

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

MINUTES

April 17, 2026

Lahaina Civic Center, Social Hall

CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

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

EXCUSED: Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF: Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney
Yvette Bouthillier, Senior Committee Secretary
David Raatz, Director, Office of Council Services
Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Office (RAO):

Christian Balagso, Council Aide, West Maui Residency Area Office

OTHERS: Alyandro Ayala
Linn Nishikawa, Aloha Amplified
Rhonda Alexander-Monkres, Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Long Term Recovery Group
Kelly Giso, Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group
Brandy Cajudoy, Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group
Rick Nava, West Maui Taxpayers Association
Joseph Pluta
Theo Morrison, Lahaina Restoration Foundation
Mitch Kingsley, Mennonite Disaster Service Long Term Recovery Group
Alexandria Domingo
Michele Lincoln
Bhejay Yadao, Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group
Lionel Pascual
Wilmont Kahaialii, Aloha Amplified
Kanani Higbee
Mikey Burke, Lahaina Community Land Trust
J. "Kamiki" Carter, Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group
Steve Fisher

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Carolyn Auwelo
Autumn Ness

Others (15)

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha, everybody. And thank you very much for attending tonight's Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee. This is what I call our listening session because we have all organized to bring, really, the Councilmembers to your community...community so we could hear about the things you would like to share, to tell us what's happening in your community, what you may need funding for, and what you think the County...or how the County can help you better. We'd also like to hear of programs that are working, and that if you could share those accomplishments and successes also, we appreciate that. My name is Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura, I'm the Chair of this Committee, and I'm going to turn the mic over to Tamara Paltin, who is your Councilmember, and she can introduce the rest of the gang.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha mai kākou.

AUDIENCE: Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: To the north, we have Councilmember Shane Sinenci, all the way from East Maui.

AUDIENCE: . . .*(clapping)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And to his left, we have Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, all the way from Moloka'i nui Ahina.

AUDIENCE: . . .*(clapping)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And to her immediate left, we have the new guy, Kauanoe Batangan, from Kahului.

AUDIENCE: . . .*(clapping)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And you guys all met Budget Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura. She hails from Upcountry, Jacaranda Country.

AUDIENCE: . . .*(clapping)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: To my immediate left we have Councilmember Tom Cook, from South Maui.

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AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And to his immediate left, we have Chair Lee, of Wailuku.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sending their regrets tonight is Councilmember Noe U'u-Hodgins of Pā'ia, Makawao, Ha'ikū, and Councilmember Gabe Johnson of Lāna'i. They said they will be watching, as this is streamed live on *Akakū*. And I also wanted to let you folks know that my staff put together a little cheat sheet of the Mayor's proposed budget items for West Maui, and it's over there by Staff. If you guys haven't had a chance to read the hundreds and hundreds of pages in the budget, my staff pulled together some of the items that were allocated for West Maui, and you can take a look at that as well. And as she said, I'm...I'm Councilmember Tamara Paltin. My husband made food for all of you, just in case --

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- somebody had to come from work and they're so hungry, we didn't want anyone to pass out, so made with love from Chef George.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We always appreciate the Paltin, George Vierra touch. I wanted to also thank Staff. So any of you who would like to, please sign up there; we'll be taking you in the order that you've signed up at that table. And I'd like to also recognize that we have our Office of Council Services staff taking notes and minutes, so that tomorrow or Monday, at our next meeting, Member Paltin will be reporting on what you said and what the community has shared with us tonight. We have...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'm sorry. I forgot to introduce our Staff. We have tonight from the West Maui residency area office we have Christian Balagso.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Soccer coach.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: From *Akakū*, we have Mr. Vinnie. Our clerk for this evening we have Lei Dinneen in the green muumuu.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: To her immediate right, we have Yvette Bouthillier.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: To her immediate right, we have Office of Council Services head honcho supervisor, David Raatz.

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AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: We have our Council Ambassador, in the red, Ryan Martins.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And our legislative attorney, Carla Nakata.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And we also have Chair Lee's grandson Riley Ambrose, in the back. Member Rawlins-Fernandez's EA, Mahealani Bright-Wilhelm; and Uncle Don...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I saw Uncle Don.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- may have stepped out. But Member Sinenci's aide, Uncle Don, is also here. Did I miss anyone?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. He was here. Ooh and Axel.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Ooh. Axel.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Axel.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Member Johnson was able to send his Staff, Axel, so he'll be diligently taking notes as well.

ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY
OF MAUI (BILL 55 (2026), BILL 56 (2026), BILL 57 (2026), BILL 58 (2026),
BILL 59 (2026), BILL 60 (2026), BILL 61 (2026), BILL 62 (2026), BILL 63 (2026),
BILL 64 (2026), BILL 66 (2026), and RESOLUTION 26-63)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Paltin. So we have one item on our agenda, which is BFED-1, which is the Mayor's Proposed Budget. So all of you can speak about anything, all...any of the Departments or whatever's in the Mayor's budget. And you'll have three minutes to speak, and if you're not done, you'll be given another 30 seconds to complete your testimony. After that, Members may have questions for you, so stand by a little bit before you walk away, they may have questions. And I want you to know this is very important for us, and this is the last residency area that we are doing this because we've gone through the whole --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Save the best for last.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- save the best for last and...and we've gone through Moloka'i, Lāna'i, everywhere, so this is the last residency area. We appreciate you a lot. And so, at this time I'd like to call the first testifier, please.

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. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MS. NAKATA: Thank you, Chair. The first testifier is Alyandro Ayala, she'll [sic] be followed by Linn Nishikawa.

MR. AYALA: Aloha, everybody.

AUDIENCE: Aloha.

MR. AYALA: My name is Alyandro Ayala. I come here to speak about the MEO for the County service. To...I start to using July last year. And for my medical conditions, the regular bus routes is difficult because I use the first was the cane, now it's the walker. My life changed using the paratransit bus because it's door-by-door service. I don't need to walk to the bus stops. I don't need to wait for the schedule for the regular bus because I do my own schedule, dependent to my needs. I start with medical appointments. After that, I see to I have the possibility to use for groceries, also for work. Yeah. Then I...I figured out my day or my life now with paratransit service to change completely my life. Yeah, because it made everything more easy for also for me, I see another person who use this service to the same way no because the service for me is also the same service for others also. The wheelchairs . . .(inaudible). . . sorry, for the...for the special bus. But for me and in the beginning, I start with this service because routes were gone. I start to helping me after the fire. I was affected for the fire and it was in the . . .(inaudible). . . with them, and they told me, they asked me what besides the help to they do, what more I need. I said transport because it's the more difficult even in the West side coming to this other side is more difficult the transport people to have needs. Then they put me in contact with MEO, I filled out the forms, I apply, . . .(inaudible). . . with my doctor information, I get in for...for the one year, after I applied, but it's completely changed the service. And the only thing, too, I was talking with my supervisor was to, I had to, two suggestions, the scheduling for...for the . . .(inaudible). . . sometimes is too long if our people to have needs one to two hours or three sitting in the bus is difficult. I don't myself, right? I see people coming with me too. And another thing is I...I work in the Westin the KOR hotel then I finish 4:00, again, wait sometimes, according to my schedule my window time half hour but how the bus coming from Wailuku, the traffic, the accidents, we had one road, but we had too many problems to end time. Sometimes I wait one hour, one and a half, two hours...

MS. NAKATA: Three minutes.

MR. AYALA: I am...I am fine. That's my suggestion. Sorry. I want to finish get a local route and a better schedule for...for the other side. Thank you. A big mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions. Seeing none. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Next testifier, please.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Linn Nishikawa, and she'll be followed by Rhonda Alexander-Monkres.

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MS. NISHIKAWA: Aloha. This is my first time testifying. I've been around a long time but first time I'm testifying, so. Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Linn Nishikawa, President of the nonprofit Aloha Amplified, and I'm here to ask for funding support for our 2026 Lights for Lahaina. This free annual event was created in response to what many in this community continue to feel, a need for a safe, welcoming space to return to and to move forward together. Last year, we...we reached 850 people through our event and through community outreach leading up to it. Where keiki and families participated in lantern making and reflected on what Lahaina means to them. In total, more than 2,000 lanterns were decorated at the event, and at schools, community groups, churches, and those at Lahaina Comprehensive Health Center, all part of Lahaina's recovery. This year, we've expanded Lights for Lahaina into a two-day experience on September 1...I mean, excuse me, 11 and 12. The first evening, our Lahaina story, brings people together through music, food, storytelling, and interactive activities at Maria Lanakila Catholic Church. The second evening is the light march, a respectful procession through Lahaina carrying light, and reflection, and unity. And you can learn more about our event on lightsforlahaina.org. But more important than the details is why this event matters. Mental health professionals remind us that trauma isn't always visible, but it is deeply felt. Lahaina will rebuild physically one day, but the personal healing journey for many will take much longer. After the light march last year, one firefighter told us, survivor told us, this is the first time I felt peace since the fire. Another said walking together reminded us that we are not alone in this journey, and another, it gave me hope that Lahaina's light will never fade. Those aren't just beautiful words; those are evidence that community centered healing works. We humbly ask for the Council's support for Lights for Lahaina. Mahalo for your consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice seeing you, Linn.

MS. NISHIKAWA: Good to see you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Nice to see you out. How much are you asking for, or how much is in the budget?

MS. NISHIKAWA: We are asking for 40,000 for the two-day event. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Which is in the budget now?

MS. NISHIKAWA: In the budget, oh...oh, how much we've raised or?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: How much is in the Mayor's budget that we are reviewing?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you in the Mayor's budget?

MS. NISHIKAWA: Oh. We have...we'll be applying on a OED grant. So yeah. And we'll be submitting our grant on Monday correct for that amount.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anyone have questions?

MS. NISHIKAWA: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Seeing none. Thank you, Linn.

MS. NISHIKAWA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice seeing you. Next testifier, please.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Rhonda Alexander-Monkres. She'll be followed by Kelly Giso.

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: Thank you. Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers, and Maui Community. My name is Rhonda Alexander-Monkres. I'm the executive director for Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Long Term Recovery Group, formed to walk alongside our families as they find their way home. So nearly three years later, recovery is still very real. Today, we have 245 families that are in our care, and we have 160 more that are on our waitlist, and this has been narrowed down from a total of 1,400 applications that we received for disaster case management services. So the other 1,000 have been shifted over to either other organizations, or we've been able to close those cases overall. Many that we serve are carrying not just financial gaps but deep uncertainty, grief, and fatigue. We've seen what's possible when support meets people where they are. We've brought families home, with two homes completed and four more underway. And in those moments, when keys are handed back, you don't just see a house, you see relief, you see healing, you see a future begin again for those families. Our volunteers, hundreds of them have shown up with open hands and full hearts, creating over an \$850,000 impact in the community in just six months. This is what happens when community wraps around community. But the need in front of us is still greater than our current capacity. We are working to scale so more families don't have to wait, so more homes can be rebuilt, and so recovery can move forward with dignity and momentum. The County's partnership is essential for us in this next phase. Together, we can bring more families home, not just to structure but to stability, to belonging, and to hope. So, mahalo for standing with our community. We do have a current grant in with the Office of Recovery, and that's the area that we would want to continue and gain support for.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for what you do. How much is your grant application for?

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: 500,000.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 500,000. And this is brand new funding? You were in the budget last year also?

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: Uh-huh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Any questions, Members? Thank you. Oh. Member

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Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are you...are you in the Mayor's budget, or that's what you want? Did they put it 500,000 for you guys?

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: I'm not sure.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. All right. Thank you.

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Kelly Giso, who will be followed by Brandy Cajudoy.

MS. GISO: So, aloha, everyone. My name is Kelly Giso, and I serve as a volunteer coordinator for Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group. Ho'ōla LTRG was created to do what recovery truly requires, to walk alongside families for the long haul. Our community is still rebuilding emotionally, culturally, and physically. The volunteers are the backbone of that work. Like she had mentioned earlier, there are angels. Ho'ōla LTRG has coordinated skilled and compassionate volunteers who show up day after day, helping clear land, rebuild homes, distribute furniture and appliances, providing support, and, most importantly, restoring hope. Mennonite Disaster Services Team is one of our biggest volunteer organizations that help us the most right now. These are not one-day efforts; this is sustained, relationship-based recovery grounded in aloha for this place and our people. Today, I want to highlight the return on investment the volunteer coordination brings to Maui County. In the last nine months, Ho'ōla LTRG has mobilized over 427 volunteers, contributing over 27,000 volunteer hours. And using a conservative national valuation for volunteer labor, that we represent about an estimate of over \$850,000 in economic impact bringing into our community. That is funding leverage not spent through strong coordination, training, housing logistics, safety oversights, and community partnerships. But beyond the numbers are the lives that have changed. Ho'ōla LTRG has already helped house two families, a seven-member multigenerational family, ensuring stability for their keiki, parents, and kūpuna under one roof. A veteran whose family has lived on the same land for over 35 years. And in the coming weeks, we're excited to house our third family, a kūpuna currently living on O'ahu who will finally be able to return home to Lahaina, to their community, their memories, and their sense of belonging. What makes these homes truly impactful is that they are set up for long-term success. Through volunteers, donor dollars, and a coalition of nonprofit support, these homes are affordable for the long-term, removing the risk of future displacement. Families are able to keep these homes in their ohana for generations, while building stability, wealth, and cultural continuity, instead of passing on debt or uncertainty. This is not temporary relief; this is what long-term recovery looks like when it is community led and culturally rooted. On behalf of Ho'ōla LTRG, our volunteers, and the families who are rebuilding their lives, mahalo for recognizing the critical role long-term recover plays in Maui's future. Your continued support ensures that our people are not just housed but truly home again.

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Thank you.

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

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Brandy Cajudoy, who will be followed by Rick Nava.

MS. CAJUDOY: Aloha. Brandy Cajudoy with Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Long Term Recovery Group. I'm the construction manager. I'm here today on behalf of families who still working everyday to rebuild their lives after the fires. I want to start by saying this work is personal for me. I love helping this community because Lahaina raised my husband and did an amazing job. The man he is today, the strength, the values, the way he shows up for others, it comes from this community. I can honestly say I'm a strong woman today...obviously you can't see that right now, but that's because of him, and your community, and what you've done for him. So being he is not just service, it's responsibility for us to give back. But what we're seeing right now on the ground is very difficult and unacceptable. Many survivors have already started rebuilding, but they're getting stuck. We're seeing serious issues with faulty contractors, projects left incomplete, funds stretched or misused, and families left homes that are still not livable. These families who did everything right, and they still fall short. Right now, there's not enough protection, support for the homeowners when things go wrong. We need support specifically with those situations, since survivors are not left to carry the burden alone. At the same time, many families are facing large financial gaps. We're actively helping those who are close, but not quite there. They don't need to start over; they just need to find the support to finish their home and come back. That funding is not extra help; it's a difference between families staying displaced or family coming home. And beyond that, the system itself is overwhelming, permits, insurance, FEMA, contractors, issues, all that is a lot to manage. I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but this is why the case management is not an option, it's essential. We're walking alongside families every day, helping them navigate, advocate for them, making sure that they don't fall through the cracks. We're also grateful to be working with the Mennonite Disaster Services, our angels. As Yuki said they are an amazing group, that I feel truly blessed to partner with them. Together, we're able to bring real hands-on solutions for families who are in need most. I also want to be clear: We have not yet built out the resiliency hub that is still part of a long-term vision. But the need right now is immediate and is happening through direct support for the case management, through helping families close those financial gaps. At the same time, they're thinking ahead. The work is not just about recovery, it's about making sure community is better prepared for the next disaster. What we're building today is not temporary, it's a foundation for a stronger, more coordinated response for the future. So today I'm asking the County to act, to invest in gap funding, case management, support for families impacted by the faulty contractors because right now, to me, families are almost home but not quite. And with your support, we can get them there. Mahalo for your time and consideration. We're not asking to start something new, we're asking to help finish what these families have already fought for so hard to build. Mahalo.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. One moment. Member Paltin has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I have a couple questions. First question: It came up in South Maui about the faulty contractors. Is there anyway to get the word out on who not to use? As a lot of the same people are being ripped off by the same people, and if we could just say, don't give these people money.

MS. CAJUDOY: . . .(chuckling). . . I don't...I would never want bad to come from Ho'ōla, and I wouldn't want it to come from my personal job either. But I understand you, and I hear you, but that's not the direction that we're going. We're just making sure that we can support them, and we have a whole path and the things that they have to do in order for us to come in and help them. But I...I get what you're saying. I don't know if that's our responsibility to blast them. But I hear you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: The other item, the 500,000, is not in the Mayor's proposed budget? What...what is the 500,000 entail?

MS. CAJUDOY: I'm going to have Rhonda answer that one.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. Okay.

MS. CAJUDOY: Yeah. Can she answer that for me, then? Yeah. She's my resource. . .(laughing). . .she's my resource. I don't. . .(laughing). . .yeah.

MS. ALEXANDER-MONKRES: So the 500,000 right now is meant for faulty contractors, for disaster case management, the volunteer services, and rebuild services. But the gaps that we have range between 200,000 to 500,000 per household. So for one year, maybe we could do one house, or with faulty contractors, we just completed two. One was \$60,000, the other one was \$80,000. So if we find those types of cases, then we could do multiple faulty contractor homes, but for some of the larger ones, the gaps are 300 to 500,000.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I think Member Cook has a question for Ms. Cajudoy.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. When faulty contractor, what type of...like, 60 to 80,000, where do they leave it, and you pick it up, and what's the scope of work to kind of get it forward?

MS. CAJUDOY: And it's varied.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah.

MS. CAJUDOY: I mean, we have one where it needs to be completely demoed because it was built two feet over the setback. And then they just kind of left. You know, that's...that's an extreme case, so that's rebuilding the entire house. But then there's the extra cost of the demo for them too, right. And then the smaller cases are just the electric wasn't done right, today I had to re..., have them rewire the entire house. It was never done

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right from the beginning. But, I mean, the County, the building permit office, they have had a stop-work order on some of them, not all of them but some of them, and it was things like that. So...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So that was my...thanks. Sorry.

MS. CAJUDOY: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That was my next question, was the interaction, participation of the building inspectors, plumbing, electrical, framing, drywall --

MS. CAJUDOY: So...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- except for foundation.

MS. CAJUDOY: So when the family goes through the whole process that we've set up, you know, with our process, we've worked with the Prosecutor's Office, so they need to do a police report for informational, they need to fill out the RICO form, but they also need to do a termination letter. Once they've done the termination letter, that kind of gives me the...the right to go on the property and have a clean slate with them, and I'll do a walk-through with them.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you so much for clarity because what the previous question was about, warning people about faulty contractors. And I understand your thing, it's like you don't want to get in the middle, but DCCA, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, The Contractors License --

MS. CAJUDOY: We've done that with them. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- Association. Contractor License Board --

MS. CAJUDOY: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Who has \$10,000 refund. Like, if you file a claim, \$10,000 --

MS. CAJUDOY: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- is the max, which is kind of ridiculous but...

MS. CAJUDOY: And it takes a while for them to get that, though.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Oh yeah.

MS. CAJUDOY: It takes like a year to two years, right? So that's not gonna...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So somehow, as a community, let's identify these players and mitigate their continued participation in it. So if you have any ideas, let us know, but...

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MS. CAJUDOY: What all the ones that have filled out the RICO form, it's there, you can find who we've had fill out the RICO form, so. And they have to report who that contractor was, so information is there for you to access.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So that would be on the DCCA?

MS. CAJUDOY: DCCA, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Contractor report. Thank you. Okay. I'll look it up.

MS. CAJUDOY: Yes, sir.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and for anyone that came in late, there still is food in the corner if you're hungry.

AUDIENCE: . . .(laughing). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. All right. Next testifier, please.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Rick Nava, who will be followed by Joseph Pluta.

MR. NAVA: Good evening, Budget Chair Sugimura, Councilmembers. If I may, I might run a little bit longer because I'm representing eight other directors of the West Maui Taxpayers. So if you could just bear with me for a moment, I'd appreciate it. Again, my name is Rick Nava. I serve as the executive director of the West Maui Taxpayers Association. We're dealing with another budget year again, and it's another increase, an increase of \$60 million, which is 3.8 from the previous fiscal year. When are we going to have a budget that actually will show a decrease because we're basically getting taxed out of here? Residents of Maui County are already facing significant financial challenges, living in one of the most expensive states in the nation. Any additional cost on service fees, interest, tax rate will place further pressure on our families. Many of us are struggling to keep up with the rising costs of living. Many have no choice but to leave their families and friends behind and move out of the island. About last week, actually, gas was over \$5 per gallon, and...and we don't know when this is going to decrease. There is also a bill that's coming down from the State, Bill 2694, that, if approved, Young Brothers will increase their shipping fee by another 5 percent for the next two years, and then, on the third year, they can pick up whatever price that is up. For those of you who are listening here, you might want to reach out to Representative Miyake about this particular bill of 5 percent increase. You know, we cannot continue to absorb the ongoing increases on our annual budget. West Maui Taxpayers Association believes that a proposed budget increase will add more financial burden on all of us. Our families are getting priced out of Maui. On another note, recently, my family and other residents of Kelaweia Mauka III were unable to leave our homes for 48 hours due to several sinkholes from the storms. The situation reflects ongoing

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infrastructure that has not been addressed for decades. Actually, Councilmember Paltin and I had a discussion about this three years ago. Maintaining roads, drainage, and flood control systems are not optional projects. They are fundamental obligations, preventative maintenance is far more cost effective than emergency repairs and far less disruptive to our safety and our lives. The Mayor's proposed budget will also establish new hazards, mitigation section within MEMA, focused on wildfire reduction, infrastructure, protection, and more. Can this mitigation be supported through the \$214 million already set aside for mitigation through the CDBGR [sic] funding? In addition, we respectfully request funding for the following priority needs on West Maui: traffic safety improvement along Keawe Street to reduce speeding and protect motorists and pedestrians, pedestrian crosswalks and flashing red lights, warning lights --

MS. NAKATA: Three minutes.

MR. NAVA: -- connecting Lahaina Gateway to new housing and shops across from Keawe Street. Install flashing pedestrian warning lights on Keawe Street, crosswalk . . . *(inaudible)*. . . to the highway to improve motorist and pedestrian safety. At Kelaweau Mauka Park, neighborhood children will benefit from the addition of safe, modern playground equipment and dedicated basketball courts to support recreation activities and community engagement. And finally, we need expanded bus shelters to support the public transit. These are essential community needs that directly impact the life of West Maui residents. \$25 million has been allocated for public service within the CDBG-DR program, which we believe is . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . is intended to support these improvements for our community. Accordingly --

MS. NAKATA: Three minutes and thirty second.

MR. NAVA: -- this item should not be included in the proposed County budget.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thirty seconds.

MR. NAVA: Okay. We strongly believe that any cost-saving measure must be approached with great care. WMT believe that health, safety, and welfare of our residents are not just priorities; they are essential. This must never be compromised in the pursuit of budget reductions. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Mr. Nava. Anybody have questions for him? I wonder if you could give us a copy of what you're --

MR. NAVA: Sure.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- reading, testimony. Thank you very much.

MR. NAVA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Appreciate it. Thank you. Next testifier, looks like it's Joe Pluta.

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MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Joseph Pluta, who will be followed by Theo Morrison.

MR. PLUTA: Aloha, everybody. I'm just getting healed up from my surgery, so I can walk again, learning how. Thank you so much, Councilmembers, for coming here today. I know it's not something you look forward to, coming over the pali, and that's one of our problems. . .*(laughing)*. . .is that so many people have that inconvenience. We feel if all of you lived over here in West Maui, we wouldn't have the problems we're talking to you about now today. . .*(laughing)*. . . Anyway, thank you so much for coming. I want to reiterate everything that Rick Nava just said. So proud of him, what he's doing for us, the West Maui taxpayers, we're so excited. We just got the Maui County Council...excuse me, the Maui Planning Commission, to approve our fire station rights of use and the land agreement. You know, our...our organization and what we have done. First thing, I'm 47 years, I've been working as a volunteer for West Maui. I love this, I love West Maui, I love the people, I love everything about it. It's a pleasure to do it, and it's...we've made progress, but boy, we've got a long way to go. You know, when this crisis issues, which we've had in West Maui for homelessness, and ever seems like forever. And when we talk about permitting, we talk about how long and how hard it is. I mean, I'm just trying to get a fire station done, you'd think I could sail right through. I've had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in all kinds of consultants and things to satisfy the conditions and ordinances that are required by law to get done, to...in order to do this. Well, somewhere, I don't know, maybe it needs to be a reprioritization about health and safety things. Is there any exemptions for health and safety things, where lives are at stake, and when urgent things are needed, do they have to necessarily follow every ordinance? Or is there...can...can there be an exemption? You make the laws, right? So you have to look at that. I think some of our laws and ordinances need to be looked at and reexamined for is it real...really pertinent today, is it applicable to what today's situations are? I know that's a philosophical question, but you are all intelligent people that can handle that. There's no question in my mind that you can handle it if you want to. So health and safety has been our thing, it always will be, we're not satisfied with the way we're being treated in Lahaina. We're not happy with the way that affordable housing is coming on, we don't think it's fast enough or good enough. We don't think their permits are being processed fast enough. And I think if you have at least a problems, where they say, well, there's no personnel, we got all these vacancies . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we got to outsource, we got to outsource these things, get it done. Solve the problem, solve the crisis, please. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks. Thank you very much and congratulations on your fire station.

MR. PLUTA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions? Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you from so much. It's good to see you walking around.

MR. PLUTA: Thanks, Tom.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: 4LEAF, which is doing the permits, I just...you might not agree

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with this, but Lahaina has a reputation of being spoiled because you're building permits are expedited and going really fast. And the building permits that are still going through the regular system has taken months and months. So from your experience, the permitting for residential for the houses and the rebuilt are taking a long time?

MR. PLUTA: Too long.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: What is too long?

MR. PLUTA: Too long is that's a...a...that's a good question, I'm sorry, I can't immediately give you exact response to that question. But, you know what? It's so complicated and difficult, somebody needs to sit down with people and take them through the literally, person to person, not tell them, oh, go to this website.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah.

MR. PLUTA: You know, that's not the answer. The answer is, here's what you do, take them through, spend the time with each individual, answer their questions. Oh my god, that would be incredible.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I thought that there was some architects working with the community for, like, design, registered homes and that. I'm just . . . *(inaudible)*. . . I'll look into it. My understanding was that there was people in the community, designed professionals, who are working with the people in...at Lahaina, and that the County has expedited building permit process. So I'll...

MR. PLUTA: Well, you know, all that may be true, but is it effective?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah.

MR. PLUTA: Is it working? You know, I don't think so.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: We can get together and talk story. I think they're tired of me already.

MR. PLUTA: . . . *(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair. Chair Lee.

MR. PLUTA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hi, Joe. What's the estimated cost of a brand new fire station?

MR. PLUTA: Oh, that's a good question. Yeah. You see, \$3 million for me. And I'm selling. I said, wow, they've been waiting for 20 some years for a Pā'ia Fire Station, and they got \$20 to \$30 million involved in that. I can get them one for 4 million bucks. It's good or better than the one they had planned, so why not? I mean, the unions got such a grip

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on things. . .*(laughing)*. . .and promises the contractors, I don't know. But I...I you know as far as the public interest is concerned today is a different day. There's new technologies today, there's AI, there's all these different things, people are in modular construction. These things got to be incorporated and allowed in our laws and ordinances; they can't be restricted just because they're new and different.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Who are you working with?

MR. PLUTA: We're working with EMB EXTREME Modular Buildings out of Canada. They...all they do is make fire stations in the warehouse, just like Ford Motor Companies, General Motors turned out all those cars and every manufacturer, in a factory setting, where they can enjoy economies of scale, where they bring down the price to 20 percent.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I mean, Joe, are you working with the Fire Chief?

MR. PLUTA: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, very closely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. We'll check with him.

MR. PLUTA: Yeah. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Pluta. Any more questions? Seeing none.

MR. PLUTA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Theo Morrison, who will be followed by Mitch Kings..., Mitch Kingsley.

MS. MORRISON: Aloha. Thank you for coming to West Maui. I actually came to West Maui, too, because I live over there, testifier, but I'm coming back. So and our office is also coming back, as soon as we get the permits. Temporary office but anyway. So we...we're supporting the 9 million in the Office of Recovery Budget for the rebuild of the Lahaina Courthouse and the old prison. We've been managing these two historic sites, County...County sites for decades, at our own expense. We brought in 750,000 for the Old Lahaina Courthouse in 2011, kind of redid the whole inside, built the Lahaina Heritage Museum, redid all the windows, and all the doors, and we've refinished the floor, we've done a lot of...well, you know, it's all gone, but anyway. . .*(laughing)*. . . And we did a lot for that building, it was a really, really...beautiful building, and we did it at our own expense or going out and getting outside grants for that. So what we've done right now, we actually have eight...eight buildings that we're...we are restoring. We've got five we own, three belong to the County. We just got a \$4 million grant from the National Parks Service for the Seamen's Hospital, so that was really great. It covers everything. You don't even need a match on that one. So we raised the 300,000 for a master plan for all our buildings, and we've hired a project manager. So we're just getting going in...in the permitting and the design phase. And then we'll be ready to

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start construction when we get through all that. So, thank you very much for your support, and we really look forward to getting our historic sites back.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Theo. You are amazing, your years of work. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. MORRISON: Okay, sure.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Mitch Kingsley, who will be followed by Alexandria Domingo.

MR. KINGSLEY: Aloha. My name is Mitch Kingsley. I'm the current project director for Mennonite Disaster Service for the project here in Lahaina. Mennonite Disaster Service is an organization that's brought us several hundred volunteers, it works with long-term recovery. And so, what I would like to do is just to share a little bit how the...the budgeting process affects us at the...at the kind of the tail end of the whole process. Mennonite Disaster Service, I...I might mention that I happen to serve on the...on the national board of Mennonite Disaster Service as well. But when I'm here, I'm...I'm just a project director. So building houses, that's what...that's what we're doing. So Mennonite Disaster Service seeks to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Our volunteers are motivated by...by helping people who are without other resources, often times disabled or uninsured, or something has...has happened to make it impossible for them to...to rebuild and recover. And that's...those are the people that our...our volunteers seek to serve. So when...and...and...well, overall I'm not going...I'm not going to quote some of the statistics I have for Mennonite Disaster Service, we've worked across the country. So there...and...and disasters are happening at a...at a increasing rate overall, so we find ourselves with many, many volunteers, but our challenge is to find the right projects where all of the pieces come together. For Mennonite Disaster Service, those pieces are representative of what we call four pillars, and three of those pillars relate very directly to funding. So the pillars are of accommodations for volunteers, that's...that's one that is a place for volunteers to live when they're there. Volunteers themselves, we need the volunteers. We need meaningful work, and we need funding for materials. Mennonite Disaster Service provides the volunteers; they provide the tools that volunteers work with and all of the support for the volunteers to live in a...in a given situation. But accommodations are something that the long-term recovery group has to...has to help us with. And the funding for the materials themselves, the building materials, that also comes from...from local long-term recovery groups. And finally, this is kind of a hidden one, but when I say meaningful work, meaningful work means, for our volunteers serving these people, that it is something that we cannot find on our own because we're...we come from many...many other places. And so, this element of a case working and...and . . .(timer sounds). . . finding out what it is that we should be doing is a very important part of what --

MS. NAKATA: Three minutes.

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MR. KINGSLEY: -- helps us be effective as...as a organization. So that is why this funding affects long-term recovery, affects Mennonite Disaster Service at the end of that. We're...we're very happy to be here, we're blessed, we hope that our service can be of help here. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Cook then Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, sir. What kind of...to paint a picture, what type of trades do you bring to the table, and, like, soup...beginning, soup to nuts, foundation, framing, roofs, and that's where it depends upon what the need is, so you can bring people, those people in? Can you kind of explain the mechanics of how your operation works?

MR. KINGSLEY: Sure...sure. We...we bring a whole variety of volunteers. So...so our volunteers are...are, you know, they're in the whole range of skill level, some are very little skills and some with high degree of skills. We almost always rely on local contractors for the technical services: electrical, the AC, and...and plumbing. So those are...are usually contracted out. Now we...we personally work under the supervision of Cajudoy construction. And so, at that is in this situation, and so basically what happens there is they watch over our work to make sure that we are going to pass every inspection. So we...you know, we...we say, is this the way we do it here in Lahaina. I mean, we might have a whole variety of ideas how we do it somewhere else, but we...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So do you work with Habitat for Humanity? Is it that type of volunteer?

MR. KINGSLEY: Well, very similar, yes. Habitat has an overall program that is not particularly tied to disaster. So Mennonite Disaster Service is...tends to be tied to disaster. We expect, for instance, to be here for...we've been here a year and a half, two years, but we expect to be here another year, perhaps longer. But yes, we...today, I drove the restore truck on...on a little project that we help. So...so the restore from on the other side offered us help.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. If you could leave information with Staff, as far as contact information. And you folks are already working together? Okay, because I was going to refer you to them.

MR. KINGSLEY: Oh yeah. No, no, no. No, we're...yeah, yeah, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Mr. Kingsley. I...I had a question. Sorry about that. I just wanted to clarify, are you asking for more than the 500,000 that they're asking for? Because I don't think they included material funding in their 500,000 request.

MR. KINGSLEY: So we are...we are not...I...I think it feels a little bit like beyond our...our area of expertise. So I don't...I don't feel like we, as Mennonite Disaster Service, wants to stick our nose in. But on the other hand, I wanted to make it very clear that that

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funding, you know, as it comes down, it has an effect on whether those four pillars are in place for us. And when those four pillars exist, we stay so I mean we can do our work. So that's what I'm saying.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: About how much materials...what is the cost of the materials that you may need in one year?

MR. KINGSLEY: Okay. That's...

MS. CAJUDOY: Can he have a resource?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sure.

MS. CAJUDOY: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Okay. So I think that when we've done our numbers for any one house, materials are about \$200 per foot. And so, that's kind of what we put into our budgets whenever we're putting together some sort of bid summary, whenever we put together the whole case before we bring it to them. And I...so my job as the construction manager with Ho'ōla, I make sure all the materials are there, and we make sure the funding is there somehow or another. And the materials have to be at the site for them to work. We have foundations done before they come in and that's it. They do everything else; we just have the electrician and plumbers come in and do the rest. Is that helpful, did that help? So I know that Rhonda's asking for 500,000, but I think yes, we do need way, way more, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next testifier.

AUDIENCE: . . . *(clapping)*. . .

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Alexandria Domingo, who will be followed by Michele Lincoln.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can somebody help her with the mic.

MS. DOMINGO: I got it. I got it. There. Yeah. Thank you. Sorry. Aloha, everyone, good evening. Unfortunately, our parent couldn't make it tonight, so I'm going to be reading her letter on her behalf. It's a parent here in Lahaina, her name is May Lenh, and she just wanted to express her sincerest appreciation to the County of Maui for funding MEO Headstart. It has been a huge help to families like ours to be able to bring our keiki to preschool, especially for those who cannot afford it. My child, Zach Spade, has been attending MEO Headstart for two years now, and our lives have become so much easier since the kids not only come to a place that we can trust our kids in and also know that we can work and learn so much. It's a big help in shaping our children's characters and minds before they enter elementary school. I'm humbly requesting that the County of Maui keep funding this organization in hope of continuing full day, full-year services for our enrolled Headstart families. And another note, we've seen such

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huge progress for this child in two years because he use to cry all the time. And so, just knowing that he was able to be comforted by his staff, by our staff, and have the families, you know, build a relationship. Because it's really hard when you're trying to leave your child and your child's screaming, and...and that's an awful feeling, right, to be leaving them there. But they built two years' worth of relationships all together with the family, and now the families feeling that this is something they would like to see for other families.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Great, very beautiful. Any questions? Thank you.

MS. DOMINGO: Can I add something? I have...I have little bit more time, right? I just wanted to add something, on a personal note, for Headstart. In the going on 22 years that I have been here, I have personally seen the success of some families. Last year, I lost both my parents, and I experienced something so beautiful. It was three different past Headstart families that supported me and my family in the hospital, as my parents were passing, and I could not believe the comfort that they brought me and...and my whole family, and the fact that they took time to visit both my parents and keep telling the stories of how Headstart helped them, so that they wouldn't have even been where they're at now if it wasn't for Headstart. So I was just so touched by that, but I just wanted to share because that shows you the success of Headstart. They're out in our community doing the good work. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Alexandria...excuse me, Michele Lincoln, who will be followed by Bhejay Yadao.

MS. LINCOLN: Thank you so much for being here tonight, and I want to thank this County Council, many of you were on the County Council several years ago when the West Maui Community Plan was passed, and you left some very strange wording in there, so that Stanford Carr and the Maui Planning Commission would have to address a mediation problem with the park. I just want to thank you for doing that because even though it seemed really weird at the time, it's what was necessary for justice to be served. In 2014, a lawsuit began. It got resolved in 2021, with the Hawai'i Supreme Court ruling on all counts in our favor. But the project of Kahoma Village had been built in the meantime. So we're saying, okay, don't tear anything down but give us some park space in that area. And...and so, the County Council left the original wording for that. Well, 2021 is when the lawsuit came through, 2022 is when the community plan was left with the original wording, and still nothing happened. Well, after the fire, we lost everything in the fire, we lost our business assets, we lost our home. But one of the first things I did after the fire, and got cell phone service and internet, was contact our attorney and go, hey, Kahoma Village lost some houses in there, we need to do our mediation so they can rebuild because right now, it will be illegal for them. They need a SMA, and they

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won't be able to get that because they're not in compliance with the community plan. So we were the ones that pushed the effort to, hey, let's get this thing through. So I know what...how I felt about wanting to rebuild, and I knew they would feel the same way. So in August of 2025, they finally...we finally came with mediation, and we were given four parcels in the Mala area, and next to Kahoma Village, just a little...little tiny pocket, little areas that were already owned by the County, and that they're going to make the best effort to create a park and a memorial to David Malo of the 'alamihi fish pond, the...that'll be between Kamehameha the Great and the High Chief of Maui. A lot of history happened down there, and there was a promise of signage and historical things, and playgrounds, some picnic tables, nothing elaborate. But I noticed in the details here there's no mention. In the Parks Department, they have mentioned some other projects in...in Lahaina restoration, which is great, I'm all for that, but I just ask that those parcels that were part of the mediation be included in the budget. Just by word, we don't even need that much money, but just to know that you guys acknowledge it and tell the Parks Department this is an important project. Because I feel like the County, once they start the ball rolling, that there will be Rotary's and other, you know, people in the community that want to buy a picnic, you know, table for the County and fund it. So I think we can get funding elsewhere. I'm not asking for a lot of money, but I'm asking for recognition and just enough to kind of...like, whatever it takes to start that. And maybe with some cash concessions, like Kahoma Village . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . being built without the SMA, that maybe some of those concessions can also be applied to this. In my remaining 30 seconds, I just want to bring up the fact that we are rebuilding in Lahaina, but it's terrifying to me to see all the grass growing on Bishop Estate Kamehameha School land, and right now it's lush and green. In a few months it's going to be a brown, and how are we supposed to stop a fire like that again? So, since 2014, I've been advocating for the reclaimed water to be put in ditches, brought over there for irrigation because Kamehameha Schools told me back in 2012, when I started asking them about it, if they would please do ag, and they said they need a reliable source of ag water. So I'm asking that I know there's a budget to get it to Wahikuli right now, but . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . could you increase the budget to get it to Bishop Estate so they can irrigate and keep our community safe? Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

AUDIENCE: . . . *(clapping)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions? Member Paltin. Member Paltin has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I'm Member Rawlins-Fernandez. But mahalo.

MS. LINCOLN: . . . *(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I take that as a compliment. Mahalo, Ms. Lincoln for your testimony. I...and maybe Member Paltin has the answer to this, so I can talk story with her later. But do you know the TMK or the addresses of the three parks that you mentioned?

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MS. LINCOLN: There...there's four parcels all together --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Four.

MS. LINCOLN: Yes. I can send to Tamara and...and a link with the...the four parcels that were mentioned in the mediation, and the mediation agreement, what the County said that they were willing to do for those parcels. So not that I'm asking, like I said, to fund the whole thing, there's so many worthy causes, but just to get the ball rolling so they know that you guys are taking it to the next level and making sure that justice is served, and that the community will all benefit from having, you know, a nice...a nice park down there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Perhaps, at minimum, we can at least afford signs, if there's no signs there, to get the ball rolling and acknowledging it.

MS. LINCOLN: . . .(laughing). . . Or clean it up and plant some plants, and yes, there's some things we can do that are, like, can get it going. But like I said, it's, it's, when I hear about all these other things, that it's I think the money will come from places. But if you guys could just show that you care, just like these are listed, like, specific projects, just to put it, hey, we want to put some money towards this to start whatever the Parks Department needs to start the predevelopment plans or whatever, and then once they let us know what the budget is, I will start advocating and getting, you know, public people to...private people to help fund it. So don't take away from all these other important things but please mention it, and give us whatever you think Parks would need just to...to start the preliminary park planning.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Probably a code amendment in Chapter...in Title 12. I just did that, and I'm happy to watch for your email and work with you on that.

MS. LINCOLN: All right. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Now you can be Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

MS. LINCOLN: . . .(laughing). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What an honor.

AUDIENCE: . . .(laughing). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just wanted to clarify a couple things. I tell these guys every day that we want the R1 to go south and not north, so just clarifying. And the other thing I wanted to clarify or ask, that if you knew that this Council today passed the parking bill, so that's one less.

MS. LINCOLN: Yay! Thank you. . .(laughing). . .

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AUDIENCE: . . .(laughing). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. No more questions. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: Next testifier is Bhejay Yadao, who will be followed by Lionel Pascual.

MR. YADAO: Hello. Aloha, everyone. My name is Bhejay Yadao. I just wanted to say thank you to Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama for providing a home with peace and stability. After we lost everything from the Lahaina Wildfire, we thought there was no hope. But with the help of Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama and their many local partners and volunteers, such as Lahaina Community Land Trust, Hawai‘i Community Lending and Mennonite Disaster Service, they were able to organize and made the rebuilding process as smooth and efficient as possible. Because of their time and effort, my family finally has a sense of peace and comfort. To families who are still struggling, still uncertain, still rebuilding, there is hope. Today, I stand here with Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama as living proof of what they can do, direct, organized, support so families facing uncertainty are not alone and can return home. So please continue your support for Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama. Your...your support can restore hope, hope for families to return home, hope that Lahaina can rebuild, hope that with any challenges our community may face Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama and their many local partners and volunteers will be there. Mahalo.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Beautiful. Any questions? Congratulations.

MR. YADAO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Great. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Lionel Pascual, who will be followed by Uncle Deno.

MR. PASCUAL: I’m talking about two items. On the first one, I ask for your support for Akana Kane Connections, that’s a group for us in Lahaina that helps men to take life and deal with it, especially with all the stuff, we losing the house, it’s a good place for us just to . . .*(inaudible)*. . . release our minds and all the questions and sympathy with each other. And then, this one I’m talking for myself. Like, we’re...we are missing in the loop with the loss because we had lost our house, and then we used our money, but it extended over, now we’re out, and all the programs are closed. So today we cut a check for 9,400 for rent, our mortgage is 3,000. And I don’t know, and we don’t...we make a little bit too much for qualify for MEO, we went. So if there’s a solution for us there’s a lot of us in this missing loop. So that’s it. I’m not a talker, unfortunately.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Yeah.

MR. PASCUAL: You guys better have questions, I’m looking for solutions, man, come on.

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AUDIENCE: . . .(laughing). . .

MR. PASCUAL: I'm up here talking to you guys. You guys got to answer something. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: So can you explain again your...like, it...it had ended, the services had ended, and now you're having to pay it on your own?

MR. PASCUAL: Okay. We stayed the Hotel Papakea.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MR. PASCUAL: And the other hotels for maybe nine months. So when we had to use our loss of use because we wanted to stay in Lahaina.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MR. PASCUAL: We wanted to stay in Lahaina, and my son is a senior. So we didn't want to move to the other side. So by the time we left out the hotel system, we had loss of use money, which just ended in maybe the new year. Then after that, we qualified, I'm not sure what program, we had four months free. And then right now we went through MEO, but it's more of a low income, four months. And then there's nothing for us, and we gonna to be homeless because we don't even make that much, without food and rent, I mean without food and for the car payments, and credit cards.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MR. PASCUAL: I'm already thinking about taking a loan for rent, which is stupid.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: So...so you don't qualify for the MEO rental assistance --

MR. PASCUAL: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- program?

MR. PASCUAL: We tried; we just left.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MR. PASCUAL: And there's nothing really out there, but everybody in the same situation like me, that get houses up there, free rent and --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh. Up above here.

MR. PASCUAL: -- yeah, they're saying, we just lost in the loop because when our money run out for the loss of use, then everything closed already. Then we keep trying up there, but they always give us information that no work.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. So you're looking for more...at least more rental assistance --

MR. PASCUAL: Definitely.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- for...for your income bracket.

MR. PASCUAL: Yeah, 'cause up there, they make more than us, some of them, and they're up there getting free rent, and they're paying their mortgage too, but I just cannot handle two mortgages and then rent. The mortgages are cheaper than the rent. I mean, the rent is...yeah, the mortgage cost more than the...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. We can reach out. Thank you, Mr. Pascual.

MR. PASCUAL: . . .(inaudible). . . Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Have you...you are employed, right?

MR. PASCUAL: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. Not employed. Shoot.

MR. PASCUAL: I'm. . .(inaudible). . .disabled. I had 17 surgeries, so I've got screws in the back.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So then what...what AMI bracket is the programs that you need?

MR. PASCUAL: We're looking for somebody, to some kind of rental assistance...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If you can speak in the mic.

