

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, ETHICS, AND TRANSPARENCY COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

May 19, 2026

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Chair
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Vice-Chair (In 1:41 p.m.)
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member (In 1:37 p.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (In 1:39 p.m.)

EXCUSED: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member

STAFF:

Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Keone Hurdle, Legislative Analyst
Joshua Edington, Legislative Analyst
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney
Maria Leon, Committee Secretary
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office

ADMIN.:

Victoria J. Takayesu, Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation
Counsel (All)
Thomas Kolbe, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation
Counsel (All)

OTHERS: (15+) additional attendees

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

CHAIR BATANGAN: . . . *(gavel)*. . . Will the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting of May 19, 2026, come to order. It is 1:34 p.m. I’m your Chair, Kauanoë Batangan. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today.

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Minors do not need to be identified. Committee Vice-Chair Nohelani U'u-Hodgins is excused. Councilmember Tom Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good afternoon, Chair.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Cook. Councilmember Gabe Johnson is also excused. Councilmember...or Council Chair Alice Lee is excused. Councilmember Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha 'auinalā kākou. Streaming live and direct from beautiful Hilo Town. I have with me one adult female canine. Her name is Hachacha (*phonetic*) Paltin-Vierra. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: . . . (*laughing*). . . Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha 'auinalā kākou, mai Molokai Nui a Hina. I'm at my private residence alone here. And aloha to Hachacha, too.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Councilmember Shane Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Hey, aloha 'auinalā, Chair. Happy to be here. No testifiers in Hāna, and hopefully it's a Hachacha afternoon. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: . . . (*laughing*). . . And then Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura is also excused. With us from Corporation Counsel, we have with us Corporation Counsel Takayesu and Deputy Corporation Counsel Kolbe. Good afternoon, guys. And then as...we also have with us our GREAT Committee Staff. Good afternoon, everybody. One second. Okay. So, everybody, please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. We have two items today. Let's take up public testimony at the beginning of the meeting. Staff?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, we currently have no one signed up for testimony at the beginning of the meeting. We can do a last call.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Yes, please.

MR. HURDLE: If anybody in the audience or on Teams would like to testify, please come up to the podium and begin your testimony or raise your hand on Microsoft Teams. This is the last countdown...three, two, one. Chair, seeing no one has indicated they wish to testify.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Staff. Members, without objection, can I close public testimony at the opening of the meeting?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

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

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CHAIR BATANGAN: Before we get to the first item of business, I'd like to recognize Councilmember Gabe Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, thank you, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. I know...I'm here, sorry for my tardiness, but the jet lag's kicking in, but I'm...I'm going full bore. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you for joining us. I...those...those...those return trips from Japan are rough. I give you credit.

**ITEM 11(28): RESOLUTION 26-81, SETTLEMENT AUTHORIZATION:
CHARLOTTE MARTIN V. COUNTY OF MAUI, ET AL.; CIVIL
2CCV-24-0000903**

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, first item on the agenda is Resolution 26-81. This would provide settlement for *Charlotte Martin v. County of Maui, et al.*; Civil 2CCV-24-0000903, filed on September 26, 2024. In the Department of Corporation Counsel's correspondence dated April 23, 2026, transmitting the claim, a request was made to discuss Resolution 26-81 as soon as possible because the trial was scheduled for June 8, 2026. After a Committee agenda was posted, Deputy Corporation Counsel Pascual informed Committee Staff that the trial has been postponed from June 2026 to sometime in June...or in 2027. Because this resolution is no longer time-sensitive and Deputy Corporation Counsel Pascual is unable to attend this afternoon, he has requested that we cancel or defer Resolution 26-81 at this time. Therefore, following public testimony, I intend to defer this item. Okay. But it has been posted, so we'll go through public testimony first. Staff, can we open up public testimony on this...on GREAT-11(28), please?

MR. HURDLE: Sure. Chair, we currently have no one signed up to testify, so we'll provide a last call for oral testimony. If anyone would like to provide testimony, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Microsoft Teams. The count is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Members, any objection to closing testimony on this item at this time?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(28) . . .

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. As...thank you. As a reminder, written testimony will continue to be accepted. I guess since it's been agendized, does anybody have any questions or comments that they'd like to make on the matter? I will remind you that the Deputy Corporation Counsel responsible for overseeing this matter is not able to be with us today, and I don't know how much information Corporation Counsel will be

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able to share, but going through our...our normal procedures, I will open the floor if...if you have questions or comments. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just wanted to clarify, you said not until calendar year 2027, or was it fiscal year?

CHAIR BATANGAN: Calendar year 2027.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. All right.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's it.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Before we...oh.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: First item.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Yeah, so this is the first item. Before we close discussion on this item, I'd like to recognize Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good afternoon, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Good afternoon. Any questions or comments on the first item?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: No.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. That being the case, without objections, I will defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused: NUH and ALL)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Members. All right. That was easy.

**ITEM 11(29): RESOLUTION 26-82, AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL
COMPENSATION RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF
SPECIAL COUNSEL MEYERS NAVE FOR LITIGATION
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AUGUST 2023 WILDFIRES
ON THE ISLAND OF MAUI**

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, second item. We have before us Resolution 26-82. This would authorize an increase in compensation for the employment of Special Counsel Meyers Nave to represent the County of Maui as a defendant in current and

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anticipated legal actions related to the August 2023 wildfires on the Island of Maui by \$240,000, for a total compensation not exceeding \$740,000. I will ask Corporation Counsel to provide opening remarks, and give Member U'u-Hodgins a minute to get settled before we recognize her on the floor.

MS. TAKAYESU: Good afternoon, Chair. Good afternoon, Committee Members. I'm here to ask for payment of 240,000 for Meyers Nave. Meyers Nave was a Los Angeles firm that we hired to assist us with the litigation regarding the Maui wildfires cases. We have terminated their retention as we no longer need them. This...these bills came as a result of a gap between when we tendered our duty to defend to our excess insurance carrier, Safety National, and I guess the gap is between when we retained them and when we tendered them. So, in accord with Safety National's litigation guidelines, they reduced their coverage of their bill. It was originally 854,000, and they agreed to pay 521,000. We were able to deduct another 93,000, and that's how we ended up with the 240,000 remaining. So, at this time, I don't know if we need to go into executive session depending on the questions I'm asked, but I'm happy to discuss the bills if needed. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Member U'u-Hodgins.

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Aloha, Chair. Aloha, everyone. Sorry I'm a little bit late.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you for joining us. Okay. Before moving into discussion, we'll receive testimony for GREAT-11(29). Staff?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair?

CHAIR BATANGAN: Oh. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had a clarifying question on what you had said in the opening and what Ms. Takayesu had said. You said that they represented us as the defendant, but my understanding was that we were the defendant and the plaintiff. Did they only represent us as the defendant and not as the plaintiff?

MS. TAKAYESU: That's correct. So, Meyers Nave was our Los Angeles co-counsel with McCorriston guys in Honolulu on the defense side, and John Fiske from Baron & Budd were...was our special counsel on the plaintiff side.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you for that clarification.

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Paltin. Any other clarifying questions before we open up the floor for public testimony? Seeing none. Staff?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, we currently have no one signed up for oral testimony, so we'll do a last call for testimony. If anybody would like to testify, please come up to the podium

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or raise your hand on Microsoft Teams. The count is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Members, without objection, I will close oral testimony for this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(29) . . .

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. As a reminder, written testimony will continue to be accepted. Okay. Members, I'll implement a three-minute questioning period per Member with a one-minute follow-up round. If anybody has any questions that require us to go into executive session, we can put a pin in those...or ask them, Corporation Counsel can let us know if we need to go into executive session. We'll put a pin in those, and then we can take the vote to go into exec. But my hope is to get everything that needs to be discussed in open first. Okay. I think I saw Member Johnson's hand. Do you want to start off, or do you have a question for me?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, Chair, I just...in my rush to move forward, I forgot to mention my Sunshine rule that there's no one here with me except for my snoring doggy. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Johnson. I envy your dog. That sounds lovely right now. Okay. All right. So, I guess that being the case, we'll start our discussion round. I'll first go to Vice-Chair U'u-Hodgins. Do you have any questions for Corporation Counsel?

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. So, this is to approve an additional, and it's in the resolution, so I can say \$240,000, not exceeding 740. What did we spend so far?

MS. TAKAYESU: So, so far, we spent 500,000 to Meyers Nave and 444,000 to McCorriston in Honolulu. This is the end of our legal bills. Safety --

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: So, pau after this?

MS. TAKAYESU: -- National is taking over all of our defense costs. To date, they've paid approximately 3 million.

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Safety National is taking over our defense costs?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Are we going to pay for them as well, or...

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MS. TAKAYESU: No, Safety National is our carrier.

VICE-CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, okay.

MS. TAKAYESU: So, they’re covering all of our defense costs.

VICE-CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, okay. Okay.

MS. TAKAYESU: So, to date, they’ve paid close to \$3 million.

VICE-CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, that was the total, \$3 million?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: And then our share was the 740, or will be the 740?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Whew. Okay. I don’t have any other questions. Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member U‘u-Hodgins. I’ll work the way down the line to my right, so Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Could...could you clarify when they decided that they didn’t want to pay? I didn’t want to...

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. We had been keeping Safety National apprised of our legal bills and discussions and updates all...pretty much all through this process. But when it came down to we met our self-insured retention, we tendered our costs to them. However, they have what they call litigation guidelines, which I was not intimately as familiar with, perhaps, as I should have been, but it was kind of a little chaotic at the time. But...so, for example, one of their guidelines was, you can’t have more than one attorney on a meeting call. And we were having weekly meetings, and there was more than one attorney, just because we were dealing with a multitude of claims and plaintiffs and the AG investigation. So, it never occurred to me to be like, oh, we can only have one of you on a call. So, you know, that added up, that...those were added costs.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No...well, that’s probably some really small print in there.

MS. TAKAYESU: . . .*(laughing)*. . . It was very small print.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That’s really my only question right now.

MS. TAKAYESU: Thank you.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Cook. Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. No questions at this time.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Department, for joining us today. Do you expect to come back at any...any other time in the future for any more funds? Because is it...is it phasing period? Is it this...maybe...that's really my question there. Is this it?

MS. TAKAYESU: This...this is it, yes. Safety National's been taking care of all of the current legal fees since. This was just that bills between when we received our...when we tendered our retention until the time we terminated their services. So, we will not be back. This was like sort of old bills.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Director. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Johnson. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Takayesu. I guess my question is, was it that we were only supposed to have one lawyer from the start, and that should have been our current insurance carrier?

MS. TAKAYESU: I'm not sure I understand. They wanted one...so they were okay with us retaining Meyers Nave, but they insisted that only one attorney from Meyers Nave can be on the call. You know, at times there were two or three, and then we also had our McCorriston firm in Honolulu, and they would have one or two on the phone...on the calls. And we were having weekly meetings, just given the nature of this. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, was it that we should have had only McCorriston or only Nave instead of both?

MS. TAKAYESU: That's a good question. I believe they would have covered one attorney. They didn't give us any pushback on the McCorriston firm, even though actually there was more than one attorney, now that I think about it, on that. But we'll just gloss that one over. . . .*(laughing)*. . . I think they would have been fine if we had one from McCorriston and one from Meyers Nave. It was multiple attorneys from the same firm that they gave me pushback on.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. And then I guess, can you clarify also who's the they that gave you pushback? Was it the Attorney General, was it...

MS. TAKAYESU: Oh, no, it was Safety National. It was our excess insurance carrier. Specifically, it was...well, there is a huge chain of command, apparently, within this insurance carrier, so they had a local liaison counsel, but then they had to kick it up the chain, and then kick it up the chain, and it was some unnamed person, basically, on the mainland.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That said only one?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yeah. Well, it's in the...it was in their litigation guidelines, in the policy, and as Member Cook mentioned, it was in very small print, but what we did was we ran it through our third-party administrator, and they ran it through their third-party administrator, and that's how we came up with the numbers we did.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the...the reason that they cut some off is because the third...or the insurance carrier paid for some of...some of it --

MS. TAKAYESU: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- because they didn't alert us soon enough, or something? Or what was that?

MS. TAKAYESU: We...we argued with them about some of the charges that they decided they weren't going to pay. For example, they objected to the hourly . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . fees of a Los Angeles firm, which was \$650, which is actually in the going rate now, and so they finally relented on that, and allowed that. So, there was...like when we called them on certain judgments that they made, they were reasonable and backed off.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. I did hear the bell.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Paltin. Member Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. So, we've been hearing about global settlement. This is not about global settlement, then?

MS. TAKAYESU: Well, this is litigation in association with the global settlement, helping us get there, going through the mediations in Los Angeles, and all the court hearings and such, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: And so, you said in your opening that sometimes we were defendants, and sometimes we were plaintiffs?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Can you explain that?

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. So, we decided as part of our litigation strategy that we were going to pursue a lawsuit against HECO because we believe that we suffered damages, and that they were primarily responsible, as well as other co-defendants. And so, that put us in the seat of being a plaintiff, where we were actively suing. And then, of course, we were being sued by everybody. We got just lumped in with all the other defendants

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in this case. So, that's why we had like two sides. We were plaintiff, and we were also defendant.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you for that explanation.

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. I'm done.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Since Chair Lee is not yet here, I will take my turn. Ms. Takayesu, so the resolution that was transmitted to us says that the compensation is for employment of Special Counsel Meyers Nave to represent the County of Maui as a defendant in current and anticipated legal actions. But this is all past billings, and so I don't understand what the current or anticipated actions are for.

MS. TAKAYESU: Well, the bills were for current litigation.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. TAKAYESU: That's how we're looking at it. At the time that they were incurred, it was for current litigation.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. TAKAYESU: So, I guess that's how we're reading it.

CHAIR BATANGAN: And then the anticipated legal actions --

MS. TAKAYESU: Actually...

CHAIR BATANGAN: -- there's none...there's nothing moving forward. So, all of the...all of the billings have been closed.

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes.

CHAIR BATANGAN: This is just outstanding invoices from the period in which we terminated the contract to whenever we received the invoices?

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. And I guess just to put a bow on what Member Paltin was asking, it was all for actions that are...I don't remember what the term was, but extra insurance is not covering?

MS. TAKAYESU: That's correct. Yeah.

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CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you. So, I don't have any other questions. Do any of the other Members need a second round of questioning? Okay. Just to make it crystal clear, nobody has any questions that may require executive session? Okay. So, that being the case, let me flip through my notes. Would anybody like...I'll entertain a motion to adopt Resolution 26-28, including any nonsubstantive revisions at this time.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So moved.

VICE-CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Second.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Moved by Member Cook, and then I'll recognize Vice-Chair U'u-Hodgins as the seconder. Any discussion? Okay. Seeing no discussion, all those in favor of the motion, please raise your hand and say "aye."

COUNCILMEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR BATANGAN: I see...oh.

MS. MACDONALD: Sorry, Chair, that's eight "ayes," one excused, Chair Lee. The motion passes.

**VOTE: AYES: Chair Batangan, Vice-Chair U'u-Hodgins, and
 Councilmembers Cook, Johnson, Paltin,
 Rawlins-Fernandez, Sinenci, and Sugimura.**

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

EXCUSED: Councilmember Lee.

MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION: Recommending ADOPTION of Resolution 26-82.

CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Thank you, Members. This item will now move on to full Council for consideration.

MS. TAKAYESU: Thank you.

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CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, that concludes the agenda that we have posted. Members, I just want to make it clear, so that takes care of all of the litigation matters that were requested by Corporation Counsel during our budget session. So, we don't have any outstanding litigation coming down the docket. Okay. All right. And with that, this concludes the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting. Thank you very much, Members. The time is now 1:56 p.m. This GREAT Committee meeting is adjourned. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 1:56 p.m.

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Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 12 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 17th day of June 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniel Schoenbeck", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Daniel Schoenbeck