

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

June 16, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:02 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Chair
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member (Out 11:27 a.m.)
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (In 9:11 a.m.)
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member (In 9:13 a.m.)

STAFF:

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

Residency Area Offices

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

ADMIN.:

Yukari Murakami, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of Corporation Counsel (All)
Jessica Crouse, Deputy Director, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(8))
Rowena Dagdag-Andaya, County Executive on Aging, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(7))
Ruth Griffith, Senior Services Division Administrator, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(8))
Roland Prieto, Assistant Senior Services Division Administrator, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(8))

OTHERS:

Testifier
Jasee Law (All)

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(20+) additional attendees

PRESS: Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.

CHAIR SINENCI: . . .(*gavel*). . . Aloha kakahiaka kākou, and welcome to the Monday meeting of the WASSP Committee. It is 9:02 a.m. I am Shane Sinenci, your Committee Chair. Thank you, Members, for taking the time to attend this meeting. And just as a friendly reminder for members of the public to please silence all cell phones and noisemaking devices. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, if you are not in the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today, and minors do not need to be identified. Also, please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Joining us this morning, we have Committee Vice-Chair Gabe Johnson. Aloha and welcome.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Aloha Chair, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers here at the Lāna'i District Office. I'm alone on my side of the office, and I'm here and ready to work. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us. Also joining us online is Pro Tem Tasha Kama. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair. I am home alone in my workspace, and there's no one else here with me. I am here, and ready to work. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us this morning. Joining us from the Chamber floor this morning, we also have Council Chair Alice Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha kākou, and salam alaikum. Let's all pray for peace in the world. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. Next we have (*echoing*)... Test. Next, from the Council floor, we also have Councilmember Tom Cook. Aloha and salam alaikum.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good morning. Peace to the world. There's currently no testifiers in the Kihei Office, and I'm looking forward to today's meeting.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us this morning. Joining us online, we have Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka, and alaikum salam [*sic*]. I have...I'm streaming live and direct from the West Maui Residency Area Office. I have Christian Balagso, and one unnamed minor canine with me, and we have nobody waiting to testify. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for joining us this morning. Also joining us online is Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Aloha kakahiaka ia 'oe.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. I am...I'm on Molokai. I'm at my private residence alone here...alone right now, but my husband, Makena Fernandez, could, you know, be in and out throughout this meeting. And there are currently no testifiers at the Molokai District Office. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us, and aloha to Mr. Makena as well. Also, Member Yuki Lei Sugimura will be joining us in a little bit...as well as Ms. U'u-Hodgins, she'll also be joining us in a little bit. Okay. Thank you, Members. From the Department of Human Concerns, we have Ms. Rowena Dagdag-Andaya. Aloha and good morning. Salam alaikum.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Aloha, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha. Also joining us is Ms. Ruth Griffith, the Senior Services Division Administrator. Aloha and good morning.

MS. GRIFFITH: Good morning, everyone.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks for being here with us. And also joining us is Mr. Roland Prieto. Aloha and good morning.

MR. PRIETO: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning, Roland. Thanks for being here. Also from the Corporation Counsel, we have Ms. Yukari Murakami, Deputy Corporation Counsel. Aloha and good morning.

MS. MURAKAMI: Good morning, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning. And also, our Committee Staff members helping us to run this meeting this morning. Ms. Criselda Paranada, aloha. Ms. Clarissa MacDonald, our Legislative Analyst, as well as Ms. Ellen McKinley, and Ms. Tiare Del Castillo, welcome. Our Legislative Attorney this morning is Ms. Megan Moniz. And our Assistant Clerks are Ms. Lei Dinneen and Ms. Jean Pokipala. Welcome, everyone. Members, on today's agenda, we have two items. The first is an Update on the Four-Year Area Plan on Aging, WASSP-1(7), and the second item is Kaunoa's Meals on Wheels Program and Kūpuna Food Insecurity, WASSP-1(8). Staff, are there anyone signed up to provide testimony this morning?

MS. DEL CASTILLO: Chair, the first testifier...

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Let me read the...the whole thing first, just in case you forgot, Mr. Law. In accordance with the Sunshine Law, testimony can occur at the beginning of the meeting, but cannot be limited to the start of the meeting. The Chair will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting, and as the item is called up

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

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. LAW: I signed up as...

MS. DEL CASTILLO: There's someone else before...

MR. LAW: I signed up as...

CHAIR SINENCI: Who you signed up as?

MR. LAW: 'Elemakule Haole.

MS. DEL CASTILLO: Okay. Yes. Chair, the first testifier signed up is 'Elemakule Haole.

CHAIR SINENCI: Elemakua?

MR. LAW: Makua...'Elemakule.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

MR. LAW: That's the Hawaiian word of the day. That means old white man. That's what it says.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Who told you that? Okay. Go ahead. Oh, wait. Before you start, we're going to welcome Member Yuki Lei Sugimura. Aloha.

MR. LAW: Ohayo.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good morning. Good morning.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning.

MR. LAW: Salam alaikum.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I'm looking forward to a very interesting meeting. Thanks for doing this.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

MR. LAW: That was good, teacher, because it gave time for Yuki Lei Sugimura to get here. She's on the Office of Aging Board, I think. So, I'm probably going to run out of my three minutes. Thank you for making your meetings more welcoming to the...oh, aloha ka aha o ke Kalana o Maui o na limahana. I don't have a prepared speech today. I kind of was hoping that you would be sitting up there today, Mr. Sinenci. And I just want to tell you a little bit about my experience with the agencies here on the agenda today. I had an aunty that was in Hale Mahaolu over in Kahului. And I met her up in Kula, and she had broken her hip. She was...had...had a walker. And I knew at some point soon that she was going to need help. So, I kind of tried to pick here and there, like information on where she could go and stuff. She was a little bit na'au kōkua 'ole, uncooperative. But in the end, she became bedridden. And so, when I saw it...when I saw it happening, I tried to call the Meals on Wheels, Kaunoa Meals on Wheels. And it was a little bit difficult because it was on a speakerphone, and she was, like I said, na'au kōkua 'ole, so she really didn't have a whole lot of patience to listen to the...the person on the phone. But the first thing, when I called the number, what the person asked me was, are you having problems getting meals? And I was like, that's why I'm calling. Why...why would you answer [sic] that? So, this...first of all, you got to get through this like interview process. And it's really hard if you're trying to help somebody because they don't send anybody out to...to help you. You have to actually call in yourself, or go there and get help, and there's no bus stop by there. So, she was also having problems with the E...MEO transportation. And so, I go back to the Salvation Army guys because at the Thanksgiving dinner, the homeless Thanksgiving dinner at the Salvation Army, the college guys give out food to everybody. I finally got together the...Captain Remilio [sic] from Salvation Army, and was a wāhine, and another lady that sat at the table with me. She was with a guy that was old. He was an 'elemakule...elemakua [sic] too. And she worked for Office of Aging. She was a caretaker. So, I tried to get her to talk with the Salvation Army captain. And the captain told me, we don't cross agencies, and then walked away from me. And I was like...well, that was the beginning of the...the saga where I . . .(timer sounds). . . was trying to get help. So, at least I got that in there for...against helping the Salvation Army with their homeless programs because they're

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not really...they...they...they didn't help my aunty because I was asking, and not because she couldn't ask. So, that's just a little bit of the story of that. And I appreciate your leniency on like making me stick to the agenda and stuff, Mr. Chair, because a lot of times people don't get a chance...they want to talk to you guys, but you don't have a lot of time. So, I notice you guys like run into the elevator and say, I got to go, I got to go. But thank you for just listening to a little bit of my story about why I'm here and trying to help you guys run the County.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Mr. Makua [sic]. Members, any questions for Mr. Makua [sic]? Seeing none. Mahalo for your testimony. Staff? Oh, also, Chair would like to recognize Member U'u-Hodgins. Aloha and welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone. I'm at my private residence right now. For disclosure, I do have one minor and an adult here at home. Koa Hodgins is home for now. Aloha, everyone.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us this morning.

MS. DEL CASTILLO: Chair, there is currently no one who has signed up left to testify. Okay.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING TESTIMONY . . .

UPDATE ON FOUR-YEAR AREA PLAN ON AGING (WASSP-1(7))

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Members. I will now proceed with our first agenda item, WASSP-1(7), Members, the Update on the Four-Year Area Plan on Aging. Maui County's current Area Plan on Aging is for October 1st, 2023 to September 30th, 2027. The Office on Aging annually updates its four-year area plan to reflect the priority needs of the County's older adults, and for their caregivers. This plan serves as a framework to contract with organizations that serve the elderly to provide services, such as daycare, home-delivered meals, and personal care assistance. It is prepared for the State of Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging for compliance with the Older Americans Act so Maui can receive grants and contracts from the Executive Office on Aging and other funding. I would like to turn the floor over to Ms. Dagdag-Andaya for her presentation, and mahalo for joining us this morning.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Mahalo, Chair. And good morning and aloha to all the...the Committee Members. Before I begin, I'd like to also recognize and acknowledge our Director...our Deputy Director of Human Concerns, Ms. Jessica Crouse. She's in...I believe she's on the...the video chat this morning as well. So, again, for the record, my name is Rowena Dagdag-Andaya. I am the County Executive on Aging for the Maui County Office on Aging. And this morning, our presentation is an update on the four-year area plan on aging. So, if it's okay with the Committee, I'd like to share my screen?

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CHAIR SINENCI: Yes, go ahead.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Okay. Mahalo, Chair. And may I get a thumbs-up, or a signal if you can see my screen? Thank you very much. So, on this cover page is a picture of the 'ulu tree that's situated right in front of our office at the Cameron Center. And when we chose the cover for...for the area plan, you know, we had various pictures or, you know, illustrations in mind, but we always kept coming back to the 'ulu tree because it...number one, it greets us when we come to the office, and it's one of the first things that our participants see when they visit us as well. And we also choose the 'ulu, or the breadfruit, because it symbolizes sustainability, resilience, and communities, values that are deeply rooted in many cultures, especially the Hawaiian culture. And we hope that those values are reflected in our work with older adults here at the Office on Aging. Traditionally planted to mark new life, and known for its ability to nourish many from a single tree, the 'ulu symbolizes the spirit of mālama, or caring for one another. And like the 'ulu tree, our area plan is a commitment to nurture, support, and sustain our kūpuna as vital members of a thriving Maui community. So, the purpose of the four-year plan, to give you some background, the four-year plan is actually a requirement under the Older Americans Act. And we work together with the State Executive on Aging to plan a four-year...four-year strategic plan that helps guide the services for Maui County's older adults and caregivers. This plan is for the Federal fiscal period from October 1st, 2023 to September 30th, 2027. It enables the counties to receive Federal and State aging funds, and also aligns with the goals of the executive...State Executive Office on Aging, and the Administration for Community Living. And these goals are related to making sure that our older adults live well, that we're prepared for future health threats and disasters, that our underserved populations have equitable access to programs and services, that our older adults and persons with disabilities in our community will age in place, and that Hawai'i's caregivers have a broad array of services and support to effectively care for their loved ones. And as it aligns with the goals of the State Executive Office on Aging, the four counties, along with the State, work together to create those goals. So, although we share the same goals, the counties and the State Executive Office on Aging, we all have different plans, and we all have different goals and objectives...I'm sorry, we have different objectives and strategies in how we can meet those goals. So, the...the four-year plan requires several approvals. First off, it was submitted to the State Executive Office on Aging for approval. We also received reviews and signatures by the Council on Aging. Our Director, Lori Tsuhako, had to review and sign off on the plan, as well as our Mayor, Mayor Bissen, reviewed and signed off on the plan as well. Attached...or on this...this PDF is a QR code with a link to our four-year plan on aging. So, we embarked on this...the community-based planning in 2022. We received 470 older adult surveys, 142 caregiver surveys, and this was a challenging time because our lead planner, James Mariano, had passed away during the development of the plan. So, you know, we...we continued work on gathering public input, which included public meetings, stakeholder feedback, and feedback from the Council on Aging. We also had a joint meeting with the State Executive Office on Aging to meet with stakeholders and members of the public to gather input. The...the planning effort is person-centered, and looks at how we can gain equity in the various communities. And of course, information

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is gathered from both the State and County levels. The needs assessment surveys at both the State and the County levels identified the following needs. They include caregiver support, addressing social isolation. 2002 [sic] was when we were just coming off of the COVID pandemic, so many of our seniors felt that, you know, they wanted to get back into the community, but at times they were still afraid to...to participate in...in group activities. But social isolation became a very...a need to address. Transportation and the built environment, meaning options for travel in...you know, throughout the...the island, and also transportation to and from, you know, between islands. So, Molokai and Lānaʻi especially, when it relates to air travel, and being able to...to access transportation to get to...to doctor visits. And the built environment piece, meaning situating housing for seniors in areas that...where they can access services, and be able to walk and feel safe in their community. Again, access to core services, needing to know, you know, where to go to to get information. Equity and inclusiveness was also another theme. Elder abuse, emergency preparedness, healthy aging. Workforce capacity is another issue. What some of our seniors and caregivers had indicated in the surveys was the...the lack of...or the...I guess, the...the need for additional workers in home- and community-based services. Housing and nutrition were also important areas, especially with housing, and the need for more senior housing, and housing that's situated on ground levels, and ADA-accessible housing. Access to technology. Many of our seniors had indicated wanting to know more on how to use the Internet, and how to use their phone for things like buying groceries on an app, or being able to access telehealth on their phone. Many of them had wanted to learn how to use their...the technology devices. Financial literacy came up as an issue. It was more financial aid that they were interested in...in receiving more information about. And of course, fall prevention. Some of the unmet needs that we also identified in the survey and feedback-gathering was that respondents indicated challenges to navigate and find information. There's a lot of services and a lot of different information out there, but making sure that they get the right information, and most accurate, and those that they can rely on and trust. That...that was an area that needed to be addressed. Respondents also indicated the need for expanded choices and options of services and support. And also, respondents indicated challenges to access and be connected to programs and services. So, in addition to seniors, we also reached out to caregivers who indicated these needs, and also younger people with disabilities had...had also identified these...these as unmet needs in the community. So, that kind of...that tells us that, you know, we need to do more...more work in outreach, and going out into the different communities by participating in...in health fairs, holding talk story sessions or listening sessions with the community, and being present, and...and letting people know...or actually connecting with other organizations so that we create a strong network of providers and nonprofit organizations who can support our...our seniors and caregivers. The goals of the plan, as I mentioned earlier, is, number one, aging well, promoting health and independence. Number two is emergency preparedness, and improving personal readiness for health threats and disasters. Equity, expanding universe...or expanding access for underserved populations. Aging in place, supporting living at home and in the community, and also, strengthening services and respite care options for caregiver support. So, in...in a nutshell, these are all of our...our goals in our plan. To address those goals, we've made progress in the following areas. So, the

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first one is, continuing our programs in nutrition, our congregate and meal delivery program, continuing our caregiver support with Maui Adult Daycare, and with our other organizations who provide respite care in the community. Our various organizations that we contract with provide in-home services. And as Chair Sinenci mentioned earlier, these services include things like adult daycare, personal care, homemaker services, where someone will come into the home and assist with some light cleaning and chore work. We also have services through Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, where they can provide legal services for older adults and caregivers. And then falls prevention is another area. So, we work with Nā Hoaloa, who does in-home assessments, and also with Habitat for Humanity, who can also provide assistance with minor retrofits in the home to help prevent falls from happening in the home. So, things like leveling floors, getting rid of any hazards in the home, fixing stairs, those kinds of...like small repairs that can be done at home. We have...we've worked with Habitat for Humanity to assist seniors and persons with disabilities for that. One thing that we've been working on for...for some time now is our continued development as a central access point for the Aging and Disability Resource Center. You know, the Office on Aging started off as a service for just older adults, kūpuna, ages 60 and over. And then in 2008, the Administration for Community Living, in partnership with the different states, established the Aging and Disability Resource Center to provide information and resources to persons with disabilities who are under the age of 60, between 18 to 59. And in the past year, we've worked with many organizations in the aging and disability community to strengthen up our partnerships. We've reached out with the Center for Independent Living, and are working with their...their employees to set up a one-stop shop here at the Office on Aging, where the employee from the Center for Independent Living can...can hold office hours here at the...the Cameron Center, and have access to our brochures and information. So, that's...that's a continued development. Working with the other nonprofit organizations, such as Nā Hoaloa, the Kelea Foundation, are really important in identifying the different issues in the community, and also being to...being able to work with them to address those issues, which leads into the partnerships with over 30 local and state organizations. Our outreach activities, we try to reach out to one or two senior groups or...or disability groups...disability support groups every month. We've met with senior clubs at Hale Mahaolu. We even reached out to the Vision and Blindness Support Group. Some of our Staff had also participated in different health fairs and resource fairs throughout the...the community. And then in...in the coming months, we have our Abilities Fair coming up in...in August, and then the annual Senior Fair at the end of October. We also have established a partnership with MEMA and AARP to strengthen our...our outreach with emergency preparedness. And then also continued compliance with Federal and State programs, which include the Title III Older Americans Act at the Federal level, and Kūpuna Care at the State level. Looking ahead in Fiscal Year 2026, we intend on ongoing plan monitoring and updates. So, every quarter, we take data on our...our progress with the...the goals and the objectives in our plan. And we report those goals to our Council on Aging, and also to the Policy Board on Elder Affairs at the statewide level. We also want to continue our collaboration with partners, and the Council on Aging, and focus on the following areas--emergency preparedness, increased outreach in the community, advocacy for accessible senior housing and transportation.

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This...you know, as a result of the...the wildfires, this has become an important issue for many of our seniors being able to, you know, continue living in a safe and ADA-accessible home, and also being able to access transportation. Some are actually saying, you know, they'd like to explore options such as Uber or, you know, be able to have more on-demand transportation services. So, that's something that...that we're...we're currently working with using our...our current funding. Caregiver support is always going to be a need in our community. And the Department of Human Concerns recently engaged in a community needs survey. And caregiver support was one of...I believe it rose to the top when it comes to services that are needed by kūpuna and caregivers. And of course, continuing to make sure that our funding is sustainable and on a continuing basis. So, you know, with program funding and sustainability, we receive funding from all three levels. The...the County provides a line item in the budget for grants to frail and elderly services. We also receive Kūpuna Care funding from the State of Hawai'i, and then also, the Older Americans Act Title III funding. So, all of those three funding sources comes out to approximately...close to \$3 million a year for...that we can use toward services in our communities. And some of you had some questions about the sustainability of the...the funding at the...the Federal level. And so, you know, we have...we have some news to share. We...we were concerned about it back in...in April when we heard of, you know, different...different programs being cut, and a lot of news in the media about things like Meals on Wheels will...will also be cut. So, in order to address that, we reached out to--we, meaning the other County agencies--our State Executive Office on Aging Director, Caroline Cadirao. We met with representatives...well, representatives from all counties met with Senator Mazie Hirono, Congresswoman Jill Tokuda, and the office staff of Congressman Ed Case. And we talked with them about the critical role of Older Americans Act programs and services, which include nutrition programs such as Meals on Wheels, the Congregate Program, caregiver support, and in-home assistance. And we explained to them, you know, the role that these services play in the community and how important it is to continue the funding to support our seniors and caregivers. We also highlighted any...you know, what...what the...the threat of service disruption would look like, especially to our rural seniors and...and underserved communities. Our ongoing efforts will...I feel like I'm missing something here, but I'm going to skip. So, just recently, the...nationwide, the area agencies on aging, which include Office on Aging, all the other counties and...and the other states had a meeting with our...our...our...the nonprofit group, U.S. Aging. And we learned that the...the President's budget for Federal Fiscal Year '26 funds all of the Older Americans Act programs at the same Fiscal Year 2025 levels. Title III congregate and C2, home delivered meals, is maintained at 1.1 billion nationwide. There is a significant increase for family caregiver support program. We don't know what that looks like in terms of dollars yet for...for the State of Hawai'i, but we do know that there is an increase for family caregiver support programs. And initially, we...we were told that some of the Title III programs would be housed under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, but they will be housed under the new Administration for Children, Families, and Communities, which is...is a positive thing because that means that all of our Title III programs are housed in one agency, in the Department of Human...Human Services, and not separated. And then also, the...the budget ensures continued collaboration and coordination across aging and disability networks. Next steps. In

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working with our...our congressional delegation, they had encouraged the...the AAAs to participate in public awareness campaigns, and sharing information about our...our programs through Title III and Kūpuna Care, as well as the County-funded aging and disability services. They encouraged us to share the stories of our kūpuna, and how the work of our Title III programs impacts their lives in a positive way. Local funding flexibility means that we will continue to work with our...our State partners to ensure that the...the monies continue to be used. So, if there's a County that has some extra funding left over, that we can, you know, share that funding, and...and be able to use it in our community. So, if, say, Honolulu has some funding that they can share with us, we can...they can...they have that ability to be able to...to help us with our programs. Continued Federal advocacy is important. So, I know some of the...the Councilmembers, if you are participating in discussions at NACo, you know, sharing with your colleagues at NACo the importance of...of services for our kūpuna, and working with them to create that voice at the national level to ensure that those...those programs continue. And of course, collaborations with aging and disability networks and other County agencies, and then also making sure that we expand outreach to our rural areas, and strengthen delivery...service delivery in these areas. So, we're happy that we have all of the...all three islands staffed with service specialists. So, for a while, we were looking for a service specialist on Lānaʻi. We have Denise Ropa, who's there. And on Molokaʻi, we have Hiʻilei Akaka. And...and in Hāna, Timmy...Timmy Satot. So, we're really happy that we can staff our...our offices in...in those areas. So, that concludes my presentation this morning regarding the four-year plan. And I wanted to go back to that QR code. So, if you have...if you would like to receive a copy...I thought about sending it via email, but it might be easier to just download through the QR code. And...and that's it. I'm happy to answer any questions. And of course, as always, if there are questions that I can't address today, I'd be more than happy to address them through written communication as well. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Thank you for that presentation. Did Ms. Crouse want to provide any additional comments?

MS. CROUSE: Hi. Good morning, Chair and Committee Members. No, I don't have more comments at this time. I'm just happy to be here with my team to...to represent the important work they do. And if questions come up that I might be better suited to answer, I'm happy to assist with that as well.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for that. Members, before we go to testimonies, are there any clarifying questions for Ms. Dagdag-Andaya or Ms. Crouse? We have one from Chair Lee. Go ahead, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Thank you for your presentation. I do have a number of questions, but for now, clarification on Title III, the Older Americans Act, includes funding for Meals on Wheels, congregate, and did you say assisted transportation?

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes, that's correct. We...although we use Kūpuna Care funding, the state funding for assisted transportation services, Title III funding can also be used for transportation.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Chair Lee. Seeing none. Any more clarifying questions? We'll go to testimony before we get into discussion. Staff, is there anyone want to provide any testimony at this time?

MS. DEL CASTILLO: Chair, no individuals have signed up to testify. If anyone would like to testify, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated they wish to testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, seeing there are no more individuals wishing to testify, are there any objections to closing oral testimony on WASSP-1(7)?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Okay. We'll now close public testimony for this item.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(7) . . .

CHAIR SINENCI: And Members, I'll open up the floor for questions and comments. Each Member will have three minutes for the first round, another three minutes for any additional rounds as needed. And we can go ahead and begin with Committee Vice-Chair Johnson, followed by Member Cook.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Good to see you. I have a list of questions. I'll just jump through them. If I get them answered, I'll move on. So, appreciate your time. The four-year plan on aging grants and contracts, I'm really curious about who gets the grants, and who...how do you guys distribute them? Do...do you want to do that in a letter to the Committee, or can you give us kind of an overview of how much is it? You know, that kind of...

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Sure. So, Chair...Chair and Councilmember Johnson, the...the contracts--I'll start off with the contracts. We have a two-year contract that starts in October, and then ends September 30th. And every two years, we engage in an RFP process. And we start off with a request for information from various providers on what kind of services that they can provide, and then we follow the procurement rules and guidelines in...

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Do they give you a lump sum at the beginning, and then you just wait for the RFPs?

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes. We generally know --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- how much we can get from...or we receive. The...the State Executive Office on Aging puts together the formula. So, we receive roughly about 850,000 in State funding, and --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- about \$890,000 from Title III Federal funds. So...

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah. And then we have about \$1.1 million from County funding. So, some of the Kūpuna Care and the...the Title III funding are used for salaries. So, we need to take that out. Yeah, you get an even smaller number just for direct services. So, we use that --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- information to determine our contracts.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thanks. I'm going to move on to another question. Thank you. The social isolation slide kind of got me. Has it gotten better? I know, you know, post-COVID, we're getting farther away. But are people getting back to their normal routines? Are the kūpuna coming out more? Or is...has it gotten better, or is it still flatlined?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah, it's...it's...well, I know we've been having a lot of discussions regarding West Maui, and understand that many of our kūpuna are wanting to stay at home. And...and it's...I think it's a mix of things. COVID was a big impact. Some of our kūpuna have expressed concerns about just going out and...and...you know, and catching, you know, a cold or --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- or flu. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . So, that's a concern. Transportation adds to it. So, when a senior can no longer drive, they depend on other friends and...and...and transportation in the community. So, that makes it challenging. A lot of our seniors have also expressed wanting to participate...or be given different options for recreational activities as well. But I know places like Hale Mahaolu, the senior groups are...they constantly try to create activities for their...their neighbors, and...with movie nights and field trips. So, that's been helping. But many of our seniors--at least what I've been hearing and what we've been seeing--is that they tend to stay at home.

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VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Yeah, that's...that's a concern I have. And you mentioned transportation several times, and hopefully we can...I'm...I'm really fascinated the idea that they could start doing Uber, and if there's funds for that, that's...that's great. Last question. I know you talked about outreach and...

CHAIR SINENCI: Member Johnson, you want to...that was...did you hear the three minutes? We'll wait for your second round.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thanks for that. Didn't hear the bell, Chair. I'll wait for the second round. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Next, we have Member Cook, followed by Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Rowena, for all of your service, and your presentation. My question is, how does the plan...how are you addressing the rural and underserved aging populations? This seems like a very big challenge.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah. We have goals and objectives...or objectives in our plan. One of the first things that we're...we're doing is, working with our...our network partners. So, our Staff, including myself, have been engaged in meetings with other providers to understand what the...you know, the different issues are in the community. You know, that's where transportation is coming up. You know, one of our network partners, Kelea Foundation, had expressed the need for additional options. So, that's one thing that we're...we're, you know, looking at right now. It's those...those partnerships that...that really help us identify what those areas are. And in order to address them, it's, you know, developing ideas with...with our network partners, seeing what kind of flexibilities we have in the funding, talking with the Executive Office on Aging to see if a pilot program can be started. So, I...I'm, you know, going to...I'm going to highlight two separate things--and I'm sorry, I'm taking up your time--but one is, you know, on food security. When we thought that Meals on Wheels was going to be impacted by Federal cuts, our program specialist here reached out to his former colleagues over at the Department of Agriculture, Director Arce and her Staff, to see if there's a partnership that we can create with them to create a kūpuna feeding program in the event that funding dries up for Title III services. You know, we're...we're still having those discussions though, because there's always going to be a need, regardless of whether or not there's...you know, Title III funding goes away. And then on the transportation side, you know, working with our network partners to see if we can do a pilot program for Uber, like Kūpuna on Uber. We know that some of our seniors are...are pretty tech savvy, but we also know that some of our seniors have a difficult time with the technology. So, finding a provider who can help with, you know, dispatching a ride, or connecting with the...the...the Uber services. That's...you know, coming up with those kinds of programs is...is what our office does through our program specialists.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. Are you affiliated...is Hale Kaukau in Kihei affiliated with your program?

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair. Yes. Initially, we...well, we . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . make referrals to some of our participants. If they are in need of food, then, you know, we connect them with Hale Kaukau. And I understand, too, that they have a grant with the County of Maui to sustain their program.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I heard my bell.

CHAIR SINENCI: . . . *(inaudible)*. . . Member Cook. Next, we have Member Kama, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Good morning. It's good to see you, Rowena.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So, you know, you talked in your presentation about the services of personal care, respite care, and chore services, right?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So, these are all volunteers--or I don't know if they're volunteers, or if they're actually paid staff--that go into the homes. and do whatever it is that they're asking, whether it's chore services, or personal care, or respite. But how many people do you have to be able to do this?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Oh, good question. So, you know, just to...we work with our providers. So, Hale Mahaolu, Ho'okele Caregivers, they...and Nā Pu'uwai on...on Molokai --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Molokai.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- they provide those home...in-home services.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: And so, their staff kind of varies. You know, just to give you an idea, we have about 112 participants on personal care. And we also have a waitlist because...because of workforce capacity issues.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Right.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: And those issues can also be, like, in, you know, hard-to-staff areas as well. So, you know, it's...it's not with volunteers, but they...a lot of the home- and community-based workers, they have, like, a license or a certificate. So, those doing personal care need to have a CNA license. Some of our homemaker staff also have a CNA license as well. And then adult daycare also provides personal care services at

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their facilities, so...so that a participant can receive bathing while they're at adult daycare.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Oh, right. I forgot about that. So...so...so, your partners are other nonprofits, right?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So, do you know what the...what the range of wages for these CNAs that are doing this?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes. You know, our understanding is...I mean, it could be in a range, you know, from \$18 and up for some of our home- and community-based employees. So, that...that's kind...I...I don't have the exact figure in front of me, but I can...I can pull some of that information up for you.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Um-hum. And in your discussions with some of your...your partners, do they seem to be able to retain their employees with the salary that...or the wage in which they're being paid?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: You know, in discussions with the providers, many of them have said that they have...they've been able to keep their employees. So, they . . .(timer sounds). . . they're thinking of different ways, you know, like car-sharing, or incentives. So, I know Hale Mahaolu, for example--and I'm sorry, I'm cutting into your time--but they've had long-time employees there who do personal care services. And...and so, they enjoy the work, and they enjoy the...the...the clients, the participants, that they work with. So, that generally keeps them on the job. But, you know, nationwide, I think there's...there's a workforce capacity issue in...in, you know, encouraging younger people to take on these jobs. So, that's...that's another area that, you know, we're...we're hoping that improves, you know, the...the training and exposure to different career options.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Um-hum. Thank you, Chair. I heard the bell. Thank you, Ms. Dagdag.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Kama. Next, we have Chair Lee, followed by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. You know, we all have workforce issues, but this Council is very concerned about the need for civil service reform, which we hope to tackle. But my concern is that the common complaint we received for all departments--hopefully not ours because our Staff is under orders to answer the phone...my office and OCS must answer the phone. And if we don't, there's an emergency someplace. But the...the point is, complaints that we receive is that people get recordings, and then occasionally get a phone call back. Are you one of those? I hope not, but that only because of workforce issues concentrates on current case managers, as opposed to intake advocates?

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: So...and thank you for that question, Chair Lee. Because that's another area that we've been monitoring in our office as well. We get about 20 phone calls a day, and sometimes those phone calls can range between five minutes to an hour. And we have at least one person, one intake person, who answers the phone calls. If not, it's a round-robin in our office. The other staff are usually conducting assessments, or doing visits in the home. So, that --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. All right.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- makes it a little bit --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Can you stop right there?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- yeah, a challenge.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Can you stop right there? Okay. So, I understand what you're saying. Is money an issue? And are these advocates that answer the phone, are they paid for...are they civil service workers, or are they paid for special funds...from special funds?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: It's...it's both. And right now, we're just trying to fill the positions. So, we have recruitments that we've requested, you know, we...doing interviews, finding the right fit for the office. So, right now, all...what we're trying to...what we're focusing on is filling those positions --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- so that we can hire Staff.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, the thing is, if...if the problem is lack of funding...because people are not going to apply for jobs that don't pay a living wage, right? So, if that's an issue, can you let us know?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes. I'll work with my Director and Deputy on that.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Lee. Next, we have Member Paltin, followed by Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Dagdag-Andaya. I just had some basic questions. How did it decide that it was a four-year study? Like, I mean, from between COVID and the fire, things seem to be a little bit changing faster than four years nowadays. But...I mean, I guess you guys can pivot still, but is that like a Federal requirement?

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair? Yes, that's a Federal requirement. So, previous to this four-year plan, before October 1st, 2023, it was the four-year period before that. And...and that was...you know, this plan had come out right after the...the Lāhainā wildfires. So, we worked with State Executive Office on Aging to...you know, to ask them to...you know, can we make changes to it as needed? Because we're continuously getting new information, conducting...you know, when we do outreach, we also collect surveys, or talk with members of the public to...to understand what the needs are. And there's so much, I understand, has...that's changed, especially out in West Maui. Because initially, we didn't know what those needs were. At first, we thought, okay, do we have to do a separate feeding program? But now we're learning that, of course, housing is the big issue, as well as transportation. So, trying to leverage funding, working with State Executive Office on Aging to identify new funding sources so that we can create new...new programs, and address those issues is...is what, you know, we intend to do with this plan. And of course, this plan can...we can always make amendments to the plan. It's not...you know, if it's...it's not set in stone, there's always a room for improvement. So, that's...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Then do you guys coordinate with the adult case...adult daycare center? Because we were supposed to be sharing this West Maui Residency Area Office with the Maui Adult Daycare Center. And Auntie Patty was calling me up like every day about wanting to do it. But I guess...well, she passed away before they could have adult daycare center in West Maui. And especially now, with the debris transport. So, do you have any update on that? Like for, you know, people to be able to go to work, and ensure that their kūpuna has something to go to without having to drive all over the rest of the island for that?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair. And thank you for that question, Councilmember Paltin. Because we have been talking with Adult Daycare. And what they report back to us is that they're also waiting for documents to be signed, or to get an approval. So, that...that's what we're hearing. We also want to support them in, you know, reestablishing the center, by providing them with funding for supplies . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . and equipment that they had lost in the fire as well. So, yeah, those discussions, we're just waiting for them to get the...I guess, an approval from...I believe it's HHFDC, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Member Paltin. Yes, Auntie Patty was always an advocate for the kūpuna. Next, we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Aloha.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for being with us, and...and team. Aloha. Okay. Okay. So, I just have a few questions. So, regarding the ADRC, that's on Maui only, or are there locations on Molokai and Lānaʻi as well?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah. It's...good question, Councilmember Fernandez, because the ADRC involves all of our Staff. So, we have Staff, Hiʻilei, who's on Molokai, and Denise, who is situated on Lānaʻi. And so, they provide information and referral services for persons with disabilities. We make also referrals to the Centers for Independent Living. So, there is a staff person there on...on Molokai. On Lānaʻi, we need to make a referral to the Independent Living Specialist here, and then she travels to Lānaʻi, and visits with clients there. So, that's how we're all connected with the ADRC.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification. So, I know you said that you...for some of the renovations for at-home aging in place, you've worked with Habitat for Humanity. And I'm guessing in Hāna, Ma Ka Hāna Ka ʻIke? I know that they've...I don't know if it's like a formal type of relationship, but I know that they do their...they do some of that work in Hāna. And so, I guess you can speak to that because I see your expressions. But also, for Molokai and Lānaʻi, is there someone that you work with here? If not, is...does Habitat folks send people from Maui here?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes, Chair. And I...so, right now, we have a formal relationship through our grant agreement with Habitat for Humanity to do that service. And they either work with volunteers on the island, or in the community to...to do the work. Or sometimes they have to bring staff over. So, what they try to do is group the projects together at one time so that they can minimize, you know, delivery of materials and equipment. And for...I forget, Ma Ka Hāna Ka ʻIke. Yeah, they...yes, they do great work, but we don't have a formal relationship with them. But I do know that they have their volunteers, the kids from the high school who also participate. And, you know, some of the retired architects also help them with the...the services for the kūpuna, and in retrofitting their homes. But yes, no, we . . .(timer sounds). . . don't have a formal relationship. But I'd like to be...you know, get to know more of their...their work as well.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Yeah, Ma Ka Hāna Ka ʻIke does amazing work. It's both benefiting, you know, the...the seniors, but also, as well as providing that hands-on experience for the students. So, it's just like all around, just really beneficial. Mahalo. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. I can get Lipoa's number to you, Rowena.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Next, we have Member Sugimura, followed by Member Uʻu-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you, Chair. Nice to see you, Ms. Rowena Dagdag-Andaya. Thank you for this good work. I do want to ask, if I could,

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Kaunoa Senior...I see Ruth Griffith on the call, on...at the meeting, and...because I know that they do...contribute a lot in their program. I want to hear from their...their staff, if you don't mind. How does Kaunoa contribute to the goals and...and objectives of this four-year plan?

CHAIR SINENCI: Member Sugimura, I believe Ms. Griffith is on for the second item, or did you...for meals...

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, I'm sorry. That's...yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Or...or --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I'm just thinking of...

CHAIR SINENCI: -- you can direct meals for Ms. Dagdag-Andaya?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. I only can talk to Rowena. Okay. Fine. I just see her on the call, so I...I just know that they contribute a lot. Ms. Dagdag-Andaya?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Oh, sure. You know, with Kaunoa, they participate as...so they provide congregate and home-delivered meals, as well as assisted transportation. So, in developing the four-year plan, those services--including leisure services, we shouldn't forget that. Because that's one of the areas that our seniors had indicated in the surveys that they...you know, they wanted to do more of, is, you know, be given opportunities for leisure and recreational services. So, Kaunoa provides a wide array of...of activities in the communities for the seniors.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Some of the seniors...

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I'll ask another --

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- question.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: So, they participate that way.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. So, in your presentation, you used the phrase "unmet needs," and the CDBG Action Plan uses that terminology. And is...were...did you participate in the CDBG-DR Action Plan with some contributions as it relates...

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: No, we didn't...yeah, we didn't participate. I...no, I...no, I...not formally.

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COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: We may have indirectly.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: But --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- but the...the use of the word “unmet needs” appears quite a lot, especially when...with strategic planning.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. The other thing that’s happening in my community right now is the Kahikinui wildfires, or the fires that are going on. And one of your goals is emergency management. So, that led me to believe that you have worked with communities, and how do you do that to reach our seniors? I do know that Kahikinui has seniors there, and what were you doing to participate with MEMA?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Thank you, Chair. It’s...well, one of the things that we’ve started doing with MEMA is, you know, sharing information about our...you know, the...the outreach activities that we’ve been doing, making sure that . . .(timer sounds). . . the information that we bring to the different senior clubs from Emergency Management, that all of our information is the same. Emergency preparedness and outreach is always going to be...it’s...it’s ongoing. So, with the residents in Kahikinui, the...you know, working with Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and other Native Hawaiian organizations, the community groups out there, especially in Kaupō area, is one of the things that we’re going to need to continue...or not continue, but to...to start doing in the year ahead. And maybe focusing a lot on...on reaching out to those rural areas. and making visits out there. But especially working with MEMA, sharing resources, that...you know, I’m...I’m glad that we have a really good relationship with them. They come to our meetings, we’ve gone to some of their presentations as well. So...so, we’re happy to...to continue our work with them. And also Kaunoa. Kaunoa participates a lot in emergency preparedness for our kūpuna in those areas.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Sugimura. Next, we have Member U‘u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Nice to see you. And thank you for your presentation. I just have a few questions. Is...is feeding program like a jargon, or can we use another name? Because it does sound a little like cattle.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Sure. I...I’m open to suggestions. . . .(laughing). . .

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COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: If I have any, maybe nutrition program, or...I don't know, something. But feeding program...I get your point. It is...it's to the point, but it's very...I don't know.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: I get it.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . But do you guys provide end-of-life services, maybe partnering with Legal Aid, like funeral planning, or will planning, or...do you do any of that?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes. We make referrals to Legal Aid for those kinds of services. We also work with...you know, we have a handbook for...for legal services, end-of-life, and an elder law handbook for preparing for those things. Funeral planning, not directly, but we do have a document at the office called Five Wishes, and they're available in different languages. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, unfortunately, is not one of them, but...but it's a...it's a document that participants can use to identify what they'd like to...you know, how they'd like to be treated, you know, what kind of music they'd like to have at their...you know, at end-of-life. We also partner up with hospice, Islands Hospice and Hospice Maui to share information with participants, and also connect participants with their services for things like palliative care, or hospice care, if need to.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. I know, sorry, that's a little bit morbid, but that's the kind of stuff I have to --

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: It's okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- work on with my grandma. And it does require an advocate to do that kind of stuff, and I know it's a little bit difficult for kūpuna to do that on their own, but I know it brings them a little bit of closure towards the end of their life. Do you guys provide counseling? Again, I...I have to work with my grandma, and sometimes she forgets that she's 86, and she cannot do all the things she used to do, and she cannot go outside and trim her own mango tree. Do you guys do that? Like a gentle reminder of what they can, and maybe physically cannot do?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Good question, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins. We do have a Case Management Specialist on staff who intervenes in those kinds of situations. And also, sometimes they serve as mediators between family members, so there's that kind of counseling. We also work with Adult...Maui Adult Daycare, who have staff on board, who assist with those situations as well. They don't even have to be participating in adult daycare services, but if there...there's a caregiving situation, you know, sometimes they...they also intervene. So, we look to our...the different resources that we have available, and make referrals if this is something that...that's beyond our capacity. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

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COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. I heard my bell, and I'm done with my questions. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member U'u-Hodgins. I had one question, Director [sic] Dagdag-Andaya. Medicare...are there a lot of kūpuna that are on Medicare, Medicaid programs?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair, yes. There...there is. Many of our kūpuna are on either Medicare or...or Medicaid services. And one of the...the...if they have questions about Medicare options, we do have a resource at the State Executive Office on Aging level. It's the...it's called SHIP, State Health Insurance Program, and they have specialists onboard who can help answer questions about Medicare options. And...because, you know, during enrollment time, there's all these different options that are being provided, and services, and it's so hard for kūpuna to decide which one, and whether or not these resources are trusted. So, we do have that resource available at the state level, and we...we have some volunteers on the island, through the State Health Insurance Program, who can assist.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Great. Thank you for that information. Okay. Members, is there any need for a second round of questions? We'll just go by hands, and you can have a second round. We have a question from Vice-Chair Johnson. Go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Dagdag-Andaya, sorry, I had one last question before the bell rang, and it's just a quick one. But, you know, you mentioned a lot of the groups that you're doing outreach, and I'm just curious if you're doing any outreach with the Wheelers. Remember those guys? Are they still active?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes. They're still active, and I believe one of our...two of our program specialists attended one of their meetings. They hold meetings once...at least once a month at Kelea Foundation. So...yeah. And we have staff on...or we have the Commission on Persons with Disabilities members who are also active with that group too, so...so we are, we're working with them.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. That was my last question. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Vice-Chair Johnson. Next, we have another question for you from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. I just was wondering, are you guys the section that oversees the Council on Aging and the Council [sic] on Persons with Disabilities, and your thoughts as to combining the two?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yes, we are. And my thoughts on it, I would prefer to keep them separate because, you know, on a...I know the word equity . . .(laughing). . . is...seems to be kind of taboo, but I think right now with, you know, our Commission on Persons

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with Disabilities, the needs are different. You know, we see similarities, but there are...you know, there are different issues being experienced, especially with, you know, like neurodivergent...you know, the population with neurodivergent disabilities, or intellectual disabilities. I...I'm sorry, I'm...I'm messing up on the terms here, but I...I think some of our commission members would...would prefer that the...the two be separate. Because although there's similar issues, there are differences that...or different issues that they have that they'd like to address.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, you're...you're muted, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, sorry. I just was wondering if the...the Aging and Disability Resource Center should then be separated to adequately address each side of the issues. Because that's like a combination, right?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah. And I think on the ADRC, there's...it's by statute. I...you know, I...that's an interesting question that you have. But I think...you know, we have...we have a commission secretary, myself, who staffs the...both commissions, and our program specialists also participate in the discussions as well. So, they're always working on the different issues. We have at least one staff person, one of our program specialists, who is very involved with the...on the disability...the disability issues. So...so, we're sharing, yeah, all those...the different responsibilities when it comes to...to those commissions.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And...and you're not seeing any intellectual issues when it comes to the elderly? Like my mom, it's not intellectual, but she forgets things plenty, and even like why she shouldn't be . . .(timer sounds). . . driving, you know, like that.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah. The cognitive issues, yeah, like...yeah. So, I...I would want to explore that a little bit further. But yeah, going back to the original question, I think keeping it...the two commissions separate is, it's...you know, if I...if I can speak on behalf of the commissions, I think they'd want to keep it separate.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Next, we have a question from Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, Miss...so, Rowena, you know the Disabilities Resource Center? What are some of the resources that they provide? And how do those family members who have...who are caring for a disabled member, how do they know that this is out there?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Okay. Thank you for that question. So, the ADRC...you know, we are considered a...a site. The main ADRC is with the State Executive Office on Aging. And the four counties, you know, we have staff who do the information and referral services. That's...that is basically the role of our ADRC, is to provide information and referral services, long-term services and supports, and be able to connect callers with

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agencies that...you know, they have...they...they might have questions about. Unfortunately, like our funding doesn't provide for direct services. So, if someone needed personal care, but was under the age of 60, then they wouldn't be eligible under our Title III and Kūpuna Care funding.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Right.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: But what we can do is provide them with a referral to another agency who can provide that. So, some...I want to give an example of Adult Daycare because they...they also can provide services for someone who's disabled under the age of...of 60. And so, either private pay, or...or there may be other funding sources outside of our contract that can be used to help support that...that individual. But mainly, the role of the ADRC for persons with disabilities.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . referral.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Yeah, it's...it's information --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . and referral.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. So, you know, one of the big challenges that families face now is, as parents age out, right? Then the question becomes, if you don't have family members to care for your child, what happens, yeah? And that's a lot of...that's an unanswered question that...that parents grapple with. So, in terms of that question--and as parents are asking, but I don't think they know who to ask--where would that question be...be aimed at? Or where would that question be sent to, or...

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: So...yeah. So, just...I'm hearing the...the question correctly. It's where do we go to if we have questions about . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . oh, gosh . . .*(laughing)*. . . like what to do, or how to continue caring for a loved one --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- as they...they age.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: As we pass away, as parents pass away, what happens?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: As parents pass away...oh, like what happens after --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- a participant...

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: To the child.

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MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Ahh. And if the child is...needs additional services. I...you know, we...I think in those situations, we would work with whatever...you know, I believe at the state level, not through Executive Office on Aging, but there may be other state agencies that can assist in the planning effort. And that's another area that I think I'd like to explore a little bit more on --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- is...yeah, how do we connect? And so, that's part of the ADRC too. Not only are we just limited to our area agencies on aging, but once a month, we hold meetings with other organizations throughout the state. So, it's...it's called No Wrong Door. And so, we are connecting with like, for example, Developmental Disabilities Division at the State level, or with the DOE, so that we can connect on...okay, here are the issues that we're hearing in our community. How can we...how can we connect on these issues, and provide the appropriate information to our callers? So, I think that's one that I want to bring up at our next statewide meeting. So, thank you --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: -- for raising that.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Kama. Members, any other questions for Ms. Dagdag-Andaya? Seeing none. And of course, thank you for asking those very poignant and hard life questions that we all have to go through. So, very important for all of our 'ohana. So, with that, mahalo to Rowena for coming this morning and answering all of our questions. So, with that, Members, if there are no objections, I'll defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Members. And then...

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: No objections, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. And then we'll go ahead and take our mid-morning meeting break, and we'll come back at 10:40. With that, the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, June 16th, is now in recess. . . .(gavel). . .

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RECESS: 10:27 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:44 a.m.

CHAIR SINENCI: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha. Welcome back to the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, June 16th, 2025. It is now 10:44. Mahalo, Members, for that extended break.

**KAUNOA’S MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM AND KŪPUNA
FOOD INSECURITY (WASSP-1(8))**

CHAIR SINENCI: We have one more item this morning, WASSP-1(8), and Members, it is the Kaunoa’s Meals on Wheels Program and Kūpuna Food Insecurity. And Members, as a reminder, we heard a lot about kūpuna meals during our budget proceedings, and so we’ve invited Kaunoa Senior Services today to talk about their Meals on Wheels program. They deliver hot, nutritious, midday meals to seniors who are unable to manage their own meal preparation. This is an essential program to help manage kūpuna food insecurity in the County. I’ve invited the Department of Human Concerns to provide an update on the program and address potential Federal funding cuts. I will now turn the floor over to Ms. Dagdag-Andaya. Is she on? Huh? Oh, we’ll go to...

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair? Yes.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, go ahead.

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: I..for this presentation, I will turn it over to Ruth Griffith of Kaunoa Senior Services. Both she and Assistant Administrator Roland Prieto have a presentation.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Welcome, Ms. Griffith and Mr. Prieto. Go ahead.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Chair Sinenci. Can everyone hear me okay? Yeah? Good morning, Councilmembers. Thank you for inviting us to do this presentation. It will be fairly brief, and I anticipate having more direct questions from all of you that perhaps we can answer some of the details. My name is Ruth Griffith, and I am the Senior Services Administrator for Kaunoa Senior Services, which is a division within the Department of Human Concerns, just like Maui County Office on Aging. And I’m here today to address the WASSP Committee’s request for updates regarding Kaunoa Services, which helped to address senior food insecurity. And I would like to share screen, if that’s possible, Chair Sinenci?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes. Go ahead, Ms. Griffith.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. Before we start, I did want to provide some clarifying information--which I..I don’t want to assume you all know, or perhaps people who are watching the hearing might not...or watching the presentation might not know--is that

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the difference between Kaunoa Senior Services and Maui County Office on Aging. So, we are both divisions under the Department of Human Concerns. Maui County Office on Aging has a...has a larger, broader spectrum of looking at all of the seniors' needs within Maui County in...in all areas. They also manage the Federal and State grants, which come to the Maui...to Maui County that are senior-related. We receive some of those grants at Kaunoa Senior Services. But Kaunoa actually runs five different programs, which is a leisure wellness program--and all of them are focused on providing wellness information and opportunities for seniors so that they can live a longer...what is called health span, a longer period of time when they're healthy, rather than simply an extended lifespan, where they might be more...more infirm later in their life. And so, our role is primarily heavily preventative, but also, we do provide support services for those who become frail and homebound. So, we do have five...five of them, only three of which are...receive grants through Maui County Office on Aging. So, the Leisure Program, which provides all the classes and activities, does not receive Federal funding at all. It is purely a County of Maui-funded program. Our RSVP, that's the volunteer program, receives some Federal funding, as well as Maui County funding. And then the three remaining programs, which is our Transportation Program, which receives State funding, as well as County funding. And then the final two are our nutrition programs. And I...I realize Council...I mean, Committee Chair Sinenci, that you wanted this to be about Meals on Wheels primarily, but I would like permission to address also the Congregate Nutrition Program because both of these programs address food insecurity within the County of Maui...if that would be possible.

CHAIR SINENCI: Staff, is that okay?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. No objections. Thank you.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. Thank you very much. Because in the...we work both of those programs together to address food insecurity in Maui County. Because those programs, those...those that receive Federal funding and State funding through via grants that are administered through Maui County Office on Aging, these particular programs require a qualification process. So, a senior, or a family member, who wants to qualify...who wants to receive home-delivered meals must go through a qualification screening process through Maui County Office on Aging before they're referred to us at Kaunoa Senior Services for Meals on Wheels and home-delivered...home-delivered meals, congregate nutrition, and transportation. Okay? So, that's...that's kind of how this works between Maui County Office on Aging and Kaunoa Senior Services. We are what's considered to be a direct-service provider. So, we're the people on the ground. Our Staff is the one that's physically delivering the meals, doing a safety check, and running all of these activities for the seniors. We are the direct-service provider, our Staff. Okay? All right. So, let me get started, and let's hope that this will work. Okay. Can everybody see the slides?

CHAIR SINENCI: Not yet.

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MS. GRIFFITH: Not yet? All right. Maybe I need to ask Jessica Crouse to please share the slides?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes, we can see it now.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. Got it now? All right. Let's get started. All right. So, Kaunoa Senior Services actually has two nutrition programs. One of them is the...is the Congregate Nutrition Program, and the other is the Meals on Wheels, or Home-Delivered Meals Program. Next slide. So, these are the two nutrition programs that we have. Congregate Nutrition Program is open to everyone that is 60 and above. The Home-Delivered Meals Program primarily serves those who are...are frail and homebound. Participants do not participate in both programs, they participate in one or the other. Next slide. Kaunoa's Congregate Nutrition Program provides nutritionally-balanced meals for those ages 60 and above in an atmosphere which encourages mentally-stimulating experiences, critical socialization opportunities, and development of healthy habits, and independent lifestyles. We have nine congregare sites that serve seniors across Maui County. West Maui's nutrition site is not currently operational due to the destruction of the West Maui Senior Center in August of 2023. There are 20 West Maui seniors currently receiving home-delivered meals to their homes. We also provide activities for them within their homes. Funding is...for the Congregate Nutrition Program is comprised of monies from an Older Americans Act Federal Title III grant, the County of Maui, as well as voluntary contributions from participants. The Congregate Nutrition Program's annual survey included the following impact results: 98 percent of participants agree that the program is important to maintaining their overall health and independence; 94 percent of participants agree that the program reduces loneliness, and helps to prevent isolation. The Congregate Nutrition Program is about providing nutrition, but ever since COVID, we did see that socialization was a huge factor in maintaining their health. We actually, during COVID, lost congregare nutrition participants. Although home-delivered meals participants are more frail, congregare nutrition participants are the ones we lost due to the lack of socialization. As much as we tried to provide them with face-to-face interaction and activities, the loss of being able to see their friends was very impactful for them. Next slide, please. So far, in FY 2025, as of May 2025, the Congregate Program is serving 650 unduplicated participants. The average age of participants--actually, that's incorrect--is actually 86 years of age. 46,000 meals served, 1,000 socialization activities provided, with a total attendance of over 62,000. Okay. Next slide. Kaunoa's Home-Delivered Meals, or Meals on Wheels Program, provides meals to Maui County's frail, homebound elderly, ages 60 and above. Eligibility for service is determined by the Maui County Office on Aging, and these are some of the criteria that they use to determine eligibility. They include significant reduced mental capacity, and the...to being unable to perform two or more activities of daily living, which include eating, bathing, dressing--the basic activities of daily living--and instrumental activities of daily living, which include preparing meals, shopping, taking medications, et cetera. Individuals must also lack the ability to shop, or cook, or prepare adequate meals on their own. Meals are delivered five days a week, and include critical face-to-face or

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phone call safety checks on a daily basis. If we are unable to provide five days a week, we will deliver a double meal on Monday. So, for example, Kamehameha Day holiday, we are not delivering. Therefore, the day before, the Staff will deliver two meals to each individual so that they do have five meals per week. The critical face-to-face or phone call safety checks are also done on a daily basis. If they do not answer the door, or we notice anything that's out of the ordinary, we will call and alert the families and/or emergency services, which we have done many times when necessary. Safety checks provide a sense of safety, security, and peace of mind for both the participant and his or her family. My...my family were also...my family was a recipient of Meals on Wheels. I lived on the mainland in college, and that safety check for my parents was the only thing I had for peace of mind to know that someone was checking on them every day at midday. So, I do know what that impact is like. Normally, we serve 120,000 meals per year. We have a 98 percent satisfactory rate, and 100 percent on-time delivery, meaning unexcused deliveries are not a part of our program. Next slide, please. So far, in FY 2025, as of May 2025, the average age of a Meals on Wheels participant is 80 years of age, which are over 50 percent of our participants. The number of participants who live alone is 160 participants, so almost a third of our participants. 105,000 meals have been delivered as of May, and there are 760 unduplicated participants. I...I believe that's the last slide; is that correct, Jessica?

MS. CROUSE: Yes, Ruth.

MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. So, that concludes my brief overview of our service, our nutrition program service, and I anticipate you guys having more detailed questions. So, I'm very happy to answer those.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Griffith. Did Mr. Prieto wanted [sic] to add some opening comments?

MR. PRIETO: No comments, Chair. I'm here to lend support for any questions that need to be answered by the Members.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Mr. Prieto. Members, are there any clarifying questions before we go to testimony? Okay. Seeing none. Staff?

MS. DEL CASTILLO: Chair, no individuals have signed up to testify. If anyone would like to testify, please come up. Okay. I see one testifier at the podium.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(8) . . .

MR. LAW: . . .(inaudible). . . Sinenci. There's a bit of...little bit of a snafu on the rules here. I got signed up for the beginning of the meeting, so I kind of understand the rules to mean, like you could speak at the beginning of the meeting, or...because I know when you break apart the agenda, you could speak three minutes on each one. So, forget all that rules stuff. I know you like to follow rules, but sometimes you got to, like, color

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outside the lines. And I would just like to thank Ruth Griffith. I appreciate her help with getting that Federal money in here, and I would just like to remind her that this is the Kingdom of Hawai'i, not America. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Members, any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Staff?

MS. DEL CASTILLO: If anyone would like to testify, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated they wish to testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, seeing there are no more individuals wishing to testify, any objections to closing oral testimony for WASSP-1(8)?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Members. Okay. We will go to...I will now close public testimony for this item.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(8) . . .

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, I'd like to open the floor for questions and comments. Each Member will have three minutes for the first round, and then any subsequent...another three minutes for subsequent rounds. And we'll go with a show of hands, but I'll...I'll call on Member Johnson since he has to leave early this morning. Go ahead, Vice-Chair Johnson.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Committee Chair Sinenci. I do have to leave early for a meeting with Ikaika 'Ohana. They're coming to Lāna'i for the affordable housing project. So, I want to thank Administrator Griffiths [*sic*] and Mr. Prieto for you guys' hard work on this issue. It's so important for our kūpuna. I'm going to have a little thing I want to speak before, but really overall, maybe you could respond to it. So, since COVID, we...we've been hearing more people eating alone, being isolated, the fires added to it. Our kūpuna have always had that kind of high risk of being, you know, alone, and eating alone. And...and it only seems like we've...since COVID has been compounded, and to bring people out is really hard. I...I...I was watching a study done...I was reading about a study done about, you know, why Americans, as a nation...or our happiness is going down year after year. And it's...and they're tying it to people eating alone, just...not only seniors, but just in general, more and more people are eating alone. Word for friend in Chinese means someone I eat with, you know. So, that...I think, first off, how do we make these numbers more? What...how do we reach more people who are alone? How...how about this first suggestion is 60 years and up, can you reduce that to maybe 55, or can look at the numbers on the age that we address these...these folks eating alone, or also...you know, with Federal guidelines, there's always these strings attached, but can we do things maybe as a County to fund better, and just leave the strings attached from the Federal guys alone, and we'll work on our

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own pots of money? Because we really want to feed those seniors that are struggling with being alone, post-fire, post-COVID. And then that's all...in turn, if you can purchase these foods from farmers, you could really have a win-win situation. So, I'm going to leave it at that because it's kind of a long-winded question. So, Ms. Griffiths [sic]?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Vice-Chair Johnson. Yes, it's absolutely true. People living alone don't eat as well. People eat better when they're with other people. That...that is why the face-to-face interaction is so important as well for us. And the phone calls, the one-on-one contact, that is critical part of the service that we provide...almost as much as the meal. It may be sometimes more than, in order to get them to...to eat properly. We have...in terms of the age, the 60-year age, that is related to the Federal grants. However, we have our Leisure Program, which is a 55-and-above program. So, although I didn't list it as a nutrition program, the . . .(timer sounds). . . Leisure Program...all of our programs do promote a nutrition...do have a nutrition aspect to it. So, our Leisure Programs are...are more to get people to come out and interact, and we do provide meals for them, usually, at our leisure events. That's one of the things we do for those younger...younger seniors like myself. Little bit different type of programming than what we would provide for an 86-year-old, right, from congregate, or even for home-delivered meals person. So, 55-year-old requires a different type of programming, and we do offer that through our Leisure Program. So, there is another way for us to offer --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MS. GRIFFITH: -- nutrition education.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Is the funding satisfactory? Is...

MS. GRIFFITH: Yeah. Well, yes.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: I heard my time, so I'm just going to end it, is...do you have enough funding for the Leisure Program?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you for asking. The Leisure Program is...is doing really well at the moment. It does have the ability to pay for itself to some extent through a revolving fund. So, the seniors are able to provide like a repay on some of the activities that they do, if they require ticketing and...and things like that. So --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. GRIFFITH: -- yeah, we are actually very good. Thank you for asking, and that is something that I hope we continue to promote.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much for your response. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Vice-Chair Johnson. We have a question for you from Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Hello, Ruth. Good morning. As you know, the three plagues of the aged are loneliness, hopelessness, and boredom. And I have one tiny solution to the loneliness. You have nine Councilmembers that could go on your assisted trans, or Meals on Wheels, or the Congregate Program, or the Leisure Program to visit with the seniors. I did that, as you know, as your director. And so, I'm...I'm pretty sure that all of my colleagues here would like to do their little part to help the...the seniors feel better. And then the other matter I wanted to bring up with you is, how are your vacancies?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Chair Lee. I will gratefully accept the offer you made on behalf of all Councilmembers to come and join us . . . *(laughing)*. . . to visit the seniors, or make wellness calls. I know that Councilmember Sugimura has gone on a ride-along. And Councilmember Kama was...her husband was a recipient of Meals on Wheels. So, there are some people who are very familiar with the services. I would encourage everybody to go on a ride-along for Meals on Wheels. That is an eye-opening experience, to see the invisible seniors of our communities. They are invisible. So, the seniors that you hear and you see, for the most part, those are mostly congregate, maybe younger seniors. They're more active. But the homebound are very frail. And to see what the County does to care for these people is eye-opening and life-changing. So, I would encourage you all to do that, to go and see the homebound, the invisible seniors, who the County of Maui is supporting. I think you will feel good about the services that we, as a County, provide for these families. The second part of that question --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Vacancies.

MS. GRIFFITH: -- Chair Lee? Oh, vacancies...17 to 19, which is almost a third, 25 to 30 percent.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And why? Why?

MS. GRIFFITH: We have been that way since COVID. Initially, I believe after COVID, everybody experienced that. There was a slow return to the workforce that has been improving. We have a lot of movement within Kaunoa itself where people are seeking higher-paying jobs, or within the County itself where they're seeking higher-paying jobs. So, they're moving within the County as opposed to us able...being able to bring in new people to the County. There's a lot of internal movement. And when that happens, it slows the whole process down as well. So, if I have a nutrition program aide, for example, or a Meals on Wheels driver that wants to move to something that's higher-paying, they will take that spot. Then we have yet another opening. So, the net effect of that is still . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . 17 to 19. And then we try to recruit that position. So, which is now an entry-level position.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. So, I've used up my time, but I'll get back to you. Thanks.

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MS. GRIFFITH: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Lee. Member Sugimura, did you have a question for Ruth?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah. In your opening, thank you very much for clarifying how you interact with Office on Aging. And I think it relates to the testifier's concerns. I...I believe that...that clarification was important because although it was a request for Meals on Wheels, that senior had to apply directly with Office on Aging. Can you clarify that?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you. That is absolutely correct. So, the initial step to receiving any of the programs that receive Federal funding, or State funding, is to first go through Office on Aging to see if they qualify for that service. Those...those programs we run that receive grant money requires qualification. So, yes, the first stop is always Maui County Office on Aging.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. GRIFFITH: Then we receive the referral...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Then you receive the referral. Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

MS. GRIFFITH: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Because I think that was pretty moving, just the description of the testifier, and the need. So, the other thing is, I'm glad to hear that you're actually providing services with Habitat. Because when I went on that meal-delivering program, there was a senior who lived...and they had a balcony that needed to be repaired. You know, I don't know what kind of major repair or whatever, but at least now, then what your drivers do is refer them to Habitat, or how does that work?

MS. GRIFFITH: Councilmember Sugimura, so actually, if we do know of a concern that the senior has as we go and meet them on a daily basis, we do a referral back to Maui County Office on Aging. Maui County Office on Aging then contacts their vast resources of senior support services to fill that need. So, we are eyes, and ears, and feet on the ground. And then we provide that...that referral back to Maui County Office on Aging so that they can help the senior locate the appropriate services.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Well, thanks for that clarification. Okay. Good to see how you all interact with each other, and have your appropriate needs and means, I think, as funding and connections. So, no other questions. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Sugimura. Members, any other questions by a show of hands? Member Cook?

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Ms. Griffin [sic]. Thank you, Chair. How many kūpuna are currently on the waitlist for Meals on Wheels? Is there a waitlist?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Member Cook, for that question. We are happy to report we do not have a waitlist.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Excellent. Is the current funding sufficient to meet this growing demand?

MS. GRIFFITH: We will see. By mid-year, we will see how...how we're doing. We are actually anticipating in the summer increase in meal prices for both Department of Education and Hale Mahaolu, who are our primary meal vendors. We also anticipate increases in prices from our vendors that provide the packaging for the meals. As with all the tariffs, and everything else going on in the economy, this will trickle down. So, currently, as of this moment, we're okay. But around mid-year, we will do another assessment, and if needed, we will contact Council.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. My final question. I'm amazed at the average age, and could you...it doesn't have to be statistically accurate, but like over the last 20 years, what the average age has increased? I mean, it seems like everybody is living longer, and I'm just wondering if it's...kind of like how that looks.

MS. GRIFFITH: You are correct, Member Cook, that our average age has increased, and for...especially for congregate. And I would love to say that we're part of that reason. That is definitely our goal, is to keep them active for as long as possible. and we do have people over 100 years of age in all of our programs, including leisure. And so, that...that is the goal, is to keep them more healthy. Of course, with medical advancement, people are living longer. Many are not living longer with good health, and that's the problem, and that's where the demand for Meals on Wheels comes in, or assisted transportation, the most frail of our seniors. But a lot of people are taking better control over their health, and being more active...mindfully more active. And so, our...our role is to provide them with the opportunities for them to continue to do that safely, providing safe socialization opportunities, and safe ways of...of maintaining their health.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, thank you so much for your services, and for...yeah, just bless everybody who has their hands involved in this, and we'll continue to help the best that we can. Thank you very much.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Cook. Chair Lee, you had another question? Okay. Go ahead. Anybody else for your first...for your first round? Member Rawlins-Fernandez, and then Member Paltin.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Ms. Griffiths. Mahalo for the presentation. I wanted to follow-up on Chair Lee's questions regarding the vacancies. Have you folks come up with ideas on how to fill those vacancies? Because a third of all the positions you folks have, that's...that's a lot.

MS. GRIFFITH: Yeah. Yes, Member Rawlins. Thank you very much. We have tried many things. We have tried multiple things all at the same time. We have tried what's called a DM-89, which is a temporary hire. In order for that to happen, the requirement is that the position be in recruitment. So, first of all, you need to have it in recruitment. Then you can request a DM-89, which is the fastest way to put somebody in under an emergency situation. However, you have to be very careful about putting in a DM-89. Because once you use the DM-89 for that position, it's my understanding, then you can no longer request another DM-89. We've had that situation before, where we brought somebody on and trained them, only to have them leave, and then...then be unable to hire another DM-89. So, it isn't as easy as saying, well, that person is home for the summer, so we'll put them in. If we do that, then after the summer, we may not have the ability to do that for any position. In terms of attracting people to these positions, quite frankly, we need higher pay, and that is something that we're working with Personnel on. I am working on that with Personnel in looking at some other comparable positions within the state to see if we could find positions that are comparable with a higher pay, or how we could make that happen for our people. So, that is something that I'm going to be working very hard on this year, but it is something that we are absolutely working on. Our Meals on Wheels and our frontline people that are actually doing direct service are actually the ones that are not getting paid the most, and yet, they do critical service on the ground. So, I think that's...that's a big thing. We tend to have...like sometimes we're really short in Meals on Wheels, then we get full. And then we get short in Assisted Transportation, and then we get full. So, it moves within each section, which is kind of strange. But all we can do is continue to recruit, participate in the County's fairs, and try to promote the best we can that way...and work closely with Personnel.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for those details. I know that, you know, Meals on Wheels delivery is more than just bringing folks food. It's sometimes the only contact with, you know, someone outside of their home all day. So, it does...it is a critical role that these, you know, folks *... (timer sounds) ...* have, and should be compensated appropriately. Just a follow-up quick, Chair, is, would you be able to share what bargaining unit those...those workers are in?

CHAIR SINENCI: Ms. Griffith?

MS. GRIFFITH: Yes, primarily 3s, some 13s.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: As expected. Yeah. One last follow-up--and I won't ask for a second round--did you speak with DPS about this as well, Personnel Services? Because we've also been trying to work with them to get them to do like a

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supplemental agreement to increase pay for those hard-to-fill positions, especially in Bargaining Unit 3 and 13?

MS. GRIFFITH: I have not recently done that. We have been having ongoing discussions in which they have been very supportive because they understand the positions that we have, and the difficulty in...in filling them. So, that is something, actually, we're going through...through the Director's Office.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. And then to reiterate, they're hard to fill because they're...they're not competitively...they're not competitive salaries, and that we need to correct that.

MS. GRIFFITH: We can...we can fill them, and then they will eventually move on to try and find something with higher pay. Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Right. It's the cost of living on Maui. It...it's very hard. Even if the work itself is meaningful and rewarding for folks, you...you still got to be able to pay the bills, and...and rent, and everything. So, I appreciate that. Mahalo, Ms. Griffith.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair, for...for that leeway.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Next, we have Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Griffiths [sic]. I was wondering, do you run the Meals on Wheels on all islands, like Molokai included?

MS. GRIFFITH: Yes, Member Paltin. That is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just...you know, during the budget, there was some...I don't want to say complaint, but comment about, I guess, the quality of the meals, the hotdog and chips, or something. I don't know if it was being prepared at the same facility as for the school kids. And I think there was maybe comparison to the Alu Like program, or something like that. When you get that kind of feedback, is there anything that can be done?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Member Paltin. Yes, we have been doing that. And you can say complaint because it...it truly is . . .(laughing). . . and rightfully so. So, how...how the Department of Education works is that every...every school that provides us with food has a different manager. And that manager has a lot of autonomy in terms of what kind of food they provide. So, West Maui's meals tend to be really good, yeah. And then some are not. So, what happens is that our Staff, the managers of our Congregate Program, has to go and talk to the...the kitchen manager, and have to work out a menu that they prefer. Now, on Molokai, we had a couple

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transitional...unfortunate transitional situations where the kitchen manager at the Department of Education passed, the long-time manager. And so, we had started to look at some of the suggestions that the seniors were making about looking at the Alu Like vendor. Our manager at the time did pursue that, and then she unfortunately passed in October of last year. And quite frankly, we lost all momentum on that because we have not yet replaced that. It was very traumatic. But the...the current TA in that position has picked up the ball, and has actually spoken to the DOE manager there already, and they have made changes to the...to the main menu already. And we anticipate even more changes to come, using more local...local food...locally-produced food items. So, it's not going to change overnight, but we are changing some of the meals to improve them. So, I hope to see a happier Molokai congregate group.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Awesome, awesome. I wonder if they do...if they do one cookbook fundraiser, and then give her one...one copy. But that was...that was like in the olden days, like way long time ago with the cookbook fundraiser.

MS. GRIFFITH: That was the best.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But you know, subtle hint, or something.

MS. GRIFFITH: Member Paltin, I did want to mention to you that we do plan to reopen our congregate center . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . in West Maui, probably within this summer. We do have an alternate location that is...we're finalizing at the moment. So, something to look forward to.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, right on. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Let me go to Member U'u-Hodgins or Member Kama for their first-round opportunity.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I really have no questions, other than to thank you folks of what you guys do. I went on one Meals on Wheels delivery in Ha'ikū, and you're right, it was very eye-opening. So, I know the importance of what you folks do. And really, I just want to thank you. I don't have any questions, but thank you, Chair.

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

MS. GRIFFITH: Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Member Kama?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. I just want to thank Ruth for all the hard work that they do in their agency. I know many seniors where I live, and in the Hawaiian community that are on Meals on Wheels. They're very grateful for that, and they're very thankful, you know, for those services. And I'm just so thankful and grateful that we

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still have these services for our kūpuna, and that hopefully, as time goes on, that we'll be able to get more people to support, and more funding, so that maybe all the meals can be just as nutritious, and where we don't have one community that does and the other ones that don't. But thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Kama.

MS. GRIFFITH: Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: I did have one question, and I don't know if it's...if you can answer it. Do you see that...how many kūpuna are on SNAP benefits?

MS. GRIFFITH: Chair Sinenci, actually, I don't see that information, but perhaps Rowena might have that information.

CHAIR SINENCI: Rowena?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: Chair, yeah...no. We...when we talk with the participants then, you know, sometimes they'll share that information with us, but it's not something that we would typically like ask, or document. I mean, we document it as the participants share the information.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. We'll go back to Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, Ruth, you talked about the bargaining units. The SRs start at what number?

MS. GRIFFITH: Chair Lee, our SRs start at 7.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I can't believe that. I tried to change that 20 years ago, and I thought --

MS. GRIFFITH: I know.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- that Robin Tanaka did. We worked on that for years. Okay. That's very, very disappointing to hear. Do you ever try and use other...other strategies as salary adjustments for recruitment --

MS. GRIFFITH: To be honest...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- let's say recruitment, you know, and retainment?

MS. GRIFFITH: Chair Lee, to be honest, I am not sure what is available to us in terms of what we can do to supplement...financially supplement. We do what we can in other ways to support them, but I am not clear about what we can do to...to provide additional monies to them. They basically work out of sheer love for the seniors --

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I know that.

MS. GRIFFITH: -- which is not...which is wonderful, but not fair. So, yes. For this year, that is my goal, is to look at all of those things more closely with the Director, with Director Tsuhako and Assistant Director Crouse to work with Personnel to try to remedy that situation. We have a lot of 7s and 9s.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Lee. Members, any other...any need for additional questions for Ms. Griffith or Mr. Prieto? One more from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just was wondering--thank you, Chair--if you guys track the Carryover/Savings annually from your vacant position...solely from your vacant positions? And then, you know, if there is those chronic unfilled positions that are causing other folks to carry a heavier burden, approach the Mayor about end-of-the-year supplemental so it doesn't become a Carryover.

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Member Paltin. We do not have chronic open positions. They rotate. There's always one open, and we don't have any position that's been open for multiple years unless I am trying to redescribe it for some reason, which also delays the process, but is sometimes necessary...because some of the position descriptions are so outdated that they need to be updated before you can hire. And in order...and to do that, that would be one way to request like higher pay, or a higher SR, or whatever...higher step. So, these are some of the things that kind of bog the process down, but eventually will produce better results for the employee. But no, we don't have anything...any positions that are chronically open every year. In terms of salary savings, I think the...the Department does track those, and I believe this year we've been asked for like a 250,000 in salary savings in the...from the Department as a whole in the budget. So, a lot of that is going to come from Kaunoha because Kaunoha is the largest division, by far, within the Department.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You mean that you've been asked to...to save that money, or that's just how it ends up with the vacancies?

MS. GRIFFITH: No, I believe that is in the budget for a...like a salary adjustment. We had that same salary adjustment last year, as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Mm, mm, mm. Okay. Thank you. That's kind of more of an administrative thing, I think, than a legislative thing.

MS. GRIFFITH: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But we can support you.

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MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Members, any other questions for our resources this morning? Seeing none. I would like to give them...any closing remarks for the Council?

MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Chair Sinenci. I would, on behalf of my team--because this is not my Kaunoa, or Roland's Kaunoa, it is your Kaunoa. This belongs to the people and the seniors of Maui County. Your staff here at Kaunoa is incredibly dedicated. I cannot speak more highly of the people that we have here. Heart. They...they were...actually, remained on the front line throughout COVID. Throughout COVID, they never once stopped delivery, never once stopped going house-to-house. And they remained so, even during the fire. We still serve. So, I would like to thank you for your support, all the support that you've given to the seniors of Maui County. This is what makes Maui County so unique, is the support that the County Council provides to our kūpuna. So, mahalo very much.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Griffith, Mr. Prieto...oh, and Rowena?

MS. DAGDAG-ANDAYA: I just wanted to mahalo the Councilmembers for your support as well, and for the opportunity to provide a presentation this morning, and to share the...the work that we are doing in both Kaunoa Senior Services and Office on Aging, and as a whole, at Department of Human Concerns. And we want...well, I know for me, I want to share our access and assistance number for your constituents at (808) 270-7774. And that number is...again, it goes directly to our...our intake Staff. And we welcome any suggestions or questions that you may have following today's presentation, and hope that we can work together to come up with different solutions for our communities. The more we share information, and work together on solving issues, I think the...the...it goes a long way in making a difference in our community. So, thank you very much. And I do appreciate the partnership with Ruth, and Roland, and the team over at Kaunoa where, you know, we are constantly coming up with different ideas, and...and sharing concerns with each other. So, I really appreciate the work that we do together. Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Rowena. Roland?

MR. PRIETO: Thank you, Chair. I haven't said much during this meeting, but I would like to echo the sentiment shared by our Administrator, Ruth Griffith. The Staff that we have here at Kaunoa Senior Services is second to none. The heart and passion that they exude day in, day out, Monday through Friday--not even just Monday through Friday--outside of the boundaries of Kaunoa Senior Services, they live the mission, and our mission and values in making sure that our seniors are taken care of throughout the community. Some of them even go out on Saturdays and Sundays. They've made friendships with seniors throughout the community. So, you know, our staff here, they're great. I will put them up against any team here in the County as far as what they do. And they do it well. They do it well. Thank you.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Roland, for that. And...and mahalo for all of your work, all the work that you guys do. Thank you. And you guys are always welcome to come back, should...should you need to present to us. Okay. With that, Members, also mahalo to the Councilmembers for dedicating your Monday morning to this very important issue. Our kūpuna are one of our most precious resources, and so we want to mālama them as much as we can. With that, Members, are there any objections to deferring this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TK).

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. And before we adjourn, Staff, is there anything else before we adjourn?

MS. MACDONALD: No, Chair. There is nothing else outstanding.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. And just a friendly reminder that we do have a WAI Committee meeting this afternoon at 1:30. And so, with that, Water Authority, Social Services, and Parks Committee meeting is adjourned. It's 11:32. Thank you. . . .(gavel). . .

ADJOURN: 11:32 a.m.

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Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 42 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

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



Daniel Schoenbeck