

**MAUI COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES**

**MAY 27, 2025
9:00 AM**

Pursuant to §92-3.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the meeting was conducted as a remote meeting by interactive conference technology, via Microsoft Teams, <http://tinyurl.com/2p9zhjr2>.

In person testimony and viewing: Council Chamber, Kalana O Maui Building, 8th Floor, 200 S. High Street, Wailuku, Hawaii.

Video recording of meeting available at: www.mauicounty.legistar.com

TIME MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 9:02 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilmember	Pres.	Abs.	Exc.	Time(s) In/Out (during meeting)
CM Pro Tempore Tasha Kama	√			
Vice Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura	√			
CM Tamara Paltin	√			
CM Gabe Johnson	√			
CM Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	√			Arr. 9:08 a.m.
CM Tom Cook	√			
CM Nohelani U'u-Hodgins	√			
CM Shane Sinenci			√	
Chair Alice L. Lee	√			
TOTAL PRESENT	8		1	

Resolution No. 25-88, FD2 "ADOPTING THE REAL PROPERTY TAX RATES FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025"

No legislative action was taken.

TIME MEETING RECESSED: 9:28 a.m.

(Meeting recessed until June 3, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.)

TRANSCRIPTION

Council of the County of Maui on 2025-05-27 9:00 AM - Public Meeting

[GAVEL] >> The public meeting on the proposed Real Property Tax rates for the County of Maui effective July 1st, 2025, will now come to order. So if you wish, you could say Selamat Agee, in Malaysian means a peaceful and happy morning, as opposed to the Filipino version, which is Selamat Pagi. Ms. Clerk roll call. >> Thank you, Madam Chair, proceeding with roll call. Members participating from non-public locations should state who if anyone except minors is present with them as part of roll call. Council Member Pro Tempore Tasha Kama.\r\n\r\n>> Excused. >> Vice-Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura. >> Salammat -- what did you say, Pagi. Good morning. >> Good morning. >> Council Member Tamara Paltin? >> Aloha Kakahiaka, and Selamat Pagi Kakou.\r\n\r\n>> Council Member Gabe Johnson. >> Excused. >> Chair, I'm here. I'm here. >> Oh, you are? You are back? >> Yes.\r\n\r\n>> Welcome back. >> Thank you. Selamat Pagi, I think I did that right. Council Members, community members, there's no testifiers at the Lana'i District Office. And I'm alone on my side of the office. Thank you, Chair. >> Were you able to converse in Japanese?\r\n\r\nnon your trip? >> Oh, that is right, I haven't seen you guys since I'm back. It was so great. My Japanese is very rusty, but my love of Japanese food is not. I think I gained five pounds. >> Very good. Ms.\r\n\r\nClerk. >> Council Member Keani Rawlins-Fernandez? >> Aloha Kakahiaka There are currently no testifiers at the Moloka'i District Office. Mahalo, Chair. Happy to be home. >> Good. >> Council Member Tom Cook.\r\n\r\n>> Selamat Pagi. I am always wanting you to repeat it three times. You always rattle it off once. Aloha everybody, happy to be back in the Chambers and there's nobody currently in the Kihei regional office to testify, but we have people on standby. I look forward to the meeting, Chair. Thank you. >> Council Member Nohelani Uu-Hodgins?\r\n\r\n>> Aloha, Chair, Aloha everyone. I am in my personal vehicle by myself. >> Okay, anybody else? >> Council Member Shane Sinenci? >> Well, somebody saw him on, but we can always come back to him. >> Okay. And Council Chair Alice Lee.\r\n\r\n>> Selamat Pagi. >> Chair, there's currently seven members present, two Members excused a quorum is present to conduct the business of the Council. For the record, I'm Deputy County Clerk Richelle Thomson and present with us Legislative Division Staff Lauren Saldana, Dell Yoshida, Joyce Murashige and Arthur Suyama. And joining meeting from the Office of Council Services is Deputy Director Richelle Kawasaki and Legislative Attorney Pete Hirano and from the Department of Corporation Counsel is Corp. Counsel Kristina Toshikiyo. >> May I please request that everyone keep their microphones muted unless it's your turn to speak. As a reminder, testimony must pertain to items on the Agenda.\r\n\r\nWhen testifies please direct your remarks to the Council and not any individual Council Member or Member of the public. Each testifier will be allowed to speak up to three minutes on each item. For individuals wishing to testify on teams, please click the raise your hand button to be added to the testifier log. If you are calling in, please follow the phone prompts to be added to the log. Decorum shall be maintained at all times. Any person who behaves in a manner that disrupts, disturbs or impedes the orderly conduct of any Council Meeting can at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, or a majority of present Council Members, be ejected, or banned from Council meetings, or if participating remotely, muted or dropped from the meeting. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but not limited to heckling, shout, use of profanity, threatening or slanderous remarks made to any Member of the Council, Staff or general public.\r\n\r\nMs. Clerk, please proceed. >> Thank you, Madam

Chair. At this time, individuals may testify on resolution 25-88 FD 2 entitled, "adopting the real property tax rates for the County of Maui." Currently we have four testifiers signed up. First is Faye Taylor, followed by Royal House of Hawai'i. Ms. Taylor, please, go ahead. Chair, Faye Taylor.\r\n\r\n>> I'm Faye Taylor. Did you call me? My name is Faye Taylor and I own a one-bedroom -- I have owned a one-bedroom condo at Wailea Grand Champion villas for over a decade. And I'm here today to express my grave concern about the 2025 property tax assessments, which defy market reality, and impose an unfair burden on elderly owners such as myself. This year unit 86 and every other second floor one bedroom condo with an ocean view was assessed at \$1,766,500, a staggering \$800,000 higher than the actual sales price of unit 172, which is the only one-bedroom condo what has solid post Lahaina Fire. Current listings for similar units are all listed for \$800,000 less than their assessed values. There are systematic flaws in the assessment process, which need to be addressed.\r\n\r\nThe 25-day appeal window disadvantages elderly owners. 75% of the owners at the Grand Champion are Seniors, many of whom cannot -- they don't have the resources or the capacity to handle the appeal process. In the County's mass appraisal model appears to ignore the economic fallout from the Fire. It's not clear whether this is computer error, or whether this was a deliberate oversight. The Grand Champion villas allow short-term rentals, which have faced heightened scrutiny post-fire. Our assessments weaponize to offset County's revenue losses. I urge the Council to audit the methodology used for the 2025 assessments and correct assessments proactively.\r\n\r\nAdjustments must apply to all affected owners, including those who were unable to appeal. Mahalo for your urgent attention to this injustice. >> Thank you very much. Any questions, Members? Yes, Vice-Chair Sugimura. >> Thank you. Thank you for testifying.\r\n\r\nI wonder if you might want to reach out to the tax office, because they have people standing by to answer questions regarding the assessments and any questions like what you are having. >> I spoke to LeeAnn there, I was able to reach her once and she sent me a list of the five appraisals. I have emailed her and left voicemail messages, and they are not being returned. So >> So -- >> I have tried. It doesn't do -- I know other owners also have tried and they are just -- we're not getting any return calls. >> If you leave your contact information, then if I could get your contact information. >> Yes.\r\n\r\n>> Let me look into it. >> Member Cook. >> Thank you for coming and testifying today and bringing this to our attention. You said the five appraisals they sent you back as an example, was that from that? >> The problem the it's a pretty small complex and there were actually no sales -- well,, there was one-3-bedroom, but no sales of one and two bedrooms during the fiscal period, okay? So they used the appraisals from the prior year, which were all during that post-pandemic bubble, which everything was the highest, and they only used one bedroom and everything else was two bedroom and they used the one bedroom that sold for the highest price any one bedroom has sold for the Grand Champion, \$1,150,000 and that was it was a whole year gap when there were no sales and that was before -- well, before the Lahaina fires. The only one -- only one bedroom that has sold at the Grand Champion since then is 172, and that was just after the cut-off for the window, because it was in August, and they cut it off in July.\r\n\r\nSo they didn't look at that, and I don't know what they looked at. >> Excuse me. >> It's inexplicable. >> Let Mr. Cook finish. >> Further clarification, you finished the one-1 bedroom sold for \$1,100,000 what is appraised values, \$1,100,000, what are they appraising them at. >> I'm sure it's well over that, because all of the one bedrooms were well over.\r\n\r\nDepending upon whether you were a second-floor, or

ground floors were all assessed 5,000 less than the upstairs one and depending on whether they consider you having a partial ocean view, or whether they considered a golf -- they are all adjusted. My personal condo, it doesn't have an ocean view. And it wasn't assessed at the same rate, but it was assessed again almost \$800,000 more than it should have been. >> Thank you. >> My final clarifying question, is your Homeowners Association addressing this issue also, or is it any other individuals besides yourself? >> I'm not aware of the Homeowners Association addressing it. And when I looked, I haven't looked at all of the 180 there, but I was surprised that only a very small handful had appealed.\r\n\r\nI know the unit of 86, and he is a friend of mine. I told him to appeal. He is battling stage 4 colon cancer. So I know elderly owners have issues that other people, and most of the owners here are older, and it just it's not fair. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. >> When you can do is on your way out, make sure that your contact information, your address or phone number is with our Staff, and then one of the Council Members will be in touch with you.\r\n\r\n>> Thank you so much. Mahalo everyone. >> Thank you. May we have the next testifier, please. >> Chair, the next testifier is Royal House of Hawai'i, to be followed by Tom Croly. >> Aloha, this is the Royal House of Hawai'i. I'm testifying about the real properties aka -- I don't know how it's been manipulated and being changed into real properties, but the real properties are actually Royal Patent. Which are allodial titles from our papa Kamehameha 3. As a Native Hawaiian and Royal Patent heir where Hilton and Kihei stay, no one has any -- no one has had any discussion with us and any of the heirs, descendants of HAWA HAWA to the undivided lifetime estate on the entire Ahupua'a. How are any of these decisions being passed without letting any beneficiaries know of any Royal Patents which are allodial titles from the Mahele, very proven until today and forever more.\r\n\r\nHow are these decisions being made? We still haven't gotten contacted by Hume times we keep on asking, or telling you guys, because you are the runs to pass everything out, and pull up every single descendants of the Royal Patents which are the real properties of Hawai'i, and all of the properties of Hawai'i. And And yeah -- it's a war crime, if not. And we still haven't got a discussion with any of you guys, and yeah, stop -- please follow the laws. Again, because the Chiefs are not in government, and they are not allowed to make the decisions, and I have the paperwork on who can make the decisions in Hawai'i, if you guys need it. All the laws, if you guys need it, feel free to reach out, because I'm pretty sure you might not know it. I don't know, but yeah, there really needs to be something done, because Hawaiians is the most highest rates in everything. I see more hotels and more stuff for tourists than Hawaiians being arrested and traversing on their own land.\r\n\r\nYeah. And it is not right. It is really not right. Please call all of the descendants again and please follow that law. God bless and have a great day. >> Thank you. Any questions, Members?\r\n\r\nIf not, Ms. Clerk. >> Chair? >> Council Member Rawlins-Fernandez has a question. >> I'm sorry, Council Member Rawlins-Fernandez. >> Mahalo, Chair. For our testifier, Aloha.\r\n\r\nMahalo for your testimony. I'm sorry, did you share your contact information with us? If you did, I missed it. >> Oh, okay. I can resend that if anything. Do I emails posted on the website? >> Yes, Keani . Rawlins at MauiCounty.US.\r\n\r\n>> To note that Council Member Pro Tempore is present and the next testifier is Tom Croly, followed by Jonathan Helton, who is currently our last testifier. >> Mr. Croly, good morning. >> Aloha, Council and congratulations on finishing up the budget. I just wanted to tune into today to express my deep appreciation for the property tax rates that you set for the commercialized residential classification. That was unanimously agreed

to by all of you, and I do appreciate that, but I especially appreciate Council Member Cook bringing it on my behalf to your attention that all of us in that category are full-time residents living in our homes and the primary use of our homes is as our residence, just the same as the 27,900 other folks in the owner-occupied classification. The rates that you set do roughly double the property taxes that I would otherwise pay, if I didn't have a permit.\r\n\r\nAnd I'm fine with that. So I think that you have reestablished the fairness that was in place when that classification was first established 15 years ago. So again, I express my gratitude for hearing my pleas, and to giving me some type of a reduction in the rates that had been proposed. I also support all of the rates that you are about to pass. I do believe that there is some logic behind all of them, and that some people aren't going to be happy with that logic, but you have followed the path that makes sense. So I am in support of that. I just want to say with respect to the first testifier, Faye Taylor, she brings up an issue that is not relevant today to property tax rates, but that is something that is worth the Council taking a look at, and that is how we establish the assessments each year.\r\n\r\nEach year the assessments look back to the previous year and only one previous year to establish the assessments. And in some cases, as she pointed out, there's only one sale for Real Property Tax to look at, and make their judgment on it, in a particular subdivision and so forth. And that does make it difficult for Real Property Tax to select the right assessments in those areas. I believe that the County would be better served by using like a three-year rolling average, something like that would help get rid of these spikes that happen in Real Property Tax as Ms. Taylor pointed out that she saw a spike of more than 50% in just a single year. If you are using a rolling average over three years, you wouldn't see that as much. And next year, I think in general, you are going to see property tax assessments go down, because you know, sales have kind of cooled off, and what they are going to base it on what they went down.\r\n\r\n>> Three minutes. >> Again, not relevant to the property tax rates you are setting today, but might be relevant for the Council to take a look at some time later in the year. Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity. >> Thank you. Members, any questions? If not, thank you very much. Let the record show we have -- thank you, Tom.\r\n\r\nThat we have Pro Tem Kama online. Selamat Pagi, Pro Tem. >> Good morning, Chair, good morning members. It's good to see you all. >> Thank you, you too. Ms. Clerk.\r\n\r\n>> Chair, next testifier is Jonathan Helton, followed by Dave Jorgensen. >> Jonathan Helton, you are unmuted on our end. If you are online, joining by video, top right of your screen, there's a microphone icon, and you will need to click on it, so that you can unmute on your end. >> We can't hear him. That is the problem. >> We'll come back to you. Dave Jorgensen, please, go ahead and unmute on your end.\r\n\r\n>> Good morning. >> Good morning. >> It says my camera has been disabled. So I will proceed it seems to happen every time on teams. Good morning, Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Sugimura, Members of the Council. My name is Dave Jorgensen and here on behalf of the Arda Hawai'i that represents the time share industry in our state. I'm a registered lobbyist.\r\n\r\nI will be extremely brief today. I have testified a couple of times and provided you with a lot of the background, and the information on behalf of Arda Hawai'i, we just want to express our gratitude to all of the Council Members for the hard work performing extremely hard tasks in trying to strike a balance between the needs of the community, and the reasonable tax rates to be applied to the different categories. Arda Hawai'i is in full support of the proposed Amendments that are before you today. We feel that strikes a fair and equitable balance between needing to raise the taxes a bit, and

keeping it, again, fair and equitable between the different classes. So we're grateful for your hard work, and commend you for your commitment to making Maui as wonderful a place as it continues to be. Thank you. >> Thank you.\r\n\r\nQuestions? If not, thank you very much. Ms. Clerk. >> Chair, we'll return to testifier Jonathan Helton. You are unmuted on our side. >> Can you hear me now?\r\n\r\n>> Yes. >> Thank you. So my name is Jonathan Helton, and I represent the grassroot Institute of Hawai'i, full disclosure, I'm a registered lobbyist for grassroot. I sent in written comments on the Real Property Tax rates. Grassroots support the track that has been proposed that was slight lower the tax rate for hotels and time shares and a couple of other property tax classes. We understand that the Council has a need to raise revenue to cover the costs of projects. On the other hand, there's a concern that with a possible recession looming for the State of Hawai'i, as you hear it is projected that tourism arrivals could be done, further increasing the prices of visiting Hawai'i via higher property taxes does of course have effects on the local Maui economy.\r\n\r\nWe realize there's a trade-off there and we support what had a what has been proposed to slightly reduce the rates from earlier proposals. I'm happy to answer any questions that you have and thank you very much. >> Members, do you have any questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony. >> Chair, currently that is Mr. Helton was the last testifier signed up. So we'll give last call for any testimony on the Real Property Tax rates for the coming Fiscal Year.\r\n\r\nSeeing no one raising their hand in teams or make their way to the podium, Chair, 3, 2, 1, there's no one else to testify. >> This meeting will be in recess until the Council Meeting on June 3rd, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. Peter, any other items? >> No, Chair. Thank you. >> Ms. Clerk, any other items? >> No, Chair, thanks.\r\n\r\n>> This meeting is in recess. [GAVEL] Thank you everybody.