

Resolution

No. 24-123

RECOGNIZING MAUI POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR VALIANT SERVICE DURING THE AUGUST 8, 2023, WILDFIRES

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2023, uncontrollable, wind-driven wildfires swept through several areas on Maui Island, destroying nearly all of Lahaina Town, resulting in the tragic loss of over 100 lives in the worst natural disaster in State history; and

WHEREAS, Maui Police Department officers and employees exhibited exceptional professionalism, bravery, dedication, and endurance while working under harrowing conditions to protect residents and property from the Kula, Olinda, Pulehu/Kihei, and Lahaina fires; and

WHEREAS, when the afternoon fire started in Lahaina that day, there were only 16 officers in the entire Lahaina District, and they were all called upon to direct traffic, conduct evacuations, and assist those in need; and

WHEREAS, other responding officers increased police staffing in Lahaina to 32 officers by 5:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, police officers skillfully guided medics and residents through thick smoke, zero-visibility conditions, roadway obstructions, extreme heat, and threatening flames, leading and transporting numerous people to safety; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, MPD officers collaborated with civilians and other County employees to open gates to lead evacuees down dirt roads, creating vital alternative escape routes; and

WHEREAS, MPD officers also assisted firefighting efforts by escorting water tankers, cutting firebreaks, and even fighting fire with garden hoses; and

WHEREAS, as the Lahaina fire progressed, officers from other districts and divisions came to assist, resulting in 49 officers in the Lahaina District by the early-morning hours of August 9, 2023; and

Resolution No. 24-123

WHEREAS, MPD officers across Maui worked relentlessly, many with their own homes and families potentially in harm's way, some for shifts of up to 24 hours, to protect communities across the island; and

WHEREAS, their remarkable efforts, unwavering commitment, and heroic actions during this challenging time were vital in safeguarding lives, protecting property, and maintaining order amidst the chaos; and

WHEREAS, Maui Police Department officers and employees demonstrated the highest standards of service, valor, and resilience, upholding the finest traditions of law enforcement as they served Maui during the August 8, 2023, wildfires, and they should be honored and recognized for their courageous efforts; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it recognizes Maui Police Department employees for their valiant service during the August 8, 2023, wildfires; and
2. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; Police Chief John Pelletier, Department of Police, County of Maui; Assistant Police Chief Gregg Okamoto, Department of Police, County of Maui; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

INTRODUCED BY:

Tamara A.M. Paltin

TAMARA PALTIN