

WATER AUTHORITY, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

March 17, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:04 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Chair
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member (Out 11:58 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 9:23 a.m.; out 11:49 a.m.)
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF:

Clarissa MacDonald Legislative Analyst
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney
Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary
Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Jade Rojas-Letisi, Council Aide, Makawao-Ha‘ikū-Pā‘ia Residency Area Office
William “Bill” Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

ADMIN.:

Lori Tshako, Director, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(3))
Jessica Crouse, Deputy Director, Department of Human Concerns (WASSP-1(3))
Patrick McCall, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (WASSP-1(4))
Yukari Murakami, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel (All)

OTHERS:

Testifiers

Stephanie Villalobos, Community Care Navigator, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Dania Dominguez, Legal Assistant, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Nicholas Winfrey, Strategic Consultant, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Aparna Patrie, Immigration Attorney, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Evelyn DelValle, Community Care Navigator, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Annie Alvelais, Director of Operations and Development, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))
Elle Cochran, Hawai‘i State Representative (WASSP-1(3))
Veronica Mendoza-Jachowski, Executive Director, Roots Reborn (WASSP-1(3))

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Zhantell Lindo (WASSP-1(3))

Jasee Law (WASSP-1(3))

(40+) additional attendees

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

CHAIR SINENCI: . . .(gavel). . . Aloha kakahiaka kākou and maidin mhaith in the Gaelic language. Happy St. Paddy's Day, everybody. And welcome to the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, March 17th. It is 9:04, 2025 [sic]. I'm Shane Sinenci, your Committee Chair. And thank you, Members, for taking this time to attend this meeting. Just as a friendly reminder that members of the public to please silence your cell phones or any 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, although we know that everyone's on spring break, so happy spring break, too. Also, please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Joining us today, we have our Committee Vice-Chair Gabe Johnson. Aloha and maidin mhaith.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Maidin mhaith, Chair, Councilmembers, community members, Happy St. Paddy's Day. I'm alone in my workspace, and there's no testifiers at the Lānaʻi District Office. I'm here and ready to work. Mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for joining us. Also joining us in the Chambers is Councilmember Tom Cook. Aloha and maidin mhaith.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Maidin mhaith, Happy St. Paddy's Day. I'm feeling Irish, and looking forward to today's meeting. Thank you, sir.

CHAIR SINENCI: And cheers afterwards, yeah. Okay. Also joining us in the chambers is Pro Tem Tasha Kama. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair, and maidin mhaith to everyone else. And yes, Happy St. Patrick's Day. I cooked my corned beef and cabbage last night, came out perfect. Sorry, no leftovers.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aw, shucks. Okay. Oh, we get the canned corned beef on the side. Also online, joining us, we have Chair Alice Lee. Aloha and Happy St. Paddy's Day.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha and maidin mhaith. I'm home alone in my workspace. I have to stay home because Koa is on spring break. And so, I want to wish everybody, hope you all have the opportunity to have an Irish happy meal, which is corned beef and cabbage.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Lee.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Looking forward to your meeting. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for joining us. Also joining us online is Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Aloha kakahiaka and maidin mhaith.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka and maidin mhaith kākou. Streaming live and direct from my kitchen table in Nāpili. I have one spring breaker minor, I have one canine minor, and I have one kūpuna, Mildred H. Paltin, with me today.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, welcome, everybody, and thanks for joining us. Next, we have, from Molokai, I presume, Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. Aloha kakahiaka.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka, and this morning's greeting reminds me of a Dragon Ball Z character, Majin Buu. . . *(laughing)*. . . Every time I hear you saying it, that's the visual I'm getting. I am alone here at my private residence in the room, but the two spring breakers are in their rooms right now enjoying their spring break, and then one adult, Makena Fernandez. Oh, and there's no...currently no testifiers at the Molokai District Office. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for that, and welcome, 'Ohana Fernandez. Next, we have Yuki Lei Sugimura, but she is...she'll be joining us in a little bit. And then finally, in the Chambers, we have Ms. Nohe U'u-Hodgins. Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Aloha, Chair. Good morning. Thank you so much for the snacks.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes. Thank you, Uncle Don. Spoiling everybody. Okay. Members, from the Department of Human Concerns, we have Director Lori Tsuhako and Deputy Director Jessica Crouse. Aloha and good morning. Welcome.

MS. TSUHAKO: Aloha, Mr. Chair and Members.

MS. CROUSE: Good morning.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Also joining us later on in the Chambers is Director Pat McCall. Thanks for being here. From Corporation Counsel, we have Ms. Murakami. Welcome, Yukari. Our Committee Staff this morning is helping us to run this meeting. We have Ms. Criselda Paranada, Ms. Clarissa MacDonald, Ms. Ellen McKinley, Ms. Carla Nakata, Ms. Leslie Dinneen [*sic*], and Ms. Jean Pokipala. Welcome, everyone, and Happy St. Paddy's Day to you. Members, on today's agenda, we have two items, the Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Human Concerns, as well as the Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Let's begin with public testimony. Oral testimony via phone or video conference will be accepted. 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

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oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and as the item is called up on the agenda. Testifiers wanting to provide video or audio testimony should sign up in the Chambers, join the online meeting via the Teams link, or call in to the phone number noted on today's agenda. For individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button. For those calling in, please follow the prompts via phone; star-5 to raise 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 in. For those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added, and then they'll enable your microphone and video...they'll call your name, whichever is logged in under the last...or the last four digits of your phone number. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes. Once you're done testifying, and if you do not wish to testify, you can view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. Again, mahalo for your cooperation in advance. Decorum will be maintained at all times, and we can now proceed with oral testimony. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the first testifier, and the only testifier signed up at the beginning of the meeting, is Representative Elle Cochran.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Representative Cochran.

MS. COCHRAN: Hello.

CHAIR SINENCI: Hi.

MS. COCHRAN: Hi.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha.

MS. COCHRAN: Can you hear...you can hear me, but you can't see me. Is that what's happening?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: We see...oh, there you go.

MS. COCHRAN: Can you...am I...where am I? Am I on?

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha. Yes.

MS. COCHRAN: I can't...aloha. Okay. I don't see myself, but anyways, aloha.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha.

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MS. COCHRAN: Mahalo. Is...I wasn't sure, though, can I ask a clarifying question about testimony? Is there testimony allowed to be taken after presentations?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MS. COCHRAN: Oh. Can I switch to that, please?

CHAIR SINENCI: Sure thing. We can call you up afterwards.

MS. COCHRAN: Can I...

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. Which item?

MS. COCHRAN: Okay, great. Both. Both.

CHAIR SINENCI: Both items. Okay. Will do.

MS. COCHRAN: Both items.

CHAIR SINENCI: We'll sign you up.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Sorry, I just needed to know. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks for joining us.

MS. COCHRAN: Aloha. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no individuals have signed up to testify at the beginning of the meeting. If anybody 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 would like to testify at this time.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. We'll just go on to the first item and keep testimony open until after the presentation.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .

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**OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN CONCERNS**
(WASSP-1(3))

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, WASSP-1(3) is the Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Human Concerns. We have here with us today Director Lori Tsuhako and Deputy Director Crouse with us this morning, and they will be providing a presentation on the Department's Operational and Budgetary Review of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. So, with that, Director Tsuhako, you can begin your presentation.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll just wait for a second until the slide deck is loaded.

CHAIR SINENCI: If you want to provide some opening comments.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: If not...yeah.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you. So, as many of you recall, the Department of Housing and Human Concerns was bifurcated pursuant to a County Charter vote in July of 2024. And so, for the past nine months or so, we've operated as the Department of Human Concerns. All but our Housing Division was maintained in the Department of Human Concerns, and the Housing Division, after bifurcation, morphed into the Department of Housing. So, I'm...I'm assuming that all Members have access to the...to the slide deck. And so, Jessica and I will...will kind of give you pretty much a 30,000-foot view of the Department's functioning since the bifurcation. And I won't take time to read every single word on every single slide unless you really want me to. But show of hands, who wants me to read the whole thing? Oh, good. Thank you. Thank you. So, the mission of our...of our Department is to support and enhance the social well-being of the citizens of Maui County. And we do that through our divisions, which include the Early Childhood Resource Center, our Grants Management Division, our Homeless Program Division, Immigrant Services Division, our Maui County Office on Aging, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, Volunteer Center, and Senior Services, also known as Kaunoa. We also manage a grant that operates our Animal Management Program. You'll see here in this next slide, the pie chart depicts how our...our budget is looking in terms of personnel, as well as the total budget. Most of our funding is spent on our Human Concerns Program. Only 788,000 is reserved for our Administration Program, and Animal Management is about \$3.9 million. And not coincidentally, the bulk of our staffing is in Human Concerns. Thank you. So, as of the 31st of August of 2025, our Department has filled 17 positions with new hirings. We maintain that...well, we also have 32 vacancies, so we take every opportunity to encourage people to apply for the vacancies in our Department, especially if they have a heart to serve people.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, January.

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MS. TSUHAKO: Yes. January 31st. So, I did want to spend some time discussing some of the budget expansion that was decided upon when this body deliberated the Fiscal Year '25 Budget. So, at that time, \$250,000 was added to the Early Childhood programs, and the Department is still working with our grantees to determine and distribute that funding through contract agreements...I mean contract amendments. \$25,000 was added to Feed My Sheep for their feeding program. Approximately 9,500 was added to Hui Laulima O Hāna, which is the Hāna Home Dialysis Program, for the additional costs associated with more frequent treatments for the Hāna dialysis patients. \$22,000 was added to the Women Helping Women grant. \$250,000 was added to the Houseless Program, and \$250,000 was also added to grants for the frail and elderly. The grants for frail and elderly have been used for home and community-based services for the elderly in our community. Additional 400,000 was added for immigrant and migrant services. The Department issued a procurement for that program...for that program funding. A selection was made, and we're in the process of executing a grant agreement with Pacific Gateway for that funding and services. \$250,000 was added for mental health programming. Likewise, the Department issued a procurement. Programs were selected for that, and I believe two of the three contracts have been executed for that...for that funding. An additional \$330,000 was added to our budget for the Molokai Community Health Center, and I think that that also has been executed. An additional \$250,000 was added for substance abuse programs, and another 250,000 for youth programs, with \$97,000 added to our existing grant agreement with MEO Youth Services, and approximately 9,700 to Hawaiian Kamali'i for their summer program. So, just to go back one quick second, the additional mental health programs that were selected for funding for that \$250,000 were Pulama Ka Heke on Molokai, the Lāna'i Community Health Center, and Spirit Horse Ranch. Jessica, you want to...

MS. CROUSE: Okay. So, regarding our Early Childhood Resource Center, these are just some statistics on the number of children in the county between zero and five, as well as the number of licensed seats in programs to care for those children. The average estimated costs for licensed care can range from \$875 a month up to 1,815 per month, and that all determines on the type of program, the age of the child, and the location. And so, just for some perspective here, if a family earning the median income of \$84,363 spent \$875 per month on childcare, they would spend approximately 12 percent of their income on early childhood care and education costs, which exceeds the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommended 7 percent for affordable care access. So, we do work quite a bit to try to make sure that there is viable care options that are both safe, secure, and affordable for families, a large part of which we do through the issuing of...of grants. So, in Fiscal Year 2025, there was \$2,055,402 issued, serving three key categories for early hood...early childhood education and care, including support for families with young children--this includes the county subsidy to help pay for those childcare expenses--support for quality in early childhood workforce, and support for parent engagement and on-track child development. This year, we have been increasing three key programs as part of the Family Early Literacy Program Initiative. So, that includes Dolly Parton's Imagination Library; Reach Out & Read, which is a program that partners with existing pediatricians to distribute books through Well Baby visits; and the Children's Books Lending Library, Ka Hale Waihona Puke No Nā Kamali'i, which is

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located in the Early Childhood Resource Center on Wells Street. So, that photo is actually one of the several shelves of books that are available to be rented out and distributed for early childhood participants.

MS. TSUHAKO: So, really dense slide with a lot of information about our Grants Management Division, but we've been operating with a shortage of one staff person in Grants Management, but our staff still manages to administer over 80 grants about housing...I mean...excuse me, about human concerns. And the Grants Management Division plays a really significant role in administering the funds, and ensuring that we have outcomes from our grantees that reflect the mission of our department. The staff provides input about what services are needed. They review very carefully outcome measures to ensure that we can be assured that the measures actually are being done, and that they support the overall mission of the department and the need for a social safety net for our community. I consider our Grants Management staff experts at this process, and we rely on them greatly for their input and their contribution to how we administer grants in general. Next.

CHAIR SINENCI: Director, if we can, real quickly, Chair would like to recognize Member Yuki Lei Sugimura. Welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. I apologize for being late.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for being here.

MS. TSUHAKO: So, as you can see from this next slide, the Grants Management Division oversees and administers over \$20 million in grant funds. And these include more than 14 million in Human Concerns grants that touch areas such as food, shelter, safety, early childhood, health, human services, education, substance abuse, youth alcohol education awareness, youth centers, homeless programs, mental health programs, self-sufficiency, and immigrant and migrant services. They also administer capital improvement grants that total more than \$2.6 million, and the Animal Management Program that is more than \$3.8 million. The...the main thing about the Grants Management Program is the outcomes and the outcome of the work done by our grantees. So, the support of the Grants Management Division contributes to 7 substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, 15 youth programs, 8 homeless service programs, 3 food security organizations, 6 animal management grants, 7 capital improvement grants, 2 nonprofits, and 35 other various human concerns grants. So, the photograph that you're see...one of the photographs you're seeing up there is the...a new building for Ka Hale Pomaika'i on Molokai, which is a substance abuse treatment program. There's also a photograph of some youngsters there who are involved in MEO's Molokai Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

MS. CROUSE: Okay. So, the Homeless Program Division includes three total equivalent personnel, and the budget in Fiscal Year '25 included \$13,745 for operations, \$208,164 for wages and salaries. We are big proponents of the Housing First approach, which does not force individuals experiencing homelessness to complete services or service

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programs before they can access housing. And Housing First also advocates that by providing someone with shelter and a safe space to exist, that that's a really important benchmark and starting point for people to be safe, and enter into and participate in ongoing services to ultimately end their long-term or chronic homelessness. The Homeless Program Division is tasked with administering the HUD-mandated Maui County Coordinated Entry System, which is our operation arm for the Housing First approach. So, this ensures that all people experiencing homelessness have impartial and equal access to housing opportunities. It identifies, assesses, refers, and connects both individuals and families to housing resources based on their strengths and level of need. This system utilizes the Homeless Management Information System, which is referred to as HMIS. This is a highly-refined database that collects client data, housing resources, and participating service organizations in order to match those experiencing homelessness with appropriate and targeted services. We also participate in Bridging the Gap, which is a board that steers policies and procedures for the Coordinated Entry System for Maui, Hawai'i, and Kaua'i Counties. And due to our participation in this system, the county was able to utilize 56 HUD emergency housing vouchers and 20 HUD stabilization vouchers to house unsheltered residents of Maui. This slide just shows some of the impact on the number of people served, the exit rates to permanent housing, and the percentage of people who participate in this program who are successfully housed two years later, which in 2024 you can see is 79.3 percent, so that's a pretty high success rate. And then just for a little more data for you folks this morning, 5.2 percent of participants are veterans, 12.6 percent are kūpuna, 23.4 percent are children, 40 percent of those children are under the age of five, 55.6 percent lived in Hawai'i for at least 20 years. Only 1.4 percent lived in Hawai'i for less than one year. This is a really important statistic because I think we've all heard the claim that people get off the airplane and immediately are homeless here in our community, but for the folks doing this outreach work in our community and providing these services, that's really not the trend that we see, and we see that the majority of people who are experiencing homelessness are long-term residents. And 197 families had minor children.

MS. TSUHAKO: We are next going to discuss our Immigrant Services Division. Their mission is to assist new residents of Maui County to become fully integrated and productive members of our community. The office provides document assistance to help people scan and upload documents to federal agencies. They provide free federal immigration and consular forms, assist with coordinating appointments for passport visas, dual citizenship, and help with obtaining essential documents. They also make referrals to other service providers and community resources, and very recently have become an authorized U.S. passport acceptance facility authorized by the United States Department of State, and so we have some information about that as well. They support acculturation efforts by administering a grant that is currently being issued to Voices of Micronesia, and they also provide consular outreach efforts, support to both consular offices and people in the community. As of the end of January, our Immigrant Services colleagues have assisted more than 1,400 clients with appointments requiring specific detailed immigration services. They've also accepted 152 U.S. passport applications. So, it just gives people in the community who need a passport application another option

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versus scheduling through the Postal Service. And our Immigrant Services Division staff is also doing advocacy on behalf of immigrant and migrant groups and organizations to enhance community participation. They work with naturalized U.S. citizens and mixed-status families to obtain passports as documentation of legal presence. As I mentioned earlier, they support and assist consulate offices with civil registration, dual citizenship visa requirements, and they have expanded immigrant engagement and empowerment for our immigrant communities. I'll do aging . . . *(inaudible)* . . . Oh. Our next division is the Maui County Office on Aging, which is also our Aging and Disability Resource Center for our county. This office was established way back in 1965 by the Older Americans Act, which has been reauthorized several times, and is the...the Older Americans Act is the basis upon which all of the services at our Office of Aging are being driven. So, the next pie chart gives you some idea of sources of funding. Predominantly, the office is funded through general funds, with additional funding provided by the state through Kūpuna Care; the Aging and Disability Resource Center; and then we have a large chunk, about 652,000, funded through Title III programs, which are federal programs; and we also have a state partnership for our Healthy Aging. The...the next pie chart also gives you a breakdown of how personnel are paid, either through general funds, Kūpuna Care, or our Title III programs, and...yeah, I won't go through all of that. For those of us who like pictures, the next...the next slide shows you more graphically how the funding is distributed from the different sources, including general funds, Title III, Aging and Disability Resource Center, Kūpuna Care, and general funds for salaries and operations. All right. So, the Maui County Office on Aging Services, our staff serve as advocates, facilitators, planners, and eval...evaluators relative to all aging, disability, and family caregiving issues in the county. They do their best to inform the public regarding programs, resources, and services available, and they allocate the federal and the state and county funding to service providers so that home and community needs of Maui County seniors ages 60 and over, as well as their family caregiver needs, are met. They also serve as a one-stop shop for people who are looking for services for themselves or for a family member if they have a disability. So, the primary functions of the ADRC are to provide information and assistance on the services that are available in our community, provide options counseling, which means that you sit with a family or...or the aged and/or disabled person, and you talk about what services they receive now, and go into a discussion about what could be...what resources could be galvanized in order to assist them. We attempt to streamline eligibility for long-term supports and services; maintain a database on resources, programs, and how they're allocated; and support quality assurance and continuous improvement through surveys, data collection, and follow-up with both participants and service providers. So, the next two slides just...I won't go through all of them, but they give you an idea of what services are provided by the Office on Aging, the number of participants that have been served, the costs associated with that service, as well as identifying the service provider. So, you can see that we have a very limited array of...of service providers who are working with the elderly, but we have these services on every island, and they include things like congregate meals and assisted transportation, which our Senior Services Division provides directly as a contractor, as well as legal assistance, adult daycare, respite, support groups, or family caregiver respite days. And these services all combine to try and maintain elderly who

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are frail by providing services in their home to ultimately try to prevent early institutionalization, which sometimes can be exceptionally crippling financially for families, as well as for the elder themselves. And I think if we ask most people who are aged and who need...who need some support to remain as independent as possible, they would say, we really want to stay in our own house, yeah, versus going into a nursing home or into a care home. And while sometimes that cannot be helped, if we can provide that service in the home, I think we really impact somebody's quality of life. And if we provide caregiver supports on top of that, families usually can...can last a lot longer as being the primary caregivers because they have support and help. Let's go to the next one, please. We should all hum Jeopardy. Oh, there it is. Okay. So, this next slide kind of gives you some idea of what we're talking about. Seniors and individuals with disabilities are...are allowed to function at their highest level, avoid institutionalization if they're given home and community-based services. Caregiver stress can be alleviated. Healthy aging can be promoted through nutrition, exercise, as well as through social interactions. We can hopefully prevent hospital readmissions, injuries, and...and associated decline. Families get information, education, and get connected with...with other consumers and with agency assistance. We assist with person-centered approach, which means that rather than having Office on Aging Staff come into your family home and tell you what you need and what you got to do, there's a conversation that occurs that's focused on you and what you think you need, and maybe what you...what your family thinks might be helpful. And it's never driven by the...by the staff member, but it's driven by the...the participant and by their family. We also help to contribute to hopefully growing the workforce because we need workforce to send people into homes to take care of our elderly and our disabled neighbors. And, you know, ultimately, like I said before, even though it's not the primary thing, it does result in...in cost savings to families. They can maintain, you know, their employment if their elderly person or their disabled person is being cared for. They can continue working and earning their Social Security credit so that when it's time for them to retire, they do not suffer from having that lack of employment early in their life because of their decision to be a caregiver. All right.

MS. CROUSE: Our Senior Service Division, also known as Kaunoha, has a goal to ensure that the aging population in Maui County remains healthy, engaged, independent, and preventing the costly need for institutionalization for as long as possible. So, key programs that they provide include Leisure Wellness, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Congregate Nutrition, Meals on Wheels, and Assisted Transportation. The next slide is an overview of the budget and personnel. So, just to give an idea, a little over \$4 million is supplied through the General Fund. Just over \$1 million comes in through grants. And then the personnel, there's about 43-and-a-half positions allocated through general funding, and almost 19 positions through grant funding. Leisure and Wellness serves people who are aged 55 and up. It provides wellness classes, excursions, and special events. As of January 31st, there have been 272 in-person classes, 45 online classes. Total attendance has been 24,000 participants, with unduplicated 2,000 participants. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program also serves people who are aged 55 and up. This is funded through an AmeriCorps senior grant, and it includes service categories for education, human needs, economic opportunity,

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capacity building, environmental stewardship, public safety, and disaster preparedness. So, this program allows people who have retired in our community to be paired with different organizations doing some of this work, so the seniors are able to continue providing meaningful services to our community and stay engaged in a new way in their newly-retired lives. As of January 31st, there have been 230 registered volunteers, which has resulted in 33,290 volunteer hours for people doing that kind of work in our community to support those needs. And there are now six new volunteer stations, so six more sites that seniors can volunteer with.

MS. TSUHAKE: So, all of you who passed through the lobby this morning to get to Chambers saw one of our RSVP volunteers sitting at that welcome table in...in our county lobby. So, those ladies who sit there and greet you and tell you where to go to pay your water bill or...or your garbage bill are all RSVP volunteers, and we're very happy to have them and see their happy faces greeting us when we walk through that door.

MS. CROUSE: Thank you. So, the Congregate Nutrition Program serves adults 60 and up, typically provides 62,000 meals served per year, and provides an in-person setting for socialization, nutritionally-balanced meals, and important connection with services when they're needed. So, as of January 31st, there have been 540 participants, 124 of which are new, 31,000 meals served, 748 activities have been provided for that social engagement and well-being, and there has been 31,642 attendees. The Home Delivered Meals Program, also known as Meals on Wheels, serves ages who are 60 and up, specifically those who are more frail and homebound. The eligibility for that program is assessed through the Maui County Office on Aging, so that's one example of the partnership that Lori mentioned earlier. Meals are delivered five days per week, and it includes a face-to-face check, where the...the person delivering the meals checks on the senior participant, assesses their well-being, identifies if there's a need for some sort of additional medical support at that time, and the friendly visits also provide a lot of support for the welfare of the senior participant, but also some peace of mind for their family members, too. As of January 31st, there have been 58,491 meals delivered, 1,200 participants, 385 of which are clients living alone, and there are occasional partnerships that accrue throughout the year, such as the Cupid's Crew partnership with AARP, where 500 roses and greeting cards were delivered by staff and volunteers to those participants to bring them a little joy on Valentine's Day. The Assisted Transportation Program serves ages 60 and up. That's another example of a program where eligibility is determined by the County Office on Aging. It provides safe and essential rides for seniors to access things such as doctor appointments, grocery shopping, specific business appointments, or even accessing services like adult daycare. As of January 31st, there have been 2,900 one-way rides offered, and there are six regular participants who utilize a wheelchair-accessible van, which has resulted in 96 one-way rides. So, we do have the capacity to help seniors who do have varying levels of mobility limitations as well. And Kaunoa has been crucial for participating in disaster recovery and emergency response. So, just for some examples, they do provide ongoing services for engagement and socialization out on West Maui, which includes Meals on Wheels and Assisted Transportation Services. The congregate program hasn't yet had a chance to reestablish itself in a site, as we did lose our West Side senior facility in the August 2023

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fires, but there are ongoing home meal deliveries and wellness checks for those senior participants to make sure they continue to be engaged with us and that they have those resources as well. There are Tai Chi, line dancing, yoga, special weekly events that happen at Lahaina Civic Center, as well as a bi-monthly bingo blast, which averages 100 senior participants. Prizes are typically donated by the community, and we really appreciate those Councilmembers who have participated in supporting that initiative. Those seniors really do have a blast every time. In terms of disaster response, when there are events that come up, the staff participates in contacting seniors to notify them of potential evacuations, closures, emergency situations, and these are just some examples of events that have taken place since the start of the fiscal year that Kaunoha has participated in contacting our participants. Most recently, with the January 30th storm, there were calls, wellness checks, and deliveries of 400 nonperishable food bags to Meals on Wheels participants to make sure that if the storm impacts resulted in an interruption of service, that those seniors were cared for in advance.

