

Aloha BFED Council Chair Sugimura, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez and members: I write to you because I am greatly concerned with the Department of Personnel Services and their handling of recruitment, position creations, and reallocations. As an administrative management employee, I wanted to confidentially share some things with you that I have run into frequently in my position, and for which the Council may not be aware as follows:

- When the Mayor and Council approve expansion positions during the budget session, that alone does not guarantee the department the position. DPS still has to determine if the department really needs it, and if so, they might not agree on the position title approved by Mayor and Council.
- Sometimes positions approved by Council in one year are still pending creation in the next budget cycle. This is often at DPS's delay, not the departments. You can tell on the department's Budget Details submitted by the Mayor, by the P-00# (but asking for a full-year salary instead of 8 months that this position has still not been created since the prior budget approval.)
- It appears DPS has no timelines for their review of position creations, employee reallocations, etc. They have needlessly prolonged various departmental requests, with no recourse for departments or employees. This denies the departments their approved positions, their reallocation of vacant positions, delays recruitment, and for employees seeking reallocation, it denies them any administrative remedy.
- The fact that DPS allowed their recruitment monies to lapse because they were working on their office renovations, shows a lack of care for County recruitment or staff shortages.
- DPS is boxing all administrative management positions into 2 main classifications Administrative Officer ("AO") (SR-24) and Administrative Assistant II ("AAII") (SR-22). The other position series is the Business Administrator ("BA") which is an excluded management (EM) position. DPS only allows the BA for use with Police or Fire Departments. All other departments are only eligible for the AO or AA II. There is no statewide rule for that, its just DPS's choice. (Ex: Hawaii County has a Business Administrator in their Office of the Prosecuting Attorney.)
- All admin management employees cannot be boxed into 2 positions, the duties are distinctly different for each. Limiting everyone to either AO or AAII is unfair and discriminatory especially when our counterparts on other islands are doing the same or very similar duties in EM positions.

- According to DPS, to be an AO, your department needs to have a certain amount of staff, but no one knows what that amount is. This is also unfair. No consideration is given to the complexity of the department's work, nor the complexity of the positions managed within the department. There is no justification for this or authority for DPS to operate on this basis.
- DPS is not open to classifying other positions that other County's have even though the departments can show that the position/work of the other County's employees are identical to, or very similar to, the work of the County of Maui employees. Other County's administrative management employees doing the same, or very similar work, are doing it at EM salaries, as opposed to County of Maui employees doing it at SR-22 or SR-24.
- The difference between the EM and SR salary schedules is that EM salaries are With-In Range Progression ("WIRP") which provides small annual increases, as opposed to the SR salary schedule which is Steps D & E increase after every 2 years; Steps F - L, increase after every 3 years.
- DPS says its up to them to determine what the position should be and they don't have to classify other positions that other County's have. However, pursuant to HRS Sec. 76-11 there should at least be equal pay for equal work of employees in the same bargaining unit and jurisdiction (no matter what the job title.)
- If DPS is unwilling to classify other admin management EM positions for Maui County, then they need to allow the BA position for other departments, not just Police and Fire.
- So many of us are working at lower pay levels doing the same or very similar work as the other County's employees who are doing it in EM positions. I am aware of at least one reallocation being reviewed now going on 2 plus years. That reallocation requests a new position be classified for Maui County, the same position the persons counterpart on another island is doing as an EM-3 with a staff less than half the size of the Maui employee's department.
- It is perceived that DPS doesn't want people to advance and that they are constantly looking for ways to deny reallocation requests, rather than looking for ways to approve them.
- DPS is not taking into consideration the additional work that comes with time and new technologies, and increasing position FTE. Rather than helping to look for ways to reallocate vacant positions upward (to make salaries more inviting for recruitment), and reallocate and/or reclassify

filled positions (to validate the work of the current staff), they appear to look for ways to deny it, and/or if there is no good reason to deny it, they just let it sit and don't do anything with it.

- Although DPS does not set salary schedules, except for their opportunity to provide input during labor negotiations, DPS is able to assist departments to reallocate existing positions either vacant or filled to higher SR levels, and/or reclassify positions to higher SR or EM levels. This would help with employee retention and make the vacant positions more inviting for applicants.
- DPS needs to allow/welcome new, higher pay classifications for County of Maui that other Counties already have, and not be so unwilling to classify them.
- In a recent council meeting regarding a recruitment contract, the DPS Director stated that departments can create their own positions. This was not completely truthful. The Departments only draft the position description as they believe the duties should be for that position in their department, but as with everything, DPS has the final review and say, and can revise and/or deny it, or just leave it pending until they are ready to do something with it. Again, no timelines.
- DPS has stated to the Council that they encourage Departments to hire at entry level and build employees from within. The problem with that is that entry level positions don't have attractive salaries and so we end up with no applicants. There is also not going to be any advancement opportunities for these entry level staff to move up to until people retire or resign. They can literally be in entry level positions for years and if you are BU3 or BU4, you haven't even had a step movement in several years, only small salary schedule increases.
- I'm not sure why there are unnecessary delays of position creations, reallocations, and new classifications, but the Director and Deputy Director are highly involved in all decisions. They appear to be very resistant to employee advancement, and in my opinion, are crippling the County of Maui by operating similar to an oppressive dictatorship.

I would encourage the Council to consider possible questions during or prior to their FY2026 budget session, for example:

- What are DPS' timelines for processing the following:
 - Creation of Council approved positions submitted in Workday by departments.
 - Employee reallocations submitted through Workday.

- Vacant position reallocations submitted through Workday.
- Classification of new positions in Maui County already available in the Statewide Classification system.
- How many vacant or filled reallocations or position creation requests take longer than:
 - 3 months
 - 6 months
 - 1 year or longer
- Is there a minimum amount of employees that would determine whether an administrative management staff member is eligible for AO SR-24 or AAI SR-22? If number of staff is a consideration, what are those numbers and where is the authority for that?
- Why is the BA position for Maui County limited to Police and Fire only, but not for other Counties?
- If DPS is unwilling to allow the BA position for other departments, is DPS willing to classify other EM positions to be in line with other Counties to provide the highest salaries for equal work for County of Maui employees?
- Is DPS willing to work with departments to reallocate vacant and filled positions to make staying or applying more inviting?
- How long does DPS believe it will be a “training” department?

I would respectfully ask the Council to please reach out to departments as to their dealings with DPS good or bad.

This is much bigger than just finding a way to get more applicants or holding job fairs. It’s about trying to increase the salaries of existing vacant positions through reallocations, and supporting the employees we already have and making sure they are being fairly compensated in comparison to other counties. When counterparts in other counties are doing the same job or very similar, at far higher salaries, its unfair and demeaning to our County of Maui employees.

There should also be some set timelines on position creation and reallocation requests. It always feels that DPS spends most of their time trying to justify a denial of a position creation and/or reallocation, rather than how they can help the department to get it approved.

Lastly, I hope the Council might consider a Charter amendment to change the hiring process for the Director of the Department of Personnel Services from the

volunteer Civil Service Commission to appointed by the Mayor with approval of the Council so there is more oversight. Some departments/branches of the County government don't even realize that the Civil Service Commission is currently doing the annual evaluation review of the Director of Personnel Services.

The fate of the County's workforce is dependent on the Department of Personnel Services.

Mahalo for all you do!