

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

MINUTES

April 7, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:03 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (left at 11:00 a.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member (left at 11:00 a.m.)
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
Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director, Office of Council Services
Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Office (RAO):

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lānaʻi Residency Area Office
Zhantell Lindo, Council Aide, Molokaʻi Residency Area Office
Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office
Jade Rojas-Letisi, Council Aide, Makawao-Haʻikū-Pāʻia Residency Area Office

ADMIN.: Lesley Milner, Budget Director, Office of the Mayor
Kristina Toshikiyo, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Nahulu Nunokawa, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Kate Blystone, Director, Department of Planning
Ana Lillis, Deputy Director, Department of Planning
Danny Dias, Planning Program Administrator, Department of Planning
Jacky Takakura, Planning Program Administrator, Department of Planning

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Scott Forsythe, Planning Program Manager, Department of Planning
Carolyn Cortez, Planner, Department of Planning
Connie Gouveia, Administrative Officer, Department of Planning
Bradford K. Ventura, Fire Chief, Department of Fire and Public Safety
Ryan Otsubo, Assistant Fire Chief, Department of Fire and Public Safety
Zachary Edlao, Ocean Safety Bureau Chief, Department of Fire and Public Safety
Eva Blumenstein, Planning Program Administrator, Department of Water Supply
Marcy Martin, Director, Department of Finance
Tiare Horner, Budget Specialist, Office of the Mayor

OTHERS: Jay Fujita, Hawai'i Fire and Public Safety
Jonah Romero, Fire and Public Safety
Lisa Labrecque, Maui Humane Society
Laurie Gaines, Maui Humane Society
Moani Makaiwi, Maui Humane Society
Nikki Russell, Maui Humane Society
Judith Aikawa, Maui Humane Society
Keri Mehling, Maui Humane Society
Junya Nakoa
Christina Sawyer
James Langford
Jasee Law
Others (7)

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I'm the Chair of this Committee. It is now 9:03 a.m. Welcome to our second week of budget deliberations for Fiscal Year '26 Budget. This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Law, and as a reminder, when your name is called, if you are not in the Council Chambers--which looks like there might be a few of you--please identify by name if anyone is with you in your room, vehicle, or workspace. Minors do not need to be identified. All right. So, Member Kama will be joining us shortly. I don't see her online. Oh, there you are. Oh, sorry.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: I'm here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Kama --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: I'm here, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- good morning.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Good morning. Aloha kakahiaka to everyone. Looking forward to a wonderful meeting this morning.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Me, too. Next, we have Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, in case you're going to Tanzania and Africa, you would say habari. Habari. And...and as you know, Tanzania is just below the equator, which is about halfway...about halfway down Africa to the east. Okay. So, now you got it, in case you --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We got it.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- want to go take a Hawaiian Airlines flight over there. And I'm home alone with my...in my workspace. No one's here with me. Sorry I couldn't be there in person, but I think I may have caught a bad cold over the weekend.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Working too hard. Thank you very much, Chair Lee. Next, we have Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you for not sitting next to me and getting me sick.

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

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You're so funny. All right. Next, we have Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Aloha, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. Habari to everybody. I'm alone on my side of the workspace on wet Lānaʻi. We need the rain today. And there's no testifiers at the Lānaʻi district office. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you're making us all envious. It's raining in Lānaʻi. How wonderful. Next, we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Hauoli Poakahi kākou. I'm at my home...private residence right now on Molokaʻi. I will be flying there to Maui for this...for Lānaʻi tomorrow. Anyway...oh, for CWRM in Lāhainā. Okay. I'm flying over this afternoon, so I'll join you this afternoon. So, at about...about 10:00, 10:30, I'm going to turn off my video, but I'll still be monitoring. And there...there's no one here. I'm here alone, and there are no testifiers at the Molokaʻi District Office. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha and habani *[sic]*.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Habani *[sic]*.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: There's no testifiers in Kihei, and I'm looking forward to today's meeting. Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Aloha, everyone. Good morning. Habari.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair. Habari, and sabai dee. Here at my home office, I'm here by myself. There are no testifiers in Hāna, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Good morning, everybody. From the Office of the Mayor, we have our Budget Director, Lesley Milner--you must be down there? Oh, yes. Good morning. Department of Fire and Public Safety, we have Chief Ventura, and he will, at the appropriate time, introduce his force. He has his whole force here. It's pretty exciting. Department of Planning, we have Kate Blystone, Director; Deputy Director Ana Lillis; and Administrative Officer Connie Gouveia. Department of Corporation Counsel, Kristina Toshikiyo. And Committee Staff, I always say thank you very much for getting us here at these meetings, and for all your hard work. Senior Committee Secretary, we have Pauline Martins, as well as Yvette Bouthillier; Legislative Analysts Kirsten Szabo, as well as James Krueger; Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst; Clarissa MacDonald; and Legislative Attorney Peter Hanano; Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director of Corporation Counsels [sic]; and Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk. Please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Thank you, Members, for attending today's BFED meeting.

**ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FOR THE
 COUNTY OF MAUI**

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We have one item on the agenda today, which is BFED-1, Proposed Fiscal Year '26 Budget for the Members...for the County of...County of Maui. Members, I will be taking testimony after opening comments today. We have...we will continue our deliberations on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, beginning with comments from the Department of Planning first, and then we'll have Department of Fire and Public Safety. We will then take public testimony and proceed with discussions for the department in this order. We're going to take Fire first, and then Planning. At this time, I'd like to invite Kate Blystone, and please provide any opening comments that you would like to share. Members, Planning is on Granicus number 26, as well as number 85. Welcome, Kate. You can introduce your crew.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Chair. And aloha kakahiaka kākou, and mahalo to the Councilmembers for taking time to discuss our budget today. I'm joined in the room by Deputy Director Ana Lillis, and unfortunately, Connie Gouveia was not available to join us today. Each of our division heads is observing online, and available to answer your questions. So, for Current, we have Danny Dias; for Zoning Administration and

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Enforcement, or ZAED, we have Acting Planning Program Administrator Carolyn Cortez; for Long-Range Division, we have Jacky Takakura--sorry--and for Plan Implementation Division, we have Scott Forsythe. I will be brief, as our budget is far less complicated than the budgets of our colleagues, but for Fiscal Year 2026, we are investing in our most valuable resource, our people. Ana and I have been in these positions for a little more than a year, and during that time, we have learned some critical information. The salaries that we offer our employees are not competitive. Top to bottom, not even close. These low salaries make it difficult to recruit experienced talent, to even interview, let alone hire, and low wages make it difficult for our existing workers to make ends meet. Call me old-fashioned, but I believe when you work for the County, especially in a job that requires so much mental agility and flexibility, you shouldn't need a second or third job to feed your family. When we were in front of you last year, we had 22 vacancies, and now we have 24. The turnover rate in our Department is unacceptable. This budget aims to address that. While we cannot fix our outdated salary schedule, we can increase compensation through supplemental agreements, recruitment and retention bonuses, and other mechanisms. For months, we have been putting together a package of solutions that addresses these issues for existing employees and for future employees. We are excited to deploy this approach in July with your support. Why do we need to fill these vacancies? The Department plays an outsized role in Lāhainā recovery. We review each building permit for compliance with zoning, and do a rigorous review of projects on the shoreline. This task alone is enough for any planning department, but we aren't just the Planning Department for Lāhainā. We are the Planning Department for Maui nui, and we need these positions filled with competent planners and support staff to meet our obligations across the County. When you try to do more and more with less and less, as we've been doing, eventually we will be doing everything with nothing. Our Staff are overworked and burnt out, but we still have so much left to do. This cycle cannot continue, and we need your support. The budget before you is modest and logical. It meets the needs of our community during this very difficult moment in our history. So, we ask the Council to fully fund our request so we can staff the Department and meet our obligations to the people of Maui County. In preparation for this day, we have received two letters from this Committee. You have the response to our first letter, and later this morning, should the Budget Director have time to review it, you'll have our second letter. And we appreciate your patience. We look forward to answering your questions. Mahalo nui.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Ms. Lillis, would you...Deputy Director Lillis, would you like to also say a few words?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Chair. We have 24 vacancies, as Director Blystone stated. We also have an exciting new opportunity with DLNR to partner and take on two Kupu interns at no cost to the Department. We've selected one intern, and they will start later this month, and we hope to select the second before the end of the month as well. They will not reduce our vacancies, but they...we do hope that they will increase our capacity, and we hope to transition them into full-time Department Staff later on. And...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Is...is she speaking? Because we can't hear.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you can't hear? Okay. One moment. You want me to do a --

MS. LILLIS: Test. Test.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- short recess? Could you hear Director Blystone? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes. It was just like the last maybe 20 seconds of what Deputy Director was saying.

MS. LILLIS: Yes, thank you. I was just stating that we have an interesting partnership with DLNR happening currently. We hope to take on two interns. We've selected one. We have interviews for the second later this month, and we hopeful...we are hopeful that that will be a meaningful partnership and transition those interns into full-time Department Staff. That is our hope. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Good. Can hear now. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Department. And next, I would like to ask for the...Chief Ventura, would you like to come here and do your opening comments? So, for the Members' information, Fire has responded, and their comments are on Granicus number 17 and 79...FS-1 and FS-2. *(pause)* Do you have enough chairs? You do, yeah? Okay. Ready? Okay. So, I'd like to ask Chief Brad Ventura to provide any opening comments, and if you could also introduce the personnel joining you today.

MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Chair. Aloha, kakahiaka, everybody. Thank you for having us today. With me, I have our Chief of Support Services, Ryan Otsubo, as well as our Chief from Ocean Safety, Zach Edlao. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share with you our budget, and go over our FY '26 proposed budget here today. Our Staff has worked diligently over the last several days to answer the two sets of questions, and we submitted the second set on Friday. I know it's quite lengthy, it's about 35 pages, but that should give you a pretty good in-depth view into our budget from the questions that we received from you all. We've set up our...our budget and our priorities to basically service our community and accomplish the mission of our Department. The recent uncertainties that we've seen in the Federal Government, including tariffs and some changes to our grants, may need to have us pivot as we move through the year, but we will keep you posted as we move along. Our budget priorities for this year are the health and safety of our community and our employees, to fulfill as many of the after-action report recommendations and recommendations from the FSRI phase reports through our budget as well. And if you peruse through our budget this year, you'll see there's at least 31 connections to recommendations from those two reports in the FY '26 Budget. And then the last thing, priority-wise for us, is to maintain, replace, and expand our assets...our assets including our equipment, as well as our facilities. So, you'll see that reflected in our equipment requests, as well as our CIP requests. A little bit about our vacancy count. We currently have zero civilian vacancies in our Department. The fire side of things, we have 19 vacancies. However, on April 1st, we just started a recruit class with 22 recruits. They graduate October 3rd, and that'll be taking care of all those vacancies. We do have more positions that are still being created in FY '25, and that's

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why we're starting a second recruit class June 16th. It's very rare for us to do two recruit classes in a year, but we know we have to this year. So, everybody's working really hard to get that done. On the Ocean Safety side of things, we currently sit at 16-1/2 vacancies. Eight-and-a-half of those are for Pu'u Keka'a. We will hire those employees once we get our building permits for that tower. There's no need to overhire or spend early. We think it's fiscally responsible to wait until that tower is under construction before those employees are hired. With that being said, that leaves us with about nine more vacancies. We started a recruit class on April 1st with five candidates, so that leaves us with the remaining three, which we'll get in the last class. We do have some proposed changes to our Fiscal Year '26 Budget. This will net a savings of about \$77,000, and I do have this in writing that I can share with the Clerk later, but just to go through it. Your questions that were sent to us made us kind of inspect our budget a little bit closer, and then you had some suggestions for us to move monies from place to place, so we did. We can reduce our Admin Program by about \$40,000 in professional services, and we can also reduce our civilian expansion positions to four-month funding, which would gain a \$89,000 savings. And we're okay also, because of the time that our recruit classes are graduating, to reduce the funding for the firefighter positions we're asking for to six-month fundings, which would be a \$91,000 savings. What we're asking for, for that is, due to the recent weather, our training center asphalt has become unsafe, and very unlevel and dangerous to drive forklifts and apparatus around, as well as walking, so we are going to have to repave that project in this fiscal year, which we did not put funding in for, so that ask is \$143,000. We'll be working with Public Works to do it as fiscally responsible as possible as they have kindly offered their services. They've been to the property, and they know what work needs to be done. Those four changes net a \$76,936 savings to our budget. I do have a bit of bad news. You may be following all the Federal appropriation bills that are being passed, and the earmarks have been removed, so for Ha'ikū Fire Station, we did lose the \$15 million grant for Ha'ikū Fire Station. That happened March 15th, and on March 31st, we were in Washington, D.C., talking to our delegates. The goal there was to basically tell them how important this money is to us, not only for just the fire station, but the whole of Maui County, and how we're going through so much to recover from the fire still, that every dollar we need will help everybody. It's money that we don't have to take from somewhere else. So, Mayor has supported a couple of things. One is to make this also the FY '26 priority for earmarks, so we will be going back in again for it. And our conversations with our delegates in D.C. were to show the importance of somehow potentially getting this money back in the Federal Fiscal '25 year, but no promises were made. We're also looking for different ways to fund this, so we have some feelers out for other grants that have come in the past, and we'll be working to see if those kind of pop up on our radar. Lastly, I just want to say mahalo to this Council for always, you know, being there. We get a lot of good feedback from you, from your communities, and I think it's really important that we stay connected so that we know what's going on in your community, so that we can fulfill the needs of them, and then you folks have always been very supportive of our Department to accomplish our mission. And, you know, the residents and the visitors that we serve every single day depend on us to do everything that we have to do. Later today, you'll see in testimony we've brought along both of our unions. We worked with them to make sure all of our priorities are addressed as best as possible, and what's important to them, they'll share with you. So, thank you. Mahalo, Chair.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. So, at this time, then, I'm going to ask the Fire to stay here, stay in those seats. I'm going to open our...for public testimony, and when we come back, Members, will do Fire first with questions, and then ask Planning to join us. So, do we have public...we do have public testifiers. Okay. So, testifiers wanting to provide testimony should sign up with Staff and join the online meeting via Teams link, or call the phone number noted on today's agenda. Testimony on the Budget...on...on...is not limited...is...is limited to the departments, as well as anything on the fiscal year budget for 2026. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas as well. Under the Sunshine Law, the Chair will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting, and as the item is called up. For...for individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking the online raise-your-hand button. If calling in, please follow the prompts via phone; star-5 to raise and lower your hand, star-6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifiers' list in the order testifiers sign up. For those in Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your hand...once...once your name is added. Staff will then call the name you've logged in under the last...or the last four digits of your phone number when it's your time to testify. At this time, Staff will also enable your phone [sic] and video. If you wish to testify anonymously, please notify Staff. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item, of which we only have one item, so you can testify three minutes on anything on our Fiscal Year '26 agenda. And if you're still testifying beyond this time, I'll ask you to complete your testimony and provide a 30-second...30 more seconds. 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...to take each person up in an orderly fashion. Please, Staff, call the first testifier. Clarissa is doing the calling of the testimony. Okay. Thank you, Clarissa.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The first individual signed up to testify is Jay Fujita, to be followed by Jonah Romero.

. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. FUJITA: Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers, and guests. My name is Jay Fujita. I am here representing the Hawai'i Fire Fighters Association. I am also a 25-year veteran with Maui Fire and Public Safety as a Fire Captain. First, as before last year, coming up as testimony, I...we stated that we do need more fire stations. That is still a request that we need to give. Second, I will be talking about two topics that we have budgeted for for this upcoming fiscal year. The first one is travel. We...we do know that our County encompasses four islands, three which is staffed by the Fire Department, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i. So, members are asked to work at these stations and travel there for work, and most of the time is on their own pay. They need to cover their own vehicles. If they need to transfer...ship a vehicle over to different islands, that is the cost that they take upon themselves. And a lot of times these are entry-level firefighters, so they are just getting on the job and have to incur these costs, as well as pay for their mortgages or

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rents back here at home. MPD, which is also under Public Safety, they do have an MOU in place that does cover for their officers. We are asking for the same, to be covered for our employees, which I think that is fair to be asked. And the second thing that we also budgeted for in the fiscal year is for our physicals. We follow the 1582 NFPA, and part of those physicals, we do screen for cancers within...for our employees. The union is working with Senators on HB 827 and SB 828, which is to bolster the presumptive cancer laws for Hawai'i. There's some stats. The International Agency of Research on Cancer classifies firefighting as carcinogenic to humans, and it's rated as a group one, which is the highest level. . . .(timer sounds). . . This is the same class that is with tobacco and benzene. So, firefighting is carcinogenic to us. 75 percent of the people honored...or members honored at the IFF, Fallen Firefighters Memorial in September, is from cancer. That's 230 out of the 306 members that were honored is because of cancer. And right now, when members are having to deal with cancer, they have the burden of trying to recoup costs medically through the Workman's Comp. We are trying to bolster this, and making sure...and taking this burden off of the firefighters having to deal with the cancer and paying for their . . .(inaudible). . . .(timer sounds). . . Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, if I could just ask a clarifying question.

MR. FUJITA: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You talked about two things. So, you're saying that when a firefighter travels to, let's say, Moloka'i --

MR. FUJITA: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- they need to pay for their own car, they need to pay for their...well, we must pay for their...well, what...what does that person pay for, and what is this MOU that you would like us to reference...or research?

MR. FUJITA: So, right now, they do...we do cover some of the travel costs, but they have to front them...the costs, and they'll get reimbursed. And if they're going to ship their vehicles over, because we are on a Kelly schedule, so we don't work...when they work there, they don't work every day. So, they work on, off, on, off, and then four days off. But in between days, they need a vehicle...and to get from the airport to the stations to work. So, most of the time, they'll ship a vehicle over. That cost is...they have to pay out on their...out of their own pockets, ship the car back. Once if they're able to get back to Maui, they have to ship it back...they pay for those costs. When they're there, if they rent someplace, they pay for that cost.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Housing.

MR. FUJITA: Housing. Yeah.

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

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. I didn't see that. Okay.

MR. FUJITA: Yeah. And most of the time...and a lot of times, it's the firefighters, so the entry level. So, this is the lowest paying that are incurring these costs, as well as paying for their mortgages and rents back home.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. Members, anybody else have questions for the testifier? Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, sir. My clarifying question, so shipping the car back and forth would be like the first time that they're stationed over there, or like back and forth, back and forth, back and forth?

MR. FUJITA: Just to do their duty there. So, however long they need to be there, a year, or until they can get transferred back to Maui.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, then they might have to have two cars, one on Maui and one over wherever they're stationed --

MR. FUJITA: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- is one of the other aspects of it.

MR. FUJITA: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, is there any talk about basically being able to provide transportation on Moloka'i, on Lāna'i, for firefighters so that they don't have to do that?...so there's a car available for them on...

MR. FUJITA: We haven't really gotten to that part yet, but we are asking for costs to have their vehicle getting shipped over and back.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Members, anybody else have questions? Okay. Seeing none. Thank you very much for testifying. Next testifier, please.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair? Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: You need to check online, yeah?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I didn't see your hand.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I had a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, just a second. Can you come back?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: My hand was up. Yeah, my hand was up for a while.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. All right. Member --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Rawlins-Fernandez has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha. Mahalo. Mahalo for testifying. Did you provide your testimony in writing so that we can reference it?

MR. FUJITA: I can do that after. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Because what...just to clarify, the costs that you spoke to about, you know, being on Moloka'i or Lāna'i, those costs, you're asking for it to be covered, not for them to continue paying out of pocket? Is that what...just to clarify.

MR. FUJITA: I think we...it was proposed in the budget, some monies, but we are...you're working with DPS to draft an MOU as to be parity with MPD.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification. Mahalo, Chair.

MR. FUJITA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody else have questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Okay. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Jonah Romero, to be followed by Lisa Labrecque.

MR. ROMERO: Okay. Good morning. Aloha, Budget Chair Sugimura and other esteemed Councilmembers, and the community. Thank you for allowing me to speak. Oh, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name is Jonah Romero, and I am here on behalf of the HGEA Bargaining Unit 15 Ocean Safety Officers. I currently serve as a Training Captain for the Ocean Safety Bureau here on Maui, and have been in the Department since 2018. For those who are not familiar, the Ocean Safety Bureau went under the direction of the Department of Fire and Public Safety back in 2017. We were a group of 40-something guards then, and we're currently just shy of 100. We stand to gain more personnel in the coming years. That type of growth is something to be proud

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of, and we have our community and you all to thank for that, so thank you. However, we all know that with growth comes challenges. More personnel means the need for more trainings, more equipment...and more equipment means the need for more space. Currently, we have various apparatus and equipment scattered throughout different locations, leading to clutter and encroaching on MFD's overall space and function. We also oftentimes find ourselves competing for classroom space. With both departments having multiple annual recertifications, it oftentimes leads to scheduling conflicts. And fortunately, our brothers and sisters on the Fire side have been extremely accommodating, willing, and flexible, but they too are expanding and growing, as alluded to what Fire-1 (*phonetic*) said earlier. That is why I'm here advocating on behalf of our Department for the budget in this...for this year's budget. The increased funding will not only improve our equipment and facilities, but also enhance our Department's effectiveness to save lives. A dedicated space will allow us to have a place to properly store and maintain our equipment, conduct comprehensive training, and ultimately serve our community better. We urge you to consider this budget proposal as an investment not just in our Department and the men and women who serve, but also in the safety and well-being of our visitors who come here to enjoy, and most importantly, our community who call this place their home. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Anybody have questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you.

MR. ROMERO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: The next testifier is Lisa Labrecque, to be followed by Laurie Gaines.

MS. LABRECQUE: Aloha, Chair, Councilmembers. Good morning. I'm Dr. Lisa Labrecque, CEO of Maui Humane Society. Last year, I stood here and shared the challenges of an uncertain future for animals on Maui following the wildfires. We expected that displaced and affected families would continue to make the difficult decision to surrender their beloved animals. We expected that veterinary care would be desperately needed due to financial strain and limited access. We expected to see a higher length of stay for animals in our care as housing became more limited, especially for dogs. This year, these fears have become our reality. We have never been called upon in this way before, and while our small but mighty staff and volunteer base have risen to the challenge, we need additional support in order to continue supporting those who need us most. We are deeply grateful for the County's support, which covers approximately 60 percent of our costs for our animal sheltering program. The remaining 40 percent is funded by Maui Humane Society using donor contributions, grant funding, investments, and other sources of revenue. Last year, we did not receive an annual increase to account for inflation, making it harder to keep up with rising costs. Then in December, Hawai'i Animal Rescue Foundation, the second largest animal welfare organization on the island, closed their doors, further straining our resources. In previous years, the Mayor's budget has included a line item for HARF of \$150,000. This has been dropped from the Fiscal '26 Budget at a time when we are being asked to do more than ever

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before. When HARF closed, we took in the animals in their care. We hired several of their staff members, and we're seeing now those animals staying about 50 percent longer than before the fires due to housing shortages, as well as, most recently, the impacts from the Los Angeles fires, which are affecting our ability to transfer animals over to the continent. I respectfully request that this Council approve the full amount we requested for animal sheltering rather than flat funding us for the second year in a row. And in addition, we request the \$150,000 previously earmarked for HARF so that we can continue the critical work of providing housing and care for the homeless animals in our community. Mahalo for your consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, anybody have questions for the testifier? Member...Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. What was the full amount?

MS. LABRECQUE: Our animal sheltering grant from Fiscal 2024 was 2,033,000. We asked for our annual increase last year and did not get it, so we got that same amount last year, and that is the same amount in this coming budget. So, the annual increase that we have received all previous years would be an additional...well, what we requested was 236,000. So, it's a difference of, I think it's like \$203,000.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 2,203,000?

MS. LABRECQUE: No. So, we're asking for 2,000...236,000 [sic], which is 203,000 more than what is currently in the budget.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Do you have that in writing? You could send it to us?

MS. LABRECQUE: Yes, we dropped off 12 copies...or 16 copies today --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good.

MS. LABRECQUE: -- and then I think I did email all Councilmembers separately with a much more detailed statement than...than what I had time for today. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. All right. Next test...oh, you know, before I go into the next testifier, I see Member Sinenci here. Good morning, Member Sinenci. Okay. Next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Laurie Gaines, to be followed by Moani Makaiwi.

MS. GAINES: Aloha, Councilmembers --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

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MS. GAINES: -- Chair, community members. I'm Dr. Laurie Gaines, the Medical Director and a veterinarian at Maui Humane Society. I want to express my sincere gratitude for the County's past support of Maui Humane, and to provide you with an update on our spay-neuter program. Your partnership has played a crucial role in improving animal welfare in our community, and we deeply appreciate your continued commitment. The disruption in spay-neuter services secondary to the wildfires led to a backlog in spay-neuter surgeries, and we are still seeing the consequences as the population continues to grow. We continue to provide medical and surgical care beyond spay-neuter for animals of families affected by the fires. The need for our services has never been greater. The demand continues to far exceed our capacity. Each month, our surgery appointment schedule fills up within minutes of opening. Currently, the County contributes \$66 per surgery, a rate that has remained unchanged for almost ten years. In reality, the true cost of an average spay-neuter surgery at Maui Humane is over \$85. The average cost at private vet clinics is over \$600. Without an increase in funding, we are severely limited in our ability to provide these critical services, which help manage the island's animal population and reduce shelter intake. Last year, our team performed 7,551 spay and neuter surgeries. Using the outdated pricing, this means the County provided funding for about 2,500 of those surgeries. If the County keeps our funding the same, this will result in 23 percent fewer surgeries, a reduction of 560. If the County would like to continue funding the same number of surgeries as you have done previously, we respectfully ask for an increase of \$48,000, for a total of 2...sorry, \$213,000 in order to provide 2,500 County-supported spay-neuter surgeries to the community. Given the rising costs and the great need for these services, we respectfully request the funding to cover the true cost of providing affordable spay-neuter. Without increased support, fewer animals will receive these essential surgeries, leading to higher intake rates and further strain on our already overburdened shelter. Thank you so much for your time and consideration. With the County's continued support and partnership, we can continue to help families keep their pets, and ensure a healthier future for our island's animals.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions for Dr. Gaines? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Moani Makaiwi, to be followed by Nikki Russell.

MS. MAKAIWI: Aloha kakahiaka, County Council. My name is Moani Makaiwi, and I am the Humane Enforcement Resource Officer at Maui Humane Society. I would like to mahalo for your continued support and commitment to our efforts. As you know, we were awarded the contract to assist with animal control services on Moloka'i, and to rebuild kennels that had fallen into disrepair. These kennels reflect the critical need for resources on the island, not only in terms of enforcement, but also through pet retention services and safe, clean housing that ensures humane treatment and mālama for the animals in our care. Since stepping into this role on February 10th, I've witnessed firsthand and heard directly from the Moloka'i community the urgent need for a full-time veterinarian to provide essential services, including spay and neuter procedures, wellness checkups, and also humane euthanasia. While we are grateful for the partnership with Moloka'i Humane Society, their capacity remains limited. The people

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of Molokaʻi are open to change, but meaningful progress requires adequate funding. Without additional support, more animals will be transferred to Maui, away from the island they call home. Maui Humane Society continues to provide critical support, but with limited space and resources on Maui, the need for action is urgent. As we approach the fiscal year of 2026, we respectfully request funding to not only sustain the progress we have made, but to expand essential programs in education and animal welfare resources for Molokaʻi, including additional funding for a second Humane Enforcement Officer of 60,000. Maui Police Department held a contract to the job description of the dog warden. Currently, I am the one officer who is responsible for the entire island, Monday through Friday. This is neither sustainable nor safe. The previous officer on Molokaʻi was supported by the Maui Police Department, which would cover when he was not on duty or needed assistance in general, whereas the officer under Maui Humane Society does not have a backup, or a supervisor on-island, or immediate onsite assistance. This remains a satellite position. We have shifted from having two Humane Enforcement Officers and one Animal Care Enrichment Specialist, instead of two part-time Animal Care Enrichment Specialists and only one Humane Enforcement Officer. This will help to ensure proper assistance for the officers, and also safety. In the past two months, I have since flown 16 puppies and 1 adult female dog, and by boat, 1 adult female dog to Maui for medical care amongst needing the assistance with behavioral issues. Per Kamaka Air, we are only able to fly a dog per kennel, one dog in one kennel, at the cost of \$177. And we are asking for assistance with transportation at 5,000 a year. That would allow us to fly two dogs a week on Kamaka Air. Privately-owned boats can cost anywhere from \$25 to \$75 one-way. On February . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . 28th, I was able to assist 16 families with spay and neuter with either their own pet or stray dogs who also had puppies. A one-day spay and neuter clinic on Molokaʻi costs approximately \$3,500. We are requesting 42,000 in County support to fund monthly spay and neuter clinics. This funding will cover essential medical procedures and wellness appointments. As we all know, Molokaʻi does not have a full-time veterinarian on-island, but it would help with the medical supplies and other necessary resources, including travel, medication, and equipment. Maui Humane Society will absorb the cost of all staff training, travel, per diem, and ground transportation necessary to facilitate these services. . . . *(timer sounds)* . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Could you...could you wrap it up?

MS. MAKAIWI: Mahalo for your time and consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. You're reading your testimony. Could you submit that to us?

MS. MAKAIWI: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions? Okay. Seeing none. Thank you very much.

MS. MAKAIWI: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

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MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next testifier is Nikki Russell, to be followed by Judith Aikawa.

MS. RUSSELL: Good morning, Chair and the esteemed Members of the County Council. Thank you for your time and your ongoing dedication to serving the County of Maui. My name is Nikki Russell, and I'm the Chief of Operations at Maui Humane Society. I'm here today to testify in support of our humane enforcement contract. We're profoundly grateful for the County's continued support, which allows Maui Humane Society to provide essential animal control and humane enforcement services for our community. As you're aware, MHS is contracted by Maui County to respond to the needs of animals and residents across the Island of Maui. In Fiscal Year '24, our officers responded to more than 3,804 calls for service, brought in 951 stray animals, and conducted 512 cruelty investigations. Our humane enforcement officers also logged 91,399 miles last year, responding to calls for stray animals, animals in distress, and victims of suspected cruelty. Maui Humane Society respectfully requests an allocation of an additional \$94,000 to account for inflationary pressures observed over the preceding two years. Additionally, we seek an appropriation of 150,000 to fund the acquisition of an additional Humane Enforcement Officer and an enforcement vehicle. This request is necessitated by a discernible escalation in demand for our services throughout the island. Contributing factors to this increased demand include the rising number of pet owners experiencing homelessness due to the lack of pet-friendly housing, and a concurrent increase in animal abandonment. To illustrate the urgency of your request, just last week, our officers intervened in a neglect case involving the seizure of seven canines from a single owner in Lāhainā. All seven animals presented in emaciated condition, with two requiring urgent medical attention, one of whom was subsequently euthanized due to the severity of its condition. The community needs Maui Humane Society's help more than ever. Our Maui Humane Society team will continue to meet these challenges, but we need the support of Maui County to continue serving those who need us most. Maui Humane Society respectfully requests an additional 244,000 over and above the 1,061,000 flat funding that the Mayor has proposed for the second year in a row, thereby resulting in a total Fiscal Year '26 funding request of \$1,305,000. As mentioned above, this additional funding will account for inflationary increases over the last two years and fund the acquisition of an additional officer and vehicle. Thank you again for your continued support of Maui County's animals.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much.

MS. RUSSELL: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, before we hear from the next...you can please come down. We just received from the OCS Staff of...many papers and documents, of which is the Humane Society testimony. Please...please come down.

MS. AIKAWA: Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Dr. Judy Aikawa, I'm a retired emergency medicine physician and Vice-Chair of the Maui Humane Society Board of Directors. It has been my privilege to serve on the MHS board for over 15 years. I'm

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speaking today on behalf of the board of directors to express our gratitude for the County of Maui's longstanding support. We are proud of our partnership with the County, and feel our shared commitment has saved animal lives, and has helped to preserve the human-animal bond, which is essential to the emotional health and resilience of animal lovers in our community. Over the last 15 years, I've had the pleasure of witnessing the transformative changes Maui Humane Society has undergone as the organization has grown from fewer than 20 employees to over 100 dedicated animal welfare professionals who care for between 250 to 600 animals each month. MHS' scope of work has also expanded so that in addition to rescuing, rehoming, and rehabilitating Maui's homeless animals, MHS now provides crucial support and outreach for underprivileged pets and their owners. Currently, grant funding makes all...County grant funding makes all that work possible, as well as enabling the organization to work to achieve the following strategic goals. One, to provide accessible and affordable veterinary care, including spay-neuter services to all who need it...this, despite a deficit of spay-neuter funding from traditional animal welfare sources; two, to expand services to ensure that underserved communities like Moloka'i and Hāna have accessible veterinary care and other animal welfare resources; three, to enforce animal-related laws and investigate cases of animal cruelty while educating and delivering services that support the community and keep animals in their homes; and fourth, to upgrade and modernize MHS animal sheltering facilities to maximize life-saving impact and operational efficiency, ensuring MHS is prepared for the future. MHS remains committed to improving the lives of pets and people in our community, but we cannot do it alone. We deeply appreciate your past and continued support, and urge you to consider increasing funding for MHS to ensure we can meet the community's growing animal welfare needs. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Dr. Aikawa. Just wondering, has all the money from the fire been expended already? Any monies that you received, donations from the fire and the Hawai'i Community Foundation?

MS. AIKAWA: We have expended the Hawai'i Community Foundation funding, but there is money left for...from the fires, which is restricted for fire use...for fire-related programs and services, particularly to the Lāhainā community and also to Kula, to a bit, where they had fires too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Could it cover spay and neutering in Lāhainā and Kula?

MS. AIKAWA: Some of the money is going to our spay and neuter programs. But remember, the County only covers 2,500 animals, and we do over 7,000 a year. Many of those are in Lāhainā, so those are covered by the Society, which raises money from grants, donations, investments, and all kinds of other efforts to raise money.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MS. AIKAWA: Yeah.

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

MS. AIKAWA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, the next, and currently last, individual signed up to testify is Keri Mehling. Apologies if I mispronounce your name.

MS. MEHLING: Good morning. My name is Keri Mehling, I am a two-plus year volunteer with Maui Humane Society. I have given over 1,920 hours in these last couple of years, and I primarily work in the hospital and clinic facilities. I'm here to emphasize the need for the spay and neuter program today. As you folks know, MHS is required by law and contract to provide certain functions under Title VI in the Hawai'i Revised Statute. The spay and neuter program is asking for \$213,000. You have earmarked 165 in the current budget. Our customer is this community, and the community has demanded, and continues to demand, breadth of services, which includes access to spay and neuter programs. Dr. Gaines mentioned that the real cost of a spay or neuter is \$85, and we're getting 66. I would challenge any person in this room to get a medical procedure that involves anesthesia and high-quality professional care for \$66. That doesn't include the fact that every single surgery day, there are a minimum of three of us volunteers there. We give 20 hours a surgical day. If you paid us a minimum wage of \$14 an hour, that's \$280 a day, \$72,800 shortfall. That's what we are giving back. It is not unreasonable for the County to step in and provide additional funds for spay and neuter. We, as members of this community, are stepping in, and the dollars need to back that. I hear repeatedly County need...the community has to step up. They've got to get involved. They do. They are feeding, watering, caring for cat colonies. They are out there keeping diseases from spreading, kittens from being born. They're protecting native species and habitats by controlling these communities. We need to be there to back them up, and we need the resources to do it. The County needs to recognize we have grown dramatically. The facility has not been able to keep pace with that because the financial backing isn't there. We should not have to go out and beg for money to do what we are contracted to do. We keep hearing the theme repeatedly, we need more homes for people in this community. We do, no question. But you can't give somebody a place to be in a home and a roof over their head if you don't have the rest of the resources there for them. And that includes helping care for the animals in this community. I would encourage this group to start looking long-term. I, on my own dime, have toured multiple facilities that are state-of-the-art. They are amazing. But what you have here are medical . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . professionals, technicians, people with extremely high levels of training, operating and doing the best they can with very little resources. And to say that they are miracle workers is a dramatic understatement. We need to back the work that they are doing, and we need to back it with our finances. Our values in this community are reflected by what we take care of, and that should be our children, our kūpuna, and our animals. It is really that simple. Thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Question from--one moment--Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you so much. Thank you for your testimony. To clarify, so the reason why your folks' spay and neuter program compared to like a private vet is because you guys volunteer your time to do the surgery?

MS. MEHLING: So, I'm a pure volunteer. I'm actually training as a technician right now.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. MEHLING: Paying for that on my own. You have paid technicians who are doing your anesthesia, your drug protocols, monitoring, and things of that nature. What we're doing is the things that doesn't require the highest level of medical care.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. MEHLING: We're doing paperwork. We're doing...moving the animals around. We're doing the post-surgery monitoring and checking with people. But those are...those are positions which are not being filled by paid people...because your paid technicians are doing the more technical work, the stuff that you would expect nurses to do in a hospital, right?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. MEHLING: But it doesn't change that all of those things have to be done for every single surgery.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And then you guys, before you come to us, take all of this and talk to the Mayor, and so he can increase your budget? So, by the time it comes to us, it's...we can just go with what he has? Because, you know, we get the budget from the Mayor, right?

MS. MEHLING: I do understand that.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. MEHLING: And as I mentioned, I'm a volunteer, so I'm sort of here on my own time, and I am not part of the group of directors that come and have a lot of the more detailed information, or have communicated directly. But I'm here on behalf of the community --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. MEHLING: -- as the person who's...I'm...I'm putting my time where my money and my mouth is.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Cool. You're just the last one, and so I'm just hoping --

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MS. MEHLING: I am, and I'm happy --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- you guys all go and take this over...

MS. MEHLING: -- to have one of them come back up and be able to --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. MEHLING: -- address that question because I...honestly, I can't address it for you.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Sure.

MS. MEHLING: If...if...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I mean, I don't know if you can come back up, but you can...we can talk stories later. Well, I don't know, in the Sunshine Law, if you can come back up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Not right now.

MS. MEHLING: Can she whisper in my ear?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah. But...but we can talk after to make sure that by the time it hits us, that we're not scrambling to move things around, and you guys get what you need from the get-go. Thank you so much.

MS. MEHLING: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I appreciate your time.

MS. MEHLING: Not a problem.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. No other questions.

MS. MEHLING: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, we did receive testimony from Dr. Judy Aikawa, from Nikki Russell, from Moani Makaiwi, and Dr. Labrecque, and Laurie Gaines. Members, the Humane Society is in Department of Agriculture this year. Thank you. Any other questions? Seeing none. All right. Next testifier.

MS. MACDONALD: The next testifier is Junya Nakoa.

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MR. NAKOA: Hello. Okay. First thing is, I'm mad because I wanted for be anonymous, but I know who the heck I am now because somebody mention my name, okay. Try look on top the thing, that thing says Pissed-Off Hawaiian. I went listen to you, the Chairperson, in the beginning of the meeting on what to do. Raise your hand and put down, hey, I like be anonymous. I tried, but the chat is not working. So, this whole process that you guys are trying to do, and shutting our mouths off, and cutting our voices, is pissing me off. Okay. I tried to leave on the chat one message. But I got...I get like eight messages on top the thing. I like talk, I like talk, I like talk. This is screwed up. This Committee, this County Council, is making us Hawaiians shut our mouth, you guys not letting us talk. Okay? So, right now, you guys are in violation because I wanted to be anonymous. You guys supposed to read my name on top, says Pissed-Off Hawaiian, not Junya Nakoa. Okay. Wait, let me get to what I really wanted to say. Okay. Fire Department, we ask you for get coverage of how they ship these guys. First thing, they get into the thing. I know my family, my friends, they're all into the Fire Department. They get in. Where they got to go first thing? Hāna, Moloka'i, Lāna'i from Maui. So, then, they go there, they no more car. They no more nothing. They stuck. Hey, I go...I go Pūko'o, I...we go to Halawa. I see the fire station, some far the buggah stay from everything else. So, if they can get they car, they can go all over the place, you know, go holoholo. Mean that island, that's the best island in the world, just letting you guys know. But, eh, kind of jam up, yeah, if you stuck over there. You stuck over there at the station the whole day, the whole week, the whole whatever, whatever the schedule is. So, figure it out. You guys...the Police, the Police, they like all kine toys for do all kine stuff. These guys are just asking for...for being taken cared of...their normal lives. You know, they're putting...they...they...they're doing things for us, and we cannot even take care of them? Come on. Now, the lifeguards, lifeguards too. Brah, lucky we get choke lifeguards. Yesterday...yesterday, I was at the...I was at the...one...one...one bar. I seen these guys on a...on a jet ski, outside Kahana, outside Kahana. Okay. Hey, the nearest...the nearest...the two nearest lifeguard stations is D.T. Flemings and all the way at Canoe Beach. You know how far those two...those guys had to travel for get to Kahana? Figure it out. Take your...hey, listen to the lifeguards. Listen to the Fire Department. These the guys who take care of me, who I can hardly...I no like swim, but they take care of me. You know what I mean? So, you guys . . .(timer sounds). . . go ahead and take care of these guys. Then the Fire Department, them guys, they're not asking for toys. They're asking for meeting areas. They're asking for the lifeguards. They're asking for normal daily life essentials. You know, one car, go holoholo, go cruise. You know, you guys...hey, and the Salary Commission, went give a whole bunch of the County guys, like what, 20, 40, 50 percent raises. And you guys no can take care of these buggahs? Come on. No look down at your paperwork, you guys. No act like you guys not listening. Let's go. . . .(timer sounds). . . Wake the heck up. Let's go. This is hilarious. How you...these guys that sit on desks and go get all kinds of raises, but guys out there risking their lives. You guys no can take care them. Wake the F up. Okay. I never swear. I never swear. Okay. Love you guys. But please, this is the process. It is one circus, brah. You guys tell hey, I went listen to the rules.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you...

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MR. NAKOA: I raise my hand. I wanted for put anonymous, but couldn't. So, how you guys expect me to follow your guys' rules --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you --

MR. NAKOA: -- if I no can do 'em?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- thank you, Mr. Nakoa. I checked with Staff --

MR. NAKOA: Oh, yeah, Mr. Nakoa.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- and you signed up...

MR. NAKOA: Remember now, I wanted for be anonymous.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No, you signed up as Junya Nakoa, and I don't know where the anonymous came from after.

MR. NAKOA: No. No. I never. Hey, I never signed up as Junya Nakoa. I signed up as Pissed-Off Hawaiian. And on top of that, I tried to leave a message on the chat saying I wanted to be anonymous, following your rules, Yuki Lei.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. NAKOA: You the one, you told me...you told me, oh, the last time you told me, oh, in the beginning of the meeting, we set the rules. So, this time, I was in the beginning of the meeting. I heard the rules. Now, you guys...you guys not following your guys' own rules.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Nakoa.

MR. NAKOA: How you expect me to follow the rules? How you expect me for follow the rules if you guys don't let me follow the rules?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: If...we're going to shut you off, if you don't stop.

MR. NAKOA: Why? Because I'm speaking the truth?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do you...do you want to...

MR. NAKOA: Because I'm speaking the truth? Because I'm speaking the truth? Again, you like cut my voice out? Again?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We want you to testify as Junya Nakoa, as you signed up. And thank you for your testimony. Any questions for the testifier? Member Rawlins-Fernandez, did you have your hand up?

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. Mahalo, Chair. I was just going to say, you know, our apologies if that was the request of the testifier. And then we'll just, you know, try to do better next time someone requests to be anonymous.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. NAKOA: Okay. So...so...what is the...what is the...okay. I'm going to testify again tomorrow. So, what's the process tomorrow?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Same as today. You could testify for three minutes --

MR. NAKOA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- on anything in the budget. What you sign up for...

MR. NAKOA: Well, I said how I going sign up? How I going to sign up? How I going to sign up if I like be anonymous?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I'll have Staff respond to you. One moment. Mr. Krueger?

MR. NAKOA: Whoa, whoa, what you mean?

MR. KRUEGER: For...for individuals wishing to testify anonymously on Teams, when you try to sign on...when you first initially sign on, you can input a name. So, when you input your name, make sure you input anonymous or whatever name you're wishing to testify on before you join the meeting.

MR. NAKOA: Try go look 'em up. Try go look my name. My name says Pissed-Off Hawaiian.

MR. KRUEGER: Apologies. That's not the name that we're seeing in Teams right now.

MR. NAKOA: See? See, this whole process is screwing us up. Okay. I telling you...I tell you guys right now. I went put Pissed-Off Hawaiian. Okay. So, you guys...you guys got to figure it out because you guys not doing us right. If I wanted to be anonymous, you guys just went screw up everything. You guys taking away my rights as a Hawaiian.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Nakoa. Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. So, to clarify what Staff indicated is when you sign in, so as the participant in Teams, you would put guest or, you know, whatever name you would like to be indicated as when you sign into Teams to make your participant name for...for tomorrow.

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MR. NAKOA: Okay. Correct. Yeah, but...now listen to this. So, according to what Yuki Lei said in the beginning, I can put...raise my hand, and I can put in the chat, I wanted to be anonymous. Okay. That's what was said. You guys go look the recording, going be on Facebook, go be on da kine, *Akakū*. Try go look at 'em. That's what she said. So, I did that, gangy. I did that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MR. NAKOA: I tried to get on the chat. I tried to go on the chat. And then I tried to put, I put I like talk, and I like talk...I no like my name be mentioned. I like be anonymous. And the thing never go through.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I understand.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I understand his point, Chair. Chair, his point is that perhaps the instructions, when we read the instructions for testifiers should indicate that when they sign in to have their name show as anonymous or whatever name they're wishing to be identified as. And then that way, our instructions reflect what the practice actually will be.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. NAKOA: Walking circus. Walking circus.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We appreciate your enthusiasm. Any more questions for Mr. Nakoa?

MR. NAKOA: . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for...okay. Next testifier. See you tomorrow.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair...Chair, there's currently no one else who has signed up to testify. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, please.

MS. MACDONALD: If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know, or on Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand. This is final call...three, two, one. Chair, it appears that nobody wishes to testify.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. With your permission, Members, I'm going to close public testimony. We'll receive written testimony into the records.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: And so, then, at this time, I'm going to ask Members, if you have questions for Fire, for Brad Ventura, we'll start questions with Committee that has Fire in this jurisdiction, which is Member Paltin. First round of questions, three minutes...and second round, two minutes, if that's okay with you. Member Paltin. And after that is Member Johnson, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, and then Member Cook.

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I guess my first question is that if we're not getting the \$15 million for Ha'ikū Station, and one of the answers said none of that money, the Fiscal Year '25, 14.65 million was expended yet, how are we moving forward? Are we on hold until we get 15 million, or are we anticipating putting \$15 million in this fiscal year?

MR. VENTURA: Chair? Thank you for the question, Councilmember Paltin. So, our plan is to get an accurate number for you folks by putting the project out to bid in 2025. If by then we haven't received any additional support outside of County, then that would dictate us doing a budget amendment to our current budget.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then I didn't see any costs for materials, construction, permitting, equipment for the Pu'u Keka'a Tower. Is that going to be paid for by Kā'anapali Operators Association?

MR. VENTURA: Yes, correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: In Fiscal Year '25, the Department listed Pu'u Keka'a contract OSO position IDs, but some of them...I think four of them are up to SR-17B. So, if the positions are still vacant, how did they move from SR-15 to SR-17, and how did four of them get step movements? P-32544 through P-32547. That was from Fiscal Year '25 answers.

MR. VENTURA: So, on the HR side of things, there's a chance that people are put in those positions as transfers, not as recruits, so a couple of them could be...I'm not super familiar with the SR rating for lieutenants, but we have two Lieutenant positions there, and then on the Ocean Safety Officer II positions, it could be people that transferred with seniority to that beach in the future. So, she's just kind of trying to balance it. We may get some recruits, and we may get some senior transfer people there that get a higher salary.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And what stage in the tower construction are we? Has SMA permits been applied for and stuff like that? Like, are we building a three-, four-person tower, is it fiberglass or wood?

MR. EDLAO: So, currently, I've been working with CIP Coordinator Mike Arisumi with the whole permit process...because the permit process is a...is a long process. So, we're in that stage right now, and looking possibly, maybe moving towards hiring a project manager to do...someone that has the expertise more than we do, into getting this set.

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Because the...the process is long, and it set us back for a while. So, we're in that stage, and we're moving towards building the tower. Right now, a fiberglass tower takes almost two years to be built and be shipped here, so we can't wait that long. The quicker way would be to get a wooden tower built in the location.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Would you need a flood hazard permit?

MR. EDLAO: I believe we have to look at all the aspects. I'm not too sure with the permitting process. I'm kind of new to the permit process as well, but working with Mike, we're both looking into it to see all what is needed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then I was wondering why only 4,000 has been anticipated to be added to the Firework Auditor Fund when the average collected is 15,000? And according to the estimated balance of June 30th, 2025, it shows Fiscal Year '25 collected 15,500. How much was collected from firecracker and aerial display permits in the past fiscal year, and would adding . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . that revenue to the Firework Auditor Fund be enough to hire a Firework Auditor?

MR. VENTURA: Great questions. So, because historically, the number of permits that we sold did not create a fund large enough to pay somebody, we just do the auditing in-house. We can look at, with Budget and Finance, reallocating funds from other places, as you mentioned, to that fund in the future to hire another person, but I'm not sure. We have to do a cost-benefit analysis to see if it's worth spending...getting a whole new E/P for something we can already do in-house. If you want, we can send you the numbers. If...if we get that question in the writing, we can send the numbers on the exact dollar amounts that we bring in every year.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. I'll...I'll see you on my next go-around.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. You got that for a question?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I have it in writing, I can send to them as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We got it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I got a whole page.

MR. VENTURA: I'm trying to answer fast.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next we have Member Johnson, followed by Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chief, for joining us today. I know you're super busy. You know, I was reviewing your responses to our questions, and I really appreciate some of the responses you made. It seems almost every year I ask about wellness of your team, and how are they...how are they doing mentally with the pressures of the job, and every year I'm impressed with what the Department does

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for their . . .*(inaudible)*. . . the wellness part. One thing that you mentioned that really...really sticks out to me is, you said, in one of the responses about, you know, doing things for the team to make sure they're mentally healthy...you said wellness as a retention tool. I...I swear, I really wish other departments would look at it just like that. That we struggle with retention, and if...if you folks are doing things to retain your workers, look at their mental health. So, I really appreciate that response, Chief. I don't know if you want to add to that, but I do have a couple other questions. The Fire Hazard Removal Fund, that's where you...if there's a property that is overrun with bush, you guys cite them, you warn them, and then eventually you'll remove it and then give them the bill. Now, that's my understanding of how it goes. One of my questions was, what about County-owned lands for fire hazard removal? We don't charge ourselves. If Parks has a...you know, if there's a County-owned land that's under Parks' purview, you folks, in your...I...I'm curious what you guys do in that situation. Because in your response, you said, we work with Department of Parks, we work with Public Works when...when there's County-owned land that we...that the Fire Department feels that it should be taken care of. Can you speak to what that means by working with Parks and working with Public Works to...for fire hazard removal?

MR. OTSUBO: Hello. I can answer that question. So, Fire Prevention, whenever there's a concern on County property, our inspector goes out, verifies the landowner, which is County. We document all of the concerns in our map *(phonetic)* system, and then we report it to Public Works or Parks. And then it's kind of assigned to the Highways Division of the certain area, and that supervisor mitigates that concern, and they report back to Fire Prevention when it's done.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: When...so, is there a certain amount of days you give them, or you just say this is the...here's a area . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . it needs to be taken care of? Is there a certain amount of time that you allow them, or is it different every time?

MR. OTSUBO: We let them know our County's process, which is 30 days. But again, we work with the supervisor, and they try to meet that 30-day requirement.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I heard my time up. Just a yes or no, how's it working out? Is it...is it...is it...are you guys able to get things done in a timely manner?

MR. OTSUBO: So far, they've been very cooperative, and they were able to get most of these areas done within 30 days.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you for so much. My time's up. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Cook, then U'u-Hodgins.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I'll dovetail...and aloha, Department. Aloha, Chief and team. I can't see everyone that's there. So, my first question will dovetail kind of off of Member Johnson's, and that's regarding question 13, recruitment and retention. The lifeguard...the junior lifeguard program is, I agree, a great recruitment tool. And the championship for the junior...the Junior Lifeguard Championship will be on Maui this year. Does the Department plan to invest any cost...any funds toward the cost of the championship since it's going to be on Maui this year?

MR. EDLAO: We have HLA and MLA that's helping out a lot with the cost. And because it's here in Maui, the flights was a big cost traveling, and we don't encompass that, being that it's here. But we could also use help with you volunteering if you're free, Councilmember Rawlins, too. Yeah, but it's going to be here at Kā'anapali. We have the ROE permit. We just got it. I'm going to send them up to Council for review, and it's to go August 9th.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Wonderful. Okay. My next question is regarding the new position for a Grant Coordinator. Is this to...and you know, Assistant Chief Gieseke has been doing a great job with the FEMA reimbursements. Is this to assist Assistant Chief Gieseke, or is this like totally separate?

MR. VENTURA: Thanks for the question. So, currently in our Department, we don't have anybody that manages, applies for, or tracks grants dedicated to that. We use firefighters who are willing to help us work in that arena. And because they don't work Monday through Friday, and sometimes they work on weekends, we have a hard time kind of communicating and getting things done in a timely manner occasionally. So, our goal is to employ a full-time Grants Coordinator that will do all that. Between DOT, FEMA, AFG, SAFER, and all the grants that we apply for, that would be the person. Chief Gieseke has retired, and Chief Gieseke is doing some pro bono work for us. But we're going to owe him something eventually because he's doing a lot of work on Fridays for that FEMA public assistance grant.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, congratulations, Assistant Chief Gieseke. I didn't know he retired. Okay. Wow. Okay. Wow. Those are big shoes to fill. Okay. So, regarding the MOU that was discussed in...in testimony today, firefighters getting...requesting parity with Police as far as not fronting costs for flights, and so is that something the Department is supportive of? Also, have you ever...have you folks looked into, like, you know, the retired vehicles from the different departments maybe to...to send here so that firefighters wouldn't need to . . .(timer sounds). . . send...you know, buy multiple vehicles? Because that's a big cost. I know, because I have to be on two islands.

MR. VENTURA: Certainly. Great question. So, some of the...what's being discussed is already in our budget. We...we reimburse them for their flights to and from Moloka'i. We'll be in...if they live here in Maui, we reimburse them for ferry tickets...we give them the ferry tickets, so there's no cost for travel there. On Lāna'i, there's a company vehicle that's available at the harbor. It transports everybody to the station, so nobody needs a vehicle

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on Lānaʻi. But what we're looking at working with the union on is something--it's in negotiations is where it's at right now--for us to provide those additional ways and means for our firefighters to not have to be burdened. A lot of our young Fire Fighter Is that make the lowest amount of pay have to travel, rent a house, get a car. We understand that. So, we're working with the union on an MOA for that. We support that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: For Molokaʻi. Because it sounds like Lānaʻi is covered, but Molokaʻi is the challenge and the cost to get to Molokaʻi. You know, a ferry ticket versus a Mokulele ticket is...is pretty substantial, especially when you're, you know, first year.

MR. VENTURA: Correct. Yeah. So, it's...it's more...we're more concerned with Molokaʻi because of the schedule, as well as the cost of housing and travel there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chief. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Next, Member Cook, then Member Uʻu-Hodgins to follow, and then Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. So, thank you all for being here. Thank you all for your service. And as far as the Ocean Safety for the lifeguard stations, what's the life expectancy? Those are basically temporary structures; is that correct?

MR. EDLAO: As far as the life expectancy, I cannot really say much on that. We have several wooden towers, and depending on the location, like those over on the north side of the island, they take a beating...they take a beating with the wind and the salt. So, we do repairs yearly, sometimes every two years, and can be costly. The fiberglass ones, they...some on Oʻahu have been there for over 15 years, and we have two at Mākena that's been there since Mākena opened in 2009. They have shown wear and tear, and we are in the process of getting two new ones, so anywhere from 10 to 15 years for the fiberglass, maybe.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. My...my question is kind of twofold. One is financial, and the other aspect is the permitting and the delays to getting a permit. The classification--maybe we can talk...I'll talk to Planning later about this--but the classification of the structure, it just strikes me as counterintuitive that a lifeguard station is so problematic to get permitted. So, normally...am I correct to say they're going to be on State or County land?

MR. EDLAO: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Are any on private property?

MR. VENTURA: Just in the future, Puʻu Kekaʻa will be.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Pardon?

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MR. VENTURA: In the future, Pu'u Keka'a will be.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. So, I mean, I'm just getting at it is generally, County property, government property, government use, government facility, government employees for the benefit of the public--and I'll put in writing, Chair--but I'd like to get an idea of the permits that are required and the delays that it costs. And there again, I'm not beating up on anybody, but it's just sort of striving for a government to be more effective and efficient in meeting the goals and objectives that we're all setting out. Financially, we are funding these, and so it's a great idea to do fiberglass because they're going to last longer, but there again, if we could provide what we need locally and just maintain. That's really my question, was the --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: About the permit.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- bringing the attention of that, and we will ask that question in writing. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Staff, you got that question about permitting? Okay. Next, Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you guys for being with us today. I don't want to...I'm going to follow up on what Member Rawlins-Fernandez was talking about with the Moloka'i firemen and their fire station. As you know, that was personal for me for about 14 long months. So, I see that there is an increase from 48,000 to \$60,000 for airfare and transportation. Is that going to...are we anticipating the cost to be more expensive, or are we going to fully reimburse the firemen flying over? Because they were reimbursed, but not fully.

MR. VENTURA: So, yeah, we just changed the MOU. Our MOU used to have a ceiling of \$474 a month. Now it's \$672 a month.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Six...

MR. VENTURA: That's the increase.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Good. And then for the \$36,000 expansion for the additional funding for rent, is that going to be per diem, or are you guys going to rent a house for the people there?

MR. VENTURA: The idea behind firefighter housing there would be rent a house and treat it --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: -- like a hotbed. The reason is because they're 24 hours at the station --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

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MR. VENTURA: -- and 24 hours off duty. So, only one-third of the people will be at the house at a time. And of course, our ultimate goal is to fill those positions with qualified Moloka'i people. And that's why we don't really want to buy a house because then we might end up with a house that nobody's in.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Sure.

MR. VENTURA: So, our long-term goal has always been, and probably always will be, but we want to get as little rent as possible and as many residents there in those jobs.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. That's cool. I mean, if it wasn't for my brother living...or my brother-in-law rather, living in Lāna'i and my husband having to take a 40-minute drive every morning, we probably couldn't afford the...I guess his...his increase in pay would have just been gone to rent and flights. But I appreciate you guys figuring this out because it is important. For your additional Fire Is, for six of them, I see they're going to go to Kahului and Wailea. So, you're going to have one new firefighter per watch then. And you guys have enough space and furniture needed for the one additional person for both --

MR. VENTURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- Kahului and Wailea?

MR. VENTURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Wailea is huge, so that...my real question is Kahului, their space.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah. Yes, and commonly, people are on vacation or teaching or out --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Sure.

MR. VENTURA: -- and that person will just fill those spots.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: And that position also fulfills one of our AAR recommendations, which is on red flag days to put a second person on a water tanker.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. VENTURA: So, that's where they may be used as well.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: On the water tanker?

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MR. VENTURA: So, we could move them to whatever station the tanker's at for the day, depending on where the red flag warning is.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Kind of a floater then?

MR. VENTURA: Exactly.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Cool, cool, cool. And then for future financial planning for our future stations, I see that Kīhei needs to be moved, Pā'ia . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . needs to be moved--which I'm bummed about because that's my favorite station--I see that there's \$8 million-something in there now to accommodate in a few years. But in a few future years, when we need more additional stations, are we budgeting for that as well?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, that's a great question. Right now, one of the studies we're working on is called the standards of cover. That'll identify future stations, not just moving stations. And then that'll give us an idea of how much more we need to budget to create new stations. These stations that are being moved, Kīhei and Pā'ia, that \$8 million right now is really a placeholder. It's our --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I can tell.

MR. VENTURA: -- best, best, best guess.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: By the cost of Ha'ikū Fire Station, I can tell that's about half the cost.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah, exactly.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next, we have Member Sinenci, followed by Member Kama, Lee, then myself.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And some of my questions were already asked, but I'll...I'll ask a couple more. Mahalo, Chief Ventura and Staff. For your grants that were awarded to the...to the Department, particularly the FEMA grants, are they...again, do they have conditions on...on how to use those grant...grant funding? Looks like safety grant, management assistant grant, and the public assistance grant.

MR. VENTURA: Okay. Councilmember Sinenci, can I just ask a follow-up question? Are you looking at the proposed grant items in our FY '26...

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: The...the...the ones that you received on page 311, for Fire and Public Safety. Federal funding.

MR. VENTURA: So, I'll just...I'll just start while Chief Otsubo looks...looks more specifically at the grant. Every grant we apply for does have specific requirements, whether it's a matching, or the type of equipment that it goes for, or if it's a reimbursement grant. They all have different...different rules, depending on where we get the...the funds from.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. So, if it's FEMA...like I...I see that there's some equipment, vehicles for Lāhainā, the air compressor, and the Quint truck. So, would those grant funding be able to...to fund those as well?

MR. VENTURA: We...there are certain grants that we apply for, like CDBG, that covers rural area, but because of the location of those items that you mentioned, they generally would not qualify for grants.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, got it. Okay. All right. And then for...I know that we had some earlier discussions about housing for East Maui. Do we still need more housing expansion for the Hāna Fire Department?

MR. VENTURA: The...because the schedule in Hāna is three days on and six days off, the current situation is that housing out there is not needed. Because the members will just drive into work, and then after their three days, they're off for six days, so they return to their home.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay. Thank you. Thank you for that. And then we did have the Ocean Safety talk about a location to house their equipment. Is there a designated location for Ocean Safety to house their equipment, or there's different locations in each district?

MR. EDLAO: We have storages at our districts to store equipment, but we have outgrown a lot. There's a lot of backup equipment that we have at our...that we're sharing at the Wailuku Station that's . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . over-full. So, we are in need of a bigger place right now, and just was waiting on approval for funding so we can start looking. We did quote at a location earlier prior, but that location has been taken already, so we're just waiting for approval.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for those responses. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next, we have Member Kama, then Lee.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, thank you for being here, Chief. So, I wanted to ask a question. You know, in the responses that you sent to us on April 4th...let me get to that. I think it was question 5, external factors, and then it goes all the way to A, B, C...and under C, it says, the permitting and approval processes for building new fire stations, lifeguard towers, or renovating existing ones often involve multiple layers of bureaucracy, environmental impact assessments, Special Management Area...SMA use

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permits, State Historic Preservation Division, flood assessments, et cetera, and these lengthy approval timelines also increase construction due to inflation. The Department also encounters delays in hiring due to civil service requirements, union negotiations, and consultations, as well as archaic processes required by other County of Maui departments. So, I...I wanted to ask you, what did you mean by archaic processes? Because I've heard that in different words during the budget session. But also, the real question is, you know, because the Ha'ikū Fire Station is not going to materialize, and you were already planning to have 15 additional personnel with the station, what will happen to those 15 additional personnel?

MR. VENTURA: Okay. Thank you for all the questions. There was a lot there. In the first statement is the process is, for us...for us, we're trying to technologically advance our Department --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MR. VENTURA: -- as quickly as possible.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Right.

MR. VENTURA: We all know that County sometimes lags behind the private sector, so we're pushing forward softwares, pushing forward efficiencies to lower costs, and...and County Finance does that regularly, and we've gone to a P-card system versus a PO system. These are all great things that enhance speed --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MR. VENTURA: -- and efficiency. For us, it's part of the process where we have to create positions and hire people that, if there's a way for us to do it more efficiently...we have a new software called Workday. It's been going a few years, but I don't think we're fully using it its...to the best of its ability when it comes to reorging and creating positions and stuff. And people are working really, really hard with our Department to try to get things done, but I just feel sorry that they have to work so hard on things.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MR. VENTURA: Your second question was about Ha'ikū. We have not --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MR. VENTURA: -- put 15 positions in a Ha'ikū budget yet. We'll probably do that once we know the construction timeline, meaning we have a bid on the job, and a groundbreaking date, and a notice to proceed. Then we'll put that in the budget. Because it'll probably take a year-and-a-half to two years to actually build the station, and by then, we can fill the positions. We have, however, in this budget that we're currently in, ordered the fire truck because the fire truck takes four years. So, we're . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . fully committed to this project.

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VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chief. Thank you, Chair. I heard the bell.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Kama. Next, we have Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Most of my questions have been asked, but I did want to check with the Chief--good morning, Chief --

MR. VENTURA: Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- to ask you if all those new communication devices that you're ordering, and the Police is ordering, they're all the same, right, as MEMA, Water Department, DEM, Public Works...all the same?

MR. VENTURA: Thanks, Chair. Are you...if you're referring to radios, yes, we have interoperability between our radio system. When it comes to softwares, ours are fairly Fire and Ocean Safety specific, but when it comes to the comms, yes, we can speak to each other.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, that will definitely improve what happened in August of 2020...2023, right?

MR. VENTURA: Certainly.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That's all I have.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Thank you, Chair Lee. So, I would like to ask about fireworks, that we did meet, and we had a meeting with Fire and...and Chief, and we said that we would kind of pause on doing any kind of legislation until we find out what's happening with the bills that are running through the Legislature, as it is a priority with the State. But going back to our budget, so are you...will you be recommending any fees or adjustments in the existing structure? I didn't see anything for that...in our fee structure, in our permits. Department?

MR. VENTURA: There's no...yeah, they...our fees this year are remaining pretty flat for...for permitting, and the reason is, I think they're connected and regulated also by HRS, so we'd have to change the HRS in order to change our certain fines and fees. We accomplished that with the Fire Code this year, but that doesn't touch the firework permits.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. OTSUBO: I can confirm that.

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

MR. OTSUBO: Yes, it does come from HRS.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Yeah, when we met, you were...you were really on top of HRS and the laws, so thank you very much, Deputy Director. And I was going to ask a lot of questions that have been asked already, so pretty much, we are ready for round two, which would be two minutes. Is there anybody...starting with Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I don't know if you can remind us if MCC got updated so that fines related to the Fire Code, is it deposited into the Fire Hazard Removal Fund? Did we do that already, or we just were talking about doing that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Department?

MR. OTSUBO: Okay. Yes, it...it was added.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then...so I had a couple of options, like you guys are requesting 250,000 from the General Fund to go into the Fire Hazard Removal Fund, and I don't think...because it's a revolving fund, it won't ever go back to the General Fund. Is it possible that funds could be transferred from the Plan Review, Processing, and Inspection Revolving Fund, or left under a General Fund balance instead of transferring it to revolving funds? Because I don't think it ever goes back to General Fund after it gets into a revolving fund.

MR. OTSUBO: Okay. For 10.10.63 *(phonetic)*, the Fire Hazard Removal Revolving Fund, I don't think there is rules set for that one yet. But as far as the Plan Review Fund, that comes from our Fire Code, and that one --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No can.

MR. OTSUBO: -- I guess, cannot.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MR. OTSUBO: It's only for two plan reviewers and anything fire prevention-related.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, removing fire hazards isn't fire prevention-related?

MR. OTSUBO: So, that one is...I guess you're talking about the two separate funds. The 10.10.63, I guess we can look into...to that one.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then, I was wondering what was the rationale behind the decision to put Starlink in each BC vehicle as opposed to the fire stations?

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MR. VENTURA: Thanks for that question. And the...the Starlinks are basically . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . if there is some sort of event where the cell service goes out, the BCs will be responding to that area. And if it is a station that we want to leave it at, we will. But a lot of times, if we need command and control and communications back to the EOC and cell service is lost, we want it there on scene immediately so we can continue communicating. So, that was the goal. And not only with cell service, but also with the ability to send our drone footage back to the EOC.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did...was the BC able to come to Lāhainā August 8th?

MR. VENTURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then, why do they need camper shells to take the trucks home?

MR. VENTURA: So, the current Battalion Chief vehicle, in the back of it, it has a camper shell that covers it. Inside of it is oxygen bottles, the drones, the Starlinks will go in there. They deliver supplies. They have their mapping for command and control. So, all those things will also be placed, similar items, in the future BC vehicles that we're asking for.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I thought you were just asking for camper shells.

MR. VENTURA: No. I think it's two trucks with camper shells is what the BC vehicles are for.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez, Cook, then U'u-Hodgins. Two minutes, and then after we do this --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- we're done. We'll take a break. We've kind of overextended. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Many of my questions have been...thank you, Chair. Many of my questions have been answered. I'm just curious about the 13 percent in premium pay increase, if I'm reading that correct. Chief, how does the overtime...how does that affect, first off, the performance of...of the folks, of your workers? But also, do you think that that number will go down after you have that new recruit class?

MR. VENTURA: Great question. So, although overtime is required for us to meet minimum staffings, that oftentimes is not the majority of our overtime. If you picture it this way, we work 24-hour shifts, so we work every other day. If you take a class that's four or five days long, you're receiving two or three days of overtime that week. So, our training creates overtime opportunities. If you're an instructor, if you're a teacher, if you're in

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our honor guard, if you're a grant writer and you're a firefighter doing it on your day off--we currently have a PIO who's a Fire Fighter III who does PIO work on their day off--that's just a small sample of the many things that we put into our premium pay budget. And then, things that happen on the weekends, medical standby, community events, job fairs, all those sorts of things are also done by people usually on the weekends on overtime.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: There's no getting around it, it sounds. Okay. Thanks for your response, and my questions have been answered. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Johnson. Next, we have Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Cook, then U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. Okay. Regarding the Building Maintenance Supervisor I and Building Maintenance Repairer I, do you anticipate this improving efficiency and timeliness of building maintenance and repairs on Moloka'i? Will this limit or restrict MFD to use in-house maintenance only?

MR. VENTURA: These employees will be available for all of our stations, districts, and locations, including Moloka'i. The...our small BMR team right now is looking at doing the remodel of the EOC on Moloka'i. They've been over there a couple of times to kind of plan that project out, and our goal is basically to build them out. Because those people just pay for themselves every single year so we don't have to contract the work out.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. And then, my apologies if you already kind of explained this in a different way, but regarding the grants that...well, the one grant that was denied and one that's pending, I think, still for community wildfire defense, the 4.4 million and then 4.5 million for Fire Prevention Bureau and prevention positions...or positions in the Fire Prevention Bureau. What...what is the plan moving forward since that 4.4 million was denied?

MR. VENTURA: So, this is a grant that we applied for, for the first time last year, and it was denied. So, we learned from our applications where there were some maybe places that we could make it stronger, and so we reapplied this year with hopefully a better grant application that gets us some...at least some of the funds that we're asking for. It isn't an aggressive ask because we're asking for not only the four positions for several years, but also for fire mitigation work through the grant as well. So, you know . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we have...we...we have not filled these positions. We don't...haven't hired them, and we don't have to pay for them unless we get them. So, once we get them, then we'll create the four positions.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chief. And real quick, mahalo, you know, for always keeping me updated on Moloka'i-specific projects--Pūko'o Fire Station relocation and the progress of, you know, constructing the Ualapu'e Station. I...I see it in the budget, and I know the updates and the challenges that we...we have

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encountered. So, I just, you know, mahalo you for keeping me posted on all of that. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook, Member U‘u-Hodgins, then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. My questions have been answered. I just want to thank the Department for everything they do. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member U‘u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I see that we have budget for Ocean Safety to have their own space. Do we have that space selected already, or are we in the finding-someplace stage?

MR. EDLAO: We looked earlier at a space, but it was taken, and we’re in the finding stage right now.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. EDLAO: Just was wanting to make sure that we have the funding approved from you guys to --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. EDLAO: -- move forward with it, and then we’ll definitely start looking.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. I ask because the last time we had, I think, Office of the Mayor, they said Haggai Institute has lots of space. So, just FYI.

MR. EDLAO: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah. And then other than that, I do not have any further questions. Not only did they answer our questions very thoroughly, but I had an opportunity to call and ask more questions. So, I appreciate your guys’ time. Thank you so much. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Member Sinenci, Kama, Lee to follow.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you. My questions were responded to in the writeup. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. Member Kama, then Chair Lee.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, I’m looking at page 11 on the CIP program. In the capital improvement program summary for the Department, there are 24.9 million of project expenditures program for Fiscal Year ’26. Does the Department have sufficient capacity to manage this level of capital improvement expenditures? And what were the

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total amount of capital expenditures in the most recent fiscal year of 2024? And how many of those projects were completed? And has the Department started on any capital improvements program for Fiscal Year 2025?

MR. VENTURA: Thank you for those questions. Those are outstanding. The...our CIP, although it appears on paper as if there's not a lot going on, there's a ton going on. And we...we tried to kind of illustrate that in the answers to the questions that we received. If we didn't cover all of the projects to your depth or liking, please submit more questions so that we can answer them. Most of the projects in 2024 are either underway or have been effected. The ones that might have been in Countywide Fire Facilities, that's our kind of smaller repair. I call those one-phase or single-phase CIPs, maybe a roof or a paving project. It's not...hopefully, it's not a multiple-year project. Those, we try to get as many of those done every single year as possible. And with the facility assessments that we did, and there's a question on page 5 about that, the facility assessments are basically daylighting all the repairs that we need to do. So, those are the things that are coming up in our Countywide Fire Facilities budget. This is probably the...this is the most we've asked for in the past years. And that's why we're asking for the...the team of people--the CIP Coordinator we already have, the BMR Supervisor with the BMRs underneath them, a lot of the smaller work they can get done, or at least they can work on contracts and bidding and that sort of thing. So, we have accomplished most of the projects that we've asked for. Some of them have moved further down the road just because of permitting and planning. But other than that, the small stuff, we're definitely getting done.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, you're done?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No...no . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Chair Lee, no questions?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I just have one, and then I'm done. So, of your CIP projects, as we're looking at the CIP charts, we had anticipated, as we discussed, the 15 million earmark, which we didn't get. But there are other projects which are in General Fund. So, Budget Director, if you could tell us in writing which projects are what you plan to do in terms of bond funds, or if you're not going to bond fund any of the Fire needs.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. And I'm happy to also respond in writing. But at this time, we hadn't planned to bond fund. We are waiting to see what happens with the congressionally-directed spending. If that 15 million doesn't come through, then yes, we will certainly consider the possibility of bond funds to finish that project.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, so the 15 million maybe is happening? I thought we heard it did not get funded.

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. As Fire Chief stated, they said it didn't get funded, but Administration and Fire have met with our congressional folks and asked them to resubmit the request, both for current funding and for possible next year funding. So, we're waiting to see the result of that before we formally remove it from the budget.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, interesting. Their fiscal year is a little different than ours, so we'll see what you're doing. Hopefully, there's some strategy to that that may apply. All right. Members, so anybody else...Member, Paltin has a question, then we're going to take a break...or anybody else, then we'll take a break. Go ahead. Two minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just have two...couple more questions. For the Department total machinery and equipment on page 10 of your second set of answers, it indicates the amount should be \$9,833,776. But General Fund total is listed at \$8,473,336, Revolving Fund is 135,000, and Grant Revenue Fund is 1,233,606 for a total of 9,841,942; is that correct? Or is it the 9,833,766...\$776?

MR. VENTURA: You lost me on the second number. I'll be honest. But...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'll...I'll submit it in writing.

MR. VENTURA: We can definitely go do the math to make sure it's clear. There was an inversion that we caught, though, right --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MR. VENTURA: -- in the chart?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I was questioning if the 9 million number was accurate. The other question I had is, if...if we anticipate that it'll take at least...at least six months into the fiscal year to build the tower and get all the permits and everything, all the OSO positions are OSO IIs. And if we only fund six months, can we fund OSO Is?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah. I would say based on the rate of speed for construction and stuff, that's acceptable. And if we need to come for...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because if it's less than six months, you're going to hire all SR-15A?

MR. VENTURA: Yeah. They'll be hired as SR-15s when they get into the recruit class, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then, does the Department inspect private fire hydrants?

MR. VENTURA: We pay the Water Department to do inspection and maintenance of the fire hydrants. That's part of what you see in our budget. That's sometimes awkward. People wonder, what are your water charges for? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And so, that's what we

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do there. But we do have a system for inspecting private water systems as they get installed, and we're starting to track them through our LIV software when they follow the maintenance program and are installed in there. So, I think you had a question about that in the questions we tried to elaborate on.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Just because I got calls from the Olowalu folks about that other thing that one time. I'll submit the rest of my questions in writing.

MR. VENTURA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have any questions? Seeing none. So, I'll just make a...I don't see in your budget, and I hope we do see, the last union that we have not provided support for, for COVID, is the fire...firefighters. And I hope that we do resolve that with negotiations with the Mayor. And we'll look forward to seeing that, hopefully, in the future. Okay. Members, anybody else have any questions for Fire? If not, I'll excuse them. We'll take a...do you want to take a ten-minute break? And then we'll come back with...Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Support ten-minute break. I just wanted to remind you that my...my video will be off. I'm going to be en route to Maui.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. We'll watch you bounce around when you're on the video. I always...it's kind of interesting. All right. Members, so at this time, it's 11:00. We'll come back at 11:10. Recess. And thank you very much, Chief, and your team for being... (audio ends mid-sentence) . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 11:00 a.m.
RECONVENE: 11:15 a.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(gavel). . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. We are...we completed Fire and Public Safety, and now we're going to head to the Planning Department. But before I do, I wanted to just give a special shoutout to Chloe --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ventura.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- yeah, Ventura, which is Brad...Chief Ventura's daughter. And I've been hearing about her for years. She's sweet when I, you know, meet them, and she's very warm and personable. I remember this one story that Chief said, is that when she comes...when she comes home or she leaves, she'll say, do you miss me yet? Can you imagine when she goes off to college? Their house is going to be so sad. So cute. And...but anyway, she baked us cookies. So, one of the good things about being here in person is that you get to eat this chocolate chip cookies that Chloe Ventura made...and we don't leave any in your inbox because it might disappear. So, Members, at this time, we're going to proceed with the Department of Planning. I'm going to turn this over to Director Blystone. Is there anybody else here with you?

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Chair.

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

MS. BLYSTONE: Just really quickly, we had...also Connie Gouveia is online and available to answer questions too if we...if we need to get to that. But that was the only addition. Everyone else is still the same. Danny Dias, Jacky Takakura, Carolyn Cortez, and Scott Forsythe are joining us online, along with Ana in person.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. So, at this time, then, we'll be taking questions from the Members to the Department. And we'll start off then with Member Kama. So, Member Kama --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- then we go to Lee, Paltin, Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez. Go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Blystone, for being here. So, I just have two questions to begin with for my three minutes that comes and goes very quickly. So, for the adopted FY 2025 Budget, the Department had 79.5 E/P. How many of the current E/P are filled? And given the vacancy rate, how does the Department expect to fill the expansion positions requested? This is on page 642 of your equivalent personnel summary by position title, General Fund, Program Budget.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for your question. So, the first...the answer to your question is we have 57.5 percent...or percent, sorry...positions filled at this time. I apologize. I was looking for something, and the second part of your question, I missed.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Oh.

MS. BLYSTONE: How to fill them?

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Given the current vacancy rate, does the Department expect to fill the expansion positions requested?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yes. Thank you for that question. So, we do expect...those are high priorities for us. There's been an increased need for media. For media...we've had media requests, and having an additional position to help Ana and I field those requests is really critical. And then grants, we have quite a bit of grant management responsibility and we don't have a grant manager. So, we're doing some of that internally. And then for other aspects of our work, we're farming that out. So, it should be...I...I think we'll find those positions rather quickly and be able to fill them.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Second question. The proposed FY 2026 Budget recognizes a 6.675 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which

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is not a new grant, but carries a 50 percent County match. Where is the 50 percent coming from? And is that match in other departments? The description indicates the acquisition of 423 acres of coastal land by the County. Was the value of this land acquisition counted as part of the match for this grant? And that's on page 646 of your grant award description.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Council...

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Program Budget.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Councilmember. Yeah. So, this was a mistake in our budget. There is no match for this grant. And so, the rest of your question doesn't really apply. It was just...it was just an error in the description of what it would need to be. There is no 50 percent match required for this grant.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have for now, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Chair Lee, followed by Member Paltin. Oh, we can't hear you --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: We no can hear you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We can't hear you, Chair Lee. Chair Lee, we can't hear you. Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Thanks. Thanks. I can't see. I can't. There's such a glare on the...on the...on the screen. Anyway, Director, your grants program, do you work on it in conjunction with other departments so that there's coordination and a timing that's followed, as well as...you know, we know that we have enough resources to handle all grants. So, is there a coordinated effort within the Administration on grants?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for your question. So, I think we are still getting our heads around what this...what our responsibility regarding grants is, and this mostly falls within the SMA Revolving Fund. So, we're involved in that, but we don't have a grants administration program. And so, we rely on the kindness of other departments to help administer those programs. The most recent one is being executed by DEM, if I'm not mistaken. And so, that is how we're doing it. So, there...there is natural coordination just by nature of the fact that we aren't set up to...to manage outgoing grants. We do have several grants to run....a few grants to run the aspects of our programming, but the outgoing grants are still...are still kind of being handled by whoever has the availability to handle them.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. Unfortunately, I was thinking that's exactly what's happening...because it's not only your department, it's other departments that need coordination and...and oversight, and they don't have it. And the other thing I was going to ask you, how is the turnout for the Wailuku Community Plan, the presentation or exhibit that you had the other night?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: It was good.

MS. BLYSTONE: Do you want to address that? Ana was there, and she can address that question.

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Chair Lee, for the question. We were very happy to see you there that evening. Our Long-Range Staff did a wonderful job engaging with the public. I would say that the engagement was extremely well done. We had high engagement, a lot of interest from individuals checking out that market event at Wailuku First Friday, and we plan to do more outreach events as well. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good job. Thank you. No more questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Following, we'll have Member Paltin, then Johnson, then Rawlins-Fernandez is on her way.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you know when the Department's Planner series position descriptions have been last updated and/or reorganized?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for your question. I'm going to ask Connie to jump on and answer that question because she has that deepest knowledge. Just for...I'm not sure if she was paying attention, but you were asking for the last update of our Planner series position descriptions, when that happened. Connie, are you available?

MS. GOUVEIA: Yes. Good morning. Can you guys hear me --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes.

MS. GOUVEIA: -- in the Chamber?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

MS. GOUVEIA: Okay. Hi. Aloha. So, sorry I couldn't be there this morning. Wasn't feeling the best, but I was able to get online and I would be happy to answer that question for you. So, yes, we regularly review our Planner series position descriptions based on the ever-changing work we do. Over the last two years as well, we have gotten rid of, in conjunction with DPS, the testing portion to become a planner. So, now it's just based on training and experience. Yes. And so, we just...once we get a list from them...you know, before we get a list, we make sure all of our position descriptions are still accurate and...and correct for each of our different divisions and sections. So, I'd say it's relatively updated, definitely.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then there's nine vacancies at the Planner IV level and higher. Is there any flexibility to hire at a lower level, and train up to what is needed?

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MS. BLYSTONE: Thank you for that question. So, we have been doing that. We have been bringing people in at Planner I level and...and progressing them through. There are certain...so that is definitely the case. And part of the reason why we have such a robust training budget is because we need to train planners to...to level up and...and get into those senior Planner, Planner V positions. So, there's some...we certainly have been doing that. We also just need people at Planner V positions who have experience. So, we've been doing a combination of both of those things.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are all of the Department's 24 vacancies currently in open recruitment?

MS. BLYSTONE: I'm going to ask Connie to answer that question. I don't think all of them are, but many of them are. Connie, can you answer the question whether or not all of our vacancies are in recruitment?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And I guess which ones are not, and why not?

MS. GOUVEIA: Sure. Thank you for the question. So, we do keep a close eye on all of our positions. Right now, almost all of our positions are open recruitment. We just recently filled one last week, which was promotion without exam for a Plans Examiner. So, that person will be promoted . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . effective for 16 of this month. Everything else we normally we'll do open recruitment, and there's obviously two reasons for that. One is that we want to cast the widest net and bring in the most qualified people to the Department; but two, also, a lot of times our recruit above the minimum is tied to an open recruitment to be able to offer the higher wages for the positions that are eligible for that RAM, as DPS calls it...recruit above the minimum.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I heard the bell. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Now we have Member Johnson, followed by--I think Member Rawlins-Fernandez is still trying to get here--followed by Cook, U'u-Hodgins, and Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Director, Deputy Director. Thank you for joining us today. I know how busy your schedules are. You know, this is a question that everybody seems to struggle with, is filling those positions. And Councilmember Paltin asked my question on those empty positions. Has...has the union worked with you guys on any of this? Has...has there been any pushback, or is there some kind of plan working with the union on any suggestions for getting these positions filled?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Council...thank you, Councilmember Johnson, for the question. The union has been extremely supportive and very helpful in guiding us in this new role. And I would say that there is generally no opposition to any sort of changes we try to make to position descriptions, our goals of trying to enact --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Great.

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MS. LILLIS: -- supplemental agreements. So, they're a very helpful partner. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's wonderful. How are you guys doing the retention pay? That's something that I'm sure other departments could learn from you guys. How's it going?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you very much for the question, Councilmember Johnson. So, you might be familiar with...the Department of Environmental Management has a supplemental agreement for their wastewater workers, and you might also be familiar with the dispatchers have a supplemental agreement as well. And so, we're following the similar templates that have been laid out by our fellow departmental counterparts. And so, basically, we're following a similar template to that. But for planners, there's a State --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. LILLIS: -- differential that is a different process, but similar enough to engage the union, work with the Mayor, work with the budget, et cetera. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, you know, that's...that's been such an issue. I'm really fascinated by your response to the questions, being that morale being your top priority. That says a lot to me as someone who's outside of your...your Department. Do you think...how much do you think pay has to do with that versus workload--or all the things, but specifically pay?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for that question. I think--you know, this is just me opining, right?--I think it matters differently for different people, right? If you are a single person, you know, pay may not be as important. But, you know, when you have a full family, there may be...that may be the thing that gets you up in the morning, is knowing that you're going to earn what you deserve for the work that you're doing. Especially, as you mentioned, the work that we're doing is really difficult, especially right now. And to be able to pay people better would be a huge boost to their morale. They know that these...these...they're doing...most of our staffers work at the County because they want to do good. They want to make a difference. And it's a reason I think --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- everyone in this room is...is here. So, to be able to pay them for that is really important to us.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, that...that's a great answer, Director. And thank you for that. I know you did, in question number 15, mention about professional services that you folks are paying out . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . for, you know, to lighten the load. Can you look at more professional services? Is that something on your radar, to have contracts, to...to make it not such a heavy burden for your Department?

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MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for that question. I...I go back and forth on this. I very much want to invest in our workforce here in Maui County. Because I think when we invest in our workforce here in Maui County, we are ensuring institutional memory. We're ensuring a better product over time. And every time we've hired a consultant--not every time, this is unfair--but many times when you hire a consultant, it takes a little time. It takes energy and time to get them on board and to understand what we're all about. But when you invest in an employee here, then you're able to see the benefits of that investment over time. So, I'm more inclined to invest in our employees --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- rather than shift to professional services.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Director. My time is up. I just want to backtrack with just a simple response if you can, if Chair will allow it. How much is your retention pay? Do you have a number?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. We are looking upwards of \$500 as the minimum starting point, and that's reflected in the budget. But we are hopeful that if...depending on recruitment and other cuts that the Council might place upon our budget, that we could go higher than that. But that would be the...the basement level.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, 500. I've seen fast food workers get a little bit bigger check than that, but...okay. Thanks so much. 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. Before I ask my question, may I ask the Chair the intentions for timeline because of the afternoon meeting? Are we going to stop for lunch, or...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, we're going to finish this meeting, and then we're done for today.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for that. Thank you for that. Okay. So, my questions for my friends at Planning. Land use and building permits, the number of vacancies is one. How many people are in that Department, or in that...how many people are dealing with land use and permitting, building permits?

MS. BLYSTONE: One second while I pull that...the right thing up.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And then I guess while you're multitasking, I'm curious, also, how many people are due to retire in that Department, that...would you call it a Department?

MS. LILLIS: Within that division, we do have --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Division.

MS. LILLIS: -- an employee with a very long tenure, and we do anticipate within the next under five years, perhaps two years, that they might retire, and they've prepared us for that. And so, that has led us to try to train up her Staff to take on her role. Thank you.

MS. BLYSTONE: And I'm doing really quick math here, and my...my thing is not really the best, but I would say between 12...around 12 people between planners and examiners and permit clerks that are working in that section.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, it's pretty staffed up if you have one vacancy.

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah. I'm seeing more than one vacancy, but --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- maybe it's because we're doing our math differently. That's okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: My next question is briefly, a Planner V description of duties, the one that you're having challenges filling.

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah. So, that is an...that is an excellent question. So, it depends on what your...what division you're in, right? So, I'm going to stay pretty high level, but a Planner V's position is...is a senior planner position. They're meant to know as much as they possibly can about their subject-matter area. So, if they're a Shoreline Planner, they know SMA and shoreline rules inside and out. If they're in Long-Range Planning, they're expected to manage projects and run those...run those projects. So, they run our community plans. That's in that division. Same with Zoning Enforcement. So, any place that we have a Planner V, they're just meant to be the subject-matter expert for that division.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, that sounds...that description, to me, sounds like that's something that comes from within. It'd be hard to hire someone from outside who's akamai and totally up to speed with Maui...with the Planning Department's rules and regulations in each of those divisions.

MS. BLYSTONE: I...I think that's somewhat fair, but I came into this County as a Planner V. So, you can get it from outside, even from off-island, as long as you're looking for the right person. If...if you have someone who has the right sensibility, who has the right background...because planning is planning is planning. All it is really is a matter of looking at our rules and learning those rules. So, as long as you've had experience

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applying the rules in other jurisdictions, whether it's here in Hawai'i or in other places . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . you can do that.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. I hear the bell. I'll wait for my next round. Thank you very much.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you guys for being with us today. I wanted to discuss the professional services for additional funding for consultant services to entitle County-owned land for housing. So, this is going to be within Planning and not in the Housing Department, or how are you guys going to work together to figure this out?

MS. BLYSTONE: That's a great question. Mahalo. So, this is a joint effort between the Department of Housing and the Department of Planning, and our model for that is what County of Kaua'i did for Lima Ola. That project required, you know, multiple efforts from multiple...multiple departments, and we're going to do the same thing. So, I think the way it's...it's looking like it will turn up is, we'll work with Housing to identify the...the parcel, and then it'll be our job to work with the consultant to go through the entitlement process for that parcel.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: With support from Housing.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: This is going to be the most interesting thing to watch us go through this as a County entity, navigating through the...our own government systems and making it work. Speaking of, you folks, Planning, they don't have any CIP, but overall in the County, we do. And when I was looking at Public Works' CIP, a lot of their job is to figure out all the maintenance for this building and the Wailuku campus, which made me wonder about parking. So, does the County have a comprehensive parking plan for the Wailuku campus? Because I don't think we have enough parking. And every time we do any renovation for any other building that's not County government-owned, we need to add more parking. Except this County government, we keep doing E/Ps, and E/Ps, and expansions, but we don't see the parking to come along with it. So, where is your folks' role in ensuring that our County employees have enough spaces to park?

MS. BLYSTONE: So, I saw this...thank you for that question.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: And I saw...I saw this in our letter, and it now has been transmitted to you, I believe. So, you'll have access to those answers. And I took that question to be, how are we going to handle our expansion positions...which we have plenty of parking in our current lot, and...and plus the Wailuku parking structure. But to your bigger question

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about how we handle parking, so we review it on a project-by-project basis. But I think the question of whether or not there's a comprehensive study of parking really should go to the Office of Management. They...they are handling the Wailuku parking structure thing, all of that.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: And...and so, I...I...I hesitate to answer that question.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Sure, the study, but the Parking Code comes under Planning.

MS. BLYSTONE: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: So, on a...on a project-by-project basis, we'll review that and...and provide --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- and apply the Code as appropriate.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah. I mean, we see...like this entire building just got a little facelift, which is very much needed, but I would have assumed parking requirements would have come with the facelift...because it was a substantial renovation. And anytime you do something like this then, on the outside, we would have needed to provide parking. Regardless if we touched any of the parking, we would have to create it to Code. Yeah. I've done it so many times.

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Councilmember. So, we can take a closer look at that. But oftentimes, people can avail themselves of their prior parking requirements when they go through a similar big lift in terms of improving their site. And so, likely, they either were allowed...we were allowed to continue on with our nonconforming parking, or yeah, we --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Or...or get a --

MS. LILLIS: -- or we were already compliant.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- Director's waiver.

MS. LILLIS: . . .*(laughing)*. . . I don't think we--oh, that...that is true. We do have the --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, we have a...

MS. LILLIS: -- ability to waive parking.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

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MS. LILLIS: That could have been in the...the file. I haven't reviewed...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I'm not accusing anybody of doing anything, not...not you folks. I'm just asking how we're going to ensure that this County isn't hypocritical, and we provide enough parking for our employees. Like that is an issue. If you have to park off campus and walk up, all of that, if you want to talk about morale . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . makes it easier. Like we get parking stalls, and it's so easy to park right there and walk here, especially like if it's raining and we're on camera. And I assume for everybody else, that must be an issue. Parking is important. I mean...so, that was my question.

MS. BLYSTONE: Just...sorry, just to add on, I'm hearing from Carolyn that if there is no change in...if there's no change in use, then additional parking is not required. So, that's probably why this...yeah, and it's...it's --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: We're going from office --

MS. BLYSTONE: -- only tied...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- to office to office. What about when we change from storage to office? Because we do that too.

MS. BLYSTONE: Oh, that's an excellent question.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I'm not trying to split hairs. Nobody wants split ends, but I'm just asking. Thank you so much.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good question. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And mahalo, Director Blystone and Deputy Director. Just a couple...and...and my apologies, I haven't seen the...the responses to the questions yet. But just a couple questions on the SMA boundary assessment for 250,000. Is that going to go out for RFP?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yes, it will.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And do you have just basically what...what that assessment would entail?

MS. BLYSTONE: Sure. I think...it's a great question. Mahalo. I think that what we're looking at is a deeper study of our SMA boundary and figuring out an SMA boundary that makes sense. Likely built on science instead of just...right now, it's anything that's makai of the major highway. We would love to just evaluate whether or not that makes sense, given the...given what that Special Management Area is trying to achieve, and look at

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potentially adopting a different line that...that more accurately reflects an area that's...that's special.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Would that assessment come with recommendations you're asking for in that assessment?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah, there would be recommendations to the Maui Planning Commission on how to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay. Thank you for that, Director. And then you have \$455,339 for anticipated overtime TA hours, as well as recruitment and retention pay. If you could speak to that?

MS. BLYSTONE: Certainly we can speak to that. So, I...I...I'll start with the overtime, and Ana's going to look up some other things. But the overtime piece, we have typically held our overtime within our vacant positions. And just as a matter of showing the truth about what's happening, I think it's important to reflect that, and that's part of the budget. So, that's the reason why there's some increase there. When it comes to...this is also the line item, if I'm not mistaken, where we are talking about those recruitment and retention bonuses that I talked about in my opening. How it's important that we look at supplemental agreements and other ways that Ana spoke about, and other ways to boost our...our salary for our employees when we cannot do that with our existing salary schedule. So, this is...those would be those...those increases that we talked about. And Ana can say more.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. Okay. Mahalo for that update.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Are you done? You are done?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. I think Deputy Director Lillis wanted to say more. So, will you continue?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: This will be part of my three minutes.

MS. LILLIS: Just quickly. In our letter, I just wanted to provide that we anticipate similar overtime and temporary assignments. So, for FY '25, it looks like 45,000 for overtime and 19,000 for temporary assignment. And so, we are on track for, you know, similar numbers for '26. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. LILLIS: Is what we anticipate.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, that was part of my time. And I...I want you to...if you want to say any more about the State differential...it seems like a major thing that maybe a lot of departments should look at with unions.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Chair, for that question. So, the State recognized that they were having a difficult time hiring planners. So, they adopted a shortage differential, which basically takes the base salary of planners that are being hired at various step levels and adds to it an amount so that every paycheck, you get this additional amount. I think it's on a monthly basis, if I'm not mistaken, I don't have the...the form in front of me. But you...you get this additional amount. And that is for...for people who are hired on to deal with that shortage. They're recognized in all the departments in the...in the State that they have planners that they have a shortage. So, we would...we would talk about adopting something similar here. But in addition to that, that doesn't deal with our planners that we already have that are not getting paid what they're...what they deserve. And so, we're looking at other ways to supplement that...that pay for the existing planners so that there is equality in...in those two things...so that we're not leaving anyone behind.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, if I could just summarize then, you are looking at some kind of differential for your Department for the planners?

MS. BLYSTONE: Correct. And for all positions. We are looking for all positions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And that's not before us though. Because you didn't put...that's not in the 455,000 that's in the budget?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is.

MS. BLYSTONE: It is in the 450.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, it is?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yes. Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. All right. I will look forward to seeing what your...whatever document you need to file, right, to make that happen. Are you in negotiations with the union, or what is...what is your process?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Chair. Our first hope was to receive the funding, and then to make meaningful negotiations based on that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. LILLIS: Thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. I'm going to...this is going to be the end of my time. But I just want to say...say that I am still concerned about the ziplines in Ha'ikū. And that is not part of this discussion, but if there is something budget-wise that you think would be relevant, please let us know. Because there...the homeowners there are very, very dissatisfied with trying to live next to a zipline. And then I will turn it over back to Member Kama. And we'll go two-minute second round. Member Kama?

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Oh, thank you, Chair. Okay. So, I just have three questions. And let me ask the questions, and then you can answer them. If you need me to repeat it, I can. So, if Council were to adjust the budgeted amount for expansion E/Ps to only four months of forecast expenditures rather than the traditional eight months, would that have an impact on...a large impact on your Department's ability to recruit? And also bearing in mind that expansion to the A Category of the budget...in your budget is not tied to any specific positions. Second question. There was substantial Carryover/Savings recognized from the FY '24 Budget. The carryover represents capital improvement projects that weren't started, vacancies that were not filled, and equipment that wasn't purchased. What, from FY '24, is being proposed again in this budget? And what services/activities were you not able to deliver, or delivered at a lower level of service in the current fiscal year? And how confident are you in your Department's ability to deliver on the services and projects proposed in the FY '26 Budget? And I think the last question, if we have time to answer, Title 19 was supposed to undergo a rewrite. It's been undergoing for years. And I wanted to know what the cost was for that rewrite? And is Title 19 completed? And how long have people been working on it? And how much did it cost us? And those are my questions.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Whoa. Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Councilmember. We're going...we're going to try to work through those questions one at a time. So, for your first question about if you gave us only four months of expenditures instead of --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- yeah. So, no, we shouldn't have any difficulty recruiting. We're okay with that.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: The second question was about Carryover/Savings, correct?

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yep.

MS. BLYSTONE: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: And...do you want to take that on, Ana?

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MS. LILLIS: Sure. It was the County-owned entitlements that was funded last year that we did not get to, and then, of course, our vacancies. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. BLYSTONE: And then your...your second-to-last question was regarding how confident we are in our ability to deliver on --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- these services. And so, we're really --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- confident in our ability. We have --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- people in mind for each of these projects, and we're going to ensure that they're delivered. And we're just getting the answer to your other question for Title 19. So, this project, you're correct, has been going on for quite a while. And it has been...changed hands for project managers multiple times. So, the total contract was 634,000, and there's about \$400,000 left in that contract. Because much of what we have left to do is public engagement and these kind of larger-scale activities. We are not...we're anticipating completing this by 2026. And so, that project is...is well underway. The project manager for that is Scott Forsythe. And we hope to do a presentation to Council at some point about where that project is, and where we're headed with it soon. After budget, likely.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Chair Lee? I don't see her. Okay. Member Paltin, followed by Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. So, just clarifying, all of the grant awards on page 646 doesn't require any County match? And then...

MS. BLYSTONE: Sorry, Chair. We're...we're...or, Councilmember, we are pulling that one. It doesn't require any match.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I thought that's what you told Member Kama.

MS. BLYSTONE: No, no, no. I'm sorry. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration subaward doesn't require any match. But I believe the Certified Local Government does. I need to double check on that, though. I'll see if I can get that information before the end.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the Coastal Zone Management. Has the Department met with the Maui Nui Resiliency Hui regarding their proposed restoration of Ka Pu'ali (*phonetic*) area for 700,000 of SMA Revolving Fund? And is the Department in support?

MS. BLYSTONE: So, to answer your last question, CZM does have an in-kind match. So, that was the other one. We're still getting on the Certified Local Government. So, if you're talking about...yes, there's a proposal that we have been going back and forth with Kai Nishiki about on this subject matter. So, we are aware of it, and we've reviewed their materials, and are in support of the project. There are some issues that need to be resolved, but overall, it's a good project.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: At the amount of 700,000 from the Revolving Fund?

MS. BLYSTONE: I think we're in support of a smaller amount. I need to find that...that information in my email. But we're in support of an initial amount with a follow-up amount. I think the initial amount was something like 200,000, and then the follow-up was more, but I need to check something.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then of the two expansion positions, has the position description and minimum qualifications been created? And what...what stage are they in the process?

MS. LILLIS: For the informations position, we have everything ready. And we pulled the list because Office of Council Services had one of our people transferred to them. But we received the job list from Personnel Services, and there are a bunch of qualified candidates. So, we feel that we would be able to turn around that one quite quickly. For the Grants Manager, we don't have any position description ready just yet, but we work expeditiously . . .(*timer sounds*) . . . to effectuate that. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thanks. And we appreciate having Jaime. We're not giving her back.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next, we have Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Many...many of my questions have been answered, and I only have about two minutes. But I'm really curious about the Title 19 rewrite. You mentioned that as one of your priorities. Okay. I know it's been so long. But you...Director, you mentioned it would be done in 2026. You...is...so, we're not going to ask for any more money for this. It's all set. It's already in this year's budget. You're good on financially...you're good financially on finishing it next year?

MS. BLYSTONE: Correct, yeah. So, the...we're working on an existing contract, so we're...we're still in...working underneath that contract. No additional funds are needed at this time.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: And we're hoping...

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Boy, that's a long time coming.

MS. BLYSTONE: I apologize. Yeah, I do want to add that we are hoping to have it done by 2026. As you know, there is a rigorous, you know, Planning Commission and Council process that we'll have to go through. And --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- some of that depends on this body as well. We'll get it to you as soon as possible.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So...of course. I'm sure we would like to hear it as soon as...as...as we can. Because it's a huge thing that's been on the burner for so long. The...if it does...if...you know, the process of doing all the public hearings and everything, if it does slows it down to 2027, would...financially, would you be looking to come back for more money?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for that question. I don't...I don't anticipate it at...now...at this point because we do have so much left in the existing contract. If we do, I mean, we'll certainly come to you with a budget amendment and have a good rationale for that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Who did you contract with? The company again? I'm sorry. I think I read it. But can you remind me?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah. It's...I always want to say Opticos, but it's Orion. So, it's the "O" with the other "O."

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's right.

MS. BLYSTONE: Orion is the...is the...the contractor.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: And that hasn't changed since its inception, right?

MS. BLYSTONE: No, they've been with us from the very beginning. In fact, they did our . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . audit that led to this project.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Interesting. That was my time. Thank you so much, Director. And thank you for all that you do. Thank you, Chair.

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

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director, Deputy Director. My question in regarding goal number 3, revisiting, updating ordinances and Department

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rules by implementing long-range plans. It was previously six items, and then five items, and then projected for this next year, five items. Could you describe briefly what those...what that would entail?

MS. BLYSTONE: I'm just going to be...mahalo for your question. And I...I'm...I'm going to be really honest about these measurables. They are not my favorite thing. Because I think they're --

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

MS. BLYSTONE: -- yeah, they're not...they're our best guess. And our best guess is, we do approximately five-ish ordinances a year. And we think we'll probably do five. Maybe next year we'll get really excited and we'll do ten. I...and that would be great, but it isn't really a measure. And this is what's frustrating about these. It's not really a measure of our --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, not to interrupt you --

MS. BLYSTONE: -- our progress. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- I understand it isn't...I'm not really that married to the quantity. It's more of the context --

MS. BLYSTONE: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- of what the intent is. I mean, if you got one done. I'm just saying that that describes something to me very substantial, and very...something that the Department is advocating and everybody's advocating, which...and I would describe that as identifying existing rules, or ordinance, procedures, et cetera, and...and how they could be modified to be more effective in meeting our needs. So, is there anything that you could kind of point to that's been changed from the way that we've been doing stuff, the way that we do it now, or planning to change? I guess, I'm just...I'm cheering you on.

MS. BLYSTONE: I know.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And I've also been perennially frustrated . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . with Planning because it's so subjective. And it's also sort of one of the principle aspects of...sorry, my hearing aids answered the phone.

COUNCILMEMBERS: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Fortunately, you didn't hear that, right?

MS. BLYSTONE: Those are good hearing aids.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: It's also one of the principle things is somewhat delays, permits...permitting approvals for both the government projects and private projects. And I'm striving to establish ways to simplify things without negating the necessity.

MS. BLYSTONE: Certainly. Mahalo for your question. So, shoreline rules are a good example. Like our shoreline and SMA rules are a good example of us taking a look at this. But we have, back at the office, a list of...I don't know, I'm not even going to pretend to know how many things are on it that we're trying to clean up that are just, you know, choices that were made in the past and unintended consequences. So, we're working through those, and we're triaging. We're picking the ones that are...are the most important first and...and working our way through them.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, that...that answers my question. You're working on it...you're aware of it, big, and you're working on it. Thank you. That's it, Chair.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Considering what you just said, you have a list of who knows how many things with unintended consequences. Are any of those financial that we should be aware of on this side as we discuss budget? Or is it more just like in theory and in application, and how we need to maybe change and pivot going forward? And I think everybody hates the word pivot, so course correct.

MS. BLYSTONE: I love the word pivot --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Oh, good to know.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Good to know. . . .(laughing). . .

MS. BLYSTONE: I say it all the time. Basketball. So, I think...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: In my head, it's *Friends*, and moving the couch up the stairs.

MS. BLYSTONE: Pivot.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Basketball works too.

MS. BLYSTONE: I think of it in basketball because you got to be light on your feet. I would say there's nothing that's coming to mind that's --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

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MS. BLYSTONE: -- budget-related, and it...when...but when there is something, we'll certainly...nothing that's coming to mind that we haven't already identified, right? So, taking a look at the SMA boundary is --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- a good example of that --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- and we've already included that.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: That's great. I appreciate that too.

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Because when you look at the map, you get to Mākena, and it just goes up and down, and it is quite arbitrary. And I know that's just what it is, so I do appreciate you folks looking at that. But since you brought that up, the last time we did try to update the SMA rules, which I was--thank you so much for all your guys' work--and then the pivoting required after the lawsuit. Do we anticipate any of that after you do the study for SMA? Potential lawsuits, or whatever may come?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo. We cannot predict whether or not there's going to be lawsuits, but I think we can predict that there'll be lawsuits always. Because...so...but I think our job is to do our...our homework, and make sure that we have a really solid foundation on which to build our recommendation, and...and go through Planning Commission, and --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- and deal with what we have.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And then one of the big things that we deal with is enforcement. And I know that we not only live in a complaint-based society, but we operate for enforcement in a complaint-based way. Is there anything in your budget that will help you folks with enforcement, and what can we do on our end to help you folks with some enforcement?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you for the question. The continuation of our awesome enforcement team would greatly assist us.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah. They do...they do awesome work, and it's probably really difficult for them to just go out and be like, hey, I got a complaint. Now I got to look at your things.

MS. LILLIS: Exactly. Thank you.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Is there anything in the budget that we need to address to help them do their job better? Do they go out in teams?

MS. LILLIS: Sometimes they do, depending on the complexity of the case. We are bringing on new trainees as well, so they oftentimes are equipped with a...a buddy. But training for them, that is already included in the budget, I think, would be important to preserve.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. BLYSTONE: To add on to that, like, I think our colleagues on other islands, we’re learning from them how robust their training program is for their enforcement folks. And they send them to conferences, they send them to learn from other people, and we’d like to be able to do some of that internally as well. So, we do have a pretty robust budget for...I used robust twice in this answer, three now, for...for all different types of training, but it’s really important that our folks are trained well.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah. And I think it’s both culturally and just situationally, because of our complaint-based society, we live . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . in a world where you don’t want to complain on your neighbors. You know, for better or for worse, we’re...we don’t have a whole bunch of Karens running around...except when we do, those are the complaints we hear. We hear from the few and far between, but not really overall. And I can only imagine how difficult it is for enforcement. But thank you so much. Thank you, Chair. I’m done.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Just a couple more questions. On page 670...39, sorry...of the proposed budget, you anticipate an additional 1,000 building permit reviews. And so, I was just...my question is, is Greenleaf *[sic]* still doing the building permit reviews for West Maui?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for your question. It’s 4LEAF that’s the --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: 4LEAF, sorry.

MS. BLYSTONE: -- but also Greenleaf is great too. But...but 4LEAF, they are assisting with...with the reviews, but we also know that we have quite a bit to do internally as well. There is an aspect of that work that we have to do as...as well. So, that’s why we anticipate that high of number.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Got it. Does 4LEAF...do they anticipate an end date when they’ll be helping?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you for the question, Councilor Sinenci. So, we’re...we are right now utilizing, with the graciousness of Public Works, their contract with 4LEAF for our reviews. And so, I am not aware of the end date on that contract. I assume it might be

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when the money perhaps runs out. But we...I would...also wanted to add to Director Blystone that as the businesses that were previously in Lāhainā are unable to redevelop there at the moment, or their permits are not coming through, we've noticed that they might move to Kihei. They might move to Wailuku or other areas. And so, with those new expansions, we're seeing those permits come in as well. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. And then you also conduct the commission meetings, Planning Commission meetings. And...and for us, oftentimes in Hāna, we...we don't...the timelines doesn't allow for important legislation to be sent to the Hāna Advisory Committee for review. And oftentimes, especially if it includes, you know, zoning changes or...or agriculture, we have . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . you know, an involved group that wants to participate. What can we do in East Maui to address this issue?

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo for your question. I think that we can talk offline and...and try to figure out some solutions that...for those...that make sense. I think there have been some through...that have come through that, you know, we have a...we have a different system than we had when the Hāna Advisory Committee was established. We now have...you're Zooming in right now from...from Hāna, I presume. And so, we have that ability a little bit more. So, we've been kind of relying on that, but I'm certainly willing to sit down with you and talk about those...those types of projects that you think are...are relevant to go to the Hāna Advisory Committee that we're not already sending...because many of them we already do send automatically. But where we can adjust our practice, I'm willing to talk with you more about that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Will do. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. So, I just want to take you to your rates and fees, and...in Bill 41, and if you have anything that you would like to share with us at this time, because we will be taking action based upon your recommendations.

MS. BLYSTONE: Mahalo, Chair. So, we utilized our...our Matrix study. We're in our last year of that study to give...to put in those numbers, and so those are reflective of those numbers. So, we have nothing to add, except for that's where we got them.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, that's page 32 through 33, 34, 35...36 in the budget, right? All the changes came from a study.

MS. BLYSTONE: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: What...what does...what is the name of the study?

MS. BLYSTONE: It's the...it's a...it was a rates and fees study from Matrix Consulting Group.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, Matrix.

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. So, I have no more questions. Members...Member Paltin, two minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had three follow-up questions. Jeremy said that we were moving away from complaint-based permitting. Has there been a memo?

MS. BLYSTONE: Delos Reyes, is that who you mean? No, we haven't moved away from complaint-based enforcement. I'm not certain what that means.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I guess he was in talks with the Mayor. And then the advisory committees, I think Pā'ia and South Maui haven't really met, at least in the last year. Is there a cost to maintaining Staff for those committees if they're not meeting at all?

MS. BLYSTONE: We have Staff for secretaries of boards and commissions, and they...they do have to keep on top of things. So, if there's...if...they have to figure out whether or not we are going to be able to have quorum for things, but only if something's been shipped to that...those advisory committees. So, the cost is pretty negligible to just have them, but we would very much entertain a conversation about the efficacy of those groups.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. So...but the secretaries to boards and commissions have other work that they could fill their time with?

MS. BLYSTONE: Yes. We have nine boards and commissions, and only four secretaries to boards and commissions.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then the last question, so permitting a lifeguard tower on the shoreline, is there a difference if it's out of wood or fiberglass?

MS. LILLIS: No, there isn't.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Cool.

MS. LILLIS: In terms of...I apologize. In terms of Special Management Area regulations, I wouldn't be able to speak to building permit.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, SMA. Because the fiberglass ones are on skids, although they are hooked up to electric and whatnot. And then how long do you think it would take for the towers to get the SMA or the shoreline permits?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you. So, I just wanted to give, by way of background, that . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . the Department did help the Maui Planning Commission pass SMA no needs or categorical exemptions as part of their new SMA rules. And those were struck down by the Circuit Court. So, those categorical exemptions no longer apply. So, now that type of necessary minor construction does require a SMA minor if it is under 250,000. And luckily, within our shoreline rules for Maui Island, it does allow

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for lifeguard towers specifically to be considered a minor structure and just get a shoreline setback determination. And so, they would need a minor and that SSAD, and that would be their permit process.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...

MS. LILLIS: And it does not matter if it's on fiberglass or wood.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the Director can sign off on a minor without going through the Planning Commission?

MS. LILLIS: For the Maui Planning Commission rules, yes, minors and SSADs can be handled administratively. And so, if our partners at Fire or lifeguards want to inform us of their permit application, we do our best to expedite.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. So, they basically just need the shoreline assessment...shoreline setback assessment determination, and then they're good to go?

MS. LILLIS: And the...and the SMA minor application.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, the SMA minor. And then on the building permit side, like whatever is...do...you guys don't do the flood hazard determination?

MS. LILLIS: No longer.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You think Kā'anapali has that flood hazard area?

MS. BLYSTONE: We have...we have been in conversations with the Fire Department about all of their SMAs and all of their lifeguard towers. I don't remember exactly if that one does, but I suspect it probably does.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: They said Kanahā does, so...

MS. BLYSTONE: And also, if I may, to follow-up on your question for the SMA Revolving Funds for Cut Mountain and that...that whole project was limited. We were supportive of \$200,000 out the gate, so not the full...not the full amount, just the 200,000.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, in phases, basically. But if they're cleaning up and then it's not all one time, is there no concern that it'll reaccumulate with trash?

MS. BLYSTONE: I think that there is a strategy that needs to be...a holistic strategy that needs to be considered here. I mean, all I can speak to is how we think the SMA Revolving Fund should be utilized in this space, and...and 200,000 is our...our suggestion at this point.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done?

MS. LILLIS: Just to clarify, if I could, our Staff did a courtesy check, and it appears the Kā'anapali location for that lifeguard tower would not need a flood development permit.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, that's helpful.

MS. BLYSTONE: Teams...it makes all the difference.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Well, I heard the bell. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. So, Members, I'm...

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

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

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Two minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Just a short one. Yeah. So, how about getting the Lānaʻi Office for the Lānaʻi Planning Commission? How's that coming along? Right now, Roxanne, my Office Manager, is kind of working for you guys. Keeping a physical space open on Lānaʻi is...is good. She does this as part of her hours for my office. So, can you guys give us an update?

MS. LILLIS: Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. And Roxanne is a fabulous partner. Thank you so much for donating her...her time to our Department. We greatly appreciate it. I was able to conduct a site visit on Lānaʻi of the First Hawaiian Bank building that they've offered to donate. Unfortunately, that building is in extremely poor repair. But our partners at the Park...at the Department of Parks and Recreation have also been consulting with us on a potential meeting site for a physical or hybrid meeting site location. And so, it's coming along. The discussions are hard. And there is, of course, the critical IT infrastructure needed to maintain for Sunshine Law compliance. But we are working our best to get something going. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I expect a Christmas card. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Okay. Does anybody else have any questions? Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Touching on finances, I...like the Planning Department's budget, as far as...the Planning Department affects the finances of many of the departments and our CIP projects, and just in general, the building, whether it's private or public building permits, the time, money, et cetera. Are you...I know you're aware of it. Is that something that, as far as like focusing on identifying time constraints on CIP projects, government having to comply as everybody else and not getting preferential treatment. I don't necessarily agree with that, but public money for public funds for public use seems to be saving. We could do more bang for our buck if we didn't have to wait two years to do something. But anyway, are you aware of it? And are you working with the other departments? I would say when the other departments who are striving to get permits, as far as like this is how we can help you speed it up, this is what you can do, et cetera.

MS. BLYSTONE: Yeah, I can speak just kind of in the high level that all of us...so Ana and all of our colleagues, anytime we need assistance from each other, we do reach out to each other and say, you know, like, this is...this is the thing. A good example is just the Fire Department, and what we were just talking about, right? There's a lot of collaboration that happens, a lot of communication that happens. Anything that comes through, we try to process as quickly as possible. And...and not just here within the County, but also State facilities as well, because we know we're living in really unique times. So, we move as quickly as possible.

MS. LILLIS: Thank you. And just to add, I think that what we've seen are departments coming to us for pre-consultation services, and that really has benefited us and them to be on the same page when their permit application comes in, that there's expectations, and they meet those expectations because they're aware of it. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I have no other questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Anybody else have any questions? Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. It's not necessarily a question, but what...to what Member Cook just said, I've been working very well with the Planning Department in trying to figure out how to fire-safe Pā'ia Town, and they have been very, very helpful. So, I do appreciate that. So...but I understand his point, and it should be a concern on how much it costs everyone, but in my specific case--and I know that they do this for other people--they have been extremely helpful in navigating us through the early permit stages for something that's in the SMA area next to iwi, and how to protect Pā'ia. And so, thank you so much. And thank you to your team.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very nice. Anybody else would like to say anything? Any questions? Seeing none. All right. So, Department, thank you very much. Do you have anything to say to us before you can depart?

MS. BLYSTONE: Well, in the words of the person sitting in this chair prior to me, just mahalo for everything. I very much appreciate your time and your attention to this. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Such a big job. Thank you. Deputy Director Lillis, you have anything to add?

MS. LILLIS: Mahalo as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. Thank you very much. And I will like to tell the public that when we do meetings, and when...every time I think of Deputy Director Lillis, when she was sitting in that chair back there as Staff, her contribution until the day I die is going to be last testifier, one...what did you say?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Three...two...one.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Three...two...one. Okay. I will always remember you did that, and you were the first person to do that, and we still do it. So, thank you for your many contributions. So, thank you, Department, for being with us. And Budget Director, you have anything you want to add? You're sitting there quietly.

MS. MILNER: No. Thank you, Chair. Pleasure to be with you all again.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. By the way, as we were sitting here, a lot of the responses have been sent to us. So, Members, please check your Granicus inbox and, you know, check all the responses that we've been waiting for to your questions. Let's see. And tomorrow we have 'Ōiwi and MEMA. Wednesday, Department of Management, and that's...and Office of Recovery is the whole day. Thursday is Housing and Human Concerns. And I would also like to say that because in this process, there were departments that we automatically didn't request to hear from them. But if...or if Members have questions for those departments, if you can submit it to us by this Wednesday. Is that fair? Because you never had a chance to ask them.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, what? Member Paltin, what?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can you repeat what you said? I wasn't paying attention.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: The...the departments that we did not ask to come here with questions, I wanted to provide an opportunity for you to ask those questions of the department by this Wednesday. Is that fair? Is that too soon? Okay. And...and you know which departments, right? Those were the ones that we said, okay, if we get their responses,

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then we won't, you know, hear from them, which is East Maui Water Authority, I think Liquor, Prosecuting Attorney, Clerks...Clerk and who else?

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Auditor. That's right. So, those are departments that we skipped this year. And so, if you have questions for them, please send it by Wednesday. For the presentations today, if you have questions in addition to what we all just did, please send it tomorrow by 9:00 to our BFED Staff, and then we'll send it to the department. I think the system is working out pretty good, right? It gives the department lots more work though. But thank you very much again. In the packet that was distributed to everybody is a long packet from the Office of the Mayor, OM-3, which has a lot of attachments. And I think you'll find that all useful, which is, you know, a summary of the grants from OED, business promotions. It has information on Johnson Controls. And you can look at it. But this is...this is going to take a lot of homework, but I think it'll answer a lot of questions that you might have had. So, if you could read that response. Anything else? Oh, you got the new calendar. We...we revised the calendar based upon the changes that you requested. So, you'll see that. All right. So, at this time, this item is...we're going to adjourn the meeting. And we will keep on talking about budget BF-1. The item is...anything else?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: AL, KRF)

ACTION: DEFER.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's it. Okay. This meeting is adjourned. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 12:19 p.m.

bfed:min:250407:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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

April 7, 2025

CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 69 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 8th day of May 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck