

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

May 12, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:01 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Chair
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (Out 10:01 a.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (Out 9:53 a.m.)

EXCUSED: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member

STAFF:

Clarissa MacDonald Legislative Analyst
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Tiare del Castillo, Legislative Analyst
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary
Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices

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

ADMIN.: Yukari Murakami, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of Corporation Counsel

Lori Tzuhako, Director, Department of Human Concerns
Cynthia Lallo, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Naomi Crozier, Homeless Coordinator, Office of the Mayor

OTHERS: Cadence Petros, Project Director, EConorthwest

Testifiers

Zhantell Lindo
Mo‘i Kawaakoa

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

Kai Nishiki
Bobby Kanuha
Jasee Law

(25+) additional attendees

PRESS: *Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.*

CHAIR SINENCI: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha kakahiaka and tahoma tatou *(phonetic)*. Welcome to the WASSP Committee Meeting of Monday, May 12th. It's 9:01. Mahalo, Members, for joining us. Just as a friendly reminder, for members of the public to please silence your cell phones, noise-making devices. I'm Shane Sinenci, your Committee Vice-Chair...Committee Chair, excuse me. If you're not in the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today, and minors do not need to be identified. Also, Members, please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Joining us this morning, I do see Committee Vice-Chair Johnson. Aloha and tahoma.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Aloha, Chair. Tahoma, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers at the Lānaʻi District Office, and I'm alone on my side of the office. And I hope all the mothers out there had a lovely Mother's Day yesterday. I hope you smelled the flowers and felt the love. So, I'm here and ready to work. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Johnson. Also joining us this morning in the Chambers, we have Councilmember Tom Cook. Aloha and tahoma.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good morning, all. There is currently no testifiers in the Kihei Office, but people are on standby, and I'm looking forward to the meeting.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thanks for that, and welcome. Member Tasha Kama is excused this morning. Also joining us online is Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Streaming live and direct from my kitchen table. I have one name...unnamed minor canine with me. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us. Also joining...I don't see Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Oh, there she is. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka. Aloha kakahiaka, Chair. Aloha kakahiaka kākou, mai Molokai nui a Hina. I am in my vehicle, about to walk into my office where I'll be alone on my side of the office, and there are currently no testifiers at the Molokai District Office. And mahalo, Member Johnson, for the Happy Mother's Day.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo and thank you for joining us. We'll circle back to Council Chair Alice Lee. Aloha and tahoma.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha. Actually, it's hahoma (*phonetic*), and that's from the...the Seminole Indians. They're split between Florida and Oklahoma. Good morning, everybody. I'm home alone in my workspace, and hope all of you had a wonderful Mother's Day celebration.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for that, Chair Lee. We'll be visiting some of the Seminole tribes next week at the WIR Conference.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: All right.

CHAIR SINENCI: Also joining us online is Member Yuki Lei Sugimura. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Aloha. Good morning. I'm in Kula. And yeah, thanks, Member Johnson. So sweet to wish us Happy Mother's Day. It was a wonderful weekend, and I'm--yeah, thank you. I'm going to be logging off in a bit because my son, who's visiting for, you know, Mother's Day, is...has some friends leaving. So, I'm going to be anxiously listening to their...the report, and then I'm going to log off. But Happy Mother's Day, and thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us. And then also joining us in the Chambers this morning, we have Councilmember Nohe U'u-Hodgins. Aloha and good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Aloha, Chair. Tahoma.

CHAIR SINENCI: Tahoma. Okay, Members. From the Department of Human Concerns, we have Director Lori Tsuhako. Welcome.

MS. TSUHAKO: Good morning, Mr. Chair and Members. Good morning. Thank you ha...for having me.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks for being here. From the Office of the Mayor, we have Cynthia Lallo, Chief of Staff. Aloha and good morning.

MS. LALLO: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, Members.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks for joining us. From Corporation Couns...Counsel, we have Ms. Yukari Murakami. Aloha and good morning.

MS. MURAKAMI: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning. And then our Committee Staff, who's helping us to conduct this meeting, we have Ms. Criselda Paranada; Ms. Clarissa MacDonald;

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

Ms. Ellen McKinley; Ms. Tiare del Castillo, welcome; Ms. Megan Moniz; Ms. Lei Dinneen; and Ms. Jean Pokipala. Welcome, everyone.

ITEM 1(5): ECONORTHWEST'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN MAUI COUNTY REPORT (Rule 7(B))

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Members, we have only one item on today's agenda, and it's the ECONorthwest's Recommendations to Address Homelessness in Maui County report, WASSP-1(5). And if there are no objections, Chair [sic], I would like to take testimony after receiving opening comments, only because Ms. Petros will be only here for...for...she can stay for only an hour. Okay. Thank you, Members.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Let's proceed. Members, ECONorthwest's Recommendations to Address Homelessness in Maui County report. In previous Committee meetings, questions arose about ECONorthwest's report entitled, "Recommendations to Address Homelessness in Maui County." To have enough time for everyone's questions, I scheduled this meeting dedicated to...to this one report. If you need a copy of the report, it's number 1 on Granicus. We also heard from advocates, and talked about the ECONorthwest report during our Fiscal Year 2026 Budget deliberations. To learn more about the report, we invited Ms. Cadence Petros, the Project Director from ECONorthwest, to provide some opening comments. She has to leave at 10:00 a.m., but to prepare for the meeting, I asked her to address the following in her comments: one, the basis for ECONorthwest's decision to move forward with a consensus model instead of a strategic plan; two, how social in...inequities and systemic failures determine who may be unhoused, and the demographic groups most at risk; three, what agencies participated in the report and the discussions ECONorthwest facilitated with them; and four, how many...how Maui County can improve prevention and resilience to reduce homelessness, and strengthen safety nets that prevent people from becoming unhoused in the long and near-term. We also have Director Tsuhako from the Department of Human Concerns, and Ms. Cynthia Lallo from the Office of the Mayor, to provide comments on the report, and the County's plans moving forward. So, with that, Members, I'll ask Ms. Petros to go ahead with her opening comments. Aloha and tahoma.

MS. PETROS: Aloha and good morning. Mahalo, Chair Sinenci and Committee Members. For the record, my name is Cadence Petros, and I'm a Project Director at a policy research firm called ECONorthwest that was hired, along with Koné Consulting and Munekiyo Hiraga, to develop a homelessness plan for the County. So, even though our contract is finished, and I'm only able to stay for an hour, I'm hoping, to answer in these opening remarks, of the questions that Chair...Chair Sinenci sent to me last week, and I hope that these responses are...are helpful to you as you move forward with your implementation. So, I think what I'll do, just as a format, is I'll repeat the question so that you all understand what it is that I am answering, and then go from there. So, the

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

first question was, please explain EConorthwest's decision to move forward with a consensus model instead of a strategic plan, and how the RFP's timeline was impacted. So, the decision to pivot from kind of a consensus-based strategic plan to a community-informed recommendations report was jointly made by County staff and our project team. And what we...what the result was, was an engagement-focused effort for--that used the input from a diverse stakeholder group that married best practices...so what we understand from the research and evidence with the lived and professional experiences of clients and their service providers. So, I'm going to start, I think, with just a recap of the timeline. Some of this may be very familiar to you, but I think it may help contextualize what was happening when the report was being developed. So, EConorthwest submitted our proposal in October of 2022. In June of 2023, the project contract was executed, and it had a six-month timeline to complete the project, which is a very tight timeline to do this effort. So, we got immediately to work and started ramping up, doing best-practice research, but also preparing for engagement. And in that brief period of time, as we were ramping up for what was going to be an August 2023 week-long engagement effort, we were in communication with staff. And so, one of our kind of first ground-truthing discussions, we heard very clearly that this--an idea of all parties coming together to develop a consensus-based strategic plan was very unlikely, to the point of being infeasible. And so, as consultants will, right, we take direction from our clients, and really try to figure out what was the best way to accomplish the objective of an implementable plan for the County, given the difference in philosophies that abound among service providers, advocates, and County folks, and...and yet, could still bring people together. Because the whole idea of a plan is that you want it to...you want everyone to row in the same direction and...and...and galvanized around some key actions so that...so that progress can be made. So...so, that was the...that was the problem statement that we were trying to figure out. So, we were going to use our initial engagement. We al--as a practice, always want to understand the lived experiences of people experiencing houselessness. We want to understand the environment in which these actions, and programs, and policies are being implemented. So, understanding the network of service providers is really critical to...to doing anything worthwhile, honestly. So...so, we were planning for a week of engagement with people with lived experience, with service providers, interviews. And then as we were on the plane the morning of August 9th, we learned that the...the...the island was on fire. And so, I got off the airplane, and one of our team members was already on island, and so spent a couple days trying to get back to the mainland after that. And then we were on pause. We'll just call it that. We didn't know--I mean, the staff were just doing what they could to respond to the devastating crisis. It was, as you know much better than I, a pretty harrowing nightmare experience for both residents and...and staff alike. So, you know, we would periodically reach out, but also trying not to be a bother. And then in late October of 2023, we got outreach from the County saying that the project was not dead, that there was...there remained interest to continue this effort. And so...but circumstances had changed. We had spent a fairly significant amount of our budget trying to ramp up for the first part of the engagement that was unable to occur. It wasn't all a loss, but a lot of that coordination and...and work needed to be redone as we ramped up again because also, the circumstances had shifted. And so, for the next month or so, two months, we worked with the County to

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

essentially refine the project scope, that no more money, timeline could extend, scope needed to change, now we needed to also obviously consider this whole new cohort of newly unhoused folks, in addition to the existing people who were experiencing homelessness before that. So, sort of...so, some pieces of the scope were modified. And...and we, at that point, also codified that instead of a consensus-based strategic plan, we were going to do a community-informed recommendations report. And so, on that basis, we moved forward. And in June and October of 2024, we returned to--or came to Maui, Molokai, and Lānaʻi, and had two sets of engagement. I...I think I'll pause here for a second because I see Ms. Paltin.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Any --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Point of information, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. As...as Ms. Candice [sic] Petros is giving her information, I was wondering if she could clarify. You know, when she says she's speaking to the County, almost everyone on this call is the County, and I was wondering if...if it could be clarified, you know, who she's speaking to. Because me, as the County, didn't change the RFP. And so, I just was wondering if we could get that clarification on...on the timeline. Whenever she says, we spoke with the County, if...if "we"...was it Ms. Lallo, was it Ms. Toshikiyo --

MS. PETROS: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- was it Ms. Murakami? Like --

MS. PETROS: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- because it wasn't me. Just wanted to clarify that for the viewing public. Thank you.

MS. PETROS: Mahalo. I apologize for that. It was--the Department of Human Concerns was our...the department we were working with, and so it was Director Tsuhako and Christopher Kish. They were our primary points of contact during...during the project. And if I fail to specify again, the default would be to...to those staff people. Mahalo for the...the correction. Okay. So, what followed after all of these kind of intervening moments was a community-heavy, community-engagement-heavy effort that really worked to pair best practices, plus the wisdom of folks with lived experience, and the guidance in providers...guidance and priorities of service providers. And there's another question where I'll...I'll talk maybe a little bit more about how that...how that process

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

unfolded. And for folks who have the report, please note that--so, on pages 2 through 4, there's kind of more detail about the number of focus groups, the...the folks who were involved, and...and we are going to talk a little bit more about that. So, that is question one, and I think I'll just move on to the...to the next questions, and...and hopefully, there will be time for...for more dialogue after that. The second question is, the analogy musical chairs on page 8 of the report is used to describe how the most vulnerable are disadvantaged when services are removed. Please explain how social inequities and systemic failures determine who may become unhoused, and what demographics are most at risk. And so, for this question to make sense, I...I think if you bear with me, I'll...I'll read a portion of the report because I think that will contextualize what...what the question is, and then I'll do my best to answer the question. So, the...the...the box in the report is called Housing and Musical Chairs, and it reads, the difference between root causes of homelessness and individual circumstances that affect who becomes unhoused can be illustrated by the game Musical Chairs. In this game, people walk in a circle around a set of chairs as music plays. There's always one less chair available than the total number of players. When the music stops, everyone must scramble to find a spot to sit, leaving one person without a chair. That person loses, and the game continues by removing one more chair from the game. Now, let's say one of the players recently sprained an ankle and is using crutches to move around. They may be less mobile and move slower than usual. This injury and mobility impairment would put them at a disadvantage in the game. Individual circumstances influence who loses, but the root cause of losing is the removal of a chair. And so, I think where I want to start is, the removal of the chair, in this...in this situation, is...is the housing supply, right? How many affordable housing units do you have, and how does that meet the needs of your...of your residents? And it determines statistically how many will become homeless in an area. It is statistically relevant...what your housing prices are is statistically relevant...how many short-term rentals you have, right? So, all of these characteristics regarding housing supply directly impact the number of people who you...who will become homeless. Now, that can be impacted by the cost of goods, the cost of labor, your finite developable land, infrastructure-use issues, second homes, short-term rentals, environmental sensitivity, right? Well, there's--you all know all of the things that go into making housing supply and housing production difficult. And then that doesn't even begin to talk about even the housing prices themselves, and when you have a mismatch between incomes and housing prices, and how that can become even more...you may have some units, but if folks can't afford them, then they're not accessible units. And so...so...so, now, we're moving...removing more and more chairs. And so, then the next question is, okay, well, what are the things that make it more likely than others that some people will become homeless, right? And so, we know that other system failures and inequities, as well as personal circumstances, help determine who will become homeless. And so, you think about our...our low-wage workers, the working poor, retail workers, service workers, disabled people, elders on fixed incomes, children leaving foster-care systems, and then...and then what, right? Folks who are leaving the carceral system, and then what? And in Maui, when you look at your point-in-time counts and...and some HMIS touchpoints, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented. They're 28 percent of the population, and they're at least 30 percent...37 percent of the

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

unhoused population. And so, we can infer from that the impacts of colonialism and racism, in addition to wage inequality, housing scarcity...all these other factors are also still at play in the County. It's a lot. You...you all have multiple systems and multiple issues that are compounded, and...and so I...I don't want to minimize the...the difficulty of the situation that you all are in. The next question says, on page 31 of the report, it identifies, quote, "silos between agencies negatively impact people in need," and then the report also includes quotes from stakeholders about their lived experience. And so, the question from that was, if I could please share which agencies participated in the report, and the discussions ECONorthwest facilitated with the various agencies. And so, I'm not going to read pages 2 through 4. There's a...there's a lot of folks who were involved in...in...in this effort. But I...I would like to take a couple minutes and just sort of describe our approach so that you can understand how we got to the end. And I think that that's...I think that's important information. And so, we understand, in the work as we do it, that...that engaging with the people who are experiencing the problem is a really good way to understand what the solutions should be. And so, a primary objective was to speak to various communities who are experiencing homelessness, and also not to conflate them all. Because different people have different needs. And so, that...that...it becomes a challenge, and it became an even more stark challenge after the fire happened. And so, we held several focus groups with...with folks, whether it was at Family Life Center, or at the Project Vision shelter, on the side of the road...we worked with Share Your Mana, and then we met with a specific cohort at KHAKO, who were Maui fire survivors. And...and just to put a finer point on it, right? These are our folks, some who have been experiencing houseless for decades, some who were newly homeless, some who had just endured probably the most traumatic experience of their lives. And so, we were very careful to provide space for them to express their needs, and to feel listened. So, it...it...this is important to me because as we do this work, of course, we want to obtain information and...and get their wisdom, but we also wanted to provide space, and room, and care, and empathy so that the exchange was more relational than extractive. It's an important part of...of the work that we do. So, not only were we interested in meeting with people who had lived experience of homelessness, but we were also very interested in meeting with folks at the County. And this included CORE team members, representatives from Mayor Bissen's Office, and then we also--because remember, we really wanted to make sure that Molokai and Lānaʻi were also represented. And so, we met with Councilmember Johnson and some folks on Lānaʻi--I was not a part of that specific conversation--and then we went to Molokai twice to meet with Chair Lindo, as well as Councilmember Fernandez-Rawlins [sic], we had an opportunity to meet, but also service providers on Molokai. So, on...the engagement on Maui with service providers was a little bit different than on Molokai be...and very different than on Lānaʻi because of the numbers of people who were able to participate in the needs of those groups. So, what I will do is describe to you the...the...the general process of the methodology that we used for the focus groups with people with lived experience, and then also, the folks for the Maui service providers. And the...and the idea, or the...the kind of method, is called 1-2-4-All. And so, you essentially set the setting. Why are...why are we all here, what are...what are we doing here? And...and then you...you ask a question. And so, in June, we were there really for brainstorming. What are the barriers, what's not working in the system, and...and what would a...what

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

are some of the solutions that you would like to elevate? So, it was an ideation phase. And then in October, we came with a whole bunch of...a compilation of information we had heard from them, best practices we had gathered. And so, it was sort of like a truth-checking. Of all of the things that you have now seen that we've provided on big posters, what are the ones that you want to elevate? And so, we use this process, 1-2-4-All. So, we asked a question in October, what are...what are the highest-priority actions that you've seen here today that you would like to elevate? And so, individually, the 1, you brainstorm yourself, and you're quiet, and you write. And then the 2 is you...you pair up, and you discuss with another. And then two pairs talk, and they elevate--okay, well, what are the 4...or 5, right, things that we think are the more...most important? And you put them on sticky notes. And you report out then to the group, and then they organize and prioritize among. So, then what you're left with at the end is, if...if all of these things occurred, or if...if...does...or does...or if it's barriers...if these are the barriers that you encounter, do you agree that these are the...the most significant barriers? Do you agree that if these things were done to ameliorate barriers, that we would have a better system? And then at the end, you're left. And so, the idea--besides, you know, for...for us, the researchers--is not only do you have kind of a synthesis of...of...of the group's discussion, but it's the...it's the process itself that is important. Because it has folks who...who come with different...different ideas about what part of the system is the most important. It requires them to talk through with others about that and...and come to some agreement about what they think are the most important pieces. Yes, Chair?

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks, Ms. Petros. I just had a question when you were...a clarifying question. With all of the different stakeholders that you guys met up with, you...there's...they...they come from a little...a lot of backgrounds, different perspectives. Were they able to discuss amongst themselves?

MS. PETROS: Yes. And are you talking about services providers, or people with lived experience?

CHAIR SINENCI: The...the service providers.

MS. PETROS: Yes. Yes, they did. And...and...and so, that's part of the facilitation process, right? Because...what do I want to say? The service providers are working in...in...in a caring profession, right? It's with their community members. They're dedicating their lives to this work, and they care very much about what they are doing. And...and...and they have phil...different philosophies. They...so, in the report, there's a...there's a diagram of what we've called ideal state. But really, what it says is, there's three parts of a system--and this will actually feed into one of our questions, so it's probably a good idea to mention it--you know, crisis intervention, stabilization, and prevention. And...and so, different people do different parts of those pieces, and sometimes they think it's the only important part because it's what they do, and they...and they feel so strongly. And they might have lots of reasons about why they think other parts aren't necessary, or are diversions, or...or whatever. From our understanding of what is best practice, all...all of the parts are necessary. And so, yeah, there's...there's conversation,

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

and sometimes there's hot feelings, and...and...and so that's why having the...the diagram of the ideal state, it's not discounting what another group does, or another person does, it's...it's trying to actually understand the value, and how all of those parts actually are important. And where things break down is when...when there is sort of divisiveness or division. And so, we experienced some of that in the focus groups, but when you have a facilitator, you have group agreements, you talk about...you know, like, let's talk about ideas, not people, right? Just some of the...some of the ways of facilitating group dynamic. And also, remembering that everybody cares about the human beings that they're trying to support, they just do it in different ways. And so, yeah...sorry, long-winded. Yes, they had an opportunity to talk about their different perspectives. We kept trying to bring it back to, we're all here to help. You...you can do different tactics and different program activities. And what are the ways that we can make the system work a little bit more smoothly to enable everyone to do what they do best, and fill in gaps where no one's doing the one thing, or...or...or find ways of making it easier to do some of the things that are doing...been...historically might not have been done coordinated. So...so, we worked with service providers from KHAKO, Family Life Center, Share Your Mana, advocate groups. We...we talked to Legal Aid, we talked to CORE, we--there--you know, you...again, you can read through all the different groups that we spoke with. Project Vision was also a participant and a host. And so, I would just offer that...that the service providers had different approaches. They had different ways they wanted to lean into helping, and they had...many of them, strong thoughts about how others did it. But we...but we felt like there was hope that with ongoing communication, and understand--there was also like a deficit of understanding what the others actually were doing. There were assumptions about what others were doing, and they were strongly-held beliefs about that. But then...but when they had...when they're sitting at a table together, and they have an opportunity to like talk about some of the specifics of funding constraints, or activities they're actually doing, that there are...there are opportunities for relationship-building and trust-building, which we felt was an important component to a viable system. Okay. So, the next question. Homelessness impacts people differently at different stages of their life, requiring different levels of need and aid. So, in the report, on page 45 through 47, we talk about that third prong of the...of the ideal system, which is prevention and resilience, and...and, you know, what do we recommend y'all do in the...in that near- and long-term regarding prevention and resilience. And so, I will...I will offer, we...I've done...I've worked in housing for...for over 25 years. I consider myself an...an expert in these issues. And also, it's not...it's--I won't be implementing. So, my first thing is to say, in the long-term, you need more housing that is affordable to the people who need it. And you have a Housing Director, and you have a comprehensive affordable housing plan that has a bunch of actions in it. And so, I...I guess...my most strong response is, please work with your County staff on prioritizing and implementing those actions that will remove barriers and spur development of...of affordable housing...housing that is affordable to the people who need it. And...and lots of different kinds of housing, right? We heard time and time again, folks not needing large units, that...that teeny, tiny ones are necessary. Now, the infrastructure needs, the land use--I mean, there's a lot of reasons that make it maybe not the...the...the highest and best use of...of critical land. And there may be places where you can tuck some...some

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

smaller homes in that can also meet needs. So, what are the barriers to that kind of production? We also heard, right?...like, infrastructure needs, not just in Lāhainā, but in Central Maui too. Like, what are your water treatment facility plans? How can you fast-track ability to make new connections? All of these things are...are...are examples of what you might do, and...and I just can't emphasize strongly enough, working with your...with your professional staff on which ones make the most sense for bang for the buck, given the system as you...as you all understand it. But...but build more housing, lots of different kinds, at affordable prices. In the nearer-term, tenant protections are...are a good example of...of things that you can do, whether it's no-fault evictions, preventing discrimination based on source of income. If I have a Section 8 voucher, and I got to find a landlord who's willing to take it, that's more difficult than if they have to take it. That might not be something the County can do on its own, but it's something you can talk to your Governor about, and it's something that other states have done. Landlord-tenant education. Tenants, know your rights. Landlords, know your obligations and your rights. Mediation efforts that you can have so that when...when mistakes are made, right, you can...you can kind of solve those so that people aren't ending up unsheltered because they had a dispute with their landlord that they couldn't get over the--you know, together. And then support for Native Hawaiian community members. Community ownership is a big deal, right? What are...what are the lessons that...that you can learn from native culture? What are the ways of ownership that you can...whether it's land trust, community housing, all--there's multiple options. Working with the State. Helping...helping the...the original inhabitants of this community be able to stay in this community. And then lastly, I've mentioned this a bit, but it's like how can you help folks who are in transition? I'm sure you all have talked a lot about medical respite. How do I...how do I make sure that I don't become unhoused because I've had a medical thing happen, and I can't take care of myself? How do I...what do you do with these children who are...who are taken care of until their 18th birthday, right, and then suddenly, no more support is available for them? What do you do for people who...who've paid their time in...in jail or prison, and now they're...they're looking for housing, they have no job, they have a record. The...the screening criteria for many apartments and places to live prevent them from finding housing. Is it...we don't want to make it safer and easier for them to go back to jail than to find housing, and so the....the...what--these are places in the system where you can intervene and make a difference. And so, I think I have responded to all the questions, unless I accidentally skipped one, and so, I think what I'll do is I'll...I'll pause there.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Petros. We have a clarifying question for you from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to clarify if you did identify a number, or a range of what people can afford. You said create housing that people can afford, which, I mean, to me, means the whole spectrum. But did you identify anything specifically?

MS. PETROS: Oh, thank you for that question. No. Because this was a homelessness-focused report, not a housing-focused report, we...we did not do that. But my understanding is

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

that you have a variety of existing data and...and actions on that, even though I personally have not worked on...on those reports.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

MS. PETROS: But...but I will...I mean and, right, for people experiencing homelessness, zero to 30 percent area median income housing is critical. It really...very often, if they're chronically homeless folks, they're going to need wraparound services, so permanently supportive housing. All--those...you...you know you need more of those. Yes? Oh, sorry.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We have another clarifying question for you from Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. And thank you for your report. On your...your description of the homeless...or part of the homeless problem, the Musical Chairs game, you talked about chairs being taken away. Did you...did you explore the other part of it? That means, the circle get bigger every year with additional homeless? You can have the same amount of chairs, but if you don't provide more chairs, you're going to continue to have this problem. And you know what? In 20 years, the County has not produced one more resource center. That is a huge problem. So, inventory is huge. Can you comment on that?

MS. PETROS: Agreed. The...the problem grows where...as you see wages not keep up with the increase in housing prices. It's just...it just follows that more and more people are going to slip through the cracks.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. We have a lot of people that move here on a regular basis, as well as our normal population increases. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Lee. Members, any other clarifying questions for Ms. Petros? She...she's here for probably another 18 minutes. Okay. With that, we'll go on and--mahalo. Oh, we have one more from Member Paltin. Yes, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just wanted to clarify, you know, I mean, we can obviously...like what you said, 30 percent and below. We...we built a number of those low-income housing, which is not 30...I mean there's a portion of 30 percent, and there's 60 percent and below, but a lot of folks...I guess, you know, like how you said about the incomes and...and not meeting the criteria, a lot of folks that need help can't make that little bit amount of money either. So, just wondering if you could clarify. When you said 30 percent and below are the low income, if...if our data tells us it's...it's everybody that needs help, is that anything that you ran into? Because we've had a few 60 percent and below come up on the West Side, and...and the biggest feedback I hear is, nobody can make that little bit amount of money and qualify, unless maybe you have a lot of kids, or dependents, and things like that...at least for West Maui.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

MS. PETROS: Yeah. I mean, Mau...when you have sort of...and maybe--if this isn't answering your question, I apologize, but I think I understand your question. One of the...one of the issues you have is, you have very high-income earners and very low-income earners. And so, when you do area-median income, things can get skewed. So, 60 percent area median income might be very high compared to what your fixed-income seniors, or disabled people, or...maybe--I mean, I don't...I didn't...I don't know the answer to this, but maybe even folks who are...who are working, right, are they able to afford that rent? And so, if that is the case, then you should be then concentrating even more housing at that 0 to 30 AMI range. I'm sure there are some people who can afford 60 percent area median income, and it may just be that it's the folks with families who...who are able to to...to...to meet those income thresholds.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Members, for clarifying questions. And...and thank you, Ms. Petros. Oh, we have one more from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah. Thank you very much. I really appreciate the study. So, you identified a group that I think we're all sensitive to, which is the prisoners that get, you know, released, and how to handle that. So, I--you have it in your report. Did you come up with some suggestions more than what we are doing today?

MS. PETROS: I will...I'll have to go back and take a look at the report specifically. It's...it's...it's warm handoffs, and...and support that is specific to that population that...that would be the most helpful. And...and I'm happy to talk more about that at a different time if you'd like just about what some options might be.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good question.

MS. PETROS: Um-hum.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. And mahalo, Ms. Petros, for...for staying on with us and...and coming and joining us today. Thank you very much. Next, Members --

MS. PETROS: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SINENCI: -- we have Director Tsuhako for some opening comments.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We, at the Department, had a chance to talk with Ms. Petros, and we're appreciative of her attendance at today's meeting. She's doing that--her appearance today pro bono because the contract has already ended. I think that the Department answered the Committee's questions earlier. I think there were two correspondence sent to us regarding the specific language in the report, as well as

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

some of the recommendations. I'm here to ask...answer any additional questions you may have. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Director Tsuhako. Next, we have Chief of Staff Lallo for some opening comments.

MS. LALLO: Yes. Thank you, Chair. And just a big mahalo to Cadence, who came and...and shared the...the report, and responded directly to the questions. I would say that there's some things in relationship to the...to the report that we need to consider. We need to consider, certainly, the timing of this, and what was happening in the community at that time. And then also, taking a look at the...the things that are happening, right, in response to...certainly, in response to the Lāhainā fires that are supporting this, also the housing conversation, and then the land management conversation, Chair, that we had with...with your team. And we are standing by to answer any additional questions or have additional conversation around this. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Chief of Staff Lallo. Members, any clarifying questions of our panel before we go on to testimony? Okay.

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

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Member Paltin.

CHAIR SINENCI: Member Paltin, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify, one more time, what I heard being said in the presentation was the recommendations for ongoing communication, and trying to understand...understanding of...of what the barriers were. Just clarifying. Is...is that what the parties agree was a recommendation of this? Ongoing communication and attempt at understanding each other? Would that be fair to say?

MS. TSUHAKE: Councilmember, this is Lori. Oh, Cadence is still on. Go ahead, Cadence.

MS. PETROS: I...yeah, I wasn't sure if the question was for me or not, Lori. So, I would say that among service providers that...that attended, yes, that was identified as a significant desire, to have ongoing facilitated conversations to come to common understanding...not just of what everyone else does, but of...of...of definitions of...of...like...like what does low-barrier shelter mean, really, and --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And --

MS. PETROS: Go ahead.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- I guess what I wanted to clarify is, when you said among service providers, ongoing facilitated communication to understand terms, is that the...clarifying, is that service provider to service provider, service providers with the department? Who...who would that ongoing facilitated communication to understand the barriers and the terms, who was that supposed to be recommended between?

MS. PETROS: All of them. I --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Everybody?

MS. PETROS: -- I think...yeah, everybody, I think, is the --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: The providers, the director, the Administration, the State?

MS. PETROS: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

MS. PETROS: You're welcome.

CHAIR SINENCI: Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Cadence, thank you. In your...your research, did you find that...you know, it...it's wonderful to speak with all groups, but didn't you notice that possibly the service providers are not necessarily the developers of new housing or new quarters? Didn't you find that...that that would be the role of others, possibly directors...directors or executive directors of housing...you know, housing programs and so forth? I have found that a lot of times, if you bring a lot of people together, those who provide the day-to-day service are not necessarily those are...who are going to build additional units. Did you find that?

MS. PETROS: Oh, absolutely. That's true. So, our report was about homelessness network, the services that are provided for the network, and so most of our recommendations really fall into the how do you make the system better. The...the difficulty is though, right, that more...like you said, more people will fall into that system if you don't do this parallel activity of housing production. And so...so, that's why I wouldn't say, here are the 75 things that the service providers said you need to do to build more housing, I was giving you my understanding, as a housing professional, what those issues are. When it comes, however, to the...the homelessness-response system itself, of which housing is a piece, you can talk to service providers and people with lived experience about that.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Chair Lee. It looks like we probably have some more questions than our testifiers, so without objections, we'll go to testimony at this time.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

Thank you, Ms. Petros. Thank you. Let's begin with public testimony. Oral testimony via phone or video conference will be accepted. Testifiers wanting to provide video or audio testimony should sign up in the Chamber, join the online meeting via the Teams link, or call in to the phone number noted on today's agenda. For individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button. For those calling in, please follow the prompts via phone; star-5 to raise your...and lower your hand, and star-6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order testifiers sign up or raise their hands. For those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added, and then enable your microphone and video, call your name that you're logged in under, or the last four digits of your phone number. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes, and will be accepted prior to the Committee's deliberation on the item on...on the agenda. If you're still testifying beyond that time, I'll kindly ask you to complete your testimony. Please ensure your name appears in Microsoft Teams as the name you prefer to be referred to, or as "anonymous" if you wish to testify anonymously. If you're in-person, please notify Staff that you would like to testify anonymously. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Once you're done testifying, or if you do not wish to testify, you can view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. Again, mahalo for your cooperation in advance. We will maintain decorum through this process and we can now proceed with oral testimony. Staff?

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(5) . . .

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the first testifier is Zhan, to be followed by Mo'i Kawaakoa.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Ms. Lindo.

MS. LINDO: Aloha, Councilmembers. Thank you, Chair Sinenci, for this opportunity. My name is Zhantell Lindo, and although I am the Chair of the Commission on Healing Solutions for Homelessness, I am testifying today on my own behalf. So, I...I think the saddest part about this whole thing is that we are now behind the cue ball, trying to figure out how a plan or a report already generated is going to match up to the amount we paid in order to be a good investment. And I'm super sad about that because, as Director Tsuhako said earlier, that the contractor is now on pro bono in order to suffice the questions. There were many times prior to executing the RFP that the Commission asked for conversation to kind of understand, and we were warned over and over again that we couldn't take up time that was being paid for to do an actual study. I also, as a testifier prior to this, when the...this...this idea came up, was really hopeful that this would be an implementation plan. And so, there was a lot of question about who was going to be the contractor, how was the vendor chosen? If indeed the...the Native Hawaiian population is the largest demographics of people affected by homelessness in Hawai'i, or in Maui County, then why not select a vendor that specifically knows the...that type of community so that both the engagement and the

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

process can be friendly to the people most affected by the problem. Also, so--but to be solution...solution-oriented, I just wanted to point out a few things. One, I think there needs to be better structure when we do an RFP that if a focus is going change from implementation to assessment or reporting, that that's something that's made known before we execute the contract and promise the money. Because that's a big...that's a big difference in deliverables. Secondly, I do feel like the process--there was more emphasis on the process of how the information gathering was going to be done rather than the fulfilled objective of what could come out as a solution, thus having a report that now says you need a solution. I think everything that you guys are reading in there, we already knew. We already knew all of these things. And as much as when I heard the contractor talk about...and believe me, I mean, I thought she was a nice person, and I really appreciated them coming to Molokai, but when you say stuff like it's less that we wanted to concentrate on the system, and...and the providers, and the...the...you know, the whole process rather than people, the problem is people. The problem in our homeless inability to come up with solutions is personalities and people. So, because we cannot force everybody into one situation, then I think what we got to do is take one better look at who are we trying to serve, which is our Native Hawaiian community, and then focus RFPs and the...the really intentful process to accommodate understanding that core group of people. Even service providers, I think, are unsuccessful . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . plenty of them, in understanding our department because this Council and this Administration has now become so committed to the Native Hawaiians and our people. And the way that we're trying to negotiate taking care of the host culture, that if the systems are not in alignment to that, we no get along with each other. And so, I just feel like there needs to be a better onset of when we have deliberation and talk about actually putting together a program--safe parking, safe sleeping, these kinds of reports--that there is really critical information and deliverables that are vetted thoroughly, and have the safeguard that we going get what the community thought was going to be provided from this. And as somebody who sit on the solution-oriented team of wanting to do action instead of only talk, I really was hoping for implementation. And so, now, we're going to have to decide what this report really means to us, and it's going to suck if it's \$250,000 or whatever that going now sit on the shelf because we already knew that...we already knew this. And so, how much are we now going to spend to implement every part of what we already knew? And I feel like that's what should have been done in the beginning. But I do want to just commend Director Tsuhako and everybody who trying their best...but it is silos, and it is personalities, and it is time for all of us to just be action-oriented instead of just . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . talking.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Lindo.

MS. LINDO: But thank you so much, and I really appreciate you guys.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for your testimony. Members, any questions for Ms. Lindo? Seeing none. Mahalo for jumping on this morning. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Mo'i Kawaakoa, and there's no one signed up after.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Ms. Kawaakoa.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Aloha kakahiaka. Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo, County Council, for having us here today. So, I missed some of the testimony--or some of the questions from Cadence, but I don't know if this testimony, if I can ask questions, or if I can just voice my opinion. I'm going to try and use my hina side in this because you guys know I always come with the kū. So, I'm...you know, I no like...I no like sound like one...one parrot. We got to start working together. Nonprofit organizations, grassroots organizations, the County, the State, the Federal Government, whoever that has the resources and funds to take care of our...our vulnerable unhoused people. Oh, did I get cut off?

CHAIR SINENCI: We can still hear you.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Oh, okay. I have no idea where I am. I no see me anymore. But anyways, yeah. We got to start working together because more and more, you see a lot of our unhoused people, anywhere and everywhere they can be on the Island of Maui. And it's hard for them to be in places and not be criminalized because get signage up that says they cannot park here, so they park in an area close by because they know that that's a safe place for them. And something happens. Their dog . . . *(inaudible)*. . . you know, get people that come into their community that steals, and they find stolen cars in that community. And they cannot really control what other people do when they are being good citizens, but just in a...in a vulnerable situation. I don't understand that there's also extra funding for Holomua Road now, and I got to start thinking about where for put my people because I no like them get criminalized. And I just move. I no wait for nobody tell me nothing. We just get it done, but we do it in the most pono way, making sure that we take into accountability how the community...how this community is going to be when we make those moves, right? I don't understand why it has to be so hard to do those things when we all have expertise in this matter. We need to start working together. I don't know if you guys can see me, if you guys can still hear me. I glad that I keeping this composure right now because, you know, I could go all kine ways, but what does it help? But yeah . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . you know, we got to start working together. I don't know who is in charge. I mean, I do, but I no like call you out, you know, because what does that get me, other than you not liking me because I went call you out? So, you know, for people who are in charge of these things, and make sure our grants go through because we helping our people, take into consideration we got to start working together. Because if we don't, this will continue, yeah? And when it starts to get radical out there, who the one going fill in the gaps? Not you guys...us, okay? Community care. We had somebody, a homeless mom--or a mom, just kicked out, three keiki...six weeks, two years old, seven years old, okay? She's at Kanaha because she has nowhere else to go. So, we take her in because we know Family Life Center has a process, and a lot of us are filling in the gaps at other places, right? So, we reach out to the community, we find her temporary housing. We...we try and get her into a place, but there's barriers that she also has to go through there. So, now, this mom of three, who had temporary housing until day...until today, is now without housing again. And who going fill in those gaps? We are. We're going to communi...we're going to activate,

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

and we're going to get her into housing because we believe that her babies do not belong on the street. This got to stop happening, okay? And then for our long-term generational unhoused people, they have been there so long, they don't know how to take care of themselves. So, when you see them on the side of the road looking crazy and hobo, it's because they don't know any better. But that's why we come in to help them learn, right? We provide a safe place. I don't know why it's so hard for this to happen. So, mahalo for hearing my testimony. I never like ask any questions to the people above us who get all our resources and funding. Just...just start doing the right thing already because it's too late already. And if you're not waiting to change your mindset, please step down and put somebody else in there that going start taking care of our people. I done with my testimony. I have no idea where the...where the...where the Teams went. You can end my...you can mute me.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo --

MS. KAWAAKOA: Everybody have a beautiful day --

CHAIR SINENCI: -- Ms. Kawaakoa. We have --

MS. KAWAAKOA: -- and to continue to do the work.

CHAIR SINENCI: We have a question for you from Member Paltin.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Kawaakoa. I had two clarifying questions. The first one is, were you one of the service providers that the EConorthwest folks had facilitated discussion with?

MS. KAWAAKOA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. And then the second --

MS. KAWAAKOA: We were invited to October one.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, awesome. Thank you. And the second question I had, I think that you mentioned homeless verification letter. To your knowledge, are you still having the trouble with only one entity being allowed to provide that homeless verification letter? Is that still an ongoing --

MS. KAWAAKOA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It is?

MS. KAWAAKOA: Yes. So, what we've understood now is that...that there's different levels of homeless verification. You can verify someone to get into shelter, you can verify

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

someone to get a photo ID, you can verify someone to get--you know what I mean? There's different levels, and I guess we don't have the verification to get someone into shelter. And so far, our experience has been in order for anyone to get help from Family Life Center, they need to be serviced in an area or specifically from them. If they are serviced from anybody else, they cannot get the help of Family Life Center.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and not even like the police, or the Mayor's Homeless Coordinator can --

MS. KAWAAKOA: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- start the forms? No?

MS. KAWAAKOA: No. They all lost their verification access.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you for that clarification. And that was as recent as this family that you were just discussing, the police --

MS. KAWAAKOA: 'Ae.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- and everybody? Okay.

MS. KAWAAKOA: 'Ae.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you for that clarification.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Mahalo for your questions. Mahalo for your questions.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo. Members, any --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, I'll yield.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- any more questions for Ms. Kawaakoa? Seeing none. Mahalo for your testimony.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, sorry.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can I do one more question? Sorry.

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, Ms. Kawaakoa.

MS. KAWAAKOA: No worries.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: When you were consulted by the...the EConorthwest, that was identified as a barrier as well, that only one entity could do that homeless verification letter? Was that identified as a barrier?

MS. KAWAAKOA: Yes. Yes. And it was...it was really nice being in those groups of different organizations because we could understand why they cannot help other people. It's because if they do, they lose their granting...their grant funding. So, it's like, brah, that barrier got to get...get taken out. Because that's unfortunate that all these people get the power and resources, and we all like do the same thing for our people, but they cannot do 'em because they get their hands tied behind their back, and we don't.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, you...you do agree that ongoing facilitated communication would help foster better understanding amongst all the entities?

MS. KAWAAKOA: Oh, for sure. 100 percent, I agree.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Would be better for it too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, Chair. Thank you --

MS. KAWAAKOA: Yeah, no worries. Mahalo for the questions.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. We have another question for you from Committee Vice-Chair Johnson.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Ms. Kawaakoa. Good to see you, Mo'i. Quick question. So, you...you just talked about the relationships with other folks who are trying to help houseless. What is the barrier, what do you think it is? Is it personality, is it funding? Can you...I know it's a bur...I know there's a struggle, people working in silos, but what is the reason why that they're not working together?

MS. KAWAAKOA: What I've gotten from the EConorthwest session was the funding. A lot of them who work in...you know, at Ka Hale A Ke Ola, Family Life Center, who I've spoken to that was in my group had said that they would love to do what we're doing, but the funding is only for this...like, it--you know, there's--it's restricted funding. So, in order to keep that funding, they cannot do what we do and just help our people because I guess the restrictions of the funding hold them back. That is the biggest barrier that is there, the restricted funding.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thanks for that clarification. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair. Seeing no more questions for Ms. Kawaakoa. Mahalo for your testimony this morning.

MS. KAWAAKOA: Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Kai Nishiki. She's currently the final person signed up.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Ms. Nishiki.

MS. NISHIKI: Aloha, Chair, Committee Members. Kai Nishiki, testifying on my own behalf. I think at the beginning of the presentation, the presenter spoke about how--how many housing units that you have really impacts how many folks will become unhoused. And so, I really want to speak specifically in West Maui and...and the sections of the report that talk about that, you know, under State and County Governments, there should be a priority on a just and a resilient recovery, and that the government should be incentivizing and funding multi-unit middle housing that supports affordable multi-generational and sustainable living. And the disconnect that was also called about between, you know, various nonprofits in the private sector, and...and Government, and the County. And I...I will say from...from my experience that, you know, a lot of times, the County is the barrier. And I will speak specifically to production of housing in West Maui, and that the County was notified by CWRM staff in January of 2024 that the County has the ability to provide water for housing from their...from their supply. And so, you know, like a big question that I have is, if I was in charge, and West Maui is the...the...has the greatest need, and the County was then empowered in January of 2024 to make sure that there...that there could be water for affordable permanent, long-term housing in West Maui, where was the sense of urgency in making sure that that happens? And now, here we are, almost summertime of 2025, and the Lieutenant Governor proposed a housing project. There are other housing providers who...who are...who have been ready, and we would have been moving folks into permanent housing in West Maui. So, why is there not this sense of urgency? A whole entire town burned down. Significant percentage of those were renters. And still, our renters have nowhere to go except for temporary housing. And the FEMA cliff is here . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . fall...falling off the FE...FEMA cliff right now. So, just really urging that the County...you know, you...they...the County could, right? They could've, a year and a half ago, said hey, we...we're in charge of our water in West Maui. How about we...we beg and plead all the water user...water users in West Maui, reduce your water usage so that we can...we can build long-term housing? If you can't do it voluntarily, do it by...do it mandatory. So, I know, you know, Councilmember Cook has the Water Committee, and I know that the County has conservation enforcement. And so, I'm just urging this body to do whatever you can. You just heard housing...how many housing units you have determines how many are going to be unhoused. And I'm glad there's a...there is a focus on unsheltered solutions. Because that's where we're headed if we're not--if the County is not facilitating housing--facilitating, not regulating,

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

facilitating housing--in West Maui in its greatest hour of need, what are we doing? What are we doing? We're just setting ourselves up for having to deal with more and more services, and people falling through the cracks and either leaving, or becoming unsheltered. So, I think it's...I think it's important, like everyone is saying, for us to work together on this, and with a sense of urgency. Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Nishiki, for your testimony this morning. Members, any questions for Ms. Nishiki? We have one from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Nishiki. So, I just wanted to clarify. The County's failure to understand that it could provide water for permanent housing projects in West Maui is a serious problem that you've identified?

MS. NISHIKI: Yes, absolutely. And we have been telling them this for almost two years now. And they were told in a meeting with CWRM staff, where a number of members of the Department of Water Supply; the former Deputy Director of CWRM, Dawn Chang; all of the dir--you know, staff were there. And so, they --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And --

MS. NISHIKI: -- they...they were told this. And then it was, again, reiterated last week at the CWRM meeting. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and have you found that the County Housing Director, Water Director, Mayor's Administration has been working hand-in-hand to execute residential workforce housing agreements to assist affordable home...permanent home providers in West Maui to navigate the County's processes?

MS. NISHIKI: That...my experience has been that the County has not been facilitating, has more been providing roadblocks. And there has been significant...I mean, I'm...I'm...I'm trying to not throw anybody under the bus here because I...I think it's important for folks to work together. But at some point, if...if there isn't progress being made, it does come down to whoever the leadership is, and...and what is being communicated down to the departments. If we're...if we're saying that affordable housing is a priority, then why don't the departments know that? Because the buck has to stop someplace. And if the department heads are not facilitating housing, and instead providing excuses after excuses, pointing fingers at each other, then there's a systemic flaw here and stemic...a systemic problem. I mean, even with...before there was the bifurcation of Housing and Human Concerns, you know, the County had the ability to adjust the AMI. We don't have to be utilizing HUD. The...the County had that ability, and that wasn't done. And so, then you have, you know, issues with...with people getting into housing. And then just the production of housing. That has not been facilitated, especially in West Maui, when they have all of the tools in their tool belt. They have them all, and they provide....then...then provided lists and lists and lists of options. And they refuse to move forward on picking an option, holding hands with everybody together, and getting people in homes. Because ultimately, that's what it's about. Ultimately, what

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

this is about is...is heads in beds, right? I mean to go back to heads and beds. But it seems that like folks within the Administration are too busy playing politics, and favorites, and worrying about personalities when our job is here to serve our community. Ultimately, that's what we're here to do. So, why are we getting lost in politics and personalities?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If I...if I can just clarify what you meant by tools. Appropriately zoned land in the community plan, in the State and County zoning, affordable in perpetuity, water resources to be exchanged, a list of them. Is...is that the tools that you're referring to for our goal of kama'āina housing?

MS. NISHIKI: Yes, exactly. If you have...if you have a project that can provide almost 1,000 units of permanently affordable housing in perpetuity, with 240 ready-to-go, with a brand-new water main right next to the project. And the County being given the green light by CWRM a year and a half ago, why are we still here instead of folks moving in? And I really hope that --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MS. NISHIKI: -- this body --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That surely does sound criminal. Thank you.

MS. NISHIKI: It does. It almost feels like there is some sort of ulterior motives or extortion going on.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Nishiki. Any other questions? Seeing none. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next and currently last person signed up to testify is Bobby Kanuha.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Mr. Kanuha. You have some testimony on the ECONorthwest homeless report?

MR. KANUHA: Yes.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MR. KANUHA: Yes. The whole...I guess you guys call them Human Concerns, eh? And anyway, I guess that is the northwest. So, I live on the north coast right out of Paukukalo. So, I stay right . . . *(inaudible)*. . . so we going--talking about from makai and mauka, Happy Valley all the way to Waikapū, and I going hit off my right shoulder, Pā'ia. So, this is the whole...that's all from over there. So, that is the whole northwest. So, I live--you talk about homeless, I deal with them every day, 24/7. I live down Fifth Lane in Paukukalo. I've been living there almost 20 years. I dealt with these people, our people, for 20 years. And I try to do the best I can, and plus I'm just here

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

to speak about the truth. Because if we not going do the truth, we're not going settle nothing. I mean, I really speaking the truth, that all this stuff is...we got to be serious, and we got to be real, and we got to do our best we can for our people because you guys the one in charge right here. So...and...and the other previous person, Kawaakoa, yeah? Kawaakoa. So, anyway...and that's the whole thing. The homeless is--because we got to stop them. You send them to Aloha House, they come back, who going watch them? They going keep on going. Get rid of the...get rid of the...instead of let them go probation, lock 'em up. Because if they go probation, they going screw 'em up because the system was meant to fail. So, that's how get hard time for the homeless, you...you know what I'm saying? So, first of all, I try to get to know them, first of all, by hey, good morning, every...you know? And that's what it is. The party's following them up, they can do this, do that, but you got to get into their head and into their inside. Because if you no get to inside them, they going keep on over...just over and over. If they know the system, they going try beat the system. We all get family, all of us, that are sick, you know what I'm saying? And we all sick, because hard every day for not commit sins, so you know what I'm saying? So, that's the...the whole idea is use our up here. We all got them in us to ask to ask ourselves, what is my purpose here? Because you know why? I got to deal with these people, but we got to still deal aloha. I still got to come up because they human. I tell them, you no was born like that, you know? I tell them, I not here to hurt you, I trying to help him, but it's my weird way of how I do my approach. And I tell MPD, I can do stuff that you no...you guys cannot do, you know what I'm saying? And just...it's just the human nature because you all chosen for do something. Every single human being. You're chosen...your purpose here on Earth, you know what I'm saying? And that's what the whole thing is about. . . .(timer sounds). . . So, if we can help--and the water thing, the water issue, and the contractors of the water issue, I know how these guys roll. I have experience in wastewater and water treatment. So, I know the system. The system, the whole structure system, everything. You know, and the thing is illegal diversion. I got to deal with this Kaupō, the back side, okay? Mile Marker 37, I live over there. That old place, my family there. First . . .(inaudible). . . on that...on that place right there, Mokuia Point. Right there. I...I...I get...I get neighbors that...that's the kine brand. Brand name, you know what I'm saying? Brand name, you know what I'm saying? But still, I got to get along with them. And the part is, we tell them, we just trying to be good neighbors, and I just expect that in return. And...and if you don't, then I still got to listen, right? I still got to...like I got to love my enemies, and I try to love my neighbors. I mean, just like all of us. But the part is, we can do this. It's all this whole Committee, the board, who following the money? If I had my way, I'd be in charge of the Audit Department. The Audit Department. That's the one. I going tell everybody, and I going come without you knowing. I just going walk right inside. I override in case I got to do the inspection on a guy from Las Vegas, yeah, you know what I'm saying? Okay. The captain from Las Vegas. Put all these guys in check because I am so outraged. I got to deal with my own, my own thing. And still, I show them my best, my aloha that I got left. So, I tell you folks, you guys in charge--I mean, listening through...my grandparents them been fighting all the way to Molina year Administration way back. The whole thing. Water, DOT, structures, land boundaries, water, illegal diversion. You know, thank goodness I'm like this. Because if you switch 'em around, I got to deal with all this and use them in this way. So, I tell you folks,

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

listen, okay? You guys can ask all the question, everything, but going stay the same. If you no change now, not going happen. We got to do this for mine, eh, everybody benefit, not only my grandchild. How is...how is Maui management going get my grandchildren out of Waihe'e School 12:30 during the day? Boom, it just happens. They going guarantee me? They not. They not going do 'em, I bet you, okay? Look at all the natural hazard. Look all the man hazard. I tell braddah, every car, that's one bomb. I work on Kaho'olawe, thank you, Dan Inouye, send eight of us to the bomb school. I'm thankful. He get one good story. . . .(timer sounds). . . A true hero, Dan Inouye. A true real hero. Real deal.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo.

MR. KANUHA: Exactly.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

MR. KANUHA: So these --

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for your words this morning, Mr. Kahuna.

MR. KANUHA: I hear you, braddah. I hear you. I hear you. Because --

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

MR. KANUHA: -- it's probably going to be my last time, so all I going say is I got to fight this. I'm here. I give all for my grandkids and all...all of us. So, now, I tell you guys, listen.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo.

MR. KANUHA: Do the right thing. Stop bouncing on that committee, this and that. And please, you guys can do it, okay?

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Mister...any questions for Mr. Kanuha, Members? Seeing none. Thank you for being here.

MR. KANUHA: This is when you guys got to ask questions. That's the deal.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

MR. KANUHA: You guys got to ask questions. I'm watching TV, no questions, you know what I'm saying? This is the way for do 'em.

CHAIR SINENCI: I think everybody heard...everybody heard you. Thank you.

MR. KANUHA: This is about the people, man. This is about the people.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo.

MR. KANUHA: Thank you guys very much.

CHAIR SINENCI: Staff?

MR. KANUHA: Please and thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Chair, no one else has signed up, but I see someone approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: Thank you for that, Uncle Bobby. Love your neighbor. Aloha. Aloha Luna Ho‘omalua Sinenci. Thank you for taking this subject-matter into your Kom...Komike. And Hawaiian word of the day is kala ulu [sic], and I'll get to that later. First thing, the ECONorthwest report. I appreciate you giving me your copy, Shane. I wasn't able to get...out of my bag before I jumped on the bus this morning from Kula, and the Council Services Office did put it in the packet, but they will not allow to come in the Chamber with it, so I decided to just come into here and skip that part. So, the girl gave a...I forget her name, she gave a pretty good synopsis of what the whole thing was about. The musical chairs thing really got to me because...hold on, I'm just kind of freewheeling right here. I'll try to stick to the script. The musical chairs reminds me of the lobby out here. I got forced out of that side of the lobby, and I went to this side of the lobby, but now they...the Ambassador's got chairs over here, so I got forced back to that side of the lobby. That's causing problems out there in the lobby with one of the Councilmembers. I believe that I could help the County with this subject-matter, but in the...in the words of one of the previous testifiers, there are roadblocks and dumb rules. It's aggravating that I cannot get kokua or aloha from the Councilmember of my district, or any of the businesses in my kala ulu--neighborhood. At this point, I'd like to mahalo Chris Kish and Naomi Crozier. They're doing the best they can to help everybody. It's kind of like a long drive up to Kula, so I can...I can understand why they kind of focus it on where most of the stuff is happening. I want to start a recycle business, so don't judge anybody for dumpster diving. They...they might actually be doing a good thing. But if they leave trash outside the dumpster after they go in there and get the stuff out, then...then you can...you can get on them for that. Maybe Mr. Kanuha can do that kind of stuff. In fact, I've been vialified [sic] in my town for recycling. There's room at both churches for sheltering people and recycling, but neither King's Cathedral--which...which runs Family Life Center, by the way, I have that in the proof of the...the other...the contract. Thank you for...Mr. Johnson, for requesting the contract for services from Family Life Center because it says right in plain English that James Marocco is the President of Family Life Center. Or the Kula Roman Catholics, and they...they won't help. At that point...and nine out of ten--my standard disclaimer--nine out of ten people that goes to church is good, but you got to watch the people . . . (timer sounds) . . . in the organization, the ones that's getting paid. Okay. I hear the bell, Shane, so thank you for...so, I'll steer you guys. I don't have time to read Act 243 of the 2015 Hawai'i Legislature, but I...I would like appreciate somebody helping with an address. I've been here for going on 13 years now. Salvation Army didn't work. My best advice to the--make the biggest

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

improvement is to quit calling people homeless. It actually is insensitive to the culture, and it's poisoning the minds of kānaka. Aloha Pō'akahi, aloha Monday.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Mr. Law. Any questions for the testifier, Members?

MR. LAW: I am somewhat an expert on this subject, so if you want to...if you did want to put me in there as expert, I'd rather answer questions like --

CHAIR SINENCI: Did you meet --

MR. LAW: -- a professional.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- with the facilitating teams when they were here?

MR. LAW: No.

CHAIR SINENCI: No? Okay.

MR. LAW: I didn't even know they were here.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else has signed up to testify. Would you like a last call?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, this is the last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated they would like to testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, any objections to closing public testimony at this time?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(5) . . .

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you, Members. And if you can...we're--I see that we are at bare quorum. We did lose some Members. They said they had to leave. But before...do we need a break? Okay. Then we'll just start with a quick question, and then we can take a break. And we do have Chief of Staff Lallo, as well as Director Tsuhako. We have a question from Member Paltin. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I would like to ask the Chief of Staff, as well as the Director of Human Concerns, why is it that we're still only allowing one entity to provide homeless verification letter? I have email from Scott Morishige from the

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

Department of Human Services, State Department of Human Service, indicating that he spoke with Director Tsuhako on April 23, 2024 [sic]. In the request for proposals from DHS Homeless Program Office, current shelter contracts, RFP number HMS-224-19-11 HPO, pages 2 through 8 of the service specifications explains the process for shelters regarding homeless verification letters, and states that the shelter provider shall contact the outreach program providers and/or shall verify and maintain adequate documentation for homeless verification. This language allows the emergency shelters to verify homeless status based on available information, such as third-party verification, as I mentioned earlier. In addition, the shelter provider can check in the homeless management information system, and shelter providers are allowed, based on their professional judgment, to have five percent of the individuals or families they serve self-certify their homeless status. I did speak to Director Tsuhako yesterday regarding this, and confirmed the information I provided to you earlier. The HPO administrator is currently away at a conference, but when he returns, I will confirm that his staff did reach out to Maui shelter providers regarding this information, and if not, we'll ask that he follow up regarding this matter. This was sent April 24th. I provided it to Cynthia Lallo, Naomi Crozier, Josiah Nishita, Director Tsuhako, Deputy Managing Director Erin Wade, and the Mayor himself, so I can't understand why people are still saying that third-party verification is not allowed. And...and that goes directly into this report that tells us everything that we already knew, and says ongoing facilitated communication. I mean, I'm...I'm...I'm just a random person, and I made an email to the Department of Human Services. I don't understand why anybody cannot do that.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin.

MS. LALLO: Thank you for your question and your information, Councilmember Paltin. I have Ms. Naomi Crozier here, and she can certainly speak to this. This falls under, I think, best for . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . Director Tsuhako. We're happy to...to answer, but Lori, did you want to add some mana'o to this?

MS. TSUHAKO: I did. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. I also got an email from the Division Head of the Department of Human Services, Scott Morishige, that's dated May 9th [sic]. And in his second paragraph, he...he writes, Maui County does not have any jurisdiction over the homeless verification process since it is tied to contracts for outreach and shelter that are both administered by the State Homeless Programs Office. As outlined in Section 8 of the service specifications for RFP number HMS-224-19-11, which is still in effect, the authority to issue and recognize homeless verification letters reside specifically with HPO-funded outreach providers, subcontracted agencies, and State-funded shelters. Acceptance of these letters is a condition of the State HPO program compliance. So, I think what we need to understand, or perhaps I can do a better job of explaining, is that the County doesn't have jurisdiction over that process because we do not pay for shelter beds. In the bottom of his email to me, for example--because I asked specifically, Mr. Morishige, I know I don't have jurisdiction over that process, that's a State process, but what can we do to make things better? And he offered three suggestions. The first is to facilitate communication between the

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

State-contracted providers and local stakeholders to ensure consistent understanding and application of the verification process; number two, providing support or advocacy for expanding outreach and shelter capacity to underserved areas of the County; and number three, educating local service providers on State requirement so there is clarity and reduced friction in accessing services. So, I think there's also--my understanding is there's...there's various reasons for homeless verifications. One of the reasons for homeless verification, and maybe for statements that suggested homeless verification authority has been removed from some agencies--which I want to make clear, was not done by the County because we have no jurisdiction over that--is that there's a time when...during Governor...Governor's emergency proclamation where people were needing to get access to photo IDs, and various community agencies were allowed, at that point, to provide homeless verification because homelessness was one of the conditions under which someone could receive an expedited photo ID, which was, you know, critical for them. So, that is a separate issue from...from accessing homeless services, such as a shelter. I read...also read Mr. Morishige's email to you, Councilmember Paltin, and it was...it was clear that for five percent of the entries into homeless shelters, shelters do have the ability to accept verification from third-party sources, or a self-attestation from the homeless person, and I believe that the shelters both do that to the extent that they are allowed in their contract with the State. Additionally, the homeless verification process, as I...I have learned more in detail, is a process by which Family Life Center, as the State's contractor, has actually done intakes to engage the unsheltered people in a process of trying to get them housed, and to end their homelessness. So, I hope that information provides a little bit of clarity. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Not--can you repeat what contract number? Is it the same contract number, HMS-224-19-11 HPO?

MS. TSUHAKE: That is not the contract number, that is the RFP number. And so, what the State does...I'll...I'll repeat it again. It's RFP number HMS-224-19-11, which is still in effect. The State will put the scope of that RFP into their contracts with their contractors. So, the State did issue a more recent RFP, but that one was withdrawn by the State, and so the existing scope in the RFP we just cited is still in effect for their contracts.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's...that's the same one he cited in mine. HMS-224-19-11 HPO.

MS. TSUHAKE: That's what...that's what he cited in his email to me as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And so, page 2 through 8 says that they should accept third-party verification, is what he says in my email.

MS. TSUHAKE: He said that they could accept third-party verification, but there's a limited number of that. I think five percent of their admissions into shelter can be by . . . (inaudible) . . .

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No, it says, in addition...in addition, the shelter provider can check in the Homeless Management Information System, and shelter providers are also allowed. So, it's not that it's in addition. And I guess I would like to follow up with Ms. Lallo, if...if you've reached out to First Deputy Campos or Mr. Morishige because it seems as though there's conflicting information?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, that...thank you, Councilmember. That's exactly what I was thinking. I have had conversations last week with Department of Human Services, but will follow up again and get you the information.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Okay, Members. If we can just hold on to your questions, we'll take a quick ten-minute break--sorry, recess--and we'll be back at 10:55. With that, the WASSP Committee is in recess. 10:55. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 10:45 a.m.

RECONVENE: 11:02 a.m.

CHAIR SINENCI: . . .(gavel). . . Aloha and welcome back to the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, May 12th. It is now 11:02. Mahalo, everyone, for the quick break, and we'll continue on with Members' questions and answers. I do believe we just have Chief of Staff Lallo, as well as Director Tshako online. We'll go ahead and...Committee Vice-Chair Johnson, for your three minutes.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. Thank you for joining us from the departments. I know you guys are super busy. I'm going to go through some of the things in the report that we're doing and working on, and I...and in the back of your mind, Directors, I want to see if you can respond to some of them. So, this report, I think, does have some solutions that I feel that we are working on, or...or have gotten under our belt. So, specifically in page 38, there's...some of their suggestions was about the grant reimbursement process that we're working on right now to just pay it up...pay it incrementally. On page 40, the safe zones and diverse shelter options. Just in this past budget, the Maui Rapid Response was...was...there was money put in for a home that we could help with that, have more diverse shelters. Page 41, diversion and crisis intervention. Rather than sweeps, the Right to Shelter bill is...we're working on that bill. Page 44, the transportation issues that houseless folks have. Remember, Members and the community, that we have the free-fare bus pass that has been wildly successful, according to Department of Transportation. Page 45, the rent stabilization. Remember, there's a bill sitting on the Director of Housing's...Director of Housing Division...Department, sitting on their desk. And then the--page 46, the poverty reduction and wealth building. They mentioned UBI, big fan of that. But the...one of my priorities was the Maui United Way that we funded for \$12 million, and I have...I...I saw that there's a proposed cut for 2 million, so please don't cut that, Members. Okay.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

So, my question is...for the departments is, you know, what are you folks doing differently? And all these things that the Council is funding and trying to push forward through bills, what are you folks doing that lets--you know, some of the criticism was we don't work well together. So, let's work well together, departments. What...what can we do? So, I leave it up to you folks. What...what do you think, Director [sic] Lallo or...or anybody?

CHAIR SINENCI: Chief of Staff Lallo? Oh, I see Director Tsuhako.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Director Tsuhako's on. Sorry.

MS. TSUHAKO: Hi. Good morning, Councilmember Johnson. I'll...I'll respond as --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Good morning.

MS. TSUHAKO: -- anybody, okay? Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .(laughing). . .

MS. TSUHAKO: So --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Anyone? Anyone out there?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you. Thank you. But --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Sorry, I didn't see all the cameras on, so my...my --

MS. TSUHAKO: Brought a bit of levity to the morning. Thank you. I think that the citations that you offered in your...in your question were good. I would also like to acknowledge that the Department is doing a lot of follow-up work to ensure things like community and staff training on issues, such as harm reduction and trauma-informed care. In fact, on Wednesday . . .(timer sounds). . . we are having a training by a world-renowned expert in the field of homelessness named Iain De Jong at MCC [sic]. I hope that through the Homeless Alliance, you've been...all of you and your staff members have been invited to that. That's part of our...our partnership, to ensure that those topics are...are more widely-offered as points of training for folks. The Department also issued an RFP for a safe parking project, which Mayor Bissen has verified as one of his programmatic priorities. We expect that the procurement will close on Friday, the 16th of May, and we will then be able to take a look and...and score those proposals competitively, and hopefully make a decision, and be able to enter into a contract for that service. I won't speak about transportation or the rent stabilization bill, but we did also talk with Maui United Way about the proposed \$12 million grant. In fact, I think we have a meeting scheduled tomorrow with Mr. Economou, and his colleagues, and my staff to go over some of the ways that we can prepare more broadly to effectively administer that funding. So, I...I think that, you know, we are doing all we can to take chunks out of this report from ECONorthwest, and make progress on that. And I think the other thing

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

that we will be enabled to do is--like for example, on Wednesday, when we hopefully have a large group of people there to be trained with Iain, that we'll have opportunities during the day to have conversations with a wide variety of people--both grassroots organizations, as well as State and County-funded organizations--about how we can capitalize on the report, and its findings, and its recommendations, and then move the conversations forward so we can attempt to coordinate more efficiently. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Miss...Director Tsuhako.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Committee Chair [sic] Johnson. Next, we have Member Cook for your three minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My question, either for Director Tsuhako, is the 100 acres in Kī...is the...I don't know if it's 100 or 150 acres, but the property by the police station in Kihei on the mauka side of the Pi'ilani. Is there any plans for that for any type of permanent or temporary shelters?

MS. TSUHAKO: Good morning, Councilmember Cook. I don't know for certain. I know that there have been discussions over the...probably over the past four or five years about that property, and what is the highest and best use of it. Throughout that period, and in the meetings that I've been able to attend, there were no discussions about, for example, having an additional homeless resource center of that nature. I think other departments had priority for permanent housing, as well as on facilities for County departments. So, no discussions about homeless facilities, to the best of my knowledge. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank...thank you, Chair. My follow-up question for Director Tsuhako, is there currently any properties in Kihei that are being looked at as a homeless accommodation facility?

MS. TSUHAKO: Councilmember, the only property that I'm aware of was...was tied to a proposal by the Teran Young Foundation [sic], which, at its inception, was a proposal to do...I think what they called it was a homeless village, so to take people who are unsheltered, and move them into a community, and have on that property a number of...of microunits, and have a...just try to do community building around that property. But I don't believe that the Department has received any proposals or requests for funding from the foundation, especially not over the last two years.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you for that response. I did meet with them a couple of times, and I was under the impression that they were doing outreach, part of it was through me. Did...from your recollection, did that project seem to have any...like kind of any legs, like substance that could potentially be worth funding? . . .(timer sounds). . .

MS. TSUHAKO: Councilmember, the...the funding from the Department of Human Concerns would be for any programmatic things. I think the larger obstacle for that project, as...as it was originally proposed, was to permanently have control over the land. And it...so,

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

I think it was a matter of land acquisition, which would not have necessarily come to this department. And I'm not aware of what the status of that purchase, or a lease, or whatever arrangements were being discussed are --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- at current.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: My time's up. Thank you very much, Director. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Cook. And just a quick...my apologies to people trying to still jump on the meeting to testify, but testimony is over. But you can still send in written testimony at wassp.committee@mauicounty.us. Staff, I don't see Member Rawlins-Fernandez, so we'll go to Member U'u-Hodgins for her three minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I only see us Councilmembers, so I don't really know who's on. Do we have Director Tsuhako, and Chief of Staff Cynthia Lallo, and Naomi Crozier on the meeting?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Cool. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for being with us. I wanted to ask, in the...in the report, we have that low-barrier shelter. Where do we find the balance in the effectiveness of low-barrier shelters, where they're encouraged to come and obviously seek shelter, and how do we find safety in low-barrier shelters? Can somebody define that, help me...put some perspective on that for me, please?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you. Good morning --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- Councilmember U'u-Hodgins. This is Lori. This is Lori. I'll do my best to try and explain that. So, the...the concept of low barriers is that--for example, in...I'll give you a real brief comparison. When I first started working in homelessness, in order to get into Ka Hale A Ke Ola, unsheltered people had to get a TB test, had to have a negative result of the TB test, had to take a drug test and be free of drugs and alcohol before they're even admitted into the shelter.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. TSUHAKE: And over the years, that...that strategy of low barriers, meaning making it easier for somebody to enter into a shelter program, became the national best practice. So, that's how we evolved here on Maui to reflect the lower barriers. The program over at Project Vision, the --

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- the big tent city, Pu‘uhonua o Nēnē --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- was...was created as a low-barrier alternative for people. So, you know, you don't need to take a drug test, or a TB test, or anything like that. I think the...one of the critical issues is that in order to keep people safe in a low-barrier shelter, you probably need to have a larger, more robust staffing pattern so that if somebody does need help, help is offered more quickly, and that any potential behavioral issues can be addressed more efficiently. And that hasn't always been possible with the...with the staffing patterns that we've had. And...and...and it's not just with shelters on Maui. This is a Statewide issue, where shelter programs try to reduce barriers to take people in, and often find that the issues that the shelter residents are dealing with are much more complex and much heavier in need than they even recognized at admission.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. TSUHAKE: So, that is an ongoing challenge.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. That's what we've been hearing too sometimes in our testimony. On page 14 of the report as well, it says, one in four...
...*(timer sounds)*... oh, shucks. I can wait. I can wait. Because this is...oh, okay. I can --

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead and finish.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. It says, one in four unhoused people, Maui County, is a youth, person obviously under the age of 18, and then the next sentence is, children under the age of five are over-representative [*sic*] in the unhoused. So, do we...and that is, I mean, unbelievably heartbreaking. How do we prioritize our children? For the ones that are under five, obviously, I assume they're with a parent. For those who are under 18--like one of my cousins, when he was young, was in an abusive household and chose to leave. What numbers...what kind of people are we looking at? Is this young teenagers choosing to leave an abusive life, or is it young children with parents? What are we seeing, and how do we prioritize our children so we're not...they're not going to be part of our statistics and our chronic homelessness?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. TSUHAKE: We're seeing all of those. All of those demographics are represented. So, we do--our shelters as well as our outreach providers all try to prioritize families, especially

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

those with children...because we agree with you, that those children do not deserve to live on the streets, or live in --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Exactly.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- their cars. And so, I think there is a...there is a priority given to families. In terms of the...the youth who are without homes, oftentimes we find in the County, during our annual point-in-time count, we have a undercount of...of...of those individuals. Largely because those...those young people tend to have friends, and they couch surf on their friend's home --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- you know, with their aunties and uncles, or some --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- other friend or relative. And so, they're not necessarily counted as being homeless on the day of the count. I think part of the reason for that is there are children who are exiting foster-care systems that don't have a family to reunite with. There's also circumstances, like you discussed, where children escape abusive households. There's also situations, unfortunately, where children are kicked out of their homes for, you know, either mental health or behavioral health issues.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. TSUHAKE: And so, all of that just kind--those circumstances all kind of combine to have this population of...of young people. We do have youth services that are...are set up to assist young people like that, including the youth shelter. Also, a youth who's not yet 18 also has the ability to go into a homeless shelter and be housed there. On O‘ahu, we have specialized programs that deal with youth homeless, and trying to remove kids who are being sex trafficked, especially in Waikiki. We haven't quite gotten that far in our development here on Maui, but we do have services for them.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Director. Thank you, Chair --

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: -- for the time.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member U‘u-Hodgins. I don't see Member Rawlins-Fernandez. I'll ask--Director Tsuhako, is there--you know, and since Ms. Petros had said that they just had the consensus model--is there an effort to go ahead and create some type of strategic plan so that moving forward, so that all stakeholders, including the providers, the different departments, the agencies, can kind of jump on, so we are seeing--you know, we're not doubling services, we're...and I know that Chief Lallo has...they're directing

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

some kind of land management group. So, you know, with all the different departments working on...on those things, is there an effort to go ahead and create some kind of strategic plan, of course, with the information that came out of this northwest...ECONorthwest report?

MS. TSUHAKE: Chief of Staff, do you want to respond to that, or shall I? Mr. Chair --

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We can --

MS. TSUHAKE: -- the Chief of Staff may have stepped away from her desk, but let me...let me take a stab at it. I think for right now, Mr. Chair, what we want to do as an Administration is follow up on those issues that are...that are the low-hanging fruit in this...in this report, and these recommendations, which include all of the things I spoke...spoke about earlier. And I think having community-wide training, such as we're having on Wednesday with Iain, as well as maybe convening other...other gatherings to have those conversations, as suggested by ECONorthwest and some of our testifiers over the past few months, will be really helpful. And I think if we can get...if we can get folks to acknowledge that there's different perspectives, there's different strategies being employed right now to end homelessness for folks, that we can make headway on a strategic plan, but there's no...there's no definitive plan today to do that. I would say that the...my colleagues in the Administration are all very willing to meet together, and work on some of the larger issues that impact across departments, and I think we'll be closer to that as we move forward. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Director. And I can safely say, I guess, this Committee is...is also committed to...to having these issues brought up on this...in this Committee before the Council, so we're definitely on board. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Okay. Members, that was the first round of questions. We'll continue with the second with Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I did receive the email correspondence from Mr. Morishige, and I see that Director...First Direc...Deputy Director Campos may be on the line, so if anyone wants to ask specifically about that. I wanted to move on to Corporation Counsel Murakami. Is it even legal to put out an RFP requesting a strategic plan, and then after it's been awarded, change the scope to like a study? Because maybe if the RFP had originally been issued as a study, then we could have had some local people tell us what we already know, you know, and we wouldn't waste that \$240,000 of taxpayers' money to get someone from the mainland to tell us what we already know. Like, is that a legal thing, that you iss...and if it is, if it was changed in writing, can we see the documentation of that? Because I believe it was a Cost of Government Commission asked for a strategic plan...plan, Chair Lee asked for one in like 2020, and then we spent 240,000 of the taxpayers' money putting out an RFP of the strategic plan. I'm not sure who put that out, but if we're going to say, you know, just a few months later that it's infeasible, why would we put out a strategic plan RFP, and then change it? Is that a legal thing to do?

CHAIR SINENCI: Ms. Murakami?

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because I think some local folks missed out, you know?

MS. MURAKAMI: Yeah, let me get you...can I...could I have that in writing? I can research that, but I would have to look into the Procurement Code. There is an option, I believe, to the change order maybe, but I would have to, again, look at the...the language of the statute to make sure that it was compliant, or it was within that scope...that maybe it was within a larger sense of the scope. So, I...I can have that back to you in writing, if...if I may.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And Chair, can we also ask for anything in writing that said that we're now changing the scope, and like not giving others the opportunity to put in a re...a proposal for that changed scope? That seems kind of unfair, especially when you have such a big ticket, \$240,000 of the taxpayers' money, you know, and...and we're expecting one thing, and we didn't get it.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. We can send --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and I'm not sure why we would --

CHAIR SINENCI: We can send that request to --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- would put out an RFP for something, and then like shortly after, tell the people that answered the RFP it's infeasible. That sounds kind of backwards. But I'd like to yield the rest of my time to First Deputy Campos, if he's available, to explain to us about the homeless verification letter system. Like I know the County can't change what it is . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . but can they explain what you've been explaining, that there is flexibility for the homeless providing organization?

CHAIR SINENCI: Staff, should we make Mr. Campos a resource? He's with the State Dep...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: He's the First Deputy of the Department of Human Services.

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, any objections to making Mr. Campos a resource under Rules 18(A) of the Council?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mr. Campos? We don't see him online.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I see him right below Yvette Bouthillier on the people list. If you click on the people list and scroll down, he's between Yvette Bouthillier and Keala Kaopuiki-Santos. I don't know if he's muted or not. Or even Tia Hartsock is also on here, you know? I mean, I don't know why we're not clarifying about these barriers that have been identified, that the Home...HPO has the flexibility. And in the letter, it specifically says shall, not could, which, you know, in legislative contract language

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

means can or must. And it also says in addition to the five percent. So, I mean, if we can't even get a facilitated communication to clear up that one barrier, I'm not sure what...what...what we're paying people for.

CHAIR SINENCI: Staff, did you allow, Mr. Campos?

MS. MACDONALD: Sorry, Chair. The list of individuals at the end are just people who have been invited to the meeting previously, so they're not currently on the call right now.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD: Apologies. Yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Too bad they didn't come.

CHAIR SINENCI: We can...we can request maybe at a future meeting. I do see Member Rawlins-Fernandez for your three minutes of questioning.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. E kala mai, I...I had a...someone stopped by my office, so I had to step away. I...it sounds like some of my questions were asked and answered, but in case...for the RFP, Chair, do you plan to have that RFP and amended scope of work posted to this item on Granicus?

CHAIR SINENCI: We can...we can do that. I...I believe Director Tsuhako said it was going to come out on May 16th. Or you just want --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, I...I mean --

CHAIR SINENCI: -- just the RFP?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- I mean for this one, for the --

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- EConorthwest. I...I think I...I remember us talking about it, and I remember looking for it, and then I ended up downloading the same thing. It was just like the award. And then I...I remember being told that we would get the RFP, but we...I don't...I don't know if we got it. But yeah. So, I...I wanted the RFP to see what the scope of work...to see what the deliverables were so that I could match the intended deliverables with the, you know, product that we got. So, that was the intention. And then if that scope of work was amended for EConorthwest after the fire, you know, that's understandable. So, if we could get that. And then, Chair, the questions that you transmitted to EConorthwest and then their written answers, if that could be...is that going to be posted to the Granicus? Okay.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes. And the RFP for...for the EConorthwest is number 32 on Granicus for WASSP-13, and that was on our March 24th, 2025 meeting if you want to look at it now.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. Oh, great. Okay. Should we also get it posted on this specific item since this is the item?

CHAIR SINENCI: We can do that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo to the department for getting...so, the RFP, was there an amended scope of work too that was on that March meeting?

CHAIR SINENCI: We didn't...we didn't have any, we just posted the RFP.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. Should I ask Director --

CHAIR SINENCI: Director Tsuhako?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- Director Tsuhako if there was an amended scope of work for the awarded EConorthwest RFP?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember. I believe there was, and I think...I think our office forwarded that...both of those documents to the Committee on the 14th of April...excuse me, I think it's the 13th of April. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, we'll...we'll look for that. And then is it okay to ask my final question, or...

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then mahalo to Committee Staff for getting me those documents. And then does...does the Department--Director Tsuhako, does the Department have a plan to execute some of the recommendations in the EConorthwest plan? Oh, I guess it's not a plan. Recommendations.

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember. We do. I mentioned earlier that we have training with Iain De Jong on Wednesday at UH Maui, where we'll do a larger trauma-informed care and...and harm reduction training, as well as some larger systems training on the homeless service...system of providing services. And then we'll move on from there to do some extra training for the community, as well as our Department staff. And then hopefully, we will start moving into dealing with larger systemic issues and trying to get providers, whether they're State-funded, County-funded or...or not --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Can I interrupt real quick?

MS. TSUHAKE: -- not to . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, would it be possible to have like...like a spreadsheet of some sort with all the recommendations, and then, you know, like a progress report, like, you know, columns that...I mean, I don't think this is like super effective, but at least as like on a one-pager so we can see, here are all the recommendations, long-term, near-term, and, you know, like...and then here's some notes on like where we're at with...with some of those recommendations, whichever recommendations that you plan to implement.

MS. TSUHAKE: That is definitely doable, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Awesome. Mahalo, Director. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for those recommendations. Thank you. My apologies, Member Paltin. I wasn't sure if you were finished with your line of questioning for the second round.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, thank you. I just wanted to clarify, what was the reason that this RFP was initiated, and by whom? Like if we could clarify that. Because if it was initiated by the Department to create a homeless strategic plan, and then the...it was in the timeline of the...that October of '22, the proposal was submitted, and then, you know, by June 23rd, when it was executed, in the week-long engagement effort, they were told it's infeasible. Why did we put out a request for a proposal for something that is...by the Department or whomever--says is infeasible? Like, that seems like a big waste of \$240,000. Yeah. Can we...can we get some of that background?

MS. TSUHAKE: Councilmember, the RFP was issued based on recommendations made by the Cost of Government Commission. I think the Commission recommended Affordable Housing Funds be used to pay for that study. So, the Department issued the RFP for that --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: We paid for a study, or a strategic plan?

MS. TSUHAKE: I believe the...the formal referral from the Cost of Government Commission was for a strategic plan to end homelessness, which is what the RFP...how the RFP was written. The --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But if the Department is going to tell the respondent to the RFP that it's infeasible, why even bother with doing that? Like, it doesn't make sense to me.

MS. TSUHAKE: I think that the...the explanation that Ms. Petros offered to us this morning maybe mischaracterized that. I think the important thing...the important, I guess, circumstance that I would note is that we entered into a contract in the summer, the early summer of 2023, and two months after we started, and we worked with the agency to come up with a work plan to actually get the...the planning done, the fires occurred. In addition to myself, and...and then-Deputy Director Saumalu Mata'afa, and Mr. Kish

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

from our Homeless Programs Office, we...all three of us were responding to the EOC, and we could not manage that process, in addition to doing the work that we were doing. And so, we asked to put a hold on EConorthwest's work because we were not able to attend to them and to that work, and by that time...by the time we . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . reestablished our relationship--sorry--with them, we knew that there was a large population of people who were displaced by the fire. And so, part of the change in the scope was to really address and try to see if there were issues related specifically to fire survivors that had an impact on our larger homeless...our larger homeless population, and issues around that. And that was the primary reason for the change in scope, because of the circumstances of the fire, and the ongoing attempt to have people housed afterwards.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It seems that in the aftermath of the fire, we'd need a strategic plan more than ever, and the study is not necessarily doing anything to help our fire survivors, who continue to have trouble navigating the DCM process, the HIP process, the FEMA process. So, I...I just--you know, as the financial oversight for the County, I really feel that this \$240,000 was misspent, and an opportunity was wasted. I don't know if we can get the money back, but I...I don't think this was a good use of taxpayer funds. I think a lot more could have been done. You know, even if...if their recommendations are not in alignment with the Housing First Program, if...if they haven't assessed the way that the County gives out taxpayer monies to the grantees, and how that is working out, I think we...we missed a huge opportunity with this amount of money to actually facilitate positive change. And...and, you know, we're...we were behind the curve, and now we're even more behind the curve. Without actionable items, that makes a difference. And...and I don't even think that what we did was legal. If we're going to change the scope after the fact, we should have gone out to bid again.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Just for your information, the Cost of Government Commission report is number 2 in Granicus. We'll continue on with Committee Vice-Chair Johnson.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, for...Director Tsuhako. For my second round, can you provide a list in writing to this Committee of all HPO-approved entity...entities that can currently provide the homeless verification letters for shelters in the County, or is there only one, you don't even need to provide a list? Or I'm...that's where I want to clarify, Director.

MS. TSUHAKO: Member Johnson, I know that Family Life Center has a contract with the Homeless Programs Office. I do not know if any other agency has one, so that is...I...I cannot confirm if there are any more else.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, thank you for that.

MS. TSUHAKO: But I'm ha...I'm...I'm sorry, but I'm hap...I'm happy--if...if the Committee were to send a correspondence, I'm happy to confirm that with the Department of Human Services.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair. Point of order, Chair. Sorry. Can...can we pause Member Johnson's? But the May 9th or whatever letter does say, additionally, I did share with both Director Tsuhako and Maui Homeless Coordinator Naomi Crozier that HPO staff have spoken to the KHAKO shelter staff, and have gone over the requirements in the RFP with them, and explained the ability that they, as the contracted shelter provider, have to verify homeless status based on the information provided to them. So, it clearly says, you know, that information was provided to Director Tsuhako about Ka Hale A Ke Ola and Ms. Crozier in...in the email that Mr. Morishige just sent to me.

CHAIR SINENCI: Miss --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Which I have...I have sent to the Committee Staff both my correspondence, and the correspondence that Mr. Morishige forward to me.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry. Sorry, Mr. Johnson. I just wanted to provide that information.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Can we --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: It's pertinent. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- go ahead and restart --

MS. TSUHAKO: Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair, this is Lori. I thought Mr. Johnson's question was about confirming which agencies had the authority from the State, as contractors, to issue homeless verification. What was...did I misunderstand your question?

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: I just needed a list of all HPO-approved entities that can currently provide that homeless verification letter for the shelters. So...so, Committee Chair Sinenci, I think this would kind of clear up where I was heading with it. Can this body, this Committee, send a letter to HPO, and hear what they're going to say on--and can they give us a list of all HPO-approved entities that can currently provide the homeless verification...verification letter for shelters in the County? If we hear from them, and then we hear from the Department, I hope they align. That's really where I was going. And so...and if they don't, I'll--I mean, hey, we... . . .(laughing). . . Again, that...that report said, we all got to work together, everybody, you know, and if one State...if the State's not--I mean, come on, we got to be better. So, that's my--I know I'm on limited time, so, Director--and if you can just respond, that'd be great--in...in

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

writing, that'd be wonderful. And Chair Sinenci, if you...we could send that letter to the State, that would be wonderful. I want to move on to my next question in regards to the trauma-informed care training. Director Tsuhako, you said that the Councilmembers are invited. I...I was looking through the emails, I didn't seem to find it. Maybe it's under a different thing, but please send us an email. We'd love to go. Maybe we can send one of our...our team members. And then is--in regards to, you know, some of the outreach folks, Mo'i was telling me she didn't get an invitation to that. I think she would be ideal to go to that training. So, can we reach out, throw that net wide for Mo'i to be involved in that as well? And that's...that's my question. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Johnson. Director, just to clarify--Member Johnson--do you know where that training is going to be at the...

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes, Mr. Chair. The training will be at UH Maui. I believe the room is Kalama 103. It starts at 8:30 in the morning, and will go until 4:00 in the afternoon.

CHAIR SINENCI: This Wednesday? Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. Okay. We'll go on to Member Cook for your second round. No questions? Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, do you have a second round of questioning?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mm, I think I asked my last question, but I'm...I'm working on the spreadsheet right now, and then I can email it to --

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- all of you to...to...to have it all. Because I...I'd really like to...since the Department's already, you know, putting together some action items, and they have a timeline that I--having it all together so that we can refer back to it, and then we can, you know, see perspectively what the plans are to achieve some of these recommendations, I think, will be like super helpful for us as a Council, and for the community to be able to see.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. Thank you for that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. Mahalo. Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Director Tsuhako, for sticking with us today. I understand my colleagues' concern about the RFP, and \$240...\$240,000 does seem like a lot of money, but--and it is a lot of money, don't get

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

me wrong--but in the Appendix A, it does provide us a breakdown of what we spend as a County for 2025. So, in Food, Shelter, and Safety Grants, we spent \$1.3 million; Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, we spent \$1.4 million; Health and Human Services and Education, we...we spent 7.5, nearly \$7.6 million. So, we spend a lot of money every single year, attempting to address our unsheltered and provide the best service we can. And yet, every year, except in 2018, it seems to go up. So, how do we measure success? I don't think spending money is the best way to measure success. So, what are...what are we doing? Not necessarily just you, I know you're trying your best, but I mean all of us? If we're not...if we're trying to figure out how to work together--and I know it's difficult, in all honesty, because sometimes we hear hours and hours and hours of testimony, which I'm sure you feel the same, and everybody is telling us about 10 million different options, and everyone is telling us that their option is the only option that works. And yet, obviously, that's not the case. Everybody feels like they're doing their best, and I don't disagree. But after nearly 10, \$11 million worth of funding, we're not seeing at least too many positive impacts...or maybe we are, and it's not being discussed. So, I don't know where my question is going, but what are we doing? Like, how...how are we going to best spend millions of dollars to get the help we so desperately need?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember. If I...if I were to try and put a big-picture tent over this issue, it--to me, it boils down to, can we end homelessness for people who are unsheltered? And my answer is yes. And we can end someone's homelessness by housing them, and providing them support to be housed, and to remain housed. Will it solve the challenge of every single person who's living in unhoused conditions right now? Probably not. HUD has a way of defining that, and...and nobody that I've met over the past 20 years likes the term functional zero, but that's how HUD defines ending homelessness...which means every single person who's offered assistance and who turns it down is kind of like . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . parked over here, and we work on the other people who say they want to work on being housed. And not everybody agrees with that definition or the strategy in...in doing that. But I...I sincerely sit before you today, and I believe that we can end homelessness for people who are living unhoused right now. And that's what we're trying to do as a system. And not everybody agrees with that strategy. Some people have a different strategy. And I've...I've said this over the years, and that is, there is a place for charitable giving in our service to people who are unsheltered. There's a place for it. People need water. People need access to hygiene, they need food. And I don't begrudge anybody, any agency, who does that for people who are living in unsheltered conditions. But I often say that I wish that those people who are doing that charitable work could understand how we can all work together to get that unhoused person into housing and end their homelessness. And...and that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to get a larger understanding of the system because the...you're not going to house somebody without resources, and there are resources. We get money from HUD to house people who are chronically homeless. And unless you understand that, people are not going to move into that system to get the resources they need to not be unsheltered anymore. And I'll...I take responsibility for maybe not articulating that well enough, which might...which might cause friction among those who have different points of view about how best to

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

intervene. But the point is, I think we can, and we should be working toward ending homelessness for each of those people who are living in unsheltered conditions. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Director. I appreciate your thoughts. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: And your hard work.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member U‘u-Hodgins.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Chair?

CHAIR SINENCI: A follow-up question from Committee Vice Chair Johnson. Go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Chair, I'll be quick. I just have a quick point of information to answer Councilmember Paltin's question in the Comprehensive Houseless Plan. That was an alternate priority of mine a few years ago that Councilmember Kama picked up and ended--using as her main priority a few years ago, just to let you know what started this all. So...and this was the end result. . . .*(laughing)*. . . All right. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. For...for follow-up, Member Johnson, were you consulted when the comprehensive plan turned into a study, and did you approve that?

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Most definitely not. But again, remember, the way that system was, was we had alternative priorities. And if a Member wanted to pick up one of our alternatives, and that was Councilmember Kama who picked up that alternative. So, maybe she did, but I certainly did not.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Johnson. Members, any need for a third round of questions for Director Tsuhako? Okay. If not, Members, are there any objections to deferring this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TK, AL, and YLS).

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Staff, is there anything else before we adjourn the WASSP Committee meeting?

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, there is nothing else outstanding.

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CHAIR SINENCI: Again, we wanted to mahalo Director Tsuhako, Chief of Staff Lallo, and Ms. Crozier, and also Ms. Petros for coming for the time that she could participate this morning. We do have an afternoon meeting in the WAI Committee with Member Cook in the Chambers at 1:30. If not, the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, May 12th, is adjourned. Mahalo, Members. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 11:54 a.m.

wassp:min:250512:crp:lt

Transcribed by: Logan Tsuji

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

May 12, 2025

CERTIFICATION

I, Logan Tsuji, hereby certify that pages 1 through 47 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 11th day of June 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Logan Tsuji', is written over a horizontal line.

Logan Tsuji