MS. TSUHAKO: I think many of you here, and many people listening to this presentation, understand that their time can be donated as volunteers, and that a lot of good can come of that effort. Our...the last of our divisions that we'll speak about today is our Volunteer Center, whose mission is to be the one resource and catalyst on Maui that leads, connects, and mobilizes volunteers and volunteer agencies to contribute to a better life on Maui. So, the programs of the Volunteer Center are all geared toward that mission. We have a Hands On Maui website. We do volunteer...which actually does volunteer matching, so agencies can post their needs for volunteers. Potential volunteers can go onto the website, can look through all of the agencies that need volunteers, and can make a decision about whether they might be a good match as a volunteer for that agency. One of the other really significant things that we do at the Volunteer Center is doing capacity-building training. So, how is it that agencies know how to recruit volunteers? How is it that they know how to select volunteers that align with their culture, that...that align with their practices? So, I think if you close your eyes and you can imagine, like, just having a bunch of volunteers thrown at you without any ability to understand who they are or why they're there, it could become a real mess for an agency. So, these...these programs actually help to assure that there's a better alignment with those factors. We do a Volunteer Hero Program every year, and actually, we already received the '25 nominations. So, agencies are invited to nominate a volunteer hero, and we'll be having a recognition event hosted by the Mayor later in April for that. Much of the work that's done through Volunteer Center, which is actually staffed by only one person, is done through social media and blog outreach. We also issue a volunteer hot sheet, which provides updated information about the need for volunteers, for...either for ongoing needs or for one-time big events where more volunteers are needed. So, in terms of our social media highlights, the social media output from our volunteer centers reach more than 70,000 people who use social media, and over 100 people visit hands on...handsonmaui.com each month from Facebook and Instagram. There is 4,400 subscribers, with an above average 69 percent open rate. So, 69 percent of the people who subscribe actually open the message and read it, and the same goes for nearly 30,000 emails that are issued. So, at the Volunteer Center, we have 157 agencies currently registered as part of our program. Recently have 19 new

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agencies registered, over 1,058 new volunteers have signed up, 25,000 partner agency views, 60,000-plus volunteer opportunity views, and 77 percent of the postings have received a response by a potential volunteer over the last year. The...we included this statement here. I think Scott Hopkins at Feed My Sheep is probably the biggest proponent of our...of our Volunteer Center because they have been able to generate a lot of volunteers and workforce for their feeding programs through the Volunteer Center, and they use it very regularly to their greatest advantage. Because it's a small agency, they do really important work in distributing food across the county, and Scott is a big proponent of the work done at our Volunteer Center. So, Mr. Chair, that concludes our formal presentation, and Jessica and I are here to answer any questions. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Director. And before we go back to testimony, Members, are there any clarifying questions for the Director and the Deputy Director? Okay. Seeing none. At this time, Ms. McKinley, are there any testifiers that want to provide testimony after the presentation? Go ahead.

MS. MCKINLEY: Yes...yes, Chair. The first testifier is Stephanie Villalobos, to be followed by Dania Laborde.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha and good morning.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(3) . . .

MS. VILLALOBOS: Hello. Good morning, everybody.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Aloha. My name is Stephanie Villalobos. I serve as a Community Care Navigator with Roots Reborn. One of the most challenging aspects of disaster recovery is building and maintaining trust with the community. Without trust, resources remain out of reach for those who need it the most. At Roots Reborn, we build that gap by working directly with survivors in their native language in culturally-appropriate ways in a safe space, and with people they recognize and trust. When survivors see someone who is from here, who looks like them and understands their struggles, it creates a powerful connection, not just for the individual recovery, but for the broader foreign-born community as well. Since 2023, Roots Reborn has served over 1,000 survivors, helping them secure housing, food assistance, medical care, health insurance, and financial stability, including banking access for those who previously were unbanked. We have also empowered community members through Know Your Rights trainings, ensuring they understand their legal protections and can advocate for themselves. We are not just providing services, we are restoring dignity, creating pathways to stability, and ensuring that no one is left behind in Maui's recovery. We have built a deep trust in the community, and we have proven that our model works. But to continue this vital work, we need the resources to sustain it. I urge you to support dedicating funding for Roots Reborn so that we can keep closing gaps, strengthening

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trust, and ensuring that all members of our community have access to the support they deserve. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for your testimony. Miss, we have a question for you from Member Johnson.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Hello.

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead, Vice-Chair.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Miss Villalobos, for your testimony. I have a clarifying question in regards to your...the Rights training. Do you train folks for dealing with Maui Police Department, ICE, or even their tenants' rights with their landlords? Can you get specific with what type of rights trainings you're teaching?

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes. To answer your question, it's for dealing with police and ICE agents. We train --

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. VILLALOBOS: -- we train folks to...we train the community so that they know how to protect our folks, and then we also train the people.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Thank you so much for that clarification. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Vice-Chair. Oh, we have another question for you from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you, Chair. I'm sorry if I missed this because I came in late to the meeting, but are they now funded...oh, I guess I can ask you. I guess you should know. Are you funded now with the Department of Human Concerns with your work, or are you --

MS. VILLALOBOS: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- under the Office of Recovery? Because you're talking about a different aspect of this.

MS. VILLALOBOS: No, no, no, we're not funded.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: You're not getting anything?

MS. VILLALOBOS: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for your testimony.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Chair?

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Just if I could jump in.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, go ahead, Vice-Chair.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: That was one of my priorities for Roots Reborn. I just wanted to add that, so Councilmember Sugimura could see that...hear that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, was the question just for the kūpuna program, or for Roots Reborn?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I think she's...I could be mistaken, but I think she's talking about all people, and how to handle police and...and ICE.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, for the training.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: For recovery --

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- of West Maui, it sounds like.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes.

CHAIR SINENCI: All right.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So, I just...

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for that clarification.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: But they're not in the Human Concerns.

MS. VILLALOBOS: All of Maui. Sorry, all of Maui.

CHAIR SINENCI: For all of Maui County?

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Chair, I just...

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, one more question.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: I'm sorry. Sorry.

CHAIR SINENCI: You want to make her a resource? Go ahead, Pro Tem Kama.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: You make her a resource, everybody got to stay. No, no, I'm just kidding. I think my question to you, so you were asking for resources. Do you have an amount that you're looking at in terms of supporting what you folks are doing?

MS. VILLALOBOS: Okay. Yeah, you can defer to Veronica Mendoza. She...she'll have more --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. Okay.

MS. VILLALOBOS: -- of the numbers and...and all of that. I just help out our community. I'm like the community care navigator on the ground.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. So...

CHAIR SINENCI: You want to wait till she comes up?

MS. VILLALOBOS: Yeah, she's going to testify.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah. Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: That's fine. Thank you.

MS. VILLALOBOS: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Thank you. Ms. McKinley?

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MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Dania Laborte, to be followed by Nicholas Winfrey.

MS. DOMINGUEZ: Good morning.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning.

MS. DOMINGUEZ: My name is Dania Dominguez. I am the daughter of immigrant parents and an immigrant myself. I'm a DACA recipient, a fire survivor, a mother, and a legal assistant for Roots Reborn. I am here today in support of funding line item for Roots Reborn. For as long as I can remember, our community has faced challenges and barriers. I've seen firsthand the gaps in resources available to our people. After the fires, the dire need for assistance became more evident. Roots Reborn was formed in response to the crisis, and has since worked tirelessly...tirelessly to bridge these gaps, but there is still more work that needs to be done. Roots Reborn hires from within the community and invests in our youth, creating opportunities where there was once none. I've lived on Maui for most of my life. Lahaina is a community that saw me grow. Roots Reborn has opened so many doors for me, ones I never thought possible. Because of financial barriers, I never believed I could pursue higher education. And I have never believed...I have always provided language support and had a deep interest in immigration services, but due to my status, I had put that dream on hold. Now, thanks to the opportunities Roots Reborn has provided for me, I am currently enrolled in the DOJ program through Villanova University. This program will allow me to provide much-needed immigration services to our community pro bono. Roots Reborn will be the first organization on Maui to become DOJ accredited, and I will be Maui's first DOJ-accredited representative. A dream I had long forgotten has been reignited because of Roots Reborn. I am proud to be one step closer to helping break down barriers our community faces. Roots Reborn is not just a disaster relief organization, it is a safe space, a vital resource that Maui has much needed...has needed for...for too long. I urge you to consider supporting Roots Reborn so we can continue this critical work, and ensure our community receives the support and resources it deserves. Thank you for your time and your consideration. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Ms. Dominguez, for your testimony. Members, any questions for Ms. Dominguez? Seeing none. Thank you. Oh, we have one from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So, what is --

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- the Department of Justice program that you are part of? You got the first certificate to do what?

MS. DOMINGUEZ: So, I will be able to represent folks in hearings. I will be able to help prepare documentation needed for their immigration. So, I'll be able to...I'll be able to represent

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people in that capacity as an immigration attorney, but it is only able to be done through an accredited organization. So, I'll be able to provide those services pro bono.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, so you're an attorney by profession.

MS. DOMINGUEZ: Not an attorney, I am going to be...so it's a DJ...DOJ-accredited rep. Right now, I am the legal assistant, and I am working under Aparna Patrie, and she's our immigration counsel.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Thanks for joining us.

CHAIR SINENCI: Exciting. Thank you. Thank you --

MS. DOMINGUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- for your work. Next.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Nicholas Winfrey, to be followed by Aparna Patrie.

MR. WINFREY: Good morning, Council. Good morning, Chair, directors. Just want to give you guys a big mahalo for the work that you're doing in this arena. We know that there are massive gaps, and the funding that you all provide really do...does give a hand up. My name is Nick Winfrey. Today, I'm here to talk about Maui Roots Reborn, the work that they're doing, the pukas that they're filling, and really, why it is so unique and different than any other organization that I have seen, really, in my nonprofit career. We know that the county does so much work when it comes to immigration support. We've seen it today. We also know that there is still more that's needed, and that's the gap that Roots Reborn is filling. The difference between these for us, for me and my perspective, is just that trust, that community-built trust that's done by the people that are sitting here today. These are the individuals that listen to their community, that are part of their community, that give space for the community, and...and listen to what those needs are, and adapt. As they've talked about, Know Your Rights training, getting people registered for health insurance, helping people find housing when there's no other resources available. That's what this organization does. This organization should have been here before the disaster, but it's here now. And with the trust, and lack of trust, and ever-changing dynamic that's taking place at the national level, you have to move fast. That's what this group does. They are the slippers on the ground. They are the ones working day in, day out with this community to uplift them long-term. So, I'm here today to just commend them on the work that they do, the trust that they have built that is unlike any trust that I have seen within a community, and I'm grateful for the work that they continue to do. And I do ask that...that the county considers a line-item request for funding across the board for them, whether it's for their Day of the Dead event, whether it's for Know Your Rights training, whether it's for Train the Trainer, whether it's for the Community Care Navigation Program, or their pro bono legal services. These are all gaps that would not be filled without this organization. Mahalo.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Mr. Winfrey, for your testimony this morning. Members...a question for you from Member Sugimura, and then Vice-Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, you want to take Vice-Chair first?

CHAIR SINENCI: No, you can go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thanks. Thank you very much. Great seeing you here.

MR. WINFREY: Ditto.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: You know, I'm...I'm listening to you, and I understand...I know the kind of work you do, and I just wonder if this really belongs to Office of Recovery concept. Because it really is...you're talking about recovery and, you know, that whole thing going on with federal government, I think, which is pushing this forward. Just want your opinion.

MR. WINFREY: Yeah, and this is just my own perspective. I'm not speaking for the organization now, I'm just speaking from my perspective and my experience. This is much bigger than recovery, Councilmember Sugimura. This is broader subsets of the community that have been overlooked even before the disaster. So, I think that you've got this set population of individuals that need a hand up, that don't know how to navigate this system that doesn't...isn't built for them without equal access. That's one portion of it, but what I am seeing is that the need is so much greater, and that's how the organization has adapted to provide that support with legal counsel, understanding that there aren't enough attorneys on island, or even in the state. So, I would say that it's...it's above and beyond. It's a much bigger umbrella than just the Office of Recovery.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Chair, if I could ask one more question. Then maybe this is not for you, and maybe it's for a speaker that we haven't heard from yet because it sounds like Roots Reborn is here in force. So, if you're providing...if they are providing these services, how are they getting paid at the moment? Because they're not on county...a county line item, as they're requesting for now. So, is that somebody else?

MR. WINFREY: I can help answer that, and I think there could be clarification on the horizon. There are pukas, right? There are gaps. When you see federal funding cuts that took place with the Disaster Relief Grant, that meant that seven staff were no longer getting paid, but the planning has been there for the organization for sustainability. So, there are some private grants and partnerships with entities like Hawai'i Community Foundation and American Red Cross that are supporting these...these programs and staff in the interim, but programs like Know Your Rights, that's just making it happen because the need is there. So, there is current funding for...for an interim to facilitate some...some immediate programs like our financial future, but really, what we're looking

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at is the sustainability long-term, and basically where those gaps are is, we have to continue to pivot with the ever-changing dynamic in the...in the world right now.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. Nice seeing you.

MR. WINFREY: Good to see you, Councilmember.

CHAIR SINENCI: Next, we have a question from Vice-Chair Johnson.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your testimony. I just want to let you know, as well as the other...everybody, that Roots Reborn is going to probably be one of my priorities for the upcoming budget session, so just to let you folks know. And I guess the specific question for you is about the pukas. Do you think the county grants could help with the pukas? You know, that's what we keep seeing and hearing is that people are falling through the cracks. Federal funds might be cut. They've got a lot of strings attached. What's your take on the county monies going specifically for those pukas? Which ones are those pukas?

MR. WINFREY: Thank you, Chair. One hundred percent that it's a need for county to be able to fund these programs. When we look at where resources are accessible right now and where they are lacking, it's really our community that has to kind of come together for these things. There are fears, long-term, fed. Are we looking at two years? Are we looking at four years? We have to plan on, you know, every case and scenario moving forward. But when it comes to communities like ours, I feel that it is an imperative that they support programs like this.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: All right. Thank you.

MR. WINFREY: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo, Councilman.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Mr. Winfrey, for your testimony this morning. Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Aparna Patrie, to be followed by Evelyn DelValle.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha and good morning.

MS. PATRIE: Aloha and good morning, everyone. I'm Aparna Patrie. I am the immigration attorney at Roots Reborn. I'm very happy to be here with you today. Thank you for allowing me to testify. I'm a resident of Lahaina myself. I worked in Washington, D.C. for 15 years before coming here. And I am with this organization because I see what they can do, and I see the impact that they've had in such a short amount of time to make things better in our community, and that's ultimately what...what my goal is. I want to talk a little bit about our legal program at Roots Reborn, and kind of explain what we do. So, we have two kind of pillars to this program. The first is direct legal

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representation, and the second is education, or Know Your Rights, as we like to call it. So, on the direct legal representation front, you know, the...the way this legal program was born was because Roots was serving clients, and saw that in the process of doing that, our clients had a lot of needs when...when it comes to legal representation. And so, those clients got funneled over to create a legal program. And we sat down with them, and we do consultations with them, hundreds of consultations a year, where we try to find out, you know, what are some avenues of relief that you may be able to benefit from? And the thing that I always come back to is the fact that these are people who are so distrustful of our institutions that they have never gone and seen a lawyer before. They have never gone to an agency to sit down and figure out their options before. But because they trust this organization and the way this organization is operated, they...they come to our legal program, and they're...they...for the first time in their whole life, they're willing to find out kind of what...what options they may have. So, we do a variety of different cases. We do asylum cases. We do removal defense. You know, removal defense is a really time-consuming, complex type of case to do. We have to go to Honolulu Immigration Court, represent clients in removal proceedings, do a trial, do a hearing, and we're one of the, you know, only nonprofits in the entire state that do that. And in the Island of Maui, we are the first and only pro bono legal services agency for immigrants that's available. And you know, a lot of our clients have been here for many, many years. They have families, they work, and they don't realize that they may have a way of getting out of the shadows, or that they may have a way of forwarding their immigration status until they come to us, or until they come to an organization like us, and we're able to sit down and explain the law to them, and explain what some strategies may be for them. Our philosophy in the legal program is to empower our clients with the knowledge that they need to make the best decisions for themselves and their families. That's...that's first and foremost what we want to do. We do not operate from a place of telling people what to do. . . .(timer sounds). . . We want to empower people. Our education section of our legal program, we had to stand up our Know Your Rights Program in 48 hours. We saw the need as soon as the new Trump...the new administration took hold, and we just...we just had to, you know, create that program with no resources. And now, with the sensitive locations--churches, schools, healthcare facilities--being fair game for immigration enforcement, we are having to speak to school officials, to hospital workers, to church leaders to explain to them what they do if immigration enforcement happens in those locations. . . .(timer sounds). . . So, with that, I'll...I'll end my testimony. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Ms. Patrie, for your testimony this morning. We have a question for you from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you for your expressive...impressive work. Did you or your organization apply for the RFP when we were looking for legal service for our immigration services? Sounds like it ties right into what you're talking about.

MS. PATRIE: I'm going to defer that question to our ED. I don't work with the sort of grants and money side of things. I do the legal representation. And so, I'm going to defer to her. She'll be up here in a minute, and be able to answer that question.

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COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, so your answer is no. Your answer. You're the attorney. You didn't apply for it...right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER (from the audience): No, we did not apply.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. From the audience.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We'll go to Member Paltin first, and then to you, Pro Tem Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Patrie, for your testimony. I just wanted to clarify two...two things. You're a survivor yourself; is that correct?

MS. PATRIE: Yes, that's right.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And does that also help in gaining the trust, that you also have been...been going through similar circumstances?

MS. PATRIE: It's a really great question. Thank you for asking that. Yes, it...it helps tremendously. You know, when we have clients from Lahaina who come in, and I know exactly where their house was, my house was down the street. I know some of the challenges they're navigating with, whether it's SBA or Red Cross or if...you know, I'm able to connect with them at that level from having gone through the same thing, and that helps tremendously.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you for your service to our community.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Member Paltin. Pro Tem Kama?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for being here, Ms. Patrie. So, the clients that you're serving, what is their immigration status?

MS. PATRIE: It's a variety of different statuses. Some are undocumented. Some are documented, but seeking legal permanent residency. You know, some are legal permanent residents seeking naturalization. It's really a variety of different...different statuses. Some are mixed-status households.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: And so, you're...you're the one that does the Know Your Rights training?

MS. PATRIE: So, I train others to do those trainings. I have done several of the trainings myself, but because we are so under-resourced in this area, we've had to rely on some volunteers and others to put this program together in a quick time. We...there's a lot more we want to do with the program, but yeah, I'm the one who writes the materials, answers the questions when they come up. But others...I share giving the trainings with others.

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COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: And are the...and are the Know Your Rights...the information that you give out in terms of how to respond if ICE comes knocking at your door, are they in different languages?

MS. PATRIE: Yes, absolutely. So, we have folks on our staff who give the...the trainings in the native languages of the communities that we serve.

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

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo. Thank you for your testimony this morning.

MS. PATRIE: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for being here.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Evelyn DelValle, to be followed by Annie Alvelais.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning.

MS. DELVALLE: Good morning. Aloha. My name is Evelyn DelValle. I'm a community care navigator with Roots Reborn. I was born and raised on Maui, and I am a proud daughter of immigrant parents. I am here to speak today to support...seek support of Maui Roots Reborn, and to advocate for its continued funding as an essential part of our community's healing and recovery. Roots Reborn provides the community with a safe, secure physical space where individuals can feel supported. We need our office to meet the growing needs of the community, whether it's seeing clients, having confidential conversations, or hosting essential trainings like our Know Your Rights. The space ensures that people can access the resources that they need, while feeling secure and protected. But our safe space isn't just limited to our office space. We also extend it to events like our Dia De Los Muertos event that we have in November. For some of those in the audience, you might remember in the early 2000s, we would have our Somos (*phonetic*) Amigos event hosted by a lot of different...different resources. And so, if you do remember that, you understand the power of such gatherings. And just like in that celebration, Roots Reborn Dia De Los Muertos event fosters unity and brings our community together. In 2024, our Dia De Los Muertos celebration went a step further by empowering our clients, particularly our women, to grow and expand their small businesses. We provided crucial support, including food prep certification support, access to licensed kitchens, and the resources to turn their passion of creating food into thriving businesses. Through initiatives like this, we were not only celebrating our culture and sharing that with others, but creating economic growth opportunities, allowing for our clients to gain independence and success in their ventures. These efforts, our office space, and events like Dia De Los Muertos, are integral to building a resilient, empowered community that can thrive together. I urge you to support dedicating fundings for Maui Roots Reborn so we can continue to provide safe spaces,

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vital services, and pathway towards a stronger, more inclusive Maui. Our community cannot lose to afford [sic] this. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo for your testimony. Any other...no questions? Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Annie Alvelais, to be followed by Ann Dionne Selestin.

MS. ALVELAIS: Aloha. Buenos dias. My name is Annie Alvelais. I'm the Director of Operations and Development with Roots Reborn. I've been inspired by a lot of questions, the presentation, what the team has said, so I feel like this might be a little chaotic. So, I appreciate your patience. But I'm here because I...I came to Roots Reborn with five years of disaster relief experience, and was...was really inspired by the level of care, which every person over here just leads with every day. So, Evelyn mentioned the office. You come in...we call it the living room. We want it to be a place where people can just feel comfortable, not come into a scary conversation, and have those guards up. It really is a place that is just really warm. I think it's been mentioned, but every person on the team is a member of our community, whether we are immigrants ourselves or proud children of immigrants. And so, we really understand what the team...or what our...our clients and our community have walked through. And it's also just the holistic way in which we...we...we serve, which is something that is really, really inspiring and, I think, rare to see. And to answer a question that was asked earlier, I believe it was you that had asked about being under the Office of Recovery. If they have funds, we will definitely take them. And I think there's ways that we could really just...like, quantify the work that we need for recovery dollars. But as Nick mentioned, this is an organization that should have been on Maui so long ago. This is such a beautiful melting pot of...of people from all over the world and all different walks of life. And I think everyone should have those pathways to just feeling safe in their own community. I don't want to give any spoilers, but there's some really, really awesome testimonies that are coming up that I think also just speak to the work that Roots Reborn is doing to empower our community. The Know Your Rights trainings, they...right now, they are currently in Spanish. So, if you speak Spanish, I would encourage you to come. We don't know that we have any in English planned, but to see the confidence in our community...community members grow. You know we tell them, you know, say I have rights. We're not trying to interfere with any legal processes, we just...just want to make sure that our community members know their rights. And to hear the confidence by the end of a session in them really knowing that they do have rights, and that they are protected by the Constitution, is...is super cool. So...yeah, I...I just think it's really amazing, the word pivot is a bit of a soft spot amongst this group because that's what this organization has continued to do since its inception. And just really hearing the needs of the community, we've always operated from a place of data. We use any checkpoint that we can to collect data to really understand the needs of our community, and pivot to make sure that our resources are going to use...to serve their needs. Through this work, we've gained really valuable insight, not just into how to build and maintain trust within our community, but how to work smarter . . .(timer sounds). . . and more effectively alongside them. I know that means I'm up on time, so thank you so much for your time. Appreciate it.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo for your testimony this morning. Members, any questions for the testifier? Seeing none.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Chair?

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Chair, I just have one.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, we have one from Pro Tem Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: I'm...I'm trying to understand the...how the entire organization works. And so, do you folks have paid staff, or you're all volunteers?

MS. ALVELAIS: We do have paid staff. So, we, at this point, are primarily funded by private grants. And we know, with the current administration, there is just more of a need to secure long-term funding. So, as...we are all...we're...we have paid staff, we also have a lot of volunteers. I think Aparna kind of touched on that as well with our Know Your Rights training. We, as a team, don't have the capacity to do all of these, but we have some really incredible volunteers who have stepped up and help us lead those trainings as well. We've provided trainings on Big Island and O'ahu. So, really just trying to...yeah, our volunteers are incredible. And the team to my left is also insane --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you.

MS. ALVELAIS: -- in a good way.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair.

MS. ALVELAIS: But maybe sometimes in a bad way. Awesome. Did that answer your question?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes.

MS. ALVELAIS: Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Pro Tem Kama. Thank you for your --

MS. ALVELAIS: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- testimony. Members and testifiers, we've just been reminded that today's agenda is focused on the...the Department's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. So, if we can...we'll be receiving the 2026 Budget next Tuesday from the Mayor. So, if we can just keep our questions and our testimony just to this...this current year's budget. Thank you. Ms. McKinley?

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MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is...

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, hold on. We have Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I just wanted to clarify the disclaimer you just made for the Councilmembers and for the public, and what...what that means, what you're...what you're asking our testifiers to do. Are you...are you asking our testifiers to limit their testimony to what the...the grant they received in FY '25 and the services they provide as an organization? Is that what you're asking the testifiers?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you for that clarifying question.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: And if I...yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Member Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, if I could add on what Member Rawlins-Fernandez is saying...because I'm listening to them, and I know we're talking about Human Concerns for this fiscal year budget. And I asked them, do you receive a grant from the county? And the answer is no. So, they're providing information that they want to get another grant, or a grant from the county. They don't get one now, it doesn't sound like. And so, just to clarify what you just said, and the...Member Rawlins-Fernandez's question is, we're talking about today, we're not talking about next week Tuesday and beyond?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. So, testifiers should stick to that then; is that correct?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, clarifying like how the immigration services is lacking or something like that is what you're saying?

CHAIR SINENCI: If...if it refers to...to this year's budgetary review.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Got it.

CHAIR SINENCI: All right. Okay. Thank you, Members. Oh, another question from Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I'm curious...all the testimony strikes me as very relevant, and I understand that they might not be for current grants. Is it relevant if they're basically identifying all of the different things that are happening that --

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah, current...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- current grants would have been helpful for, if it was available at the time? Anyway, I'm just...I understand the parameters, I understand the agenda, I understand the structure. I also understand people who are doing a tremendous amount of work for the community, who are sharing with us these vital services that are being provided, and I just want to thank them all for their efforts. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah. Mahalo, Mr. Cook. Ms. Nakata, was that pretty much...did we forget anything in that disclaimer?

MS. NAKATA: Thank you, Chair. Yes, Staff would acknowledge that much of the testimony centers around work that's currently being provided this fiscal year, and that's entirely within the agenda item today. The request for a line-item grant for the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget is not on today's agenda. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Yeah. Thank you, Ms. Nakata. And I'm...I'm always having to be reminded myself. Ms. Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. So, to dovetail off of what Member Cook was saying, and I appreciate his comments, is that what we're doing today is a review relating to the operational and...operation and budget of Department of Human Concerns. Under Human Concerns includes some of the services that overlap, or that is not available under the immigrant services that's under the Department of Human Concerns. And so, it would be related so long as they don't specifically say, we're requesting funding in the upcoming fiscal budget. So, if the testifiers just avoid, you know, talking about the future budget and funding needed, then it...it would be permissible under the operations of this department.

CHAIR SINENCI: Nakata?

MS. NAKATA: Yes, Chair, Staff would agree with that. It did sound as though the testifiers were tying it to some form of sustainability or other grants received, not as a current line item, but through the FY '25 Budget. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Nakata. Mahalo, Chair.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We have Chair Lee, and then Vice-Chair Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. I look forward to the discussion with the department because the director, unless things have changed in the last 20 years, the immigrant services really doesn't provide the kinds of services that...that Roots organization does. Yeah. It helps with citizenship and it helps with information. Doesn't do any grants, just...there's only like three people, or two people in that division. So, they might be more relevant to the general social services part of the Department. I don't want people to think that immigrant services is not doing their job, but...because that's not their job unless things have changed in 20 years. And I'm sure the director will explain all of that when she has the opportunity. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Chair Lee. Vice-Chair Johnson? And then we may consider taking a break after this.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. Yeah, I think the situation over time has changed. I want to remember...remind the Members that we did have a larger pot of money for immigration services. We cut it down to make...make it passable. And then now, that's part of the reason Roots Reborn probably didn't apply, and we'll let them explain...because it was a smaller pot of money and that's...went to the Pacific Gateway. So, I just want to let you guys know that that was one of my priorities from last year to get it passed. So, that's why they might not have applied for the...the other pot of money. But we'll let them talk about it if they want to talk about it. But just letting the...the Members know what happened with last year's budget. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Vice-Chair. Okay. Members, that was that. Thank you for that discussion. At this time, Members, would you consider a ten-minute recess? How many more testifiers we have, Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, there are six currently signed up for this item.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. With that, the WASSP Committee is in recess until...we'll go to 10:40.
...*(gavel)*...

RECESS: 10:28 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:41 a.m.

CHAIR SINENCI: ...*(gavel)*... Aloha and good morning, and welcome back to the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, March 17th. It is 10:41 a.m. Mahalo, Members, for that quick break. And we'll continue with our testimony. Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Ann Dionne Selestin, to be followed by Representative Elle Cochran.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Ms. Salistan.

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MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: So, Anne Dionne is not going to testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: She's not going to testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, she's not going to testify. We're...we're okay?

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Then we'll go to Ms. Cochran.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: I did. Yeah. Sorry --

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: -- so she's going to...so she's going to testify, but I think I'm...I'm after her.

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, okay. Who's...

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, if we're skipping Anne, then I believe the next testifier is Representative Elle Cochran, to be followed by Veronica Mendoza-Jachowski.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. I see her online.

MS. COCHRAN: Are...are you here? Am I here?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MS. COCHRAN: Oh, okay. Here I am.

CHAIR SINENCI: We're all here.

MS. COCHRAN: Okay. Maidin mhaith, Members, and also hau'oli la hanau to Mō'i Kauikeaouli. Today is King Kamehameha III's birthday also, so let's not forget that. And so, in sticking with the parameter of the agenda in reviewing the operations of the department, I wanted to...I was looking back, obviously, on homeless efforts. So, there was an RFP put out back in 2022, and it was for homeless...a homeless strategic plan. It cost us \$240,000, quite a chunk, and it morphed into becoming a report on recommendations to address the homelessness in Maui County. So, when I look back, the RFP was given in 2022, then August 8th, 2023, the fires occurred. And then ten months later is when this...this...this group, ECONorthwest, started working, you know. And I'm curious why it took ten months. And the scope of work for this...for this RFP also had taken out the analysis of funding sources and its uses. So, now I'm tallying

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up well over \$3.5 billion...yes, billion dollars had been infused into Lahaina, in Lahaina alone, for...you know, since the fire. And that had a lot to do with, yes, displaced, unhoused, homeless. So, I'm just curious why that portion was taken out to be analyzed. So, that scope had changed. And also, which I do like, though, they wanted to get more direct engagement with live experience, people within the, you know, the homeless realm. And so, that is excellent. But I'm tallying up the numbers there. When I see all their workshops, their outreach meetings and things they had, they have touched 70...about 160 or so lives. When...135 people, they had reached out to, live engagements. And in January of 2024, 5,245 people were in our...in our shelters. To me, that doesn't give a huge voice of what the homeless situation was or, you know, our most needy of demographics in this community was at that time. I mean, what I'm getting at is, that was a huge chunk of money. At the end, it came up with recommendations, not a plan. And we really need a plan. And that never occurred. Great takeaways on changing codes, looking into alternative housing . . .(timer sounds). . . making sure things are affordable to be built. It has one bullet point about tiny homes. Well, guess what? We got 450 tiny homes in Ka La'i Ola. We got like 180-something or other in Kilohana. We got tons of tiny homes now. And those projects have no idea what they're going to do with them after the five-year temporary use is up. So, this county, hopefully, can take a look at those tiny homes and see maybe, you know, to utilize them. And there were a couple states where they were pointed to on how they have solved . . .(timer sounds). . . some of their homeless issues, too. Tenant-protecting laws and policies, changing up codes for more flexible development, things of that nature.

CHAIR SINENCI: Elle, let me see if there's --

MS. COCHRAN: So, again, I...

CHAIR SINENCI: -- any questions for you real quick.

MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Questions for Representative Cochran? Did you have more? Oh, we have a question for you --

MS. COCHRAN: Yeah, I do.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- from Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning, Representative Cochran. Thank you for dropping by. So, that's very interesting information that you're sharing with us. What, in the budget, do you think we...well, we shouldn't be talking about the new budget. What should have we been doing in the old budget as far as you can see?

MS. COCHRAN: In ref...okay. So, I'm looking at, there was, I believe, 300,000 appropriated for water and street meds for the...for homeless. There was a chunk of funding, I

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believe...I'm trying to figure out if it was ever released or not. I don't believe it has been. I think that those types of programs and services are very critical to addressing the needs of our homeless population. Medicant...medication and water? That's...that's sustenance. That's life-giving and keeping our people healthy, you know, regardless where they're at in their world. And I think that's super important, if that is still sitting there, to be used. I think that definitely should be utilized. Also, there is that one, and then I think the overnight safe parking program, which I think still hasn't rolled out. I'm surprised, I thought it was. It had been discussed back when I was a Councilmember, and you folks know that was a few years back. So, that is something...and...because what I recall back when I was on the Council, the statistic was a third of the homeless population were single women with children. Picture, you know, a mom with her kids in a car, got to go park down some dirt road in the back corners of wherever. I mean, that's scary. That's dangerous. And so, it makes all the sense in the world to keep people like a mom with her single...a single mom with kids who has to live in a car in a safe environment. And...you know, and we have lots of parking lots unused at night, just our own county, you know, and state parking lots for...for starters. So, those two things, which, you know, briefly scanning through some past budgets, I definitely think we can make them happen today, which would be so, so needed and helpful.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you, Chair Lee.

CHAIR SINENCI: Another question for you from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. Good morning, Representative Cochran. So, what was the --

MS. COCHRAN: Aloha . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- what was the name of the nonprofit that you started off talking about? I'm looking.

MS. COCHRAN: The nonprofit for the street meds or...I believe that was supposed to go to Project Vision, particularly for the Pu'uhonua --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. COCHRAN: -- oh, sorry. The...yeah, the report? The --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah.

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MS. COCHRAN: -- the...the homeless report?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. COCHRAN: Oh, that was ECOnorthwest. It was a consortium of three groups with Munekiyo Hiraga also involved. It was this --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. That was the homeless report.

MS. COCHRAN: -- this report.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: You have a copy.

MS. COCHRAN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: It was just...yeah, it...I did. I'm a, you know, hands-on, got to read paper.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I remember.

MS. COCHRAN: Bad for trees, but yeah. So, but that...that was that report. It has good things in it because I think there's codes from San Mateo, California, Oregon, Washington, things and policies and laws they have already written. We don't need to reinvent wheels here, and learn from others, you know, how...how they've addressed --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: -- their homeless. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: So, appreciate that.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: Real briefly, I just want to say, I'm jealous that you have Carla Nakata. Ms. Nakata is with you . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Our building's not the same, Ms. Nakata. Really, really miss you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Elle. Thank you for joining us this morning.

MS. COCHRAN: Aloha. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Ms. McKinley?

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MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Veronica Mendoza-Jachowski, to be followed by Nicholas Hernandez.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Hi. Good morning.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good morning.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Thank you for allowing us some time to speak before you guys, even as we learn the process of civic engagement here. You know, I just wanted to come, I'm the founding executive director of Roots Reborn. As you guys know, Roots Reborn is a relatively young organization, but we've done a lot. And...and yes, we've done a lot, and primarily in the space of recovery, but there are existing gaps. And especially with the new administration coming, those gaps are only going to get wider and deeper. And so, we...we...we recognize, and we appreciate, and we're in gratitude for the county and for all the services that are provided for our immigrant community, our migrant and immigrant community. So, thank you so much for...for all that you guys do. But I believe that there are still gaps, and...and...and like I said, they're only going to get bigger and wider. So, we're really here just to speak to the work that we're doing to bridge those gaps, what we've done in the past, what we're doing now, and what we hope to continue to do, and we hope that the community really sees us as a worthwhile investment. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Ms. Jachowski. Members, any questions? We have one from Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: One really fast. So, I know that you do great community outreach. And can you leave us your contact information --

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Yeah, absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- so that we can get in touch with you as we prepare for Fiscal Year '26?

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Of course.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo for joining us.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Ms. McKinley?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Nicholas Hernandez, to be followed by Cecilia Garcia.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Mr. Hernandez. Are you testifying?

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: So, they were...they were here with us, and so the next three testifiers...I believe the next three testifiers who are with us will not testify.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: Nicholas --

CHAIR SINENCI: The last three --

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: -- Maribel --

CHAIR SINENCI: -- won't testify.

MS. MENDOZA-JACHOWSKI: -- and Cecilia.

MS. MCKINLEY: Okay. Then Chair, the next testifier, and the last person currently signed up, is Zhan Dudoit Lindo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha, Ms. Lindo.

MS. LINDO: Aloha, Councilmembers. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. My name is Zhantell Lindo, and although I am the chair of the Commission on Healing Solutions for Homelessness, I am testifying on my own time and on my own behalf. First off, I would just like to thank the Council for supporting the Department of Human Concerns' budget, and allowing us to think of creative solutions. One of the comments I wanted to make is, based on the current budget, I would like the Council to consider making sure that Molokai representation can be flown back and forth to meetings if they so choose to attend the meetings in person. So, currently, we don't have that budget, so I'm not able to fly, and I think for a year and a half, I was paying for my own airfare. And although that's a commitment that I'm willing to make, I was thinking about other commissions and people who are not able to fund their own way, and I think that's a vital part of making sure that our commissions are strong and...and have good representation from islands. The second thing is, I believe that Director Tsuhako has been super supportive of me personally. I know that she and I, we disagree on sometimes the path forward to certain things, but it's always been very respectful and cordial, and I like working with her because she does stretch my ability to think outside of the box. So, in saying that, I would like to say that I think one of the reasons that some of the projects haven't worked is that there is no...when the Council puts money into a project, like for homelessness and all those things, I think there needs to be a component that mandates the inclusion of our commission and other county-reliant sources and resources that we count on to help us achieve the goal. So, a lot of money is put into coming up with a plan, and coming up with a purpose, and attaining this no poverty, no homelessness kind of structure, but there's not enough policy that ties

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everybody to work together. And...and it's junk because in a perfect world, I would think that everybody would work together automatically, but that's just not the world we live in. And so, because of liability, and restraints, and all kinds of different kind of compartmentalized structure, I think there needs to be more emphasis in when we putting in money for certain things that are critical, like...like the unsheltered and safe parking zones, that there be legislative components that tie people to have to do the checks and balances and work together to ensure that we hire the best vendors, we hire the people who are...because I don't personally think ECONorthwest was the best vendor. I attended all of their Molokai meetings, and it was a joke. And I think that the fact that they took that money from the county and they delivered a plan that says you need a plan is a joke. And I said that to them on the first time they were there. I think that we have the answers with us, but as long as we keep hiring people to tell us . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . that we need one plan, or we keep looking at this as a whole big systematic problem, we're...we're always going to end up with the same thing because the problem is too enormous. What we have to do is get back to what we do best, which is community-based solutions, and figuring out how we work that through. And I think that can be done. And I think Director Tsuhako is game for anything that will help her to achieve her objective too. And again, like, I super appreciate her support. The staff we have is amazing for the commission, so just wanted to kind of inject those things into that. And thank you guys for supporting . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . the Council. I also want to also invite everybody to come see what we're doing on Molokai in our own small way. I know that Naomi Crozier has reached out that their team will be doing a look at what our church is doing. And when you come for your Council budget hearing, I invite you guys to come take a look at the things we're doing. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Zhan. We have a question for you from Member Paltin. I'm muted...you're muted.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Dudoit, for your testimony. I guess we could have just paid you 240,000 because that's the same thing they said. There wasn't enough coordination or cooperation for them to even make a strategic plan. So, I'm not sure if we should have even paid them any money. But my clarifying question is, is the Commission on...you mentioned the Commission on Healing Solutions for Homelessness, is it full up?

MS. LINDO: Meaning are all our vacancies filled?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, do you have vacancy?

MS. LINDO: Yeah, we have a lot of vacancies. We have actually, I think, three or four. I'm getting that exact number. Because it's by district, and we're not the typical county commission, and we're actually like our own independent, created by the Council. The Council has the opportunity to keep updated on their representation from their district. And so, right now, I think Lahaina, Kihei, and Wailuku are not represented.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, did Eyke fill her term, or she stepped down?

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MS. LINDO: No, she stepped down.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Nobody that I know of informed us. Do you know if there is a process for that?

MS. LINDO: So, again, I think it's because this commission is a Council-enacted commission, that even though Cory and the Mayor's Office has oversight over it, I think the rules are a little bit different, and the way they...this...and everybody was, like, dropping out like flies. Because this is a super hard commission to belong to. And so, I...I'm not sure if there needs to be more support in the collaboration between Council, or how this...this commission is organized versus how they deal with normal commissions that are established by the Charter. But...and then I just wanted to also say...because you made that comment about ECONorthwest, I want to say that their blaming the Administration and...and the county for not having the tools in place is not fair either. Because they full-willingly took on the...the job knowing the restraints, and so I just...I just want to speak up for that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like a breach of what they were supposed to provide? They were supposed to provide the strategic plan, and then if they say they cannot provide it, then why we paid them money kine, is what you're saying?

MS. LINDO: Well, yeah. And then, you know, you came from California, or you came from wherever you came from, and you did these plans in a continental setting, and you took on an island strategic plan of which you knew nothing about...the people, nothing. So, that negotiation could have meant I want to take the first year to really get into your communities and understand them so that I can deliver one good product, but that never happened. Whether it was...and I think it's because never have the right people collaborating together to make sure prior to the RFP, or prior to the...prior to the design of the grant execution, that there was input to make sure that stuff could be done.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then has the Commission on Healing Solutions for Homelessness been involved in the Safe Parking Places Program [sic]? Like...because that was funded long time ago, but it never did come to fruition. So, has that been a topic of discussion amongst the Healing Solutions?

MS. LINDO: No. In fact, I testified when it first came up, and we had all the conflict of, you know, who was going to run it, and Cameron Center, and all that. And I brought up that the commission had no part of talking about it, discussing it, or having a legitimate documented recommendation, except for...no, let me take that back. Except for, yes, the commission was...had a letter executed that said they supported the Cameron Center, but that was it. So, as far as I'm concerned, we've never had a chance to really like be a part of the decision-making or creation of any of those.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then also, the delay on the water grant to Project Vision, is...are these things that the commission oversees at all?

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MS. LINDO: No. But we have designed...we're working it out, Director Tsuhako and I, and we have designed a section on our standing agenda that gives a Human Concerns report of which we are able to ask for specific information on bills and projects. And so, that's how we've been getting the information now. I'd like to see that be improved, and...and that there are sometimes things slip through the cracks, and we don't know what's going on. So, I...I would hope that that gets improved too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. Because, I mean, it feels like the funding that we put in is going into a black hole. I...I've heard from many people that, you know, they haven't got the funding that they...that was put in, and there seems to be no oversight of this Department. Even with half of their responsibility doing these lifted off their plate, it's very disappointing. And, you know, I...I did hear the Mayor say the parking spaces and the water program in his County of the...State of the County, but, you know, that's just words until we see something real happen.

MS. LINDO: Councilmember, I just...I...okay. So, I...I know exactly, and I feel the frustration, but I like go on record in saying that the unsheltered situation on an...on our island community is so enormous, and it's so like encompassing of so many different systematic problems that our current Housing and Human...our current Human Concerns department cannot be the only blame for why we're experiencing the things we're experiencing. I think the basic thing is, if we like help people and heal people, the whole entire leg of government in every department and in every leg needs to be healed people, and we need to have better collaboration among all levels, and private sector, and commissions, and departments. Because it's...it's all of our downfall that we cannot talk to each other and we don't have good communication. And so, I...I just...I just want to put that there because this is so big, the problem is so big. And we're going to end up finding the solutions in small pockets of people who want to be doers, but the department cannot be the only blame.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Members...Member Paltin, you had your answer. And we have...we have your time for...with Director Tsuhako after this, so some of these questions can be addressed to her, yeah.

MS. LINDO: Thank you, everybody.

CHAIR SINENCI: But...but all good discussion.

MS. LINDO: Love you guys.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Zhan. Thank you for joining us. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, this is the last call for testimony on this item. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify.

MR. LAW: Aloha kakahiaka. Aloha kākou.

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CHAIR SINENCI: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Mr. Law.

MR. LAW: Aloha *Akakū*. Ko'ū inoa Jasee Law, aka Homeless Guy. Luna Ho'omolu Sinenci, Director Tsuhako, Deputy Director Crouse, aloha Pō'akahi. I'm here to testify about my experience with the Salvation Army. The thing was kind of small, I'm pretty sure that's one of the service providers with the Department, and why I'm at war with them now--the war of words, not bullets. I...I was a client with Corps Sergeant Major Mark Saxon in the Homeless Division for ten years until last fall, when I was denied services and drummed out of their army. Although I appreciate all the times they let me use the phone, and shower, and when they cooked lunch for me, in the end, they failed. I sleep on the mauna in Kula, and I met a nice lady named Katherine *(phonetic)* up there in Waiakoa Town. She became my hanai aunty, and when she had to move down to Hale Mahaolu, she allowed me the use of the refrigerator in the kitchen. For two years I visited with aunty, accompanied her to the store, and tried to kokua her with her life. She used a walker because of a broken hip, and I knew it was only a matter of time before I needed help with her medical needs, transportation, et cetera. Salvation Army was one of the few options we had for help. So, I started attending worship services in Kahului with the whole squad. There was one Filipino man, Ed Guzman, part of the advisory board, who interrupted my first conversation with Captain Remilia *(phonetic)*, and it turns out he had a scam plan to sign her up with a membership to his legal aid business for only 29.99 a month.

CHAIR SINENCI: Jasee, we'll keep to the testimony item. Continue. Going off.

MR. LAW: Okay, Luna Ho'omolu Sinenci. After being strung along for a few months and passed around like a hot potato, I asked Captain Stephen *(phonetic)*, the husband of Remilia, if they were going to help me or not. He said no. So, I wasted the whole summer praying and singing while aunty wasted away and became bedridden. In the end, the paramedics took her away. I never saw her again. Hopefully the state took care of her.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Jasee...

MR. LAW: So, in a nutshell, that's it. But I wanted to ask here today for a copy of the contract for services, Mr. Sinenci, with the Salvation Army. I'm on a mission from God, with or without them, and I'm wondering if we're giving Salvation Army taxpayer money, and why they're throwing away whole pizzas in a dumpster, along with the cardboard boxes, into our landfill. For your information, this thing comes out positive, not for me, but for somebody else out there in the future. There's a booklet called Five Wishes available at the Office of Aging *[sic]* at the Cameron Center for legal help with wills and . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . advanced medical directives.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Jasee.

MR. LAW: Thank you for your time.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Okay. Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: This is the last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium and raise your hand on...or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing no one, Chair. No one's indicated they would like to testify on this item.

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

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Members.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(3) . . .

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. And thank you, everyone, for...for your testimony. Right now we're going to open it up for three minutes for questions to the director and the deputy. And we still have one more item, Members, so if we can keep our questioning succinct, that would really help our cause, okay? I'll...I'll go to Pro Tem Kama and then to Vice-Chair Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Well, I was just going to ask the question about whether we'd have enough time to talk with the Department, as well as the Parks Department. If we could...I mean do you expect us to...to do the Department in maybe about 15, 20 minutes and then do the Department for half an hour?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah, I don't see any testimony...a lot of testimony for the Parks. We have...we have one in Representative Cochran.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We'll go to Vice-Chair Johnson for your three minutes.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. I...I want to respect everybody's time, so I'll try to keep this on...on pace. So, Director Tsuhako, you know, some of the criticisms we've had of...is the...the smaller nonprofits struggle with the burdens that the department puts on them, such as auditing. Do you...do you audit every grant...grantee or...like take, for example, Roots Reborn. Would they need to be audited? And have you audited the smaller ones?

CHAIR SINENCI: Director?

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MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Member Johnson. The audit requirement is not necessarily imposed by this Department, but by the county in general to ensure that agencies have the financial fortitude to be able to manage the funding, the taxpayer funding, that's granted to them for the service. The smaller agencies are not required to do an annual budget. Agencies that receive over, I think, \$750,000 in federal funds have to have a single audit every year, and we ask for those to be shared with the department when those agencies are required to do that for federal requirements. I think the audit requirement is once every three years for grantees who don't meet the threshold for federal funds.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Do you...do you get any...okay. Thank you, Director. Do you get any feedback from the smaller grantees that the audit is a big burden?

MS. TSUHAKO: We have had some feedback from grantees. I think one of the strategies that this body has actually encouraged the smaller agencies to do is to form a subrecipient agreement with a larger agency that can be a fiscal agent, such as...and I think funding was set aside in the last fiscal, two fiscal years for Lokahi Pacific to act as a fiscal agent for smaller agencies that couldn't meet the administrative burden. And that's been, I think, a pretty effective way for smaller agencies to gain that capacity.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Do you have a...do you have a number of...of people...of smaller agencies that have taken up the Lokahi Pacific offer?

MS. TSUHAKO: I believe several of them have. There's actually another agency that has been a fiscal agent for a grant that was given several years ago, but I can't remember his name.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. All right. I'm limited on time, so I'm going to pivot real quick in regards to the Maui Humane Society money that you folks are...are...are taking control of. The unfunded federal dislocated worker. Now, there...we heard from Maui Humane Society that some of their positions got cut by the feds. Does the county have any pots of money that could help rehire those folks at the Maui Humane Society, and if that's something you're interested in?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Councilmember. Dr. Labrecque has not sought any funding from . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . this department to...to maintain that staffing. I think they have undertaken a request to get private funding to make up for the funding lost through the Dislocated Worker Program. We have not received that request from them.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. My time's up. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Vice-Chair. Next, we have Member Cook, followed by Chair Lee.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director. I believe...I think I...you said there was 49 vacancies and you filled 17, approximately. I'm curious, how many people in the department in total?

MS. TSUHAKO: The department in whole has about 150 full-time equivalent.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Are the...some of the vacancies, are they in the departments [sic] that would be reviewing the...reviewing and processing grants?

MS. TSUHAKO: One of the vacancies is one in the Grants Management Division.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Is that position...is that one of the positions that there...is there redundancy for that, that grants can be reviewed in spite of the lack of that position? So, does it just slow it down, or does it stop it?

MS. TSUHAKO: It slows it down, Councilmember Cook. So, right now we have the Grants Management Administrator, as well as one Program Specialist, who are managing those 81-plus grants. So, having that vacancy does contribute to delays in execution sometimes. But I must say that, you know, part of the...part of the delay also has to do with the agencies who are seeking county funds. If...if the agency cannot articulate what the outcomes are and how those outcomes are measured, then we're not going to execute the grant.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And...and I...we've...our conversation, I grant...I grant that...I got...I grasp that. Is there any...is the department or the county looking towards utilizing any technology, any tools that could potentially augment the processing since getting personnel is difficult? Are they looking at alternate ways? Is...is...I guess my question is this. Do you believe that there is software that could help do some of the reviews because it's somewhat prescriptive?

MS. TSUHAKO: Councilmember, I think that the county has looked into various grants management programming. We did that when we got CARES Act funding. And I think...I think the Office on Recovery [sic] is looking at maybe procuring for a system to do that. There hasn't been one program that the entire County, meaning all of the departments who issue grants, have used. And...and I think partly because there's differences in what we're paying for. So, for...for this department, it's human services, which is a lot more tricky to...to measure than, for example, whether a well is able to pump 50,000 gallons of water every hour. . . .(timer sounds). . . It's a different metric.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. So, it's very subjective because it has to be reviewed and analyzed.

MS. TSUHAKO: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. That's my time's up.

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CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Member Cook. Next we have Chair Lee, followed by Pro Tem Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning, Director Tsuhako. I just wanted to ask you, does the Immigrant Services Office administer grants?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. They have one grant currently for acculturation with Voices of Micronesia, and they'll soon have a second grant for the \$400,000 to Pacific Gateway to do the legal immigration work that our staff is no longer able to do.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Really? How many people do you have in Immigrant Services now?

MS. TSUHAKO: We currently have five staff.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Five staff. So, they would be able to handle that \$400,000 grant?

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, the other thing is, did you say that Grants Management handles 81-plus grants?

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes, I did.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, how many people are in Grants Management now?

MS. TSUHAKO: We currently have three Staff, Madam Chair, so Grants Administrator, Program Specialist, and an Operations Assistant.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. That's a lot fewer than...before we had like six or seven in Grants Management. Is it because other departments are now handling the grants that you used to handle?

MS. TSUHAKO: The staffing at Grants Management has been pretty consistent, I would say, for the last ten years. I think that a lot of the other departments have developed their own grants management sort of staffing and more specialized. We continue to act as a...as, I guess, resources to those other departments when...when asked, but we have expertise in the area of social service grants, for sure.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, my last question has to do with the homeless. Everybody is very...well, I don't know, disappointed that we haven't been able to make greater strides in this area. And as we all know, it's a multi-faceted problem with multi-departments involved. So, knowing that you do not have authority over other departments, who should be spearheading the grand effort to deal with...with the homeless problem?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you --

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Is it the Mayor's Office or who?

MS. TSUHAKO: -- thank you, Madam Chair. I think that the Mayor's Office has a role to play in that in terms of the...and the Managing Director as well, to convene the departments that have input into and . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . work in this area, especially to deal with the encampments. And so, we have been having more regular convening of those meetings to try and coordinate the various efforts from different departments.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. My time's up.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Chair Lee. Pro Tem Kama, did you have any follow-up questions?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes, I did. I just had one.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: To be...the last meeting we had with Member Sinenci, we were talking about a parking lot. Is there an update on the parking lot?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Member Kama, for your question. So, the department recently responded to correspondence from the Committee regarding the status of the parking lot project. Just really briefly, Representative Cochran discussed earlier this morning that in the past, during the Victorino Administration, Cameron Center was located...was identified as the location for that pilot project. Unfortunately, we weren't able to execute a grant agreement because we did not follow the exact procedure for procurement. So, once the procurement was issued, no agency bid to actually do the service. Mayor Bissen has identified a safe parking as one of his priorities to offer service to the...to the houseless community, and we're refining the RFP. Having had that experience in the past about needing to procure, we have...we have drafted the RFP, and we're making refinements to that to offer that for bid. And I think that that's one of the follow-up issues from the report that was issued by ECONorthwest is, once a procurement is issued, all of the agencies who are involved and...and who generously offer opinions and strategies about how to deal with people who are unsheltered can then come...come in and offer a proposal for the review and scoring, and perhaps be selected as the vendor for that project.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: When do you anticipate the RFP going out?

MS. TSUHAKO: The RFP will be issued before the end of this month.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. And how long do you think that will take to turn around?

MS. TSUHAKO: Generally, there's a 30-day --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah.

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MS. TSUHAKO: -- window for proposals to be...and we might give a little bit more time because it is a complicated program that has many facets, and so agencies might need a little bit more time to put together a comprehensive proposal. And it might...if you think about it, it might be beneficial to us as a community if different agencies were to partner together to...to formulate a more collaborative response to the RFP. And I think in order to encourage that, we may extend the timeline a little bit to give them time to do...do that work beforehand.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So, who...who decides on the site for this parking lot?

MS. TSUHAKO: The site will be offered by the proposers.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. So, whoever's going to respond to the RFP has to . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . come up with the land.

MS. TSUHAKO: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Good question.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Next, we have Member Paltin, followed by Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. For my first question, did...are you anticipating getting the full Title III federal funds? And if any of the state funding is based on federal funds, have you been informed that you would get the full allocation?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Member Paltin. As of this date, we have not been informed that there'll be any reduction in Title III funding. We...our Executive on Aging is keeping in close contact with Caroline Cadirao from the State's Executive Office on Aging, and getting regular updates about any hints that our funding may be impacted down the line.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Second question. My office sent a transmittal about that land that was executive-ordered to the county. My aide went and checked it out, and was informed that a special deal had been made out with you and the condominium complex about letting them park there. Was that anything in writing? Is the county getting compensated for that? And if you can please explain.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you. That...that is not true. I didn't make any special deals with any condominiums. I do not know what you're speaking of.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, the land that was executive-ordered to the county, you haven't put the chain lock on that land, and you don't know who is parking on that land that was executive-ordered to the county?

MS. TSUHAKO: I do not know. I did not put the chain, I did not ask anyone to put the chain on. We were working with a gentleman who was volunteering to help clear some of the weeds and stuff, but we weren't able to generate a formal agreement with him. The response to your correspondence has already been transmitted, Member Paltin. And there was also a similar response generated by this Committee, and that has been responded to as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, you are not taking any responsibility for the land that was executive-ordered to the county and what is going on there?

MS. TSUHAKO: The land remains in our inventory. In May of 2023, before the fire, we began efforts to try and return that land to the state because it could not be used for affordable housing or as an emergency evacuation route. But those efforts were derailed due to our fire response, and we have not taken up that effort again since. So, it remains in our inventory for the department. . . .(timer sounds). . . It did not transfer to the Department of Housing upon bifurcation.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

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

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Seeing that it's 11:27, and we still have one more item with a presentation and testimony to take, I think I'm just going to limit my turn to one question, and I hope that we don't go too far past the 12:00 hour, Chair. Yeah. Okay.

CHAIR SINENCI: Me too.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: All right. Just one correction in the presentation. Aloha, Director Tsuhako. Mahalo for your presentation. You mentioned that the 330,000 grant to Molokai Community Health Center was executed. It was not yet executed, so I just wanted to correct the record on that. And then...and...and I hope that it will be executed this week, and I believe it will be. Grants has always been a struggle, and under my Committee, we've talked about how to do a better job at managing incoming and outgoing grants, whether it's, you know, centralizing, decentralizing, a combination of both, and I had meant to schedule it in my Committee so that we could have that discussion before going into budget, but it's okay. Your...all right. So, my question is regarding grants and the facilitation and management of incoming and outgoing funding. Do you, one, feel that the staff that you--I love your staff, Curtis is...is wonderful--but do you have enough staff to manage the grants? And if you feel like it's...it's not enough for the number of grants or the amount of funds, like have you thought about what, you know, a better formula would be for us to consider

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in giving, you know, the proper staffing resources to the...either the amount of money that is allocated under your department, or the amount of money that is being received? You know, because I know both, you know, incoming and outgoing funds have to be managed. And...yeah. So, any...any...any comments on...on that that you could share with us before we go into budget this year?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Councilmember. And thank you for acknowledging the staff because they really do have expertise and...and try very hard to be helpful and productive. So, we have one vacancy as a Program Specialist in Grants Management. We're actively recruiting for that, and we're hoping that once that position is...is filled, that we'll be much better able to respond more efficiently and quickly to the execution. And as I mentioned earlier to Councilmember Cook, the execution is not only about having agencies turn in an application . . .(timer sounds). . . but it's making sure that those programmatic objectives are understandable and measurable, right? So, we don't want to just count outputs. So, I gave out...I'm doing homeless outreach, and I gave out 4,000 Band-Aids. We want to see what the outcome is. How many of those people that you've outreached have actually gone into the shelter to stabilize their lives? How many of them have actually been housed permanently and stayed housed for two years? So, our ability to measure what is being proposed has to be really clear so that it can be measured. So, that, I think, you know, it's not just a matter of having money being given out on paper, but it's actually making sure that the service that's being proposed makes sense, that will contribute to our social safety net, and can be measured. And I think that that process maybe is not understood as well in terms of the back-and-forth discussion that needs to happen with our program staff and the grantees. So, thank you for that, the question.

COUNCILMEMBERS RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Next, we have Member Sugimura, followed by Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I'll try to be fast. So, just a question for you since it's been talked about. I wonder if you could post in this Committee the EKO [sic] --

CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, the Northwest --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- Northwest...yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: -- report?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. We can.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: That one. And the other thing is--and if you could just send a letter to the department, if you could look--I'm concerned about the federal funds that

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may get cut with the actions of this current federal administration. And of course, because you touch so many people that need that in many different ways, I was looking at the appendix, as well as your department, for the services you provided, how many of them are...I mean, even if it's the state, a lot of times the state is a passthrough to us. So, which of the grants may be in jeopardy, or--I hate to use that word, but are--rely on federal funding? So, if you could send that, a letter...Chair Sinenci, if you could send it to the department, if we could get it in writing? Because it'll be too long to go item by item. And then I got to leave like 10 minutes...I mean, oh, 15 minutes from now, I got to leave. I have a 12:00 I got to go to.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thanks.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Staff, you got that? Okay. Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. In the interest of time, I will save any questions, and if I do have any questions, I will reach out to the department to ask about their '25 budget.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Member U'u-Hodgins. And I just have a follow-up question from Pro Tem Kama about the RFP going out for the safe parking. Does the proposal, the RFP, the applicants also need to negotiate on behalf of the...the county to lease, rent or...the...the safe parking lot?

MS. TSUHAKE: Mr. Chair, that would be dependent on them. So, I think the preference would be to have the proposers have access to land already so that they wouldn't need to...to acquire land for that purpose. I think having private land for this project removes a lot of the requirements that were imposed on the original RFP. And so, I think it allows for the community of nonprofit providers to be more creative in...if they have access to that land, to what the programming will actually look like without the county being too heavy-handed with requirements.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. Members, any need for a second round of questions?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: No time.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Seeing none. That concludes our first item. Staff? Members, any objections to deferring this item?

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Great. Thank you. And then we'll have Director McCall come down. Thank you, Director Tsuhako and Deputy. Mahalo for coming. Thank you, Members, for your patience. This is such a big department with a lot of agencies within it, so appreciate your patience.

**OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND RECREATION**
(WASSP-1(4))

CHAIR SINENCI: And next, we'll have Director McCall here. Thank you for joining us. Staff, does he have a...okay. Members, our second item, the Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Parks and Recreation. And we have Director McCall here, and he will be providing a presentation on the department's budgetary review for Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. So, go ahead, Director McCall.

MR. MCCALL: Good morning, Councilmembers. Erin go Bragh, for those of you...Ireland forever. And as you know, our department's mission is to provide a safe and satisfying, cost-effective recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. And I'll give you a brief recap of where we are in the operational budget for the department at this time. And I will make a strong attempt in consideration of time to make sure that this is not...this is a PowerPoint, and not a power read. Go ahead, next slide, please. All right. As you can see in our three programs, our General Fund was 42...42 million, approximately--I'll round these off--and we currently have about 16 million still remaining with several months of bills and purchases to finalize. Next slide. This--I think we can go through quickly--this next slide is just a reference to some of the equipment in our Administrative Program. You can go ahead and click on. A difficult section within our Administrative Program is our permits and enforcement area. We continue to experience vacancy issues, as listed in several of the . . . *(inaudible)*. . . One of the strategies that we are currently working on very hard is, we are going to propose a reorganization of the...of the section. With it, we believe it'll allow us to possibly increase the attractiveness and the financial reward of some of the positions within that department...I mean that section. The...we are also, you know, continuing to work with other agencies, including Corporation Counsel, PD, the Prosecutor's Office, to deal with some of the issues on the enforcement side as well. Next slide, please. In our Parks Program, in our Maintenance Division, the...to address the issue of the expansion positions, the...both positions, one will be filled as the Painter II will be as of April 1st; the position Painter Helper has been filled; and all budgeted equipment has been ordered, procured, et cetera, and we're currently waiting delivery. Next slide. Okay. The Maintenance Division's major projects this year, I will just highlight the areas at Cove Park in South Maui. A great deal of innovation occurred there. Keōpūolani Park, Kula Park, and the...and the tennis parking lot. The repairs and parking lot seal coat

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striping were updated. Waialae Park backstop and fencing. Pā'ia Community Center received new chain link fencing, post and rail. Baldwin Beach Park and Haycraft Park, or a dunes restoration group within our Beautification Section, did major work there. The Lahaina Rec Center as one and two, the softball and baseball backstops, the baselines, the outfield fencing, the replacement has occurred, as well as the dugout rebuilds. And Kēōkea Park pavilion was rebuilt as well. I believe the next slide will show some pictures of all of these projects. That includes, by the way, the...the women's restroom at the golf course. And just to address one concern that is regularly brought up regarding the new dugouts, that new style was started several years back. It helps, actually, the safety of the dugout, but also the prevention of loitering and other problems that we have with those dugouts. Okay. And the Maintenance Division also has within it the Waiehu Golf Course. The golf course, we have worked on the...we've got the installation of the new telecom fiber optics. As I said, the women's restroom remodel was completed. And the...the concession space abatement--in other words, we--two concessions run out of there, the carts and also the restaurant. For those of you who may know--I'm sure Chair Lee may be able to tell us--the...the restaurant had a soft opening this past Friday. And so, that operation is up, and we are looking forward to some good things coming out of that. Yeah. Yeah. All right. Next slide, please. And in our CIP section or division, you will see the financial breakdown on this slide, what we have remaining in the budget. Next slide, please. Oh. While we're going to that slide, I do want to commend Mr. Sam Marvel, the head of that division. He's worked extremely hard. When I took over as director, we had two CIP Coordinators with five positions, so three unfilled. We were very fortunate at one point this year to get up to all five positions being filled. And work was made. Unfortunately, we...we did lose two of those individuals; one to the private sector, and unfortunately, one passed away. And so, but we have...are in the process of interviewing more, and we also have inter...hired another one within our Maintenance Division due to the promotion of Mr. Agapay to the superintendent. So, his position as a project coordinator was filled. Happy to say the Lāna'i Youth Center and skate park, the progress has been great. We will have the opening, the grand opening of the skate park on the 29th of this month, and also the blessing of the youth center, which will open up a little bit later this summer with some final punch list items to be done, but we will be doing the blessing of the building at that time. Next slide. We're ongoing in this division. We will start the next phase of the War Memorial Stadium rehabilitation, which will include bleacher repair, box office repainting, a new scoreboard, a new sound system, et cetera. And that will begin in June. Next slide as well. The ongoing project at War Memorial Gym is on schedule to be completed at December of this year. And I'm happy also to report that we were able, within the budget constraints, to get some of the repairs to the offices that we had discussed in previous meetings as well. Okay. And the next slide. Yes, the Lahaina Civic Center, that project, the air conditioning replacement and wood floors, the floors are in already. The project is actually a little bit ahead of schedule, but I don't want to jinx it, knock on wood. And we are scheduled to finish with the AC system by September. Okay. Next slide. The old Hāna School improvements, which includes all of those renovations listed there. I think the important thing is, we finally have gotten some of the permitting and...and whatnot, and we...the construction should start in...in this summer. It's been a long project, yes. All right. In...next slide. In our East District,

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the Makawao Boys Club is currently...Boys and Girls Club is currently being reroofed. That project started, it's...and should be done by next month. The Pā'ia Community Center rehab program...rehab of that facility, including some of the kitchen work and some more interior renovation is in the design and permitting. We expect the construction in '27. And the Pā'ia Gym project, as I've stated in the past, we are looking to build a new building with...as a Category 3-rated hurricane shelter, onsite emergency generator, et cetera. And this is currently in design and community engagement, and the construction would be expected to start in 2029. On the West Side...next slide, please. We have completed Nāpili Park improvements, the new batting cage, the ADA paths, and swing set. We also have the Lahaina Rec Center improvements that are currently in engagement and in design with the community. The bid for that is expected to go out in July, with building to start in the fall. And that's for the new covered playground. And also Kelawea Mauka would be under the same timeline for a new playground. We're currently working with a private entity that may assist us with that as well. Next slide. On South District, South Maui Community Park Phase 2, the bid for this is expected to go out in July of '26, with an opening of the facility in...and...and the buildings out in '27. This would include new fields, pickleball courts, and walking paths. The Keawekapu parking lot is...the bid will go out next--oh, I'm sorry, I'm looking at the wrong list. Okay. The bid will go out in...later this year, and we expect the lot to open in '26. And the...finally, the Hale Pi'ilani playground, the bid will go out in July, and will build out in the fall. The community center was completed this year with the new AC system, et cetera, installed. Next slide for Molokai, please. Ono Ali'i Park improvements, the new shade structure, the construction is expected to start in '26. And the playground improvements at Pu'u Hauole is currently in design with community engagement, and should start in '27. And on Lāna'i, we have the Fifth Street courts improvements which are currently...the project started, and we expect it to be done in August. And the dog park on Fraser Avenue was...has also started, and we expect that to end in August as well. Okay. Next slide, please. The department has a master plan for the Waiehu Municipal Golf Course Clubhouse that has been...in effect, the plan is nearly complete...the project...the plan for the project nearly complete. This would be the creation of a new clubhouse and also community meeting space. And the next step in creating this is...is going to be creating the CIP project with the final concept, and that's where that particular one is. That plan is just coming to end. Finally, the...next, please. The Parks Vulnerability Analysis is...again, this slide will basically show what we are addressing. I believe you guys recognize the flooding, the park deterioration, and also the former Baldwin Beach Park Pavilion. And the study...more information on that is there, and with the plans to address it. The Hamakualoa open space, the cultural assessment. Currently, 'Āina Archeology is on site finalizing the field work. When that is done, the implementation of that plan will be...we currently plan, anyway, to have that to go with the Mālama Hamakua group. They have been an outstanding partner in the management. Currently, they are operating under an ROE. We hope to get them a long-term lease when this study is complete. All right. Next slide, please. Our next division, of course, our Recreation and Support Services Program. This is a...this page just is a large scale of all of the different sections that comes under this, from the daily operations to the community work, our pools, and our PALS programs, et cetera. If we can go to the next slide, please. The expansion positions within this division have been

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filled, and all equipment except one has been ordered. And that is only currently being delayed by a compliance issue with the vendor, and that will be worked out shortly, we hope. All right. Our next slide. These are the recreational programs that we currently run through this division. I am very happy to note, thanks to a lot of support from the Council and the health of our community, I guess, post-COVID, the growth of the PALS program continues, and you can see the number of sites and the number of children served this past summer and this past winter. Our next slide, please. The maintenance and projects within the REC division that their staff handles, you know, is day-to-day, basically preparation and...and maintenance of those facilities for our various events. Our projects include the installation, repair, a lot of post and rail work, a lot of plumbing and electrical repair, and to be quite frank, a great deal of time for...for this section of...of that division is spent repairing vandalism. And the fun stuff that that division does is shown on pictures on the next page. This is our staff getting a swing set in Pā'ani Mai Park in Hāna. Our Lāna'i people, which do a wonderful job with their recreation programs, with their youth basketball and many other programs. And then our inclusive section, doing our inclusion...inclusive kayak program, which is a big hit within that community. And finally, the last picture page, yeah, is just a quick, again, several other of our programs. I do want to shout out, being that we are featuring senior softball in the pictures here. Incredible form by that pitcher, by the way. I just want to throw that out there. But I want to thank the...the work done by Kaunoa, the partnership with them. Without their help, I don't know if this program would be possible. But unfortunately, Director Tsuhako just left, but Kaunoa does a wonderful job in assisting our Rec Staff with this as well. All right. And I believe that's it for now. I hope that's the short and dirty. I tried to keep to the ten minutes.

CHAIR SINENCI: You did great, Director. And mahalo for staying with us. Staff, we'll go to testimony. We might have a couple.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the only person currently signed up for this item was Representative Elle Cochran, but we don't see her online anymore. Would you like us to do a last call?

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MS. MCKINLEY: This is last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Members, any objections to closing public testimony for this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR WASSP-1(4) . . .

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CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Members. Okay. And we'll just go with a raise of hands for any questions for Director McCall. Oh, we have one from Pro Tem Kama, followed by Vice-Chair Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you. So, Mr. McCall, I remember having a discussion, and maybe...I may have added to the discussion in my mind, but I thought that the War Memorial Gym was going to be a Hurricane 5 status.

MR. MCCALL: I'm...I'm not aware of that. I believe it's a Hurricane 3, I thought, and I...I can double check that --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

MR. MCCALL: -- for you and get back to your --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah.

MR. MCCALL: -- office on that.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. That's it.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. Vice-Chair Johnson, followed by Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Would you like me just to read my questions and have them respond it in writing to save time? But I...I can give out the questions right now, if you'd like, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. First off, I want to thank the Parks and Rec and Director McCall for all the things you do on Lānaʻi. The community is abuzz, and you guys are doing great work. I really appreciate all that stuff--the skate park, the dog park, the list goes on and on. You...and I can't say enough how happy we are with what the folks at the Parks and Rec are doing. Now, that being said, would you consider, because we are growing, making Lānaʻi its own district so we could actually fund some of these guys in bigger-paying positions? And just...you know, they're doing as much work as the Molokai programs are doing, and we're even smaller than they are. So, just wondering if the director would consider making...you know, making us a division within the Parks? Also, I'm curious about PALS, Summer PALS on Lānaʻi. I would really hope we could get it up and running. Maybe an update on Summer PALS. The...let's see, and the...okay. So, those were my main questions. And just to let everybody know, March 29th is the skate park opening event, so just throwing that out there. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo, Vice-Chair. Director, did you want to comment? Or send him a...

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MR. MCCALL: We'll go ahead and respond in writing, if that makes this a little quicker for you.

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

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

CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks, Vice-Chair. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director McCall. I know a lot of people been waiting for that expanded Lahaina Rec Center parking...playground. Thank you so much. I was wondering about the Category 3 shelter. You know, when Hurricane Olivia was...I think that was scheduled to hit us as a Category 5. I just was wondering, is it possible...like if we don't have any Category 5 shelters, is it possible for people to shelter in a Category 3 shelter as like the next best option?

MR. MCCALL: Thank you for the question, Councilmember. I...I don't have an official MEMA/HIEMA-type answer, but my...my answer would be that would...that would definitely be safer in the Category 3 than anywhere else in the community. So, yes, we would...we would --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Open.

MR. MCCALL: -- we would open to those as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. And then the other question I had was, in...in light of the fires and everything, and you know, the department's use of wood-shake rooves...roofs, and...and, you know, I come from Hilo, and we use like those tin ones. Now there's the industrial, where it's farther apart, the ridges. Has the department considered like switching over away from the wood-shake roofs for like, you know, safety and longer-term maintenance? I just was at the Kahului Community Center, and I noticed all...three of the corners were puka, and it's using that wood-shake roof. And...and if...if there's any CIP projects scheduled for the Kahului Community Center?

MR. MCCALL: That is currently being evaluated...I'm sorry, thank you for the question. But the Kahului Community Center is currently being evaluated to go ahead and get the roof redone. And the...in question to the wood-shake roofs, as far as switching existing roofs, when time comes to replace, that is definitely a consideration in them, but we are...each project is being evaluated individually for those.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. And then last question would be for the...I went to the community outreach for the Lahaina Rec Center, and it seem...I just wanted to clarify from your presentation, the old layout of the Lahaina Rec Center park is what's going to be put at Kelaweia Mauka, and the Lahaina Rec Center one is going to be kind of more incorporating of the feedback at the community outreach?

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MR. MCCALL: I have...thank you again. I have not seen the final . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . decision that came out of the meeting as far as the design, but that was the purpose of that, is to incorporate the community input in the final design. And I know the CIP Division was considering all of that, and going in and making their final choices.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and the old park that was at Rec Center is the design for the Kelaweia Mauka one?

MR. MCCALL: I believe they're using similar site things, yes. I don't know if it's the exact same one, but it's...what they're working on is doing both at the same time, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: With...both with shade cover?

MR. MCCALL: I believe so, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Are there any other questions from our Members online? You guys are good? Thank you. In the Chambers, we're all okay. Okay. Members...and again, mahalo to Director McCall for...for joining us this morning and sharing his budgetary review. With that, Members, any objections to deferring the second item?

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

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. With that, again, mahalo to everyone for their participation. We do have an afternoon meeting here in the Chambers with Member Cook under the WAI Committee. And Staff, is there anything else we should...before we adjourn?

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

CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

MR. MCCALL: And Chair, the appropriate Gaelic response to --

CHAIR SINENCI: Yes.

MR. MCCALL: -- Erin go Bragh just for you is, it's sláinte, which would be God with you. So...

CHAIR SINENCI: Sláinte.

MR. MCCALL: Or good health. Good health, actually, would be sláinte.

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CHAIR SINENCI: What a good ending, sláinteá, and Happy St. Paddy's Day, everybody. With that, the WASSP Committee meeting of Monday, March 17th, is now adjourned. It's 12:04. Thank you, Members. . . .(*gavel*). . .

ADJOURN: 12:04 p.m.

wassp:min:250317:crp:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 56 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 10th day of April 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck