

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

MINUTES

April 6, 2026

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:06 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF: Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst
Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary
James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney
Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices:

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Keomailani Hirata, Council Aide, Molokai Residency Area Office
Chaelin Ryu, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

ADMIN.: Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel
Lesley Milner, Budget Director, Office of the Mayor
Bradford K. Ventura, Fire Chief, Department of Fire and Public Safety
Ryan Otsubo, Assistant Chief, Department of Fire and Public Safety
Zachary Edlao, Ocean Safety Bureau Chief, Fire Rescue Operations Division,
Department of Fire and Public Safety
Richard “Remi” Mitchell, Director, Department of Housing
Saumalu Mata‘afa, Deputy Director, Department of Housing
Stacey Vinoray, Housing Program Research Analyst, Department of Housing
Gail Rumbaoa, Housing Administrator, Department of Housing
Qunli (Helen) Zhao, Housing Program Accountant, Department of Housing

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OTHERS: Dean Wong
Ashlee Klemperer
Susan Graham
Hana Diller
Danielle Castrence
Josh Woodburn
Travis Liggett
Nicole Hokoana
Jeremiah Savage
Christopher Salem
Jasee Law
Others (23)

PRESS: Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.

ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BILL 55 (2026), BILL 56 (2026), BILL 57 (2026), BILL 58 (2026), BILL 59 (2026), BILL 60 (2026), BILL 61 (2026), BILL 62 (2026), BILL 63 (2026), BILL 64 (2026), and RESOLUTION 26-63))

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It is now 9:06 a.m., and today is actually the first day...second day of deliberations. We met last week Wednesday, and then we had Council meeting, Good Friday, and here we are today. I hope all of you had a wonderful Easter with your families, ate a lot of food, hunted Easter eggs. For those of you with little ones, I envy you, as my son is now 33 years old. This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Law, and as a reminder, when your name is called, if you're not in the Council Chambers, please identify by name who is...if anyone is with you in the room, vehicle, or workspace, and minors do not need to be identified. Good morning, Vice-Chair Kauanoe Batangan.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, Members.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Good morning, Chair Lee. Do you have a greeting?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I do have a greeting, and it's an easy one. However, even though it's easy, we don't want to say...the morning one is buenos dias --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, buenos dias.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- and I don't want to have to say buenos noches.

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

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, I hope the meeting is not going to last that long, right?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, yes, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: For you, we will not go past 1:00. Buenos noches, Member Paltin. Oh, buenos dias.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's for Hāna tonight. Buenos noches.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, yeah. Buenos dias.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka buenos dias kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Johnson, buenos dias. He is here, right? Oh, yeah, online.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: There's no testifiers...can you guys hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can hear you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. There's no testifiers. I'm alone, and I'm ready to work. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. You know, we can't see you. Your...the lighting is off. Member Rawlins-Fernandez will be joining us. She's at a site visit regarding the Molokai damage. Oh, she is on? Oh, okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, welcome. *(pause)* Member Rawlins-Fernandez, can you hear me?

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can you check?

MR. KRUEGER: Chair, she may be encountering technical difficulties right now, but...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, we're going to come back to you. I think you're frozen. Can you hear us now? *(pause)* No? Okay. We'll move on. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Sign language. Member Cook, buenos dias.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Good morning. Member Sinenci, online.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha kakahiaka and buenos dias. Here at my private residence, I'm here by myself, and no testifiers in Hāna, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Not until tonight.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Yeah, we're going to converge upon Hāna tonight for our district meeting. Thank you. I hope you're cooking to greet us. Member U'u-Hodgins is on her way. Did she log in? You know, I cannot see any...I don't see all the Members on my screen. And we will come back to her. I think I've gotten everybody. Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, can you now hear us? *(pause)*

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We can hear you now.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I'm getting a new computer today.

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

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Aloha kakahiaka, mai Molokai Nui a Hina. I'm at my private residence, alone, and there are currently no testifiers in the Molokai district office. And as you noted, Chair, I will be joining Congresswoman Jill Tokuda on some site visits in Kaunakakai for a little bit during our meeting. But I'll stay on to listen, and then we'll come back around 10:30.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. Please thank Congresswoman Tokuda. She's always there, caring. We really appreciate her. Thank you. And thanks for...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: She is, and I will extend that. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Thanks for doing that also. And I think we've gotten everybody now. Assisting us with today's meeting are the BFED Committee Staff. Thank you very much for working hard, even over the weekend. Our invited resources persons from the Administration, there's Budget Director, Fire Chief, Director of Housing, Deputy Director, Deputy Corporation Counsel Wigglesworth. And please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Thank you, Members, for attending today's BFED Committee meeting. We have one item on the agenda today, which is BFED-1, Proposed Fiscal Year '27 Budget for the County of Maui. And for anybody here waiting to testify, I am going to take testimony after we hear from the resources. So, appreciate your patience, and you can learn along with us with what's going on with our Fire and Housing Departments. So, Members, before I get into the Departments, I just wanted to say, first of all, I wanted to send best wishes to all of our

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Maui County participants in this week's Merrie Monarch Festival. And we proudly can stand beside the Paredes 'ohana, as they are there with their hālau in Hilo, as well as we have Kumu Nāpua Silva with their hālau and participating, so we'll be cheering them on. I want to really thank the Paredes family and the hālau because each year they have been very successful. So, looking forward to hearing about that and celebrating with you. I want to take a moment to go into what we did April 1, with the Upcountry residency area meeting, as well as Councilmember U'u-Hodgins to provide comments on Makawao-Ha'ikū-Pā'ia residency area meeting. On April 1, this was our first district meeting, and it was at the Hannibal Tavares Community Center. We convened at 6:01 p.m., and the Committee heard from about 44 testifiers. Many individuals shared their positive experiences and asked for continued support for Maui Economic Development Board's STEMworks Program, Maui Economic Opportunity's Transportation Services, the BEST Program, which is the Being Empowered and Safe Together Reintegration Program, and the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Cycle Strong Program. That was a brand new entity. Our...our common topics also included support from farmers and deer management special...especially through funding for Maui County Farm Bureau, Maui Coffee Association, Maui Cattlemen's Association, the...the Maui Farm, Hawai'i Farmers Union United, and the Farmers Apprentice and Mentoring Program, and the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m. Really appreciate the 44 testifiers and the community who came out strong to tell us what they were hearing within their community and what their needs may be. We will then continue on with Member U'u-Hodgins. Good morning. Welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone. I'm at my private residence right now, and I have two male adults, one Makoa U'u-Hodgins and one Koa Hodgins with me. And for the brief overview of the Pā'ia-Makawao-Ha'ikū meeting, we had 30 testifiers, and we heard a range of thank yous and concerns from my community, which include MEO Paratransit, Head Start, STEM and the beauty of STEM and all it can provide to our children. We heard from the Ha'ikū Community Association, and water testing of our surface water and our streams. We heard about advocates supporting open space. We all heard about concerns about Ho'okipa and the beach and the parking and the turtles and the tourist management and moving certain things mauka. We heard from public infrastructure about the parking situation in Pā'ia in general. We heard both sides of the Holomua Road situation that we're all familiar with. And we heard conversations about housing, taxes, facilities, and expanded access for cultural use and community service. It was fun. Thank you so much for all of you coming. And that's it. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Yes, it was a very interesting community meeting. We knew we would hear from a concern from a force, and we certainly heard it. And we even had Kai Lenny there, the famous surfer, as one of the testifiers. So, thank you for bringing your community out, Member U'u-Hodgins. I wanted to...before I get into the Departments, I wanted to do a special congratulations to George Vierra for retiring. This is his present for you. I'll have Staff pass it on to your office. I got this from [sic] him when I was at Wailuku First Friday, and I saw this, I said, this is George's retirement party. So, please give it to him. It's a...it's a Lahaina painting. So, thank you very much.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, and congratulations to him. And before I get into the Departments again, I wanted to say that Staff has been looking at the weather because I'm sure we all heard that Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, we may hear...or have some remnants of the Kona low storm, maybe not that bad. So, we are checking, and if we do have to, we will let you know. But it sounds like...you want to report what you heard from MEMA? Kirsten?

MS. SZABO: Good morning, Members. MEMA had reported that as they were getting briefed from the National Weather Service that there was limited impact expected for the County of Maui Monday and Tuesday, and there was some elevated concern for Wednesday, and then more concern for Thursday and Friday. While it is the Member's choice, you know, safety should always be the first concern, so their advice would be to reschedule, but of course, defers to the Committee and the Chair for what is best for the community and the Committee.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, I open it up to you, but Wednesday is South Maui, Thursday is West Maui, and so we were kind of wanting to check, just in case, if we should, you know, make a change. If we do have to make a change, it would be to next week--when did you say? The 14th, which is Tuesday.

MS. SZABO: Members, the...the Secretary team has identified that Tuesday the 14th is available at both South and West Maui, and Friday the 17th is also available for reservation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: For West Maui?

MS. SZABO: For both locations.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Oh, both locations. Okay. So, those are the...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Did you look into connectivity? Is it better now? Can...is the connection better to West Maui so that we don't have to go by car, and South Maui too?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin, are we having a connectivity problem in West Maui? I don't know.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What...what do you mean, connectivity problem?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee?

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: We...we've never had a connectivity problem that I'm aware of, except for like, you know, during the fire. . . .*(laughing)* . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, Chair Lee, did you...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, that's the reason why when we have public hearings there, we make it in-person and not online, because we're never sure if the online is going to work. Yeah, but...but our Staff has been working with MEMA to see if we can improve that situation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Maybe the Chief Ventura...no, he was shaking his head, maybe he knows more about this. Any updates on that, Chief?

MR. VENTURA: I mean, we can...we can assist like we did in a previous meeting with like Starlink if something needs to be brought out there, but it would be...somebody has to go out and test it first. You know, that's what we have going on right now.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. That's just an option.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, I'm not clear. Are you saying like you'd want people to drive to the Civic Center in the storm and then we would stay home and listen to them?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No. Oh, no. I...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Or I'm not clear on how it...how...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, I'm bringing...I'm bringing this up, Member Paltin, because if in case because of the weather and what we've experienced, if...we are looking at it in case we have to reschedule it, and if it does get rescheduled, it would be for the following week, the 14th or the 17th, as...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, I guess I'm not clear on why we're asking about the connectivity, because if...if we're all at home, like even the testifiers, then it would be like normal. But if we're expecting them to go to the Civic and get connectivity, then they're driving in the storm.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, we don't want...we want people to be safe.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, that's why we're having this discussion. And the connec...we'll make a comprehensive decision based upon, you know, whatever the situation is. And thanks, Chair Lee, because I think you remember the public hearing problems that we were having, right, setting up. All right, Members. So, those are...those are the thoughts that are happening now, and we will definitely let you know as soon as a decision is made. But we do want everybody to be safe. So, the...as far as the Wednesday night South Maui meeting and the Thursday for West Maui, we will weigh, you know, the options and...and come to a decision, let you know. And then if we have to reschedule, what Staff said is that they've already looked into the 14th or 17th of the following week to reschedule so that we still have...we can still have the district meetings. All right. So, that's that discussion. And so, at this time, I would like to go into discussions regarding the Departments. And we have Fire, Public Safety, and Housing with us today. And so, at first, I'm going to take up Fire, Department of Fire and Public Safety, Chief Ventura. Thank you very much. If you could give your opening comments, and then we'll hear from Housing, and then we'll take public testimony.

MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Chair. Aloha and good morning, everybody. Buenos dias. Thank you, Budget Chair, as well as Committee Members, for allowing us to come before you today to express our budget and answer any questions that you have. This year, as always, our budget is focused on supporting our Department's mission, keeping in mind our priorities, which are the people of our Department and our community. You know, we do this by developing proficiency in our mission-specific tasks of being first responders to save lives, protect property, our precious environment that we live in here in Maui County. This year, we come to you with nearly a flat budget. We have a .6 percent increase to last year. And to support our priorities, we have focused this year's...this coming year's budget on training, equipment, and preparing our firefighters and lifeguards for the hazards that they will face in these coming years. Additionally, we have heard this body, the Council, speak and talk and ask us questions about fire prevention and fire investigators as well as drowning prevention. Our budget reflects investments in these areas. Lastly, we have pursued external funding through donors to support our County so that we can minimize our ask to the County to support our Department and our community's emergencies. You folks just recently approved a donation of two firetrucks from the Sayre Foundation, and we have more on the horizon. Mahalo to all of you for being vested in our community and for always being very supportive of our Department's responsibilities. We look forward to your support of this year's Department of Fire and Public Safety budget as we work together to safeguard our community and meet the growing demands on public safety. Mahalo to all of you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Chief. Next, we have Housing Department.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair and Members. Good morning. The Department's initial presentation is going to closely track the letter dated March 10th, 2026 to the Budget Office, BFED-02. In that letter, Budget Chair asks that the departments address six questions during the hearings. The first is a description of significant increases or reductions or other changes in funding compared to the current fiscal year. The second is a description of new or discontinued positions, programs, or services and the rationale for those adjustments. The third is changes in grant funding, including any potential

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risks to Department operations as a result of that reduction in funding, particularly in light of changes in the Federal Administration. The fourth is any activity or adjustments in special or revolving funds. The fifth asks for information on capital improvement projects with an emphasis on the status of Fiscal Year '25 projects and their readiness to proceed. And the sixth asks for information concerning proposed changes to rates, fees, or assessments. So, with respect to the first question, significant increases or reductions or changes in funding compared to fiscal...the current fiscal year, I would ask that the Members take a look at the second page of the Department's response to the BFED-1 (HO-01) letter. And on that second page, we identify major changes to the Department's budget. There is increased funding for the Rental Assistance Program in the amount of 4.1 million over five...4.4 million over five programs. There's increased funding for the Affordable Housing Fund projects at about...approximately 21 million. And then there's the deletion of a number of one-time Fiscal Year '26 County grant fund subsidies, and those can be found on page 10-11 of the Budget Details. The more notable of those are the Lānaʻi Affordable Housing Fund...Housing Project, a reduction of 10 million, Lahaina Community Land Trust, a reduction of six million, Hale 'O Lā'ie Project, a reduction of 2.7 million, and the Kilohana Makai Workforce Housing Project, a reduction of 1 million. The second question asks for information concerning new or discontinued positions, programs, or services. And I would ask that the Members take a look at Budget Detail pages 10-3, 10-4. And in particular, there are a number of new positions. The first is on page 10-3 of the Budget Details, a new Housing Personnel Assistant, which would be a support role to a reallocated position for our Housing Operation...our Housing Administrative Officer. We would be reallocating an Administrative Assistant II position to a Housing Administrative Officer. And then we have a new position called the Housing Clerk, and that will...we will be discontinuing a position also called Housing Clerk that was unique to the Federal Division. And the new Housing Clerk position would be across all of the Department's divisions and service all their needs. Then there's the Housing Public Information Officer position. And then finally, a Housing Grants Manager position. And for all the new positions, we would be asking for eight months of funding. The third question relates to changes in grant funding, and the Department is anticipating a reduction in 50 percent of the Housing Trust Fund funding, and that can be located on page...Budget Details page 10-34. And there's a description of it on page 13 of our HO-01 letter. Then the fourth question relates to activity and adjustments in special or revolving funds. For the Affordable Housing Fund, the Department has ten projects in the budget. Six of those ten projects addresses the 80 to 120 percent AMI range, and three of those projects relate to County-owned land, reflecting a \$21.5 million increase in the fund. The Department submitted its Affordable Housing Plan on March 31st, and we delineated the criteria for our projects. They included readiness as their primary objective, the ability for the project proponents to leverage the County's funds. Then...let's see, we had experience of the contractor, the developer's experience. Let's see, what's the last category? I can't recall. Ah, yes. The fourth one was community need. Thank you for the help from the audience. . . .(laughing). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(laughing). . . Thanks, Saumalu.

