
Ryssa Tam Ho, Boards and Commissions Liaison, Office of the Mayor

**OTHERS:**

Kelly Shane Davison

(15+) additional attendees

**PRESS:**

*Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.*

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . .(*gavel*). . . Good afternoon, everyone. Will the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting of July 1, 2025, please come to order. It is 1:32 p.m. I'm your Chair, Nohelani U'u-Hodgins. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. Let's see. Committee Vice-Chair Member Paltin, are you on? If not, we will come back to her. Councilmember Tom Cook, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Good afternoon, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Councilmember Gabe Johnson, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers at the Lāna'i District Office, and I'm alone in my house. The dog is outside snoring, so I'm here and ready to work. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Cute. Thank you. Let's go back to Committee Vice-Chair Tamara Paltin. Good afternoon.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Aloha 'auinalā kākou, streaming live and direct from my kitchen table. Currently, it's just me and the unknown minor canine, the four unnamed minor children, and the named husband should be back shortly.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. I'm glad your husband has a name.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Councilmember Tasha Kama, I'm assuming, will be with us shortly. Council Chair Alice Lee, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Talofa lava, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Talofa lava. Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, I don't see. She should be with us shortly. Councilmember Shane Sinenci, good afternoon. Talofa lava.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Talofa lava, Chair. Here at my home office, I'm here by myself, and there are no testifiers in Hāna, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. And Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good afternoon. Talofa lava. I'm looking forward to a productive meeting.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. From Corporation Counsel, we have Deputy Corporation Counsel Christie Trenholme, and Yukari Murakami is online with us if we need her today. We also have Jody Yoshida with Boards and Commissions Liaison, as well as

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Ryssa Tam Ho, Boards and Commissions Liaison, and Kelly Shane Davison should be with us online as well, as we will be discussing his appointment to the Salary Commission. We have our Committee Staff, which include Maria Leon, Committee Secretary; Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst; Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst; Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney; and Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk. Please...please see the last page of the agenda for information regarding meeting connectivity. Do we have any testifiers signed up? Do I have to read it or no? Grand.

**ITEM 2(5):        RESOLUTION 25-133, APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER TO  
                         THE SALARY COMMISSION**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Well, considering we don’t see anybody testifying, let’s begin by going to Resolution 25-133, the Appointment of a Member to the Salary Commission. By correspondence dated and received on June 12th, 2025, the Mayor transmitted Resolution 25-133 to consider Kelly Shane Davison to a nomination...as a nominee to the Salary Commission for a term expiring March 31st, 2030. The Council’s 30-day deadline to approve or disapprove the nomination is July 12th, 2025. Copies of the board listing and application for the nominee have been uploaded to Granicus. Thank you, Maria. As you may have noticed on the agenda, this item was posted for no legislative action today. Since our deadline to approve or disapprove the nominees is July 12th, I requested a resolution be posted today on the July 8th Council meeting agenda for consideration. My intention for today is to hear from the Boards and Commissions Liaison, Jody Yoshida, to provide opening remarks on the Mayor’s nomination, and then to receive any opening comments from Mr. Davison. Following that, I’ll ask for testimony on the item again, close public testimony, and get into discussion, Members, so we don’t have to do this on the floor. So, right now, I’m going to ask Ms. Yoshida for any comments, if you have any.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, okay. Ryssa. Thank you.

MS. TAM HO: Aloha mai kākou. Kelly Davison serves as a senior executive vice president for Exertus Financial Partners located here on Maui. Kelly graduated with a degree in international business from the University of Texas, El Paso. Over the last 20 years, he has built multiple successful businesses in retail, wholesale, and e-commerce. He currently manages businesses in the financial industry across 12 states. Kelly is a retired major from the Army Reserves in military intelligence after 24 years of service. Mahalo.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. Mr. Davison, do you have any opening remarks that you would like to share with us? *(pause)* Oh, shucks. You’re muted still. Is he unmuted on our end?

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MS. MACDONALD: Kelly, you are unmuted on our end. If you're having difficulties unmuting, if it's not allowing you, you may need to leave the meeting and rejoin, and then hopefully the...yeah, mic and camera will let you unmute yourself.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And while he leaves us and rejoins, let's say good afternoon to Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Good afternoon, Chair. Good afternoon, Members. I didn't realize it was so late. Pardon me.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: That's okay. Good times go fast, and it was our lunch break. That's why we always start late. Well, we will wait for Mr. Davison. Should we see if we have any testifiers? If not, I will then close public testimony. Written testimony will continue to be accepted.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

**. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON ITEM 2(5) . . .**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. We will now wait for Mr. Davison, and then we will have a three-minute questioning period after he rejoins us, and we can ask all the questions so we don't have to do that during our Council meeting. *(pause)* Mr. Davison, can you unmute now? There's a little mic on the top. If not, maybe we can give him the number to call in. *(pause)*

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Does anybody have a question for him? . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Hello. How are you?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: We're going to try to call him.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. We're going to try to call him in. And you know what? In the meantime, let's take a two-minute recess. We will come back at 1:41. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

**RECESS:** 1:39 p.m.

**RECONVENE:** 1:44 p.m.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Will the GREAT Committee please reconvene. It is 1:44 p.m. Member Paltin, do you need to claim an adult member with you right now?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Yeah, I have an adult male in the house, just pau hana. His name is George Vierra.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Aloha, George. And then we will...

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MR. VIERRA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Hui. Oh, look, my camera not even on. Hi. Okay. We are going to begin with asking questions with Mr. Davison. And why don’t we begin by my asking you why you are interested in the Salary Commission, and where do you see your...your presence and its benefit on the commission? Thank you.

MR. DAVISON: Absolutely. Thank you for taking the time to consider me today. I believe that my interest in the Salary Commission is to get more involved into the Maui Council, as well as everything that it provides to its community. I’ve been building businesses for...for many years in Maui, and have been a contributor through those means. But by participating in any way that I can, to help with the Council in providing greater benefits, helping people, the locals, everything like that, I...I saw this as an opportunity to become a part of the great things that you guys do, and...and help in any way that I can.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, does anybody else have any other questions? If not, I can ask Member Rawlins-Fernandez’s typical questions, but we will go with Member Kama, because I see your hand up. Thank you, Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. I must have the wrong information, because I have Mr. Davison, but I also have him as Planning Commission. And his...did I miss something earlier because I came late, Chair?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: No, you did not.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I think that’s what he wanted to do, but they put him --

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: I think he was...

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: -- on this one instead.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yes, I think he was --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay, okay.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: -- interested in serving on the Planning Commission, but I believe either INB, or through the course of whatever happens before they get here, they moved him to the Salary Commission. So, that’s what we’re discussing today.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. So, Salary Commission. Okay. I have to reroute my brain to go there instead of Planning. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, any other questions? Member Paltin, go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Davison, for your willingness to serve. I just wanted to ask, was the Salary Commission your number two choice if the

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Planning Commission was your number one choice? I mean, looking over your resume, you seem super-qualified to do anything, and I just want to make sure that we're making the best use of your skills and talents.

MR. DAVISON: Thank you so much. I appreciate those kind words. Yes, the Planning Commission was my initial request. At that time, there was an opening for the Planning Commission, and that was mainly why I was applying for it. As far as I knew, Salary Commission was not open and available at that time. As I went through the interview process, the Planning Commission seats were filled, and I did request what other seats were open. Upon that review, the Salary Commission seat did open up, and I requested to be considered for that position.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay. And like nothing else caught your eye, like Civil Service, or anything like that?

MR. DAVISON: Good...good question. I wasn't too sure what other positions all were open. When I heard about the Salary Commission, this was all before the salary topics were...were, you know, heavily debated and talked about here in recent months and stuff. So, I did apply more than eight months ago, before all of this, and so I thought, oh, it would be a great opportunity to be involved, and be able to participate. Now, all that time has passed, and I understand things are not quite as active as it once was. It's still of interest to me, and of course, any opportunity to serve, I'm open. That's what I'm here to say, is I'm open to other positions. I'm just looking for an opportunity to where I might be a benefit, help serve. The Salary Commission, I thought, was a great way, but I am...I am open, and all ears to whatever might be available.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay. Cool. I guess...I mean, one of the main issues that we seem to have sometimes is quorum, but now, as we're filling up the seats, it's not such of a...such a big of an issue. But you think, through your line of work, that you'll be able to make the meetings and things like that?

MR. DAVISON: Yes, I...I believe so. Again, I do run a business. I...I run a financial business that operates in about 12 different states at the moment. Yes, I do have a very busy schedule, but when there's something on the schedule, like you guys are very well about having all the days, times, everything like that, I can fit that in, especially when I know ahead of time. So, the answer is yes.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay. Cool. If you happen to know any Accountant IIIs in your line of work, send them our way. Because we just learned that Finance is really looking for Accountant IIIs.

MR. DAVISON: All right, all right. Will do. I'll keep that in mind. . . .(laughing) . . .

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you for my opportunity. So nice to meet you virtually, Mr. Davison, and thank you again for your willingness to serve.

MR. DAVISON: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Paltin. I’m sure Finance appreciates the plug, because you’re right, we just...we need accountants. Members, any other questions for Mr. Davison? I’m going to go with Member Johnson, followed by Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Davison, for joining us today, and your willingness to serve. I’ll tell you a little bit of a story about how...what happened to me is when I first applied, I wasn’t a Councilmember. I was just a John Q. Public, and I applied for a planning commission, and the same thing happened where they said, well, how about this commission? And when you said you’re just, you know, looking for a place to serve, I really...that really made...I understand that feeling, because I was just there trying to help the community. So, I really appreciate your response to that question. And I know that Councilmember Paltin asked about your availability. So, I’m just curious, is...you know, you...you operate a lot of businesses, so of course, you’re...you look at folks’ salaries and wages. I guess my basic question is, is one job enough for Maui County? Do people need higher wages? I’d like to have...hear your opinion on...your thoughts on, you know, the wages in the County. Are they fair?

MR. DAVISON: Yeah, that’s a great question, especially as we look at cost of living in...in...in Maui, in Hawai‘i in general. Let’s just be transparent, it’s too expensive. They’re priced out of paradise. More and more families moving away from Hawai‘i, going back to the mainland, than ever before. After the Lahaina fires, we saw that start to rise on an exponential level, where people just have a very difficult time. Could the wages be risen? Yeah, absolutely, but I don’t know. I don’t know if we could raise... . . .*(laughing)*. . . raise the wages enough to get them into million-dollar homes that we see today.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right, exactly.

MR. DAVISON: I...I...I don’t know if that’s really realistic, right? If we start to say, okay, you know what? 30, 40, \$50 an hour, is that going to be enough? No. But opportunities, business opportunities, opportunities to thrive, and...you know, we’re seeing more food trucks, and other opportunities. And...and if we create those doors to be open for people to thrive on, trading products and services to get them into homes, I think that might be a more fit discussion, to get locals into the million-dollar homes that we see today.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, you’re singing my song, Mr. Davison, so thank you for your responses. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Johnson. Member Sinenci, your questions.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Mr. Davison, for your willingness to serve. And just continuing on the lines of Mr. Johnson’s questions, you mentioned, you know, maybe supplementing people’s salaries with other businesses. I remember in Mr. Johnson’s ADEPT Committee, he did bring up some businesses that could be...that could diversify within our economy . . .*(inaudible)*. . . And so, I just wanted to, you know, get your thoughts about continuing with agriculture, as well as I believe at

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that meeting, he mentioned more fishing industry, those types of things. Do you have any ideas what we could diversify besides that?

MR. DAVISON: Yeah. You know, there's a long history with Hawai'i and agriculture. And while I'm not born and raised here, you're looking at a haole guy here from Idaho, and I've gone from potatoes to pineapples. That's my story. I had, you know, a business called Mr. Pineapple for 20 years, worked closely with the pineapple farmers, Hāli'imaile, the West Side, as they did organic pineapples, worked with the folks in Kaua'i and on the Big Island doing their white pineapples, and all kinds of fruit and vegetables. And you're absolutely right. We...we need to keep that historic agriculture right here in Hawai'i. We need to provide more opportunity to go from 30,000 fields...acres of growing pineapples down to less than 1,000 acres in...in Hāli'imaile? That's awful. And it...it hurts to see our local industry, once was thriving and booming, to be lost. And I...I...I agree, the fishing, the...the farming, everything like that, is...got to be brought back to life. That is what is part of what makes Hawai'i, Hawai'i. And I'd love to see ideas of how to make that happen. Competing with bringing in food from other countries? I...I think we have everything we need right here on Maui to be sustainable. It's a matter of having the right minds and...and...and people to be able to do it. Just give you a quick example. You know, working with a farmer out of Florida, he's growing farms, and fruit and vegetables where it's growing much faster. He's figured out like a recipe kind of thing, all right, where it's growing much, much quicker. If we start networking with farmers outside of how they're doing that, it might help our locals be able to achieve those kinds of things.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: All right. Great. Thank you for those responses. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sinenci. Members, any other questions? I hope you all received Jared's letter of support by this...for this nominee. And as we all know, as I feel, Jared, I hold him in high regard. So, if he holds Mr. Davison in high regard, I can respect that. Member Kama?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Mr. Davison. I just have a few easy questions. What branch of government did you serve?

MR. DAVISON: I served in the Army Reserves for 24 years, and retired in 2023.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: And you served in your hometown?

MR. DAVISON: Great question. I served all over. Yes, and my final...my final five years of service was out of Fort Shafter, Hawai'i. And I flew back and forth over there.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. Wow. And so, my second question is, you're going to be serving on the Salary Commission, and...and...and they just decided to give us all a raise, and there was some hooptla (*phonetic*) about people thought that that was too much money. But the job we do is a part-time job. But it...when we end at 12:00 midnight, and we go for days and days and days at a time, working late at night...and

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even though we have Committee meetings on one week, and the next meeting [sic] is supposed to be an off-week, an off...noncommittee meeting, those are the weeks that we meet and the days we meet with our constituents, and have meetings, and get to know the community a little better, and they get to know us. So, bearing all of that in mind, and you weigh the amount of time spent, and...and how much time we're putting into this part-time job, do you feel like it's equitable?

MR. DAVISON: You know, I was watching it closely, that discussion go back and forth. And I think, you know, with...with any job, the salary increases from the...the Mayor on down, I think it can all be justified as long as we see the...the fruit, and the work being put in. And just like you explained it, right, you put...you...you...you provided facts of, yeah, there's off meetings, and all this extra time, and part-time...and the answer is yes. You know, and sometimes that's what the public doesn't know, right? And...and the words can be kind of twisted through the media, and everything like that. But the...the end result is, there's a lot of work to be done. And is it paying enough, even with these increases? Let's face it, we all don't get paid enough . . .(laughing). . . for...for the amount of work. And I believe that, yes, it can...it can be justified. And even more so when you see the fruit of bills being passed, the growth of businesses, the growth of the economy, the growth of Maui, and...and what we can do for...for everybody. And is there a dollar that you can even put on that? Is there a value? Probably not, to be honest with you.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Well, thank you for that answer. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Kama. Members...Member Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. Interesting background. I'm reading...I'm reading your...your resume that you provided, and I can understand why you thought you wanted to be with the Planning Commission, just with your, you know, broad breadth of experiences. But I do support you for...what you really are saying is that you'll do anything to help the community, I think, and, you know, take that step forward, and I hope you, you know, continue on. You have done financial literacy classes? Is that what I'm reading? And why did that happen?

MR. DAVISON: Yeah. So, in my background over the last 20 years on Maui was, like I mentioned, doing pineapples, and I did the clothing line company, and I did a tropical floral business from the Big Island. As I was doing all these businesses, yes, I was helping locals and tourists alike in the different industries. But five years ago, I opened up a financial business, and helping with life insurance trusts, and retirement planning, helping people get out of debt, things like that. And I found that I could help people a lot more in that area. Everybody's got money problems. So, but as...as the agriculture was diminishing, I found I could be more effective in the financial industry. So, I did do that. I transitioned. I closed down all my businesses to focus on the one, and expand that business throughout all the islands, and...and then extend it out to the mainland as well. Through that, we teach a lot of classes for free. We don't...we don't charge. In fact, here's an example. We sent three of...of my agents out this last weekend...out to Hāna. And they met with about 90 kūpunas, teaching the elderly how to set up their own trusts, and...and helping them with financial planning, and stuff like that. And it

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was a very successful event. And that's an example of kind of what we do for the community, is a lot of teaching and educating in that area.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Fabulous. There's a lot of need for that, I think.

MR. DAVISON: Yes, absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: . . . *(inaudible)*. . . everybody needs money and it can help, so... And that's exactly some of the things --

MR. DAVISON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- that we need to do with Bill 9 that is before us, right, is that financial literacy, and training, and how to set up your budgets. I think those are all part of, you know, living in a community and living life. So, thank you very much. I support.

MR. DAVISON: Absolutely.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Members, any other questions before I close out this meeting? Seeing none. As a reminder, this resolution was posted for no legislative action because we're going to be voting on it on the Council meeting of the 8th, because our due date is July 12th. So, I will now defer this item, without objection?

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.** (Excused: KRF)

**ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. And so, Members--oh my gosh, this is like a 32-minute meeting. This concludes the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good job.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: It is now 2:02, and this meeting is adjourned. . . . *(gavel)*. . .

**ADJOURN:** 2:02 p.m.

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 10 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED the 18th day of July 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel Schoenbeck", is written above a horizontal line.

Daniel Schoenbeck