

# **BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Council of the County of Maui**

## **MINUTES**

**December 17, 2024**

**Online Only via Teams**

**CONVENE:** 9:09 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair  
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Vice-Chair  
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member (Out 2:50 p.m.)  
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member  
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (Out 2:21 p.m.)  
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member (In 10:10 a.m.; Out 12:01 p.m.)  
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member  
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member  
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member (Out 12:01 p.m.)

**STAFF:** James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst (trainee)  
Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney  
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney (trainee)  
Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary  
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk  
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk  
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Office (RAO):

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

**ADMIN.:** Kristina Toshikiyo, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel  
Saumalu Mataafa, Deputy Director, Department of Housing (BFED-21(32))  
Lesley Milner, Budget Director, Mayors Office  
Patience Kahula, CDBG-DR Program Manager, Mayor’s Office (BFED-21(33))  
Josiah Nishita, Managing Director, Department of Management (BFED-21(33))

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

Helene Kau, Executive Assistant II, Department of Management (BFED-21(33))  
Dan Shupack, County Capital Improvement Program Coordinator, Department of Management (BFED-21(7))  
Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture (BFED-21(7))  
Jeffrey Jurickovich, Agriculture Park Maintenance Specialist, Department of Agriculture (BFED-21(7))  
Cynthia Razo-Porter, Director, Department of Personnel Services (BFED-21(34))  
Kainea Aiwohi-Alo, Deputy Director, Department of Personnel Services (BFED-21(34))  
Cheri Nashiwa, Human Resources Specialist IV, Department of Personnel Services (BFED-21(34))

**OTHERS:** Desilee Santiago (BFED-21(34))  
Jasee Law (BFED-21(34))  
Others (50)

Resource Personnel  
Susie Thieman, Executive Director, Lokahi Pacific (BFED-21(32))  
Asad Khan, CDBG, Tetra Tech, Inc. (BFED-21-(33))  
Jorge Ramirez, Administrative Support I, Tetra Tech, Inc. (BFED-21(33))  
Carrie Robinette, Senior Hazard Mitigation Grant Specialist, Tetra Tech, Inc. (BFED-21(33))  
John Buri, Director, Post-Disaster Programs, Tetra Tech, Inc. (BFED-21(33))  
Lisa Davidson, Disaster Recovery Program Director, Stantec (BFED-21(33))  
Kim Pugel, Associate, Stantec (BFED-21(33))

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

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Today is December 17th, and it’s now 9:09 a.m. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I’m the Chair of this Committee. And I want to welcome all of you, and also mention that this meeting is being conducted according to the Sunshine Law. And as a reminder, if you are not in the Chambers when your name is called, please let us know who is with you, excluding minors. So, first, we--I have been requested to call on Chair Lee. You have something special?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Just the morning greeting, which is Feliz Navidad, everyone.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Perfect, right? All right. Feliz Navidad. And Vice-Chair for this Committee, Member Kama.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Mele Kalikimaka, Madam Chair, and Feliz Navidad.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We're all in the spirit. Next, we have Member Cook in the Chambers.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Feliz Navidad, Mele Kalikimaka, Merry Christmas, and happy to be here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I mean, it's a good day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: With that, I have to say thank you, Arthur Suyama, for doing all the decorations in here, and for bringing the festivities to us. Appreciate that. And then online, we have...I see Nohe U'u-Hodgins. Welcome back, nice to see you.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning, Chair. Feliz Navidad. I'm at my home. My husband's also here as well, Koa Hodgins. I almost said U'u, but that's not his name.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: There are no testifiers at the Pā'ia District Office. . . .*(laughing)*. . . My brother is Koa U'u, my husband is not.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: But nice to see you all.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good family. All right, nice to see you. And...and we have Member Johnson, and Member U'u-Hodgins, then Member Sinenci. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Aloha, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers at the Lāna'i District Office. Feliz Navidad, and I'm here and ready to work. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Feliz Navidad. And I see your ornaments in the back of you, very good. In the Christmas spirit. Next, we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez on Moloka'i.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka kākou, my Moloka‘i Nui a Hina. I am at my private residence alone here, and there are no testifiers. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha and buenos días, Feliz Navidad from Hāna District Office. And no testifiers. I’m here with District Staff Dawn Lono.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Thank you, everybody, for being here. We also have from the Managing...we have Managing Director Josiah Nishita. I think I saw him earlier. Helene Kau, Executive Assistant, Office of Recovery, I think--or are you in the Management Office? But Helene is here in the Chambers. From the Office of the Mayor, we have Patience Kahula, which is CDB-DR [sic] Program Manager; and Department of Agriculture, Kali Arce...Kali Arce, Director, as well as Jeff Jurickovich, Ag Park Maintenance Specialist; and Department of Housing, Saumalu Mataafa, Deputy Director; Department of Personnel Services, Kainea Aiwohi-Alo, Deputy Director; and Cheri Nashi--Nashiwa, Human Resources Specialist. Department of Corporation Counsel, Kristina Toshikiyo, thank you for being with us forever. Office of--other...other resources. We have...for BFED-21, which is the first item on the agenda, we have Susie Thieman--she’s already sitting up here in the front--Executive Director for Lokahi Pacific; and for BFED-21(33), which is looking at contracts, Tetra Tech contracts, we have from Tetra Tech Asad--I’m going to say your names wrong, I’m sorry--Khahan [sic]; Spec...you’re all subject-matter experts; Jorge Ramirez, subject-matter expert for CDBG; Carrie Robinette...let’s see, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. And from Stantec, Lisa Davidson, Disaster Recovery Program Director; Kim Pugel, Associate; and there’s lots more people in the Chambers, so I hope that I get this correct. And Members, if there are no objections, under Rule 19...18(A), Rules of the Council, I would like to designate Ms. Thieman as a resource person for the first item and--because of expertise that she possesses, as well as County grants, and the individuals from Tetra Tech and Stantec as resource persons for BFED-21(33) because of their expertise on behalf of the County. So...

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. And Committee Staff, I have Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary. Boy, you started with us this year. You’ve come along way, huh? Right in there with us, so I appreciate you a lot. James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst; as well as Kasie Apo Takayama; Kirsten Szabo, which is Legislative Analyst trainee with a lot of finance experience, so we appreciate you being with us; Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney; Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk; and we also have--I just went blank--Peter Hanano. Sorry. I was going to call you somebody else from

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

Corporation Counsel, but Peter Hanano here. He's visiting, and we were told not to ask him questions yet. So, Members, this is the meeting, and all the people who are going to make the meeting happen. And before we do this--is that correct, Michele Yoshimura? Okay. Before we do this, we have a surprise for all of you. Just for the Christmas spirit, we have Santa Claus visiting. Okay. Tasha, start singing.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Oh, you better watch out, you better not --

MR. CLAUSE: . . .*(bell sounds)*. . . Ho, ho, ho. Merry Christmas. Hello, everybody. Merry Christmas. Nice to see you folks. How are you? . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

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

MR. CLAUSE: Ho, ho, ho. Merry Christmas. How are you? How are you? Merry Christmas, everybody. How are you? Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, Santa is here visiting us --

MR. CLAUSE: Ho, ho, ho.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- this morning, and to extend the Christmas cheer. For those of you who are not in the Chamber, we'll put some of the Santa goodies in your --

MR. CLAUSE: Merry Christmas.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- in your mailboxes.

MR. CLAUSE: Okay. We seem to . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Tasha's asking for a new car.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And let's see what Chair Lee is asking for.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, we have to --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Santa, I was...I wasn't naughty.

MR. CLAUSE: You promise?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, promise.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. CLAUSE: Merry Christmas. How are you? Nice to see you, Alice.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: God bless you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. At this time, I have to call a recess.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Don't believe her. She was really naughty this year, Santa.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: She was really naughty? . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair Lee was very naughty.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We have witnesses.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Exactly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee, we have witnesses. They're saying you were really naughty.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I'm going to call a brief recess.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Don't...don't believe what she said, Santa.

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

MR. CLAUSE: Merry Christmas. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Five minutes. Okay.

MR. CLAUSE: Ho, ho, ho.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, 9...9:25. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 9:17 a.m.  
RECONVENE: 9:25 a.m.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Thanks for taking a short break for Santa Claus to visit us. And so, we heard that Member Kama wants a new car, and that Chair Lee said she was a good girl.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And I want a truck.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And you want a truck? . . .*(laughing)*. . . Don't over-ask. Okay. So, items on our agenda today. We have BFED-21(32), Discussion of Bill 184, Amending Chapter 3.36, Maui County Code, Relating to Grants--that's first--and BFED-21(33), Wildfire Recovery Grants and Reimbursements; BFED-21(7), Kula Ag Park Phase I Expansion Update; and BFED-21(34), Employee Retention and Recruitment Contract. Members, I will be taking testimony after presentation and opening comments for each of these items today. Do we have any testifiers? Anybody wants to testify?

MS. SZABO: Chair, we have one testifier signed up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Online?

MS. SZABO: Yep, Ms. Desilee Santiago.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, then testifiers wanting to provide testimony should sign up at the table out in the lobby or on the Teams link. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link and at [mauicounty.us/agendas](http://mauicounty.us/agendas) as well. Under the Sunshine Law, the Chair will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and the...and as the item is called up. 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. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order testifiers sign up or raise their hands. For those on Teams, Staff...for those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added, who will then call your name and...and--or your phone number, whichever is your preference. At this time...at...at this time, Staff will also enable your microphone and video. If you wish to testify anonymously, please notify Staff. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per person. If they are still testifying beyond that time, I will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. Once you are done testifying, or if you do not wish to testify, you can do...you can also view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or [mauicounty.us/agendas](http://mauicounty.us/agendas). We will also do our best to take each person up in an orderly fashion. And Staff, at this time, can you please call up the testifiers?

MS. SZABO: Ms. Desilee Santiago, please.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Desilee?

**. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT THE BEGINNING OF MEETING. . .**

MS. SANTIAGO: Hi, good morning.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Oh, I saw you the other day.

MS. SANTIAGO: Can you guys hear me okay?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, we can hear you.

MS. SANTIAGO: I'm testifying on the BFED-21(34), item...for the retention...employee retention recruitment.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. SANTIAGO: So, my name is Desilee Santiago. I've been...you know, I've worked at the State before. I've just come from the County Building Department for three-and-a-half years. It was pretty difficult to get a job at the State, at the County. The waiting time to even be let--you know, notified whether or not I was on the eligibility list for said positions took probably about two to three months, and then about another two months before you're able to interview or, you know, that you get contacted for interview. And then you don't know until like, oh, you've been offered it. So, it's like, you know, you have like six-to-nine month wait, and most people--I mean, I don't know anybody who can wait at least six months to get notified if they got the job or not. You know, they're, you know, applying everywhere. When I--excuse me--about six months ago when I was trying to look for a better opportunity, pay opportunities, I was stonewalled, like just met with outdated position descriptions that I didn't...I lacked the minimum qualifications for. Had to wait for DPS to--you know, this back and forth. I think I spoke on this previously. So, it's just extremely difficult for people to sit and wait, or fight for their requirements, like...and these are all outdated, like from the '90s. These things don't even apply. Some of these position descriptions are talking about Kiva or something that we don't even use anymore, items and job descriptions that that Department doesn't even...aren't responsible for anymore. So, I think taking like a fundamental look at what every single description is, you know, posting, and the minimum requirements, and instead of like blocking them, let the Departments decide who they're going to interview, who will be--you know, a lot of these positions are trainable. There's tests that are outdated tests as well, you know, that they have to take that make no sense. Like the test I did for building permits really had nothing to do with the job like itself at all. So, it's

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

just frustrating that, you know, there's such a lack in the workforce, but there's people willing to, even with a small pay, because they look at the benefits, they look at the retirement, you know, trying to do that, and they end up just going to work at Target or Chick-fil-A, and getting paid probably the same amount as the clerks...which is really pretty shameful if you...if you ask me. So, I mean, I think just kind of changing, or like taking a really good look at what these positions are asking of people, and like...like I said, letting--if . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . they do...if they have customer service, if they can do Word document, if they know how to spell, if they know how to speak on the phone. I mean, I feel like anybody is trainable if they're willing to be trainable for any position. Anybody can learn something, so...yeah. I mean, I just ask, like, hopefully this company--I'm not sure what capacity the retention and recruitment--what they're going to be doing, but it would be nice if they would look at the actual descriptions for each position and see what makes sense. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank...boy. Thank you very much for sharing your experience. Members, anybody have any questions for her? Member Kama.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you for being here, Desilee. So, my question is, you know, you...you had offered such a well-rounded perspective, right, of your experience. Have you spoken to anybody at Personnel regarding that?

MS. SANTIAGO: I mean, I've spoken to the clerk as far as when they would email me and say lacks minimum or more requirements when it was literally the same position elsewhere, but it was named different. And...and it's an open recruitment so it's a different classification, but it was literally the same SR rating. It was actually less work, and how do I not--like, okay. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you just went silent.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: You just --

MS. SANTIAGO: For instance, which I thought was kind of ridiculous.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MS. SANTIAGO: The golf course, the Waihe'e [sic] Golf Course, they were looking for clerks. Oh, sorry. Can you guys hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We can hear you.

MS. SANTIAGO: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sorry.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. SANTIAGO: So, the Wai...Waihe'e [sic] Golf Course, they were looking for a new clerk, and they were...they literally asked me, what is your golfing experience and quantify the amount of time. And I'm like does mini golf count? I mean, I think...like, just stuff like that is such a ridiculous ask of people. It's almost insulting. Like, I mean, no, I don't golf, but I'm pretty sure I can, you know, learn it, and I'm...I'm looking for the clerical portion of it. I'm assuming that's what you need and not somebody to--I don't know. I don't know. I just thought like that...like those kinds of things are so discouraging for the workforce that they don't want...nobody wants to apply. I mean, everybody I ask, they say, yeah, I've applied, and I haven't heard anything for three weeks, and then I get an email saying that, I'm sorry, but you lack the minimum requirements. And you can get a hearing, you know, request a hearing or an administrative review, and people don't have time for that. People just want to work.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Um-hum. Um-hum.

MS. SANTIAGO: So, I don't know. I...I think there needs to be real change in that --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you.

MS. SANTIAGO: -- process.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you for your testimony. Because I've heard the same thing, too, from a whole bunch of other people. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Chair Lee.

MS. SANTIAGO: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning, Ms. Santiago. How many different --

MS. SANTIAGO: Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- positions did you apply for besides the one at Waiehu Golf Course?

MS. SANTIAGO: So, at that time--because this is, you know, the most recent, which--in, like, six months ago before I started this job. I want to say 13.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thirteen positions?

MS. SANTIAGO: Because if...13, one-three. One-three.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And it took you an average of --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. SANTIAGO: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- you know, like four or five months to be notified that--let's say you...you weren't qualified?

MS. SANTIAGO: I think the average was about...the average time when my application was submitted, you get the confirmation email, to when like a clerk from DPS would...was maybe about 9 to 12 weeks.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: 9 to 12 weeks. Okay. Well, you know, is it possible for you to send us an email with your suggestions so we can follow up?

MS. SANTIAGO: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you very much.

MS. SANTIAGO: Absolutely.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next, we have Member U'u-Hodgins with questions for you.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Hi, Des.

MS. SANTIAGO: Hi.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Hi. In your testimony, you were saying that you were...you took a test during, I'm...I'm assuming, the application process, and then that's not at all what you kind of did at work. I wonder if you can describe what the test was, or something similar?

MS. SANTIAGO: I mean, it...it was basic. It's like if you don't know anything about building--but okay, let's keep in mind, these are entry-level positions. These are not, like...these are very entry-level.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. SANTIAGO: But I...I do come from a building background, so I know how to read plans. It was just like count the bedrooms, simple stuff like that.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. SANTIAGO: And then the fee schedule, which we all know is kind of a nightmare to calculate if...especially if you haven't done like long multiplication, you know? And you can't use a calculator.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. SANTIAGO: Just the terms that--if you're not used to the terms. But like I said, it had really nothing to do with what we actually did, was we process applications and turned them in Kiva, wrote the numbers down, routed them. I mean, it's...it's such...so many different things, and it was all trainable, is what I'm trying to say. So, if we're blocking people who want to learn and maybe get into the County, get into the Building thing, that would...would have been the...you know, the best position for them to start. But then you have this test that is super difficult. And of course, we don't calculate our own fee. Like, even Kiva did that with evaluation.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. SANTIAGO: MAPPS now does that automatically. We don't have to do any of that. Math is automatically calculated.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Um-hum.

MS. SANTIAGO: Just...and now more so, you need people that are more tech savvy. Because you have like the greatest engineers and reviewers, and they get stuck because they have no idea how to navigate MAPPS, and that's what causes a lot of the...the delays on the other end. So, a lot of...of the old timers ended up retiring because they did not want to learn MAPPS.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. SANTIAGO: So, we're just--you know, in this new age, which is really hard, that we have to change the way that we are recruiting in order to be able to get the quality people in. Because what's the point of doing all that, going through DPS, interviewing, selecting, and then the people come in and they can't do the job?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. SANTIAGO: You know what I mean? Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah. Thank you so much. Thanks, Des.

MS. SANTIAGO: You're welcome.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody else have questions for...for the testifier? Seeing none. Okay. Thank you very much for sharing your experience.

MS. SANTIAGO: Thank you, guys.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. SANTIAGO: Have a good day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. SZABO: Chair, that is the end of the testifiers that have signed up to testify, but we see someone approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: Aloha kakahiaka, aloha kākou, aloha, *Akakū*. Ohayo Luna Ho‘omalu Kashiwa Sugimura. My name is Jimmy, and all I want for Christmas, Santa Claus, is a cardboard dumpster in my town of Waiakoa. Thank you. And depending on you...who you ask, I've been good or bad.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. All right. Any more testifiers?

MS. SZABO: Chair, that is the last of the testifiers that we have.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. SZABO: I will provide a brief countdown for anyone that wants to sign up...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one else has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. So, with your permission, I'm going to close public testimony for this section at the beginning of our meeting and receive written testimony.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

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

**ITEM 21(32): DISCUSSION ON BILL 184 (2024), AMENDING  
CHAPTER 3.36, MAUI COUNTY CODE, RELATING TO  
GRANTS (RULE 7(B))**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. All right. So, we're going to go to the first item, which is Bill 184. We have Susie Thieman here sitting with us as a resource, as well as we have Deputy Director Mataafa, Saumalu Mataafa--there he is--online. And this is a Rule 7(B). And as you know, at the...we already had first reading...passed first reading with the Chair of the Housing and Land Use Committee recommendation, passed first reading on December the 6th, and today is information only. So, I'm going to defer this and hopefully, if you want to, after receiving this information, we'll pass second and final. It'll--it's on the agenda for the December 23rd Council agenda. So, this time then, I want to ask

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

Deputy Director Mataafa to give your opening comments, and then we'll hear from Ms. Thieman.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Committee Chair Sugimura, Vice-Chair Kama, and Members of the BFED Committee. Again, my name is Saumalu Mataafa, and I'm Deputy Director of the Department of Housing. The Department is here today to respectfully request your support for Bill 184 and its passage on second and final reading. The goal of Bill 184 is to allow the Department to administer grants under Chapter 3.34 directly to individuals. So, this will help us expedite the financial assistance that we'll be giving out to homeowners under the 'Ohana Assistance Program, and it will continue to add more affordable units into our inventory. So, we are happy to be here today, the Department, and to answer any questions. I would respectfully request to also recognize Buddy Almeida, our County Housing Program Administrator, as a resource for today's meeting.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very, very much. Does Buddy Almeida also want to say a few words?

MR. MATAAFA: No, we'll defer to him for more technical questions, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Ms. Thieman from Lokahi Pacific, you want to say anything regarding this...I guess you have a contract, right, to administer this program?

MS. THIEMAN: What we had was a service contract. Thank you, Chair, by the way. What we had is a service contract to do the...everything except the awards to the individuals. The difference between the service contract and a grant was...was strictly covered in that, and it was discovered in...well, let me...let me start with the beginning. As everybody knows, that the applications were opened in the month of July, closed on July 31st. We did the judging, finished the judging on August 9th, and it wasn't until November 27th that the Housing Department found that they had incorrectly drafted the service contract, and I believe that's when this was uncovered by someone in the...in Corp. Counsel, that the County cannot give grants directly to individuals according to Chapter 3.36. It...it kind of stunned me because I know that the programs...other programs that are in the Homeowner's Programs under 3.34, the First-Time Homebuyer and the Individual Development Accounts have been in process for years, 15 to 20 years, and it was my understanding that those were all direct from the County to the individuals. We didn't understand why there had to be a change if those were operating correctly. I guess my biggest concern at this point is if Chapter 3.36 has changed, can there be something in the change that identifies what types of programs? Otherwise, it appears to me that perhaps any Department can start

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

giving grants directly to individuals without going through the nonprofits or the for-profits that I think was meant to give some credence or...or stability to the whole program of grants. Just...to me, it opens a can of worms, if I can use that expression, and maybe does something that we don't want to have happening on a long...in a long-term or that broad. Perhaps there's a way to amend it, but put a stipulation in there or something directing it to a certain program, like the Homebuyer's Program in 334...3.34. I just...I don't know. I...I like the fact that 3.36 talks about the profitable...profit organization, or a nonprofit, or an organization that has bylaws that talk about the same criteria or purpose as what the grant would be for. Just to change it to open it up to individuals really bothers me. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Anybody have...we got to do...we got to do testimony again, right? All right. Do we have any testifiers?

**. . .OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(32). . .**

MS. SZABO: Chair, there are no testifiers signed up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, last call for testifiers. I'm going to close public testimony, receive written testimony for this first item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

**. . .CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(32) . . .**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And now, Members, anybody have questions for any of the resource people? Member Kama, which was in your Committee; Chair Lee, which was your program; and then we'll just go to...go down the row. Go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, the last statement I heard from you, Ms. Thieman, was that it's troublesome to you that these grants will be made to individuals under this particular program. What is that that's troubling to you?

MS. THIEMAN: I'm sorry, I...I didn't quite hear that, but I think you were saying I was having a problem with --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: That it was troubling to you that grants under this program --

MS. THIEMAN: Right.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: -- would be given to the individual homeowner.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. THIEMAN: Yes. We --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, three minutes.

MS. THIEMAN: The intent of our pro...of our involvement was that we would do all the leg work, so to speak, and that the actual grant process would be done by the County, and that was...that was stipulated in everything from day one. We had had an issue a couple of years ago when we did the fencing grant for the farmers.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Oh, yeah.

MS. THIEMAN: We had a great program, worked out with the OED's Director on how we were going to administer that. As you recall, that was an emergency grant --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Um-hum.

MS. THIEMAN: -- to get the money out, get those fences built as quickly as possible. With a change of Director, that whole thing fell apart, and what was supposed to take a year ended up taking a little over two years to do. And that bothered me because it was an emergency, and farmer...some of the farmers had to wait that full length of time to get their fences up. I did not want to be involved in anything like that with this program because again, it's an emergency situation. We wanted this to move as quickly as possible, that's why we did our work, like I said, with the applications in a month. Two weeks later, the judges were finished with the judging. Everything was turned over to Housing. Matter of fact, on August 23rd, Housing told us that Corp. Counsel was working on the three documents--the agreements, the liens, and the date restrictions. We expected, you know, by September, the grants would be going out, and it didn't happen. I don't...don't have a problem with the County giving grants to individuals, but I think it should only be certain things where the individuals are directly impacted, like...like this. I...I think the Homebuyer's Program, and probably all three of them, would fit the criteria of amending this piece, but I don't think it's appropriate for every grant from every Department.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you, Susie. Well, first of all, you know, our focus is only with Housing --

MS. THIEMAN: Right.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- not the other Departments, and it's taken probably a year and a half to move this...this ordinance. Okay. So, you talk about August 23rd, you're talking about this year?

MS. THIEMAN: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, but it was passed the year before. So, this thing has been dragging --

MS. THIEMAN: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- and dragging. We have a crisis, and for some reason, something as...to me, simple as this, is fumbling and stumbling along. And so, you know, I...I think it's important that whomever is going to implement this program work out the details. Because it's...it's really not the Council's kuleana, yeah, to get involved in the finer details. And so, I'm hoping that the Department looks at what is going to work, and the adjustments can be made later if there are easier ways to do...accomplish the objectives. And nothing is set in stone, so I don't know why this thing can't move forward. The...the thing about giving grants to people directly--it's...it's really not grants, it's...it's really giving them reimbursements, you...you know, reimbursements for if...if that's the way it's...it's happening. It's like if I'm an appli...grantee, and I pay a contractor \$50,000 to build a portion of the ADU, that money would go to that...the contractor, yeah?

MS. THIEMAN: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, there is, I'm sure, a process where you have to prove that there is an expense for...a bona fide expense for \$50,000. That's not rocket science, you know? So, I don't know if some--things...things have to move, and this is the legislative body. We're not supposed to be getting...delving in...into the details because sometimes we...we might make it worse. No, really. Because it's not...we're not going to be involved on a regular basis. We're not in the field. So, all I can say is that this Council is desperately waiting for this to move, and...and we thank you for all of your...you know, all the work you've done so far to...to make it happen. It...it's sad, and it's unacceptable that it hasn't moved to where it should be today.

MS. THIEMAN: I agree.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And there are many--hundreds of people could have been moving into their homes already.

MS. THIEMAN: Yes.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And...and then, not only that...oh, yeah, I did have a question. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Is the average...is the average request \$100,000, or what is it?

MS. THIEMAN: Yeah. The...for the most part. There were a few people who came in with less because they had a contract proposal from like Honsador, or somebody like that, who said, here's the finished price, and it was like \$85,000, so that's what they asked for. But for the most part, because they were doing kind of--not really piecemeal, but they had a contractor who would have subcontracts, they had to leave it open and ask for the max of 100,000. If they spent less, that's what they would get paid.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin is excused from this meeting. Next, Gabe Johnson. Member Johnson, do you have a question?...followed by Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yes, thank...thank you, Chair. Who's our Corporation Counsel today?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Kristina Toshikiyo.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Ms. Toshikiyo, are you...are you here? Can --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I have some questions for you.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Sure. I'm here, Member Johnson. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, thank you, Ms. Toshikiyo. The...the grants versus contract issue, can you elaborate on that? Because we give microgrants in the Department of Ag to individual farmers, I--why is this different? And did we have to go...is that...I want to know...first off, I want to know why this is so slow to actually enact. And then secondly, can...if you can get into the grants and contract...contract debate or issue?

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Just in...in general on the grants versus contracts? . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, why did...why is it that--for here, for this position...this situation, this pot of money is --

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Yes.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- being languished after a whole town burned down, and we can't get this money to folks who are willing to build an ADU in a year-and-a-half, so...and it's because of our grants-versus-contract concern? Is--can you elaborate on that, Ms. Toshikiyo?

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Yes. It's part of the requirements under the Hawai'i Procurement Code. When we enter into contracts, the contracts are basically payment for good services and construction, and grants are exempted from that. So, where we struggled with is, how do we pay through a contract disbursement of grants? Because typically, it's a reimbursement for cost for goods and services that the contractor has provided. So, I mean, it's...it's pretty highly technical on that end. I think the majority --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Let me jump in here.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Oh, sorry. I just...just wanted to say --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, just for that--go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead. All right.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: I just wanted to say really quickly that historically, the grants that are paid to individuals have been through another grantee. So, for instance, Lokahi Pacific and some of the programs they described, we would grant the funding to Lokahi, and Lokahi would then disburse in individual grants. So, that's historically --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: -- how these programs worked.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, Director Saumalu, why...why did it take a year-and-a-half for the Department to do something like what Ms. Toshikiyo is describing? What...why is it...why is it so slow?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Councilmember Johnson, for that question. Ultimately, you know, for us to go back and kind of add a little bit more context, you know, the funding was initially recognized as a contract. And then throughout the process, we discovered around summertime that that contract needed to be turned into a grant. And so, we went through the process of making that grant to Lokahi Pacific, and going through that amendment process to switch over the funding source from a contract to a grant, and the vendor chose to . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . end that contract at the end of November. So, we're at the process where we're trying to get the funding back into the Department. We believe that's the most expeditious way, at this point in time, to get the funding out to the homeowners is for us to take the funding back and move it out to homeowners.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

It's not our preferred method. We would prefer to be able to execute a grant agreement with a vendor. But for us at this point, and because we have so many pending applications, we'd like to bring the funding back into the Department to make sure that we can get that out as expeditiously as possible.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: You know, the guy...I know my time's up, but we had someone, Claude (*phonetic*). He called me, he spent...he's...he's running out of money. He's built...place is half-built, and it's because--going off the discussion he had with the Department and everybody on this program, that he was going to be able to get the funds. Now, he's got a half-built unit, then--do that for nobody. But my time's up, and I'll--we'll...second round, we'll discuss more of that, Deputy Director. Thank you, Chair.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Johnson. Next, we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez, then Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. I'll dovetail off of Member Johnson's set of questions. So, this program is now different because--from the Farmers' Market Grant because it's now going to be issued directly from the Department instead of the Department to a fiscal sponsor to...as a grant manager to the recipients. And just to clarify, that this is the route we're going now because there was a mistake made when issuing or allocating the funding via agreement to Lokahi Pacific, it was accidentally made as a contract instead of a grant?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is that a question for the Department?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, yeah. Deputy.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: He's going to speak.

MR. MATAAFA: That's correct, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification. Okay. And then I...I do understand that when we had initially approved the funding into the budget, that it took some time to develop policy procedures, and then...and then the...the...the contract itself. So, I...I know...I remember that we did put funding before policies were in place to issue the funds, so, I...you know, I understand that part of it. Okay. So, the bill that's before us now is regarding 3.36.150. And just to clarify, this just carved out an exception for 3.34, which is the Homeowner Programs Revolving Fund. So, grants that is only coming from

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

that. Because I...I...I heard Ms. Thieman's concern--aloha, Ms. Thieman--was regarding giving an exception to all grants, but it...but this bill doesn't do that. This bill only gives that exception to 3.34. All other grants would have to follow 3.36; is that correct?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, for the question. Yes, that is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then the purpose for this...for this is because it's going to be grants coming directly from the Department instead of a fiscal sponsor?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you for the question again. That is also correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then I guess the...the piece that I'm...I'm not fully understanding is...is why? And I don't know if it would be for you, Deputy Director, or if it would be for Deputy Corp. Counsel.

MR. MATAAFA: I'll take a first stab at it, and then I'll pass it over to Ms. Toshikiyo after. So, for us, our goal is to increase our housing...our affordable housing inventory. And...and looking at all the different . . .(*timer sounds*). . . possibilities at this point in time, the most efficient way to get money out to these homeowners is for us to bring the funding back into the Department so that we can hopefully get this bill passed, Bill 184 passed, hopefully at the next Council meeting, and then be able to move forward and get this funding out. It's...it has been a lag --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I...I understand the goal, Deputy Director. Sorry. I'm sorry for cutting you off. I understand the goal, and I support that intention. My question is, why this mechanism? So, like why is this exception to 3.36 required? Why...why do you need that? I don't understand that part of it. And so, maybe Deputy Corp. Counsel can...can explain.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Yes. Yes, Chair. And yes, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. If I...if I can take just a moment to kind of dive into that. When we reviewed Chapter 3.36, there was a couple of places that would have been inconsistent with granting to individual homeowners. So, for instance, an applicant would have to be, as Ms. Thieman mentioned, either nonprofit or a for-profit, so then, of course, individual didn't fit there, as well as, you know, some of the reporting and application requirements would not necessarily fit with an individual homeowner applying for grants. But then we ran into Chapter 3.36.150 that basically has that catch-all language that says all County grants, and my reading of that would include the individual homeowner grants under 3.34 would all be subject to the requirements of Chapter 3.36. So, those were several of the issues. And rather than just, you know, basically rewrite 3.36 to create a separate category for individual homeowners when this body has already put in a lot of the work for

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

3.34 for the 'Ohana Assistance Program, all of those types of requirements, you know, I just thought that it might be easier to just exempt those types of grants. Because as far as I can tell, these are the...the few grants that we--out of all--everything the County grants and all those different contracts or grants, it...it's...it's a relatively small number in comparison.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Deputy Corp. Counsel Toshikiyo. That all makes sense to me now. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Yeah. So, I let that question proceed because I think that's the crux of this whole discussion. Thanks for that clarification, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. And that was over three minutes, but understanding why. Member Cook, then Member U'u-Hodgins, then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My question --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And it was a question that everyone had.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My question is for Susie. If...how many applications did you receive, approximately?

MS. THIEMAN: The total number of applications was 114. Of those, 53 were complete applications. The number of applications with building permits, which was number one, was 18; the number of applications with applications for building permits was 35; and the number of incomplete apps was 61.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And could you briefly describe the scope of work that your contract conveys? Like, people would make the applications to Lokahi. You...did you generate the forms, or was that something that the...that was part of--if you could brief...I know it's a big deal, but if you could kind of give...give me a thumbnail sketch of what your scope of work was and when you passed the baton --

MS. THIEMAN: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- to the County.

MS. THIEMAN: Sure. We created the application, put it on our website, also gave it to the Housing Department to put on their website. As people called with questions, I took all of the calls personally. We were...were under the understanding that there were a lot of people who had permits for building their ADUs, but during the time that it took to get the permits, the cost of doing that had risen to the point where they could no longer build them. And so, this was...as...as Chair said, this was, let's get it done now, let's get this money out there. And so, I took each call personally, as--we're...we're talking about like 400 phone calls during

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

the month of July. And it's not that I didn't trust anybody else to answer the questions, but you know how people can get where they say, oh, but somebody in your office told me this. And so, we made it a very close situation so that...and I made exact notes on what was said and what was discussed in all those meetings. As Chair knows, we've sat down one day and went through it, and so the whole point was that by the time it closed, the people who had those permits we thought would have turned them in. Now, if we end up...ended up with only 114 applications, obviously, those hundreds of people either didn't get the word that it was open, or decided not to, or had already gone ahead and built. One of the main criteria was that you could not have started on the project. It had to be shovel-ready, but not in process. The...so, we did the judging, the...I had the team that we...that judged was my construction team from when we did do housing projects, and they came in and went through them all and judged them. Did a terrific job. We turned the reports in to the Housing Department, I think it was like August 16th or so . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . and...and we expected things to move because we had already heard from them that they were working on these three documents, which is what was needed. The reason we did the contract for service instead of the...getting a grant for it was exactly those three documents. We didn't feel that we were capable of...of handling the legal side of things, and we certainly weren't going to be the ones chasing down if people broke the contracts, et cetera, when the County has all the...the lawyers they need to...to accomplish that.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank...thank you.

MS. THIEMAN: So, when that was...when that was done, we thought it was in the hands of Housing to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for a very comprehensive clarification of your thorough work. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. THIEMAN: Thank you, Tom.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for everybody coming here and helping us figure this out. Member Rawlins-Fernandez and Member Johnson asked my what and why questions, so I'll ask the how question. How long is this going to take after this is passed for people to get money in their pockets so they can start building what they need to build?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Department?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Member U'u-Hodgins, for the question. So, there's actually two pieces here. The first one is getting Bill 184 passed, and then there's a separate budget amendment that I believe will be transmitted for the Council to hear next week on December 23rd, which recognizes in the FY '25 budget the funding that's required for this program to go forward and be operated out of the Department. So, it takes those two things legislatively from the Council to move this forward. And then from the Department's standpoint, we are currently working on templated grant agreements, which will be ready around January, mid-January, and then there's also some lien documents that we will also be submitting. And so, once we're able to get both the Bill 184 passed, and then also the budget amendment passed, we will have, at that point, the documents ready to send letters out to all the applicants who have applied and were ranked and scored by Lokahi Pacific so that we can start executing those grant agreements and getting the funding out to them. So, we anticipate maybe around February getting the funding out if all goes well and legislatively...legislatively we're able to get Bill 184 passed and the budget amendment through the Council.

COUNCILMEMBER U-U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. That's pretty much all I have. Please let us know if you need anything. This is such a good program, and we really need people to build what they need to build so they can continue to live here. Thank you, everyone.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Good series of questions. Next, Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you. Mahalo. Some of my questions have been asked already, but just for Ms. Thie...Thielman [sic]. So, are you okay with passing Bill 184, just for clarification, or you don't see you guys being able to administer the funds even if we passed Bill 184?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Thieman? Yeah, I think so. You were asking for Ms. Thieman, right, Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. THIEMAN: Right, Councilmember. Like I said in...in my opening comments, I'm concerned that it could be picked up and used by other Departments unless there's some sort of a stipulation that this applies--and I think somebody said it does--this applies strictly to the homebuyers...or the Homeowner Programs in 3.34.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. All right.

MS. THIEMAN: As long as that's in there, I'm okay.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. THIEMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Sinenci. So, Members, in Chair's agenda on the 23rd--and there is the letter that we...that talks about it, which is item number 3 on Granicus, and the purpose of the proposed bill is to amend Fiscal Year 2025 budget amendment for the special revolving funds for Fiscal Year '25, Homeowners Program Revolving Fund, to increase the estimated balance as of 6/3/24 by \$2,718,266, and add conditional language authorizing the use of funds for 'Ohana Assistance Program in the amount of 2,718,260--same amount, \$66. So, that's in the Council agenda. So, Members, anybody have any more questions for this? Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: For Deputy Director Mataafa, are you guys shorthanded in Housing...shorthanded with regard to implementing this program? I'll tell...I'll...I'll...I'll tell you why. I got a call saying that people were trying to get more information on the 'Ohana Assistance Program, and were told that whomever is in charge was on vacation, and she was on vacation for two weeks. So, only one person answers the phone on this project, or do you share, you know, responsibilities? That's why...I'm asking, are you shorthanded? That...is that why the public doesn't get a response, or is it because you just have a dedicated person in charge?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you for that question, Council Chair Lee. And yes, I'll say overall, Department is shorthanded. We are pending a couple of new expansion positions that will be coming to you guys shortly, and then we do have some positions that we're...that are posted and we're hoping to fill by the beginning of the next year. And if we were able to fill those positions, it will take a heavy burden off of the staff that are currently managing this program. So, yes, we do have one person dedicated to this, and she is one of our star specialists who has helped, you know, set up the guidelines for the program, understands, you know, the program requirements, and actually set aside a plan of how to implement it from the Department moving forward. So, getting her extra help. We'll be keeping close eyes on the program, both Director Mitchell and myself, and then County Housing Administrator Almeida, who's also on the call, to make sure that this is our priority and we do want to make sure that this gets funding. But yes, we are shorthanded overall and extra...extra help would be appreciated, but we do have, right around the corner, the ability to fill some of our vacant positions.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Member Paltin...Member Paltin is in the meeting.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Member Paltin is in the meeting.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I don't see her. There she is. Okay. Member Paltin, welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I'm at Maui Memorial with George in a private room. But my question was, you know, a lot of the survivors were really disappointed that they wouldn't be able to take advantage of this to rebuild their houses. They were told this is only for new housing and not rebuilding housing. And I just was wondering because, you know, realistically, we're looking for housing to house people, and, you know, over 35 percent of owner-occupied folks are at risk of foreclosure. The foreclosure moratorium isn't extending beyond January emergency proclamation. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . So, I was wondering if that was something we could fix with this bill as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Deputy Director, is that a question for you?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Anyone who can answer it.

MR. MATAAFA: Is there a specific amendment you would make to the bill, Councilmember Paltin?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't think so. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I would like to amend it to say that, you know, if people are rebuilding an 'ohana unit for them or their family to live in post-fire, that they could also be eligible. You know, people have called me up, like, really upset that, you know, you're trying to make people who have homes that they live in more wealthy by being able to rent things out, and they're just struggling. You know, they didn't have insurance, they don't have enough insurance, they don't have a place to live, they've been moving, moving, moving, moving over the past 15 months. Why aren't we offering them the same kind of assistance?

MR. MATAAFA: Chair, if I may?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you for that, Councilmember Paltin. So, this legislation specifically targets ADU, but doesn't prevent us from working on other solutions to add financial assistance for those wildfire survivors. So, I will say that maybe this program --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, but it's wildfire survivors that want to build ADUs.

MR. MATAAFA: Okay. So, if it's for wildfire survivors that want to build ADUs, the program was set up to be comprehensive for all Maui County residents, regardless if you lived in West Maui, Upcountry, or South Maui. What comes down to is how we score the application. So, if you have permit application...if you have your permits in hand --

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

MR. MATAAFA: -- you would score higher than somebody who doesn't have their permit. So, that might be one of the things that we could look at within the program to see how we maneuver the funding and financial piece. But the way that the...the scoring and ranking works is it is available for--it's more readily available for those who have the permits in hand and are able to go with their rebuild. So, I'm not sure --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So...so, my --

MR. MATAAFA: -- if there's a disconnect between wildfire survivors . . .*(inaudible)*. . . permits --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. My constituents were directly told that they can't use this to rebuild their ADUs. They were told--I mean, they can go through the expedited permit process. They were counting the 100 grand before it even came. They ended up having to foreclose their property, you know, it's...they...they listened to all the propaganda the County put out, and...and they made some financial moves based on it, and...and now they lost out, you know?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, Member Paltin, I'll ask --

MR. MATAAFA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Ms. Thieman to answer. Or are you...or are you done, Deputy Director? Ms. Thieman?

MR. MATAAFA: No, I could --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, go ahead.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. MATAAFA: No, I can let Ms. Thieman answer it. Thank you. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. You spoke to every single phone . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . applicant and took all the phone calls. So, you have something to add to this? She raised her hand.

MS. THIEMAN: And...thank you, Chair. I just wanted to add that we--in going through the process and...and the...all the phone calls that we got, yes, we did...Councilmember Paltin, we did get a lot of calls from Lāhainā.

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

MS. THIEMAN: When there was somebody who had...let me back up a step. The process for this particular grant was started--I'm trying to get my timeline straight here. Again, it was started because of all these people who had permits already in-hand. So, one of the criteria for the judging was that a completed application with a permit got priority. If they had put in an application for a permit and had a completed application, they were like in the second tier of...of the awardee list. Questions that we got were from people who had not even begun the process, were still involved in the...the FEMA and...and all the different people who were working with them, just trying to help them keep their lives together. And when they called and asked about it, the question that I --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, an expedited permit they said would take 7 to 14 days. You know, we can do expedited permits --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . we're going to give you --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- for the wildfire survivors. It could take --

MS. THIEMAN: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- 21 days, you know?

MS. THIEMAN: Right. Yes. I understand about 4LEAF. In my conversations with the folks, I told them that if they wanted to do an application, we would be looking at it from the standpoint of what are you building first, the 'ohana or your main house? And the questions for most...that came out for most of them was that they only had enough money to do the 'ohana. And so, we said, well, you know, you have to be living on the property--excuse me--to...to qualify for this grant, according to the rules. Now, if there's another round, certainly they would be welcome to jump in because the criteria may be different. But just for...just for your reference, out of the 16 people that qualified with permits, 5 of them are from Lāhainā. Now, I can't tell from the addresses if they were in the fire zone, but at least there were...there were 5 of them in that section. And we tried to

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

encourage them to, if they could, in the...put in an application. If they were going to be living in the...the ADU or the 'ohana unit while they rebuilt their house, we thought...we thought that that perhaps was a qualified way to go about it. And...but as soon as their house was finished, they needed to move back into the house so that the 'ohana unit could fit the criteria and the...the requirement under the affordability piece. And we knew that that was going to take time.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. THIEMAN: There was no way they were ready to do that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just to let you know, that's not the feedback that I've been getting. They've been telling me something different and, you know, calling in tears.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. THIEMAN: I can't...I can't hear.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, that's not the feedback that she received is what she said...Tamara Paltin said. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Member Johnson. Are you done, Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member...Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. So, I guess my question's for Susie. Has Lokahi been getting paid for this service over this year and a half, or...or when did you guys start getting paid for the service?

MS. THIEMAN: We got paid for the six weeks that we worked on the project.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Six weeks?

MS. THIEMAN: Basically, right? The month of July when the --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. THIEMAN: -- applications were open, and half of the month of August when we calculated with the judges the results and turned everything over to the County.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, it's been sitting with the Department since August?

MS. THIEMAN: This has been with the County since August 16th, right?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah. So, Susie, you said you spoke with everybody by phone personally. Do you know the guy that I'm--I won't say his last name, but you know Claude?

MS. THIEMAN: Sounds familiar. Otherwise known as "Bud?"

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I just wanting...

MS. THIEMAN: Does he go by the nickname "Bud?"

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I don't know his nickname, but I...I just...I just want to make sure, is his--he okay? Because there's folks that said, you know, very clear, and I know you mentioned it, that you can't have already started working on your ADU and then expect reimbursement, you have to get kind of qualified and approved, and then you could start working on it. And maybe Deputy Director can speak to that. But what--I don't understand why that is. Can you--that--that's--why is that? Is it...is...is there a reason behind it? But I...I just want to know if...if he's going to be okay, and then if you guys want to explain why you guys are doing it that way.

MS. THIEMAN: If it...if it's who I think it is, he just called me this last week again. And I...you know, I told him that we weren't involved anymore and that the criterias [sic] that we had to use was set forth by the Housing Department because they wanted --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. THIEMAN: -- to make sure that those who hadn't started, but had a permit, were the first in line.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Deputy Director, do you want to add more to that?

MS. THIEMAN: What?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Asking the Department.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Johnson. I don't have the list of scores in front of me right now, so I don't know where that gentleman ranks currently, but I can get back with staff and determine where that individual applicant ranks.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. And then you knew there was a problem as...as early as August; is that correct? Or earlier than that?

MR. MATAAFA: No. I was made aware that there was an issue with the contracts around August, correct.

MS. THIEMAN: If...if I may --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, it's December now.

MS. THIEMAN: Gabe?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Go ahead, Miss...yeah.

MS. THIEMAN: There...to . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . our knowledge, there wasn't a problem in August. Because the Housing Department had told us that they were working on the agreement, the lien, and the deed restrictions, which would be the next part in giving the award letters. Because the award letters would have to go out, people would have to agree to those stipulations before they could become part of the program. So, that was right on track as far as we were concerned.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Bell went off. Did you...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I'm done. I just...you know, I want us to act with some urgency, you know? And I get it, but sometimes our own systems are the ones that jam us up. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, before I get to Member Kama--if you do have another question--this is a question for the Department. Section 1 of Bill 184 states that the bill's purpose is to exempt those awarded a County homeowner grant from requirements related to qualifying standards for applications, reporting, and disbursement limitations. These requirements are in Section 3.36.040, 3.36.110, and 3.36.190 of the Maui County Code, respectively. However, actual amendments to this bill exempts grantees from 3.36 entirely. Is Bill 184 intended to create an exemption for only those three sections of Chapter 3...3.30...3.36, or from the entire chapter?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, for the question. So, the legislative intent behind 184 is to allow the Department to issue grants directly to individuals. I think Ms. Toshikiyo alluded to earlier that Chapter 3.36 only allows nonprofit or for-profit agencies to administer grants. So, our intent with this bill is to allow the Department to be able to give grants directly to homeowners. And I see Ms. Toshikiyo is also online. She can add in if I got anything wrong.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Ms. Toshikiyo.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Yes. Thank you, Chair. The intention is to exempt 3.34 grants from 3.36. Those are some of the categories of requirements under 3.36 that would apply to the individual homeowners if we did those kinds of exemptions, but yes, the intention is all of 3.36. And there are certain requirements probably in every section of 3.36 that are inconsistent, I think, with the purpose of the homeowner grant programs under 3.34.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We got it? All right. Thank you. I think Member Rawlins-Fernandez also talked about that. Anybody have any more questions? I'm going to defer this. Oh, I'm sorry. That's right. Member Kama.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, the question I have is for Deputy Director Mataafa. So, can people still apply, and who would they apply to if they are?

MR. MATAAFA: So, currently, we have the list of applicants from Lokahi Pacific that we will be moving forward with. So, the application period is closed for this funding round.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: And then how many...how many people are on that list?

MR. MATAAFA: I think --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 160.

MR. MATAAFA: What I had in front of me is--I think we have a couple tiers. We have about 20--well, 16 with approved permits in the first tier, there's about 26 that are pending permit approval in the second tier, and then we have another group of applicants that are below that tier as well that don't have either of those indicators.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, if the money runs out and you still have people on the list and another allocation was made for this program, do the people on that list just roll over into the new program for the new funding?

MR. MATAAFA: I think I would defer to Deputy Corporation Counsel Kristina Toshikiyo on that one. I'm not sure if we can open up the list again and then have them apply for the funding one more time. So, I'll defer that one to Deputy Corporation Counsel.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Toshikiyo, and then I see Tamara Paltin with her hand up, too. Ms. Toshikiyo?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Member Kama. I actually don't know the answer to that one. I would have to go back and look at the program in its entirety, and also would have to look at if there is additional funding, how the Department will choose to do the next round, whether or not they're going to be doing it in-house or whether it would be part of a grant to an organization to...to...basically to outsource it through a grant, and then work with them on those requirements so long as it fits within the requirements of 3.34. So, I'd have to look into that further, I guess, is the short answer.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. I'll wait for that answer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Kama. Then I see Member Paltin's hand up with questions.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. My question would be for Ms. Toshikiyo as well. Hey, Ms. Toshikiyo. Would this bill allow fire survivors to build an 'ohana...or an ADU and live in it while they rebuild their main house, and then rent it out for an affordable price?

MS. TOSHIKIYO: So, this bill is specifically to exempt the Homeowners Programs under 3.34 from the requirements in 3.36. I think that if you wanted to make that part of the law, a better route would be to amend 3.34, the Homeowners Programs, specifically the 'Ohana Assistance Program section.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And can that be done during budget?

MS. TOSHIKIYO: I think that would be up to this body on what bills you're going to be considering and acting upon --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Or sooner.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: -- during the budget session.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Are you done? Anybody else have questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. All right. Members, I'm going to defer this item, and it sounds like we all have many good clarifying questions, and we are going to be talking about this further, I can tell. Member Mataafa [sic]--I'm sorry, not Member--Deputy Director.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair. So, one of the things I just wanted to ask for your support is if we could pass the budget amendment, which would be heard on the Council on the floor at next meeting. So, that would be the request from the Department of Housing, is asking and seeking your support.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Members --

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- anybody have any questions before I defer this to the Department? Okay. So, this is...this is on Chair Lee's agenda, which is on December 23rd, as well as that budget amendment that I briefly spoke about, which is item number 3 in your...in Granicus today. So, I'm going to defer this. And thank you very much. I'm glad that this is moving forward, and to get these clarifications. And I think that person who has...is concerned that was calling Member Johnson probably called a lot of our offices, so thank you for hearing the cry basically and bringing this forward. So, I'm going to defer this item. And thank you very much, Department. Thank you very much, Susie Thieman. You're retiring and moving away, back home. February 28th is your last day here in Hawai'i; is that correct?

MS. THIEMAN: Close.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Close? Okay. So, thank you very much for all that you have done for our community. So, Members, I'm going to defer this item, and I'm going to move to the next. You want to take a short ten-minute recess? Yeah? Okay. So, 10:30...oh, 10:42, come back. . . .(gavel). . .

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TK and AL).**

**ACTION:**      **DEFER** pending further discussion.

RECESS:        10:32 a.m.

RECONVENE:    10:51 a.m.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

**ITEM 21(33): WILDFIRE RECOVERY GRANTS & REIMBURSEMENTS**  
(RULE 7(B))

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It is now 10:51. We are on the second item, and it is regarding wildfire recovery grants and reimbursements. This item is also under Rule 7(B) for discussion. And because it's wildfire recovery grants and reimbursement, that's why we asked for assistance from the...the experts that I mentioned in the beginning of the meeting. And as you know, there has been talk in the...in...in the news about the DR funds, so this prompted me to think it's time for us to start talking about it. It is something that I wanted to bring up earlier in the year when the Administration went to DC to talk about this, but it wasn't the right time. So, then we have here today Tetra Tech, Inc., as well as Stantec, and our Managing Director who oversees all of this. So, at this time--oh, and thank you, Helene Kau, also, for being here from the Office of Recovery. So, I--Director Nishita, if I could turn this over to you, and you can do your opening statements, and then introduce who else you would like to contribute at this time.

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmembers, for allowing us to be here today. I guess I got to look at the screen . . .*(laughing)*. . . most people are on the screen. But no, appreciate you folks taking the time for these important matters. Just quickly, I'll say that Patience and Helene are here also joining me from the Administration. And then we have Asad...Asad here from Tetra Tech, who will introduce a few team members on the call too, that we'll be getting to in a...in a short moment for the presentation. We do have some other resources in the audience as well from Tetra Tech and Stantec in case they're needed, but we do appreciate the time being allotted today. We do plan to highlight three main programs to talk about today--that's public assistance, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and then the CDBG-DR that...that Chair spoke about a little bit ago. I'll let Asad introduce the team members, and then, Chair, you can let us know if it'd be appropriate to go into the presentation itself. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. KHAN: Thank you very much. Aloha, everybody, Chair, Members, County management. We want to thank you for the opportunity allowing us to come and share our update with you. I'd also like to point out that Stantec is here also, and if there's any specific questions that come up in reference to drinking water, we'll defer to the...to the Stantec team. We last presented here in March, and we want to give you a quick update, but prior to that, I'd like to introduce our team that's on Teams right now. John Buri, he's based out of Houston; I've got Carrie Robinette, she's based out of Dallas; and Jorge Ramirez, he's based out of Puerto Rico. So, these are the experts that are on...on to support and respond to any questions that you have. I'll keep my comments brief. If...if you all allow, I'll kind of quarterback our team here, and kind of make sure that the questions that you

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

have later on are responded to. As Josiah had mentioned, you know, we're going to be talking about infrastructure, hazard mitigation, and the emergency management readiness. So, if I may, if I could start. Is there...I'm sorry, is our presentation available? Okay. So, for infrastructure, we came to the Council in March, and the commitment that we made at that time was that we would have processed \$21 million worth of data to our State and Federal partners. As of right now--I'll wait until we...we get that. Should I continue speaking or...yeah. Okay. So, what we had committed in March was that by first quarter 2025, we would have processed \$21 million worth of data to our State and Federal partners to start the reimbursement program. I do want to point out that at this point, December 2024, we have processed \$80.1 million, so we are ahead of our schedule. So far, the County has received \$1.75 million from HI-EMA for the reimbursement of the damages of the fire. In the pipeline right now, with the...with the...with HI-EMA, is \$19.85 million that the County is awaiting, receiving that from our State partners. And there's a category called Category Z, which is the cost of the consultants. So far, we're in the process of submitting half a million dollars for our fees. And lastly, we're also tracking the insurance funds that were received by the County, and this is because we want to make sure that there is no duplication of benefits for...for the...the multiple programs that are taking place. I do want to kind of mention a couple quick things, and I'll keep my comments very, very brief, but the reason we're ahead of where we had projected was because we had the management here at...at...at Maui has really bought into the...the...the program. And I'm not saying that because the management is sitting right next to me, I'm saying that because I've been doing this for 20 years, and the community and management really have to buy into the program to support us. I'll give you an example. You know, when we've asked Helene--who again, is sitting right next to me, and I'm not mentioning her because she's sitting next to me--is...is, you know, when we asked the, hey, would you please call the State representatives and/or HI-EMA to push some issues for us, she's been more than happy to do so. Josiah, under his leadership, has done the same thing. So, it's a very, very...it's...it's...it's a very big benefit to the...to our progress to have the management support the...the...the push that we're asking for. You know, this is what we do as full-time jobs, right? And this is not what you all do as full-time jobs. So, it's critical to have that trust and partnership with our clients. So, I...I want to thank and credit everybody here. So, I can't just sit here and take credit when the credit is to be shared. If we can go to the next slide. What we have projected for next year, will be the first quarter 2026, is that we would have processed \$140 million. Which means our goal is to, in the next 12 months...months or so, push another \$60 million into the FEMA process. And at the same time, concurrently, we're hoping that we will have about \$80 million that would be funded to the State. Now, it's a little bit of a concern that we have that we have to push the funds from the State to Maui, but--so, we're looking at an 8...\$80 million sort of area to...to...to bring in the funds. And our cost at that time for the consultants, which is, again, Category Z, is going to be...the reimbursement for...for Category Z will be \$7 million. I do

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

want to point out a couple quick things here. One of the things that we've heard when we first came here, that capacity was a major issue. Our State and Federal partners had always said, hey, capacity is of issue with Maui. I can tell you the...the way the...the progress is being made, the challenges that the County is enduring right now, capacity has become a minimal issue. It--I'm not saying it's not, but the amount of product that's being pushed forward to our State and Federal partners does not reflect the comments that I hear often, or we used to hear. So, I just want to point that out. If you go to the next slide, the two major projects that we're looking at right now is the wastewater system...wastewater and sewer system, and roads and drain lines, right? Just to give you an idea, this is the best-case scenario. So, when you look at it, and you add this process from the time there's a submission made, if everything is perfect, there aren't any problems, and, you know, everyone's doing what they've committed to--in that I mean the State and Federal partners--we would have this process done in 400 days just to move one project, these large projects. These projects are over \$5 million, and it's going to need a lot of work. That's the best-case scenario. In the 20 years that I've been working in this industry, I have never seen things move that fast. So, I want to be very, very clear with everybody here that this is going to be a very, very slow process, even though the County of Maui is really pushing, and they are truly an advocate for themselves. And I believe that, you know, we're...we're...we're going to push the State and FEMA, it's just going to take a lot of time. And I don't want to sit here and promise you things or...or, you know, say, hey, this process is going to go faster. It's not. It's a very, very slow process. And please understand, this is a reimbursement process. At this point, I'll introduce my colleague, Carrie. Carrie is going to be discussing hazard mitigation. Carrie? *(pause)* Carrie, you're muted.

MS. ROBINETTE: Good morning, everyone...or good afternoon. Can everyone hear me clearly?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ROBINETTE: Okay. So, I was asked to provide kind of an overview of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funds--and if we can skip ahead to slide 7 and 8--wanted to provide an overview of the...the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding that the County is kind of looking at utilizing. The HMGP program comes about after a major presidential disaster declaration, so as a result of the wildfires. This money is set aside to look at opportunities for the County to not just repair, but look at opportunities to kind of build back better, safer, stronger, as a way to kind of reduce damages and avoid damages not just from wildfires, but from other disasters as well. So, as...as a result of that, the State received \$357 million in Federal funding, and that is Statewide. So, in working with HI-EMA, we developed notices of intent across the County Departments, and worked with the County Departments to kind of develop proposals for projects, and we submitted those HI-EMA. HI-EMA allotted 218 million, or 61 percent of

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

the funding available Statewide, to Maui County. In order to kind of utilize that funding, we reviewed the projects, and we have basically worked with the County to prioritize seven projects for a total of \$291 million. And I want to stress that the \$291 million is the total project cost across all seven of these projects. FEMA is going to be contributing 75 percent of those funds, so 218 million, and the County is going to contribute 73 million in nonfederal funding. So, there is a path that the County is looking for so that that 73 million is covered under an alternate grant program, so we'll talk about that in just a moment. But we are utilizing that allotment that HI-EMA has worked with the County to identify. But to make sure that Maui County is kind of putting their best foot forward, the County is also undergoing the development of ten alternate projects, and those projects are going to be submitted to HI-EMA as back-up so that, let's just say other subapplicants across the State, or other prioritized projects do not ultimately get selected for funding, then the County has backup projects to submit forward in order to utilize as much of the funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program as possible. And one of the other things that we wanted to mention is that between Tetra Tech and Stantec, who's kind of working in tandem across HMGP, the funding for us to develop these applications on behalf of the County is completely reimbursable. So, this work is being done at no expense to the County. But as Asad mentioned, these programs are complex, so Tetra Tech is happy to be supporting Helene and the Office of Recovery and Director Nishita through developing these applications. If we can go to the next slide, please? *(pause)* So, I wanted to give kind of an overview of the different project types that the County is looking at. We're looking at flood risk reduction, so ways that we can reduce the impact of flood damage, whether that's through passive flooding, storm surge, the various different types of flooding that Maui County is prone to, we're looking at flood risk reduction for infrastructure. Looking at shoreline buyouts of properties in Lāhainā, so concentrating initially on Front Street. So, we're looking at shoreline buyouts for property owners, again, on Front Street in Lāhainā. Wildfire and drought mitigation. So, we're looking at doing some work on some water wells and other infrastructure up in the Lāhainā area to basically reduce drought and wildfire risk, and...and provide additional capability for the County to operate their fire suppression process. And then retrofitting and floodproofing water and wastewater infrastructure and pump stations. So, looking at basically further protecting these...this...this infrastructure from damage due to future disasters. And if we can go to the next slide, please. So, to kind of give a picture of the timeline for the HMGP program, as with any FEMA program, as Asad mentioned a few minutes ago, HMGP takes a while. It...it takes a few minutes. The disaster occurred in August of 2023, and the County is in the process of developing these applications with a deadline of submitting them to HI-EMA on February 6th of 2025. So, it's coming up very quickly. We do expect any communication back from FEMA and HI-EMA to start rolling in about summer of 2025, so around June, July time frame, with any questions or clarifications or any additional documentation that they may need on these applications. Obviously, we're hoping to avoid that, so we're working

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

very diligently with all of the...the County Departments to make sure that we minimize that as best we can. But once we get through that process, we'll continue to work with Maui County on those application development activities, and then transition into more of grant management once the initial phases of these projects are approved, and we continue to kind of develop out these projects, and work with the various County Departments to implement these projects. And with that, I will turn it over to John Buri to discuss emergency management readiness. Thank you, everyone. Mahalo nui loa.

MR. BURI: Thank you so much, Asad. Thank you so much, Carrie. Another element of our scope for Maui County is to strengthen and help support the Emergency Management Agency, or MEMA. That began in 2024 with a program assessment and understanding of MEMA's strategic growth goals. We had several conversations with Managing Director Nishita to really--and aim is to...to really look at how the...the organization, the Emergency Management Organization, can be more resilient. So, that included senior staff training for emergency preparedness, and then supporting the congressional field hearing with some additional information as well. In the future years, 2025, it's going to be focused on updating those plans, developing workshops to test and train on those plans, and then again, focusing on how to strengthen those response capabilities. You can see the list of key plans that MEMA has identified there that we would be supporting, including a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, or CEMP; a Continuity of Operations Plan, or COOP plan; Feeding and Mass Care and Sheltering Plan; and finally, Hazard Mitigation Plan. If you could move to the next slide, please. I want to dive into the Hazard Mitigation Plan, as you've heard Carrie talk about the success that Maui County has had with the 404 Hazard Mitigation Plan, and this could not...this will not only help that, but strengthen future opportunities as well, not only for 404 or HMGP funds, but to also prepare and position Maui County for other grant programs that may be available in the mitigation space, including Flood Mitigation Assistance; Building Resilient Infrastructure in Cities, or BRIC; and then even the CDBG Disaster Recovery funds, which I'll talk about that in a moment. But again, when we approach this, and working with the Recovery Office Managing Director, we are always looking for those other opportunities for funding that may be available. So, if you could please move finally to our last component of today's presentation--it's going to be focused on CDBG-DR. And we understand that that is...have a lot of questions, an important and timely topic. So, I have a colleague, Jorge Ramirez, that is available that--he and I are both going to be speaking on this, as we have been supporting the County and Patience in Mayor's Office on this. So, the four keys to success, four areas that we have focused on have included demonstrated capacity, or again, the idea of the ability for Maui County to manage a program like this; being able to hit the ground running and program readiness, since it has been 15 months after the disaster; project management and recovery support function coordination, an ongoing effort there in the County; and then data-driven program design. And Jorge...Jorge has been Director of a very large

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

public CDBG-DR organization. And Jorge, would you like to...to add...to share any other information regarding this effort? *(pause)* Jorge, we cannot hear you. So, if...maybe we could move on to the next slide while he's --

MR. RAMIREZ: No, I'm sorry. I'm here, John.

MR. BURI: Okay.

MR. RAMIREZ: I apologize. I didn't unmute. I'm sorry. Good morning, everybody. Capacity is important to HUD. It's the ability to demonstrate that the County can manage, implement, and oversee projects without noncompliance. And I believe that we've been able to demonstrate that for the County, so that's not a question, the ability to be able to manage these funds. With respect to program readiness, I think the work that we've been doing with Patience and the RSFs has gotten us to the point that we're ready for any type of allocation and any type of program, which included the...the management and coordination of the RSFs. We've had several meetings with them to get this program where it needs to be as soon as the allocation is announced. And as John mentioned, this is data-driven in the sense that we've worked--and with unmet needs and all the information available to get the program to this point. John?

MR. BURI: Thank you. Thank you. Next slide, please. We're going to talk about some key highlights, and I broke...we've broken this down into external and outreach-focused activities, as well as internal planning. So, one of the big hallmarks of this past year was the Mayor and Staff's trip to Washington, D.C. to advocate for this long-term recovery funding. That was meeting with a variety of different individuals from both the Administration at the Executive Branch and both sides of Congress, who really are the decision makers when it comes to this. In addition, there were some meetings scheduled with the Housing and Urban Development leadership for the CDBG-DR company, and again, it was very focused on capacity, the unmet needs of the community, and projects that are really going to make an impact. In addition, there's been a lot of coordination with internal and external stakeholders and communication support with one of our partners'...subcontracting partner, Anthology FINN...FINN...yes, Anthology FINN Partners. Jorge, would you please talk about the internal planning that went on?

MR. RAMIREZ: Yes. So, the main goal for CDBG-DR is to plan structure and budget for the upcoming allocation. That has to be done with a clear understanding of timing and amounts. What we did to do that is determined the unmet need. CDBG funds are the funding of last resort, so they're designed to be taken all the way to the end, and then whatever is left over at that point, that is the allocation. So, that was determined. And based on that amount, we coordinated with stakeholders to figure out how to structure a program to meet that unmet need depending on the allocation, which at this point, we still don't know. Based on

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

those programs, then an action plan is written. This is a plan that's required by HUD that is sort of like the road map, and describes how the community, the County, is going to manage this program. The program design, it has everything from demographics to the actual design of the program, and it'll lead the SOPs. That program has been taken as far as it can at this point. We've also assisted with consulting, including writing white papers and any type of RSF requests to help guide the County. John?

MR. BURI: Thank you, Jorge. So, finally, let's talk about the steps in the process. And this is an appropriation that's made by Congress. CDBG Disaster Recovery is part of a disaster supplemental that accompanies an appropriations bill. So, what is being talked about is a continued resolution, or continued appropriation, and that bill text, based on comments made by Speaker Johnson, is scheduled to be released tonight, on December 17th...and that would be on the East Coast time. The continuing resolution, if you will, is a larger funding of the Federal Government, but within it, it will likely include a disaster supplemental that will fund activities under the agencies like FEMA, Department of Agriculture, the Department of Transportation, EPA, and of course, Housing and Urban Development. Speaker Johnson, in his comments this morning, stated that...that the disaster supplemental was close to the President's ask, which was totaling approximately \$100 billion for disaster recovery funding. As a part of this funding, they...we would anticipate, again, based on his comments today, that it's between 10 and \$15 billion in HUD funds that would cover and fund disasters that occurred in 2023 and 2024. We would anticipate, based on the President's ask, was \$12 billion. Now, again, not to get too far into the details, we know that this has been delayed, but our goal is to be able to review the bill text, and then provide some analysis and support to the County once that is released. Once it is appropriated by Congress, it then moves to the HUD at the agency level, where they will take the...generally speaking, they take the amount that has been appropriated, and then announces an allocation to the various grantees. That will be published in the Federal Register, and the funds will be awarded. Then, at that point, a grantee would be able to submit the action plan based on the unmet...met needs, provide all the compliance and certifications to the Housing and Urban Development, and then administer the program. I'm going to ask next to have Jorge talk a little bit about what goes into the program, and what is a CDBG-Disaster-Recovery-funded program, and what it can fund and what it looks like. Jorge?

MR. RAMIREZ: Okay. So, these are--what do you say--the basics of CDBG. CDBG is somewhat complicated, but these are the most important parts. CDBG, as I mentioned before, addresses unmet recovery needs. It is the funding of last resort, which means you have to expend all the monies avai...readily available, such as even PA and HMGP, whatever monies...what...whatever monies you have, and whatever unmet need you have, this is only what it can fund. Second, it has...it has to meet a national objective. LMI is low- to moderate-income

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

people, so it is intended to meet or assist people that are LMI. It can also assist in urgent need and/or slum and blight, but at this point, it's probably mostly going to be LMI. And that does have to be prioritized in the programs that you have with respect to housing. So, for example, if you can or choose to spend on urgent need, first you have to meet your LMI requirements. Lastly, you have to avoid duplication of benefits. For example, if you have a homeowner that received insurance proceeds, let's say \$10,000, you cannot then fully repair their home, and they get to keep those \$10,000 extra, and you have to keep an eye on those things. Those are the very, very basics of CDBG-DR. What kind of programs can you have in CDBG-DR? As I mentioned, you can have housing programs. This includes affordable housing, rebuilding, repairing homes, et cetera. Infrastructure monies, anything with respect to infrastructure. Water, wastewater is the biggest problem in Maui, so it can fund certain projects so long as long as there is a tie to the disaster. It could do economic development, helping businesses that were affected by the disaster, and helping with...with Maui in any way related to businesses, but again, should be tied to the disaster, and there are certain requirements to these programs. Public services, as well as mitigation. Mitigation is a side bucket of funds that you get, and they don't necessarily need to be--so, you can spend these monies, for example, to improve housing. It doesn't need to be necessarily a house that was directly affected by the hurri...by the hurricane--or the wildfire, sorry. So, mitigation are like monies that--you can spend a little bit more on improving stock or anything that--like HMGP or infrastructure. And lastly, it is money that can be used for FEMA PA and the HMGP. FEMA PA and HMGP have a nonfederal match. Ironically, although all these monies are Federal funds, they are considered by Code as to be nonfederal. So, these are the monies that can be used for that...that gap that you have on PA and HMGP. John?

MR. BURI: Thank you so much, Jorge. That concludes our prepared remarks. So, Asad, I'll turn it back to you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mr. Nishita, do you have more to add?

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. I mean, that...that would essentially conclude just our presentation piece.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay.

MR. NISHITA: And then we'll be happy to take any questions at the appropriate time. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. So, sorry, Ms. Kahula, did you want to say a few words too, from CDBG? Or this covers it? I didn't introduce you.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. KAHULA: Mahalo, Chair. I think at this time the presentation's done, and we can open up to question and answers if..

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. KAHULA: Or questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. So, at this time, we'll take public testimony. Anybody signed up for this section?

**...OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(33)...**

MS. SZABO: Chair, we do not have anybody signed up to testify. If there is anybody who would like to testify, please raise your hand in Teams, or come down to the podium.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Last call.

MS. SZABO: Last call for testimony...three, two, one. Chair, there is no one to testify.

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

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

**...CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(33)...**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. So, I'm going to open it up for three minutes of questions from the Members, and I'm...I'm going to start off with Member Cook in the Chambers.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My question for whoever's...it's appropriate for. The flood risk and storm surge funding, is that geographical...geographically limited to West Maui?

MR. KHAN: John, if you don't mind, I'll defer that to you.

MR. BURI: Sure. These are...the...the FEMA 404 funds are not tied to just the disaster area. So, Carrie, I know you've been working with this very closely with Helene and the team. Would you like to speak specifically to that?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ROBINETTE: Certainly. So, the 404 funds are not tied specifically to West Maui. They can be used Statewide, depending on what the County priority and State priorities are.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So --

MR. NISHITA: Chair? Oh, sorry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, go ahead.

MR. NISHITA: If I just may add, the State really has identified for us their main priority to be critical infrastructure and the protection, preservation, and/or establishment of critical infrastructure. And so, with that in mind, you know, we had...we worked with the State to prioritize projects for hazard mitigation that could meet what the State was ultimately looking to prioritize in the allocation of hazard mitigation funds.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, my question is, like in my district of South Maui, flooding has been a perennial issue that people are well aware of, South....South Kihei Road that--in sections of it that are really close to the ocean. It's been...I think people are in agreement that basically, the only way we're going to flood...mitigate flooding in South Maui is to have, from mauka to makai, retention basins to mitigate the amount of...quantity of water coming down, as well as the...capturing the sediment that is polluting the ocean and causing problems. And then as far as like storm surge, the possibility of--basically, we can't stop sea level rise, but there is ways to mitigate storm surge, what reefs do naturally, which would...could be manmade. So, that's...I'm looking at. We...we recognize that South Maui has...and has experienced and continues to experience damage to the infrastructure, and threatening to have to relocate the road and the sewers, et cetera. So, I was just wondering if any of this is being planned for. Thank you.

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. I--and thanks for the question, Councilmember Cook. I would just note that, you know, the...the County's, I think, original request . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . was maybe close to about a billion dollars that we put in. The State, you know, identified certain priority areas and, you know, did kind...some initial run-throughs of...of projects. There are time limitations for what the funds have to be used by. And I'm sure, as you are well aware--maybe more than anybody else in the Council--the time it takes to actually do large infrastructure projects. So, somebody can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe it's by like 2029 or so that we have to utilize the funding, which for a large infrastructure project, you know, meeting a lot of the obligations for like environmental reviews, and permitting, and supply chains, and contracting, and...and...and what have you, the timeline is going to be pretty short here, considering all of those factors...especially given that I...I don't believe we get final approval--maybe it's projected through FEMA to do their reviews by like, I think,

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

August of next year. So, you know, there's some factors that we have to take into account with that. I hate to...when people always bring up shovel-ready, but essentially, it--we do need to identify projects that are kind of, you know, in the works to be able to meet the...the time frames for some of those large infrastructure pieces. And then we are working on the Hazard Mitigation Plan update, which will factor into a lot of what you're describing in terms of the...the impacts that South Maui is seeing, and other areas across the County, and...and really, State, for that matter.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Just...in closing.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Basically, what I just described is probably 12 to 14 months of actual construction time. So, I recognize everything you said is accurate, and I'll just focus, again, on permitting and reviewing is the time that it takes, and it isn't the construction that it takes. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next, I'm going to have Member U'u-Hodgins, followed by Member Sinenci. Member Paltin popped back into the meeting...I think...oh, yeah, there...there she is. And then Gabe Johnson, and then Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Member U'u-Hodgins, you have questions?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I do. Thank you, Chair. I think this might be for Managing Director Josiah, or whoever can answer it, but I think we've talked about this before. Can you please remind us of the...specifically, the seven prioritized projects and the ten alternate projects that the County has listed?

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. I don't know--Carrie, do you have the list in front of you? I...I don't have the...the HMGP list in...in front of me right now, but I...I would just note we're still, you know, working with HI-EMA on the prioritizations and the actual project applications and submittals. But while, you know, Carrie is maybe pulling that up, as I said, you know, the State did identify critical infrastructure as being the primary priority for the hazard mitigation funds, and then, you know, looking at ways in which the County can leverage the different Federal funding sources that are out there, including hazard mitigation, the PA assistance that we're receiving, CDBG-DR funds, and other things that we won't get into today, which could include, you know, Federal funding through the Infrastructure Bill, the IIJA, IRA, and...and other sources of that. Carrie, would you mind addressing Councilmember's question?

MS. ROBINETTE: Sure. Thank you, Member U'u-Hodgins. So, specifically speaking to the first...the seven prioritized projects. We have the Launiupoko and Honolua

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

Wells and Fire Mitigation Firefighting...Firefighting Capacity Project; the Kama‘o (*phonetic*) Wastewater Treatment...or I’m sorry, Water Treatment, Raw Water Reservoir Improvement and Flood-Risk Reduction Project; the Maui County Emergency Generators and Automatic Transfer Switches for Critical Water Infrastructure--and those three, Stantec and Kim Pugel can probably speak more to you when they are doing their presentation. But then we have the Kihei Wastewater Pump Station 2, 3, and 7 retrofit. So, these projects are to retrofit pump stations 2 and 3 to mitigate against flood damage and sea-level rise, and then pump station 7 is a relocation of that existing pump station further inland, again, to avoid flood damage. So, there is some mitigation that’s taking place on South Kihei Road, specifically these...these pump stations are in that area. And the last and seventh prioritized project is the Lāhainā Land Acquisition. So, there's been 19 projects that have--or properties, rather--that have been identified as part of this project that are along Front Street and two are on Shaw Street that are right in the . . .(*timer sounds*). . . burn area in Lāhainā. So, the goal of that project is to acquire those 19 parcels. And basically, the County is going to have those deed restricted. If they are purchased by the County through this program, they will be deed restricted and maintained as Open Space, and I believe the...the long-term goal--and Director Nishita, if you want to speak more to this--but I think the long-term goal is to maybe look at...at turning that area into a cultural corridor, and kind of maintaining it so that...the shoreline, as we know, is eroding, and kind of looking at...at flooding impacts, avoid putting infrastructure back into that area. The ten alternate projects --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Can I --

MS. ROBINETTE: -- we have --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Can I stop you, Carrie? Will somebody please send me an email for the ten alternate projects? Because I do have another question that I would like to get answered. Sorry, I don’t mean to interrupt you, but if somebody could just jot that down and send me a quick email, I’d appreciate that. Either for Ms. Kahula, or again, Josiah, this Pre-Allocation Action Plan for the CDBG-DR funding--and I’ve heard so many acronyms today, I feel overwhelmed with them, which I get, that’s just how things work--where is this Pre-Allocation Action Plan, and when can the Council see it?

MR. RAMIREZ: I’ll take that one. So, the Pre-Allocation Action Plan is...I would...I would say it’s at about 80 percent. You cannot complete the allocation plan until the Federal Register comes out with the alloca...the specific allocation or funding amounts. So, if you could imagine, we’ve had to create the plan and draft it so that it’s ready...so that it is ready, as soon as the allocation comes out, that we remove projects if we’re underfunded, and add projects if we get more than it is designed for. So, it is--we...we...we wrote it as best as we could without knowing the actual allocation. Further, the Federal Register adds like certain

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

requirements and waivers that is going to modify this plan. So, we can...we can certainly give you where it's at right now. But the other thing that happens with the action plan is, as soon as we receive--and...and I'm sorry, I'm going to...talking too fast. There's an appropriation of funds, and then HUD gives the allocation of funds. So, Congress gives money, and then HUD says, okay, we're going to give this much to Maui. When we know the amount, we can polish it up a little bit more, but then that plan needs to go out for community outreach. And...and it's a specific amount of time that it has to be out there. Once it comes back, based on community outreach, we have to change it again based on said outreach, and once it's done, we send it back to HUD. So, it...it is available, I just need--it...it is not complete, if...if that makes sense.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: It's available to us right now, or...

MR. RAMIREZ: Yes. I...I mean, it's --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Great.

MR. RAMIREZ: -- it's...it's in a draft form, it's just --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: That's fine.

MR. RAMIREZ: And it's...it is...it is HUD Speak. So, it's not elegant, but yes, it's...it's available.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Send over that HUD Speak Action Plan, along with those reminders of the ten alternate projects in that email to all the Council, and I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. RAMIREZ: Okay. I will shoot it over to...to Patience, the...the latest copy, so...so that she can send it over.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Next, Member Sinenci, followed by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Yeah, just continuing a question for Mr. Ramirez. Can you again say the timeline for the CBDG-DR [*sic*] funds? Are we looking at--when...when are those funds...be coming down, or second reading at Congress, or what's the timeline? Has it --

MR. BURI: I...if you don't mind.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Allocated?: Okay. Go ahead, John.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. BURI: Yes. Yes, sir. Thank you very much for the question. So, the Congress has...will have to approve this, I believe, by December 28th, or in...in the next two weeks. So, as I mentioned, Speaker Johnson stated that there would be a draft of the bill made available today, and that that will go through the reading process.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. But it --

MR. BURI: So, they...they had...they need to fund the Government by the end of the year, and it would be for a three-month continuing resolution.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. So--and there is no danger of the Speaker putting it on hold or deferring it until after the new Administration takes place?

MR. BURI: So, again, a very good question. By all the public accounts that have been published, that this will...they are planning to get this done. I think the risk is very, very low for something like this to delay the supplemental funding.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. And then, if I could, Carrie, just ask--if my time allows, Chair--for those ten alternate projects that Member U'u-Hodgins had requested.

MS. ROBINETTE: Sure. So, I can give a brief rundown. So, we are hardening seven fire stations and...and nine other critical facilities, which are community centers across various portions of the County, to be able to have those facilities withstand up to 200-mile-per-hour winds. We are looking at doing some work on the Lāhainā recycled water force main, so basically the R-1 in Lāhainā, to mitigate that infrastructure. We are looking at putting generators onto some of the reclaimed water hydrants for two of the wastewater reclamation facilities, one in Kihei and one in Lāhainā, with the goal of being able to provide a redundant power source for pumps that pump water into the purple hydrants that the Fire Department would like to use for fire suppression, just as kind of a backup water...water source for fighting fires. We are looking at doing two areas of rockslide, landslide stabilization, one on Hāna Highway around Mile...Mile Marker 38 and 39, and then up at Kahekili, we're doing some slope stabilization and drainage improvements on that roadway in an area that...that sees repetitive flooding. And then we have . . .(timer sounds). . . a wildfire mitigation project in Upcountry, and then an Upper Kula transmission water line retrofit. So, that's just kind of a very brief rundown of those ten alternates. And as you can see, they're kind of spread in different...different parts of the State based on the...the location.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah. Thank you, Carrie. Thank you, Chair.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, next we have Member Paltin...you--are you still there?--you're still there--with questions, and then Member Johnson, Member U'u-Hodgins...I'm sorry, Member Rawlins-Fernandez last.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. We can hear you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. My question was about...I'm not sure if it was Stantec or Tetra Tech is assisting with the \$2 million shoreline acquisition grant that's due in February. Okay, great. I was wondering what level of interaction do you have with the County and the State Coastal Zone Management Planners. Because they reached out to me a little bit concerned about the nuance and things like that, and they felt like they weren't...there wasn't enough communication and collaboration.

MS. ROBINETTE: So, right now, with this application, we are just starting to really get into...to putting that...that program together--and I'll...I'll let Director Nishita comment on this as well--but that's going to be a heavy lift. It's 19 parcels, again, on Front Street and two on Shaw Street, but that projects is going to be a heavy lift. And there's many moving parts, for instance, with the demolition that's already taking place through other FEMA programs, like the FEMA Debris Task Force, and other work with the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA. We are working to coordinate with all of those agencies and communicating with both HI-EMA and with FEMA to try and set up some meetings to figure out exactly what level of coordination we're going to have to do to make sure that, number one, we're not duplicating benefits with any other Federal funding that FEMA is providing. But we are working to set up the communication with the homeowners. I was communicating with the Department of Management last week to verify that we have a list of the property owners' names and contact information. We will be working with them first thing to kind of explain the program, and then next, to have them sign what we call a voluntary participation agreement that basically says they understand the program and they --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, sorry, I don't want to interrupt, but I have limited time.

MS. ROBINETTE: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the question was specifically onto the collaboration and coordination with our own County/State Coastal Zone Management Planners--like Tara Owens, Jim Buika, like that--because they've been working on these areas for years, and years, and years, and they may understand some of the nuance, you know, and it's a tight turnaround with February deadline.

MS. ROBINETTE: So, I will turn that over to Director Nishita to comment on.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. And I think one...just...well, I guess to address...address the question specifically, I mean, we are working with the Department of Planning. But the...the other piece is that, you know, this...this is a quick process and a moving process as we're...we're going through it. So, just like everything else we've been dealing with, we're . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . having to do these things concurrently and at the same time. I mean, obviously, I think with the luxury of time, a lot of things can be done differently, but we're having to do things significantly in tandem, given kind of the time constraints we're under. But the...the overarching thing I just want to note is that this doesn't mean that we're guaranteed to get the funding from HI-EMA. So, I would say of all projects that were identified and...and we tried to work with the State through, I would say the...the property acquisition piece was probably the one that they had maybe the most hesitation on. And so, we are trying to work with them to provide avenues and options for property owners who may not have clear options available to them to be able to provide an...an avenue for them to be able to assist in their recovery process. But, you know, that...that is one that we just had meetings actually...actually somewhat recently on with them as well, to help justify the program, and why it's a community need, and...and should be classified under the...the Hazard Mitigation Program. But this is all still tentative. Nothing has been officially approved yet, and then we'll have to go through FEMA review too, which we love our FEMA friends, but they also will have their own opinions on...on things. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. The bell went off, yeah? Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for being here, Tamara. Are...are--is it okay for you to be in this meeting? My goodness. Thank you. Okay. Okay. So, next we have Member Johnson, followed by Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. And of course, all of our thoughts and prayers go for George. Hopefully he's doing well over there. Okay. I guess this question is going to be for Josiah Nishita. You know, Managing Director, we...we have that kind of precedent where we did the Haggai Institute, we--the County bought the Haggai Institute. Now I'm wondering, are you guys interested in using these funds, the CBDG-DR *[sic]* or any of the FEMA money, that helps us purchase move-in ready units as opposed to, hey, there's a parcel of land, let's build affordable housing, and five years down the road, if we're lucky, we get that, whereas if we just go in and, you know, prop...purchasing properties on the West Side that are under the Minatoya list...I'd like to hear what Josiah...Mr. Nishita, what...his thoughts on that. Because, you know, we...so, we'll start with that. Director...or I mean, Managing Director Nishita?

MR. NISHITA: Thanks, Chair. I...so, I'll just say, overarching, it's...it's a little difficult to answer that without understanding how much funding is being allocated, and then what restrictions HUD may be putting on the funding itself. Because, you

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

know, they...they could, you know, require certain things, or put...put certain conditions on the funding that may make certain types of projects or programs, you know, ineligible for the funding. So, ultimately, we will need to see what amount is allocated, and then what, you know, restrictions may be on the funding before we'll be able to, you know, fully identify what programs would be eligible. And I think that's...that's partly what Jorge was...was getting at previously in the...in the presentation. But I would...I...I would just say --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Managing Director? Okay.

MR. NISHITA: Yeah, I would just say that we have talked about, you know, things that could be eligible under DR which, you know, could include like shovel-ready developed projects. It could include like homeowners' assistance programs, you know, actually building new single-family and multi-family developments, things like that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. You know, I...I appreciate the idea of, yeah, we want to purchase these lands and keep them in open Space, but right now, we're not an Open Space emergency, we're in a housing emergency. So, that's kind of where I'm like well, buying land and keeping it in Open Space is nice for the view, but when you need a roof--we need a roof. Our community needs a roof. So, I...I really want to see--you know, and again, Managing Director, how's our capacity? When the action plan is ready to go, are we ready to go? I...every time we have the Departments come in and speak to us, they talk about capacity issues. Are you folks ready when the...for the action plan? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. Yes. When the action plan is ready and...and...and approved, it will include a combination of County Staff assistance, contracted staff. And of course, we'll...as the County has done so great over the years is, also working with community partners and organizations such as nonprofits and whatnot to help fill in a lot of the gaps. But Chair, if...if I may, I just want to address one thing real quick of what you alluded to earlier, is that there may be confusion about the different funding sources we're talking about. So, in terms of Hazard Mitigation Funds, we...we can't use that for the purposes of what you're relaying. So, when DR comes in --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: The DR funds?

MR. NISHITA: Well, yeah--you talked about, you know, why are we using these funds to purchase Open Space when we have a housing shortage.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. NISHITA: Housing miti...Hazard Mitigation Grant Funds are...are not funds used to...to build homes, it's to mitigate against future --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's...that's . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

MR. NISHITA: -- hazards. So, the...the Open Space kind of, you know, buyback program we're talking about is under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which help mitigate, you know, future disasters or future issues from happening, and the DR program could help step in to actually provide that housing assistance. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. My...my time's up. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank...thank you. Thank you for that clarification. All right. So, next we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Mahalo, everyone, for being here and for the presentation. So, my first question is dovetailing off of Member Sinenci and Member U'u-Hodgins regarding the funding. And so, in the PowerPoint, it said Congress approves, and then HUD calculates and announces grantee allocation, Federal Register notice published, and awards funds. So, if--what...whatever it is that Congress then approves by December 28th, is there...is there any concern, or would...about a new HUD leadership delaying the funds, or once Congress approves, HUD would try to exped...expedite the awarding of the funds?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody can take that.

MR. NISHITA: Thanks, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember, for the question. I'll...I'll give a short response, and if Patience wants to provide anything else, she can...or anybody from our Tetra Tech team. I...I would just note that, you know, we have been in discussions with the current HUD leadership, and, you know, our...our hope would be that the--and I...I think the...the best outcome would be that we could get everything finalized under the current Administration just to eliminate, you know, any uncertainty and...and any changes in direction, policy, or...or whatnot. And so, that...that is what we are hoping and...and striving for. And I don't know if anybody else from our team wants to elaborate.

MR. BURI: Managing Director Nishita, I think January 20th is the last day for the current Administration. We...we have seen that happen before where Federal Registers are released. I would not want to speculate or comment on the probability of that, otherwise it would fall under the new Administration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. So, we'll all keep our fingers crossed. Okay. Next, I...I think...I...I don't know who to ask this. I don't

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

know if it would be like our Deputy Corp. Counsel, or I guess Managing Director could speak to this. You know, branches. So, with Council, Council as a legislative branch is the policy maker and fiscal oversight, and, you know, as was stated earlier by my colleagues, we haven't really had any oversight over this budget. We really haven't had much input at all. And so, I know this is not County-generated funds, but it...it would still need to come to Council for approval into...to be incorporated into the budget. So, I'm just...if...if someone could speak to, you know, just the...the...the appropriateness of the checks and balance. Because, you know, I mean . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . it's not like Council's going to disapprove integrating or, you know, the--whatever funds that we get through DR, hazmat, you know, all of that funds, but at the same time, you know, like I mean, we...we have had no opportunity to provide input into the creation of those budgets.

MR. NISHITA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, for the question. I...I would just note that, you know, in--I think our anticipation is probably for both fundings--also, the three that we talked about today--PA, HMGP, and DR--PA is going to--I mean, it's just...it's essentially a replacement of damaged things. So, there...there's no real--you know, I mean, we're just working directly with...with FEMA on what they'll be willing to, you know, allocate to us in terms of what was damaged. HMGP is a percentage that's allocated to the State that is based off of the PA that's received, you know, given disasters that are occurring. And then the State really identifies the critical, you know, priority areas in which, you know, we are trying our best to get as much dollars as possible for each of them. I would just note that any of the infrastructure projects, I believe, are already on the six-year CIP plan that the Council has, you know, already reviewed and...and adopted as a part of the previous budgets. And then obviously, we're hitting, you know, wildfire mitigation measures and some shoreline erosion pieces in that, that's in...you know, in relation to the community plans that have been developed. The DR piece, that will really be determined in consultation with the Council and community as to what the funding allocation will go for. I...I think in FY '26, we're anticipating to--probably for both HMGP and CDBG-DR would probably be in the FY '26 proposal to Council. By then, hopefully we'll have a clearer picture as to what allocations are being made. And then HUD, you know, determines through the action plan, I guess, you know, the eligible activities and what projects can be funded that we'll have to develop with the community in consultation of. And...and I don't know if anybody else has anything they want to add to that. But overall, I would say your...your point is well taken, that more collaboration is needed. I think that's essentially what you're...what you're...what you're getting at, and...and...and we'll...we'll do a better job at that. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Managing Director. Mahalo, Chair.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. So, I think the important discussion that we're having is that possibly the DR funds looks like more of a reality than it was in the past with what's happening in Congress. And Managing Director, of all of this Federal funds, which is wonderful, how much of County funds would be required as a match, or for us to have to come up with, in order to receive any of this Federal funding?

MR. NISHITA: Thanks, Chair. Well, it's...it's a little difficult to just give you a straight number. HMGP would be basically 25 percent, but for PA, it...it could depend on the...the project and activity, especially for some of the reimbursable expenses. I...I'm not sure where...where the State's going to put their 100 percent...oh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Managing Director.

MR. NISHITA: Sorry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: One moment. We lost quorum. Who left? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we recess? Can we recess?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can we recess? Recess for three minutes? Five minutes?  
...*(gavel)*...

RECESS: 11:55 a.m.  
RECONVENE: 12:01 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: ...*(gavel)*... Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It's 12:01. So, sorry about that break. I guess I'm going to ask...or I was corrected that it wasn't a technical we lost quorum, but it was a can people leave your cameras back on...or can you leave your cameras on. So, we didn't see all the Members here, so otherwise, we would have to recess this meeting based on Sunshine. So, just for that clarification, one quick round. Anybody have any more questions? I'm going to defer this, take a lunch break until 1:00 if you would allow, or 1:30--well, up to you, Members--and then we'll come back with the last two items. Any more questions? This is so relevant and important. Thank you very much. Okay. So, I see no other hands for questions. I'm going to defer this item. Thank you very much. Helene Kau, you look like you want to say something.

MR. KHAN: Chair...Member, we've got some closing comments. John Buri is going to share some closing comments with you all.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. KHAN: And --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MR. BURI: Thank you so much.

MR. NISHITA: Sorry. John, before you go.

MR. BURI: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. NISHITA: I'm sorry, real quick. I just wanted to note for the Council to just--so everybody's aware, that the PA and HMGP are on a reimbursement basis. So, we...we have to, you know, put the money up first, and then seek reimbursement. I--that wasn't brought up in the discussion previously, but I just want to make sure you're aware, and that will be reflected in how we submit our FY '26 budget. And I'm sure we'll have further discussions on that, but just to keep Council aware. Go ahead, John.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. BURI: Thank you so much, Managing Director Nishita, Chair, Councilmembers. We certainly appreciate this opportunity to provide the County with an update, and if I could just say that the information presented here is very fluid, and the information is very critical. There's a lot of changing...a lot of changes that go on with these long-term recovery programs, and the data is very, very important. So, you know, while we were...we wanted to provide you with an update, a snapshot into this, please understand that, you know, things like the action plan, things like the other documents and grants, that, you know, they're...they're very fluid and...and there's certain things that are unforeseen. We see this a lot in different disasters that can impact this Congressional action, you know, actions by elected officials at the Federal level, or agencies that may impact this. So, thank you again very much for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I think--I was just going to ask if you had a question, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, before we close. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: A quick one for Managing Director. So, on the Granicus item, the presentation on Granicus, there are like maybe about eight slides after the thank you slides that the presentation ended on. Did...did you mention what those slides were?

MR. NISHITA: Sorry, Chair. If...after--the thank-you slide was the last slide I have. So, if...if something was uploaded, it might have been inadvertently included.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh. Oh, okay. There's like 27 slides.

MR. NISHITA: Okay. We'll --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, about eight slides after slide 19.

MR. NISHITA: We'll...we'll make sure to work with Staff to correct it if there's a wrong attachment. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, that was your question? I saw your hand go up. Any other questions, Members?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, that was my question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Any other questions, Members, before we close? I'm going to defer this. All right. So, this item will be deferred. And Managing Director, we'll look forward to hearing more from you as things unfold. And thank you very much. As a Member Cook said during recess, thanks for all the hard work that you have been doing to get us to this point, as well as everything else that's going on. So, Members, I'm going to defer this, but we have two more items, and I wonder if you would like to come back for lunch at 1:00 or 1:30? Any preference?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: 1:00.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 1? Okay. Very good. So, the last two items, the Kula Ag Park, I think it's going to be relatively kind of short. I expect to bring it back in the next term with more details. And then on the--but we will hear it. And then the last item, which we heard the one testifier this morning talking about the difficulties of dealing with the County and jobs, so that might be a little bit longer. So, at this time then, I'm going to call this meeting to recess, and we'll be back at 1:00...or 1...1:10. . . .(gavel). . .

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TK, AL, and TP).**

**ACTION:**      **DEFER** pending further discussion.

RECESS:          12:06 p.m.  
RECONVENE:      1:25 p.m.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

**ITEM 21(34): EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT  
CONTRACT (RULE 7(B))**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It's now 1:25. Members, thank you very much. So, we are--I think Member U'u-Hodgins is excused from the remainder of the meeting, and thank you, everybody else, for being here. We have bare quorum, so let me know if you're going to be dashing off. Leave your cameras on. So, the next item on the agenda--I'm going to take actually the last item and bring it up third because Department of Ag is not available until after 2:00 today. And so, this is a 7(B), and basically, I wanted to have a presentation to find out the \$150,000 contract from Brandcrafters LLC and the effectiveness. And I...the reason I wanted to take it up is, every Department talks about how they don't have enough employees, right? And...and then we heard the testifier this morning, the one testifier talking about their plight, I have to say, and--because it's not a brand-new story, but it is something that probably we, as a County, are doing in our process. So, it takes us long to get back to people, and by the time we get back to them, they might have taken another job, is what it sounded like, and I'm sure with all good intentions. It also sounds like our personnel requirements maybe need to be updated from that testifier. And so, I wanted to take up this \$150,000 contract, which brought me to where we are today on employee retention and recruitment. And I...my...I want...I want you to open up and tell us whatever you want to tell us about what a good job you're doing, Director, as well as from the Department. So, please do your presentation, and then we'll ask for testifiers, then we'll go into questions from the...the Members. Go ahead.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you, Chair and Councilmembers in the Chambers and online. Cynthia Razo-Porter, Director of Personnel Services. So, we were able to hear the testifier this morning, but before I address those issues, yes, we did enter into--so, just to clarify, it was the Office of the Mayor that entered into a contract for recruitment and retention. Our money lapsed. In the FY 2023 budget, we had a...you know, we did our office redesign, and so we weren't able to enter into that marketing contract. However, we, you know, participated in that process. So, we did hire Brandcrafters for \$150,000, and they created the Work Maui Nui website, and I guess it was just to create a brand for the County. You know, we're 20-plus departments, and just to have one uniform brand was important to us to kind of update our marketing strategy, you know, on social media. Having a presence on social media was very important. So, that money was created on media campaigns, digital campaigns. They did some print-type advertisements in *The Maui News* and radio ads. They created banners, banner flags, and created marketing materials that were kind of uniform with, you know,

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

the County Work Maui Nui logo for us to share at marketing...I'm sorry, at job fairs and different community events. We did appreciate 7 percent, it looks like...between 7 and 10 percent increase in the number of applications received during that period, which, you know, we always heard like, oh, I never thought about the County for employment. So, you know, just getting that message out to, you know, community members was very important, and I believe, you know, made an impact. And if we can just go back in time in August is when this campaign was to launch, and, you know, just at the same time as when we had the...the devastating wildfires in August. And so, Brandcrafters took a step back and kind of re-evaluated, you know, the...the message that we were creating. Because we did have, you know, some feedback from the community, like there was just a wildfire, like what are...you know, what are you recruiting for positions? And so, there was a pause in that kind of launch, and...you know, so small delay on the campaign, and just to modify the message. And would you like me to continue? So, we have, today, approximately 600 vacant positions. We have 2,700...2,776 filled positions, so active employees. Of the 3,400 positions that, you know, I consider civil service positions--so these are positions that, you know, they come off a list, you know, we actually recruit for--it's not an appointed position, it's not a temporary position--there's 600 vacant positions. Eighty-two percent of those positions or...or 3,400 positions are filled. So, that's, you know, an improvement, I would say, over the course of time. But I guess in the last three years, we created 422 positions, and that's significant. And, you know, it's...it's...it's been a moving target, I would say. And departments are filling positions, but, you know, there...there's also that ebb and flow. You know, people resign, they move, you know, there's...there's...you know, life happens for people that, you know, work for the County. And, you know, it's just...if we can hire an additional, you know, 100 employees, I don't know, every six months, I mean, that would, you know, give us some advantage. And yeah, departments, you know, sometimes struggle with filling vacancies. And right now, we're currently recruiting for 100 positions, so we have 100 job postings. And just in this last...this current quarter that we're in, there were 64 terminations, and I think 100 hires so far in this, you know, we're December--what is today, 18...17--24 were retirements, 25 were resignations. The others were death, the end of their employment of a temporary position, they were discharged...and so, that, you know, brings us to that 64 number of terminations. And we do have the breakdown of the number of vacancies by Department, and we can share that with you. As far as the testifier this morning, it's true. You know, there's lots of ways to improve the process that we do, and, you know, we continually work with departments to try to improve that. We looked at the history of this person's application, and they...in the last five years, they applied for 34 jobs. Of that, I believe it was three positions that we did take an exorbitant amount of time to get this person on the list. Did not have a chance to kind of drill down and understand what the delay was, but we do recognize that there was a delay. And, you know, we talk to departments regularly. In fact, a presentation was provided to departments a couple months ago, in October, and, you know, kind of

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

highlighted some areas of improvement. And if I can just run down the list with you. Areas for improvement was, consider recruiting at the entry level of the series and grow our own staff. We often hear departments say, no, we need this higher-level caliber position. Okay. I'm not going to argue with them, but if we grow our own, you know, it's...I mean, that's kind of the succession plan that we should be having. And, you know, in some cases we cannot. We need, you know, a 5, but, you know, we...we...we're always asking, can we reallocate this to a lower-level, hire at the entry-level, and...you know, and some departments have seen success because they've embraced that...you know, that concept, and, you know, we still work...we're still working on that. Anticipating vacancies before they occur. You know, we're still helping departments do that. The Budget Ordinance allows that we can, you know, overlap. It's called an overlap fill, so if someone's leaving, we can hire someone three months before they leave. So, 90 days they'll have on the job with the person that's, you know, resigning or, you know, retiring. And that could happen. It doesn't happen as frequent as we, you know, appreciate. You know, we hear the same...you know, the testifier today, we hear the same examples of it took the department, you know, "X" number of days to even call for an interview, or, you know, it took them two months to hear back that they were selected for the position. By then, you know, I don't blame a candidate for not being available. And I'm not...you know, sincerely, I'm not, you know, trying to make excuses, but those...you know, that's the reality. And, you know, so, we talked about ensuring a timely selection process, respond to candidates that were selected or not selected, and, you know, consider the candidate experience essentially is...is the bottom line. And, you know, we test people, we do training and experience evaluations. We've backed off from testing candidates even though it's in the law--in 76, it says, you know, it's the merit principle and, you know, tests, you know, shall be fair--because we recognize that people don't want to take tests, they don't like tests, you know, or like we qualified all of these people to take a test, and only half of them showed up, and so now we're doing training and experience. And it's, you know, streamline the process, but there's still, you know, the challenge of...you know, most companies, you...you apply and, you know, you can get hired tomorrow, so, you know, that's the competition. And anything else? Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Are there any testifiers?

**. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(34). . .**

MR. KRUEGER: Chair, we currently don't have any individuals signed up to testify at this time, so we'll do a last call. If there is anyone who would like to testify--oh, Chair, I see an individual approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: Aloha awakea, Luna Ho'omalua Kashiwa Sugimura. Jasee Law from Kula Uka. I didn't prepare any kind of testimony or anything, but I'm kind of pretty

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

good on increasing the morale of people. And the...the flags...if we were to fly the...the Hawaiian flag at the same equal level as the American flag out front of the County building here, I think it would increase employee retention, especially the...the Hawaiian people, and make us more proud to work for Maui County. You feel me?

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

MS. SZABO: Chair, there are no additional testifiers signed up. This is the last call...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, there's none.

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

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

**. . .CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(34) . . .**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. So, thank you for the presentation. And you did mention...we did ask for a list of vacancies by department and that more in detail, so can you submit that to the Committee? And one of the reasons why I wanted to bring this up is that we have so much Carryover/Savings coming from Administration, and that we're waiting for it to be verified, all the Carryover/Savings, right? But a lot of it comes from the A account, right, which is unfulfilled [sic] positions, and I think it's adding to a budget that is really not accurate, and is my concern. So, that was...that was one of the reasons. And the other one was this Brandcrafters LLC that was \$150,000 contract. Was that renewed, or what is...what is going to happen with that contract, and has it been...has it fulfilled whatever the goals and objectives set out? Oh, but you're saying it wasn't your contract. You're saying it was Administration's contract; is that right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, should we have somebody from Administration talk to us about this?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Or is it --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- I mean, I can respond as best as I can respond. There's maybe something that, you know, I'm not aware of, or can't speak for them. But in

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

FY '23, I believe Council authorized 150,000 in our...for recruitment and retention, and 125,000 to redo our office because, you know, we...we had that challenge with space. And we were not able to...you know, that...that was enough of a lift for us to do our office remodel and, you know, the recruiting--you know, it was just to wrap our heads around like what are we asking for? So, we had an...you know, an idea, but by that time, you know, just to get the RFP to...to do, you know, the leg work for that, we just...you know the--our money had lapsed. And so, when the new Administration came in, they were like, no, that's a great initiative, you know, we want to support that. And so, you know, they kind of took the lead, essentially, is what happened. So, you know, we participated, but it was--you know, so what we paid for and how it was paid for, you know, it was kind of outside of our purview. But we did, you know, have--this...this was our laundry list of ideas that we, you know, wanted to see incorporated with a recruitment and retention campaign.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Was it fulfilled?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, so, at the beginning of this meeting, I kind of shared like what it was that we did do, and we did appreciate, you know, a 7 percent increase in applications. And just kind of be mindful, you know, in August, when this was supposed to launch, we had the fires. And so, I feel like--just to be honest, that departments weren't ready to--you know, for that level of engagement because suddenly, you know, we were focused, you know, on...on other things, and so, you know the messaging was changed. And I mean, I think we appreciated benefits from it. However, you know, we may have missed, you know, some of the...the...the better fruits of it because, you know, suddenly we had, you know, new...new projects that we were, you know, focused on, and...and just, you know, kind of understanding that. But yes, we...we did do digital ads, we have, you know, Work...Work Maui Nui website that kind of launches us--or launches people to look at, you know, the different benefits of working for the County, what departments do. Just...yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any other questions? Chair Lee, then Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you, Cynthia.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, you were listening to the testifier this morning, and one of the things that the person mentioned was the nack...that seemingly, the lack of knowledge on the part of DPS personnel on eligibility requirements, and MQs, I guess, because some of the questions were outdated. You remember her saying that?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I...I listened to most of it. By the time I listened to it, she was maybe a minute --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I think --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Maybe a minute or so in.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- She asked about Kiva.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Oh, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, you were watching, so you saw that. Some of the questions, either on the...on paper or by the person in your office, were not relative anymore, you know, because information that's no longer used, like Kiva and other things. So, how do you train your folks?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, when...so, we don't write department position descriptions, departments write their position descriptions. We receive --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- descriptions.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: But they have to have some working knowledge of the positions that are being applied for, right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, it...it...it appeared...the impression I got was--from the testifier is that even some of your workers are really not familiar with some of the positions that are open.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And so, I'm...I'm wondering, how do you train them for that?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we're a training organization, and we have many employees in training. We have a very new staff, and so I'm not sure who this person spoke with, or what the questions were. But when you apply for a job in the County, you know, we...we have our class specs, we have our MQs. And so, Kiva, yes, is, you know, outdated.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Right. Okay. So, when we hear...this is what we hear. When the departments do not fill their positions in a timely way, many of them blame DPS.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Correct, yeah?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I hear that.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And then you blame the departments, right, for being slow.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, how do we resolve this?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, two months ago, we met with the departments, and we gave them areas for improvement, exactly what I shared, you know, a few minutes ago. And, you know, there's got to be more urgency . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . when it comes to filling our vacancies. Because if you're saying, you know, this is an urgent need to fill and, you know, we see a list --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Um-hum.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- sit for 60 days --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Cynthia, why...why don't you guys have a working group that continually works on this? You know, not just once or twice, but...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Because maybe you have to break down the problem --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- and prioritize, for instance.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And not go for the whole 700 at one time.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, just my suggestion. Thank you.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Cook, and after that, we'll go to--I don't know if Member Paltin came back--then Member Johnson, Member Rawlins-Fernandez --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- and then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. So, try and keep brief --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- answers. The Department of Personnel Services, the challenges to hiring, how much of it is the public employee union, and how much of it is County policy? Or generalizations.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I don't --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Because you have to comply --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I...I don't think the union hinders us from hiring our positions, so not them.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: And maybe it's just, you know, understanding the process, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- in our office, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. So, my next question --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- is, why don't the departments interview potential employees, and then you test them...rather than you do the whole process and filter? Because we have all of these different departments with all of these different expertise, and different requirements, and different criteria, and different levels that they need. They're...they're going to basically be doing the training. I mean, they're going to get placed in that department --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- and they're going to, like, school them--this is what...this is how it's done, this is what we need you to do. I don't...I don't understand why the departments--you, Department of Personnel Services, get an applicant for Water...that may be in the Water Department. And just like, here's seven people that want to work for the Water Department. They look at it, they say--because a lot of it is personality, communication skills --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- being able to basically work...get along and work with other people. There's so many...to me, as a previous employer and employee, there's so many aspects and attributes of personality and vibe that you're either going to fit into an office, or not. So, somebody might look great on paper, and then they actually be counterproductive. So, is there a rule against that, or is it just sort of caught--I'm wondering, is it County policy that everything goes through Department of Personnel Services, and is there any way to change the way that it's done so that we can all be happier with the product?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, departments have the ability to fill their positions within their department in-house. So, that's called a noncompetitive promotion. They post the job, and they interview --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. So...but they're --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- all qualified candidates.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- they're not adding employees, they're shuffling employees?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: They're shuffling employees.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: But at the lowest level...so assuming that every--you know, employees are moving up, right?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That's a big assumption.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's a big assumption. But I mean, that--I'm applying for a promotion, so that's assuming that it's, you know, moving up --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Um-hum.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- they can fill at the lower level.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. So...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: And we don't get involved.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I often hear if somebody goes on vacation for two weeks, that then things set--is there...how is it set up? Are there replacements . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . for people on vacation? One more. I'll be--wrap it up. Are there...when somebody goes on vacation, everything stops?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: When someone goes on vacation, a Department can choose to temporary assign--so, an employee from one role into that role.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Part...it's the department that determines?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Departments could do it that way. But at some point, there--somebody's on vacation --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- so they can't fill...backfill a vacant --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- or a vacationing employee.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. No, thank you. That's all my questions until the second round.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Oh, let's see...Gabe Johnson. Member Johnson? Member Paltin didn't come --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Oh...okay. So, thank you, Department, for joining us today, I know you...you know, talking about that. I want to clarify; it was 800, and now it's 600 vacancies? Is that the...the exact number?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So...so, that 600 number, that's kind of a moving target. And --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I see you're sitting, so it's actually--if you run a vacancy report in...in Workday--is our HR system--it'll show you 933 vacant positions. However,

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

before you write that number down, many of those positions are seasonal. So, they're PALS, they're seasonal lifeguards --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- they're...you know, positions that...you know, they come and go, like we hire them for a season.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, it's--600 is your number --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, you know, thank you.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- unfilled positions.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: In...in...in your opening remarks, you mentioned that you...you were moving forward with the Brandcrafters, and then the fire happened, right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: And that kind of put it on pause. You know, a lot of folks lost their jobs right after the fire. I think that was when your Department would kind of step it up and like, you know, go all in because there's a whole group of folks who don't have a job now, and they'd be looking. And I know you're not part of the rebuild...you know, the other departments, I get it. You know, Public Works had to also try to hire in that...in the same time they were trying to --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- rebuild West Maui and Upcountry, then I would say that's too much to ask. But for you folks, that's your specialty. Could...can you...can you hire--like...this...this is the root of my question. Can you move on or move forward in the process without the department need...needing to be there? Can you just push...push for jobs and...and without waiting for them?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we recruit to fill positions that departments say we want to recruit for. And so, you know, we accept applications, we screen, we add them to eligible list..you know, we test, we add them to eligible list, and we--departments hire their own employees. So, at some point, we're handing the baton off to the empl...or to the department. We could, you know, be more involved in the process, and we've extended that, you know, how can we help you to the departments, and, you know, we don't...we don't get really a lot of traction

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

with that. We've done one-stop recruitments for Police. You know, we work pretty well with Police. You know, we have a system where, you know, it's a one-stop recruitment. Other Departments won't embrace that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Can you do that one stop and share...well, why won't the other departments...can you explain why won't the other departments not pick up like that?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we've extended it. I'm not sure. It...it does require a huge amount of coordination on everyone's . . .(timer sounds). . . part. Because we're looking at having an applicant come in, having them sit for an exam and doing an interview, and making a hiring decision within, you know, a very short period of time. And --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: And you could do that for other departments --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- let's say Public Works, or Housing, or...or Ag, they just have to want to do that, and that's --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I keep hearing that talking point, that you...you guys --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We would probably want to do it--just to be clear, want to do it for those vacancies that, you know, there --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- are a number of positions.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: You know, my time's up. And Chair, I don't know if Managing Director Nishita is purview to this discussion, but it should be...he should be paying...you...he...he should be listening to this. I mean, if that's what we're hearing, that departments need to, you know, emphasize this. Because we're in budget season, and like you say, all these carryover monies, they're not getting filled, so what's the...what's the problem? I really think Managing Director's Office should be here in the call. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Next, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Okay. So, first, on Granicus, we...we only have the executed contract posted. I'd love if we can get the final

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

report because--aloha, Director and Deputy--the...this contract has ended, correct? So, there should be a final report with the deliverables and assessment of how the...what the outcome was.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do you have the final report? Oh, you don't have a final report?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It...it's under the Mayor, correct?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, we would need to request that from the Mayor's Office.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: True, but I thought that they might have it. Okay. You got that? Thanks. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay. So...okay. In law school, and I'm sure other industries, you have to first like identify the problems, right? And so, in contracting this marketing firm, the problem was identified as a lack of education that the County jobs are...are available, are quality jobs, and encourage folks to...to apply. And I guess what I'm...what I heard is that there's been a 7 percent increase in applications. So, we paid \$150,000 to get a 7 percent increase in applications. However, our Departments are saying we're not ready for that 7 percent increase. So, ultimately, we got a 7 percent increase in applications, but our County wasn't ready to take advantage of that increase in applications. And I will stop there because I saw you want to speak.

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

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, go ahead, Director.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, I don't say that they said they don't want...you know, they're not ready, I just feel like the timing of it...you know, when the fires happened, the...the campaign was launched. There was some delay because, you know, on social media, we had lots of comments, like a whole town burned down, like what...what are you guys doing? Like, why are you trying to recruit to fill--you know, there was...there was, like, some backlash. And so, you know, just being mindful of, you know, people's emotional state. And so, there was kind of a--to modify the message, like we need your help, and, you know, just kind of toned it, you know, not to be tone deaf, but to, you know, recognize that people were suffering, and maybe that wasn't the most...you know, the timing. The timing just felt a little off.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. I hear that. All right. So, I'm looking at the recitals in the...in the...in the terms of the contract. And so, it

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

initially said May 2023, and it would be a contract for eight months, which would have taken it to January 2024 for completion. However, it was signed by Rachael Lallo in...on July 25th . . .(timer sounds). . . 2023. And so, that...that's why I was asking if it...if it was done. Because if it was still for eight months, then...if it...it if was only executed in July, then...oh, no, it's 2023. Never mind. It's 2024. Go ahead.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I'm sorry, did you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, my question is, was it from July then to--July, August, September, October...March of 2024?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: You know, I'm...I'm not comfortable because I knew it was supposed to launch in August. There was some pause. I...I don't...I don't know when. But yeah, it was an eight-month contract and --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. So, you don't...you don't --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- know when --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- when the contract was executed and completed?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. That's fine. Mahalo, Chair. I...I do have more questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You did? Okay. Okay. Wow. Maybe we should have asked somebody from the Mayor's Office to come also. That's who sounds like has the...has answers for some of the questions, yeah? Sounds like you weren't involved in it. So, even the...administering the contract, and making sure it gets done.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You just heard that it was a good program of sorts?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, I think we appre...like I said, we appreciated some of the benefits we got--you know, marketing, pamphlets, and, you know, they showed

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

up at...with us at job fairs. You know, we got some videos that we can post on our applicant system. You know, we have a host site that --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Sorry.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- you know, kind of promotes our jobs.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Thank you. Okay. Sorry. Shane, I missed you. Apologies. Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. Yeah, just following up on the...Member Rawlins-Fernandez's questions. Director, you said the contract has ended and it wasn't extended?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: That was just for eight months?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. And then you also mentioned that some of the Departments had--oh, I see, Ms. Toshikiyo. Is that--hi.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: Sorry for interrupting. I just...I pulled up the contract, so I have the...the dates if the Members were interested.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Go ahead.

MS. TOSHIKIYO: But the initial contract was eight months from the notice to proceed. So, the notice to proceed was August 2nd, 2023, and then there was one extension, and...let's see...there was an amendment--sorry, I can only pull it up page by page here--and that extended the time of performance--or notice to proceed, which was August 2nd, 2023, until June 30th, 2024. So, that's when the contract ended.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: So...

MS. TOSHIKIYO: I hope that clears up some questions.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Extended a couple months. And then for--thank you, Ms. Toshikiyo. And then Director, you mentioned that some departments hired at the...at the lower-entry level and...and maybe did their own training until they could hire for those higher positions. Are they able to do that within their departments, like change the scope of the...the job descriptions?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: They are?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. And...and you...and you said some of those departments had success with that process?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: So...so, they kind of addressed the questions from the testifier, that, okay, all these high...higher-end questions for those higher level. So, some departments saw success in...in training on their own, and then bringing up those workers to those higher levels, yeah?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Most...most, if not all, of our positions in the County, you know, belong to a series. So, the series includes an entry-level, and, you know, you work your way up. So, for the sake of, you know, ease, it's a trainee, it's an advanced trainee, it's, you know, a journey...journey-level worker, it's, you know, a senior worker, up to like --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Got it. Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- super, super, you know, qualified, highly-qualified employee. You know, there's five levels.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Do you guys...and you also mentioned that like 50 percent of those terminations was due to resignations. Do you guys have a list or projections of how many people are--may potentially retire so you're seeing a number of how...how much people will be...will be leaving the County?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think on average, it's about 100 employees a year retire.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: A year? Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Within, you know, 10 percent one way or the other.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Sorry, I didn't see the list. I was just curious, how many vacancies in the Parks and Recreation Department?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We have that number.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do you have that separate list?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: 30?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: You're sitting? No. 75.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Seventy-five. Okay. The only--I'm...and I'm only asking because we're working on some long-term strategic planning, but I guess that also, you know, is on how many vacancies, I guess, there are too. So --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for those responses. Thank you, Chair. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Perfect timing. Thank you very much. Okay. So, you know, going through these questions or looking at this contract--Corp. Counsel. I don't know the relationship, right? This is CONTRACT NO. C7992, and if you look at the contractor standards of conduct...conduct...conduct, is Rachael related to Cynthia Lallo? I mean, that's such an unusual last name. I don't know if you know that. You probably look like you don't know that. That'd be a question that--can you send Mayor's Office? It's signed--oh, yes? Yeah. Oh, you --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: She's related. They're...they are related.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, they are related?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: They are related.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is that a problem? You know, based upon this contract, it says, contractor --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair? Point of information, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: If you...if you want to know, I can tell you that it's been taken up by the Board of Ethics. And so, it was already...there was a determination and opinion made by the Board of Ethics, if that's what you're asking.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Oh, I--or I wasn't asking about that, but I wanted to know if they were related. So, what was...I guess we have to ask for the decision then. Do you know?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I believe they said no conflict.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: But you can...you can go double-check.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, that's good if there's no conflict. Thanks for knowing that. So, we're going to have to ask that question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: That's what I do.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's what you do.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Know things.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You Sherlock Holmes all around. Okay. I have no further questions. You...do you, Member Cook? Okay. We'll take Member Cook, and then I'm going to go to the next item. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I'm curious--and it doesn't have to be exact--but I'm just curious. Parks and Recreation, 70 vacancies. What would the ballpark pay scale be, from low to high, in those 70 vacancies? Are like they all 70 like lowest-paid, or are there...is there a variety?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I would say the majority of those vacant positions are park caretakers, and they're like 38...38,000.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, 38,000 annually --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Or higher. Forty? I'm trying to do math in my head, and I'm not very good at that. More like 40. It's like a BC-3, so which...yeah, DPW.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: What...what's the lowest? Because that sounds...that strikes me as low as far as being able to live and survive.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right. Prob...I mean, they might have some clerk vacancies in there, and that's probably even lower.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That's all, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any other questions? Seeing --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you do? Okay. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I said earlier I had more questions. Yeah. Okay. So, my question for DPS. So, is...is there--like, does DPS, or the departments, or whoever have like a goal to like process applications by...you know--you know, because in your...in your comments earlier, Director, you said that County is competing with the private sector that can hire new employees within days, whereas, you know, our civil service process takes a little more time. And so, knowing that, is there a goal to...you know, to process applications by, and to have applicants hired by? Is there like a time set that if we achieve that, then we are in good shape?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, DPS receives applications, we process applications. You know, our goal is five days. Sometimes, you know, with Police, you know, they...they take a test. With Fire, they take a test. Ocean Safety. So, it...it just depends on the position, but if it doesn't require a test, our goal is like within a week to get a name on a list and get that name to the department.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, that's the application portion.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's the application.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then after the departments say, okay, this is the person we want to hire, I've heard that it...it--after that point, when the department says we want to hire this applicant, that it has taken, you know, like months, eight months, to actually get that person on board, like hired. So, is there a time frame for that?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, ideally, it would not take eight months. Ideally, it would take, you know, a month. Again, you know, some departments have background checks, they have polygraph, they have psych exams. You know, there's...there's--every position may have a different --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, I mean, after they decide. After they make the decision, this is the person that we want to hire.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: One month?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: One month would be great. . . .*(laughing)*. . . On average --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- on average, it's 103 days. So, that's --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- too long in my book. But some --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- Departments have done it in two weeks. So, you know, again --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- it's an average.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then I...I know you said earlier that, like, you know, people don't like taking tests, and of...of course, it's not like something that's something fun to do. But I think what we heard in testimony and, you know, from others that have given us feedback--or at least myself, is that it...it's about the relevancy of the test.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And so, you know, like Chair Lee was saying earlier about questions not being relevant. So, I don't know if there is like...like a time frame in which DPS works with departments to ensure that the...the tests remain relevant and up-to-date. Is there a time frame?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, when we do a recruitment, we say, hey, this job requires a test. We've been encouraging . . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . departments. We've been encouraging that we, you know, abandon the tests. If we don't have an exi...existing list, you know, we...we go for what's...what we refer to as a T&EE, which is the training and experience evaluation. And so, we just look at their experience, we give them a score, and that's how their names are placed on the eligible list. If there is a test, some departments are very adamant that, no, I want to make sure this person can read and write, you know, and can...can compute. And we refer to, you know, the department, and we say, okay, let's build this exam based on what this employee...you know, future employees should, at a minimum, know, and we refer to them as SMEs. And so, these

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

subject-matter experts will come in and evaluate the tests, and, you know, they kind of sign off on it, like, yes, this is relevant to the job.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, thanks. And then my last question is regarding like process for internal improvement. So, does DPS have a process in which it receives or requests feedback from applicants and employees on how DPS could service...provide their service better?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We do not.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And if not --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: But that would be great.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- would you consider having one?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Wonderful. Okay. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. You know, so, I...I have a question. It's basically how do...how do we help those folks who want to help us? I...I know a guy who applied for at least 24 different County positions, and he can't seem to get through. He's got a college degree, he wants to work in this department, wants to work in that department, and for some reason, the...the County just does...does...it doesn't happen, and I don't know what...what's the issue. But basically, do you guys ever look at applicants who maybe this job might not be a good fit for them, but what...what about over here? Do you...do you...are you on that counteroffers stage anywhere, or can you hold onto applicants who really want to work for the County until you find the right fit, and maybe you guys could be that kind of...carrying that...that application to the desk to where it would be most fitting?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, in my head, and with a small percentage of people on my Staff, we have discussed like what if we looked at these applicants...you know, like some applicants, they apply, like your...your person, like 24 times, and it's like, what...how can we help this person find a position? Like, you know, what's missing? You know, are they just applying for the wrong roles? Because we have people that clearly don't qualify, and they apply for, you know, these high-level positions. In your case, it sounds like, you know, he...he could meet qualifications for a number of jobs, and just kind of like being a recruiter and plugging them into --

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- you know, those positions. And, you know, we...we haven't developed a process for that. Part of it is, you know, we're just civil service, so how...how do we pick like who...who these five people that we're going to try to, you know, kind of find a role for them? So, I'm still kind of developing that idea of, you know, like you tell me you want to work for the County. Show me your resume, show me your experience. These are the, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- five jobs that we think you would qualify for, would you be interested in...you know?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Doesn't that make more sense? That--yeah. That makes sense to me.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, I...you know, I...I think...I--it just...if we...if we're looking at this big problem. Across the board, every department (*audio interference*) the...so, the departments might not be able to move, but can we move maybe (*audio interference*) what's right?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(*inaudible*). . .

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Like hold (*audio interference*) a great one, Director. You know, hold the applications until the round peg fits the round hole, right? And that's what you...you want to have, is these people fitting in positions of success, will they succeed. So, I...I don't know. I just think that if--we...we can talk in circles, and, you know, I'm trying to help. Every year, budget season . . .(*timer sounds*). . . we come back with people just not filling the positions, and we are emptying, you know, Carryover/Savings. It just does...and then we hear the departments say, oh, we can't do anything because we don't have enough engineers. It's just the most frustrating thing. Okay. My time's up. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. Anybody else have any more questions? Okay. Yep. That's exactly what we hear, right, year after year after year. So, this...I'm going to defer this item, Members, and hopefully, you know, we can help this situation get better somehow if you would like. Okay. So, this item is now deferred.

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: AL, TP, and NUH).**

**ACTION: DEFER** pending further discussion.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

**ITEM 21(7): KULA AGRICULTURE PARK PHASE I EXPANSION  
UPDATE (RULE 7(B))**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And the last item of the agenda--I see Director here from Agriculture, Department of Ag, which is the Kula Ag Park. Okay. Do we need to give them anything, James? We can...we can swap out? Okay. So, next item is the Kula Ag Park Phase I Expansion Update. And we have here with us, which is Director Arce from Department of Ag, as well as Jeffery Jurickovich, which is the Ag Park maintenance person. Is he here? Oh, that's you? Okay. Come. Thank you. So, as you're getting settled, one of the reasons why I wanted to bring up this Kula Ag Park is because we have budget coming up, as well as we have the Legislature coming up in January, but I wanted to get a status and overview of--did you...were you able to draw down the \$20 million for the Kula Ag Park expansion, 10 million from the County--which you don't have to draw down, but--as well as from the Legislature, and do you have enough funding basically is what I'm concerned about, and the progress. Because it doesn't look like anything's happening there, but it's an empty field until you get your plans in place. So, I...I don't know what your plans are. So, that is a reason why I'm bringing this up. You can make opening comments. And I also did get...and I don't know if the other Members got a document from Munekiyo Hiraga which talks about the Kula Ag Park expansion, the--number 2, which has answered a lot of the questions that I had on what's happening with the Kula Ag Park. So, why don't you make opening comments, and then we can go into this for a little bit.

MS. ARCE: Aloha, Chair Sugimura and Councilmembers. Thank you for inviting us to give an update on the Kula Ag Park CIPs. We have a presentation that might provide more detailed information, and I also have prepared a financial breakdown.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, good.

MS. ARCE: We have...we are supposed to have Dan Shupack from Management standing by as a resource, as well as one of the water engineers, either Tom Ochwat or Chris Kim. And I also have next to me our Ag Park Manager, and he will...he and I will share in giving a presentation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Next. Oh, can you press the button? Okay. So, let me provide a little history on the Kula Ag Park just so that everybody is refreshed of what Kula Ag Park is. The Ag Park Program is to promote the development of diversified agriculture by providing appropriately-sized lots at reasonable rent with the long...with long-term tenure. Supporting agriculture helps to diversify our

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

economy to not be solely dependent on tourism. *(echoing)* Prior to the establishment of the County of Maui Department of Ag --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: One moment. *(audio interference)* Oh, we're good now? Okay. Sorry about that. Go ahead.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Prior to the establishment of the County of Maui Department of Agriculture, the Ag Park Program was being managed by the Office of Economic Development under the Mayor's Office. Oversight and management responsibilities have transferred to the Agriculture Department in Fiscal Year '23. Next. The only Maui County Agriculture Park is the Kula Ag Park, which is 445 acres and located on Pūlehu Road. There are 31 farms, with lots ranging from 10 to 30 acres, and supports 25 farmers. Next. The aerial map that you see here--go down one more--shows the Kula Ag Park in light green. Next. So, a little background on the funding and the expansion. In Fiscal Year '19, 6 million, which is a cumulative of 5 million from the State and 1 million from the County of Maui, was used to purchase a 262-acre parcel of land adjacent to Kula Ag Park. More funding was needed to...for the project planning and implementation. In Fiscal Year '20, the County was allocated 3.5 million from the State for water pumps, ground, and site improvements to facilitate the expansion. Next. The goals of the Kula Ag Park will be explained on this slide. Oh, hi, Dan. The new Ag Park will provide an additional 28 Ag lots to farmers. Next. The major components of the UMAP, also known as the Upper *[sic]* Maui Agriculture Park, is to build paved road systems, including gulch crossing, nonpotable-water distribution system, including fire hydrants and overhead electrical service. And I'll turn the presentation over to Jeffrey. *(pause)*

MR. JURICKOVICH: Okay. So, there are...there are four phases of the construction to developing the Upcountry Maui Ag Park, which is referred to as UMAP. Phase I, construction of the booster pump. The booster pump station is required for an agreement between Mahi Pono and the County of Maui in order to supply 1.5 million gallons of water per day to the Kula Ag Park, and an additional 1 million gallons of water per day to the UMAP. Construction of the booster pump is expected to begin January 25th...January 2025 and end in...and end in December of 2026. Phase II of the project is the construction of a reservoir. The...the new 2.4-million-gallon reservoir will provide water for UMAP, as well as additional water storage for fighting fires and for drought conditions...conditions. Construction is expected to begin in early 2026, and end mid-2027. Phase III of the project is the installation of a 12-inch main line. This...this water main will connect the new 2.4-million-gallon reservoir to UMAP, and will be gravity-fed. This part of the project is expected to begin...to start in early 2026 and completed by end of 2026. And Phase IV, final phase of the project, is construction of the Upcountry Maui Ag Park. This includes roads, power, water lines, and fire hydrants, and expected to begin in early 2026, and to be completed by mid-2027. *(pause)*

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ARCE: Okay. Next slide. Oh, that one. Yeah. The total cost for all phases, including the cost of a project manager, who will provide oversight on all phases of the project, is at 42.5 million. Please refer to that document. It looks like this, with the green head...headings. The County has acquired a total of 24.2 million. For the State appropriation, I provided all information that was requested to the State Budget and Finance, and the signed PAB form and the State Budget and Finance is now drafting the B and...budget and finance memos. Next. Oh, and that information was as of November--end of November--from Kyle Maki. Takeaways. So, the Ag Parks...can you go back? So, the Ag Park supports growth and development of diversified agriculture, and it promotes the agriculture industry. These phases of improvements to the Kula Ag Park water system and the expansion of the Ag Park Program through the development of the new agriculture park in Upper Kula, which we call UMAP, supports growth and development of diversified agriculture throughout the State, thus promoting the agriculture industry, which aligns with the Chapter 226-7 of the Hawai'i State Plan. Once the expansion is completed, the Ag Park will support an additional 50 farms on a total of close to 700 acres. Thank you. Yeah. That concludes our presentation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. I see Mr. Shupack here. Do you have anything to add from Management and CIP?

MR. SHUPACK: Thank you, Chair. Yes, I'm just here to help answer any questions that the Committee might have regarding the Kula Ag Park expansion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you're done?

MR. SHUPACK: Yes. Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. SHUPACK: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Any...any testifiers?

**. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(7). . .**

MS. SZABO: Chair, there are no testifiers signed up to testify. We'll do last call. Either raise your hand in Teams or come down to the podium. Three, two, one. Chair, we see no one seeking to testify.

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

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

**. . .CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY BFED-21(7) . . .**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, no objections. Whew. I think...I think you're asking for...well, this is...I could be mistaken, but your slide--or the presentation showed that you need \$42 million for this project?

MS. ARCE: Yeah. Thank you for the question, Chair. Yes, that's correct. And Dan can elaborate, but I believe it's because of the escalation of the cost of the project since it had started a while back, and there was a lag in the project. And also, the recommendation from the engineers were to provide...were to have a larger reservoir. The larger reservoir will function as additional water storage for our farmers. And oftentimes, during drought, we have low water. And also, in light of the fire, additional water being stored there will be available for fighting...fighting fires. Maybe Dan can elaborate more on that answer. Thank you, Chair.

MR. SHUPACK: Yeah. Thank you, Director Arce, and Chair, and Members of the Committee. Yeah, just to clarify, yeah, that there's--42-and-a-half million is the total projected cost of the project. That's all four phases. Twenty...a little over 24 million has already been acquired through various means of State and County funding. So, the amount that's still required to complete the project, based on the--our current estimated cost, is 18.2 million. So, that's...that's the total remaining funds that's needed. And that...that's not all going to be, you know, requested from the County. We're going to pursue all...all avenues, between Federal grants and all...as well as through State...further State appropriations. We've already received 13.5 million in State appropriations out of that 24 million that's been acquired so far, so we're hopeful that we can...that, you know, we can obtain more funding from the State to help us reach our goal, making this project a reality.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, the initial 10 million that we got, with a matching 10 from the County, you're saying that you got an additional 14 million? You said there's 24 million from the State? Did I misunderstand you?

MR. SHUPACK: Oh. Yeah...no, the 24 is just the total...total funding from all sources.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, all sources? Okay.

MR. SHUPACK: Yeah. The...it was 13.5 is what we received from the State so far. Yeah. And yeah, 10 million of that was matching to the FY '24 appropriation from the County, so...

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you've gotten all of the 10 million...the initial 10 million?

MR. SHUPACK: That's correct, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And...and...and you're anticipating 18.2 more million, and...from what sources?

MS. ARCE: So, this new number is also new to the Department. I've asked Management Department to have Strategies 360, whom we contract, to provide us a list of funding opportunities that we can go for. And as Dan mentioned, we will also seek out grants that we can apply for independently, and other sources of funding. So, you know, this is...like I said, this is new to us. And the other option would be to go with the smaller...smaller tank, which would cost less. And I don't know the cost of that, but that wouldn't have enough water for backup. That would just be replacing what the farmers have typically allotted by the day. But you can correct me, Dan, if I'm wrong...or Jeffrey.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mr. Shupack, so that's correct? I guess you're asking to be clarified.

MR. SHUPACK: Yes. Yes. I believe that's correct, yeah. And I believe that the...the cost of the smaller reservoir, which was...I want to say it was a 1...1 million...1.3-million-gallon reservoir...yeah. And the...the cost...the estimated cost of that was about, I believe, \$10 million less that would --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MR. SHUPACK: Oh, it's 7 million. Okay. So, it was 15 instead of 22. Okay. Yeah. So, it would be...yeah, it would be a good percentage less, yeah. But of course, at the cost of reduced excess storage capacity.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, it...it sounds like what you're looking for is Federal funds then, not State funds, correct? Or County funds. You're looking for Federal funding if it's Strategies 360; is that correct?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Chair. Yes, we...we are going to try. It's not a guarantee. If we can get assistance to ask for more State funding, that...we would be grateful for that as well. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, maybe what we can get from--oh, go ahead.

MR. JURICKOVICH: So, with the larger reservoir, that would be enough, as we mentioned, for...for functional, as well as some surplus. So, without the additional...doubling the size from approximately 1...or 1.2 to 2.4 million gallons,

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

we would actually have a surplus. And that's a...that's a big concern. Because when the reservoirs do get low now, that's all we have. So, we would be able to...to store that additional 1.2 million. We're currently not using...not getting the one...the combined 2.5 million, which is we'll...which we're going to be able to get from the Mahi Pono reservoir. We currently aren't getting that much water now, but if we have the...the 2.4-million reservoir that we build, we also have a 1.3-million-gallon reservoir on site, and then additional reservoir up top, another 4-million-gallon reservoir. So, we could hold on--keep all those reservoirs full, and we would have a significant surplus for drought conditions and for fire conditions. Because a big concern now is a backup. So, when we run out, that's all we have stored.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. So, Staff, maybe we can send a letter and find out what the--is there phasing? I think you're--you know, I think I've been hearing about this booster pump for years, and these are brand-new numbers in terms of what they're talking about today for improvements. So, maybe by the end of this, maybe we can get a letter together to them to find out what they're planning on doing with the additional funds--it's a lot of money--and their source of revenue. And I guess they're not talking...looking at the County for revenues, it sounds like, right? It's...it's from other outside State, or significantly Federal funding; is that correct, Department? Strategies 360 is Federal.

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Chair. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to have Strategies 360 provide some funding opportunities. Of course, it's not guaranteed. We...it's possible that we might ask for CIP monies in our budget. It's also...potential that we can request from the State Legislature as well. We're going to have...try all opportunities that's available to us. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Then maybe we can find out what your time schedule is. Any...Member Johnson, questions?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Department, for joining us. I'm...I'm a big fan of the Kula Ag Park, and I hope that we someday can expand to other districts. So, in regards to the...the big...the big-ticket item, which is the reservoir, you know. As you know, the ADEPT Committee, we just passed out a 30,000-gallon water catchment system that you don't need a permit for for...for farm...for farms now anymore. Is that something that you could kind of--if you did look at having a smaller reservoir because you know the prices is so--it gets...it's so astronomical at that...when you get the big reservoir. When you get the small one, could you have like the individual farms...the individual...individual farms be the--responsible for making--you know, having a 30,000-gallon water catchment system on their...on their parcel? That way, you wouldn't need such a big big-ticket item, such as the reservoir. And I think you did pass that at WAI, Mike (*phonetic*). Sorry, I didn't mean that. Thank you.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Johnson. I...I think that's a great idea. I don't know if any conversation was made with the farmers. We recently just took over management not too--maybe like a year-and-a-half ago, and we're still, you know, trying to get rooted in what Kula Ag Park needs are, and what exactly we need to do in order to make progress on the CIP projects. But I...I like your idea. I can defer to Jeffrey or...and see if he has any comments on that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Sure.

MR. JURICKOVICH: That's a good question. In the year-and-a-half I've been managing the Ag Park, it's just rained a few times. So, catchment, you know, just my...my...my thoughts on that would be put in a catchment system. And if you're worried to fill it once, you may utilize all of that water in one day. But it does make me think of the possibility of maybe looking into a catchment, or allocating keeping the tanks full for an independent lot storage themselves. But I'm--that would --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Um-hum.

MR. JURICKOVICH: -- by--not a concern, but something that would have to be discussed would be how much allotment of each lot...farm lot would get to fill up their certain size of their tank, and then they would have their own backup. So, it is definitely something --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. JURICKOVICH: -- and that may be a possibility.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Well, like we're in the planning stages. But, you know, that big funds, the...the money, that is really what we're looking at. Wow, that's a big chunk of change for the...the reservoir. That's why I was just coming up with some solutions. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . The last thing I'll ask is, Phase IV is a long time away for the Ag Park. Phase IV is a long time away. Any thoughts on Ag labor dwellings in the Ag Park *(pause)* for Phase IV?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Johnson. I recall in a previous meeting that question was asked about...about residential Ag dwellings. And in following up with Guy at Finance, he mentioned that the Ag Park doesn't allow for residential dwellings.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Just Ag labor dwellings is...

MS. ARCE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- but...okay. All right. Thank you.

MS. ARCE: Um-hum.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, before we proceed, I wanted to pass out this document that we received from Munekiyo Hiraga, and I'll ask--you have questions, right? So, after this. So, can you pass out the document that we received? And Members, I'm not sure if all of you got it. It's...it's addressed to me from Munekiyo Hiraga, dated December 11th. It hit my office yesterday. It has a map of what they're talking about. It talks about the project in...in-depth. And...and the reason why they came up with this additional document is, the Department of Ag is proposing the development of the Upcon...Upcountry Maui Ag Park and...for the 262 acres and...and putting on...and related water system improvements, which is what we're talking about. So, this is relevant to the changes, I think, that are going on, and the funding. Yeah. Department.

MS. ARCE: Chair, I...failed to mention that in order to make progress on the development and building of the reservoir, whether it's the smaller one or the larger one, we need to acquire some of the land back from CTAHR, who is leasing that lot, and we're working on that as well. What happened with that was, we were proceeding with negotiations with Dr. Cynthia Reeves, the previous Administrator, and then she retired sometime in November, I think mid-November, so we need to pick up those conversations. I am told that we can just submit a letter to just take the land and amend it, but personally, I would like to be friends, and be able to have them as our partners, and be a favor in their eyes. And we are working with them, and hopefully, we can get them to agree with returning--or letting us have approximately 2 acres. And we're also helping them do a lot of movement of their infrastructure in order to accommodate the reservoir in the space that we are looking at. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook, you had questions?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. Thank you, Chair. I have a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And then remind that I...I have to leave early for a meeting in Kihei. Is there any earthwork as part of the pha...of this new phase to basically

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

make the area...maximize the amount of farmable area, or is that just up to the tenant...tenant's responsibility to do whatever improvements?

MR. SHUPACK: I can answer that. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

MR. SHUPACK: Thanks for the question, Councilmember Cook. Yeah, I believe that in kind of the preliminary layout of the Ag Park, they looked at usable land. And of course, you know, that was all previously Ag under A&B in the past, but there's also a lot of, you know, kind of challenging terrain...I guess you call it unfarmable or...yeah, like rock...you know, rocky, kind of uneven land. So, they did...they made it kind of a key part of their analysis...spatial analysis to make sure that that...there was a certain percentage of usable land per parcel. So, that's how they're...they've split it up. So, the intent is that, you know, each parcel will have so many acres of usable land. And --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thanks...thanks. That...that answers my question.

MR. SHUPACK: Yeah. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The booster pumps to get the water from the lower elevation, like Mahi Pono's, is it coming from their Pono Wai (*phonetic*) and being pumped up, or is there...and is there one or two booster pumps?

MR. JURICKOVICH: It's cur...it's currently...the...the existing booster pump that's there now is actually coming out of the ditch before it gets into their reservoir. And those are some really old...old pumps, I'm not sure how many there is. And that's part of the...part of the agreement was to replace the booster pumps. So, the booster pumps project, they're actually going to go in the reservoir, which is just...just downstream of...of 100 feet or so from where it comes out of the...the ditch. And so that's why...that's why they're going in...in the reservoir. So, there was a requirement. I don't know why that was...that agreed-upon several years ago, four or five years ago, but that...it was required to move those into the reservoir in order to get the additional 1 million gallons of water for the new UMAP.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That makes a lot of sense. It would be hard to get much water out of a ditch as opposed to the reservoir. The concrete-lined--are...are the new...this 2.4-million-gallon reservoir, is it a tank, or is it a concrete-lined Pono Wai?

MR. JURICKOVICH: It's a concrete tank...open concrete rectangle tank.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, it'll be nonpotable water because it's basically surface water from the plantation? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Is there any plans there could be, since it's in a tank, a small treatment plant so there'd be potable water in the future for processing? That's one of the challenges up there, am I correct, that there's not potable water to process produce?

MR. JURICKOVICH: It is...it is. As of now, it was just to be an open-top tank with just straight ditch water...water for Ag use only.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. Well, I'm supportive.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. So, you're going to leave, and once you leave, we're going to lose quorum. So, quick question, Member Kama. And I...I'm sorry, then Member Sinenci, then we're--I'm going to adjourn this meeting after. We're going to lose quorum.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So...so, my question, Chair--thank you, by the way--is, since the Ag park has...was created, how much...how much funding has the County put into this project and the State, and then--but my more important question is, for all the farmers that have been farming there, has any revenue...have they been able to develop any kind of revenue so that, as farmers, that they can actually produce? I mean, I think...if I'm reading this correct, right, is to promote the development of diversified Ag by providing these lots to people, right? So, the intent was to diversify the Ag industry. You can either sell it, you can trade it, but at least you're...you're sustainable in some way, shape, or form. I kind of shudder at the 42 million that we're going to be looking at if we're 18 million short already. And I'm just looking at what the budget might be next year, knowing what the economy is like now. And so, I just want to know that...that answer, Chair. How much money was invested in the Ag park since its inception, how much revenue has been generated since then, and how much more money are we going to have to invest in the Ag park if we're talking maybe about having farm--work...workers' housing on the Ag lot? I mean --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Cannot.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: -- those are discussions that we're having, but all of that comes at a cost. So, I'm wondering--still could be some projection of that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, to answer your--one of them, you cannot put housing at the Kula Ag Park.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Um-hum. Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, that's not going to be a cost that we're going to see in the future.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I will tell you that for as long as I've been on this Council, Kula Ag Park has been...this...as far as the additional booster pump was one year that I've been around, that was one of the discussions. Still not done. The acquisition of the 262 acres was in my Committee during my first term, so that...the State gave us money, or there was money that was assisted to take us to this point that we are. So, it's a great question, and maybe that's going to be something that we can send the Department in writing, Staff, so we can get like the history of how much we've spent. The document that we got from Munekiyo Hiraga gives us a history of --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- what...what happened and when, in terms --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- of dates and whatever.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: But great question, Member Kama. Member Rawlins--oh, Member Sinenci, then Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Just for clarification, the new addition is...we're still going forward with it being organic farming, Director?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Sinenci. I kind of recall that we discussed that in Fiscal Year '23, and I recommended...or I commented that I would not want to have our farmers be certified. I would prefer that they willingly use organic and safe practices.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, so you mean if--like, they would have to be certified organic to...to farm . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

MS. ARCE: I would prefer they not be mandated to be certified, but have the freedom to farm --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. ARCE: -- what they want, and how they want, but encouraged to use organic and natural --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Practice.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ARCE: -- methods...practices, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. And then the...the cement reservoir, is that on site?

MS. ARCE: That cement reservoir that you are talking about that we want to build is not yet been built. Currently, we have a pond-like reservoir that's rubber-lined.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: But...but is that...is that on the site of the...the expansion, the UMAP?

MS. ARCE: It is not. It is in the Kula Ag Park, in lot 16, and --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, that's --

MS. ARCE: Yes. And the space that we are wanting to use is immediately adjacent to that reservoir that's there now.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. And then the new addition would have the same types of administrative rules as the current Ag Park?

MS. ARCE: So, thank you for that question. As far as rules for the UMAP, those have to be determined when the UMAP is created. That was advice and counsel from our Corp. Counsel Nāhulu Nunokawa.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, then Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I just have two questions. One is regarding the clarification on Strategies 360 for Federal funding. I didn't understand. Are you...are you talking about the public affairs communication firm that Shan Tsutsui worked for, Strategies 360?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. I believe they're the same company that has multiple branches that handle communication, as well as have an arm that assists with providing a listing of grant opportunities and funding opportunities. So, the...Strategies 360 is contracted by Mayor's Office to provide assistance to all the departments, if they choose to use them, to search out opportunities.

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: What kind of opportunities, funding opportunities?

MS. ARCE: Federal-funding opportunities.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And was that RFPed out, do you know?

MS. ARCE: Are you asking if --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I don't --

MS. ARCE: If Strategies was RFPed out?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I just...I don't remember...yeah. I don't remember, you know --

MS. ARCE: Maybe Dan can --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- like as far as like procurement goes.

MS. ARCE: -- answer that from Management.

MR. SHUPACK: Yeah, I'm not...I'm not sure that...yeah. As Director Arce said, that's contracted through the Mayor's Office, so we'd have to ask them.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Because that was something that I remember Member Kama was kind of working on, to try to secure Federal funding through a firm. And I don't remember, you know, there being like specific professional services and an RFP going out so that there was an opportunity for anyone to bid on, you know, this...this work. But, you know, perhaps it's just one of the many things that was, you know, going on at the time. So, I'm sure, you know, I could have also missed it. So, I...but I...I would...I would like to get confirmation on that. And then the...the second thing, I just...I wanted to--oh, well, I also--for disclaimer, I have two minors, unnamed minors here. And then regarding Member Sinenci's question--and then I...I think maybe...maybe that was why Member Johnson was raising his hand--but you...you were...Director, you said that...Member Sinenci asked about organic certification. And I understand that that wasn't something that when we discussed in the pre...in a previous term about the expand...the Kula Park expansion getting organic certification, that was not a requirement. However . . .(timer sounds). . . I believe that pesticide application was prohibited. And so, in responding to Member Sinenci's question, I...I didn't hear like a...like a clear response to that, so I'm asking as pointed as I can. Pesticide application is prohibited, correct?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. So, pesticides, as we know, are...are also available as inorganic forms. It would be really good if our Department has the bill in hand so I can refresh my memory. As you said, it has been, you know, previous terms, so I think I would like to refer to that, and then we can be more clearer on the practices that will be involved on the...that we would expect from our farmers.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, mahalo. Sorry, when I said...when I say pesticide, I didn't mean synthetic chemical pesticide. And so, yeah, then if it's under that law, then it...it would be prohibited. Mahalo, Director. Mahalo, Chair. I heard the bell.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, thank you, Chair. Basically, Councilmember Rawlins summarized my questions. Because really, the bill was written so that you didn't have to get certification, but the neighboring farmers couldn't do anything that would prohibit you from doing such, such as spraying those chemicals. So, there has to be a buffer. So, you're not required to, but you also can't spray those nasty things next to a farmer who wants to get certified organic. Just a point of information. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else, Members? Okay. Oh, go ahead, Department.

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Chair. I just want to comment on Councilmember Kama's request about the history of the finances. I believe I would need to get help from OED because we just received this management responsibility recently. We don't have an accounting of that, so I wouldn't be able to provide that for you. However, we can work with OED, or you can make a direct request to them to assist with the answers for your...for Member Kama. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Kama, you put your hand up again?

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yes. Thank you, Chair. So, I think if the direction from the Director is to go and see OED, then let's send OED a letter.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, we will. Finance should have an accumulated accounting, right, of everything that went on with the Kula Ag Park I and II, yeah? Yeah. Okay. So, we'll...we...we will. We will get that. And...all right, Members. So, I'm going to defer this. I see no hands, so...no further hands. The additional document that we got from Munekiyo Hiraga--so, you're saying the reason why we got this is because now, you're trying to acquire the land that CTAHR is on for this booster pump, additional booster pump? Is that what you said?

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

MS. ARCE: Yes. Thank you for asking, Chair. Yes. So, we need 2 acres back from them, and I was told that we could just send a letter and take the land. But for me, I--myself, personally, I'm not that kind of person that's going to just do that. So, we are working with them, and now, with the changeover of losing their Administration, we have to wait for direction on who's the next person so we can pick up those communications. So far, the negotiations have been positive, and we've been giving them certain things that they requested, such as moving their containers, and moving their beehives in the area that we are proposing to use. So, I feel like it's going to happen, I just need confirmation from either the dean...the new dean that has stepped in temporarily, or the acting Administrator, who...whomever that might be. And the retirement has been recent, so we are just waiting for further direction.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow, this is like completely new. But they didn't buy the land from us, right?

MS. ARCE: No, they are...they are leasing it. But --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. So...

MS. ARCE: Yeah. But I can assure you that now that the projects fall under Department of Agriculture, we will try our very best to do what is needed to make progress on improving the infrastructure for our farmers, and to increase the amount of land that potential farmers are able to lease. My whole goal is to ensure that more farmers get on the land so that they are able to start making an income and increasing our food security.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow, you would think CTAHR would have the same goal as us, so it shouldn't be any...any problem at all for us to ask Munekiyo Hiraga to do this additional work so you can get to this goal that you just introduced today. So, we'll send a letter to the Department to get the history, financial history, and then to find out more about the CTAHR thing. It's very unusual.

MR. JURICKOVICH: Could add...add a little...add a comment to that as well. So, the booster pump is actually on the Mahi Pono land because that's going in the reservoir on their property. The CTAHR lot is in...basically in the middle of the Kula Ag Park, and that's on their lot as the...also the existing Kula Ag Park reservoir now. So, with that additional approximately 2 acres would be...would be to allow to the additional reservoir expansion, and the reason for that is so there would be much less infrastructure. It would basically be an expansion of the existing reservoir, that there would be two reservoirs side by side, which the water will float so they'll fill simultaneously and get pumped down simultaneously. So, it was the most efficient way to place...the best place to put an additional water storage tank, utilizing--next to the existing reservoir, which

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

**December 17, 2024**

---

has also got different pumps on it besides the booster pump relocation project from Mahi Pono.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Water is so important. Okay. Members, any other questions? Seeing none. I'm going to defer this item, and we'll continue this discussion next term.

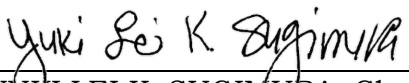
**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TC, AL, TP, and NUH).**

**ACTION: DEFER** pending further discussion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And if you could fill me in more about this CTAHR, and this kind of interesting situation. Mr. Shupack, thank you for working on this additional CIP project. And one of the other things that I would like to know are the existing farmers on Kula Ag Park I, and how productive it is, and the status of the leases that's there, and...yeah. But anyway, that's...that's a future item on the...I'm on the Kula Ag Park Committee, and we can discuss that also in the Committee meeting. And so, if no other questions, Members, this meeting is now adjourned. . . .(gavel). . .

ADJOURN: 3:03 p.m.

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, Chair  
Budget, Finance, and Economic  
Development Committee

bfed:min:241217:lt

Transcribed by: Logan Tsuji

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Council of the County of Maui**

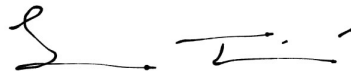
**December 17, 2024**

---

CERTIFICATION

I, Logan Tsuji, hereby certify that pages 1 through 94 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED the 15th day of January 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



---

Logan Tsuji