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MR. MITCHELL: Deputy Director Saumalu Mata'afa reminded...refreshed my recollection. And then we also, in the evaluation process, had a bonus points category, and that was for projects that focused on 80 to 100 percent AMI, as well as projects that focused on County land. The Department is cognizant of last year's budget discussion, where there was some focused interest on making sure we were proposing projects around the 80 to 120 percent AMI, and that's what we've done this year. The fifth project...the fifth question relates to capital improvement projects. We have one capital improvement project, that's the Komohana Hale project...2 million was authorized for that project, and we currently have encumbered about 400,000 for site assessment, and there'll be additional encumbrance for market study, and the site evaluation is proceeding. The sixth question relates to proposed changes to rates, fees, or assessments. The Department only has one fee, and that is the fee relating to Chapter 2.97 projects when they were initiated, and there are no changes to those fees. The Department would also be asking for reauthorization of funding for the Deed Restriction Program in the amount of 500,000. As...as the Council knows, there was a bill recently introduced to allow the program to provide funding not only for new home acquisitions, but also for renovations of existing homes. And then in the Budget Details on page 10-9, relating to contractual services, there was a line item expansion request for \$670,000. The Department anticipates we do not need that now as that line item relates to the Hulialu Transition Housing Project, where we were anticipating the State would not continue funding the program, but we have indication from the State that they will be funding it to the tune of 1.5 million, and so we're currently in negotiations with them to extend that funding. And that's the Department's initial presentation. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. So, Members, now at this time, I'm going to do public testimony, and Director Mitchell, if you want, I'm going to do Fire first, and then maybe you can come back after we do Fire during deliberations, so...for questions from the Members. So, we have testifiers, for sure. Let me put away this stuff. Welcome all the testifiers that have been sitting here very patiently. I...I want to ask you to sign up if you haven't yet signed up in the lobby for...to testify, as well as online meeting via Teams link, or you can call in by phone, noted on today's agenda. Testimony is on budget items and is not limited to the departments scheduled today. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas as well. And under the Sunshine Law, we will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting 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. If calling in, please follow the prompts via phone, star-5 to raise your hand and lower your hand, star-6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier's list in the order testifiers sign up or raise...or raise their hands. For those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added. Staff will then call the name on...you're logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it's your time to testify. At this time, Staff will enable your microphones and video. Please ensure that your name appears on Microsoft Teams as the name you prefer to be referred to or anonymous if you wish to testify anonymously. If you're in person, please notify Staff that you would like to testify anonymously. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Oral testimony is limited to

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three minutes per item, and if you're not done, I'll give you another 30 seconds to complete, and...and once you're done testifying or if you do not wish to testify, you can also view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live or mauicounty.us/agendas. We will do our best to take each person up in an orderly fashion, and we'll now call on testifiers wishing to testify at the beginning of the meeting. Staff, please call the first testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The first testifier is Dean Wong in the Chamber, to be followed by Ashlee Klemperer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning, Mr. Wong. So, this is why I missed your retirement party. It was at Imua. Your celebration, it was fabulous.

. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. WONG: Thank you so much. And thank you, Councilmembers. And pardon my hoarse voice this morning. My name is Dean Wong. I am the CEO of Imua Family Services. I'm also the contracted CEO at Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center. I might refer to it as PYCC. So, I am actually here this morning to discuss Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center with you really quickly, which is, I think it's Bill 55, Section 6, and item number 12.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Like that.

MR. WONG: So, there you go. Anyway, I just wanted to say that, you know, this past weekend, before the weekend, the Department of Human Concerns sent out a congratulatory award letters for those who had put in their grant proposal, and the funding that they noted in the reward letter was about 400,000, which is what we had been previously getting in terms of support for a very long time at Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center, so it was just flat-funded support. I really appreciate the Department's continued support to Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center and to the programs that they've been running for so many years. It is the only youth center on the North Shore providing services to that number of youth. However, it cannot continue to operate at a flat-funded amount, and so the request that we actually put in for the '27-'28 fiscal year budgets over two years was around \$554,000, so that's \$154,000 increase...and again, that is because it has not seen an increase in so many years. The actual operating budget for Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center runs closer to \$835,000 annually, so you can see that this request is not asking for its full amount. With the amount of young people today that are needing more mental health support and counseling, it is important that we not just provide recreational drop-in experiences and programs for these young people, but that we also build in opportunities for them to receive the help and support that they need around substance abuse, around youth and teen suicide, depression, and anxiety, and that is the area that Imua Family Services is supporting the Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center in, in bringing those clinical and support services to their programming. So, this funding request that the department...that PYCC is asking for through the Department is really so that they can increase their programming efficiency and so that they can increase the style and the programs that they are giving to the young people. So, I just

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wanted you to see that when that comes up in your budgetary, that although it has been recommended to just continue the funding that it has been receiving for many, many years, I wanted you to note that there was an increase in funding that was requested. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, question, what was the amount again?

MR. WONG: The amount that we requested was \$554,000.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Members, it's in the budget for 350, as you said, so...

MR. WONG: Oh, okay. That's actually less than I thought it was in the budget for, so I appreciate that. I thought it was in the budget for about 400,000 is what I saw.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It was probably rounded up.

MR. WONG: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anyway, 350.

MR. WONG: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. WONG: That would be dramatically less than what they have been operating on for even up to this point, so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. WONG: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, quickly then, are you...what did you say when you introduced yourself? What is the relationship with PYCC?

MR. WONG: So, as I mentioned, you know, their budget runs around \$835,000 to operate annually. You know, in the...they had one CEO that had been there for quite some time, as you know, for over 30 years, and that CEO was not actually receiving a full salary through the organization. And so, in order for them to continue, with the cost of doing business increases, with the cost of administrative costs, and with the cost of leadership changes, they couldn't continue to operate. So, Imua Family Services stepped in and created an administrative agreement, which is a new kind of contract. It's not a merger. It's not a dismantling of a 501(c)(3), but it's two nonprofits coming together, one to support the other one, so it reduces their overhead costs dramatically, and being able to not have them have to do things like have Xerox contracts and increased accounting service. While they were having to sort of piecemeal all of their accounting and their auditing services, now Imua Family Services, which has a strong capability in its administrative services, is able to do those aspects of the operating their organization at

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an extremely reduced cost. That includes their HR services, their payroll services, their accounting services. Through Imua, they're able to have access to our CFO and our accounting team, our HR department...and these are the things that keep them operational and keep their staff getting the benefits that they need so that they can feel supported without it costing the organization a tremendous amount of money in overhead costs. So, this is how we are supporting them. We have a three-year agreement with them that will support them through this transition. Then in the future, after we build them up, if they're able to afford those costs independently and on their own, then they could continue to operate that way, but it may just prove to be more efficient for them to contract those services.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Wong. I wanted to clarify, is the Pā'ia Youth Council, Inc., the name that they're in the budget under?

MR. WONG: Yes, it is. I guess that is their doing business as, right, name, and I think their community standing name is Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center, so that is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Yeah, the last few years, it did say 350,000, not 400. I was wondering how many...like do you have a count of how many kids, you guys...individual kids you see, like, not repeated per --

MR. WONG: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- annually?

MR. WONG: Yes, and I believe they have written all of those numbers into the grant, as well as the increase of that. I...I just want to comment. I do believe the reason why you're seeing 350,000 versus 400,000, I think there's a separate line item where in previous years, the Director had separated a single program called Project Venture, which is around substance abuse programming, and so I think that was around \$50,000, and that's why it rounded up to about 400,000. I think those programs are now integrated into the single grant proposal right now, and so I think that's where we're...we're seeing a difference in, now that I'm remembering that. So, to answer your question directly, you know, the Pā'ia Youth and Cultural Center sees on average between 45 and 65 youth on a daily basis. Now, of course, they're...a membership, which is free to young people across North Shore, so in many cases, the young people that are coming are coming repeatedly. Like they're coming on a daily basis after school. If parents are still working, they're getting support there in the programs that they're receiving. So, while they might see around 300 or 350 to 400 children on a monthly basis, there are going to be those that are coming on a daily basis. And actually, one of the things that we...Imua Family Services did for PYCC at the beginning of the year when we transitioned was to support them in creating an actual membership registration that took the data that you're asking for into consideration so that we could effectively report how many young people were coming in, where they were coming from, what kind of

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family support that they were having, and what districts around the island that they were coming to the...to the youth center for.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And are you receiving any money from the Liquor Fund for alcohol awareness or from the Opioid Fund for...

MR. WONG: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: None of that?

MR. WONG: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MR. WONG: And...and I will say that part of that is because the organization had been really running as a recreational drop-in center, right? So, the programs were really more around the skate park and the fishing program and the boogie board and, you know, the ocean sports activities, as well as just the drop-in, the gaming, multimedia lab, and of course the radio station, which provides a voice for youth in that community. All of those things are still happening and they're very valuable, but now the programs themselves are being increased to provide clinical types of services, which the staff there are not necessarily fully supported in being able to do that, but now the staff of Imua Family Services can bring that clinical support and other programs like YouthLine and Alliance for Life so that the young...the...the staffing there are getting the support and the training to be able to support the young people in those clinical areas that they need help in.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You're done? Okay. Anybody else have questions? Thank you very much --

MR. WONG: No, thank you --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Mr. Wong.

MR. WONG: -- so much for your time. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice to see...nice to see you here. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The next testifier is Ashlee Klemperer, to be followed by Susan Graham.

MS. KLEMPERER: Good morning, Committee Chair, Committee Members. My name is Ashlee Klemperer, and I'm the Executive Director of La'akea Village, and I'm here to

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testify on Appropriation Bills 55 relating to the Affordable Housing Fund. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Department of Housing for including our project in their recommended list. For the last 20 years, La‘akea Village has been working to provide vocational training, life-sharing services, and support for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The original vision of the organization included a supportive housing community for adults with differing abilities, their ‘ohanas, and support...supportive community members. It has taken us 20 years, and finally we are here today to advocate for our village of inclusion, to share details of that community, and ask to be funded and included in the FY '27 Affordable Housing Fund with an appropriation of \$4.5 million. Our village of inclusion is the only supportive affordable rental housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their workforce, and other qualified community members being built in the entire State of Hawai‘i, an innovative solution to address a severe need for our most vulnerable people. The village will include 22 single-story detached homes that range from one to three bedrooms. We will have full ADA units. We will have dedicated units for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, a full-time on-site housing support specialist, beautiful open-air community center, in-unit laundry and covered lanais, shared green spaces and community gardens, and regenerative agriculture on the property. Our dedicated units for adults with differing abilities will include a five-bedroom, three-bathroom home that will be licensed through the State Department of Health, and this will include...or this will provide housing for three adults with disabilities and two to three live-in caregivers. This will be the highest level of care available in the village and would be the second of two houses of this type on Maui. Currently, there is one on Maui and one on Molokai. In total, we would have seven bedrooms for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and five rooms for live-in caregivers between all of the units we would be retaining. Our village of inclusion is intended to support not only adults with disabilities, but also other vulnerable populations with similar needs. We understand our kūpuna and people with physical disabilities are also in desperate need of housing that can support them. We understand the great need for safe places to age in place. Our village of inclusion is designed with that exact expectation in mind. We have provided you all with a packet of information that includes all of this plus more details. And I want to thank you all, Committee Chair Sugimura and Members, for the opportunity to advocate today for the future that Maui County desperately needs. We hope the Committee recommends the full appropriation amount of \$4.5 million, and this funding would be a cornerstone and foundation of our village, a vital opportunity for us, but truly a great fit for partnership with the County. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Thank you all for your service.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Nice to see you again. Any questions, Members? Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. I didn't quite get the...the project again. If you may, please?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Could you...

MS. KLEMPERER: La‘akea Village.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: La'akea. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. They're in the budget book, Special Purpose Revenue, Schedule of Revolving Special Funds for Fiscal Year '27, number 9 under the Affordable Housing listed projects for 4.5 million grant...a grant to La'akea Village.

MS. KLEMPERER: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. The...is the \$4.5 million the entirety of...will it get you to like moving people... heads in beds?

MS. KLEMPERER: No. So, the packet we provided does include our entire capital stack. And so, the...the funds that we've requested, the 4.5 million would act as critical catalyzing funds that would then allow us to leverage our full capital stack. We do expect the entire build cost to be between 23 and 30 million. So, the 4.5 would be a vital start.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then would you be able to use...I know CNHA and other entities did some pre-approved plans. Would you guys be able to use those or are you planning on creating your own housing plans...housing designs?

MS. KLEMPERER: We have our own designs, yes. So, we've been...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, you already have them.

MS. KLEMPERER: Yes. So, we have been operating off of a Hawai'i State Grant-in-Aid for planning and design. So, that is what we are currently operating under. That was a \$300,000 grant, and we are near completion of that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. That's it for me.

MS. KLEMPERER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any more questions? So, I guess what you're saying then, to get you to the 30 million complete buildout, that this is...sorry, this is the beginnings, and that where you're getting the rest of your funding from? Because this is a portion of your total.

MS. KLEMPERER: Yes. So, very happy to....to share that. So, to start off with that 300,000 grant-in-aid, La'akea Village has also been able to obtain about 90...\$900,000 in assets that we are investing upfront. Then we would be...we've applied for the Affordable Housing Fund at the 4.5 million. We have also applied for FY '27 Maui County Home and Housing Trust Fund funds and that application is in review for 3.55 million. And then we have also...we are also under review for a

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congressionally-directed spending request at 3 million. And then we have a plan of launching a capital fundraising campaign for between 10 to 15 million.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, the balance is 10 to 15 million.

MS. KLEMPERER: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, you're getting State GIA, is it this...is it this request or...this year or did you already receive it?

MS. KLEMPERER: Already received it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Because this grant-in-aid for Fiscal '27 has not been done yet.

MS. KLEMPERER: Right.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. So...and then you have congressional. I guess...I guess Director can tell us about your Maui County house, your 3.55 million, that additional?

MS. KLEMPERER: Uh-huh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Can get more information on that at the appropriate time. All right. Any more questions? Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. KLEMPERER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice to see you again.

MS. KLEMPERER: You too.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The next testifier is Susan Graham, to be followed by Hana Diller.

MS. GRAHAM: Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to be here today. My name is Susan Graham. I currently live in Kula, and I'm here today to ask for your support for La'akea Village. I've lived on Maui for 35 years. I've raised three children here and seven grandchildren who call this island home. I care deeply about the future of our community, especially its most vulnerable members. My eldest grandson Zen (*phonetic*) is part of the developmentally disabled community on Maui, and has lived with me for the past 15 years. He's smart, funny, and full of life, but his communication challenges often set him apart. While others his age are hanging out with friends, getting married, and starting families, Zen remains isolated from those milestones, as do many neurodivergent adults on this island. My greatest concern for his future is this. What happens to him when I am no longer here? Where will he live? Who will care for him, and who will ensure that he has the quality of life we all deserve? A safe place to live.

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People who love and care about him, and meaningful activities to fill his days. La'akea Village is designed to answer those questions. It will be an inclusive and supported community. And with the La'akea Day Program nearby, residents will have access to daily activities, a shared kitchen for communal meals, skill building programs, and a country store that provides real work. Zen is actually at the store today. He works Mondays and Wednesdays at the store. Most importantly, it brings together adults with disabilities and their parents, direct support workers, families, and elderly residents to live side-by-side, a multi-generational neurodiverse model that exists in communities across the continental United States and around the world, and would be the first of its kind in the State of Hawai'i. Without places like La'akea, many adults with similar challenges end up confined to their homes with little to do and few connections to sustain them. We can do better than that. By funding La'akea Village, Maui County has the opportunity to make a powerful statement about how we value and care for all of our citizens. I urge you to prioritize this funding for Zen, for all the families in my position, and for the kind of inclusive, compassionate community we all want Maui to be. Thank you for your time and commitment to everyone on this island, regardless of their abilities.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ms. Graham. Anyone have questions for her? I have a quick question. The store that you're talking about that he...that your grandson is working today, is it at La'akea Village or...

MS. GRAHAM: It is.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It is at the village.

MS. GRAHAM: It's on the property that we lease from the County. It's...the...probably an acre of it is considered our day program. The housing would be in a different section.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. GRAHAM: But yeah, it's a small country store.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for that clarification. No other questions. Thank you.

MS. GRAHAM: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Hana Diller, to be followed by Danielle Castrence.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Can I make a brief announcement?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The MEDB building in Kihei is...currently doesn't have any running water, so the RAO is going to be closed until future notice today.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, which means your office there is closed then. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Next testifier is Hana?

MS. DILLER: Aloha mai kākou. My name is Hana Diller, and I am from Upcountry Maui. I currently serve as the Day Program Manager at La'akea Village, and I am here today to testify in strong support of the County of Maui Affordable Housing Fund request of \$4.5 million for the La'akea Village Supported Housing Project in Pā'ia. La'akea Village provides adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to live, work, thrive within a supportive community. Our approach focuses on dignity, independence, and real community connection. At La'akea Village, independence also comes from being an active member of community, where individuals take on kuleana through meaningful farm work and daily responsibilities. This housing project is a necessary next step, allowing us to better support the needs of the IDD community in a more comprehensive and sustainable way. In my role, I work closely with families every day, and I have personally witnessed the challenges that aging caregivers face as they strive to meet the complex needs of their adult children while also navigating their own health and well-being. Many parents carry a constant concern, as Susan Graham shared in her testimony, what will happen to my child when I'm no longer able to provide care? This question weighs heavily on our community and organization, especially given the severe shortage of appropriate housing options for adults with disabilities on Maui. The reality is that there are very limited group homes and supportive living environments available across island. La'akea Village's including...inclusive housing community directly addresses this urgent need by offering dedicated housing units for adults with disabilities within a supportive living environment. This project will provide not only housing, but stability, purpose, and belonging. Residents will have access to programs, employment opportunities, and social connections that empower them to live as independently as possible while still receiving the support that they need. Equally important, this project offers peace of mind to families. Parents deserve the assurance that their children have...will be safe, supported, and able to lead fulfilling lives. Investing in La'akea Village's supported housing project is an investment in the well-being of Maui's families and a more inclusive future for our island. It will reflect our collective commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not left behind, but are rather instead given the opportunity to live within community. I respectfully urge you to support this funding request. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifier? Member Paltin?

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Diller. I just was wondering, as a worker, do you live on site? Or is there assistants living on site?

MS. DILLER: Not currently. We do not have anyone living on site at the moment.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is that the plan when it...at full build-out?

MS. DILLER: No. So, in these dedicated housing units for our adults with disabilities, we will have staff members living alongside of them, either in the group home or in the one- to two-bedroom housing units. For me myself, I...I'm not sure if I will be living alongside, but that is an option.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any other Members have questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much, Hana. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The next testifier is Danielle Castrence, to be followed by Josh Woodburn.

MS. CASTRENCE: Good morning. I'm...My name is Danielle Castrence, and I live in Upcountry, Maui. I have been . . . *(inaudible)*. . . La'akea Village for two years. I am here today to testify in strong support of the Country [sic] of Maui Affordable Housing Funds request for 4.5 million for La'akea Village support housing project in Pā'ia. I live...wait, I moved to...I moved to Maui because my mom passed away, and I...now I live with my brother. My brother take care...take very good care of me. I want to be more independent, and I live with...on my own or with friends. I feel like I am ready. I am grateful for my La'akea 'ohana who helped me with this new way of life. It would mean a lot to me to able to live there with my friends. I love to . . . *(inaudible)*. . . on the farm and taking care of the chickens and horse and look after the garden. Learning new skills make me feel independent, and I am so excited to live with people who also like to take care of the farm. Please fund the La'akea Housing Village. It is so important to me. I want to be at my forever home and family because 'ohana means family. Thank you for...thank you so much for listening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for Danielle? Seeing none. Thank you very much for testifying.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Chair, I have a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I didn't see you. Sorry. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Danielle, I really like your testimony, and you said you like farming. What do you want to grow?

MS. CASTRENCE: A garden.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: All of the above. Okay. Great. Thank you for your response. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Johnson. Again, thank you very much. No other testimony...no other questions for her. Any more testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Yes, Chair. The next testifier is Josh Woodburn, to be followed by Travis Liggett on Teams.

MR. WOODBURN: Buenos dias, Chair and Councilmembers. I don't really know how to follow that. That is...that's why we're here. My name is Josh Woodburn. I'm here to testify in support of La'akea Village's request for funding. I am the VP of the Board of Directors. I've been on the board for ten-plus years, very passionate about the project. Just a few quick things. You know, we have a...as you'll see in your packet, and if you learn about La'akea, we have a very strong mission that I don't see us ever deviating from. I would say, if anything, we adapt and we grow with the times to mold with changes in...in laws and rules and regulations and to stay current. Our project, as you've heard, is about inclusion and immersion, not seclusion or isolation. We want to integrate our participants with the community, such as other, you know, longstanding programs like Ka Lima O Maui or Imua that you heard from...from Dean earlier. We are...it's a County lease, so we are improving County land, building homes that will remain and eventually end up back as being owned by the County, so it's a bit of a win-win for everyone. We have gone through a number of...started our approvals process. We have FONSI from an EA, so we have been involved with County review and comments and guidance and discussions, so I feel like much of the County who administers our lease is familiar with where we're at and...and our process. The cost, of course, as you heard, of the project is quite large, but this initial funding will help us to keep the speed and the momentum that we've started with our consultants and take the next step to...to keep building and keep growing. So, for...for lack of...for a little bit of a brevity, I'm going to sort of end with a little bit of a quote from one of my favorite movies, Tommy Boy. This quote relates to the auto industry, but I think it's very applicable here. It is...it says, in the auto industry, you're either growing or you're dying, there ain't no third direction. And that's what we're trying to do here at La'akea. We're trying to grow and...let me just check something real here. Oh, and sometimes...sometimes there are growing pains with...with, you know, as you do this and with organizations, nonprofits, but overall, every year, year after year, we get better and stronger, and even more so now with this, you know, shot of adrenaline that we just received with our partnership with Imua, who, similar to PYCC, is going to help us with some of our administration and...and added support. So, thank you for your consideration, and I hope you can find it...find a way to fund our request.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Joshua. Member Paltin has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Woodburn. I...I was trying to quickly look up, how long is your lease for?

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MR. WOODBURN: I believe it's 55 years, so we've got 35-ish left. We're 20 in, yeah. And I'm assuming it's renewable, or at least, you know, we can discuss renewing and continuing at that point as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then, are we too far out about your selection criteria and the rent charges? I'm assuming since it's affordable housing, the rent is going to be like, what, 120 and below, 80 and below, 60 and below?

MR. WOODBURN: 100 and below, I'm hearing from Ashlee. We are going to also do a 201H process, so that's sort of our next step. So, we've kind of...the first one was the EA, and...and so we do have consultants helping us with that next step as well.

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

MR. WOODBURN: HHFDC.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then, are you anticipating more applicants than homes? Like, is there a criteria for selection?

MR. WOODBURN: I don't have all those details, but yes, I would assume just based on community input and feedback and just kind of general knowledge of need for housing in...in our community in general, I would imagine that, yes, demand will exceed availability.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then like the rent, is it...who would be paying the rent, the people that need inclusion as well as the people that would be working there?

MR. WOODBURN: So, it would, I guess, depend on...part of what we have to determine is with 201H, there's a lottery system, and how that gets...how the selection process happens, and that's where I think the...the rates get determined for those units. And then the...the...the paying of the rent would come from whoever gets selected, whether it's HUD financing or whatever other support they have or just being, you know, qualifying for low-income affordable housing.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. WOODBURN: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, I found your lease in our budget documents, Members.

MR. WOODBURN: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It is with Appendix B1, and if you look on...is there a page number? The page number got cut off? Anyway, it's here. Active lease and the TMK, La'akea Foundation. Human Concerns has the lease, Pā'ia *(phonetic)* Store Subdivision, Lot A, and the lease from 11/30/05 until 11/29/60, so it looks like it expired? So, we need to take this up with the Department. And as far as...

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MR. WOODBURN: 6...60, 2060?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, 2060.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: This is only 2026.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's 11/29/60, so... Okay. You're right, we have a ways to go.

MR. WOODBURN: We still have some time. Okay. Hoo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And it is a dollar per year. Sorry.

MR. WOODBURN: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Read wrong. Okay. So, that...they are in the budget documents, and we can get any more information regarding this and the needs from the Department. Okay. So, no other questions. Thank you very much for being here in force.

MR. WOODBURN: Thank you. Thank you for listening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any other...any other testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Yes, Chair. The next testifier is Travis Liggett on Teams, to be followed by Nicole Hokoana.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mr. Liggett?

MR. LIGGETT: Good morning, esteemed Chair and Members. I hope you are all sincerely doing well. I was just following up on my previous testimony requesting a significant movement toward disinfection of injection well discharges in North and South Maui. And so, I just want to give everyone an update that we heard from Chair Lee, that in fact, Eric Nakagawa had said that DEM is not able to start work on design work for the new UV system in Kahului until Fiscal Year 2028, that for some reason they simply cannot. And I just want to point out that the 2020 Supreme Court decision said that definitely those discharges require an NPDES permit, and so it's just not defensible to say it's not required if you haven't applied for the permit that Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her friends said that you need. So, it's like...it's like saying, hey, we pulled you over. You don't have a license, and they're like saying, officer, no, my license is not expired, I never applied for one, and they're like, okay, go ahead. You know, it just doesn't hold up. And also, disinfection was ceased in 2018. It went from R-3...R-1 to R-3, and my UIPA show that in fact none of the sitting Councilmembers were actually ever informed that it went from negligible to off-the-charts pathogens in Kahului, and in fact, you actually have to notice big decisions like that. It's not something that an administrative decision can be made in the background quietly, and just that placed against all the testifiers that came out for supporting some sort of progress, it just really can only be

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framed as like a slap in the face because we have only, as far as I can tell, taken a giant step back on water quality. And it's just not legally defensible because if you have an improperly noticed administrative decision, or you just ignore a permit requirement, you're actually financially liable for the impacts of that discharge. It's like driving without insurance because if DOH approves a discharge, it's like protecting you from liability, and people, I believe, are getting sick. The exceedances are in the water bodies, and it's just not defensible. And all these people talking about mental health and unsheltered, like infections have nervous system inflammation components. That can often look like mental health. And also, try holding down a job when you have an infection. And just the idea that you're sweeping down...people down there, while actually ignoring like serious health impacts, and then saying to the people, like, well, Eric said no. I'm like, okay, well, how many votes did he get? And you know, in closing, there's like this Heloise (*phonetic*) article. It's this sweet lady. . . .(*timer sounds*). . . She writes, Heloise...I've got 30 seconds. She says, my husband just won't clean down there. He says, it feels too good. Sorry, it's a little off color, but it's about what's legal and not, and Heloise says, well, he says it feels too good. He doesn't want to be gay. Isn't that funny? Heloise says, well, you know, the good Lord made it feel good down there so that men would clean down there, but it's obviously not legally required to clean down there. So, just for rhetorical purposes, we can assume that it was Eric Nakagawa's wife that wrote, dear Heloise, like get your stuff together, like disinfect the wastewater. It's legally required, and ask Richelle . . .(*timer sounds*). . . you know, are we liable --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. LIGGETT: -- if people get sick, and you are.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Liggett.

MR. LIGGETT: So, disinfect it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anyone have questions for him? Seeing none. Thank you very much --

MR. LIGGETT: Have a great day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- for your testimony. You too. Have a great day. Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Nicole Hokoana, to be followed by Jeremiah Savage. And Nicole, we have promoted you on Teams, so you should be able to access your mic and camera. Chair, I'm not seeing any indication that Nicole is available to testify. Maybe we can come back to her?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Please do.

MR. PASCUAL: So, the next testifier is Jeremiah Savage, and we'll return to Nicole Hokoana.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning, Mr. Savage.

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MR. SAVAGE: Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MR. SAVAGE: My name is Jeremiah Savage, I am the CFO for Imua Family Services. And I'm testifying on Bill 55 on behalf of PYCC, whom we have an administration agreement with. Basically, I was also...actually, for your information, I also used to be a Maui County fiscal officer, as well as a grant manager for OED. And the reason why that's relevant is because when I used to work as a grant manager for OED, I used to work with Susun White, who at the time was the executive director for PYCC. And during the time, that grant was in the Office's [sic] Economic Development. And I remember going through her budget and talking about this, that, or the other, and she had so much passion for PYCC. And, you know, from working in that Department, I learned that a lot of these organizations start from the passion of helping their communities, seeing a need, having a network, going out in the community, working with volunteers, and doing all these things. And the one thing that a lot of them lack a little bit is that they don't have the administrative acumen to be able to move forward. Well, PYCC lost Susun White recently. And when we were asked to help PYCC, we were...we were allowed to allow them to focus on their mission, on helping the children in their communities, and that's what we've been doing. In doing that, this proposal that we...we just got a letter back from them that they got granted the \$350,000, which to my understanding, they've been getting year after year after year after year. And really, it doesn't even supplement or pay all the salaries of the people that are doing the jobs. Not only is the workforce here in need right now, but these people that are helping these kids are getting paid 30, \$40,000 a year and really struggling to survive, or even getting that program. What I hope that we can understand here and appreciate is the cost of living goes up. So, does the cost of nonprofits. So, does their cost to live. And without considering incremental increases to that, organizations like PYCC will not be able to survive. So, I am just up here wanting to say I hope you support an increase because we did ask for 554,000, I think is what I put down, because I actually helped develop that budget. I would hope that you would consider that. And at the...at the risk of my own time here, I do want to advocate for La'akea. I've been out there on their...their...their thing and...and I think that they have a lot of capacity to not only do the program that they have, but they have the capacity to actually do the capital improvement project, which a lot of nonprofits can't. So, I've worked with Ashlee, Susan Graham, I mean Susun, and I know that they have the capacity to do that. So, I hope you support them as well. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Mr. Savage. Anybody have questions for him? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Savage. Just clarifying, she retired, Susun White?

MR. SAVAGE: Yeah, she retired, I believe, a year and a half ago, maybe.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then wasn't PYCC going to move back or something?

MR. SAVAGE: Move back to where?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like retreat a little bit. Weren't they rebuilding something?

MR. SAVAGE: They're...they're in the planning to rebuild across the street, another site. That's another project, but --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Separate monies.

MR. SAVAGE: -- it's...it's separate from what's going on in the current operations of PYCC.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's just operating money, is the 554...100 percent?

MR. SAVAGE: Actually, their budget is a little over \$800,000 a year. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: The 554 you're asking from the County is strictly operating?

MR. SAVAGE: Yes, that's strictly operation. It has nothing to do with that project that's...they're...they're planning to rebuild...or build.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. SAVAGE: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any more questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Thank you for being here. Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. We'll return to Nicole Hokoana. It looks like her mic is now unmuted, and she can begin her testimony, to be followed by Christopher Salem.
(pause)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Hokoana?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, it appears she's unmuted on our end, and it looks like she's unmuted herself, so she's able to begin her testimony. But if she's having technical difficulties, we could move on to the next testifier and return to her again.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Why don't we do that, and then we'll come back to her.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay. Chair, the next testifier is Chris Salem.

MR. SALEM: Good morning, Chair and Members of the Maui County Council. As a matter of procedure this morning, I just want to confirm these different bills that are listed on the agenda. Are those independent testimony, or...or is this one...one to be lumped into all, or all --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. SALEM: -- to be lumped into one? If you can clarify that, please?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for your question. Yeah. So, we have one bill on the agenda, which is the budget bill, of which what you're talking about, I think, is all under the budget bill. So, three minutes.

MR. SALEM: Okay. Actually, what my testimony was focused on was Bill 56. So, is that independent of 55, or all in one?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. All...all in one. We just have only one bill before us, which is BFED-1.

MR. SALEM: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, one agenda item.

MR. SALEM: Okay. Thank you. So, on page 60 of Bill 56, the capital improvement program again lists Lower Honoapi'ilani Road improvements scheduled for 2/27 through 2/32. The funding for this project's been on the County budgets now for over three decades. 2002, the residents were notified by Public Works the project had received all discretionary agency approvals on the revised civil engineering plans. The records show Public Works failed to obtain the land frontage dedications from the affected property owners. And Public Works wasted--well, I'm not sure if it's accounted for--massive amounts of funds, and they continue to do so on this project. As it stands, no eminent domain proceedings have been initiated to acquire the required frontage areas from the property owners. A portion of this roadway has already been lost due to coastal erosion here recently, and yet this project continues to be deceptively presented as a viable CIP. My request this morning is straightforward. Councilmember Cook, please demand a proof of viability of these projects and others listed on the MPO reports or remove these projects from the budget. They're misleading and wasting our time. Turning to the broader issues of 56, this bill contains extensive lists of roadway projects throughout Maui County. My first question is whether Public Works or the Department of Finance has now...has a ledger of the thousands of deferral agreements that provide revenue to offset expenditures, as is required by law. Second, thank you, Fire Chief, for attending this morning. I bring to your attention the fact that Public Works has lumped developers' fire mitigation obligations and environmental mitigations into roadway deferral agreements. What this means is subdivisions were signed off, homes were built and occupied without fire protection. How many times did that occur in Lahaina? The question remains, and we hope you will assist us in this, is Public Works is jumping into the shoes of the Fire Department and the Planning Department and erasing, because as we...we now know, none of those improvements that are deferred ever get completed. As a matter of law, these obligations are not within the lawful scope of Title 18 roadway deferral agreements. They're separate conditions imposed by Planning and Fire. I'll keep saying that. And they cannot be deferred, transferred, or satisfied through Public Works' discretion in the dark. As the Council's aware, the audit of these

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agreements was initiated following an unanimous vote of this body. The record now reflects that the County Auditor failed to perform the most basic initial steps required under government auditing standards, to identify and compile a list of these agreements and identify which agreements are authored by Corp. Counsel in violation of the spirit and the adopted laws. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . We know there are many. I will wrap it up. As a result, Chair, you've been notified to inform the Mayor that this budget is in violation of the County Charter. The complaint has been drafted and shall be filed with the Second Circuit Court this week if you fail to recognize these revenues to offset these budget expenditures...and further, to investigate the allegations relating to deferred fire mitigations. I live in West Maui. I know the consequences. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Does anybody have questions for Mr. Salem? Seeing none. Thank you very much, Mr. Salem. Next testifier.

MR. SALEM: You're welcome.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we'll return to Nicole Hokoana. Nicole, you are unmuted on your end and our end, so if you're able to begin your testimony, then we can begin timing appropriately.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Hokoana? Do you see her? I don't see her at all.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we did promote her as a presenter, so she should be able to unmute, but we did promote two phone numbers with the last four digits 8653 and 0910 in case she called in by phone.

MS. HOKOANA: Hey, this is me.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, Oh, okay. Good.

MS. HOKOANA: Hey. Okay. That's terrible. Can everybody hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We can hear you. Please proceed.

MS. HOKOANA: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. HOKOANA: Oh, what a nightmare. I'm so sorry. Aloha kakahiaka, everyone. My name is Nicole Hokoana, and I appreciate your time. Mahalo, Chair Sugimura and Vice-Chair Batangan and everyone, for being here this morning and allowing testimony. I am the CEO for Aloha House, and I'm testifying in support of an affordable housing grant application requesting 2 million for the acquisition of two new Sober Living Program homes. These homes provide supportive long-term housing for up to 20 very low-income adults who have completed intensive substance use treatment and are receiving ongoing care to address co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders. They require additional support, monitoring, and case management for their long-term

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recovery. Aloha House has made a cash commitment of up to a million dollars to support the total anticipated purchase cost of 3 million for the two homes. Aloha House is Maui's most established comprehensive substance use treatment provider and provides services from detox to residential to outpatient care. The Sober Living Program provides transitional and long-term housing for adults that are participating in or have completed substance use treatment and require ongoing support to maintain sobriety. Clients in the Sober Living Program are typically employed or advancing their education as they work towards reestablishing their health, fiscal responsibilities, and relationships with family and friends. With affordable housing fees of 300 to 600 per month from each resident, the program generates income to cover ongoing maintenance and repair costs, as well as supporting the costs of providing an appropriate level of care including case management to each resident. Most programs...most clients entering our programs report income levels of less than \$5,000. In addition to supporting relapse prevention, these homes address the critical need for housing by providing homes for very low-income adults who are also at risk to becoming unsheltered. Based on an average stay of six months, it is estimated that two new program locations will provide affordable housing with an appropriate level of service for at least 160 low-income single adults over a five-year period. And based on a minimum useful life of 40 years, these two program locations will ultimately serve over 1,200 very low-income Maui residents. Housing...this type of housing also helps to ease the burden of publicly-funded resources such as law enforcement, emergency services, and community support such as providers for unsheltered individuals. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . It is Aloha House's intent to keep these properties in service of sober living and mental health recovery in perpetuity, ensuring this means of affordable housing continues to be available through the usable life of the properties. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Does anybody have any questions?
Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Hokoana. I was wondering, does the locations chosen, do you have houses that you already are pursuing?

MS. HOKOANA: We've taken a look at the market, but we have not started to actually look specifically at which --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And --

MS. HOKOANA: -- we haven't made any decisions, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- do you have any district criteria, like one in West Maui, one in South Maui or something?

MS. HOKOANA: No. Typically when we look for houses, we try to find locations that are kind of central, near a bus stop, near places of work, so that, you know, a lot of our...our clients don't have transportation right away. So, you know, kind of being centrally located, whether that's centrally in Lahaina or Kahului or Wailuku, so that it's not so hard to get to work or get to the grocery store and those kinds of things.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Members, so we received this testimony on eComments, so you can look at it at your convenience. Any more questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Next testifier, please. Thank you very much.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. That's all the individuals signed up to testify. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, please. Oh, here we have --

MR. PASCUAL: -- I do see one individual approaching the podium.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- we have Mr. Law coming.

MR. LAW: Thank you, Jarret. Ohayō, Luna Ho'omalū Kashiwa Sugimura. Jasee Law from Waiakoa Ahupua'a up on the mountain, Haleakala. Aloha, Ka'aha O Ke Kalana. Aloha, Akakū, and aloha kākou, everybody out there in TV land. Yeah, I was...I wanted to talk about the fire guys instead of Housing and stuff, that's my favorite Department is the Fire. Every time I go over there, they're very helpful. And I feel the mana is...is good there. At the Kahului Fire Department headquarters and up in Kula, Engine 13. So, I've said this before, so everybody listen, I can't really give you a test, but who knows the word for fireman in 'Ōlelo Hawaiian? Okay. You guys, I'll say it again for you. I'll be a patient teacher. It's kinaiahi, K-I-N-A-I-A-H-I, with no punctuation. Yeah, I visit there whenever I get a chance. I feel like just for moral support stuff, I mean, they probably don't need me over there, but every time I see some guys over there, I kind of stop and just say hi, thanks for working for the County. And I also noticed that they do recycling at the fire station in Kahului. And so, I want to encourage that, and if the County can put in some extra money for that. I don't know how much they're paying and stuff, but costs always go up. And Chief Ventura said the...the budget, they turned in a very good budget, only .6 increase. So, if you could make a point...point...I get confused on the decimals, but yeah, just give them a little bit of an increase for the recycling, that'd be really good. So...but that's not for the community recycling, that's only for the firemen and their families. And although they probably wouldn't give me too much trouble over there...well, I'm having a little bit of trouble at Kula with the...the recycling, especially just...maybe just a cardboard dumpster at the Kula Fire Station would be nice. And once again, not for the community because the County's got liabilities on their...the lands that they are looking after over there. Because if anything happens, like they get run over by a fire truck, then we got to talk with their...the lawyers and everything, and we got plenty of work to do. And so, when it comes to liability insurance--I'm going to tie this in, Mr. Cook, with something that's relevant--State of Hawai'i basic business application. And insurance is separate from the application, but I feel like, why would I get insurance for a business if I didn't even have a business first? So, when I go over there, I went over there again this morning . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . looking for a--30 seconds, please--when I went over there looking for an application in 'Ōlelo Hawaiian at the State of Hawai'i, which is taken over from

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the Kingdom of Hawai'i, which took over for Lili'uokalani, they're still spocking (*phonetic*) me out and giving me a hard time, and I think they're digging in over there, but I'm going to keep working on it, and I'm going to call a translator in, but I'm probably going to need a witness when the sheriffs come. And I'm going to try to translate their form, English form into 'Ōlelo Hawaiian at no charge at all so that I can get business insurance to go recycle cardboard . . . (*timer sounds*). . . at the fire station.

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

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. We can do a last call for oral testimony if you'd like.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please do.

MR. PASCUAL: This is the last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

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

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, I'm going to...we already have Chief here and Deputy...Director Milner. So, Members, I'm going to entertain questions from you for the Fire and Public Safety. We'll start from our Vice-Chair, Member Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I was wondering...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You want to take a break?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, sure.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And also, maybe the Mayor had a chance to sign FS-2 and we could print that out during our break?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, so we...

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

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is that correct?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- she's still reviewing it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, it's still being reviewed. Okay. We haven't gotten . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you think you could finish within ten minutes and give it to us?

MS. MILNER: I don't know if you know --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director Milner?

MS. MILNER: -- how many questions you all asked.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. I only asked a few.

MS. MILNER: But I'm about halfway through. We expect to get it transmitted this morning. Mayor is available to sign.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Along with HO-2. That will be transmitted as well this morning.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Your call on the recess. I just was thinking we could see the answer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. We will continue and...and take a couple rounds of questions and then we'll break for Housing to switch off. Chief, welcome, and nice to see you. Thank you very much. Many questions. Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Department, for being here with us today. First question comes from page 299 of the budget narrative. I noticed premium pay is going up 53.3 percent while normal wages and salary are going down 6.8 percent. Are there any structural reasons for this? Like are we getting a lot of hazard pay or holiday pay? Are you changing overtime assumptions? Are there any changes in the CBA that we need to be aware of? And are there any concerns with asking this much overtime of our men in uniform?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Batangan. This was actually the advice of the Budget Office. This is a reallocation of holiday pay. Previously...that's the majority of the increase. Previously, the holiday pay was included under the salaries and wages line items, but we advised that it's easier to be able to crosscheck the actual

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salaries of each individuals against the salary schedule if holiday pay is included appropriately under premium pay. So, that's the reason. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Okay. So, page 315. Under your key activity and goals...activity, goals, and measures, average time from alarm to arrival for all incident types combined is just 7.05. I'm assuming that's minutes? Okay. So, are there any stations around the island that are significantly over that Countywide average?

MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the question. So, depending on where the call is in districts, we do have a lot of districts that have longer response time. So, if you're talking about like Kula heading out to Kaupō, Kahikinui, the response times are well above that.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: As well as Nāpili, same thing for Kahakuloa area.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: In general, are there any stations in which the call times average well above the Countywide? Or I guess, are there any that you are concerned about that we don't have plans to address?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, I'd say the most concerning areas we have right now, we are addressing, one being Pā'ia Fire Station heading out towards Ha'ikū, and then Lahaina Station. Their district runs all the way to the tunnel. And so, their response time is above average in that Ukumehame, Olowalu area as well. So, the Olowalu Fire Station will help that.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Perfect. And then I noticed that there are meal allowance increases across multiple stations. Are there any policy changes that are driving this?

MR. VENTURA: The...from what I understand, the meal allowance increases are for staffing moving into those areas.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: And the collective bargaining agreement, which is being...just finished arbitration, will determine if there's a lift on that cost.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Sorry, I'm going kind of quickly because, you know, we're on time limits.

MR. VENTURA: Three minutes.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: I noticed that you guys are proposing to give auto allowances for six battalion chiefs. This is in lieu of purchasing vehicles.

MR. VENTURA: Correct.

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Can you walk us through your thinking?

MR. VENTURA: Sure.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: And how do you determine when it's most appropriate to give an allowance versus to purchase a Department vehicle?

MR. VENTURA: Sure. So, it's a similar model in many . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . public safety entities to go this route. If we just look at the six battalion chiefs and I look at the most recent trucks that we've bought for the battalion chiefs, we're looking at about \$780,000 in vehicles. Then when you divide that to \$57,000, you get about 13 years of service out of them bringing a personal vehicle into the game.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Understood. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Batangan. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Can you hear me okay?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, we can hear you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Good. Okay. I'm in...I'm in my office and there's no one else here. I've developed a cough this morning. I didn't want to spread it around.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning, Chief.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Do you have any updates on Pi'ihana? For instance, I know the fires have subsided for now, and that's only because of the weather. But as you know, that's a real problem area for...for fire outbreaks. And have you installed the cameras that you were planning to do? And have you taken any further steps besides the cameras to prevent future fires, if possible?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, thank you for that question. And it's...we're very well aware of that area of the island and grateful for, obviously, the rain we've had recently. The camera that we put in that area is on ALERTWest, open to the public, available to you as well. We did move it twice to get a better viewshed of Pi'ihana Farms, and we're also working with Hawaiian Electric right now to possibly put a mobile camera in the area. Obviously, the thing we worry about is vandalism and theft, so we want to put it somewhere where it's protected and watched and maybe, you know, chained down. But it would be closer to the Pi'ihana area. So, we're looking to add that with Hawaiian Electric. Operationally, we've added additional staffing in Wailuku. And what we've seen in their response capability with the additional personnel and the second vehicle has been a great improvement to their response to fires. It's...now, we...we're...granted, we know it's been

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green, but the fires that they have had out there, they've been able to get to easier, faster, and...and get them under control quicker. So, that's, operationally, how we've approached it. And then we've also kind of touched on the fire prevention side, which I know is...is important to you as well, because the more of this that we can prevent, the better off we're all going to be. So, on the fire prevention side, I'll let Chief Otsubo kind of expand on what's in our budget this year and what we're doing over there.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

MR. OTSOBU: Okay. As for fire prevention, I guess we...we've been having the clearance to the structures and making checks annually. We also tried to put gates to prevent unwanted access. But that's another issue that, I guess, it's been told that the owner is letting people in that we can't control.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, Chief...Chief, let me ask you real quick. Are there fewer houseless folks there because of the storms and the flooding? Because a lot...a lot of the fires are caused by those...those people.

MR. VENTURA: That's a great question. I honestly haven't been on the property for probably four or five months, so I cannot give you a head count necessarily of how many people are there. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . But as...as the drought season comes in, we're going to make sure that Fire Prevention goes there and, you know, enforces what we've discussed in the past to make sure those people are --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: -- you know, further away from the homes and such.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Chair. Next, we have Member Paltin, followed by Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chief and Chief and Chief Ventura, Otsubo, and Edlao. My first question is, you know, in the PSPS, we've had some experience with that so far. What happens with your fire stations and lifeguard towers? Do they have...all have backup generators, or how does that work? Because you know, I can just stay home and do nothing, but you guys cannot.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, thank you for that question. All the stations except for our Prevention Bureau currently have backup generator power. So, our essential functions at the station--radios, computers, garage doors, so we can get in and out--are all connected to the generator. Some of our lifeguard towers are on completely isolated PV systems, so they're still able to run off the battery, like Makena and such. And then the ones that are connected to power would be able to open for the day, but they would use more analog means, like bullhorns, rather than the PA system that's built into the tower. And then we'd...we would make sure we're communicating on how...are there batteries for

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radios and such like that. I think Chief Edlao was also provided generators, portable generators for most of the districts; is that correct?

MR. EDLAO: That's correct.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then that brings us to radios. I see 200 replacement radios? Are these going to be like in addition, or they're to...the...they're going to be the same as what the Fire is getting...I mean, sorry, Police is getting, 800 megahertz, or...

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, great question. So, it's one of our big investments this year. So, our current radio system is supported by portable radios that many members of our Department carry, and the company is not supporting repair and maintenance of them anymore. So, we still have enough to kind of get us through this year, but we're starting to kind of do that Frankenstein thing where we take parts off of one to make the other one work. So, our goal is, this year, to do a phased-in approach for our radios and get the 800 megahertz radios replaced with new 800 megahertz radios that have high wind capability which gives us a longer reach for our radio system. And the primary goal is to outfit the firefighters that are going into IDLH and into fires with these radios and work in...at the wildfires, and move the cache of radios to our administrative Staff and Ocean Safety. And then in Phase II, we look to work on the...the rest of the Department.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Would you say this phase is 50 percent, 25 percent?

MR. VENTURA: It's probably close to 60...maybe 60-ish percent. We also have requested congressional direct spending in this year's direct ask for Phase II. So, that project just got drawn up and is just going in as we speak, but we have met with senator's office as well on that project.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And...and the price is accurate, that's...recent price quote?

MR. VENTURA: That is . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . a fairly accurate price quote. You know, our numbers come in in August, September when we build the budget. So, here we are in April. I'm sure they've gone up a little bit, but hopefully we've built in enough there.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's my time, that was real fast. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Member Paltin. Followed by Member Johnson, and I guess Member Rawlins-Fernandez went to her site visit. Member Cook will be next.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I'm going to turn my camera off because I've got some Internet issues. If I get delayed, just skip me, but I'll try to get my questions in. I'm really concerned about El Nino, Chief. They predict it's going to be higher in heat and droughts and cyclones. And is the Department confident in its capacity to proactively address wildfire hazards in the...in the WUI, the

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Wildland Urban Interface? And are there programs or positions that didn't make it into the budget that would be recommended for inclusion? Are there any programs, positions planned for the future FYs that could be moved ahead of schedule? Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Thanks, Chair. I'll just speak to the operation side of it, and Chief Otsubo can speak to the prevention side of it. The...on the operation side, you know, we're as...we're as equipped and prepared and have on order and ready to be delivered as soon as the construction is finished of a major enhancement to our wildland fleet. It does take four years to build an engine. It does take about two years to build a mini, and it's going on about three years to build a tanker. But with your support over the last, you know, Fiscal Year '24, '25, and '26, we have a lot of trucks that are coming in on those orders that are going to...that are going to address exactly what your concerns are on the operation side. And then additionally, with the Sayre Foundation donating, you know, one brush truck a year ago, two water tankers this month, we have more trucks similar to that on their way. And so, we'll strategically place this equipment throughout the County to address the Wildland Urban Interface of the...you know, the homes and whatnot. And then on the prevention side, we have a few things going on to kind of create buffers and slow the fire's effect.

MR. OTSUBO: Okay. Some of the things --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oaky.

MR. OTSUBO: -- we're doing for...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chief. I'm glad...

MR. OTSUBO: Oh, do you want me to continue on the prevention side, or you got enough?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Let me just switch up real quick. You know, I'm on limited time, Chief, so sorry about that. I'm going to ask a different question about the proposed increase in gas, diesel, and oil costs. Sufficient, given the recent increase in oil and gas prices and cost projections that it may continue to rise over this year? Is this a long-term strategy to manage these rising costs by transitioning to renewable fuels, biodiesel, or energy? Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Thanks for the question. Yeah, the raise in fuel prices is a concern, for sure. The...we're...we're hopeful that this trend is temporary, and we can kind of bounce back from it as a country. However, if it's a short-term thing, we'll be able to absorb it in our current budget, hopefully. As far as transitioning to other vehicles, you know, we...we have considered and have a hybrid vehicle, and we considered an electric vehicle in some of our administrative vehicles. But the technology in firefighting equipment still doesn't meet our demand, our mark for our type of district. In the city, electric firetrucks are working . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . because short runs, you return to the station, you can charge again. Sometimes our firetrucks don't get back to the station for three hours,

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five hours, seven hours, ten hours on longer incidents, and so the electric vehicles can't last that long...at least electric firetrucks, that is.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Understandable. Is...is there any vehicle that you think you could hold off until next year?

MR. VENTURA: Maybe. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: There was...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I think maybe, is it...which one?

MR. VENTURA: There was a question that was written to us that will be shared via email to all of you folks. So, the question in particular was about our vehicles that we're requesting in FY '27. And the vehicles that we're requesting in FY '27 --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MR. VENTURA: -- some of them are for emergency services and we can compromise, but the ones that are for our administrative Staff, you know, we've been...we've been supported by Mayor and Council over the last few years to get a lot of administrative Staff, and now we just need to give them a way to get around the island. So, last year, we were able to get two vehicles --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I understand.

MR. VENTURA: -- and then this year we asked for two, but we could...we could deal with one if we needed to.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you for being amenable on your budget. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next we have Member Cook, followed by Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chief. Do you have an update on the relocation site selection for Kihei?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, we just concluded the study. We...we're working through the draft study, and it's probably in its final version right now. We just got to give it one more review before we make any changes. We looked at sites that were outside of the SLR-XA, outside of the SMA, preferably above Pi'ilani Highway, and north of the Kihei Police Station, just so that we could kind of bifurcate the district as best as possible to keep that seven-minute response time down. So, there were several properties that were looked at, and probably the two that rose to the top were in the Pi'ikea area, the top

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of...or Lipoa area, the top by the tech park, and maybe in the future, if that doesn't work out, the Pi'ilani Promenade area.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, there's...it's not to the point for any land purchase funding?

MR. VENTURA: We're kind of...in the best interest of the County, and to save us the most amount of money, we're...we're looking, hopefully, towards the Promenade because they're willing to help us with the property and donate to us.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. My other question, I think you reviewed it in your notes, but in Program Budget, page 304, an explanation following how it relates to the exclusive dispatch center. And that's just like, how will...how will it impact your current dispatch operations?

MR. VENTURA: Gotcha. So, that's a pretty complicated project we're working on right now. So, a PSAP, or a public safety answering point, is what Maui Police Department's dispatch center is, and they have...they have...they have toed the line and carried the weight for...for decades for our community. And what we would be building in our Department is a secondary PSAP so that we could dispatch Fire, medics, and Ocean Safety officers out of our dispatch center, and they could focus on the police side. It would impact operations a little bit on the call-taking side, the way...we've looked at models in Honolulu and other cities where the dispatch centers are separated. And so, you have an initial call-taker, and that would still be Maui Police Department that would take the call, and then they would transfer it to the...the right parties, whether it was a Police dispatcher or a Fire, Ocean Safety, or medic dispatcher.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, it would still be integrated with the MPDs?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, it's...that's part of why we're wanting to do this study, to see what overlaps we need to maintain and what maybe...maybe they have a more police-specific software they use, and there's a better fire-specific software that we could use. And if those can still integrate, then that's what we want to learn by this study so that we can make sure we're kind of . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . setting this up for the future.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thanks. Well, we got to take care of the dispatchers. That's...we've learned how difficult --

MR. VENTURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- that job is. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chief.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next, we have Member U'u-Hodgins, followed by Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I don't have too many questions because Chief Ventura and I celebrated Prince Kūhiō Day by talking about his budget. But since Member Cook brought up the calls, I'm really glad he did. So, in the audit

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book that we received the other week, I was looking at the back few pages. So, in 2016, Fire responded to 10,931 calls, and in 2025, they responded to 17,497 calls. Obviously, that's a major increase and not too much of an increase in personnel. So, I was going to ask, what can we do to ensure that we have enough resources to respond to these 7,000-some-odd calls that you folks are now experiencing with the same amount of people?

MR. VENTURA: Thanks, Chair. Thank you for that question. No, operationally...and to add one more detail to your...your stats there, our last fire station that was added was Wailea. Kaunakakai was built and moved after that. But in 2003, we opened Wailea Station, and we were just over 5,000 calls a year. And so, you've seen the increase. And we've done about all we can do within our current building structure. Every fire station, we've maxed out every parking stall, every bed, every...every slot to put somebody in. So, it's...it's critically important that we continue to grow the Department over the years, do it responsibly, and do it in...you know, in phases. So, I think getting the support for Ha'ikū Fire Station, which is going to be coming to Council soon for its ZPA approval, the Planning Commission already approved it and recommended it, and then the Olowalu Fire Station, just kind of growing that out. When we opened Kahului Fire Station, it was surrounded by three cane fields. So, we have to think that far ahead as we develop the rest of our Department and kind of stay out in front of the growth and in front of where the community demand is going to be. So, Ha'ikū and Olowalu would be very critical to support, and then in Central Maui, where Wailuku is being the busiest district right now.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. That's really all I have.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Chief Ventura. I did want to mahalo the Fire Department during the Kona low storm. East Maui ran out of electricity for a couple days, and so the fire station was able to help those kūpuna that required power for their oxygen tanks. So, thank you for that. Yeah, just following up on Member U'u-Hodgins' question about Olowalu, does the station have enough water resource? And if not, would...would additional resource...water resource be needed for that?

MR. VENTURA: Thanks for the question, Councilmember. The...as far as the station goes, we've received adequate water. You're talking about water supply, like domestic water supply? Yeah --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yes.

MR. VENTURA: -- from...from the landowner to build the station, and also to build for the future. So, the initial station that's going to be placed on that property is...is actually fairly small. It's a modular fire station that West Maui Improvement Foundation is bringing in, but the parcel that the County is going to be gifted here is approximately four acres. So, as the County continues to grow, and the...the...maybe that station, that

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modular station needs to be replaced in many, many years, we would be able to build brick and mortar on the property and have a...you know, a 100-year fire station there. The...and so, we did request enough water to support a larger station in the long run.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And of course, those planned new stations would require larger crews, more trucks?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah. So, fortunately, we...we're...we're in front of this already, which is a good thing. The Bezos Family Foundation donated the truck for Olowalu Fire Station that should be here on island in 2026, and the Ha'ikū fire truck was already ordered about a year ago because it takes four years to build. We're kind of lining that up with our six-year CIP for the project.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay. And then...oh, so you mentioned the...the truck donations. So, we're...you...you would still require some of the new trucks in the budget with the...with the family donations?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, sir. The...the donations that we're getting are...are great wildland firefighting trucks, but they're not engines. And so, we're...the request we have this year is for one engine and a tanker for Wailea, but it's a larger tanker than what we're getting donated. The ones we just got donated, and now you folks approved, are 1,250 gallons, and the one we have coming in for Wailea is 3,500 gallons. So, it's just a little bit different of a vehicle.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. And then my last question, Chair, was in Pā'ia, there was a question about drones for lifeguards when trying to locate missing people out to sea. Is that something that Department already does?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, sir. We do have a drone program, and we have drones at various locations throughout our Department. With the . . . *(timer sounds)* . . support of Mayor and this body, we added our battalion chief aides to our response fleet last year, and they will have drone capability on scene. We also work with some of the lifeguards and have some lifeguard-specific drones that are available for doing ocean searches, which we just did two weeks ago.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: All right. Thanks for that. Thank you, Chair. That's all the questions I had.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Sinenci. So, I have a question. We're hearing...or just wondering what's happening with your bargaining unit...units agreements.

MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Chair. Update on the two main bodies in our Department. We have almost 100 lifeguards and 300-plus firefighters. Those are what sounds like the last two bargaining units to finish arbitration. There was an announcement that just happened recently for the Hawai'i Firefighters. Arbitration was complete, and the arbitrator made its ruling. So, now we're just kind of waiting for, you know, formal confirmation and documentation of what the situation is. Rumor has it, it was not

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favorable. And so, we also have the lifeguards that just went to arbitration on March 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th. And so, we have to wait until the lawyers put in their final briefs to the arbitrator, and then the arbitrator will have another 30 days to make his final decision.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, we don't have anything final regarding the firefighters?

MR. VENTURA: Nothing's concrete yet. Right now we just have some emails and text messages, but I haven't seen any documents. DPS might have something.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I guess we have to get the final documents before we can...all right. So, I have a question. I guess over the weekend I had an email exchange, and Captain Vaas, thank you for working on Saturday, and thank you, Chief, for also answering about permitting. And I noticed that in the program book, page 333, Fire Prevention Program, you have services provided, Plan Review, Processing, Inspection Revolving Fund. And I was wondering if you were planning on using this at all for...to expedite...help expedite permitting. And in...in Bill 55, on page 58, Special Purpose Revenues, Scheduled Revolving Special Funds, CC...item CC, top of the page, it talks about plan review, processing, and inspections, and there is \$2.2 million...well, there's \$2 million. So, I wonder if you're going to be using that to help with the permitting concerns? I think your guys are overworked by working on Saturdays, going through paperwork, I wonder how we can help you.

MR. OTSUBO: Okay. So, talking about plan review, we did some research, and we have several strategies to improve in that area. One is we are trying to get a career path for Fire Prevention. Just met with DPS last week, and showed them their problems, and they agree with the solution. But we...we're going to present like two solutions, and work with them on it. We also...I guess, Cap Oliver . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . made better instructions for applicants, and then the third one is third-party reviews by 4LEAF. And we're looking at using that Revolving Fund to, I guess, try to put that in place.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. So, that's what you're...that's what you're going to use the funds for. And when you say career path, that means you're doing DPS, some restructuring of departments and organization?

MR. OTSUBO: Yes. Because I guess the problem is the revolving door where inspectors come and go, and then we still need to like sign off COs, so plan reviewers are assisting with inspections. So, that whole career path's going to help the whole...the whole problem.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. VENTURA: Chair, if you --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. VENTURA: -- if you want me to add to the --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. VENTURA: -- Revolving Fund. So, you'll notice in our budget there's...there's several asks in the 10-10-75 index code, and so now you have the balance that you mentioned, \$2 million in there. We would...we would possibly use some of that funding to assist with a third-party reviewer if Corp. Counsel and County Council approve that use.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. That will help expedite. Members, do you want another round of questions for two minutes each? Okay. Member Paltin, I see your hand, as well as Member Batangan. Member Paltin, then Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. When I worked in Ocean Safety, we were sometimes before a part of Parks and Recreation. We heard from Ocean Safety and firefighters about a situation at Ho'okipa, you know, about emergency vehicle access, bathrooms, and things like that. Are work order requests being put in to address...I guess there's a stairways that goes to nowhere, or the bathrooms, or is the Department working with Parks and Rec to get a traffic flow for emergency vehicles to get through? Do they give you guys rein to let...direct traffic sometimes, and how does that go?

MR. VENTURA: Thank you. Is this all in reference to Ho'okipa? Okay. So, as much as possible, we start with all of our repairs in-house. We have BMRs, and so if there's something...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, most of the requests were not to the facilities that are run by lifeguards, it was to that park itself. Are you guys able to put in work order requests to the Park stuff, or how does the interaction between Fire and Parks work now that they're separate?

MR. VENTURA: If there was a request from our lifeguards for something--and we recently just did this at one of the Kamaole parks was, they wanted another lifeguard stall. We just do a director-to-director email, and make sure we're not, you know, violating any rules. They know, they agree, they have input. If we're asking, for example, another parking stall, they would tell us maybe where it's best suited for the lifeguards, rather than just taking up the primary stalls or whatnot.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It was...I mean, it was kind of a granular thing, but it was more about like, you know, the bus tours, and then the park rangers not being able to address the bus tours, but them clogging up traffic. And I think one of the firefighters had said that they had a hard time reaching it because of the clogged-up traffic. And if there's any way to like move it along, or restrict it so that there is a fire lane or something there, so that there always is access if there's a 911 call?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah. Certainly, we've all been to Ho'okipa when people are parked on both sides of the road. And if you have a full-size truck, your tailgate's in the middle of the road. So, no doubt there's been challenges there. And the good thing is, if there's a fire, we're going to be able to stretch hose, because we can fit the hose through a one-foot spot. And then if it's a medical emergency, we're on foot. So, we'll work around those

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issues. But yeah, I think over time...and it's a tough area to do construction in that shoreline setback. But we can...if...if there's a need for us, if there's a persistent problem that our lifeguards bring to us, then we can work with Parks on signage or moving fences or something.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If I could follow up on Member Cook's question as well about the separated exclusive call center. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Is that...like when EOC operation occurs, is the exclusive call center going to be like in the same building, or it's still within just drafting the consult...like you're getting consultant services on how it should be?

MR. VENTURA: Got you. So, basically, where we have space available is kind of what we looked at. And MEMA is moving to a new space, but sounds like they're going to fill it pretty healthily. What we're looking at is putting the dispatch center at the Wailea Station for now, because we have parking, we have space upstairs that can be renovated to hold the PSAP. And initially, when they talk about those types of buildings, they need to be public safety level, which is like concrete, secure facility, and all that. And Wailea can meet that...that kind of Code, so that's where we would put it as our primary location, and then we'll see what the future brings as far as moving it closer to town or whatnot.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, is the intent that there would be firefighters at the EOC as well as a dispatch that's separate? Because like on the August 8th fire, it seemed as though EOC wasn't aware of all the calls and volume and nature that the dispatch was getting.

MR. VENTURA: Yes. So, that's perfect, because we have upstaffed our EOC staffing that goes there from the Fire Department, so we send more people there now, and then we also would, yes, be able to readily contact dispatch. The model of staffing that we're looking at, it kind of mirrors Honolulu Fire Department staffing, which is first responders trained in firefighting and...to run the dispatch center, so they'd be HFFA members, and then they would be...there would be a more robust staffing model so that we could, you know, expand and contract. A lot of times when you just dispatch and you go to an incident, you're kind of on your own, and the dispatcher might have to still be doing 911 calls and listening to command, and that's just not good safety practice for our firefighters, and so what we're rebuilding is kind of a redundancy. When an incident is happening and there's multiple companies there and there's a lot of activity going on, you're going to have dedicated dispatchers to that, and then you're still going to have 911 running the rest of the fire trucks to other incidents. So, it'll all be kind of working together, but we'll have...we'll have more players in the game.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Okay. Chief, the Department's requesting \$40,000 for transport to Lānaʻi by airplane rather than ferry. Is there a reason for that?

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Is it just preference for like you don't like Mā'alaea, it's not reliable service at the moment? What's the rationale?

MR. VENTURA: Great question. So, yeah, the increase in travel for the firefighters on Lāna'i is because of multiple reasons. One, the ferry is a longer route right now, it's out of Mā'alaea versus out of Lahaina. It has sometimes not been a...it's been shut down due to weather that sometimes the planes can still fly in. Our current model is a reimbursement to them, and so the firefighters put in for...put in their receipts, and then they get reimbursed for their travel. Police offers airfare, and so this was just us kind of being in succinct with their offer to their employees that we would offer the same thing. So, negotiations happened, they turned into arbitration, and one of the only things that was actually negotiated in our contract was this remote station work for Maui County. And so, that was added to the availability, so the firefighter could go on the boat if it was more convenient, or fly if it was more convenient.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, once...well, when the County eventually gets its own ferry to Molokai and Lāna'i, this would still be in effect because that's what they bargained for?

MR. VENTURA: This is a supplemental agreement, so we would be able to pick the best option at that time.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: And then question on uniform allowances. So, it's not a standalone item anymore, and I couldn't look it up, but what does the...what do members normally get in terms of uniform allowances? And I'm primarily asking because I'm trying to understand the reasonableness of MEMA's request for a uniform allowance...I'm trying to get a sense of what Police and Fire offer their members.

MR. VENTURA: Okay. So, there's...there's two parts to our uniform allowance. One is our blues that you see firefighters wearing, and then on the lifeguard side, their...their beachwear, their board shorts, lycras, sun protection, sweaters, that's all reimbursement. So, they go buy it themselves, and they get reimbursed, or they pay a discounted rate for it. Then there's uniform items that are in the CBA. So, both collective bargaining agreements provide the employee with a maintenance of their uniforms, so like dry cleaning and pressing and that sort of thing, and that comes directly to them in a check once a year.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Oaky.

MR. VENTURA: So, that's the two parts. That pretty much covers all the uniform allowance. Everything else is considered personal protective equipment like PPE, and that's in a separate.

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. But for the uniform allowance, is there a cap that you guys offer?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, so if you are on the line working 24-hour shifts, you're . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . offered 100 percent reimbursement for your first uniform, 75 percent for the ones after that. And if you work Monday through Friday, you get three uniforms a year --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: -- full reimbursement.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, anybody else has questions for Fire?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yes, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I hear Gabe.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I do, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Gabe, do you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Great. Yes, thank you, Chair. Following up on a few questions Councilmember Batangan brought up. You know, the travel money for Lānaʻi, I also want to remind everybody, you know, after the...after the fires of Lahaina, some firefighters had to move to Oʻahu to continue working, so they have to fly from Oʻahu because of the housing shortage that we have to deal with, so there's that. Chief, I'm looking...how can I put this nicely? I'm looking for some cuts, and I...I want to, you know, hear your opinions on this. You know, the repaving of the Joint Training Center, is that possible to wait until next year? And again, Councilmember Batangan brought up the...the uniforms. 71,000 for ties and new hats, maybe we could wait for a year? Because I'm looking for funds specifically for Lānaʻi for one position in Public Works that I think would be really helpful. So, maybe I could move that money around, but I, of course, want to hear from the Department. So, Chief, can you speak to those?

MR. VENTURA: Certainly. So, those questions did come to us and were transmitted with answers back to you folks, maybe a few minutes ago. In reference to the ties and hats, those are not mission essential, and so we understand if it's...if it's not the right time, it's not the right time. Now we're trying to make our firefighters look more professional for ceremonies and services, and that's what those are for. If you look at the graduating classes of Honolulu Fire Department, every firefighter has a hat and tie, and so that's all we're trying to do. The paving, however...the paving at the Joint Training Center got so bad that we actually had to go ahead with the project. So, that project's actually complete. So, when you come to the Training Center for the blessing in the next couple of weeks, you'll see that that job is complete. That being said, we will be looking for funding in FY '26's Budget to reimburse Public Works. Part of that may include us coming to do a resolution with Council to move A Account funds to B Account so that

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we can pay Public Works for that. That all being said, that 160,000, all of that is not needed. We're requesting, and it was transmitted to you folks, to keep \$45,000 in that index code to finish the Training Center. That includes containers, roofing, props, building out the rest of...of what we planned for that, the yard, we call it, in the Training Center. So, out of the \$160,000, some of that is available for you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Chief, I just want to appreciate you guys. You know, I know we want to...we want to do everything we can, and that's why I'm really glad you're able to respond the way you did. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, any more questions for Fire? Okay. So...okay. I'm going to now take a recess, and then we can change out and ask Housing to take your place. But Chief, thank you very much for your...I know you work hard on this budget, and so we appreciate your...your focus.

MR. VENTURA: Thank you. Everybody does. They're...they're all vested in making sure we answer your questions, and we...we have a responsible budget, so thank you all.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing how 911 dispatchers are going to integrate with your program, because I think that's important. All right. Members, I'm going to take a...I'm going to take a...we'll...we'll come back at...is enough time if we come back at 11:25? Is that all right, Members? This meeting is now in recess. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 11:19 a.m.
RECONVENE: 11:30 a.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It is now 11:30 a.m. Thank you, Members. We have now switched out to Department of Housing. But before...before we do that, we have made a possible decision, Members, if you could give us your input, but because of the no water at MEDB building where your...your...your district of residence area office is and the weather report, we are going to be recommending that tomorrow...Wednesday's meeting for South Maui be rescheduled. And I did get a request for it to be on the 14th, and because of that, Member Paltin, for your meeting on...at West Maui, would you like to also consider it to be rescheduled?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, we're available on the 14th as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Uh-oh. First come, first serve, you know? . . .*(laughing)*. . . All right. So, that would be the 17th then, Member Paltin. Okay?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No, but you can do what you like, so go ahead.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. So...

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. That takes a lot of the stress out of the planning for --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- our office and the community and OCS.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Yeah, I hope you get your water back on...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: They will. Department of Water Supply did a really good job on the weekend. There's a 36-inch waterline that they had to do a patch on, and there's a picture of the guy standing next to it, and it's waist-high...that's a lot of water.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And so, we had marginal water pressure and flow on Saturday for most of the day, but they fixed it really well, and so now it's a different part of Kihei they're doing that on.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Okay. Thank you very much. So, we are going to reschedule. You'll let the public know, OCS, about the rescheduling of the two meetings. I think we are erring on the side of caution, and thank you, communities, for being understanding. So, again, the meeting Wednesday for South Maui is now going to move to the 14th, next week Tuesday, and Thursday's meeting for West Maui is moving to the 17th, and what this will impact then is the Members' priorities that you are going to submit on Friday. Please do submit it on the 18th, which is Saturday, by 6:00. Is that time okay? 6:00 on Saturday for the Members. Oh, you want 4:30? Okay. 4:30 then on the...on the 18th. All right. Members, that sounds good.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, you guys...you're going to make a infographic and put out a press release on that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, yeah. Staff will take care of that. All right. So, now we're going to have the Department of Housing, and Director, thank you very much for being here, as well as Deputy Director Saumalu Mata'afa. Good to see you here. So, Members, at this time, I'm going to take questions, and I'm going to start with Member U'u-Hodgins, since you have Housing as one of your Committee departments. So, that'll be three...three minutes for the first round and two for the second.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. You know, I asked my questions in writing, and I'm still kind of going through Housing's response that they sent over, which was really, really thorough. So, I don't have any questions right now, and I'm happy to go after a couple other Members --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- if they have more questions.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Sinenci, followed by Member Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. I'll just ask one of the questions I sent in, because I didn't get the responses yet as I'm at home. But...so, my first question was, just what are the projected job duties for the DHHL Liaison Program Specialist number 3 (*phonetic*)? I know that DHHL is planning to do some paper leases, and so how is the program specialist working with some of the DHHL plans to come and give out these paper leases?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question, and Member Sinenci. I believe the Department's response to BFED letter H0-2 was transmitted, perhaps within the last hour or so, and attached to the transmittal is the DHHL liaison job description, so one can see the particulars of the position. But more specifically, with DHHL projects, the goal is to ensure that the liaison is keeping the Department up to date on those projects and how they might interact with adjacent projects and how the Department can help move the DHL...DHHL projects along. But you should...you should, at this juncture, have the job description in your inbox.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Great. Thank you, Director, for that. And then for some of those helping with the DHHL projects, can they also help with...should we need any zone...like zoning or...or water infrastructure? Can they also assist with those types of things? From the County perspective, helping...helping DHHL get some of these permits and zoning through the County.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, and Member Sinenci. The way the DHHL liaison position functions within the Department is to not take a lead role in the substantive work of the DHHL projects, but to rather keep the Department informed of where the projects are going and any issues in the projects that the Department could play a role in because the Department has either adjacent infrastructure it's working on or adjacent project so we can coordinate the two. But it's not to take on a lead role within the prosecution [*sic*] of a DHHL project.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Great. Thank you for that clarification. And Chair, I'll...I'll go ahead and look at the Department's responses for now. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Batangan, followed by Chair Lee.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Okay. So, I'm not sure how the appropriations for the Affordable Housing Fund came to be. Are they entirely from the fall 2025 competitive process? And then why would either the Department or the Mayor recommend approving 99.8 percent of the projected fund balance, leaving basically nothing for any additional competitive awards?

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Member Batangan, for the question. Let me address the first portion of the question. Prior to the new Department of Housing's inception, the former housing section, Department of Human Concerns, had not for some time instituted a RFP process, competitive process. And so, that, among many things, was top of the order for the Department of Housing. So, we instituted that, issued an RFP for developers to submit projects that they wish to have included in the Department's proposal to the Mayor's Office for its budget. And we structured a review committee of largely outside individuals so that there wouldn't be accusations that the Department was, you know, guiding projects. And we had folks within County government and folks outside of County government.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Sorry. Sorry.

MR. MITCHELL: And so, that's what we did.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Can you be a little bit more brief? So, the list of projects in the budget ordinance for affordable housing subsidies are from this process you're describing?

MR. MITCHELL: So, we did it once in the first year. In the second year, we did it again.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MR. MITCHELL: And then we provided the Mayor's Office with the ranking that was produced.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. And then you don't intend to do that again this year?

MR. MITCHELL: No. Once we've done that, and it's part of the budget and the Council acts, then we don't issue another RFP.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, then can I go back to the question for...that Member Sinenci had asked about the DHHL liaison? So, this person does not act as a point of contact for DHHL to the County. It's only for you to have eyes and ears on what DHHL is doing, right?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, Member Batangan. I don't wish to narrowly define it as just the Department. When I say Department, I mean the County. So...but I wanted to distinguish between being the eyes and ears for the County through the Department from actually doing substantive work on DHHL's projects.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. So, if DHHL had a question saying like how can I help move along this request, or how would I help align my project with proposed, I don't know, water, wastewater, roads, other infrastructure throughout the County, this DHHL person is the person that they would call for those kind of interactions with the County, or no?

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MR. MITCHELL: That's correct.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Oh, they are. Okay. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Oh, I hear the timer. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Chair Lee, followed by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hello, Director. I was wondering if you could send us a copy of that RFP that you put out for housing projects? And what percentage was not spent last year? Do you know that offhand of the Housing Fund?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and Chair Lee, for the question. We will be sure to forward to you a copy of the RFP, and we'll also provide in writing to you what percentage of the fund was not spent last year. I don't have that number at the top of my head.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, what happens if the Council deletes a couple of your recommendations and replaces it with other projects? How is that handled?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the chair...question, Chair, and Chair Lee. Well, I think that's up to the Council's prerogative on how they proceed with the budget. These are the Department's recommendations and...and the Mayor's recommendations, and if the Council chooses to delete a project and insert something else, I guess that's the Council's decision.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, you'll get...do you need for us to send it to you in writing, or it sounds like you got it? No need? Okay. All right. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director Mitchell. My first question is to clarify, is the Ku'ikahi Village referenced in H0-2 the same as the Ku'ikahi Workforce Housing Project? Are those the same?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question. Member Paltin, thank you. Yes, those are one and the same and are...no, I'm sorry. If you take a look at page 7 in our response...H0-2 response that was sent about an hour or so today, our response to question 11 clarifies that the Ku'ikahi project was submitted...has submitted an Affordable Housing Fund request in Fiscal Year '27 to create 102 for-sale residential units. Their proposal represents a shift in the previous project plans, so when I said the same, it's the project on the same property, but the project details have changed, and the developer will need to submit its plans to amend its land use entitlements approved by the Council.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, this number 3 on Revolving Funds, page 47, is a completely different project than the answer on page 11? Or --

MR. MITCHELL: That's correct.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- question. So, you said readiness was one of the criteria. It seems that Ku'ikahi is no longer ready if they have to do those other things? They have to shift and redo stuff? *(pause)*

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Paltin, for the question. What you're seeing is a different project than what you have seen in the past. It is a project that reduced the number of units to accommodate 102 for-sale units in the project. In order for the project to move forward after...and if the Council decides to fund the project, they'll need amendment to their Chapter 2.97 application to update the plans, and then they would be ready to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. And then I had a question about how, after the government...Governor's emergency proclamation finishes and we're doing noncivil employees, is there a pathway, or are those noncivil employee positions need to shift to civil service?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Member Paltin. You may recall there was some discussion, I believe it was at your Committee meeting --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, my Committee.

MR. MITCHELL: -- DRIP Committee meeting, actually, about whether to . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . rely on the Governor's emergency proclamation for affordable housing, or to rely on State Statute 76-77 sub 14, which allows community development agencies and organizations to convert civil service positions to exempt. At the end of that, we chose to rely on the State law, and so it...what we have done was...is not affected by when the emergency proclamations expire. So, it's a simpler process. We don't have to worry about doing another step after they expire.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you still need expansion positions to be approved by the Managing Director for reorganization, or is there a union involved?

MR. MITCHELL: So, yes, we still need the Managing Director's approval for our reorgs. And with regard to converting from civil service to exempt, union consultation is not required. We work through DPS for that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Johnson, and then after that would be Member Rawlins-Fernandez. I see you're back from your site visit. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director, Deputy Director. Real quick questions in regards to, first off, your travel budgets. How about keeping your travel budget flat this year? Would it adversely affect your operations? I'd like to hear your opinions on that.

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Member Johnson, for the question. I want to just take a quick look at our Budget Details, just to refresh my recollection on the percentage change.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I think it was 20,000 change. *(pause)*

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you again for the question, Member Johnson. There is a slight change in the per diem for...for travel, but we've also increased our travel allowance because now we have three administrators we didn't before, and so we're making accommodations for those administrators to participate in a variety of events that require travel. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Fair enough. I'm going to move on to a different question, and this is in regards to the Maui County resident's First-Time Homebuyers Program. As we know, it's \$30,000 caps. What's your opinion on increasing that...that condition? Because as you know, the cost of housing has gone up and up, and 30,000 sometimes isn't...isn't going to cut it. So, I'd like to hear you guys' opinion. Would you be amenable to increasing that condition?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and Member Johnson, for the question. The Department's currently looking at the First-Time Homebuyers Program, and in particular, at the amount provided. I think it's 30,000. Our position is that amount is insufficient given market conditions, and so to answer the second part of your question, yes, we are open to increasing the amount.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Very good. Those were my questions. I appreciate your responses to the written questions, and thank you so much. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Cook, and...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Director Mitchell, Deputy Director, and team. Mahalo for being with us today to answer our questions and your very comprehensive responses to the written questions. Okay. I think the...maybe this was already addressed. This is not to Housing. This might be to Staff. Granicus item number 8, the March 17th response. I...I saw the questions attached, but the responses are not attached to that item. Just flagging that. And then, let's see. For HO-01, question 20, included in your challenges, Bill 65. My apologies for that challenge. We're addressing that. We passed Bill 65 on first reading at our last Council meeting to broaden the Molokai Voluntary Deed Restriction Program. Okay. And then for...okay. And I'll stick to that for now. So, would the Department be supportive of, A, another 500,000 for round two of that Molokai Voluntary Deed Restriction Program, and/or, B, an additional 500,000 to also Lānaʻi, to have a program for Lānaʻi's housing...for Lānaʻi Island for a Voluntary Deed Restriction Program?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez for the question. The most succinct answer is yes and yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Wonderful. Okay. Okay. Let's see. I...I...I wanted to make a couple of statements because institutional knowledge is important. So, the purpose of the DHHL liaison position, so that...if folks will remember, that was created by Council, and that was a joint initiative by Member Kama and I. And the purpose of that position, after identifying the County's processes, including Planning, Public Works, we were becoming an impediment to moving forward DHHL projects. And so, to try to expedite the...you know, to try to not be such a problem . . .*(laughing)*. . . for DHHL, we created this position so that there would be easier communication to get projects through quicker on DHHL's side. And then the Affordable Housing Fund is not meant to bank money, that it's meant to ensure that at minimum, you know, initially 1 percent and now 3 percent is spent on affordable housing projects per Charter because that wasn't happening before that. And the Committee, as the Department explained, to review the RFPs or the . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . proposals were meant to try to decrease the, you know, potential of politicization of the process and to try to minimize or eliminate favoritism by individual Councilmembers having pet projects for their districts so that the criteria that's reviewed includes, you know, all the...to ensure that the funding would be able to be issued as quickly as possible. Mahalo, Chair. I heard the timer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. So, I will...I think everybody has had a chance. Okay. So, I have a question. In the Affordable Housing Fund on page 50, item number 12 is up to \$1 million must be for pre-development costs to construct affordable housing projects on County-owned properties. So, what is the plans for that? What are the plans for that?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question. That relates to the Housing and Community Development Division's leadership in developing County lands. In particular, we are focused now on the parcel that we affectionately call the Kihei Police Station parcel. And I don't recall off the top of my head how large the acreage is, but it's a very large parcel that's mauka of Pi'ilani Highway that's going to require a significant amount of pre-development costs to get that ready for development. So, that's the purpose of that amount of money. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good, is that enough funding? Or do you have...is it...is it to a point where you have details, or is it just kind of...

MR. MITCHELL: What we would do, Chair, is we would issue an RFP for pre-development services, and we would anticipate that those funds would be used for those pre-development services.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you're assured that that's enough money then?

MR. MITCHELL: We proposed an amount and worked through the Mayor's Office CIP folks to make sure that we weren't underestimating an initial amount.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you...you...you have checked on it then. And so, we still have La'akea in the audience, and it sounds like we're fine with what was presented. And then we got this handout, and I was wondering, are there any more funds at La'akea in their financial stack that they're anticipating to get from Department of Housing? Is it the HOME Fund? Is that...isn't that from you, Housing Trust Fund?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair, for that question. Yes, there are additional funds that La'akea is applying for, and that includes the National Housing Trust Fund, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program Fund, and then also we put in a request on behalf of La'akea Village for the congressional directed spending funding as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, according to the summary that we received, and I think it's online also, Fiscal Year '27 Maui County HOME and Housing Trust Fund is for 3,555,000 in review, as well as...oh, of course, Affordable Housing Fund. Is there any other County funds that they're anticipating?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair, for the question. That's the funding that we're aware of that I mentioned. Again, it's the HOME, HTF, Affordable Housing Fund, and then also they have a request in for congressional directed spending.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, if they do not receive the...the HOME/HTF, then what is the impact? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Because I see it's in review.

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair, for the question. So, currently, what's happening is the funding was noticed at the Federal level. That funding passes through to HHFDC. There's an expectation that a grant between HUD and HHFDC will be completed around September of this year, and then if that happens, we're expecting grant agreements to be executed around the beginning of next year, calendar year.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I see. Oh, I see. So, the process...that process is HHFDC to the County. So, there's another review approval that has to happen, or did that happen?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair, for the question. And so, the funding is there. The Department of Housing, through its RFP process, proposes the projects. So, when it's going through the Department of HUD and then also through HHFDC, it's a matter of just recognizing that the funds are being passed through, and then the funds ultimately come to the County for that RFP...through that RFP process --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, do...

MR. MATA'AFA: -- and we select the projects.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, do we need to have a copy of that RFP also? It's a whole separate process, it sounds like, huh?

MR. MATA'AFA: We can provide that RFP to you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Appreciate that. I have no other questions. Members, anybody else have any further questions? Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Okay. Member Kama, before her passing, had been working on legislation related to the Long-Term Rental Tax Program. Her proposal was to restrict benefits to those that offer leases in line with the fair market value rent. I had spoken with you, Director Mitchell, earlier, and you had asked that if I was going to pursue this line of legislation, that I give you additional Staff to help verify the...that the leases comply with the fair-market value. Can you help remind me where...which division within your Department I would stick an E/P if this is something I wanted to pursue?

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, thank you, Chair. And thank you, Member Batangan, for the question. I believe the additional E/P would be in the County Housing Programs Division.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. And then this one might be for Stacey Vinoray sitting back there, but I noticed that there's \$57,500 being requested for two additional office leases. What are these sites, and why are they necessary? You're welcome to call her up to answer the question, by the way.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. Thank you, Chair, and Member Batangan, for the question. This is a great opportunity to ask Stacey to raise her hand. She's the newest member of the Department of Housing. She joined us today, so thank you, Stacey. Also, we have our accountant in the audience, Helen...Qunli if she could just raise her hand. I know she's bashful. There you go. And two of our three administrators. We have Gail Rumbaoa and Alicia Mazingo...Gail for our Federal Housing Programs Division, and Gail for our...Gail for our Federal Housing Programs Division, and Alicia for our Housing Community Development Division. And I noticed that some Members have mentioned that the Department's responses to your questions have been thorough, and I'd like to thank our administrators and Staff for really working hard at giving the Councilmembers a lot of detailed information. So, thank you. Okay. There was a second part to your question.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Yeah. So, what is...what are the two additional office leases you guys are pursuing? What are they for, why are they necessary, what services are they going to provide? Any information you can give us would be helpful.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Member Batangan. Those actually...those leases are actually in place. They aren't new leases. They relate to our office space in One Main Plaza, Suite 515 and Suite 540.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Last question. Are there any grants or contracts listed in the budget narrative that are not listed in the budget ordinance that you're aware of?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question. Not that I'm aware of.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook? Oh, sorry. Member Cook, then Member Paltin. Okay. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. So, Director, I didn't hear the Chair's question, but I heard the answer, and it might be to my question. The professional services on page 10-8 for \$300,000, administrative costs for parcel development, is that specific or general?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair. Thank you for the question, Member Cook. If you just give me a second, I want to find our response to the BFED HO-1 letter, which details. So, look...if you take a look at the BFED HO-1 response from the Department, page...sorry, HO-2 is what you received maybe within the last hour. Do you have the HO-2 response? And then if you look at page 12 in that letter, you will see from the top of the page down. So, the very top of the page is the descriptive narrative of the purpose of that professional services line item, and then this...and then the next item says, Relating to Professional Services, Index Code 924002B: and it lists all the intended services right there.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. I'll look it up, because I don't have it at my fingertips right now. I do have one other question, and that's on page 10-11, Affordable Rental Housing Program, increasing it by over \$4 million. Restore conditional language, increase due to additional program and participant FY '27 funding for rental assistance programs. My question is, as it relates to the Affordable Housing Program, provide a list of additional programs the Department will be implementing in addition to any current programs. It's like what will that...basically, what will that money be used for? How much of it is new, and how much of it is continuation?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Cook, for that question. So, in the beginning of FY 2026, we issued an RFP to start the new grant cycle for the Rental Assistance Program, which lasts for two years. We received five bids, and the Department forwarded all five bids for consideration in the Mayor's budget, and those include the Family Promise of Hawai'i as one entity, which the funding amount will be a little over 1.2 million. The Global Empowerment Mission is the second entity, which is going to be awarded 3.45 million. We have Family Life Center, whose funding award will be 941,000. Maui Economic Opportunity, or MEO, is listed at \$1.399 million. And then the last program that is proposed for funding is Women Helping Women in the amount of \$300,000. So, to answer your question about which programs are continuing, that includes Women Helping Women, MEO, and Family Life Center. The program that's being discontinued . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . because we did not receive an application is Ka Hale A Ke Ola, and then we have two new programs, which is Family Life...Family Promise of Hawai'i and the Global Empowerment Mission.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for the clarification.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Paltin?

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. My question is the level of interaction that your Department has with Planning and EP&S. Planning has money for consultants to look for County lands suitable for housing, and I...I would like to know that they're not doing that in a silo without you guys. And also, EP&S has like maybe 100 grand for green housing initiatives, and I'd also like to know that they're not doing that in a silo without you guys. Or would it...if they are, would it be better to take their money and give it to you?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, and Member Paltin. We address that issue in part--let me just make sure I get the correct letter--in our H0-2 letter. On, let's see, page 17, but specifically, we have had several meetings with the Department of Planning to talk about ways to work collaboratively in entitling County lands and getting professional service to do that. So, there is...they're not working in a silo in that regard. We have not had interactions with EP&S to figure out how to use their funds collaboratively with respect to, I think you said green planning or green development. So, there's an opportunity there for us to reach out to them and...and figure out how to work collaboratively with them.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, they've never consulted you in giving out that money to date?

MR. MITCHELL: Not to my awareness.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then the PARUS one, I think I read in your answer that that's not yet been awarded, or that's been awarded March or something?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Paltin, for the question. If I recall, I believe it's either being routed for execution to complete the grant, or it's been executed already, and I'll follow up with that and get you a response.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, no heads in beds yet?

MR. MATA'AFA: No heads in beds yet.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MR. MATA'AFA: But I will mention that PARUS is really good about having funding upfront that they can put towards purchasing the home, and then request funding back from the County. So, they have a pot of funding that they can use to start purchasing while they wait for the grant to be executed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Cool. And then the Ku'ikahi one that we were talking about before, the...in the affordable housing booklet, it says 102 units, 120 and below like 31, and 140 and below 71, so that's going to be different iteration. Would the conditions the Council put on the, I guess, Change in Zoning or whatever still stand, or would those change? *(pause)* And is it a different landowner? Like did...something changed, right? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Or no, they just changed their minds?

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question. Member Paltin, I think because there's a number of significant changes to that project, how we proceed is something we need to discuss with Corporation Counsel.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: When will you...I guess when the 2.97 re-amendment thing comes to us, that's when we'll dive deeper?

MR. MITCHELL: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And so, you recommend just leaving this money in there because it's in the form of a loan, and will...the Affordable Housing Fund will get the money back upon sale?

MR. MITCHELL: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: And then if I could just follow up on your earlier question about the PARUS Program. In our HO-2 response, page 7, it's item 12, we wrote the PARUS Program received an appropriation for 1 million and change in Fiscal Year '26. A grant agreement for the project was routed for execution in March 2026. So, we need to figure out what the status is on...on executing that grant agreement.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sure, let us know.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have questions for Housing? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. I have three more questions for the Department. All right. So, HO-01, question 13 asks about grants, and the grant to Ikaika 'Ohana for the Lāna'i project. Well, it doesn't say to Ikaika 'Ohana, it says for the Lāna'i Housing...Affordable Housing Project. So, that's a grant, not a loan?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and Member Rawlins-Fernandez, for the question. Did you say HO-1, question 14? We're just trying to make sure we're looking at the same thing.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: 13.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, question 13. Sorry, let me just get to the right place.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Close.

MR. MITCHELL: Go ahead.

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. I think you're asking whether the funding noted is in the form of a grant or a loan, and for that line item, it's for a grant to Ikaika 'Ohana.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And so, if that question, question 13, it asks about which grants you have, and then there's also a previous question about contracts, but it doesn't ask about loans. So, if that question included loans, there would likely be a longer list of projects there?

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember, for the question. So, the funding that's referenced in our response to question 13, the two that are mentioned there are general funded line items, and those were issued in the form of a grant. We do have Affordable Housing Fund where we do issue loans out of that account. So, you're correct, there...there could be another question that addresses the issuance of loans from the Department.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification. And then...oh, shoot, I didn't write down which question it was, but regarding the rent-to-own program, is...is...is that going to be managed by the County, or is someone else managing...a third-party managing that? I can look for the number if you want. Sorry.

MR. MITCHELL: We're just trying to figure out where...where that...our response to that issue popped up in either HO-1 or HO-2. If you have that...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, HO-1.

MR. MITCHELL: HO-1, and do you have the page number?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: One moment.

MR. MITCHELL: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Sorry, I should have had that ready. Sorry, my bad. That would be question 14. What are the top three Department priorities? And the Department increased its FY '27 Affordable Housing Fund appropriation by 21 million. Funding will support development of rental, rent-to-own, and workforce housing units.

MR. MATA'AFA: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez, for the question. So, that specific response is addressed in our Affordable Housing Fund Plan. So, there's a few projects in the Affordable Housing Fund Plan that are rent-to-own projects, where the developer or the owner would be managing those units.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . I heard the timer. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do you have another question, your last question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It's okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. So, I notice...if nobody else has a question, I just have one quick question. So, the...in your affordable...or in your breakdown of the departments of what you will be providing grants for, or projects, I should say, in Budget Details 10-11, Hale 'O Lā'ie project 10-11. So, this is for 2.5 million, and this is...this is continuation of the HHFDC arrangements that you have for this project?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question. Yes, the amount being requested relates to the County helping to underwrite the cost for continuing the Interim Housing Program through February of next year. The State requested an extension of the time to phase out the occupants. And of course, there's a cost associated with extending beyond the previous agreed August 26th timeline. So, to accommodate the phasing out and to allow us to keep moving forward, that additional request for funding is to help underwrite the costs of the occupants in the building through, I think, February 27.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, Director, were those part of the wildfire occupants still, or is this brand new, or something different?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair. I don't know the particulars of each of the occupants, but when the facility was initially populated, it included wildfire survivors, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And so, after you are done with this portion, what more is there that we need to do? Because we're...we're taking over this property at some point once we do renovations.

MR. MITCHELL: So, we issued in March, through our Housing Community Development Division, an RFP for the redevelopment of the project. And then April 1st, we had a pre-bid conference, and I don't have the other deadlines on the top of my head. Do you recall the other deadlines that are coming up? But we have a schedule for our developer proposals to respond to. Now that they've received the RFP, they've gone to the pre-bid conference. So, we're moving forward with our obligations under the memorandum of agreement to develop the property.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, when would we take it over?

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MR. MITCHELL: We technically have, under our current agreements, taken over. We'll take over the project, the facility, in August '26, and then we've extended that to February '27. And then when the...we pick a developer, the developer will receive a sublease to the ground lease. The developer will take it over to develop at that juncture. So, we're in the process of getting the developer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you are in process then?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All the things that we need to do --

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, we are.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- according to the requirements of HHFDC and the...and the project. Okay. So, that's my...my question. Last call, Members. Is that it? Okay. So, I'm going to thank...thank you very much, Director and Deputy, for being with us and for your questions. I guess we'll review what you sent over in detail. And so, that's it for your Department. Thank you very much.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, as they're leaving, I just wanted to reconfirm as far as our district meetings. So, South Maui residency area meeting is now going to be on Thursday [sic], April the 14th at 6:00 at the same place. West Maui residency area meeting is now on Friday at 4/17 at 6:00 p.m. And Members' proposals are now due Saturday, April 18th at 4:30 p.m. Yeah. Okay. So, any questions on that? Thank you for your flexibility.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I'm sorry, what?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can you repeat the due date on that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. So, Members' proposals are...are now due on Saturday, April the 18th at 4:30. So, we moved that one day over to adjust for the residency area meetings. So, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is there...you have a template for that on the Granicus?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, for how you want...how we want the proposals to be submitted. Do we...do we have a template? We can make one. Is that what you're saying? Yes. Staff will make a template, get it to you. So, you will get the templates on that. So, thank you very much. Any questions? So, we can have consistency. We're done with the departments for today. And thank you, testifiers, everybody for being here. So, I just wanted to...we're going to end this meeting at 1:00.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez, you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair? Yes, thank you. I think I was not in the meeting when you rescheduled the South Maui and West Maui. For South Maui, you said the 14th --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- but you said Thursday.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Tuesday.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: The 14th is Tuesday.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then for West Maui, you said Friday the 17th?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, we're also going to reschedule the Wailuku-Waihe'e-Kahului --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That stays on.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- district hearing?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Because it's going to be in the Chambers, and that remains on the 16th. We're not rescheduling.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: On...on the 16th?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. So, South Maui is now being canceled...or rescheduled from Wednesday to Tuesday the 14th at 6:00. And West Maui is being rescheduled to Friday, April the 17th at 6:00. And your question about Wailuku-Kahului, that remains the same, in the Chambers on the 16th at 6:00. And the other item is Members' proposals are now due on Saturday, April the 18th at 4:30. And we're going to create a template.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah? Okay. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'm just going to...I'm...sorry. I'm just wondering if you're going to adjust the calendar? Because then...I mean --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- I wouldn't likely...if it's not good to drive on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I might not come in, and then just we'll do things online. But then we wouldn't need to end at like 1:00 p.m. or whatever, you know what I mean? So, when could we expect an adjusted schedule? Because we're ending at 1:00 because I got to cook, right? Nah.

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

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, I'm not cooking on the 9th now.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, just when would we expect the adjusted calendar to reflect?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I see. So...so, actually what you're saying is we could work longer and maybe take some...more departments. I like that. So, let's work on the adjusted schedule if we need to. OCS?

MS. SZABO: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can you speak in the...

MS. SZABO: Members, we're working with the Budget Director to see if departments are available to move them up.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. Because on Tuesday, the 14th, it says start at 1:00 p.m. until end, but then we're going to have to drive to South Maui. So, maybe we don't even need to come in. Nah, I don't know. I mean, I don't know how it works. I guess it's because we got to fly in from Molokai on Tuesday. So, just logistics needs to be adjusted is --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- all I'm saying.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, and departments for review. So, we'll work on that, and we'll get it to the Members once we work on it with...oh, Budget Director is here. So, we can work on it with Budget Director for Departments as it may apply, and we'll...we'll redo this calendar. Very good. So, do you think tomorrow we can have this done by? Is that too soon?

MS. SZABO: We'll endeavor.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: We'll endeavor. Okay. As best as we can. Thank you. We got to do some scrambling. Good question. Anybody else? Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yes, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: This is Gabe online.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I won't be able to make the 17th. You know, we have farmer's market on Saturday. I won't be able to make the Friday meeting.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. Thank you. Are you done? Your hand was...okay. Delayed. All right. So, thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I'm done. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We'll adjust the calendar, and we'll get back to you with what departments may be moved up or...or we'll move it around so it works. I'm going to...one of the last things that I just wanted to talk about is budget perspective, I guess, for what we're going to do. So, what we did already, the last several weeks, we've heard from ERS, Employee Retirement System, State of Hawai'i, and Define Benefit Pension Funds, EUTF, Employee...Employee...Hawai'i Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund, and UHERO, which talked about our economic conditions. And with that, we've tethered our discussions to our current economic realities. As you know, that we are all hearing about gas prices being high. I think the fuel...fuel cost average for Maui is \$6 per gallon. Molokai is 6.50 to \$7 a gallon, and...and Hāna is about \$6 also. I'm curious what's happening with Lāna'i because I always hear that Mr. Ellison keeps Lanai's gas prices down, so I look forward to hearing from you, Gabe, as to what your island is doing with these economic downturns or up...up...upticks that we're seeing right now.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Molokai is over 7, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Over 7.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Over \$7.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Okay. Molokai is over \$7.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Hāna is \$6.90 in Hāna.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow, \$6.90. Okay. And Lānaʻi, Gabe, do you know what Lānaʻi is? I can't hear you. Oh, you're frozen. Okay. Maybe you can answer, but Lānaʻi always...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: ...hear me now?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I can hear you now, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah. It's \$4.99, and it's just being subsidized by the company.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Amazing. So, he's been doing that for the residents of Lānaʻi for years, so thank you very much for sharing. We're also hearing about how expensive groceries are, and I always use eggs as kind of a measure. I recently went shopping, and at a grocery store, it was almost \$13 a dozen. And there may be, you know, eggs at a lower price from a bigger store, but I was shocked just to see that. But overall, what it's saying is that it costs more, right? Our...our budgets, our household budgets are being stretched, and we are having to really count our pennies. And in this kind of environment, we must be disciplined to keep taxes reasonable and build a budget that accounts for our economic circumstances while also addressing community priorities. This is the environment we're living in. In recent years, the Council has stepped up to meet urgent needs, particularly in response to emergency events and recovery efforts, and that work has mattered, it has made a big difference. At the same time, we must also ensure that our budgeted amounts align with our ability to execute in the coming fiscal years. It is our responsibilities. In the proposed '27 Budget, which includes 17...174 million in Carryover/Savings, which suggests that a closer look at how we must effectively deliver in a single fiscal year. And I wanted to bring out a report that was done on May 21 from our County Auditor, the report on fiscal sustainability and financial conditions of the County of Maui, which basically says under the financial indicator results--and this is interesting--the County has sizable financial reserves, and with these reserves gives the County increased flexibility to much reserves to be a size of...to supplement signs of...services, and budget objectives are not being met to have these reserves, and that maybe we are, with our taxpayers, simply being overtaxed by having this excess. And I think we're all...we all saw that by the 174 million Carryover/Savings, and if we can look at that responsibly is what I'm asking. Our County employees also continue to deliver over challenging circumstances, including many vacant positions within each department. However, the '27 Budget includes requests for more than 90 new positions. We're told that the...the vacant positions are around 500, of which DPS is...is going to clarify for us. We must analyze these areas and others as we progress through the budget process. We must also be clear about addressing our immediate needs. Lahaina recovery remains a focus, while communities and flood-impacted areas for many of your districts are also need...in need of support with the recent Kona low storms. This requires us to be thoughtful about what we're about to...what we ask for our departments, and to deliberate about where we focus our efforts. Looking ahead, we also need to consider long-term fiscal changes that will affect the County's revenue base, including the sunset of the GET revenue in 2030, and property tax impacts from the reduction of the short-term vacation rentals. What is the impact of Bill 9? Our goal should be...a goal should be a budget that is

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realistic today and sustainable for the future. I also want to ensure that this process includes a meaningful exchange of ideas amongst Members. Your perspective will be critical in shaping a budget that reflects both community...community needs and practical realities. Ultimate, this is about...ultimately, this is about setting clear priorities and delivering a plan that is both achievable and responsive to our community needs. So, I just wanted to put that out there, and if any of the Members have any input, I would love to hear from you before we adjourn at 1:00.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Cook? Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah, I mean, I'm...I'm feeling it now, and I...I...I see our community, I don't see...I don't see an upturn in business, in job growth, in...you know, it's a couple hundred bucks a month already for my gas. Food is probably \$400 a month more if you do meat, fish, eggs, milk, basic necessities. Coffee's like five bucks more a pound than I...I like to drink, so I'm kind of like...I'm going to start liking something else. I think that's universally true for all of...all the working people on the island, and we've been highly subsidized in the past, and we will continue to be through tourism and grants-in-aid, et cetera, stuff. So, I'd love to be as generous as we have been in the past and want to be for the nonprofits because I think we get a really lot of bang for the buck. Our nonprofits on the island are incredible in what they perform, what they provide. So, I'm just...I'm just echoing a concern. I don't have a solution, but I tend to be very conservative. The craziness that's happening in Washington, just off the charts, hard to believe that's happening. Doesn't look like this fuel issue is going to get solved anytime soon, and it seems like it's going to be a lot worse. So, anyway, I embrace all my colleagues. I embrace all of our neighbors, and encourage all of us to rely on each other, trust each other, and help each other. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody else have any comments? Okay. Thank you very much, Members. So, at this time then, when we look at the budget, these are, I think, our responsibilities. And again, what wasn't included in this 1...\$1.6 billion budget, the Kona low storm two, and I think they took into consideration one by that statement that we got from the Mayor when we had our budgets delivered. I look forward to hearing all of you as we go down this path, and our responsibility is pretty clear. At this time, if there's no other comments then, this meeting will now be adjourned at 12:32.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER.

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

April 6, 2026

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And we will continue on with our discussion of BFED-1. Thank you very much. And we'll see you in Hāna. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 12:32 p.m.

bfed:min:260406:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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

April 6, 2026

CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 68 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 30th day of April 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck