

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

April 9, 2026

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 10:01 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF: Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst
Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary
James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney
Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices:

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office

ADMIN.: Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel
Lesley Milner, Budget Director, Office of the Mayor
Cynthia Lallo, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture
Travis “Koa” Hewahewa, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture
Lauren Nelson, Food Access Coordinator, Department of Agriculture
Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, Grant Coordinator, Department of Agriculture
Derrick “Kai” Thielk, Agriculture Park Maintenance Specialist, Department of
Agriculture
Jade Rojas-Letisi, Economic Development Director, Office of the Mayor

OTHERS: Georgia Pinsky
Tirzah Rodgers
Cesar Gaxiola, Executive Director, J. Walter Cameron Center

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Sophie Sellers, Grow Some Good
‘Kruze Lani, student
Ezekiel Lani, student
Bobby Pahia, Kaialahui Foundation
Hanalei Colleado
Dr. Paige Okamoto
Keani Kapeliela-Bannister
Nikki Russell
Dr. Judy Aikawa
Charen Kepler, Ka Ipu Kukui
Hauanu Bernades
Travis Liggett
Lorrie Betsill
Jim Langford
Rob Bence
Jasee Law
Tehani Ka‘alekahi
Others (19)

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

**ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY
OF MAUI** (BILL 55 (2026), BILL 56 (2026), BILL 57 (2026), BILL 58
(2026), BILL 59 (2026), BILL 60 (2026), BILL 61 (2026), BILL 62
(2026), BILL 63 (2026), BILL 64 (2026), and RESOLUTION 26-63)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It is now 10:01, and welcome everybody. There’s a bunch of people in the gallery waiting to testify. Thank you for joining us. I’d like to also welcome those people who’ve been waiting for an hour thinking that we were starting at 9:00. This meeting was scheduled for 10:00. So, sorry for that inconvenience, but glad you’re still here. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura. I’m the Chair of this Committee, and I want to mention that this meeting is being conducted in accordance to the Sunshine Law. And Members...I’m going to welcome the Members. If there’s anybody with you in your room, please identify if there are any adults, minors do not need to be identified, in your workplace, vehicle, or wherever you’re sitting. So, at this time, I’d like to welcome...good morning, Vice-Chair Batangan.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha. And Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good morning, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Nobody else is here. I see people in the gallery. Hang on. Okay. So, online, we have Member Sinenci. Good morning, Member Sinenci.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair, fellow Members. I'm here at my home office. I'm here by myself. And there are no testifiers in Hāna.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Be safe, and welcome. Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka, mai Molokai Nui a Hina. I'm at my private residence alone. And there are currently no testifiers at the Molokai District Office. It is lightly drizzling. It just started again. There was rain until a little past midnight last night, a steady, nice flow, and we like that, that's nice, resulting in not too much runoff or raging rivers. So, that's the weather report for Molokai.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Welcome. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou, streaming live and direct from my kitchen table in Nāpili. I have with me one male adult named George Vierra and one minor canine who shall remain unnamed. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Chair Lee, good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning. I'm home alone, except with...my kitty, Jill Lee, is here with me, but nobody else. And I just want to let you know that in Wailuku, it's just overcast and constantly drizzling. And I'm sure you want to know that I'm getting very good at fixing leaks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: As long as I have duct tape, I'm terrific.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Member Johnson, how are you in Lānaʻi?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning. Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers here at the Lānaʻi District Office. I'm alone on my side of the office. And the weather report for Lānaʻi is a light drizzle, winds 10 to 15 mile per hour, give or take. And I'm trying to dry mamaki, but I can't dry it in this weather. It's just too moist. There's too much water in the air. So, I'm going to have to hold off on the mamaki drying for now. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ah, okay. Member Uʻu-Hodgins. *(pause)* Good morning. Can you hear us? Member Uʻu-Hodgins. Oh, she can't hear us. Okay. We'll reach out back to Member Uʻu-Hodgins. Thank you. Okay. So...oh, there you are. Member Uʻu-Hodgins. Good morning. *(pause)* Can't hear you.

COUNCILMEMBER UʻU-HODGINS: Oh, good morning.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, there.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: I couldn’t hear you earlier, but now I can hear you. Thank you. Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez and Tamara, for letting me know things are happening. I’m at my private residence. We have two adult males with me who will be leaving and leaving me with my youngest of a minor. But good morning, Chair. Thank you, everyone.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. So, our invited resource persons from the Administration include Budget Director, Director of Agriculture, Chief of Staff from the Mayor’s Office, Deputy Corp. Counsel Wrigglesworth. And please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Thank you, Members, for attending today’s BFED Committee meeting. And we have one item on the agenda today, which is BFED-1, Proposed Fiscal Year ’27 Budget for the County of Maui. And before I go into presentations from the office...from our agenda departments, Agriculture and the Office of the Mayor, I wanted to do a moment of silence. This morning, I learned that Michelle Santos, who has worked in the Mayor’s Office for many, many years, passed away suddenly. I didn’t know that she was ill. And what a great loss for the community. I always think of her as the person who would touch many generations in the Filipino community by putting on pageants. I hope she trained somebody to do her talent and ability to bring families together and train and develop, you know, future leaders in the Filipino community. So, if you would allow, please bow our heads and give a moment of silence for Michelle Santos.

. . .*(moment of silence)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Bless her, and we’ll...you know, we’ll hear more about Michelle. What a special lady. So, today, we have one item on the agenda. And I’m going to be taking comments from Department of Agriculture, who was here bright and early this morning, as well as from the Office of...of the Mayor. And then we’ll do testimony after. So, at this time, do we have Director Arce here from Department of Ag? Oh, there you are. And I think I saw Deputy Director Hewahewa here also. Is he also? Thank you. *(pause)*

MS. ARCE: Aloha kakahiaka. Thank you, Chair, for welcoming us. And aloha, Councilmembers and everyone in attendance. This morning with me is Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa. I want to acknowledge and thank our wonderful Staff in the County of Maui Department of Ag who are out in the agriculture communities, listening to stakeholders and advocating for their needs. They are joining...we...we have joining us as resources in subject-matter our team--Food Access Coordinator, Lauren Nelson; Grant Coordinator, Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos; Ag Conservation Liaison, Jeannine Rossa; Ag Advocate, Mya Hunter; and Ag Park Maintenance Specialist, Kai Thielk. We also want to acknowledge our farmers, ranchers, and small livestock producers, and partner agencies who continue to work alongside us and help guide the Department in serving and providing for our community. This morning, we will present on budget justifications for the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget for the Department of Agriculture, which is approaching four years in establishment. When compared to last year, Fiscal Year 2025, the Department of Agriculture’s proposed Fiscal Year ’27 budget reflects increases in two areas, the salaries and wages budget and operations

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budget. The 38.3 percent increase in the salaries and wages budget is due to collective bargaining and the Salary Commission approval for wage increases. The 10.5 percent increase in the operations budget account for anticipated expenditures related to additional personnel as we develop and expand the Department. To house our growing Staff, funding is needed for office rental space. The increased operations budget also accounts for expansion requests in line item grant funding for Maui Botanical Gardens, Maui Humane Society, and three new programs, which are Sust'āinable Molokai, and Maui Economic Development Board STEMworks Program, and Food is Medicine Program, which I will follow with an explanation of each of these programs. The added expansion grant request for a Sust'āinable Molokai Food Hub is to expand their keiki meal box program. The added expansion grant request for Maui Economic Development Board STEMworks Program will support their ag business and technology internship. This is the only program in Maui County connecting high school students with agribusinesses and on-farm experiences. The Maui Humane Society expansion grant request will support animal sheltering, animal enforcement, and spay-neuter program. Maui Nui Botanical Gardens project expand...is expanding their educational efforts as they are seeing an increase in visitors, both local and from the continent. Hawai'i is known as the extinction capital of the world, and it is vital to keep and build a collection of what little rare and endangered and cultural heritage plants Maui Nui Botanical Garden protects and cultivates. This work ties into their seed banking efforts that are also growing larger. With most people's awareness of being more self-sustainable and increasing one's food security, Maui Nui Botanical Garden also aspires to increase propagation of fruit trees on their campus, as well as for public sale. The operations budget increased in the contractual services, which reflects anticipated funding for food access initiatives that include the Lāna'i Farmers' Market, the Eat Local Maui Challenge, and the Kūpuna Feeding Program. The Department is proposing adding three expansion positions--one for Grant Management Program Specialist IV, one for Accountant III, and one for a Research Statistician I. These will all be full-time. The Grants Management Program Specialist IV position is essential in expanding the Department's grant management capacity and will perform a full range of planning and development activities. The duties and tasks will include conducting research studies and report recommendations for improving the Grants Program, develop grant programs and initiatives that are data-driven, act as a liaison with other private funders to increase funding capacity for agriculture producers, lead the grant writing activities for State, Federal, and private funding to increase funding opportunities to ag sector, and secure funding to support the departmental programs. The Grants Management Program Specialist III do not have those duties. Its duties are to identify and write the Federal or State grant opportunities, researches, identifies, and write for Federal or State grant opportunities, maintain a list of potential Federal or grant...Federal or State grant opportunities, work closely with Mayor's Office Grant Coordinator to look at funding needs of the Department of Agriculture, gathering information and supporting documents to support grant opportunities, ensure compliance with the State and County regulations, policies, guidelines, and requirements, and supports departments, agencies, farmers, ranchers, and community organizations through the grant process. The Accountant III will support the Grant Coordinator in the management of the department's grant subsidy funds and focus specifically on the lifecycle, compliance, and reporting of externally-funded grant projects. The Research Statistician I will design

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studies, collect and analyze complex data, and interpret findings to guide evidence-based decisions, identify agricultural trends, ensure data integrity, and collaborate with the departmental leaders to translate technical results to provide critical statistics of Maui County's agriculture community. There has been no effect or status change to the USDA strategic partnerships in the Pacific Islands area funding, which supports our Maui Nui Agriculture Conservation Liaison position. The Department receives a \$60,000 Revolving Fund for the Maui Humane Society to purchase a new fleet vehicle for their Humane Enforcement Program. To keep their fleet up to date and their officers operational, Maui Humane Society requests a new vehicle each year because of the extensive use in performing their job. The Department also has an Agriculture Parks Revolving Fund that will be used for agricultural paint...park maintenance and repairs as needed. The Budget Office will provide updated balances for all revolving funds. The Fiscal Year 2025 capital improvement projects include the booster pump replacement project at the Kula Ag Park, which will break ground before the end of this fiscal year. The bid for the 2.4 million-gallon reservoir and 12-inch mainline capital improvement projects also to be built at Kula Ag Park was recently awarded to Goodfellow Brothers Inc. Currently, the contract documents are being developed. There are no proposed changes to rates, fees, or assessments from the Department. With that, I would like to close our presentation and thank Chair Sugimura, Councilmembers, and agriculture producers, and people from the industry for their support. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Director. Well done. We will then hear from the Office of the Mayor. I see Cynthia Lallo, good morning. Chief of Staff.

MS. LALLO: Good morning, Chair. And good morning, Committee Members. Thank you very much for taking a moment this morning for Michelle.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, I miss her.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, it's a tough one. Office of the Mayor is really going to outline what changes we have budgeted for for FY '27. So, Budget Director Milner and I are going to tag team that just to keep things efficient. So, as you know, we have a few changes in Office of the Mayor. And let me get to my notes real quick. So, the major changes are the creation of the Grants Division. This is a pilot project in the Office of the Mayor as we have been talking about for quite some time. The Grants Division is being piloted in the Office of the Mayor for efficiency's sake. And as you know, because I know you've asked the questions, there are unfunded positions in the Department of Management because we are projecting that to transition over in FY '28. In addition to that, there's the new line item for the Small Grants Program that sits under the Grants Division. In addition to that, all of the residency area funds for our Councilmembers will be there. We also have grants for the Maui Fair and Makahiki season. The Makahiki season allocation is to focus the tourism management basically dollars under one effort. So, in cooperation with the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources to provide the framework for that, we have allocated funds to focus the full season and to support unapologetically Maui kinds of actions under tourism. Let's see. Do you want to talk about the...the...the salaries and the...the changes for the...

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, as we discussed with the Grants Division, the intent is for that to be staffed by five individuals, three of whom are already in the Office of the Mayor. So, the only increase there is on the annual salary increases. And we are anticipating adding two new positions...one to oversee the division and the other to assist in managing residency area funds specifically. So, salaries and wages in general went up 11.8 percent due in part to that, but also due to collective bargaining agreements, step increases. Operations went up 12.5 percent, again due to the grants that Chief of Staff was just discussing primarily. And equipment went up 6.9 percent because the Budget Office got a fancy new printer copier to make all these binders for all of you. Thank you, Chair. *(pause)*

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done? No?

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Chair. That concludes our opening statement.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. All right. So, Members, are we ready to pass out the...the general budget provisions? Okay. Can you speak in the mic?

MS. SZABO: Chair, we'd like a little time to assess the formatting of the report, and then --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay.

MS. SZABO: -- we can do that as you approach that item.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We'll talk about that then. We'll put that later on in the agenda. So, this time I'm going to take public testimony on any item in BFED-1, which is on the agenda. So, testifiers, there are many of you, thank you, welcome. Wanting to testify, provide testimony, please sign up with the Staff and...in the lobby, or you can join the meeting online via Teams link or call in by phone number noted on today's agenda. Testimony on the budget is not limited to the department...departments scheduled today. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComments link at mauicounty.us/agendas as well. Under the Sunshine Law, the Chair will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and as an item is called up. For individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button. If calling in, please follow the prompts via phone, star-5 to raise and lower your hand, star-6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier's 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. Staff will then call the name you've logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it's your time to testify. At that time, Staff will also enable your microphone and video. 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. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you're testifying beyond that, I will give you another 30 seconds to complete. Once you're done testifying or if you do not wish to testify, you can also view the meeting

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on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. We will do our best to take each person up in an orderly fashion. And Member Rawlins-Fernandez, I see you have your hand up. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. We're only taking testimony one time. So, if there are any changes to the general budget provisions from what was proposed by the Mayor, then maybe you can comment on those before we take public testimony, since this will be their only time to testify on it today.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, we haven't distributed the document to the Members. So...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: You can orally say it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wait, one...go ahead, Staff.

MS. SZABO: Chair, I'm not aware of any Member-proposed changes. This is just a comparison between last year's general budget provisions and the proposed budget provisions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: What's in your budget already. So...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. So, if there aren't any changes, then that can just be said. Like whatever is on Granicus now is what it is. And there aren't any changes that the Committee Chair proposed or received from the Committee Members.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Fine. That's great. So, that would be Granicus number? In case the Members wanted to look at it.

MR. KRUEGER: Chair, it's just the general budget provisions contained right now in Bill 55.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Bill 55. Okay. So, do we want to tell them what Bill 55 is online? Do you have the Granicus number?

MR. KRUEGER: Yes, Chair, it's...it's number 55 on Granicus, funny enough, and then it's also on the agenda.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Okay. Very good. Okay. Any questions, Members? Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, for the clarification. Thank you. Okay. So, at this time then, we will now call up testifiers wishing to testify. And our first testifier is...oh, go ahead.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. Our first testifier is Georgia Pinsky, to be followed by Tirzah Rodgers.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Pinsky?

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MS. MACDONALD: Ms. Pinsky, you are unmuted on our end. So, you may just have to unmute your camera or mic on your end. You should see two icons in the top right-hand corner, and if there's a line through them, you'll have to click on those.

. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MS. PINSKY: Thank you. That was a little bit confusing in the instructions. I thought you were going to turn my mic on. Apologies. Good morning.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning.

MS. PINSKY: Aloha, Committee Chair and...and Members of the Budget. I am tuning in this morning from Naholoku, Kaupō, as a resident of Shane's District. And my name is Georgia Pinsky. I'm the co-founder and now executive director of the Maui Farmer Support Network. I'm here this morning to express my deepest gratitude to the County of Maui for its ongoing support of our work. Thanks to your investment, Maui Farmer Support Network is now serving over 100 farmers in our Farmer Navigational Coaching Program. Food production remains a critical need across Hawai'i, post-wildfire, post-COVID, and now post-flood. Farmers are on the front lines of building a more resilient future for Maui County, and MFSN and the County of Maui is right there alongside them. We received our notice to proceed for Fiscal Year '26 funding in early February. Since that time, we have been able to revamp and relaunch mauifarmernetwork.org. The new website has significantly increased our efficiency in signing up for farmer coaching, tool library borrowing reservations, event RSVPs, and overall programming participation. I want to recognize our newest Staff member, Celestine Casserley, who recently joined us as operation manager for MFSN. We are currently in the implementation phase of our County of Maui EP&S landfill diversion grant, which is called Waste to Agricultural Wealth. We're providing at-cost wood chipping services, cardboard upcycling for sheet mulching, and a series of composting workshops. This has been especially impactful over the last few weeks in these post-flood conditions as our chipper service works hard. We worked six days in a row last week, helping farmers to clear debris and return to production. Later in April, MFSN will launch Show Up, Speak Up, and Be Heard, a program focused on amplifying women farmers' voices, building confidence, strengthening leadership, and increasing our collective ability to speak our truths about agriculture. This work helps to grow leaders in regenerative agriculture. This initiative is funded by the Women's Fund of Hawai'i. In addition, we have a proposal pending for the Community Resilience and Empowerment Workforce, or CREW. This initiative will provide free or low-cost labor support to our small and beginning farmers. We've identified that consistent, quality labor is one of the greatest barriers facing our small farmers. CREW is designed to grow the agricultural workforce, not just farm owners, but skilled workers, supporting both economic development and farm viability for Maui County. I want to revisit briefly my testimony from last year, where I spoke about Maui County's opportunity to be a leader and a model for resilience and sustainability. There are some simple, straightforward steps the County can take, including implementing graywater irrigation systems and increasing funding for water resource management. This includes funding for

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catchment tanks for those without meters, filtration systems, and gutter systems that retain and store water, rather than diverting it into sewer and septic. For our . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . high-elevation residents...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thirty seconds.

MS. PINSKY: Thirty seconds. For our high-elevation residents, this could also include support for air-to-water generation systems. Additionally, increasing water retention on the 'āina is critical work that we in Maui County can do better. By slowing the flow of water and allowing it time to percolate into the soil, we increase long-term agricultural capacity. Swales, berms, and small retention ponds should be more widely implemented, particularly by developers, as a simple way to support agriculture and reduce sediment runoff. As we look forward to Fiscal Year '27, I respectfully ask you to continue . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . this critical investment in the Maui Farmer Support Network. Thank you for your time, your support, and your continued vision.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ms. Pinsky. Anyone have questions for her? Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Can you share what your ask was for Fiscal Year '27, and if it's already included in the Mayor's budget or not?

MS. PINSKY: We are a line item in the Department of Ag budget, I believe at 140,000, same as Fiscal Year '26.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and that was the entirety of your ask?

MS. PINSKY: Yes, ma'am.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Yeah. So, the 140 is flat, and I think you just said that you're okay with that. Is that right? I...I wanted to clarify.

MS. PINSKY: Yes. Yes, we're --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oaky.

MS. PINSKY: -- extremely happy with that number. It represents about 50 percent of our annual budget.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's great, and it's good to hear that you're looking for other pots of money. Those green-collar jobs that you guys are creating and working on, that...that's so important to what you're doing. I really appreciate your testimony, Georgia, and thank you for all you do.

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MS. PINSKY: Thank you. Yeah, the space between high school and entrepreneurs is the space that agriculture really needs to focus on.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I'm glad to see one of the priorities that I've pushed forward and this body voted on is actually...you know, it's...it's working. So, thanks so much, Georgia, for all the hard work you do. Mahalo, Chair.

MS. PINSKY: Thank you, Councilmember.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any other questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Tirzah Rodgers, to be followed by Cesar Gaxiola. Apologies if I mispronounced your name.

MS. RODGERS: Aloha kakahiaka. My name's Tirzah Rodgers. I'm the Board Chair for Maui Farmer Support Network. First, I want to say mahalo, mahalo, mahalo nui loa for the support, your ongoing support of Maui farmers for the last six years. Our focus is to support Maui farmers, but we're...but our farmers are feeding Maui County, and in these times, this means that they feed our...sorry, this means that those they feed are less dependent on outside sources and the increased costs that those sources are subject to, making Maui community's dollars go further. Mahalo for the last six years of financial support, which has helped us to maintain our ED, Georgia Pinsky, who you just heard from, who has done an amazing job to support our farmers from...from coaching to creating a safety net for those who are looking to be Maui's food security system. And I say that in that she's created resources for these farmers that create mental help as well as tools, as well as resources, as well as helping them get their properties and maintaining and...and hanging onto these properties with the support that...that they've gotten through grants that Georgia has helped them work through. Maui's food...sorry, she's managed to organize self-care days and the Laulima days where farmers gather to help other farmers to complete tasks that really, truly groups can help change their...their mind on whether they can get through it. She's also helped us with the tackling of waste management, as she mentioned, with the Cardboard Redistribution Program. And then there's the things that don't end up on the line items that just by being there, she's created a community and...and a group of people who when they see each other on, you know, needing something, they can help each other directly by our groups and our WhatsApp . . . *(inaudible)*. . . And we also have a tool library for farmers who can't afford those larger tool items yet, and...and she creates a space for them and holds space for all of the things that we don't think about that farmers necessarily need. And so, I just wanted to take a minute to thank you all and...and to especially acknowledge the hard work that's going into all of this . . . *(laughing)*. . . support for these farmers.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. RODGERS: Thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Question from Member Johnson, then Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Real quick, you mentioned the tool library. I'm really interested. Can you tell me some examples of some of the tools? The chipper, I heard, was one.

MS. RODGERS: Yeah, we have a chipper. We have a soil sifter. We have chicken pluckers. We have...I mean, I think we have...I can't remember how many are on the...I didn't research it, sorry. We have an auger. We have a number of tools, egg incubators, and...I'm sorry, I don't have a list of them.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, that's wonderful. Yeah, that auger comes in real handy, I'm sure. So, great, that's good to hear.

MS. RODGERS: And we . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Great. Thank you. Thanks for answering my question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. RODGERS: For sure, yeah, it's currently being funded, but Georgia has maintained it for us, and...and we are looking for more funding for that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: She's a good librarian for the tool library. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I have a question about the cardboard redistribution. Do you have enough cardboard? Where do you get your cardboard from? I think there might be someone in the Chamber that shares your passion on cardboard collection.

MS. RODGERS: I would...I would not be the right person to ask. Do you mind if we redirect to Georgia Pinsky?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you're up. You're up.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I don't mind if it's okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You're up for a testimony. You're not familiar with the program? Is that what you're saying?

MS. RODGERS: I'm saying I'm not directly involved in it. I'm saying I'm the Board Chair --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

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MS. RODGERS: -- so I...I know about it, but I don't know --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay.

MS. RODGERS: -- I don't have the information in front of me, I apologize.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Members, do you mind if we ask Ms. Pinsky to answer that question? Yeah, fine. Please. Georgia.

MS. PINSKY: Thank you. So, we're primarily collaborating with Ace Hardwares [sic], Marmac in Maui Lani and Pukalani. That's going to get us about 75 percent of our way towards our poundage goal. We have a deadline of June 30th. We are looking for smaller secondary sources for pickup, and we are redistributing it directly to farmers for sheet mulching use.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and do the sources need to be in that general location? You're not going to like grab some from West Maui or...

MS. PINSKY: We would absolutely pick it up from West Maui and redistribute it to farmers on the West Side. So, we've discovered that the time or coordination that it takes people to go to the business and pick it up is actually their biggest obstacle. So, we got funded to do the drive time and the coordination, and we'll just drop it off on farm.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Great to know. Thank you so much.

MS. PINSKY: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. You know, I just turned off my computer. Can I have a minute recess? . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 10:37 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:40 a.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(gavel). . . Thank you, everybody, for letting me get back onto the meeting. That's why I always need my son to do my computer work. But hey, we're back at testimony. Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair, the next testifier is Cesar Gaxiola, to be followed by Sophie Sellers.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning, Cesar.

MR. GAXIOLA: Hola. Buenos dias, Committee Chair, Councilmembers. Beautiful day. My name is Cesar Gaxiola, and I am the Executive Director of the J. Walter Cameron Center. I...I did provide a written testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of the proposed \$180,000 budget line item to support planning and

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development efforts for the Cameron Center West. For more than 54 years, the Cameron Center has served as Maui trusted nonprofit hub, currently home to 26 resident agencies. Many organizations have started at the Cameron Center and later graduated into their own facilities across the County. An example, we had the Maui Arts and Cultural Center. They were with us for two years. Imua, Easter Seals, Lokahi Pacific, and many more, strengthening Maui's nonprofit network and expanding services island-wide. West Maui faces a growing challenge. There are more than 50 nonprofit agencies currently on the waiting list actively seeking office and program space so they can be closer to the communities they already serve. Families in West Maui should not have to travel long distances to access essential services. These requested \$180,000 is not for construction. It's for our responsible planning and development work, including feasibility, community nonprofit coordination, infrastructure, preliminary design, preparing for the project for future capital investment. Cameron Center West ambition as collaborative service hub. The expanded access reduces travel and it strengthens nonprofit partnerships while ensuring public funds are used carefully and effectively. I respectfully ask the Council to support and retain the \$180,000 line item for the Cameron Center. So, mahalo, and thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much for testifying. Any questions for Mr. Gaxiola? Seen none. Thank you.

MR. GAXIOLA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for the good work that you do for our community. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Sophie Sellers, to be followed by Bobby Pahia.

MS. SELLERS: Hi. Good morning, everyone. My name is Sophie Sellers. I am the Special Projects and Operations Coordinator for Grow Some Good. Mahalo for the opportunity to be here with you today and for your continued support of our programs. Grow Some Good is dedicated to strengthening our local food system through agricultural education, community-based food production, and increased access to nutritious, locally-grown food. Our work is centered around three core programs with many more small programs. First, our Farm to School Program, where we provide direct on-campus support at schools across Maui. This includes a Garden Coordinator that's on our Staff, curriculum, materials, and technical assistance. That Garden Coordinator not only teaches the kids, but also maintains the garden and helps other educators within the school integrate agriculture into their lessons. Through this program, students gain hands-on experience growing and preparing food while schools build sustainable garden programs that are integrated into everyday learning. Our second program is our Kumu Mea Kanu kits, which expand access beyond schools with established gardens. Not all of our schools here on Maui have the budget for a garden. This program allows for any teacher that requests to request a garden kit for their students. Last year, we distributed over 3,400 kits to these classrooms across Maui. Each kit includes slips or seeds for every student, along with growing material and video curriculum, as well as written curriculum. This allows for students to grow the...grow food at school, or they can take them home and grow with their families. This extends

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the learning into their households. Once the plant is grown in the classroom, it's also taken home or redistributed to local farms. Our third program is Nā Māla Kaiāulu, our 2.5-acre regenerative community farm located in Wailuku next to the YMCA. This is located on County land in partnership with the YMCA and Parks and Rec. This site serves as a production farm, an outdoor classroom, and a developing resiliency hub. We're establishing a long-term agroforestry system that will increase local food production, and already is, while restoring soil health and reducing fire risk. This is also a site that takes STEMwork interns, so when we talk about STEM, we are taking interns at our site. Across all programs, our impact is measurable. This past year, we served over 9,000 students...5,000 of those students were Title I students. We harvested over 26,000 pounds of food, which was redistributed to the community at no cost. We planted more than 1,500 trees and shrubs, and many more small plants on our farm, as well as in our schools. And we engaged nearly 3,000 volunteer hours this year alone. Financially, Grow Some Good operates as a stable and efficient organization, with approximately 72 [sic] of all of our expenses going directly to program services. County funding represents a small portion of our budget at 17 percent, with the remainder . . .(timer sounds). . . supported through grants, contributions, and program service revenue. This ensures that public funding is primarily supporting on-the-ground implementation. Continued County support allows us to maintain work across multiple sites and provide stability when we don't always have other grants coming in. We would ask for continued support so we can continue building a model for regenerative community-based food production here on Maui. Mahalo for your time, your partnership, and your commitment to strengthening Maui's food system.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. So, the amount that you're in the Mayor's budget is for the 150,000, you said?

MS. SELLERS: Yes, it is.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And under Grow Some Good, right?

MS. SELLERS: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, that's what I see. Thank you.

MS. SELLERS: Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very interesting. And you're that...you're that farm that's right next to the YMCA and Keōpūolani Park?

MS. SELLERS: Yeah. Definitely come visit us. We are open whenever the Y is open, but come when it's staffed, which is Monday through Thursday 9:00 to 2:00, and we do have volunteer days once a month on the second Tuesday of every month, or come harvest on Wednesdays.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Put us to work.

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MS. SELLERS: Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. Oh, one moment. I didn't see. Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, no, not for the testifier, for you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay. Oh, it's for me --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Not for the testifier.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- not you. Sorry. Thank you. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony, though.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, we have two students signed on, number 15.
Would it be possible...they're waiting to go to class.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, definitely.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, there's...there would be like nine testifiers
before them. Would we be able to --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Expedite.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- take them up so that --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- they can...we can release them to go back to
class?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I know that's usually what we do, our, you know,
general policy, and hopefully there aren't any objections from folks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No objections. All right. Can you call them up? Do you see them?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, that's Kruze Lani.

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MR. K. LANI: Aloha. Thank you. Aloha, Chair and Members of the BFED Committee. My name is Kruze Lani, and I am a student here at Molokai High School. I'm the current President of our Future Farmers of America chapter, otherwise known as the FFA. I'm involved in 4-H and am beginning my own efforts in agriculture and small business through STEM. Today, I am testifying in support of Maui County Department of Agriculture's FY '27 budget. As a youth growing up on Molokai, agriculture is not just something we learn about. It is a part of our daily life, our culture, and future. Through FFA and 4-H, I am learning leadership, responsibility, and how to be a part of the next generation of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. One of the issues I am most especially passionate about is protecting our island's agriculture from threats like the coconut rhinoceros beetle. You know, it is a deadly threat to our local economy and food system. So, if we don't take action to invest in our agriculture now, we are risking...we're taking a big risk toward important parts of our food system and our local economy. I am also beginning to understand how difficult it can be to start in agriculture. Access to land, resources, funding, and support programs make a big...big difference in youth people like me who are trying to get started. The Department of Agriculture's programs, especially those that support farmers, provide grants, improve infrastructure, and invest in education, helping to create opportunities for students like me to continue in agriculture rather than leaving it behind. Supporting this budget would mean that you are investing in youth who want to farm and build businesses. You're protecting our local food systems, strengthening Molokai's agriculture future, and creating real pathways for students to stay and succeed in our community. That's the biggest one. I respectfully ask that you support the Department of Agriculture's proposed budget so that youth like me have the opportunity to continue learning, growing, and contributing to the agriculture in our beautiful Maui County. Mahalo for your time and supporting agriculture and the youth in our community. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, is your hand up or he...standby for a question from Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha, Mr. Lani. Mahalo for your testimony. Do you also have another student with you?

MR. K. LANI: Yeah, I have my...my brother. So, he's going to...yeah, he'll use this computer.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

MR. E. LANI: Aloha, Chair and Committee Members. My name is Ezekiel Lani, and I am a ninth grade student at Molokai High School. I am part of FFA and 4-H. In fall 2025, I was selected for a STEM internship through Maui Economic Development Board. I work at local egg farm...I worked at a local egg farm in Ho'olehua, close to my school. This experience helped me learn responsibility, work skills, and more about agriculture. It also showed me that there are opportunities for students like me here on Molokai. I was hoping to do the internship again, but there was not enough funding. I...I ask that

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you continue to support programs like this because they help students learn...learn, grow, and stay involved in agriculture. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much for participating.

MR. E. LANI: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Have a great day.

MR. E. LANI: Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hey, Lani boys.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Cute. Yeah, cheers. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair, the next testifier is Bobby Pahia, to be followed by Hanalei Colleado.

MR. PAHIA: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair Sugimura and Councilmembers. My name is Bobby Pahia. I am the owner of Hawai'i Taro Farm, also an advisor to the Kaialahui Foundation. Listening to the budget that was proposed by Director Arce, I understand the need for the building more...building the capacity of the Department, because I know that we got to create the structure so that we can carry on business to help address food security. Before I go on, I want to just applaud the...the efforts of Maui County Council regards to addressing food security. And what I mean by that is addressing and supporting the Maui County Department of Agriculture. You know, obviously, we lack the political will in our State to support addressing food security. However, Maui County has taken the lead in not doubling, but tripling the investment in...into addressing food security in agriculture. So, I applaud you for that. However, there is much more that needs to be done. We have...8 percent of what we consume in Hawai'i is produced by our local growers over here, okay? Ninety percent or greater is brought in. So, it's very obvious that we are in a very insecure...insecure position for food. I mean, all it takes is a terrorist activity, dock strike, a pandemic, and we'll all be in a situation where we have, they say, two weeks food supply. I just want to encourage the Councilmembers to continue to support the efforts of the Department of Agriculture, because what we're doing is we're...we're laying a foundation for the rest of the counties. Maui County is leading the way. And I got to say that our Department of Agriculture, boots on the ground here, has definitely helped us in a greater measure...I'll just say in a greater measure. As we all know, State agencies and departments, a lot of them lack the capacity to address our outer island issues, hence the Maui County Department of Agriculture. So, on that note, I agree with increasing funding for...to build the capacity in the Department of Agriculture. However, I do want to state this. The bottom line is, we got to grow food. That's the bottom line. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Thirty seconds. So, on that note, we got to grow more food. So, I want to advocate right

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now for this...this Grants Program. You know, our farmers got to go through this reimbursement program. And I tell you what, agriculture is tough. Margins of profits are slim. Cost of production is high. We don't need reimbursement programs. We need programs like the MEO, how they conduct their microgrant programs. That's what we need in the Department of Agriculture. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And that's why I'm here to advocate for that. And please take this to heart, Councilmembers. Our farmers, they don't have the kind of money for the investments they need to pick up equipment, and they don't have the kind of money upfront in a reimbursement program. Mahalo nui.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, sir, for...well, for coming, your testimony, your passion, and your advocacy. This...the flooding that we've recently had in South Maui, we have a tremendous amount of topsoil that has been cleaned up at the Public Works. Is there a place where you have...is there a place where you folks could put it? I'm going to talk to Ag and talk to Public Works, but they're stockpiling it. Personally, when I've walked and seen what it is, it's...it looks like really ono soil. There's a lot of cinders from the top of the mountain that shouldn't just be used for fill and shouldn't just be thrown away.

MR. PAHIA: Definitely. Fortunately, you know, I have a 350-acre farm, and Pete Sullivan, when they have to get rid of soil, Keoni Gomes, you know, they call me up, and I have a place to put it, but I'm sure other farmers can use that topsoil because that's all good soil. So, I hope that answers your question, Tom.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, it does. I guess, mostly, too, I'm asking besides you, since you're really plugged into the ag community, if you could do that...let other farmers know it's available and try to get it spread around. I'd like to see it...when people are transporting it, if it could be dumped here, dumped there, dumped there, instead of having to transport it, it's saving money. Thank you, sir.

MR. PAHIA: You're welcome. And definitely, social media is a strong tool. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any more questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The next testifier is Hanalei Colleado, to be followed by Dr. Paige Okamoto.

MR. COLLEADO: Aloha mai kākou. Wau o Hanalei Colleado. I have a...I'm the owner of Ho'omana Farms, LLC, aka Ho'oili (*phonetic*) Farms. I'm a hog farmer. I do my business on leased land through Kaialahui Foundation. I'm also one of the Councils on Kaialahui. We need to support ag big time. I mean, we suffering. Right now, my business, I had to size my business down, hog farming, because of the bottleneck of the slaughter facilities. The slaughterhouse cannot...they don't have the capacity to move my product into the local market because it has to be USDA certified in order to do that. So, I had to with my...not of a choice of my own, I had to do it, is downsize. So, basically, I liquidated. I was running 1,000 hog operation, and I had to size it down to now...I'm

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probably under 100 hogs right now because I can't feed them because I can't make money to move them. So, we need advocacy, and that's why the Department of Ag is in, and I think it's a laugh to see how much money is put towards agriculture, because out of all money we get, and all the talk about sustainability and agriculture and stuff like that, and the percentage that is given is laughable. It's almost mocking guys like myself who passionate, and we doing all that we can to feed our community, to sustain the livelihood of all, to make it sustainable so we don't have to be...I mean, I was spending big dollars to bring in feed from outside of the island because there's just nothing here, and I...I...I depleted everything I possibly could. So, downsizing my operation, and I'm going to make one difference because we're going to make the feed over here. We get everything over here to do it, we just need the support so that we can get the thing done. And I, as a farmer, bringing on younger guys and trying to duplicate myself. They're already doing the farming, but not at the scale that I'm at. I got a lot to offer. So, I give them land, I give them materials, tell them, show me what you got, and let them do whatever they do, and then just kind of coach them along. I no want gentleman farmers that just there for a couple hogs for feed their family. I like guys that going to be producers like myself, where we make volume, and we can move all of that, and we can somehow later on in the future take away all of that that is coming into these big chain markets because it's drowning guys like ourself out because it costs a whole lot of more money than what they can get them someplace else with doing that size volume. We're wanting to kick this thing off the ground and do volume, but it takes time. It takes money. We doing everything we possibly can. So, the importance of you guys supporting financially and however way the money is directed to help guys like myself and the lesser guys to...to come up to me and pass me. That's the whole idea is outdo me. There's no competition here amongst the farmers that I'm raising, young farmers. When they in their 30s and their 40s, I wish I had the knowledge . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . I had back then that would bring them up further the chain, and then we're not going to have to suffer and be dictated to on what comes into the island. To me, there's control, and I don't like that kind of control. So, we got to solve it ourself, but with your guys' support and with the money and with the Department of Ag, I think we can do that. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Mr. Johnson? Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Colleado, for your testimony. I...I do have a clarifying question, but let me first give you a shout out. During COVID, this...this farmer and his farm gave so much to the community, and I really remember those days, and I really appreciate you for supporting the community during COVID. I'll never forget it. Okay. My question to you, Mr. Colleado, is you mentioned the bottleneck of slaughterhouses. You know, there are...on Lānaʻi, we have a mobile slaughterhouse. Would you support a mobile slaughterhouse, maybe in the Department of Ag or maybe in a nonprofit? We...I'm just asking. Just like the way we do the tool library, is that something that you think could help your business with a mobile slaughterhouse?

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MR. COLLEADO: Yes. So, Kaialahui Foundation, which Bobby Pahia, as well as myself, is a part of, we've done the legwork. We went to Friesla, we visited all of those, you know, modular units, as well as the mobile slaughter --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MR. COLLEADO: -- units to get numbers, to see what it'll take to get this and that done. And instead of pushing that agenda on somebody else, we trying to do it ourself, because nobody's going to...seems to be jumping on the bandwagon fast enough, at least for our operation and the way we're thinking and the capacity that is needed to meet that demand islandwide. It is a model, Hawai'i Taro Farms is a model for the State...the County is using for the rest of the State, and I believe that that's very important. So, yes, we do need that, we can use that, and I'm in full support of that, but it still takes money to do that, and we need to get that --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Most definitely.

MR. COLLEADO: -- in place, and we need to get infrastructure in place even before we consider purchasing these units, which is like \$6 million, which does everything. You know, it's like 5...58-foot units, the modular units, and then, of course, you got the mobile, which I believe you're speaking to, so that would very much so help the cause. And then one of the things we did during the fires and the pandemic is that I said, you know what? I cannot wait for the slaughterhouse to go feed our people because they can't do it, I just going do 'em, and I going give 'em away, no need to pay for 'em. So, brought in the hunters, brought in the butchers, friends of mine, and we did it...we bagged it, and we provided for all of the hubs for redistribution for free, because I believe that's what I was --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's right.

MR. COLLEADO: -- brought up to do in this space and time. I didn't know that at the time, but when it happened, it was like a no-brainer. The...the lāhui having to eat was more important to me than me trying to keep my business afloat. It was all in at that time, and I'm still all in, and I'm paying for it, but that's okay. I...if I got to be the example for the younger generation to...you know, to stop that high-level building of a farming thing just to address the basic stuff so that it can continue without crumbling, then I think I've served my purpose, and that's the reason why I here testify.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Well, you're singing my song, and thanks for clarifying. Thank you, Chair.

MR. COLLEADO: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We have one more question for you from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Similar question. So, you guys are making your own modular slaughterhouse, and then also creating your own feed?

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MR. COLLEADO: We're not making our own slaughterhouse, we just doing the legwork to find out what it'll take to do it. As far as the feed, that's my vision, because I know as a farmer, that's a make or break right there. You can't take care of that, you can't make it. And...and I...I am a firm believer about you are what you eat, but really, there's another level to that. You are what they eat. So, that's the reason why I need to make my own food, because there's Frankenstein stuff across the nation and across the world that is making our animals sterile, that it cannot reproduce.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, on the slaughter...

MR. COLLEADO: Excuse me?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: On the slaughter...on the slaughterhouse part, you're just doing the research into modular slaughterhouse, but you haven't...there's no solution at this time for more slaughterhouses?

MR. COLLEADO: Well, money is the issue. That's the bottom line. We can do all the legwork we like. We know numbers, we get all of the...what needs to be done, ducks in a row, stuff like that. And that's where we need advocacy, and that's where we need guys like the Department of Ag to go to bat for guys like us. Otherwise, hopefully we can depend on some privatized money or wherever that going to come from. But we...we...we...it's a...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What dollar amount are...has your research said?

MR. COLLEADO: Well, just the modular units alone is a \$6 million purchase.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

MR. COLLEADO: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 760. 760 for the mobile...

MR. COLLEADO: Yes, 760 for the mobile --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And 6 for the modular.

MR. COLLEADO: -- and 6 for the modular. That's...yeah, I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 760,000 for the mobile and 6 million for the modular.

MR. COLLEADO: That's correct, and that's not even including the infrastructure needed to take care of the waste management, where it's going to be placed...and all of that other stuff that comes along with it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And so, only get DeCoite now?

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MR. COLLEADO: DeCoite is only cattle, not hogs. You get Nakasone, which is --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No more...

MR. COLLEADO: -- the only hog facility certified, and he's been talking about going out for a very long time. He tired already, and he's been brought up in a different generation, doesn't look promising, basically telling the hog farmers, why are you guys raising pigs? Because cannot move them, because he cannot process it. He doesn't have the capacity to. So, new generation like myself, Johnny-come-lately kind of guys see differently, and now we're trying to breed them all into our community. We're trying to breed all of the skills that is needed for herdsmen so that they can take them to another level beyond where I'm at right now as far as how to farm in this natural farming way. The way I farm is on mulch. The hogs live on four feet of mulch, but I also pasture-raise, and that is beneficial for the soil, because we grow soil. Anything after the soil is a byproduct. You get the veggies and all that kind of stuff, and the hogs play a very big role in rotational. Chickens and all da kine --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Would it --

MR. COLLEADO: -- mass production --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- would it...

MR. COLLEADO: -- stuff, we got to do that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, yeah. Would it be possible for a new entity to take over for Nakasone if they want to get out?

MR. COLLEADO: I've offered to purchase his operation, and no. It's a family thing, and whatever they're...they're wanting to...you know, whatever thing they get going on with their 'ohana...I have offered to purchase it. And, you know, grandfather clause or . . . *(inaudible)*. . . no. The answer is no. So, we cannot wait around. We got to go do what we got to do. So, we're looking at all options --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Got it.

MR. COLLEADO: -- and I think Hawai'i Taro Farms has a great place. We central, we one of the biggest ones that represent Central, aside from Mahi Pono, which is not even Hawai'i, they Canadian operation. So, I think it's a big --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Got it.

MR. COLLEADO: -- deal when you get one vision in place. We just need the money, the support, because we get the passion, and we're already dealing with the future in breeding guys, at least I am. I'm duplicating myself --

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. COLLEADO: -- I'm breeding them into the community.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any more questions?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hello.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I think Chair Lee has a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I didn't see you. Hi, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. For the testifier, thank you for your great testimony. Just wondering, you talk about increasing production, increasing processing. What about increasing your markets?

MR. COLLEADO: How to increase the market when you can't get the slaughtering issue, getting the product into the markets? My struggle is feeding them, keeping my livestock alive while I'm trying to work. Well, you know, Bobby Pahia, I work with him. He's the visionary. He went breed me into the picture, so it's like I'm in full support of the vision of Kaialahui, nonprofit, Hawai'i Taro Farms, for-profit, and of course, my own, Ho'oli Farms, aka Ho'omana Farms. And we're all on the same path to make it easier for the next generation. So, did I answer the question?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, no, I was just wondering if there's...if we have a market locally, or who would you sell all of this?

MR. COLLEADO: I was providing...yes. Yeah. So, I had...I was the supplier for Old Lahaina Luau for a number of years. They take one a day, and that's what, actually, when I first started, I started off with 2 hogs, then 12, then puka 1,000, and I had their...them as the market. I was making my money that way to reinvest that back into the community. So, basically, all that money I went make all went back to just keep me growing. And then when the pandemic happened, that's when everything went kind of like go away, and I knew it, then the fires went happen. And that's how, I went pule, and Akua says, if you can feed 'em, feed 'em. So, I fed the community that.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MR. COLLEADO: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you very much. Thanks.

MR. COLLEADO: All right.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any more questions, Members? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Dr. Paige Okamoto, to be followed by Keani Kapeliela-Bannister. Apologies if I mispronounced your name.

MS. OKAMOTO: Aloha. Good morning.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning.

MS. OKAMOTO: Good morning, Chair Sugimura and Councilmembers. My name is Paige Okamoto, and I am a veterinarian at the Maui Humane Society. I'm here today to advocate for our animals and the residents who love them by requesting increased funding for spay and neuter and veterinary care for the Fiscal Year of 2027 Budget. Every day, I see the faces behind the statistics. I see families who want to do the right thing, but are forced to choose between groceries and a vet bill. Currently, the Maui Humane Society is the only provider of affordable alteration surgeries on this island. We are the safety net, but that net is being stretched to its breaking point. While the County generously covers about a third of these costs, the Maui Humane Society and our private donors have been carrying the other two-thirds. In a post-wildfire economy, the model is no longer sustainable. We must address the hidden consequences of the wildfire response. The temporary pause and routine services wasn't just a calendar delay, it was a biological green light. We are now seeing the backlog in the form of increased community cat populations and a surge in unplanned litters. If you tried to book an appointment with us lately, you know the demand is staggering. We aren't just looking to keep up, we are fighting to prevent a public health and an animal welfare crisis that will be far more expensive to fix three years from now if we don't act today. Increasing in spay and neuter is the most fiscally responsible move this Council can make. Preventative care is significantly cheaper than the alternative...an overwhelmed shelter system, increased stray-related public safety calls, and the spread of disease. We have already expanded our team's hours and availability. We have the surgical supplies, we have the facility, and we have the skilled talent. What we need is a budgetary partnership to match the scale of the need. We are asking for this increase not just for the animals, but for the people of Maui County who rely on us to keep the community safe and their pets healthy. Let's invest in prevention now so we aren't paying for a crisis later. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Thank you for your time and for your continued support of the Maui Humane Society.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. I see in the budget that under this department for Spay and Neuter Program is \$255,000.

MS. OKAMOTO: That's correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: In the budget.

MS. OKAMOTO: That is an increase of 8 percent from the Mayor's budget.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. OKAMOTO: That provides for 2,500 spay and neuter surgeries costing about \$102 per surgery.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. All right. Any more questions, Members? Member Paltin has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you...is it Dr. Okamoto?

MS. OKAMOTO: Yes, ma'am.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Was the increase that Chair Sugimura said what you were asking about because you said you wanted an increase or did you have a different specific number in mind?

MS. OKAMOTO: That was the increase we were asking for, but I also will defer that question to our CEO, Nikki. She has more information on that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then do you know that if the monies for this year is being released timely enough to make a difference? It seemed like a lot of the Humane Society money has yet to be released.

MS. OKAMOTO: I do not know the answer to that question. I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Chair Lee? One moment.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hi, Ms. Okamoto. I was wondering the \$120 [sic] for spay or neuter, what does that include?

MS. OKAMOTO: That includes the supplies that we need for surgery as well as the support staff and veterinarians for their hourly wages.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, okay.

MS. OKAMOTO: And that includes...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I just wondered, because I just had my...my kitten go through that surgery and that cost \$854.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, I just want to let the public know that, you know, by going to your...to your place and for that...for that service, that's very reasonable. Of course, I'm not sure that I would have gone myself because I'm so scared with...you know, when it comes to operations for my children. So, anyway.

MS. OKAMOTO: Understandable.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: But thank you, and...and we certainly support everything that you do. Thank you.

MS. OKAMOTO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. No further questions. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Keani Kapeliela-Bannister--apologies--to be followed by Nikki Russell.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: Aloha mai kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: Thank you. Your pronunciation was great. Aloha, Chair Sugimura and Members of the Council. My name is Keani Kapeliela-Bannister, and as a Canine Animal Care Manager at Maui Humane Society, my heart is split between two islands. I am here today to give a voice to the dogs of Molokai and the wonderful community that cares for them. First, mahalo for the partnership that allowed us to establish a footprint on Molokai. Because of your support, we now have humane holding kennels, a dedicated office, and most importantly, a way to keep families and pets together. We are no longer working from a distance. We are on the ground. However, being on the ground has revealed a reality that no spreadsheet could have ever predicted. The need on Molokai is far more urgent than we ever anticipated. In just six months, we have responded to 151 calls for help, and we've taken in nearly 100 dogs. To put that into perspective, we have found ourselves caring for...for 30 dogs at a time in a space designated for a very small fraction of that number. When you are over capacity in a temporary facility, the stress levels for the animals rise, the risk of diseases rise, and the workload for our dedicated staff becomes nearly impossible to manage. This puts the welfare of our Molokai dogs and team members at risk. These dogs are incredible. They are resilient, loyal, and as our Mayor Bissen can personally attest after adopting one of our Molokai puppies, they are a vital part of our 'ohana. Molokai deserves equitable care and support, and we continue to advocate until its community has the resources it needs and deserves. But right now, many of the dogs have to be flown to Maui just for basic care, spay-neuter, microchipping, and medical emergencies. This isn't a logistical challenge...oh, this isn't a logistical challenge, it is a sign that Molokai is currently underserved. The community's deep love for their animals is there, but the infrastructure is not. We are at a crossroads. We have data now, and it tells us that we cannot continue with temporary solutions for a permanent need. We

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are asking for your collaboration to build a sustainable, fully-resourced system on Molokai. Mahalo for your time, your compassion, and being a part of our advocacy.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. In the budget, I see \$372,000.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: That is correct, and that would be a 55 percent increase.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions for the testifier? Oh, Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. Mahalo, Keani, for your testimony this morning. You mentioned you guys do have veterinary services on the island.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: On the Island of Molokai, we do not have permanent veterinary services on the island.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: You have the traveling that...

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: We have made...we have gone the...the extra mile to make those travel...travels happen, whether it's veterinary services go to Molokai or sending the animals to us on Maui.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Is that Krysta with Infinity Vet Services?

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: She is not a part of the work that Maui Humane Society does with us on Molokai.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh. Oh, okay. Thank you for that.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. KAPELIELA-BANNISTER: Mahalo, everyone.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Nikki Russell, to be followed by Dr. Judy Aikawa.

MS. RUSSELL: Aloha. Good morning. Thank you for having us here today, Chair Sugimura and the dedicated Members of the County Council. My name is Nikki Russell, and I'm

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the Interim CEO at Maui Humane Society. I'm here today to advocate for sustainable funding for our County contracts in the FY '27 Budget, funding that accurately reflects the true evolving cost of the essential public services we provide to this community. Maui Humane Society is the only open admission shelter in this County. We're a safety net that never closes. Last year alone, we took in over 5,000 animals. Beyond our walls, our humane enforcement officers serve as the frontline of public safety. They responded to over 4,100 calls, investigated 500 cases of cruelty, and drove more than 108,000 miles from Hāna to Kapalua to protect both our people and our pets. The landscape of Maui has changed, and our budget must evolve with it. We're currently facing the perfect storm of increased demand driven by three key factors. The loss of local partners. With the closing of HARF, the responsibility for the island's displaced dogs has fallen almost entirely on our shoulders. They also used to help with the Molokai puppies. The housing crisis. Last year, over 400 families were forced to surrender their beloved pets simply because they could not find pet-friendly housing. The economic ripple effect. As tourism and visitor spending remain down, our residents are struggling. When an 'ohana faces a financial crisis, their pets are the first to feel it. We aren't just seeing more animals, we're seeing them stay in our care longer, which exponentially increases our cost for food, medical care, and staffing. Currently, the Maui Humane Society is covering a growing share of these County-mandated sheltering and enforcement costs through our own private donations and grants. Every dollar we spend covering the gap in these basic mandated services is a dollar we can't spend on our proactive community programs, such as low-cost spay-neuter, our Community Cat Program, our Foster Program, and our surrender diversion program, 4EverPets. The current funding levels are no longer sustainable against the rising cost of labor, the logistics of service on Molokai, and the skyrocketing price of veterinary supplies. We're asking the Council to increase funding for both the sheltering and humane enforcement line items to a level that reflects our reality. These services are not extras. They keep our community safe, our streets clear, and our families whole. We have the expertise and the dedication to do the work, we just need a budget that reflects the scale of the task. Mahalo for your time and your continued partnership.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, what...what are you asking for then?

MS. RUSSELL: Certainly. For animal sheltering, we had asked for \$332,000. That's an additional 14 percent. We had requested 250,000 for our 4EverPets Program, which is not currently in the Mayor's budget. For humane enforcement, we had asked for an additional 100,000, and that's an 8 percent increase. Also from the rotating...Revolving Fund, we asked for 80,000 for a truck, which 60,000 of which is in the Mayor's budget.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Could you...we have your testimony, but none of that is in this document. So, I wonder if you could submit that in writing to the Councilmembers?

MS. RUSSELL: Absolutely.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Appreciate it. Any questions, Members? Thank you.

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MS. RUSSELL: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Dr. Judy Aikawa, to be followed by Charen Kepler.

MS. AIKAWA: Aloha, Council Chair and Members. My name is Dr. Judy Aikawa. I'm a retired emergency medicine physician and Vice-Chair of the Maui Humane Society Board of Directors. I've had the privilege of serving on the board for the last 17 years, and today I am here on behalf of the rest of the board to express our gratitude for the County of Maui's longstanding support. We are proud of our partnership with the County and feel our shared commitment has saved animal lives and has helped to protect and preserve the human-animal bond, which contributes to the emotional health and resilience of our community. Each year, Maui Humane Society takes in 450 to 1,000 animals per month, or nearly...or nearly 5,000 animals annually. In addition, MHS touches the lives of thousands of animals and pet owners through MHS outreach programs. As outlined by my colleagues, programs include sheltering, veterinary medical treatment, including spay-neuter, adoption services, humane enforcement, and a pet food bank and other support to avert the need for pet relinquishment. The need for these services throughout Maui County continues to grow. Housing instability and lack of pet-inclusive rental housing, limited access to affordable veterinary care, increased length of stay for both dogs and cats due to not enough adoptive homes, and the lasting impacts of the Lahaina fires have increased demand for MHS services. On Molokai, as outlined by my colleagues, animal welfare challenges are significant and make it especially important that Maui Humane Society, in partnership with the County, continue to expand assistance there. Despite these challenges, our team continues to work to ensure that Maui County receive the best and most compassionate Maui animal...Maui County animals receive the best and most compassionate care. As the only open admission animal shelter, MHS resolves to help every animal, regardless of age, condition, circumstance, or owner resources, and to improve the lives of pets and people in our community. But we cannot do this alone. We deeply appreciate your past and continued support, and urge you to approve the requested funding to ensure that Maui Humane Society can meet the community's growing animal welfare needs. I'll close with Gandhi's famous words...the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. We believe that very fervently, and hope you do too. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifier?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Yes, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Can I clarify, did you say that you service 450 to 1,000 animals per month?

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MS. AIKAWA: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. No other questions. All right. Thank you.

MS. AIKAWA: Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Charen Kepler, to be followed by Hauanu Bernades. Apologies if I mispronounced your name.

MS. KEPLER: Aloha, Chair, Members of the Committee. My name is Charen Kepler and I am the Executive Director of Ka Ipu Kukui. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today in support of the inclusion of funding for Ka Ipu Kukui leadership programs in the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. Ka Ipu Kukui exists to educate, cultivate, and inspire leaders rooted in kuleana to contribute to a thriving future of Maui Nui. Through both our adult fellows programs and our Stay Maui Nui Youth Program, we are building a pipeline of leaders who are deeply connected to place across sectors and committed to serving this community. Each year, our adult...our adult fellows participate in a year-long program engaging with leaders and experts across Maui County and the State. They gain a deeper understanding of the systems that shape our islands, from housing and water to healthcare, education, economic development, and food insecurity issues. These are all issues that County Council addresses every day. At the same time, our youth program provides students, at no cost, with meaningful exposure to career pathways, local industries, and leadership development opportunities that help them envision a future here at home. I'd like to share just one story. We have a student in our Maui...Stay Maui Nui Program who, at just 13 years old, already knew his path. He wants to become a lawyer advocating for Native Hawaiian rights. What struck me wasn't just his ambition, but his clarity of purpose. And over the course of the program, he was exposed to so many different pathways, but he never wavered. He stayed grounded in his commitment to serve his people and his community. What our program did wasn't change his direction, we strengthened it. It surrounded him with mentors, gave him a deeper understanding of the systems he hopes to navigate, and most importantly, showed him that he can pursue this path right here at home. That is the kind of leadership development we are cultivating, a purpose-driven, grounded, and people-committed to Maui Nui. Today, Ka Ipu Kukui alumni are actively serving on numerous boards and commissions across Maui County and the State. They are leaders in government, nonprofit organizations, and businesses, helping shape policy, responding to community challenges, and guiding Maui's recovery and long-term resilience. Just this morning when I walked in, there were six fellows in the room, only one here to advocate for Ka Ipu Kukui, the other five here in the capacity of their kūlana. At a time when Maui continues to navigate significant challenges, investing in local leadership is not a luxury, it is essential. The County support allows us to continue offering accessible, high-quality programming, including tuition assistance for adult fellows and fully-funded opportunities for our youth. It ensures leadership development

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is available to those committed to serving our community. And importantly, it strengthens a network of leaders who are . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . connected, collaborative, and prepared to work together for the greater good. On behalf of our entire organization, I respectfully ask for your continued support of Ka Ipu Kukui in this year's budget. Mahalo for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to the people of Maui County. I am open to questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for what you do. Appreciate you. In the budget, 47,500.

MS. KEPLER: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none.

MS. KEPLER: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Hauanu Bernades--apologies--and Travis Liggett.

MS. BERNADES: Good morning, Chair --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning.

MS. BERNADES: -- Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Hauanu Bernades, and I serve as the Immigrant Services Program Coordinator here at the County's Department of Human Concerns. I am a current fellow in the Ka Ipu Kukui Program, and I am here testifying today in support of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget for the program. Rather than explaining what the program is, which Charen did an awesome job, I want to share why it matters. Working in County government, we often move quickly from task to task, responding to community needs, managing programs, and solving problems as they arise. The fellowship provides something rare in public service...the opportunity to step back, think more deeply about the responsibility we carry as public servants, and how the decisions we make today shape the long-term resilience of our community. One of the most meaningful parts of the experience has been learning alongside colleagues from across Maui Nui. Many of us would never cross paths, yet in our daily work, the decisions we make are deeply interconnected. Through the fellowship, I've gained a greater appreciation for how working across these various sectors strengthens our ability to serve the people of Maui County. It reminds us that public service is not only about the work we do every day, but the kind of leadership we bring to the future of this County. For me, personally, the experience has strengthened my approach to public service, reinforcing the decisions we make and the long-term impacts for the people and communities we serve. Programs like Ka Ipu Kukui invest in something that cannot always be measured day to day, but over time, with deeper collaboration, stronger leadership, and a greater commitment to service our County with...with dedication and purpose. For these reasons, I respectfully

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ask for your continued support for the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellowship Program. Mahalo, Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members, for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Good job. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Travis Liggett, to be followed by Lorrie Betsill.

MR. LIGGETT: Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers. I'm back, and I just want to apologize for my earlier testimony. I've been dealing with so much, and it just is very stressful, and I'm doing a little bit better now. And today, I'm bringing some concepts which I just submitted in written testimony, which are legislative concepts that you might consider after the budget season. I know it's not exactly in context, but I'll tie it all together at the end. But the WAIWAI Act would zero out property taxes for kuleana watersheds that are properly managed, and incrementally increase property taxes for the ultra-high-value holdings, and that could address Member Cook's concerns about sediment, while reducing tax burdens, reducing the risk of kuleana lands being taken. The NANI Act is a ecosystem rights bill that would put the power of the public trust doctrine into the people's pockets, give them standing to stand up for the ecosystems, and civil settlements would be given to the County, administered to the departments to fix the ecosystem. It's a funding source. The HANAI Kanau [sic]...HANAI Kekau [sic] Act, through a small licensing fee, could institutionalize and codify that amazing skillset of...of immediately provisioning all that emergency housing after the fire, like without any experience. And that is a very good skillset, and it's...it's just a change in philosophy to not punish misfortune, and just say, you know, really rich people can be unhoused in a big emergency too, so it's not about even income levels. And finally, the Digital Democracy Act could just take away the in-person requirement of signatures for citizen initiatives, because for people like me that have big health issues, the idea of getting 10...10,000 signatures is not plausible, and so it just allows the same court system, the same ID.me certification to be allowed for people who are administering signatures, and it's actually probably less subject to fraud than, say, meeting someone in person. And that puts the power of writing legislation much more in people's hands. The final point is, please pass that \$1.8 million for design work for the Kahului Wastewater Plant, because if you can do that, it'll get the design work in play, and we have the design work for Kihei, and I will give you my word, but that by the time that design work is done, I will find a donor, 0 percent overhead, kaiaction.org. It just makes municipal works a nonprofit donation mechanism that makes the investment tax-deductible, 0 percent, not one penny taken by the nonprofit, and you just take the gift, and that MOA muscle memory can then be developed, because, you know, some really nice person might say, you know, I'm going to...I...I propose a \$10 billion . . .(timer sounds). . . MOA, and there's no problem with just accepting that, and suddenly you have 1,000 percent of your current budget or so. And I think Bobby would know exactly what to do with that, and it's just outside-of-the-box thinking that just really turns the narrative to, yeah, just innovate, and they're just ideas. I'm not a lawyer, but if you pass that 1.8 billion...I'm sorry, million, sorry, for disinfection work in Kahului, I will work so hard to get the other 18 million, and just hand it over with my compliments to everyone . . .(timer sounds). . . and it's just so smart. So --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. LIGGETT: -- my compliments to everyone, and thank you for your patience.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifier?

MR. LIGGETT: Have a great day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Shane...Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair And mahalo, Mr. Liggett, for your testimony.
I was just curious if you had sent in your testimony to the BFED Committee?

MR. LIGGETT: I did just like the second before I started talking, and it should be all there.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay.

MR. LIGGETT: They're actually written so that any one of you could just sign it and send it to the clerk. It's all formatted properly.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any more questions for Mr. Liggett? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MR. LIGGETT: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Lorrie Betsill, to be followed by Jim Langford.
(pause) Lorrie, you have been promoted.

MS. BETSTILL: Hi. Aloha.

MS. MACDONALD: You're a little quiet.

MS. BETSTILL: Aloha, Councilmembers and Chair. Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, we can hear you now.

MS. BETSTILL: Okay. My name is Lorrie Betsill. I have been a resident of Lahaina for nearly 20 years, and I have owned and operated businesses here. This gives me firsthand experience with budgeting, financial planning, and economic sustainability in our community. I am here today to express concern regarding the assumptions and priorities within the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. First, I question the population data being used. The budget appears to reflect a population exceeding

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160,000 residents. However, in the wake of the Lahaina fires and ongoing cost-of-living challenges, we have experienced a significant outmigration of local families. Many have relocated to the mainland in search of affordable housing and basic necessities. Realistically, I believe our full-time resident population may be closer to 125,000. Additionally, Maui County has a substantial number of second homeowners who are not full-time residents. This distinction matters, and I do not see it clearly reflected in the assumptions driving this budget. I also note the reliance on Statewide visitor spending reported at 20.78 billion compared to 17.72 billion in 2019. These increases largely reflect inflation and rising costs, not true economic growth. More importantly, there is no clear separation identifying what Maui County itself is generating in revenue. Without accurate localized data, we risk and continue to build budgets based on inflating and misleading figures. Turning to expenditures, the proposed \$2.1 billion budget allocates more than half to the General Fund, largely for salaries and personnel. On page 70, I noted 262 employees within Environmental Management. While environmental stewardship is important, I question whether this local government is able to honor and reflect allocation for the most urgent needs at this time. Maui County is in a period of economic distress. Every day, including me, residents are leaving because they can no longer afford to live in Lahaina. Many who remain are struggling financially and emotionally. This is not reflective of a thriving community. I respectfully suggest that we align our priorities. We should be investing more in economic recovery and financial strategy, including employed positions focused on rebuilding local businesses and stabilizing our workforce. Public safety and infrastructure should be at the forefront, which is foundational to community stability, such as our farmer talked about. We cannot put the cart before the horse anymore in Maui County. We must proceed with caution and rebuild our infrastructure first. Lastly, water systems . . .(timer sounds). . . and resource management--30 seconds--water systems and resource management, including revitalizing existing infrastructure, such as the desalinization plant of West Maui, which remains underutilized. Because this budget is still under Council review, I respectfully urge you to reallocate resources towards these priorities before final adoption. This budget should reflect the reality of our residents that we are living, not just projections on paper. Thank you for your time and consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next and currently last individual signed up to testify is Jim Langford.

MR. LANGFORD: Difficulties. Are you guys there?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, we can hear you.

MR. LANGFORD: Oh, pardon my manners. Hi, Chair. I wanted to just start by saying, up until recently, this meeting you guys have...I've never...in the thousands of meetings I've watched, you guys smiled the most in the beginning of this meeting, talking about farming and...and the youth being able to farm, and...and the momentum leading into,

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you know, caring for the animals slowed it down a little bit, and then the reality of caring for the animals. And then we got to innovation, which, you know, is my specialty, and I hope you guys got the Maui OS. I wrote the software, basically, that can address our last testifier, the issues in a calmer way. You know, you guys have experienced me expressing sardonically with sarcasm some intense emotions that have yielded results that...that...of you guys smiling all the time in the morning. So, like I'm down with that. I have the...so I'd love to partner with everybody that spoke this morning and use all the grant and connections that I have, and I'll tie it together with the plastic recycling for farming products. I've figured out how to use the systems we have, shred the plastic that isn't recyclable, I turn it into 3D printed material that allows us to make farm tools. And that would be a great apprenticeship program for the engineering-minded farmers who are coming out of high school. So, anyway, I just wanted, honestly, like everything that I heard today was so great, and wanted to just remind you guys that you smiled the most in the morning. So, as this budgeting goes through, may that spirit of the 'āina hold true for...in all your bellies and your picos, because you guys are rocking it. I've never felt you guys doing this good. So...so, I would love to speak with you about my MauiOS to mitigate the emotional concerns that the...the folks who were born later in the Bible, you know, the everything before humans is our ancestors people that are excited about where the money's going. My software can mitigate that and show where the income streams from the DC...the CDB...you know, all those letters with a dyslexic guy is tough, but all those grants for the 1.8 million, so...billion, sorry. So, anyway, just reminding you, I have a proposal in there that can mitigate all sides of this equation and would love to...to...to speak . . .(timer sounds). . . in partners with you folks. Thank you kindly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for Mr. Langford? Seeing none. Thank you very much.

MR. LANGFORD: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier and currently last is Rob Bence.

MR. BENCE: Aloha, Council. I apologize I wasn't able to provide any written testimony, but I heard you were talking about ag this morning and I wanted to echo the excellent comments from Uncle Bobby. I also would like to hopefully advocate to support the disabled farmers, and with the high cost of farming, the MEO grants is the best way because the money goes directly to the provider of the equipment. And I guess for those kinds of grants, if the money would not be a reimbursement, that would be a huge help. I know my mom got a lot of grants for Keiki O Ka 'Āina and when I talk to her about the County grants, she was like reimbursement, not so good. I also heard a little bit long for get reimbursement sometimes, but I really...I didn't really get to dig into this bill. I think I heard that the Mayor had proposed lowering the property taxes on like mansions over 4-1/2 million or something, but I would just encourage to tax the very, very wealthy because we get...like Ellison owns so much and we get so much super wealthy that can really afford to help fund many of these things that we really need. Mahalo.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, there's currently no one else who has signed up to testify, but I see an individual approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: Jasee Law from Kula Uka, Waiakoa Ahupua'a. Okay. Do you guys want the good news first or the bad news? Thank you. Ohayo, Chair Kashiwa Sugimura, for asking the Department of Agriculture. I was smiling too, yeah, when the...when the meeting started, there was a lot of good stuff and the future Councilmember of Kula was saying some good things about farming, so we got that to look forward to. Starting to catch on after 130 years of colonization. So, one question I had for...oh, so Department of Agriculture, I stand in support 110 percent, and I just had one question about the management, the grant management, are...are they...where the...where is that coming from, the...the funding, and are they looking at other countries besides the United States for grant funding? And thank you for all the previous testifiers for coming in, for testifying today and taking time to participate in the local government. The Hawaiian word of the day comes from Pukui/Elbert, and I was talking with Moana Lutey from the Clerk's Department and I opened a book up and the word came out, palahaheha, P-A-L-A-H-E-H-A, lazy and negligent. So, I'll go on to Mr. Johnson's responses. I think you said we could talk about anything that's in the whole budget for the whole thing. Mr. Johnson was talking about the screening device yesterday. I was surprised to learn that the money had been spent already on that. I'm going to dig more into it if I could ever get past the closed doors on the 7th Floor. So, I would say a'ole to the screening device, and I'll tell you a little story I had with trying to get availability with the government was some of you know before, a couple years ago, they put in the glass partitions at the courthouse building across the street there and now they've got a screening device and you got to go through it, you got to empty all your pockets, you got to take off your belt, you got to take off your hat, all this kind of stuff. It's really a pain in the ass. Oh, excuse me, Sugimura. And so, when I try...I'll go back to my story about when I was trying to get a job...a application for a business license with the tax department and she wants to call the Sheriff's Department on me for asking over and over again for a 'Olelo Hawaiian translation. And I went over to the Sheriff's Department to give them a letter to let them know ahead of time that they might be called by this person working for the State. And the...the screener, I took off all my metal . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . objects--30 seconds, yes ma'am--took off all my metal objects there and the buzzer didn't go off, I went through the metal detector and all's I had was a piece of paper in my hand to give to the Sheriff's Department. And the screener told me I had to put the piece of paper through the x-ray machine. That's how ridiculous this whole thing can get with...so, putting a screening device in the...in the building here for the County Council would just be a great hindrance to the people that are trying to participate that don't have access to all this fancy computer device and stuff you have. Thank you for the girl from Kaupō . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . by the way, coming in on the Internet there. That was...you came in real good.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Next testifier.

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MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Tehani Ka'alekahi.

MS. KA'ALEKAHI: Aloha, Chair, Councilmembers, and Members of the Budget Committee. My name is Tehani Ka'alekahi, Executive Director of Sust'āinable Molokai. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today and for including Sust'āinable Molokai as a line item in the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. We truly appreciate this partnership. It reflects a shared commitment to Molokai's people, our farmers, and our future. I do want to extend a huge thank you to Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez for her continued support and advocacy for Molokai, and also to Director Kali Arce for being a champion of Sust'āinable Molokai, our farmers, and our agricultural community. At its core, our work is about caring for our community, and today, that means ensuring food security for our keiki and families. Through our Kaukau for Keiki Program, we provide food boxes during school break when many children lose access to regular meals. In 2025, we served 600 keiki every week for six weeks. This year, we're expanding to serve 700 keiki each week for eight weeks. That growth reflects both the increasing need in our community and the trust families place in this program. We love that we get to support our farmers and food producers here on Molokai and that we can directly address food security in our community. This work ensures our keiki have access to healthy food, supports families during times of need, creates consistent markets for our local farmers, and keeps food dollars circulating on island. We're grateful for the Department of Agriculture's partnership in helping us strengthen coordination with our growers and continue building a more locally-driven food system. The proposed \$175,000 investment is not just funding a program. It sustains a service that Molokai families rely on and ensures that when school is out, our keiki are still cared for. We respectfully ask for your continued support of this line item in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. With your partnership, we can continue this work, supporting our farmers, feeding our keiki, and ensuring that no child on Molokai goes without food when school is out. This investment makes a real difference in the daily lives of our families, and we are very grateful for your continued support. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Yes, you are in the budget for \$175,000, Sust'āinable Molokai. Thank you.

MS. KA'ALEKAHI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, there's currently no one else who is signed up to testify. Would you like me to do our last call?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, please.

MS. MACDONALD: If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know, or Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand. This is final call...three, two, one. Chair, it appears that nobody wishes to testify.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, with your permission, I'm going to close public testimony and receive written testimony.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, we are...if you look at the time, right, we're right about 12:00. I'm going to start with a round of questions and then ask if we can break for lunch, or do you want to go on longer? I was thinking of taking a lunch break and then come back at 1:30. Fine? Yeah? Okay. So, I'm going to...I'm going to start, and we'll do questions for...yeah, Chief of Staff Lallo, I should have told you could leave earlier. Sorry about that. All right. So, Department of Ag, I see the Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa coming, and we'll take questions from Member Batangan.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Actually, Chair, can you start on the other side?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure. Member Sinenci.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. That's important. Member Sinenci, questions, three minutes. Followed by Member U'u-Hodgins --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- then Cook. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah. Mahalo, Chair. Yeah, I'm looking at the grants, and I know that...and mahalo, Director Arce and Staff, for that presentation. I'm looking at some of the agriculture grants, and I know that the...the microgrants are competitive. Is there a timeline for that, or have you already started the process? Well, I guess it would be after we approve the budget. What is your timeline for farmers to apply for the microgrants?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Sinenci. At this time, we'll have our Grant Coordinator answer that question. Thank you.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Thank you for the question. So, right now, we have...we're going to be opening up our Fiscal Year '27 grant applications that MEO would be able to apply in...during the months of May and June. So, that would be our timeline. After we are able to award, then they would be able to identify a time start...or a time to start the application for the Microgrants Program. Thank you.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. And then, are there other competitive grants that are listed in the grant subsidy detail?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, we do have a list of...I can identify what those competitive grants are. If you can give me a minute here.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you. Only because we're hearing from a lot of our constituents at the district meetings.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, one moment. So, our areas where we're going to be opening up our grants for competitive opportunities is for the agriculture operations, infrastructure, education, agriculture recovery, feral animal control for Lānaʻi and Molokai, Food is Medicine, kalo, ulu, and niu production, Lānaʻi agriculture, Lānaʻi Grown Food Stimulus Program, livestock, Molokai agriculture, and non-food agriculture. So, those are going to be open for competitive opportunities to our community.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, great. Mahalo for that. Thank you. Those were my first round of questions, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- thank you very much. So, next, I'll go to Member Uʻu-Hodgins, followed by Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER UʻU-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Ag Department, for being with us today and your presentation. This question is for whoever can answer, but last I saw Deputy Director was by the elevator on the 8th Floor, and we had a quick conversation about ag crimes. And so, I'm wondering if we have any grants that might help our local farmers and producers that can help with security and helping prevent the rampant crimes we have with our farmers.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Deputy Director?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, mahalo. Yeah, I remember the conversation. So, updates on that. MPD is taking the lead on that, but we do have some ideas now that we have a new ag advocate we're trying to work with MPD on potentially developing some kind of program to identify ways that we can help. But as far as grants for ag theft or ag crime, nothing at this time.

COUNCILMEMBER UʻU-HODGINS: Okay. Okay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Good idea, though.

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COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, cameras, fencing, I'm sure that would be helpful, but one step at a time. Thank you. And then we had Uncle come and talk about slaughterhomes [sic], and it...it does have a trickle-down effect. Like it is hard for my dad to get the stuff we need to make loko (*phonetic*) when we do. So, my question is, is what kind of like other Federal requirements...like when we have the deer stuff, we need USDA people to come with. Do they have that same kind of requirements? Or if we were to help with some sort of mobile or modular slaughterhouse, what are the other things we need to consider for something like that?

MR. HEWAHEWA: I think the biggest one, we've been having several meetings over the last couple of months with the slaughterhouse conversation, and I think that one of the biggest needs that...that came up recently in our role that the Department of Ag took was on the workforce. So, retaining that workforce and that type of environment, that type of work. It's really hard work. And I'm actually going to hand it over to Lauren Nelson on the...the program, the Butchery Program surveys, and maybe you can share a little bit about the role we're taking with that on the slaughterhouse.

MS. NELSON: So, great question. With the certifications, each mobile slaughterhouse unit or slaughterhouse will need to be certified for each specific species that's processed. And there has to be space in between species processing. So, you need to have workforce on multiple days to handle multiple species. And that requires workforce, like Deputy Director shared. So, we are currently working with community members to finalize a meat processing and butchery needs assessment that will be sent out to all of our slaughterhouses, delis, and meat processors and butchers across the Maui County to get their needs so that we can then design, hopefully, a butchery and meat processing program to fit those needs and to help any graduates from this nonaccredited program find immediate work upon completion. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you for that answer. Chair, I think that's all I have for now.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you so much. Thanks, Department of Ag.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Cook, to follow by Member Rawlins-Fernandez and Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that update on the...the study. Not always a big fan of studies, but that's...that's, no, very appropriate and engaged and timely with what the community needs. And some of the...I know from my friend who...friends who are ranchers, the challenges with slaughtering beef. And I mean, you can't get any more self-reliant than being able to raise your own livestock. So, as far as like grants and helping farmers, I think this...the flooding events that we're experiencing now and my walking the various areas where they've been cleaning up, the soil's like really awesome. I mean, it's...so that's something I'm just hoping that, and it's not...not

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forever, but the Ag Department could work with Public Works and Bobby and other people to be able to like let people know they can get a truckload...a truckload of really good soil, especially stuff that has the cinders from up in the mountain. I mean, it's like, I wish I had a truck that...or I wish I had a place to put it. But I just want to plant that seed. I really think that that is a...you know, a truckload or two of good topsoil, because this isn't...this isn't...this is amazingly black, great ono soil. It's like I get all excited. So, I'm just hopeful that we take advantage of this now, and it's not just used for fill, and it's not just used for capping and some of the other material that you could use pretty much anything for. So...and then following up on Member U'u-Hodgins' thing about vandal...security, I'm wondering about vandalism. And since the farmers can't live on the property, and they're basically commuting, has that gotten any better with fencing and whatnot, or is there still...still vandalism occurring at the ag park?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, not so much at the ag park, but in speaking with other...oh, Chair? Sorry --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, please.

MR. HEWAHEWA: -- for misspeaking, misstepping [sic], but yeah, not just at the ag park. I...I didn't realize, we were able to go up with the Cattlemen's Association and MPD, and we had a meeting with all the different ranchers and, you know, for me, I was...I was blown away to see how common theft was happening with...with multiple ranches, all kinds of different vandalism that are happening. So, that kind of like put a spark in our...our Department on figuring out ways that we could help, like Councilmember U'u-Hodgins was talking about AirTags, and we looked at SweetWater [sic] CSI, different watermarking opportunities that could be put onto tools, equipment, and even livestock to ID equipment that are specific to specific ranchers or farmers. But yeah, it's a really huge issue. Legislation was tossing out a few bills on it, and I just don't have the information in front of me right now, but we can happily send that over to you and see. And one of the things that Department of Law Enforcement was hoping this year is to get more sheriff . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . law enforcements to the...the County of Maui. Right now, they have a program and potentially 22 positions created for ag sheriffs, but they were looking at doing the program on Hawai'i Island and O'ahu to pilot, and then, of course, secondary Maui County. So, we're really advocating and pushing that we can get that type of support over here.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, thanks for the update. We just...more people need to get the memo that you can't steal.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Department of Ag Director, Deputy Director, and team. Mahalo for being with us today, and mahalo for

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all your support for Molokai and Countywide. Okay. I wanted to kind of dovetail a little bit off of Member Cook's question regarding the soil. And I know this isn't new to you folks, but like I'm supportive of using the topsoil, but also cautious of moving it from one moku to another because of the risk of moving invasive flora and fauna. I don't know if that's something that you folks have talked to farmers about, or I know that you're not necessarily in charge of using the topsoil from the mud floods, but I know that you have some funding for education, so I don't know if that could be, you know, potentially included in...in that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Member Rawlins. We haven't started any conversation. We're learning about the topsoil coming down from DLNR, and Member Cook had mentioned. I do agree with you on being cautious about transferring soil to different locations, but I believe that before anything can happen, there should be some thought into the process and maybe some biosecurity in place.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that response.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you have more.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: One moment. Deputy Director . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, oh.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Deputy.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, yeah, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, I just kind of wanted to add to the other...there's also concerns with sediment contamination from the Department of Health, so a lot of PSA announcements been coming out about that, so just got to be aware. There are testing being done with the Department of Health, and then also, would love to include Department of 'Ōiwi in the conversation, as...as 'āina is...I don't even like saying the word cultural resource, but it's...that needs to be a factor in...in how any of these decisions are made. And I would love to have, or suggest, Department of 'Ōiwi to help address that...that issue and situation. Over.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: For sure. Another reason to not be using pesticides. Okay. Yeah. Okay. So...man. As you know, they found two CRB on Molokai for the first time, and it's like heart-wrenching. And then they also found another CRB in Kahului, and then I see additional funding . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . for education. Would

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you please share some of your strategies or your plans with that funding to try to help educate the community?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, mahalo for the...the question. Yeah, I think the Department of Ag took a really active role after the first detection back in November of 2023, holding over 25 meetings with our Maui County CRB Working Group, which consists of several different organizations, community members from HISC, Kaua'i Island's Invasive Species Committee, CTAHR, HDOAPQ, PPCB, DLNR, MOMISC, MISC, C-CAP. So, a bunch of different agencies we've been meeting over the course of over two years now in developing a matrix and understanding everybody's roles and responsibility. And for the Department of Ag, because we're a nonregulatory agency, we took the role of education and advocacy around this particular issue. And by Code, in 22.02.020, we are...we were asked and tasked to minimize invasive species, pests, and threats. So, lots of work has been done by many different agencies, lots of collaboration, especially with these current detections. Recently, we were made aware that because the State Department of Ag is the regulatory agency, we had to wait for State Department of Ag to come up with an announcement after I...I deemed that finding Kahului and Molokai as the CRB as...identified as CRB. And then we take an active role following up with addressing our public. But...oh, Director has...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Deputy Director. And yeah, mahalo for --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- that correction. Suspected CRB.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, I'm sorry, Director, did you have more to add?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, I would like to add in regards to your original question is about education. So, within the last two years, we've been partnering and coordinating educational trainings in the community to make them aware. And I believe that those has...those trainings around the three islands have prompted awareness on the community. And we will continue to support the agencies that do it and we'll coordinate with them. And those agencies that do partner with us and conduct the training come out of UH, as well as sometimes we have Hawai'i Department of Ag Biosecurity involved as well. We also support in covering any educational materials such as flyers and posters, and we assist

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with posting them up in the locations that haven't been posted, or replacing them and...and...yeah, and supporting them in that. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, thank you for that additional information. I am trying to take a lunch break, Members, at this time, or would you like to finish this one round of questions and call them back? They're going to have to come back for round two. Any thoughts? Okay.

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

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Paltin --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- is that who I hear?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'm okay with whatever you guys decide. I just wanted to clarify, did...I...I was trying to look, but we didn't get any responses --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- from Ag, and just one response from the Mayor, right?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. So, we haven't gotten any --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- responses from Department of Ag, and we're waiting for...I guess Mayor has one. Oh.

MS. MILNER: Chair?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can we...oh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, Staff?

MS. MILNER: AG-1 was just transmitted and AG-2 should be transmitted in the next 15 minutes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, good.

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MS. MILNER: The deadline for Mayor's OM-2 letter, because we were up next week, was April 14th, but we were doing our best to get that information together in an expeditious manner, but I don't know that it will be transmitted today. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Yeah, we --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I have a...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- moved them around, so that's the problem. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I have a follow-up question. Can AG-2 be transmitted even if we gavel out? Because if that's the case, I'm in favor of taking lunch, getting the responses, and --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- then asking my questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, we need to.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Great.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure. So, I...we'll wait for...did it come over yet, Budget Director?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. My team should be emailing it shortly. We just got the signed one back from the Mayor.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. MILNER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, it's AG-1 and AG-2 responses?

MS. MILNER: Yeah, AG-1 has been transmitted, and so however long that takes to upload to Granicus. And then AG-2 should be coming very shortly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. Oh, great. All right. So, Members, at this time--thanks for letting me proceed as we have--I'm going to call a recess, 12...is 12:16, come back at 1:30? Is that okay with you? Is that okay? Okay. So, we'll come back at 1:30. We are now in recess. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 12:16 p.m.
RECONVENE: 1:36 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Good to see all of you. I hope you had a nice lunch, and we will now continue with Department of Ag. Members and the public, if you look

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in Granicus number 32, AG...and AG-1 is there with responses, and also for...if you look at 85, AG-2 with responses are also there, so this should help. So, the Granicus numbers are 32 and 85. Before I proceed, I wanted to know if the Department would again read...I think it was answering Member Sinenci's question regarding grants, competitive grants. So, if you look on...could you read off what is in AG-2? Question 11, yeah. Is that right?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes. I was reading off of question 11 under Operations and Equipment.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: For AG-2, right?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: For AG-2, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And I wanted...I wanted the Members...we didn't have the responses yet, so I asked her if she could reference it because I think it was important. So, proceed, please.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes. So, this was the question in regards to how...which grant subsidy was going to be up for competitive, and the responses for that is agriculture operations, infrastructure, education, agriculture recovery, federal [sic] animal control for Lānaʻi, and also federal [sic] animal control for Molokai, Food is Medicine, kalo, ulu, and niu production, Lānaʻi agriculture, Lānaʻi Grown Food Stimulus Program, the local food purchasing incentive Farm to Family, livestock, Molokai agriculture, and nonfood agriculture.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You meant feral animal control, right, not federal?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, it's feral animal control.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Let's see, where were we? Member Johnson, did you have a...I think we're going to continue with you and then go to Member Batangan. Chair Lee is excused for right now. Okay. Member Johnson, our farmer.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Well, first off, I want to thank the Department for working with me to help the Lānaʻi ...help Lānaʻi strengthen its food security. I know my office has been working with Lauren and...on the language for the FY '27 Lānaʻi Food Stimulus Program. And I just wanted to read out for the record so we're all on the same page on what we're talking about. So, funds must be used for a grant to implement a food voucher program for Lānaʻi residents. Vouchers must be used for the purchase of locally grown or sourced fresh produce and fruit, edible algae, poi, meat, fish, eggs, and honey with the County Lānaʻi's Farmers' Market vendors. Vouchers may be issued with preference given to kūpuna, children, or members of a household with kūpuna or children. Again...once again, thank you guys so much. The County Lānaʻi Farmers' Market is now twice a month, so I plan to propose a change in the Parks and Recs' rates and fees to exempt County farmer's markets from paying fees in order to prevent the headache, time, and paperwork to pay each other, you know,

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like robbing Peter to pay Peter. . . .*(laughing)*. . . It doesn't make any sense when the County pays itself. And keep the Department of Ag costs lower. So, Department, does that sound about right on our languages that we agreed on?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. I believe that's what we have printed here, received from Axel, exactly what you said.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Great. So, thank you for, again, working with us. I...it's really great when the Council works with the Admin and we all agree on things to...you know, it just flows so much smoother. So, my next question is in regards to another point on farm...farmers' markets. What is the plan for the new farmers' market and farm stand to be developed this year? How is this location determined, and what will be the Department's ongoing role with or support for this market? And what ongoing funding or E/P executes this annual goal? And that's on page 109 of the PB.

MS. ARCE: Chair? Thank you for the question. I'll have Food Access Coordinator Lauren Nelson speak on that.

MS. NELSON: Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. So, the Department will continue next year to support the Lānaʻi Farmers' Market and provide funds for the market's management and permit fees and support with the market establishing SNAP/EBT so that they can also start to accept DA BUX, the double spending power of SNAP customers, towards local produce, and also implement the Lānaʻi Grown Food Stimulus Program at the market. Additionally, last year, our Department successfully championed Hāna Food Hub's congressional earmark request and the funds will be used this year . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . to expand their commercial kitchen and food processing facility to expand market opportunities for East Maui food producers. Lastly and quickly, we've championed the Kaialahui Foundation's congressional spending request to establish a farm stand in Waikapu to support Hawaiʻi Taro Farm and other Central Maui growers' market access. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: See, now, isn't that wonderful? That's so good to hear. Now, I heard my time, so I won't...you know, I'll pass the buck, but I will say that maybe crop theft and managing our...our furry animals like the dogs, there could maybe some kind of synergy where as a farmer, I could get a dog from the pound to watch my crop. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Someday I think we could find...find a guard dog to keep my crop...crop theft down, but that's for a different time to discuss. Thank you, Chair. I don't have...I'll wait for a second round.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, I see your hand up, Tamara...or Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, because you said you were just going to Member Batangan and --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- Alice Lee wasn't here, but I'm...I'm next after Gabe in the lineup.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We're going by seating. Okay. Proceed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I thought we were.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Could. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, it's my...my turn?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. My first question is the three expansion positions that you're requesting for Fiscal Year '27, do they require a reorganization and union consultation?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Department?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. I believe we're integrating the proposed positions into the current organizational chart. And yes, it probably does require a reorg, which we are working on with...with the County.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the four positions that you requested last year, only two of them have been created to date. Is that correct?

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's correct. We haven't created the Secretary, the half-time Parks Project Coordinator, and the Value Chain Coordinator. So, actually more, Member Paltin. Two-and-a-half positions. The Park Project Coordinator is half-time.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. So, that hasn't been created yet either?

MS. ARCE: No, it hasn't.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And I thought you said in your presentation to us you wanted to make it be something different.

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's true.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Or that's what it's...

MS. ARCE: We're planning --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

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MS. ARCE: -- to reallocate positions to fit our needs now at the current time.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. What was it that you wanted to make it again?

MS. ARCE: So, we were considering the half-time as a HR person, a DPO. That would be one of the potentials. And reallocating the Value Chain Coordinator to a Program Specialist so we can avoid creating a new class and having to develop a description. And we found that the Program Specialist duties are very similar to what the position will be covering.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Got it. Thank you. And then the Ag Emergency Action Plan timeline, I believe it says that you gave all the information to Tetra Tech. Is there a timeline for when the emergency action plan will be created?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair? Yeah, no timeline. Had several meetings at Tetra Tech, Administrator Amos at MEMA. But, you know, I am just super grateful for them to...as we were looking through the potential plans...for emergency plans for the County, I never see Ag in there, so we really advocated to ensure that Ag had an emergency response plan in there, and currently working with our farmers . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . and ranchers to help contribute to that. So, no timeline yet, but as soon as we know, we'll get back with you. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That went by kind of fast.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Actually, Chair, Chair Lee is here now.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you're here.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: So, if we continue through --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, sorry.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- in order --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Welcome back, Chair Lee.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- she would be next.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Chair, you're still muted.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I'm here in my workspace, and I have no questions at this time. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Okay. Department, Section 8-18.3 of the Charter requires that you report to the Mayor and Council annually on the County's overall performance in meeting agricultural objectives and any barriers that could be addressed by ordinance. Have you been submitting those? I wasn't able to find them on your website.

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's true, we...we develop a...we prepare an annual report every year and we send it to Managing Department. After that, I do not know where it goes, but --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. ARCE: -- you can always ask our Department for it.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. And then who in your Department's responsible for tracking legislation or developing remedies to barriers that could be addressed by ordinance?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. We do have Mya Hunter, she's our Ag Advocate. She tracks policies, bills, and advocates for the ag community, which potentially could lead to developing new bills or ordinances.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Can I ask why you need both a private secretary and an additional secretary to service boards and commissions?

MS. ARCE: Yes, thank you for the question. We have the Kula Ag Park Committee and we also have the Animal Board. And because the Conservation Committee has one of our Staff members, the Ag Conservation Liaison sitting in for me, because I have to sit in on the other ones, all of the clerical and secretary work goes to our Administrative Assistant and myself. So, that will relieve the burden of me and our Administrative Assistant in preparing those documents.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Okay. I see in your narrative that the Department lists infrastructure, water access, and farmer housing needs as key operational focus areas. So, I'm clear from both the testimony and your budget what you're taking to address infrastructure. Can you talk about water access and farming housing and what you're doing to address those?

MS. ARCE: Yes, I can speak on some of that. For Kula Ag Park, we're...we've awarded the contract to build a 2.4-million-gallon reservoir, which would service the 31 lots currently being leased. And then we are planning to build the Upper Maui Ag Park Phase II, and that would have approximately 24 lots. As far as other infrastructure in...in water, we

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are working with the Water Department into developing some kind of incentive to create new programs to involve the greater community.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Are there any collaborations with the Housing Department to address the farmer housing needs?

MS. ARCE: We've not ...*(timer sounds)*... talked with them, but we have worked with Planning Department on a couple of bills or ordinances that came our way in the last two years, which led to the expansion of the square feet for the farmer housing. Maybe Deputy Director has more to add on that. No, that's it.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. I heard the timer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, perfect. Of course, I'm going to ask you about the Kula Ag Park. So, Phase II, right? You must have known that. What is happening at the Kula Ag Park with the second...the second phase? How close are we at using the \$20 million that was asked for, now three years ago, four year...three years ago?

MS. ARCE: Okay. Thank you for the question. So, the funding that you're referencing, the two expenditures that the 10 million in Fiscal Year '24 bond funding were used for the design of the...the reservoir at Kula Ag Park, as well as the 12-inch waterline that will connect the 2.5-million-gallon reservoir to UMAP. And as an amendment number 2, the Unemori Engineering's contract that covered that. And then the booster pump station construction at Reservoir 40, the remaining 5.86 million that had lapsed, we just got it back this year, reappropriated in Fiscal Year '26 Budget. The 5.86 million was the balance from the 10 million that the State had sent the check a few months ago. So, we have an index code and it's in the...in the...part of the allocated funding.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, how soon will Kula Ag Park II begin?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, that's a great question. I would like to focus on building the reservoir first and the 12-inch waterline, so the water issues are addressed and the farmers will be more...have more efficient water flow. In order to build the second park, we need money. And with building the 2.5-million-gallon reservoir, we would exhaust almost all the money that we had got through grant funding, governmental bonds, and State allocations from fiscal year...back as Fiscal Year '19 or '20.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, the 20 million...well, I think there's a State 10 million and then the County matched it, which was one of the requirements. And what I told the State when we got the money was that...that their 10 million was going to be matched by our 10 million and it is for development of the Kula Ag Park II. So, that's not correct then, is what you're saying.

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MS. ARCE: I don't have...so, the Management Department, Dan Shupack, he's the one that helps in the...the funding and where it goes. And we have a spreadsheet, but to my understanding, the...all the allocated funding is for all the CIPs in the Kula Ag Park. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . So, we're using the funding as we go through the CIPs, and we're planning...we still are planning to build the second park, we just need to get more funding after we exhaust it building the reservoir.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Please send the question to the Department and also for...I don't think Dan Shupack is in Management for CIP, but whoever's doing...well, whatever, send it to Management as well as Ag. So, update on what's happening with the Kula Ag Park and funding. Next.

MS. ARCE: Excuse me.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ARCE: So, when you ask what is happening, so the answer I provided is not sufficient. That is what's happening now is moving towards building the reservoir and the 12-inch waterline. The booster pump is going to kick off breaking ground soon and that would complete three of the four CIPs. That's what's happening. And the funding, we do have a Excel spreadsheet that can explain where each of the funding from all of those previously allocated funds are going to.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. ARCE: And we can share that. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Fine. That's good. Good. This is kind of interesting to me because I...I really thought that we were getting the \$20 million for...to build the Kula Ag Park II. I'm going to then go back to Member Sinenci, U'u-Hodgins, Cook, Rawlins-Fernandez. So, Member Sinenci? Two minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. I just had...thank you. I just had one follow-up question and I don't know if Member Johnson asked it. Can the Department of Agriculture be a sponsor for the Lānaʻi market within the Parks Department?

MS. ARCE: Chair? Thank you for the question, Member Sinenci. I'll start off and then I'll transfer to Lauren. So, the...because of the lack of available spaces to hold the farmers market on Lānaʻi, we had worked with Director McCall and Deputy Director Dudoit in getting their permission and approval to run the pilot program on their park with the agreement that no other County parks, yeah, on every island will be used for farmers markets. And Lauren, you can take over if you have any more to add.

MS. NELSON: And Councilmember Sinenci, Director Arce is allocating 35,000 towards next fiscal year's budget, towards the market, and after funding the Lānaʻi Farmers' Market for two years at the end of next fiscal year, it is expected that the Lānaʻi Farmers' Market

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will be self-sustaining. So, they will have a year heads up to prepare for Fiscal Year '28 where we will not provide funding after that. Thank you. After this next Fiscal --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Great.

MS. NELSON: -- Year '27.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. That's all I had, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I have no further questions for Department of Ag.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. So, I think on page 111, number of agricultural management systems to restore and rejuvenate critically lands weathered by erosion and stuff. I guess my question is, how's...how's the interaction with the Department of Agriculture and the State and Soil Conservation and NRCS? What about erosion? How much engagement is there and what kind of programs?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Member Cook, for the question. We work intimately with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and also the district, especially Molokai-Lāna'i Soil Water Conservation District. We reach out to Department of Ag Biosecurity mostly for invasive species issue. As far as soil erosion, we haven't discussed that. And also the fact that we're still expanding and we know that those are critical issues. Eventually, we'll climb higher on the stepladder, but those are not forgotten. And as much as we can address it, we will.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for your answer.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Go ahead.

MR. HEWAHEWA: No, I just want to add real quick. I mean, we...we got our position hired where we got Agricultural Conservation Liaison, and it was partnered together with USDA NRCS. So, whatever suggestions you can share with us, we can add them to the...the plate as far as looking at erosion on our three County islands. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. Because...and...and my question isn't so much expecting the Department to actually be implementing and wrestling with that. It's more, you're dealing with all the local ranchers, you're dealing with the local farmers, you're dealing with the co-ops. So, you're very in tune with it. And so, just for you to . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . be able to represent possibly the magnitude of that problem, the areas that are mostly impacted, what potential mitigation issues that could be focused

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on. You know, probably my biggest passionate deal is detention basins, retention basins, utilizing stormwater, recharging oper...just this holistic, comprehensive mauka to makai management. And I think that your Department, although it doesn't have the Staff or the budget, could be a strong advocate for that.

MS. ARCE: Yes. We do have the Ag Conservation Liaison that just began in September. And Jeannine is meeting with a lot of those smaller agencies as well as the larger agencies and getting a handle on what projects are happening, and what has been addressed, and looking for the gaps that the Department can fill. And eventually, in time, we hope to convert that position as a permanent and then build that as another division.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Great. We need like NRCS, Army Corps of Engineers, this...everybody all hands on deck. So, I don't have any more questions. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. I think I just have one last question for Ag. For the Molokai Feral Animal Control, I see that it was reduced from 100,000 to 50,000. For FY...for this current fiscal year, FY '26, did you receive any applications for the grant funding?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. We'll have Ana answer your question.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, thank you for the question. We did receive applications and we were able to award one grantee in Molokai for...for that funding. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, great. Can you share with me who?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: I don't have that in front of me, but I can definitely provide that to you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Sounds good. And then...okay. One more question. We spoke about this, revising the condition under the agriculture microgrants to include a requirement or preference, and we'll figure out the language exactly, on aligning with the Food and Nutrition Security Plan. If you could speak to that, so that when I introduce that, the Members already understand what we're doing.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Thank you. We do have Staff that can answer that, and that's Food Access Coordinator Lauren Nelson.

MS. NELSON: We so appreciate --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha, Ms. Nelson.

MS. NELSON: -- Council's work to champion the Food and Nutrition Security Plan. This is three years of work collecting data from our community and voices from our food producers to create this plan and have it vetted by community. So, we so appreciate

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championing the four goals of the Food and Nutrition . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Security Plan within the allocation and structure of the Microgrants Program, just so that we can ensure that our programs are all aligning towards the goals of the plan. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Nelson. Mahalo, Department. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Johnson, followed by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. My...my question's going to be about grants and who applied and who...and what did they get. So, I didn't think it was answered, but correct me if I'm wrong, but it...about the grant application amounts requested and the amount that they were approved by the Department, especially for the Farm to Family. And I think it's really important to understand the demand and need for these programs in the community and who's working on these programs. If that was a question that was like, oh, too big of a thing to write out, you can look at the Department of Human Concerns and how they responded to that model through a table form. We really just want to know like who's applying for what and then what they actually received or if they didn't receive. It just helps us understand the need and funding gaps. So, Department?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. We are beginning a tracking system and Ana can explain the work that she has been...or her team has been doing to collect that information.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, thank you for the question. For the Farm to Family grant, we did solicit for organizations to request for up to \$250,000. We did receive 15 applications and from the funding that we had available, we were only able to award four due to the amount that was being requested. So, we did in the amount requested. When we take a look at all of the applicants, there was a total ask of \$3 million, but we were only able to award 900...or 900,000. So --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: -- so, we can see that there is a need that people will respond for that particular program.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's really good information. Thank you for...for that response. I'm on limited time. I didn't mean to cut you off. I really appreciate that response. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . I'm going to ask something different. This time is so fast. Is this two-minute turns, Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, okay. This . . .*(inaudible)*. . . --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You can ask your question.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- if you'll allow it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ask your question.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. You...the Department removed provisos from the Maui Food Farmer Support Network and the Farm Bureau, but the number was the same. You guys just changed the names of the pots, or what was the impetus behind that?

MS. ARCE: Yes, thank you for the question. So, it was a miscommunication on my part with Budget Director. We had intentions to fund Maui County Farm Bureau and, you know, I just never communicated that to Direct...to Director Milner.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. So, the money's flat. So, maybe they can apply to that pot of money. Is that correct, Director?

MS. ARCE: Yes, that is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. That's wonderful. No more questions. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. Now Member Paltin, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Maui Farmer Support Network seemed to think that they were included in your budget. Is that not true then?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Member Paltin. I have either Deputy...Deputy Director or Ana can respond to that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then my other question would be about the Humane Society, if they're being able to draw down fast enough and if you support the increased funds that they were asking for.

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you. I'll again ask Ana to respond to that.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, thank you for the question. For Maui Humane Society, as far as drawing down money, they are...their contract is structured a little bit different where they're able to request for 25 percent installments. So, they don't have any issue requesting on a quarterly basis those fundings. So, I don't...I haven't identified an issue with them receiving the funds.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Okay.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: I'm sorry, was there another question?

MS. MILNER: Sorry, Chair, if I can chime in really quickly --

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Support...

MS. MILNER: -- about the additional funding. I reviewed the request and we did support the entirety of the funding except for the...we're supportive of it, it just was not included. I think we misread the spreadsheet, but the 250,000 and then the increase of 20,000 under the Revolving Fund, the Administration would be supportive. That was just an oversight. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then still asking about the Maui Farmer Support Network and timeline for the admin rules. That's part of the County Code . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . and I'm concerned about it because, Director Arce, you have been the lead of this Department since its inception. If there were ever any change, I would love to have documented like, you know, how you created this and how you guys operate. And that's what, you know, administrative rules are for. It helps the continuity of the important work that you're doing. But yeah, still asking about Maui Farmer Support Network. I've seen it as a line item and then I seen it deleted, but the testifier thought they were included.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Must have been another oversight, it was news to us, too, right now. So, for that one...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It's news to you that it was deleted or that it was included?

MR. HEWAHEWA: That it was deleted.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. I see it on page 1-10 in the middle.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah. We got it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Line 2...okay. So, that was unintentional?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. All right. Thank you. Admin rules.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. So, last year, I misunderstood the...the question, and I guess I didn't know the difference between the admin and the house rules. And I was referring to the house rules that we were working on. So, we...we have progress on that. We haven't begun the admin rules and we'll need to get together with Management Department to help assist us in beginning that process.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Great. Sounds good. Just letting you know it's part of the Maui County Code.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. My turn?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, your...your turn.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, Director, how...how much do you rely on grants that you apply for as part of your budget? Like 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Chair. I can't give the percentage, but we only have one grant-funded program. And we did have a DM-89 sitting in the position that was for a Grant Management Specialist that had the...a small percentage FTE to write and secure for funding. Now we have that position filled, so we are going to strive to start securing funding.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Do you operate independently or are you a part of a Countywide, departmentwide grant system?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for that question. We are operating independently with the grant subsidies that we received in the approved budget.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. And that goes for grants that you process and oversee. You do that independently?

MS. ARCE: Oh, yeah. And we're also part of the grants working group with the Mayor's Office.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Working group, meaning that there is a coordinated system or you just talk story every week or something?

MS. ARCE: Yes, the...the...they're meeting regularly and working towards firming up the...the whole organization of that new system, standardizing it.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Yeah, because...right, exactly. Because that's what I've been pushing for, is standardization and coordination. So...but for now, you're...you're working independently, but you have that bigger goal that all of you...all departments are working on?

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Batangan?

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Director, I was kind of surprised to hear that you are on the Kula Agricultural Park Board. So, I looked it up, and you're not listed as an ex-officio. You are an appointed member to the body, correct?

MS. ARCE: Yes, and...

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. I take issue with that--one, because of the workload issue that you mentioned, but two, your Department oversees this park, and the Committee is responsible for advising and, at times, reviewing actions of the Department. I think there's a conflict there.

MS. ARCE: Yes, you're correct. That's why we're in the process of doing language changes with Corp. Counsel on that particular section of the Code in 22.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: So, you would be switched to --

MS. ARCE: And that is one of the --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- a non-voting ex-officio --

MS. ARCE: -- suggestion...

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- or you would be switched...

MS. ARCE: Non-voting. I...I picked that up when I was looking at it.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Okay. That's all, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's all? So, I wanted to, I guess, continue on with Member Batangan. So, the Kula Ag Park, which I'm a member of as a Councilmember, I'm curious how many meetings there are, and maybe I missed a lot of the meeting, I'm not sure, but I haven't gone to many meetings recently. And to ask for a clerical person, I'm not sure what their responsibilities would be, or what is...why there's a need, I guess. Maybe I'll send that in writing, then you can look at your records and then answer it.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah?

MS. ARCE: But very quickly, we didn't have much meetings because of a couple of things...technical difficulties, and also the fact that we had to chase down the Chair. And I mean, just to be frank. And because of having to chase down, it just falls on us to put the agenda together for the next meeting. And as time went on, we started to have low attendance and members leaving the committee.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, so we don't have enough members of the Kula Ag Park Committee? Is that what you just said?

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MS. ARCE: Yeah, we...I have the numbers at the office, but yes, I believe that's true.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Maybe we can ask that question. And I guess it's tied to Member Batangan's question about why do we need a clerical person then for the Kula Ag Park, if that's their responsibilities, but maybe you can educate me and the Members. Also, I'll probably ask it in writing too, but the follow-up of Bill 116, which is Kula Ag Park leases, and I think it's something that we've been trying to get that squared away now for maybe two years, but it probably gets put on the back...back burner with all the different other bills that are . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . in Corp. Counsel. Is that correct?

MS. ARCE: No, that's incorrect. We work on it when Corp. Counsel is available. It's almost to the final draft where we would like to share it with you, and it's not on purpose that we're putting it aside. We just have to wait for Corp. Counsel to be available for us.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Should I send that to Corp. Counsel in writing then, yeah? Okay. So, another one. Okay. I'm done. Anybody else have any more questions for Ag? Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just wanted to clarify that your secretary to boards and committees is also for what will be the Dangerous Dog Committee, formerly known as the Animal Control Board, as well as the Conservation Planning Committee, and are they able to also do other secretarial work or strictly limited to that?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like could they help with the admin rules?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Member Paltin. So, yes to the Dangerous Dogs, yes to Kula Ag Park Committee. Because our representative, Jeannine, is sitting in for me as Vice-Chair to Chair Molina, who's also extremely busy, I'm under...I'm assuming already that the work will fall on Jeannine, and especially when the GreenPrint begins. They do have a secretary in boards and commission. She's not the secretary, but she's the Staff member. And just assuming that the workload will get heavier once the GreenPrint begins, and I'm not sure if Jody *(phonetic)* would be able to manage it and would really appreciate if, you know, we jumped in to assist where we can.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then the other question to follow up on Member Johnson, because the pot funds remain flat, would we be able to condition...I think it's Maui County Farm Bureau...was that what you said, Member Johnson, Maui County Farm Bureau and Maui Farmer Support Network? And then wouldn't it be competitive?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for that question. Yes, it will be competitive. I've been communicating with Budget Director Milner, and those two organizations will be able to compete for funding.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, but if --

MS. MILNER: Thank you. Chair?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- if we condition it...oh, go ahead. Sorry.

MS. MILNER: Yeah. Sorry. Yeah. If you condition it, that will leave the same amount of competitive funds available that were available last year, and they will go through the normal application process, but as a line item grantee. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. That might be safer just since it was an oversight this year that...you know, that way nobody's all nervous or anything, but I don't know if that would be one of my priorities, but I know there's a lot of farmer lovers there, so maybe it could be.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Fight over.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I don't know, I didn't...I didn't read that thing yet, sorry. The buffalo soldiers went home, so now I'm going to focus.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Buffalo. Okay. So, are you done, Member Paltin? Member Rawlins-Fernandez? And Member Johnson, you too?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. All right. So, I was just looking. I knew that you and the Director were voting members of the Kula Agricultural Committee, and so it looks like that was set up in 2016, so well before the Director's time. So, it wasn't her that put the language in...into the Code to be selected or for the composition of the committee. Do you...so, Director, in amending, I think that's...what is that, 22.048.070 Kula Ag Park Committee, will the Councilmember still be a voting member as well, or would that position also be ex officio, non-voting?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. I will look at my notes and...with Yukari and provide a written response. I...I don't want to misspeak, but I believe that the Councilmember as well as the Director would be ex-officio. Well, we're...I'm recommending that as a change in the language.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Because that would make sense that both would become non-voting members...not just the Director, but also the Councilmember on the committee. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any other questions? Oh, yes --

MS. MILNER: Sorry, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Director?

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MS. MILNER: This is Lesley. I just wanted to let folks know, I spoke to Director Akitake this morning, and yesterday at the Board of Ethics meeting, they have come to an opinion on County employees as being involved with entities that receive grants from the County. As soon as I get a copy...the formal opinion hasn't been released yet. As soon as I get a copy, I will release it, but I just wanted to let you know that that happened yesterday. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We'll look forward to that. And we can ask for that, right? Okay. Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Yeah, just for the record, the...I don't have...I don't necessarily have an objection to the Mayor being able to appoint somebody to the Kula Ag Park Committee. I do have a issue with the Mayor appointing somebody from the Department of Agriculture on the committee, given that they have management responsibilities for that. So, I don't actually think it requires a Code change. You could just appoint somebody different. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. We'll make a note of that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- 22.04A.070 says the Director.
...*(inaudible)*...

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Oh, okay. Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. I'm going off the...the ag park's website, which --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- states something differently.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I'm going off the County Code.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. I...I...I didn't pull it up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Should be same, same, huh? Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: ...*(laughing)*... That was...I like that. That was a good discussion. Chair, so in regards to...this...this question might be for Director Milner or the Department, I'm not sure, but I want to know where the GreenPrint funding lays. Is that...is that in Department of Ag or is that a different department?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director Milner?

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. The committee with the responsibility for the GreenPrint does fall under Office of the Mayor. No specific funds have been included for the GreenPrint. I know when I spoke to Jody in our office last August, they were talking about getting a consultant, and I advised her that if they decided to go down that route to come talk to me, and we would work on an amendment for additional funding. I was never informed that there had been progress made on the GreenPrint, and no additional funding was requested this year. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Plot thickens. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have questions, Members? If not, then all right. Thank you very much for spending your day, really, with us. Thank you. Sorry to keep you waiting. All right. So, this item...we are done with Ag, and we have all their questions. We are going to switch off, and I see Chief...Chief of Staff in the audience. Thank you very much, Cynthia Lallo.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Chair, can I request a quick recess?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure. So, we'll come back at 2:26, is that...that's too short?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: No, that's fine for me.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, let's go...let's go 2:30. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 2:24 p.m.
RECONVENE: 2:34 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good afternoon. Welcome back. 2:34. We will continue, but we have switched off, we have the Office of the Mayor. And Members, I have Office of the Mayor responses in Granicus number 39, OM-1, and OM-2 is number 97. Do we have any responses? OM-1 has a response? Okay. All right. So, we have Chief of Staff Cynthia Lallo with us, and she may have to leave because they're setting up shelter Upcountry, and if so, then she has given her...is Jade here, Rojas? She's online. Okay. So, Jade and Budget Director will be Office of the Mayor. So, at this time, I'm going to do a round of three minutes, a round of two minutes, starting off with Member Batangan, go to Lee, Paltin, Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez, Cook, U'u-Hodgins, Sinenci, we're going backwards.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Yep. Thank you, Chair. Budget Director, given our conversation yesterday, may I confirm my understanding of WIRP and EO 2025-02? Are these tools used to adjust compensation for nonunion employees with the primary goal of treating

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them equitably after our unionized employees get paid increases through collective bargaining?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Batangan. Yes, your understanding is correct.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Ms. Lallo, if most unionized employees got a 3 percent pay raise, how do you justify using WIRP and the EO to give all EA IIs in the Office of the Mayor a salary of \$177,960? Shouldn't the salary adjustments for non-union employees be similar to the 3 percent that unionized employees received? How do you use the WIRP and EO to recommend salary increases over 12 times that much in the Office of the Mayor?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I will hand this off to Chief of Staff in just a moment. There are a variety of reasons for the salary increases that were approved for Office of the Mayor, but I think one of them is, as you all are aware, appointed positions do not come with the same job security as civil service positions, so providing competitive wages is very important to incentivize employees to remain in those positions. The other thing is to remain competitive with some other salaries in the County. Chief of Staff?

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Budget Director. And thank you, Councilmember Batangan, for your...for your question. In addition to what Budget Director has already shared, which I think is...is pretty robust and thorough, I would say that Mayor makes the choices in relationship to salary and the compensation. He's very aware of equal pay for the appointed folks, so that's what it's about.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, the Office of the Mayor is just one department within the framework of the County. I can see justification for one, maybe two people making director-level salaries, but four seems a little excessive. Just because people have the title of chief or director in the Office of the Mayor doesn't mean that they are...they have the same responsibilities as department heads established with the Charter. Can you provide justification for the need for four people to have director-level salaries in the Office of the Mayor?

MS. LALLO: Sure, thank you for that question. So, in relationship...and I'll give you a specific example. So, in relationship to the Communications Department, we've never seen a Communications Department as robust...or it's my understanding, as robust as we have right now. However, the...the need and intensity for communications within the County only intensifies in relationship to what's happening in our community. What we know is that when communications is...is efficient and effective, right? For instance, we get less calls in the call center at MEMA, right? So, we need to stay hip, trendy, and relevant in that to make sure that the communications continues to . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . match the need of the community.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. I hear my time. Thank you, Administration. Thank you, Chair.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, just a point of information. I only saw three Executive Assistant IIs.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Sorry. You're correct, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: There is one additional E/P outside of the Administration Program slated for that salary.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, got it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Chair Lee, Paltin, Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. My question has to do with economic development. So, whomever wants to answer that question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I think...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: We know because of Bill 9, hundreds, if not thousands of jobs will be lost. And so, what is your plan? And I know you talked about economic zones, enterprise zones. Could you expand on that and other plans to offset the losses in jobs?

MS. LALLO: Thank...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Anybody?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you, Chair Lee. I will...I will start and then I will hand it over to Director Rojas-Letisi. In relationship to workforce development, the Office of Economic Development has re-shifted and refreshed, as you all know. The focus of that...that...that refresh is really about workforce development and how can we create jobs that meet the needs of the community and also meet the needs of the worker, keeping our folks here in not just living wage jobs, but thriving wage jobs. Director, do you want to take it from there?

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Absolutely. We have a really robust program through our Workforce Development Division as well, too. So, I'm sure most of you know that that is 100 percent funded through the State. It's a Federal program, but it's funded through the State, and then we, of course, administer it on the County level, too. So, there are a lot of wonderful campaigns, programs that are part of that. We opened a program, including subsidies for...for employers to be able to pay up to 50 percent of their workforce, targeting different youth and adult programs as well, too. We also have our American Job Center, too, which directly assists individuals looking for either employment opportunities, upscaling job training, a very robust program.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Jade? Jade? Okay. Thank you for that description. But at the end of the day, let's say in the first year and the second year and the third year, how many new jobs will you be creating or subsidizing?

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: That's a great question. I don't have that exact answer for you. I do know that we are definitely...one of our primary focuses is identifying the career pathways in all the different sectors that we have a high-level focus on. So, we're having conversations with these different sectors that we kind of shared with previously in regards to construction, healthcare, creative industries, and the visitor industry, getting a better understanding, a boots-on-the-ground understanding, too, of what their needs are so that we can have conversations at a State level, you know, with our partners like UHMC to be able to provide them data to support programming's coming back. And I think a perfect example is, you know, we used to have the engineering...four-year engineering department...excuse me, degree program at UHMC, and it's no longer there anymore, unfortunately, because the priority is for them to send students to the Manoa campus. But if we can provide that information...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So...so, you're...you're looking at this in broad strokes. You don't have targeted numbers, like the first year . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . you know, 100 new jobs, or anything like that?

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: I wouldn't say necessarily right now. We're still collecting a lot of that information. So, I don't have those specific numbers quite yet.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I thought I had heard you say that Makahiki season was going to be branding for the Visitors Bureau, and it was something like 1.5 million. This past fiscal year, we had 300,000 for the Wedding Expo, and then like, I think 106,000 for the Hele Mai something. So, that's like three times of what we spent last year. And we don't know the future of oil, jet fuel, and things like that. And my understanding of Makahiki season is it's like mid-November to late January or February, although this year, it seems to be going into April. . . .*(laughing)*. . . So, I was wondering if you could explain like 1.5 mil for mid-November through possibly February for tourism. I...I...I'm not understanding.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. So, the Makahiki season line item under the Grants Division Program, both in operations and in grant funding, is a total of \$1 million. This is not a tourism grant. The intent is for these grants to be provided to local entities to host different types of events throughout Makahiki season. And I will let Chief of Staff elaborate. Thank you.

MS. LALLO: Thank you. Just really quickly as an example, \$150,000 actually will be spent on the framework and marketing packets, I guess, like a press package, for instance. The rest of that money is open for grant applications. As an example, we might see a

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Taste of Makahiki, or we might see our local fashion folks do some kind of fashion show, and those kinds of things. So, we're looking at innovation from our small businesses and our business community and our...our community groups to come together and do some innovation around Makahiki. What we want to do is really amplify the voice for this, bringing everybody together with a theme in a subject-matter and everybody push at the same time around the same thing, if that makes sense.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. If...if we could get like more detail in writing, that'd be great. For economic redevelopment in West Maui, I just was talking with one of our residents who has been very involved, and they would like to try and create a commercial space across the smokestack area. One of the issues is parking, but that was supposed to be, from what we heard from Transportation the other day or the day before, the West Maui Transit Hub. Is there any consideration for commercial . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . space that's going to be right next to the transit hub? And has this entity reached out to you? Are you providing any support? Because I mean, personally, I feel like it's a great area because it's out of the sea level rise. You know, it has...he's thinking of restaurants and other kind of local businesses, which the...the fear for me has been that Front Street could turn into from what International Marketplace was to what it is now. And that would really push a lot of our local businesses out, especially when, you know, monthly rates were like 30,000 a month plus CAM, plus a percentage, you know, and now with brand new stuff and new Code and like that, who local is going to be able to afford that?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that, Councilmember Paltin. So, no, that entity has not reached out to me. I would love to speak with that entity. That...that funding and that support would really come from our friends at the Office of Recovery. But the Office of Economic Development and Office of Recovery is focused together, right, multi-pronged to support redevelopment and economic revitalization in West Maui.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I'll put you in touch with Kimo Clark Truth Excavation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Not really, but I'll abide by your bell.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . We'll come around. Member Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. This is going to be on page 537 of...of the proposed budget. This is in regards to the houseless solutions. So, please provide a breakdown of FY '26 spending for the houseless solutions. Were any of these innovative solutions successful and plan to continue through other more established funding streams within the departments or...or within other departments? How were the grantees selected for these funds? And if there was an application process, please provide a list of organizations that applied, the name of the project, and the amount requested, and the amount approved by the office. I guess it's really coming, like, is there...you know, how many people are applying? Is there a huge need? Like, that was

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really surprising from the Department of Ag, their responses to this. So, can you guys respond to that one?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I think we'll respond to the majority of this in writing as Ms. Crozier isn't available, but what I will say is the solicitation has not been issued for these funds to be used as...entirely as grant funds, and we can provide more detail on that in the written response. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Fair enough. Okay. Thank you, Director Milner. I'm going to pivot about the REPI funding. Please describe the two initiatives created under the REPI funding in FY '26. What FY '27 will continue or implement these initiatives? And that's on page 555.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Yes, the REPI grant's a reimbursable grant from DOD. So, the County fronts the money and gets reimbursed. So, far, we've expended \$314,865 and received full reimbursement. It's going to be a phased long-term investment in flood mitigation. This is going to establish critical foundational improvements. Measurable reductions in flood severity and sediment load will occur progressively over time as watershed and wetland systems mature. We're also continuing to pursue additional mitigation strategies and funding opportunities, including the REPI funding included in the 2027 Budget. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I'm going to pivot and one more question about the Maui County Fair. And I'm wondering how much money was...revenue was generated in Maui County Fair in 2025, and what was the total cost versus the revenue or the profit and loss? And that's on page 557.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Yes, we are working with the Department of Management and Festivals of Aloha to get the final numbers. We have the gross number, but not the total profit. So, we want to make sure we have accurate numbers before that's transmitted. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Would you want to say the gross or you want to wait?

MS. MILNER: The gross, it looks like, was...sorry, this is going to sound funny, but it's gross people, not gross dollars. . . .*(laughing)*. . . So, it was over 118,000 people and we will provide you with the dollar amount. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's amazing...118 or 180? I'm sorry, what'd you say?

MS. MILNER: 1-1-8.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's amazing. Okay. Thanks so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Cook.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo, Chief of Staff and Budget Director and Ms. Rojas, for being with us today. Okay. Some of my questions were asked, and my question regarding financial literacy is in OM-2 that Member Cook asked. So, I'll just ask if you can share a bit more about that.

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. So, in relationship to financial literacy, you know, what...what we have found, right, is we spend a lot of grant dollars supporting pilot programs and initiatives to...to what avail, right? What...what equals success? So, the financial literacy is really to pair with our small business programs, our nonprofit organizations in relationship to providing pathways to sustainability. Outside of County funding, outside of grant funding, is there some way that we can generate and create some synergy around this?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Awesome. And then will that be managed internally or will that be contracted out to a third party?

MS. LALLO: That would be contracted out to a third party.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Were...were you able to, you know, talk story with like groups or organizations that would want to work on this?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for that. And Budget Director Milner said it depends, you know, contract or grant versus grant, right? So, we'll see how that all shakes out. What we're hoping for is for that sector to come forward with some best practices and some innovation that specifically matches Maui. It needs to be Maui-specific, Maui-centric. And so, we have indeed talked to some folks in the sector. That's where we co-created the idea. And so, that will be obviously a competitive process. So, we're hoping to get the best of the best.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification on it being a competitive process. And I think...I don't...do you know, are you going to set the guidelines and then, you know, put it into the scope of work? Or are you going to ask the contractor or third party to develop the guidelines on like, you know, is it just the...anyone that receives a grant from us? Should our, you know, employees who write grants for County also attend?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that. That's a really...that's a great question and a great suggestion, by the way, in relationship to folks that are writing the grants. So, it depends. If it is...if we come out with the specific criteria and the framework and the metrics and the outcomes and all of that, it will be a contract, yeah? Otherwise, it will be a grant.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. I think this is wonderful. I support it. That's my questions for now. And my Sunshine Law disclosure is I have two minors now in the house with me. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Lucky. Wonderful. Next, we have Member Cook.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Member Cook, followed by Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chief of Staff and Budget Director. I see that the Kihei Clean and Safe has a line item for 480,000 and it's been shifted. Is that all kind of addressed now? That...is it going to be a grant? And...and I don't want to get in the weeds on this. I'm just...I love you nodding your head and it being here, enough. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MS. MILNER: Here's a verbal yes for the record. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The small business promotion, I'm a big advocate of cultivating it. I'm curious, it has \$500,000, there's a reduced funding of 70. Off the top of your heads, do we know what type of things were done in 2024, 2025, and 2026? Because the budget has been pretty consistent. Is there some milestone point of reference from the past that we're continuing to cultivate or is it just always sort of bubbling up? Thank you.

MS. LALLO: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Cook, for that question. So, we've shifted grants around a little bit, right, as you know, and we have a lot of small grantees that apply for \$25,000 or less. We have a Small Grants Program for them with a simpler application process, yeah? So, there's some there. Then we have the Makahiki piece also, right? Certainly a small business opportunity for them as well. And then we have that general small business promotion. Small business promotion, when we take a look at public purpose for those funds, some of the things that have been done are entrepreneurial workshops, a lot of opportunities for training and networking and staying...I always say, hip, trendy, and relevant, right? Which is absolutely necessary for...for our small businesses. In addition to that, creating opportunities for small business to connect not just locally, right, but Statewide, national, global because we live in that world today. So, those are those opportunities. And I would say that small business promotion, we are absolutely looking at piloting things, supporting new, innovative ideas, and not re-funding every year because we want our small businesses to be sustainable. And I will open it up to Director Rojas for any additional.

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Yeah. I think I just want to put a lot of emphasis on the fact that we really want to support and uplift these small businesses on a global scale too. So, of course, we see Hawai'i on the Hill as...in general, right, as one of the staple events throughout the nation to really shed a lot of light on these different businesses. But any opportunity that we have to help these small businesses increase additional revenue streams, we really want to help and love and support them in that way as well too.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thanks. And Chief of Staff, your answer was, the...you stated it...well, I was just curious that it isn't to basically re-fund different things each year, so there is...it's sort of like new stuff each year generally?

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MS. LALLO: Yes. So, historically, I would say that we see some of the same folks coming back again and again and again, right? And that's why we're looking at that financial literacy component, really trying to provide tools. So, we're fund one and done or fund two and done kind of thing. But here's what we know for small businesses, right? Any good business . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . plan cannot be successful in a year, or very few, right? It needs to be over a certain term. And so, when we see people coming back for more than one year, we're looking for progression towards sustainability.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Not wanting to get in the weeds on the grant thing, but it seemed like the...having a custom...a streamlined modified grant process for \$25,000 and less makes sense. Having like 70 of them, \$1.5 million worth, doesn't seem that it's meeting that criteria. Like...so, I'm just curious. And it...it probably just...there's a huge demand and trying not to limit it, but it seems like the objective to have it being simplified, executable, manageable for that dollar amount gets somewhat distorted by having so many of them. Are we...anyway, how confident are you that you're not going to have brain damage?

MS. LALLO: . . . *(laughing)*. . . I'm not confident of that now. Thank you for your question. So, in relationship to that, we have a lot of really cool community events that are about gathering community, right? They don't necessarily need an economic development objective or an ag objective or those kinds of things, but our community does well when it gathers, right? We take care of each other. That's how we show...that's how we celebrate all of those kinds of things, right? We want to make sure that we're catching...that we're catching those, right? A lot of you in your residency area funds earmarked money for that anyway. So, we're hoping to wrap that up in the small business...or sorry, in the small...Small Grants Program.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thanks. That makes sense because there's...for those, there's sort of a beginning, middle, and an end. It isn't as much of a ongoing mapping. So, maybe that would be available for some like sunset tune kind of stuff in the parks, different community groups wanting to have events. Okay. Thank you.

MS. LALLO: Yes, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That's all my questions, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member U'u-Hodgins, then Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you for being with us. I'm going to start off by saying, as much as I love all you folks, I'm going to double down what Member Batangan said about some of the raises and some of the step movements, especially when we have our first responders not get a step movement and their new contract basically reflects a reduction in pay. And now I understand you guys are not civil employees and they are, but they also can't strike. And when this Administration is giving themselves raise and then reducing the funding for our first responders, especially after post-fire, is pretty wild. I don't think I necessarily need a response because I don't know if there's anything you're going to say that's going to make me feel

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better about this. I'll be honest. Like I'm really shaking because it's making me mad. I hope we figure this out because what we just did to them while doing this at the same time is super not cool. And I really don't have any other nice words for it, but I'm just going to leave that there. I hear your justification, I just don't agree with it. So, moving on. Can you please explain where we're going to find a balance between OED and the new Grants Program and how they're going to work together while doing similar but different things?

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins. In relationship to the Office of Economic Development versus the Grants Division, it's very different. It would be similar to the Grants Division and the Department of Ag grants or Human Concerns, right? So, Office of Economic Development is completely focused on economic development. Grants Division is those things that don't fall in any of the other departments and provide general Countywide oversight on both incoming and outgoing grants.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And then I see on page 15-16 that we have...and I know you said this earlier, we have two people from Mayor's Office in Admin and one person from OED moving into these...this Grants Program. But we have two people that were appointed that are now moving into civil service and one from civil service moving into the grant section?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that. Now, all of these positions are appointed and --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: -- we're taking those appointed positions and next year, right, for Fiscal Year '27, it will be piloted in the Office of the Mayor, and then for '28, it will be transitioned to Department of Management, where it will be civil service.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. What's that transition look like?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I'm working on the specifics of that with DPS and the Department . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . of Management of what all it will entail. Ideally, we would have been able to start in Department of Management right away, but we all know the process for reorganization, so because of the importance of this, that's why the pilot is happening in Office of the Mayor. But I'm happy to send you a follow-up when I get more details on how that process will flesh out. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Great. And then I do have another question that maybe we could get the response in writing. So, you just answered Member Cook's question about the community gathering grants for the small grants, which I see the benefit. Like in Makawao, we have a lot of those, so I see it, and I like those. But can you please share the criteria for what you're looking for with those small grants? And we can get that in writing if you haven't sent it already.

MS. LALLO: We would be happy to provide that in writing.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Done? Yeah. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah, I mean, I heard the bell.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Sinenci? *(pause)*

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Am I up?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. Sorry, you didn’t hear me.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And mahalo, Ms. Lallo and Budget Director. I, too...I did want to mahalo the Mayor for the Hāna youth travel of \$20,000. We did have Ms. Mary Brooke on Monday night from the Hāna Dragon Booster Club, and she asked about how would she be able to apply for...for some of the student travel funds?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Department?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question, Councilmember Sinenci. Please just put her in contact with me, and I’m happy to walk her through that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. I’ll...I’ll forward your...but Ms. Lallo, you would be in charge of all of the...the grants under the Office of the Mayor?

MS. LALLO: Yes, I will be continuing to love and support that effort.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. And then I did see that Ke Kula ‘O Pi’ilani School up in ‘Iao has got a line item. I did also see in the news that they’re...they’re thinking about moving the school. Is this funds...has the...the Mayor addressed possible move of the charter school?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. I believe the discussion around the move happened after this first round of storms, so that’s not addressed in the budget, but we’re definitely supportive of Ke Kula ‘O Pi’ilani, and if the funds need to be used for a relocation, I think we’re supportive of having that discussion. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, and I do see Ms. Rojas-Letisi with her hand up.

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. Just to add to that, I did meet with them last week, and actually, the preference would be for them to

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remain where they are, so I don't think that they plan on using the funds for that as they're, you know, culturally rooted where they are currently, and want to address those steps first before even thinking about potentially moving the campus.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that update. And then it looks...so maybe this is for you, Chair. It looks like the residency area funds also will be under the Mayor. Would we...when do we have to submit our revisions for that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, that would be due on the 18th, which is Saturday at 4:30, with the rest.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. *(pause)*

CHAIR SUGIMURA: More questions?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. And then the last question about the small grants. Those are competitive, small \$25,000?

MS. LALLO: Yes, Councilmember, those are competitive.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Great. That's all the questions I had, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. So, I noticed that in the...the program book, we have Kemper Sports Marketing for 400,000, and we have PGA for Century Tournament for 150,000. That means it's happening. Which...which is the one that's at Kapalua Golf Course?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, that's the Century tournament.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Century, right? So, is it coming back? You folks know something?

MS. LALLO: Well, we have been...thank you for the question. We have been in constant communication with both the...the PGA and, of course, the...the golf course itself, trying to pull together the Century Tournament and taking a look not only at next year, but what does that look like in the future, right? What's the sustainability of it? It's a huge revenue piece for us in a variety of different ways. Century is a wonderful philanthropic community partner, as we all know, and we are doing everything we can to pull that together, including line-iteming this.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Even with no commitments?

MS. LALLO: Correct. Nothing in writing.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Because I...I think they were thinking, from what I've heard, is that the...it's no longer going to be in January, but it would be moving to possibly October, or is there some changes that may happen? Of course, a lot of things has to happen also, right, with the golf tournament...I mean, the grounds and everything.

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MS. LALLO: Correct, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Kemper Sports Marketing is 400,000.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, so Kemper Sports, as you know, is the folks that make the Maui Invitational happen here, and what they would like to do...we know that in sports and in basketball, there's especially, right, there's a whole bunch of stuff happening, right, and there's a lot of competition in a variety of different ways. I won't bore you with that piece, but Kemper is committed to coming back and also to bring...sorry, and also bringing back...or adding a women's tournament to this. So, it will be going from the men's Maui Invitational, and it will be adding a full women's tournament as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ah, same time? Or is it two...

MS. LALLO: I'm not...you know, that's a great question. I'm not sure about the timing. I don't know how it could be at the same time, but I would think that it would be in the same window.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Because their funds last year were for 250 and it's gone to 400.

MS. LALLO: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, you're anticipating there's going to be another weekend or...

MS. LALLO: Exactly, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Interesting. Very good. And so, with economic development, right, so this is Ms. Rojas-Letisi. Good to see you. And maybe you can tell us what kind of jobs you are creating as we are, you know, feeling like we're going into a slight...well, I don't want to use . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . the R word, but...and I ran out of time. Okay. Next round. So, anybody up for next round? I have Batangan. Okay. We'll do another round. Batangan, Lee, Paltin, Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez. Proceed.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Two minutes.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: So, when the Budget Director and Deputy Finance Director talked to us about Carryover/Savings, I asked for a report on all of the Council provisos that were not encumbered. So, one, thank you for pulling that together, and great job in taking care of most of our requests. But one stood out to me, Mālama Kakanilua, and the notes in your report at the time said that rather than a grant, as the Budget Ordinance said, that you guys would instead issue an RFP for this. I followed up with your office, and it was again reiterated that you would instead of provide a grant, issue an RFP. So, my question is, if the Budget Ordinance, which was adopted by this body and signed into law by the Mayor, says that a specific amount of money should go

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to a specific organization for a specific purpose, how is it that you're able to unilaterally say that instead of giving it to them, you'll issue an RFP for a slightly different purpose?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Batangan. I don't believe it's for a different purpose. It's the purpose that requires it to be a contract because that's a County property.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. But then how would you go to RFP if it's for a specific organization?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. We cannot give contracts to specific organizations unless there's a sole source justification or something else. So...

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: And is the...is the proviso justification for a sole source then?

MS. MILNER: No, it is not.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, then how do we square the Budget Ordinance with the new practice of contract versus ordinance...or contract versus grant?

MS. MILNER: So, if something like this came up this year and Corp. Counsel advised it should be a contract, the language would read up to 200,000 must be for the development of a long-term management plan for the 500-acre parcel, et cetera, et cetera.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. But that is slightly different language than what's in the Budget Ordinance itself. And the response I got from OED was that this had been in the ordinance since Victorino's time. So, it isn't just a casualty of the difference between a grant and a contract. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. If I understand the question, I think similar to what we've discussed over the last several meetings, we have been going over with a more fine-toothed comb, determining there have been things in the budget for the last several years, including the grant to *Akakū* and things like that that shouldn't have been a grant and should have been contracted. And so, we're trying to make those changes to align with the recommendations that we're now getting from Corporation Counsel. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: I guess I'm still not satisfied with the answer on how we can change language in the ordinance itself, or change the directive from the ordinance itself. Like what's the legal mechanism for overruling the language in the adopted ordinance?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Batangan. The ordinance does not say that it needs to be a grant. It does say for *Mālama Kakanilua*. We will be coming in for a budget amendment to remove that so that it can be issued as a competitive RFP. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee, this is...we got to continue.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Director Milner...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead, sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Director Milner, you mentioned a grant of...well, Mr. Sinenci brought it up, but for Ke Kula 'O Pi'ilani, the 40,000. I know you're familiar with this because I put in 40,000 every year for the last six or seven years. So, is this for a different purpose?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That 40,000?

MS. MILNER: Yes, we have a line item for Ke Kula for 333,000 for this year. That's intended. They have a couple programs they want to do as well as make some improvements. Obviously, more of that money may need to shift to improvements in light of the recent storms.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Great, great, great. So, in other words, you don't need my 40,000 then, right?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I will...I will leave that to Ke Kula 'O Pi'ilani to determine if 373,000 would be more useful to them than 333.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, I'm pretty sure. And as far as the golf tournament, that 400 or 450,000, is that for marketing or is that for water?

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Chair, for that question. It is 150,000, and that is for the marketing component for the PGA, it is not for water.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Yeah. Because as you probably know, water is the big issue, yeah? And I'm not sure how they could move that tournament to October because that's the kickoff tournament of the year for the PGA. That's the...Century Tournament is the first one, and then the second one is on O'ahu for a reason...that second one. So, that's...they're all in sync. So, I mean, how close are we to solving the problem of water for the Century Tournament, Ms. Lallo?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for that question, Chair. Water . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . that's a great question. I mean, you know all of the things that are happening and all...all of the acquisitions and the management and the maintenance and all of those kinds of things. So, that is...that's happening. What we can do is we can be prepared for that in working with PGA. PGA is looking at, I think, shifting their schedule as well, and they're looking at this in its totality, not just the Century, right? Whether those tournaments are coming back to Hawai'i at all, and if so, what would that look like?

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hmm. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Paltin, followed by Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. My next question is on the additional funding for Public Information and Communication Specialist and Website Design Team for Maui Nui Strong, Maui Nui First, and miscellaneous costs for email blast and social media. If you could explain that? And then, like, you know, I think one of my questions on the follow-up OM-2 was...like it's kind of disjointed. Like if I'm trying to provide information for my community, and then I get the email press release, I'm looking for how do I share this information to the community, and there's not a corresponding Instagram or social media thing that happens at the same time. It's like, I don't know when, how much later. So, if I'm looking at the email with the press release or communication, I got to, like, screenshot it, put it on social media so that my constituents can know the same information that I got through email. But then when like the social media component comes out, like, all slick and pictured then my stuff looks like stupid, you know? So, just...like, that's what I meant by disjointed in the OM-2. Like, you know, people are like, I can't read this little thing, you know? And then what's wrong with the Maui Nui Strong, Maui Nui First, as it is, that it needs more money? Is this related to Maui Recovers doing a storm page, Kona storm section?

MS. LALLO: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Paltin, for the question. So, in relationship to website, we know that the County's website is...is tough to navigate. It's not very user-friendly, and that it's going through...it's going through a full refresh. That refresh is happening kind of as we speak, right, in motion, hoping that that's going to help . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . Councilmember Paltin, with the issues that you're talking about, because what's reflected in our social media, not reflected on our website, right? So, trying to get those aligned. So, actually, one of our comms folks is leading that refresh out of the Office of the Mayor, so we're hoping that there's going to be continuity and consistency and easier for you to share out to your community.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And I...I just wanted to just add that it's not just County of Maui social media. There's like...sometimes you don't know which one to go to. Because the Fire Department has their own, the Police Department has their own, MEMA has their own, HIEMA has their own, and it's not always a unified message on like the important things. Like I mean, I'm sure the Fire Department can say about like, you know, don't leave your grill unattended extra in addition to the County stuff, but the important County things should be like across the board. And then...you know what I'm saying? Like if it's get out of Hawaiian homes, Leiali'i, because Ka La'i Ola is overflowing, that should be like an across the board kind of thing at simultaneous so that, you know, everyone knows, evacuate or whatever.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, absolutely, Councilmember. And that's why our communications team is leading that. Certainly many departments have spun off things in response to a County website that is antiquated, right? That's why it's so important to pull in those websites.

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Some of those websites that we have up will be actually collapsed when the new refreshed County website comes out. So, it will definitely streamline things.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Cook. Do you have questions?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I think you missed Member Johnson.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I think he's before me.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead. Sorry, did I miss anything?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. All right. All right. Two minutes, here we go.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, interesting story about the Century Tournament, just for laying it on the line. Is it happening? A yes, no, or maybe?

MS. LALLO: Maybe.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Now, that concerns me when we talk about money in the budget, but okay, maybe that'll...maybe that money will be in the budget. I don't know. Let me...let me ask some other questions before... I want to talk about the GreenPrints, okay? Is the office involved in creation of the GreenPrint in accordance with MCC 2.82.050? Is any funding dedicated to executing this contract? What plan and process guides the use of the Open Space Fund in acquisition of properties? You know, that...that green...GreenPrint has been going on for so long and we keep adding extensions. So, can you guys give us an update?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Yes, Office of the Mayor's Staff does work with the committee that has oversight on the GreenPrint. As we discussed earlier, I haven't had an update from them on any progress toward reaching out to consultants or moving forward. We are talking to them so we can provide you a more detailed response in the letter, particularly if there are dollar amounts needed, but we are supportive. And if they aren't able to meet until later in the year and make progress, you know, we...we can talk about an amendment at that time once we have a better dollar figure. As for the Open --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MILNER: -- Space Fund, the Office of the Mayor works with the Department of Management to determine how those funds are allocated in the fiscal

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year budget. There are several things we take into consideration, including whether the entity qualifies for the use of the fund, whether the use of the funding aligns with the purposes of the Open Space Fund, whether they are using that money to leverage additional funding, but we'll put the rest in writing. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I want to talk about the...the...the salaries . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . of some of the folks that obviously are contentious. So, is the Mayor Office [sic] going to lead on supplemental agreements? Is the vision to plan or improve benefits and possibly supplement our employees that are being left behind?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. As Managing Director spoke to the other day, there are discussions around supplemental agreements, particularly for our bargaining...our lower-paid bargaining unit, that are in progress. And as we have more information on that, we will share it. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I'd love to hear more information. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. Let's see. Okay. In...oh, shoot, I didn't write down page number, but the...the goals and objectives. There's one about Kuha'o Business Center on Molokai, and it says that the goal is to provide excellent business service to our community, and then it has the number of clients served per year, and it's 5,707. I'm...I'm guessing that the number of people helped, that may be duplicative and not unique individuals. If that's unique individuals, that's really impressive, because that's like far more than half of the community.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for that, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. In relationship to the count, clearly I would say that it's not unique individuals, and it's total amount of units that have been served, as opposed to people. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that. And then...shoot, I don't know if someone asked about the Tourism Management Grant Fund. Did someone already? I know Member Johnson submitted that question in OM-2. But if no one asked about that, could you speak to that?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. The Tourism Management Grant Fund has been maintained at 450,000 for this fiscal year, and that's intended to be a competitive line item for folks to apply for.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then, for...for some of the items that remain under OED and some that are being moved to the new Grants Division, can you speak a little bit to how that was like the process in deciding which would stay under which division?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for that question, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. So, Lesley and I sat down together, and we went line by line, and we said, does the

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foundational component of this . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . have an economic development interest? Yes or no? And then we split it.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: That's great. And then I did hear the timer, but just a last follow-up. I know we spoke about like it not being kind of all over the place and it having a little bit more of like alignment with our plans, such as the CEDS, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, and other economic development plans that we have to kind of align our funding to our action items or, you know, the recommendations from our plans. Is that also going to be part of the intention moving forward?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that. And yes, we want to be mission-focused and data-informed. And so, everything that we do, right, we're trying to get everybody paddling in the same direction. Not super easy, by the way, but...but yes. So, Director Rojas-Letisi has been working very hard in connecting with State and everybody else she can get a meeting with to say, hey, what are we going to do collectively so we can amplify and have deeper, more sustainable impact?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then I don't see Ms. Rojas-Letisi unmuting herself, so that's...mahalo for that response. And I...I do love honoring the time and energy that went into developing the plans by implementing the recommendations that came out of the...the groups that worked on those plans. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Next, we have...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. I do see her raising her hand now, or you unraised your hand?

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: I...if time allows, Chair, but...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please.

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Would you like me to...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please answer.

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We're right there.

MS. ROJAS-LETISI: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, yeah, Rawlins-Fernandez. And so, just to add to that too, so in identifying these different reports, right, so there's the Chamber of Commerce 2023...or excuse me, 2030 Blueprint, and there also is the CEDS report too, but the CEDS report had come out prior to the wildfires happening, right? So, there's been a huge economic shift based off of that, so I just wanted to add that there is a lot of emphasis on making sure that we can try to amend the CEDS report before we

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actually...before...because it's supposed to be updated every five years, but hopefully we can do that sooner than later as we move forward with identifying the different programs that we need to invest in, and then again, in ensuring the alignment of. But as Chief of Staff Lallo had mentioned, we are very involved at a State level with . . .*(inaudible)*. . . DBEDT, DMAP, and many other different groups that are coming together to identify holistically on a State level all the different sectors that we should be investing in, which then, of course, will trickle down to our community directly as well too.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Rojas-Letisi. And I'll put a plug here for our Molokai Career and Index Report that I had done, so we can also use that as a guide for Molokai-specific strategies in economic development. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook, followed by Member U'u-Hodgins, then Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I don't have any further questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No further questions? Okay. Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. So, for the grants, the newly-minted Grants Division Program, I do see that one of the things you folks are going to be focusing on in that program is the Residency Area Fund, so I think that's probably all of our things. And sometimes we have it and it goes in all these different types of grants, but are they all going to be centrally located in this Grants Division Program?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins. Yes, the intent is they will all be centrally located in the program, and we will have one specific individual assigned specifically to the Residency Area Fund, so you'll know exactly who to speak to.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Got it. Okay. I like that consistency. Good luck to them.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And so, when...when...now that we have this new program, OED, and some of the other grants in like Human Concerns and DEM, and with this now new program, are you folks going to be in communication with the grantees, and be like, hey, this is your person you're now going to talk to, you weren't actually quite a fit in OED or whatever, and here's where you're going to go?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for that question, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins. So, yes, as you know, we're getting ready to launch our grant workshops across all departments. I think OED typically goes first. That workshop is on the 15th, and that is where we will definitely be having those conversations. One of the things that we want to be able to

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answer is, this is what my grant is, this is my idea, this is my program, where do I fit?
So, it's really important --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: -- for all of our grant managers and those folks doing those workshops to be able to answer that question, which means they're going to have to know what our other friends in other departments are doing.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. Okay. I think that's all I have for now, but I do look forward to reading your responses to the questions. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. My questions were answered. Thank you for answering our questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. So, I just have one question. Keokea Hoolaulea, where are they?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question. Alikea actually just reached out to me and said, hey, when does the application window open? So, they would be in the Small Grants Program because they're under 25...25 or under.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And there...is it now with another department?

MS. LALLO: That is with the Grants Division.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Grants Division under the Mayor?

MS. LALLO: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And so, the Grants Division under the Mayor, it looks like there's 6.5 million...I guess I must be looking at the wrong page, there's only bigger grants. And I'm on page 571.

MS. MILNER: Sorry. Chair, if I could just interject, I think what Chief of Staff Lallo was trying to say, the Small Grants Program is a pot that they would apply to. There's no line item for that entity. I believe that's usually line-itemed under the residency area funds. So, if a Councilmember wanted to do that again this fiscal year, they could do that, and then they would be line itemed in the residency area funds rather than applying through the Small Grants Program. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, last year, you all know the...my story about them, right? So, this is Member Kama who asked me to support Keokea Hoolaulea, so I did. And then OED was not able...or they were not able to get their insurance because they didn't have, I don't think, leadership to see it through, and they missed the deadline. Their event was

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ending of July, they didn't have their insurance done, and so therefore, their money lapsed. So, what happened to that money lapse? Or do we --

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- have to put in...we have to replace that money? Because it came out of the '26 funds, I think.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. In discussions with the organization, as you know, they used the FY '26 line item to fund that event, but in discussions with them, they said we do not need to reappropriate 25,000 in Fiscal Year '26. If it's in Fiscal Year '27, they think that timing will work better for them to be able to fund their event. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I'm going to...I'm going to call you offline just to get...because they are going to have...they had their event last year, they paid their own money, and they got reimbursed. And this year, they're going to have their event not in July anymore, they're going to move it to September because July was so difficult, and for whatever reason, leadership or whatever, that their insurance didn't get done, or they didn't get the support. I'll talk to you later. Any...okay. That...that's my time. Round three, Members? No? Anybody have round three? Everybody's shaking their head. You're all good? Member Paltin, you have round three?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I don't think I do. I just had a question, I think, for you, because usually we get the answers, like you say, oh, turn in your follow-up questions by 9:00 the next day, but we didn't get OM-2 yet --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Responses.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- so is it the same thing, like...like 24 hours after we get OM-2, then the follow-up questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Good question. Let's ask OCS, can you guys handle it? Okay. So, now we are getting the responses today, so there...did we get all of it? We haven't even gotten OM-2.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, as we discussed earlier, the deadline for OM-2 was April 16th, as that was the originally scheduled date. We are working on gathering the information. It will not be transmitted today because we just found out we were up today a couple days ago --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. MILNER: -- but we will do our best to get it to you early next week. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Early next week. Okay. So, then they're...

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and the same for the Department of Management, we didn't get any responses. So, that's...that's the procedure, is like after we get the response, then we can do any follow-up if we're not clear.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Yeah, otherwise --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- we may be asking the same question. So...so, in terms of...you're going to get that to us, right, Budget Director? So, for the Mayor, it will come next week, Monday, is that correct?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. End of day Monday? Yeah, by end of day Monday.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. And for the Managing Director responses?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I will follow up with Managing Director on the status of those responses. The Budget Office has not received them yet.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Yeah. Okay. So, for the Office of the Mayor, then the responses are going to be due the next morning or the next...by 9:00, can you guys handle?

MR. KRUEGER: So, Chair, yeah, that would be April 14th, and if we anticipate receiving the letter April 13th, then perhaps if...if Members could submit their...any additional questions on April 14th.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. And then we're going to be...next week, Monday, we're going to be on Molokai, right? That'll be a miracle, yeah, if we can do this turn around and read and...but...huh?

MR. KRUEGER: Yes, Chair, unless you want to set a different deadline.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MR. KRUEGER: It's just based on the current practice, yes, if --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MR. KRUEGER: -- the responses are received. If OM-2 is received April 13th, then April 14th would be the due date for Members' additional questions for follow-up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, can we send it...give it to you, like, 4:30 in the afternoon or something, is that...that okay? So, on the...the Office of the Mayor would be, if we get the response on Monday, then 14th. It's coming on Monday, so it would be due Tuesday, right? I put up my calendar. Okay. So, it'll be Tuesday the 15th at 4:30.

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

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: 14th. I should look at a calendar, sorry. Oh, here. Okay. Why don't you tell us, as I'm trying to pull out my calendar and make sure I...

MR. KRUEGER: Yes, Chair. So...so, it sounds like for...the Committee's anticipating receiving the response to OM-2 on April 13th, so for the additional follow-up letter to the Mayor's Office, any additional questions from the Members should be submitted to staff by 4:30 p.m. on April 14th, that's Tuesday.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. And is that it? Oh, the Managing Director. So, we don't even know when the Managing Director's responses are going to be, right?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I'm anticipating receiving them no later than tomorrow, so --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, tomorrow.

MS. MILNER: -- that is my hope, but I need to confirm with Management Staff that I am not being overly optimistic. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, we'll talk about that one tomorrow, right? Okay. Very good. I know there's all kinds of things happening in the community, and so therefore, it makes sense. All right. So, we're done with the Office of the Mayor, and...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Chair, sorry, I have one more question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, sorry. Okay. Please.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you for giving me an extra third round. So, for the small grants, for the community gathering grants, and I'm sure it'll probably cover some other things, what happens if they like fit that criteria you're looking for but it's more than 25,000, is there some space to go over that 25,000?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question. In order to qualify for the Small Grants Program, it's going to be \$25,000 and below, which means that it's a more --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: -- simplified application process. If they want something above \$25,000, then they're going to have to take a look at the...the programs, right, the departments, and see what --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: -- see if they have alignment in any of those.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Because what Member Johnson was asking in Department of Ag earlier about waiving the fees for the farmers' market on County

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property, many of these small grants that have to do with community gathering spend majority of their budget on policing. And I want to ensure that policing is made whole, but that's like what he was talking about, but on a bigger scale. So, we're...you know, we're paying ourself to pay ourself to throw this...to have somebody else throw this community event. So, I do hope we kind of take a look at that and figure out what kind of qualifies as the amount they need for their event, and what qualifies maybe as the amount they need to pay ourselves to pay ourselves. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have...anybody else have questions? Member Cook, you're good. Member Batangan, you're good.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: A follow-up to Member U'u-Hodgins' question. So, in the residency area district funds that's been consolidated, if it's 25 or less, will they also be streamlined under this small grants process?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. So, what you're saying is, is that if they are \$25,000 or less and they're line-itemed in your residency fund, do they qualify for the simplified application process?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Correct.

MS. LALLO: I think that that's...yeah, I think that's reasonable. Yes. Look at us making decisions today.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Mahalo, Chief of Staff. Mahalo, Chair. That was it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just wanted to clarify what Member U'u-Hodgins was saying. Like are you talking about like instead of paying them to pay us to host an event, like waiving fees instead or something?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Great question. I'm not too sure how this would work, but like when I work with the Makawao Association and they have to do the 4th of July parade and the nighttime party, a good chunk of their budget just goes to police. It's a requirement that we put on the event. And so...and as much as they can do all the fundraising, it's like, we are asking for money...they're asking for money for...from us to pay another County entity and it eats up a lot of their budget. I don't have an answer on how that would work, but it's...you know, it just feels like we're having like one of those Lazy Susans on a Chinese buffet and we just keep moving it.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, I think we got to pay the police because that's like if they sign up for overtime or something --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- but maybe we can waive permitting or something, I don't know.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, they need to be made whole. That's why I don't have an answer, but it's...it's a lot, it's very expensive. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Got it. Thank you for clarifying.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any more questions for round three? Seeing none. Okay. So, Members, you also noticed that the residency area pot, which were...was at 140, we changed it to 200, it's back at 140. Just FYI, we can talk about it in decisions week. I know that was a big deal for us last budget cycle. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I did have a question about that, but I was saving it until we get to the Revolving Funds. Are we still doing Revolving Funds today? Because in...I don't know if it's good to talk about if Chief of Staff is still there because there is a Revolving Fund that is called like similar to what our district pots are called, but I think it doesn't have anything in there. Is that...did that used to be like if the districts didn't use the entirety of their fund, it went into the Revolving Fund, or was it something completely different?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, interesting. Do you know where it is in the budget that you're referencing?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, I think it's appendix...the...the Revolving Funds. Is that appendix...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Appendix...

MS. MILNER: Appendix A, Part II. Apologies, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: A, Part II.

MS. MILNER: Councilmember Paltin, are you talking about the Economic Development and Cultural Programs Revolving Fund?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes, that's what I'm talking about.

MS. MILNER: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I'm not aware...I'm not aware that any of those residency area funds that go unused go into that fund, but if you'd like to send that

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question in writing, I'm happy to dig a little bit more into the history of the fund. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's amazing. . . .(inaudible). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, because it's zero, zero, zero, and then one of the questions the Mayor...that you had sent was like is this fund still needed? And I didn't really understand the answer, like why is it still needed if it's zero, zero, zero, unless like our excess that don't get spent in a fiscal year goes in there, but then that brought up the question like is it to West Maui's one? Is it separated by the districts or what? So, I was holding off on that question until we...it looked like we were going to talk about Revolving Funds and general budget, something . . .(inaudible). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I...I was going to talk about the...as a last item, to talk about the budget...what is it called?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I know the answer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. What is the answer?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It's in the County Code. It was created in 2011. It's under 3.81.0...oh, or 3.81.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What was it created for?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, it's not...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: The purpose of the Economic Development and Cultural Programs Revolving Fund shall be to provide funds for the economic development and economic development programs; cultural restoration and cultural programs in the County of Maui. The Council finds that the creation of the fund is necessary to strengthen and diversify the County's economy; to support existing County businesses; to promote job creation; to attract new business, industry, construction, and events that will foster economic development in the County; to restore cultural and historic sites and facilities; to promote cultural programs; and to improve the overall economic, cultural, and social well-being of the County.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good job.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Why did they create the fund? It...it just has like the use of the fund, but I can go back in 2011 to see the meeting minutes to see why it was discussed and why it was created. But that was the purpose of the fund.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did it talk about a revenue source, since it's zero, zero, zero right now?

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: There shall be deposited into the Economic Development and Cultural Revolving Fund any Council appropriation to the funding [sic] of [sic]...and all monies donated to the County for economic development and cultural programs.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. MILNER: Chair? Sorry, if I can just chime in really briefly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chime in.

MS. MILNER: Apologies. Yes, and I think if I remember correctly from OM-1, what we stated was that, you know, the purposes stated in that Code section are still very important. I think if the Councilmembers feel those needs are being addressed by the Office of Economic Development or other departments, we're certainly open to having a conversation about the necessity of maintaining that fund. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hmm. Okay. Okay. So, we can go deeper. Any more, Members? Okay. I think we got our questions answered, but we will wait for answers...responses. And then we will reply accordingly with questions. Okay. Members, good job. I will then thank you very much, Chief of Staff. Appreciate it. And I wonder if Budget Director would hang around a little bit so we can talk about the general budget provisions, which is...

MS. MILNER: Always happy to spend time with you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I know. This is like we're now married and together. So, the general budget provisions, which is in our budget document, I'd like to discuss the proposed changes to the general budget provisions, and Staff has distributed...did you distribute it? We're going to distribute it. Have you...have we? Okay. Here it comes. Staff has distributed...is distributing--don't forget, online we have a bunch of people who will need it too--documents...a document comparing this year's proposal with last year's. Most sections appear unchanged, aside from fiscal year...fiscal year and fund balance updates. The substantive changes appear to be in Section 15 and 19. Section 15 adds a provision to direct excess General Excise Tax revenues to go...to go directly into the applicable General Excise Tax fund under Chapter 3.100 point Maui...oh, comma, Maui County Code. Section 19 adds revenue bonds as a financing option, increasing the cap on unreimbursed transfers and loans to 150,000...150 million, and reducing the detail required in the quarterly capital improvements project report. And since we have Director Milner here, I wonder if you could walk through these changes with us and talk about the rationale for the proposed changes? And on this, we're not going to be making any decisions. We want to have a discussion since we have Director here with us. We'll do this during decisions week. Director?

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, to address Section 15 for the GET tax revenues, that was something that was arrived at after discussing it with the Department of Finance for their, I guess, accounting purposes, this mechanism...and for the Budget Office, it's a cleaner way for any excess revenues to be transferred into the GET Fund rather than recognizing them in bulk as General Fund Carryover/Savings. It's better to just directly deposit them into the fund. So, that's what you're seeing there. Section 19, as we've talked about with the Department of Finance and the Department of Water Supply, we are looking into the possibility of doing revenue bonds for the Department of Water Supply. So, that's why that language is added there. I do just want to add that if we do decide to do revenue bonds instead of GO bonds, we would come back to the Council to discuss that. So, putting this language in here doesn't automatically mean we can just switch them to revenue bonds if we want to. As for changing the language around the quarterly report, I apologize, that was not an intentional change, so I'm happy to revert to the adopted language from last year. And I believe that's all. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you're saying H, alphabet H, right, is what you're talking about?

MS. MILNER: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It's all...you've taken it all out, and that was a mistake?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. No, I did not delete anything from that section on the version I was working on. I thought I had pulled the version that was posted as the most recent version of the general budget provisions, so I apologize if that was not the case.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Members, so this...this we will talk about during decisions week, so if you could digest this. Okay. Members, any more questions for the Budget Director? Although we'll have her next week, we can ask you more questions if we need to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Married.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, we're married.

MS. MILNER: I'll be here all month, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So...so, that's it. Oh, Member Paltin has her hand up. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: On the calendar, it said we were also going to do Revolving Funds or additional legislation for session, but I didn't see any additional legislation for session. Are we still doing Revolving Funds?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Staff? I don't have that on my plans.

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

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Today's the 9th, right?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can you talk about...can you talk in . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS SZABO: Chair...Chair, it is on the calendar. There was nothing specific that you had pointed out to us, so we don't have a handout for you, but if you would like to open a discussion for the Members to talk about it, we can obviously support that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Members, you want to do that? Today is the...so I must have an old calendar. I am going to take a short recess just so I can get a new calendar, so...oh, thanks.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Can we still take that recess?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, let's take a recess. So, we'll come back at 4:05, is that all right? 4:10, come back at 4:10. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 3:54 p.m.
RECONVENE: 4:20 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to our meeting, Budget, Finance, Economic Development. It is now 4:20, and I want to announce that Kauanoe Batangan was the first one back sitting at his chair telling me, where is everybody? So, note taken, we are...we are keeping score. Thank you very much for being here.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: There's a fair chance that other Members who are not in the Chamber were also at their desks on time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's true, right? We didn't log in on time. There's Nohe raising her hand. Okay. So, going back to what we were talking about, the Revolving Funds. So, Staff has given over to you the balances that we received. It is in Granicus...what number? It's in Granicus 86. If you look it up, it should have been emailed to you, and Members who are here have gotten a copy of it. The current balance is as of 3/31/26, and it has all the Revolving Funds. You can look at it. And for today, we wanted to...as it was posted on the calendar, that we will be taking up general budget provisions, which we did, and the Revolving Funds, which we just got that list. Member Paltin had that observation about the Revolving Fund that's actually zero balances, so we can talk about that. And additional legislation for...for session. Who had legislation and is not posted for today is Member Johnson. Member Johnson, it would be Bill number 66 and 67 for discussion, but we can't talk about it because we need to post it. But that was the only legislation that we received, okay? So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Also letter T, Landscape Planting and Beautification Revolving Fund is zero, zero, zero as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It's zero too. Okay. Letter T.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So...so, Chair --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- you're saying I can't talk about the choices between putting...creating a Revolving Fund or putting money in the EP&S to help mitigate climate change and solve the problems that we're dealing with? I can't talk about those kinds of things?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wait.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Maybe he can talk about the Revolving Fund part.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Revolving fund. So, we're not making any changes to the Revolving Fund. We are discussing it, and we will do decisions next week. What date next week will we do Revolving Funds? We don't have it calendared, yeah?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I also have E for repeal, County Park Special Revolving Fund, zero, zero, zero.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you have E, has no change, zero. And what else did you say?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, it's E, G --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: G.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- and T.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: E, G, and T. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are all zero, zero, zero.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. E, G. Okay. So, we'll make appropriate changes. And the...all right. Anybody else have any thoughts on this? We'll take...we'll take it up next week. Yes. After then...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Also, the Hawaiian Cultural Restoration Revolving Fund, there is a bill on that, but you're saying we can't talk about it because the bill...the bill is posted on Granicus, I believe. But they wanted to expand the use of that fund, and it was also my understanding that they didn't want to continue the parking lot that...the parking lot that generates the...the revenue.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is this...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Letter N.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is this the one that's in Lahaina that would pay for...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It is, yeah? So, is this a Corp. Counsel...is this...this is Mr. Hanano's question, what to do about that.

MR. HANANO: Chair, yeah. I think the one that Member Paltin is referring to is Bill 63, which I think is on the agenda, as well as --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. HANANO: -- 64 and Reso 25-83. I think Member...as you mentioned earlier, Member Johnson's two bills, 66 and 67, aren't on the agenda. And I think we're going to post that for the next round.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. HANANO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: For next discussion. Okay. So, with these bills then, Member Paltin, you're saying that these funds would then be used based upon what the bill is asking. Is that your question?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I believe the bill for letter N is asking that it be utilized throughout the entirety of the royal complex area. And I mentioned it to the folks at Na Aikane, and I was thinking that we should probably have them weigh in. This fund originally, I think, was managed by Friends of Moku'ula, and then that organization kind of ended, and then it was under Parks, and then it was under 'O'iwi Resources. But when I was talking to Kaiea Medeiros, he was saying that they...they didn't think that the parking lot was appropriate because it is over Moku'ula, Mokuhinia, and so then I'm not sure if we want to...what...what we're doing, if we're going to continue to generate revenue for the Revolving Fund, or if we're not going to continue to generate revenue for the revolving fund. And the request is just to take the 1.17 something million out and blow it on the royal complex, and then annually appropriate it, or if there's other County-owned parking lots that would then generate revenue for the Hawaiian Cultural Restoration Revolving Fund, but it...it seems like a discussion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And I'm not sure if all the right people to discuss it are --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- present.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay. Bigger discussion. Oh, hang on. Okay. So, I'm being told to ask Budget Director if she has any comments regarding this discussion because you have submitted something to us.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, that bill was part of the package that came down from the Office of the Mayor along with the budget bills. This was a request of the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources to allow those funds to be used for the entirety of the royal complex as well as renaming the fund. I am reaching out to the Department of Transportation and the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources to get clarification on the parking lot. It could be a situation where we start charging for the parking lot again prior to its relocation, and if and when it is relocated, or maybe it just doesn't exist anymore, I think then we revisit what lots could be used to go into that fund, or if we want to disband the fund altogether. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good. You know, I think Member Paltin made a good point that all the people that need to be here to discuss it is not here today, but we appreciate that, and we will bring it up for sure, right? Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, at...at a minimum, I think Na Aikane should be involved. I don't know if there is anyone left of Friends from Moku'ula, but I'm not sure --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- it'll be a pleasant conversation if we invite folks that used to be with Friends of Moku'ula.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. I think I saw Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom here once, and she was going upstairs for a meeting. They've been meeting regularly, I think. Well, we'll...we'll...we'll do the right thing.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then that was the other question I had, is like the way that the...the bill is written right now, and then there's a request for canoes, which I don't know if the canoes falls into the current wording of the bill of how it should be spent. And then the other thing was the bill also said that we would get annual reports. I haven't...I looked through the County communications, I haven't seen any annual reports. And then on the bill that's supposed to expand it to the royal complex area, then that part about annual reports, I didn't see it carried forward. So, lots to discuss with that one in particular.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Important.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And I'm...I'm not sure if it's something that should be brought up when 'Ōiwi Resources comes before us or now during your Revolving Fund discussion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, for today, we are not ready to, you know, gather the resources, and I think it's a bigger discussion, I agree with you. Member...Chair Lee?

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: A couple of years ago, I conditioned the Revolving Fund to give about 250,000 to Ke‘eaumoku’s group, Ke‘eaumoku Kapu, and for some reason, I don’t believe it was used. So, when we do have that discussion, could you make sure that he’s invited? I don’t know of other people who are active in that area, but I know he was, him and his group. Okay? Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, he was using this particular Revolving Fund that we’re talking about?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, he asked for funding, and I conditioned 250,000 for his efforts. But for some reason, it...I don’t believe it was used, but --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- we need to get him to come and explain it all.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And that’s...and it would be with the Hawaiian Cultural Restoration that you...you conditioned it under here for Ke‘eaumoku Kapu?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, what is his...Tamara, what is...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Na Aikane.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Na Aikane.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Under Na Aikane.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then I think ‘Ōiwi was one of the ones that was such a small budget that we weren’t going to hear from them, but with all this --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Discussion.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- moving around, maybe we should.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Yeah. For this, I think it’s important.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. You got that? We have to figure out how to...that’s the next thing on the agenda that we’re going to talk about, right? Okay. All right. So, this will definitely get scheduled.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Chair, I have a...well, actually, I have two questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. I'm having trouble understanding how to read the handout that was given out related to the Revolving Fund. So, these are...they reflect current balances, but then there's parentheses next to them saying no change. Is that over the last fiscal year? Or are we...or --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- are we not proposing any changes to the upcoming fiscal year?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: The balances. So Director, can you take that?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. You're talking about the updated balances for the Revolving Fund? So, when we submit it, obviously, it's based on when we have the information, when the budget is generated, and sometimes more fines or fees or other funds that go into the Revolving Funds are generated between the time that we do the budget and when it is submitted to you all. It is up to the body if they want to amend the bill to update it to the new amounts. Either way, that amount is available in the fund, and we haven't appropriated in the funds any more than is already in there. So, it's up to the body if they want to --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. MILNER: -- update those amounts. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. And then one more question. Most of these funds are...you know, the name is pretty descriptive, and I can kind of figure out what they're for. Y. Naval Air Station Kahului Airport Switch Pump Station? Can I get a...like what is that for?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. If you look at EM-01, there is a description in there of the purpose of that fund. If I remember correctly, it's funding that's received from the State for maintenance on that property, and that's why it's really specific. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: NASKA, we used to call it. Okay. Great. We figured out a solution, Member Paltin. So, now I'm going to talk about...oh, anybody else want to talk about the Revolving Funds? Because I'm going to now change to calendar and get 'Ōiwi to come. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had an additional question. I think for Open Space and Affordable Housing, they do list the previous year's appropriations, and I'm not sure, like, if...if the...how that works. Like I'm glad. I...I think I might have been the one to ask for that when my Open Space money for the West Maui 50-acre acquisition kept disappearing, and it hadn't happened yet, so I think I was the one that asked for it. But I'm not sure how to read it in that when they say the previous year's appropriation,

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should I add that? Like where does that fall in terms of balance as of 6/30/26 anticipated revenue total for Fiscal Year 2027? Like is that amount already taken out and we don't need to worry about it, or that's...we add up all the numbers, like, for Open Space, I guess, if --

MS. MILNER: Chair?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- we would add up...okay. Yeah.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. The prior year appropriations should not be deducted from the balance. They're already encumbered, so they're not included in the estimated balance.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you. So, just Fiscal Year '27, deduct it from either what's on there or the updated balance, and then that's the remainder for Fiscal Year '27?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paulin. Yes, that's correct. And I did just want to add, there are no prior year appropriations for the Affordable Housing Fund. The only fund where it does not lapse is Open Space. Mahalo, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Sorry, my bad. Can you remind me where the number of the open...the updated Revolving Fund amounts?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, on Granicus?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is it BD-8 or something?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: On Granicus, it is number 30...oh, 86 Revolving Funds.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 86.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 86.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay. Good job, Lesley, Budget Director. All right. So...

MS. MILNER: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, we'll take this up. Now, I'm going to talk about...oh, Member Sinenci has his hand up. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. Just following up on Open Space. On Monday, Scott Crawford with Ke Ao Hāli'i said they weren't able to use the \$600,000 for the 9.78 acres at Nānu'alele due to not having a public access. So, Budget Chair, would that...I mean, Director, would that just go back into the pot?

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. Yes. If you delete one of the prior year appropriations, you should increase the estimated balance by the same amount. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, what...what was the project again, Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Number 6 of the prior year.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I'll circle it. So, that'll go up. All right. Very good. Anything else? Okay. I'm going to put...open...I'm going to put the Revolving Fund aside, and calendar. So, for tomorrow, I would like your...to think about this. 10:00, Public Works, and DPS, Personnel Services, and 'Ōiwi. Budget Director was able to get 'Ōiwi to come and talk to us. So, Member Paltin, we can talk about this.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, still checking.

MS. MILNER: Yeah, still checking. Could you...sorry, if I could just confirm, is the intent just to discuss the Royal Complex Revolving Fund, or are there other items you'd like them to be prepared to address?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, right now, they have come before the Committee already, the Budget Committee, so we weren't planning on taking them up. But it's just only about these...this fund and the bill.

MS. MILNER: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I'm in communication with the Deputy Director, and I should have an answer shortly. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, that would be an alternative then. And then on the 10th, instead of tomorrow...instead of having MEMA because of what's happening in the...hopefully no disaster, but what's happening, that I would like to get your permission on the...on the 16th, which is next week, Thursday, 1:00 to 4:00 is DEM, which is all of them, including EP&S, and to put MEMA discussion here. So, it's going to be a short period because it's 1:00 to 4:00, and then that night we have the Kahului-Wailuku area residency meeting in here, which starts at 6:00. So, if we had to, we could stretch it to 10:00, if Chair Lee would allow us to...I'm sorry, stretch until 5:00, go 1:00 to 5:00, and then talk about all this, the DEM as well as MEMA, and then at 6:00 is your public hearing. But if the Members want to end at 4:00 for DEM and MEMA, we can do that too, just can't ask too many questions, hopefully.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: What's the date for next Thursday?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 16th. That's the day that we're --

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: 16th.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- having the area meeting here for Wailuku-Kahului.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, we want to change the agenda to add one more item, and the time from 1:00 to 5:00?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So...well, if we had to stretch it, but it's 1:00 to 4:00 right now, and it was only going to be DEM, but because we are having difficulty with the storm, we're asking to put MEMA on the 16th with DEM. So, both of them would then be on the 16th.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That'll be fine, but I don't know. MEMA would probably generate a lot of questions. Maybe we won't have as many for DEM.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, Director, is MEMA available for the 16th?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes. The administrator confirmed he could be here on the 16th --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. MILNER: -- between 1:00 and 4:00.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, that's confirmed then. We just need to talk fast, and hopefully we have all their responses. And tomorrow you're fine with...if we can, it'll be Public Works, DP...DPS, Personnel Services, and 'Ōiwi. So, we can talk about this fund.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I heard back from the Deputy. Director is currently on leave and won't be available until next week, and he's been the one having a lot of these conversations, so she would prefer if it could be next week.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Chair, my...my session is a public hearing. Yeah?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We don't need to decide today. Okay. You know what?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, no, I'm just saying we're not having discussion. It's just receiving --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Right, right.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- testimony.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Right, like the residency area meetings. So --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Staff is saying we don't...we won't decide today. We have to gather all the information, and then we'll let you know tomorrow, right? Okay. Any more questions regarding our calendar? Thank you, everybody. I mean, you know, thanks for adjusting. Next week is going to be a long week because we have...every night, we're going to be in the community. So, on the...on the 13th, we're in Molokai. 14th, we are South Maui. We reschedule to South Maui. And then on the 15th, Lānaʻi. 16th is here with Chair Lee and Member Batangan. And then on the 17th is West Maui. Residency area meetings. So, next week is going to be heavy duty. Thank you, everybody, for working extra hard and adjusting based upon our weather.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. You keep saying that the 16th is here, Chair Lee and Member Batangan hosting. What are the responsibilities of Member Batangan?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: My...I just want to make sure I'm clear --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: The food, right, you're making. Just kidding.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- that Chair Lee is handling the public hearing and that I am a humble garut.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . You can get that confirmed.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, we're going to need somebody to take notes for the report.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . OCS does that, don't panic. They do a good job.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay. Whatever the garut is supposed to do, I hope it's around making stew, but we won't say. I think that'll be hard. Next week is not a good week for you to be cooking. Anything else? Oh, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: The menu is already set, you know.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, it is?

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: When you're done with the calendar stuff, I had just one more Revolving Fund thing.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Letter K, the Fireworks Auditor Fund. It wasn't listed in Fire's response as a fund that they oversee. I think they only put Fire Hazard Removal...Fire Hazard Removal Revolving Fund and Plan Review Processing and Inspection Revolving Fund. And the Fireworks Auditor Fund was supposed to fund an auditor, but it doesn't make enough money to fund an auditor. So, I was wondering if we wanted to just throw it into maybe the Fire Hazard Removal Revolving Fund, because it seems they forgot they had that fund, so they didn't list it like they needed to keep it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just throwing it out there, if Ms. Milner wants to keep it or not, because they didn't know they had it, it seems, or they didn't say they had to keep it. From what I read.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And previous years, they said it...it doesn't generate enough revenue to employ an auditor.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. I will confirm with Chief and Deputy Chief and get you an answer. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Great. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, are you saying to combine J and K? Because the Fireworks Auditor Fund is only \$162,000, and then the Fire Hazard Removal is almost 100,000. So, are you...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That, and...and that they didn't list it as it was important. Like you asked in your first round of questions, is it important to keep the Revolving Fund, and it seemed like they didn't say yes.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, that's what I'm going off.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Less paper next year, you know?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. That Revolving Fund for fire reduction, is that the abatement...abatement fund?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That...that's needed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Fire. No, I'm --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, that's needed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- saying the one below that, throw everything from the auditor fund into that fund if they don't want it anymore.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. I'm just saying the abatement one is...is really needed because that's what they use when...when somebody forgets or refuses to cut their grass or whatever, then the Fire Department can go in, hire somebody, and it's done.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. That . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, they need that...they need that fund, yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, especially because of the fires, yeah. Okay. We will find out then from Chief, right? You're checking? Okay.

MS. MILNER: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anything else? All right. Great day. Look, it's only 4:46. So, at this time, we're going to defer the item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for this discussion. Tomorrow, we're going to find out if we have...oh, we got to figure out what to do with 'Ōiwi, right? Because we can't have this discussion without...yeah. All right. So, tomorrow, we will see you here, and we are bright and early at 10:00, Public Works and DEM, and maybe we will let you know who's going to be where for 'Ōiwi Department. Anything else, Members? Any questions? Okay. This meeting is now adjourned. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 4:47 p.m.

bfed:min:260409:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 9, 2026

CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 105 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 15th day of May 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i

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

Daniel Schoenbeck