MR. PASCUAL: Looking for some rental assistance that we qualify for 'cause everything is mostly for low income.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. Uhm, I'm trying to find out --

MR. PASCUAL: It's the same...it's the same fire, that's the part that makes me mad. It's the same fire, but all different qualifications on what situation, which is crazy.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So not low what...what is the bracket that the program is missing in?

MR. PASCUAL: Well, we make 14,000 more than enough, more than the MEO one. So we didn't qualify. A year.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Annually --

MR. PASCUAL: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- 14,000 over?

MR. PASCUAL: Yeah, yeah, because we qualified before, and they had one, I guess, was a grant, and this is now not a grant, it's like through welfare or something like that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. I know we put 12 million to Maui United Way for...and they haven't yet distributed it for rental assistance program. Does...Alice, your program, do you know how they can apply for that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I think what we're going to do is take down your name and information, if you could give it Lei, and --

MR. PASCUAL: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- and then, yeah, and then if we can talk to you further.

MR. PASCUAL: Yeah. I'll wait, please. Thank you 'cause...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. Thank you.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: One question. Were you part of the FEMA program?

MR. PASCUAL: No.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And the FEMA program is extending one more year.

MR. PASCUAL: We're not in the FEMA program.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Are you...

MR. PASCUAL: We just ended our loss of use. So we wasn't in nothing. The only thing was with Red Cross when...when we was at the hotels. But as of now, we're not...we never was through FEMA . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Some of the people here today working with Hawai'i Community Lending, and all these other probably CNHA and all the other consultants that are helping in the community, is there any way you can help guide him?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you have a case number?

MR. PASCUAL: Yes, I do. But my wife is taking care of mostly, but she's working tonight, so.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. But the two of you can talk on the side.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And then help him. Yeah. And then we can do...we can also follow up on...on your issue, but you have to let one of us know.

MR. PASCUAL: I'll wait.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Huh? No, wait, you have to call us.

MR. PASCUAL: Oh, give me your number. I'll call you, guarantee I'm calling everybody.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: We'll give you our number.

MR. PASCUAL: I'll call you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Okay. Very good. Thank you.

MR. PASCUAL: Okay. Thanks.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Uncle Deno, who'll be followed by Wilmont Kahaialii. Uncle Deno?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is there a Uncle Deno here? Maybe we can come back to him.

MS. NAKATA: Okay. The next testifier is Wilmont Kahaialii.

MR. KAHAIALII: Aloha ahihi. So, e kala mai, I was looking over this, and what I have to share with you, it's not even addressed on this agenda. So I hope that maybe what I have to mahele might get some support or traction down the road. I stand before you today as the president of Aloha Amplified. We...we're the nonprofit organization that hosted the Lights for Lahaina event last year. And I wanted to give you guys some context about how that event really came to fruition because about the early part of last year, one of Linn's daughters came with me, and we went out to where our house was destroyed by the fire. And she did something that really was a precursor, this is why Lights for Lahaina happened. She said, Uncle, why don't we just go up to your house, where your house was. So we went up, the sun went down already, was getting dark, and she said, Uncle, where was your living room? And so, I said, oh, was over here. She said, "Why don't you go sit in your living room". So I sat on the gravel, and then she said, "Uncle, tell me a story. Tell me what life was like before the fire". So, I closed my eyes, I started talking story, and by the time I was done, I opened up my eyes, she had taken these

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lamps that she had, and she had traced the outline of the house, so I found myself surrounded by light. That really hit me so hard that I decided I like do the same thing for Lahaina because Lahaina was...it's been so dark and dreary for the last two-half, three years. And I know what the power of light can do for a lot of us still going through the trauma, still trying to navigate this...this recovery. And so, when I teamed up with Linn and her ohana, they helped me find the hope and the energy to do this for Lahaina town. After that event, there was so many people in West Maui, not even Lahaina people, people from Kapalua, Kahana they're like, are we going to do this every year, I said, would love to for as long as it takes because you heard her share testimony earlier. There are people who actually, because of the event, were coming out of the dark, and they felt by virtue of that event, they had hope to keep trying. It's not easy. It's not easy. You...you heard brother talk. It's hard, some of us going through some really maha'oe, niiele, kapulu, kapahai kine stuff, but we love this place so much, we doing everything we can. . . .(timer sounds). . . See, that's what I get for being portagee, the alarm going off already. Can I ask you guys, the next time you put together a budget, can we have something for the mental health and wellness component for our community 'cause it's not here. That's why I feel like I'm speaking out of turn, k'olu'olu. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. One moment. Member Paltin has a question.

MR. KAHAIALII: Oh no, you can talk to me later.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. I just wanted to clarify that these were pulled out of the Mayor's Budget as West Maui specific funding. So you don't have to read the hundreds and hundreds of pages. The mental health component isn't specific only to West Maui, and it's in the big budget book, which is, you know, like thousand-something page. But these are...my staff just pulled out highlights, like a one-pager that is specific to West Maui.

MR. KAHAIALII: Do you know what that piece is that addresses that? What kind of budget has been allocated for that piece?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: There's various ones. Like, I think Mental Health Kokua and other ones, and it's not only for West Maui. And then I think the State is also funding the Maui West at the Lahaina Comprehensive Health Center, which has, you know, free sessions with Dr. Knightsbridge and things like that.

MR. KAHAIALII: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But this is not what we put in the budget, this is like a brief synopsis of the Mayor's Budget so you don't have to read thousand-something pages and look at what was allocated specifically for West Maui. If you want to read the whole budget, you can go to mauicounty.us/agendas and the BFED...

MR. KAHAIALII: You know what, Tamar, let's do this...let's do this because I love the suggestion, you have my number.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, but I'm not gonna get to you because I'm...this lady has me on all kind of deadlines --

MR. KAHAIALII: Okay...okay --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: --and reading every night --

MR. KAHAIALII: -- fair—fair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: --every night this week.

MR. KAHAIALII: But I'm just trying to save you some...some time because what you're suggesting to me is just another gate --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MR. KAHAIALII: -- one more thing I gotta go do, one more thing we gotta go do, one more thing we gotta go look for, one more link

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Page 433 in the program budget, there's over \$10 million for, in mental health.

MR. KAHAIALII: Boom.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: Chair, did you want to go back to Uncle Deno?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's not here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, he's not. Oh okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He left.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Kanani Higbee, who will be followed by Carolyn Auwelo.

MS. HIGBEE: Aloha, I'm Kanani Higbee. I'm a Lahaina Fire survivor. And I say, you forget mental health sorry, but you can pay endless money to mental health and still not address the issue, which is houselessness. We are homeless. We are homeless. We are homeless. You know, that's the same thing I would tell a mental health person, like a fricken crisis counselor, we're homeless, we need housing. We don't need million, \$10 million of mental health, what we need is our issues addressed, which is housing. So I

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earned by bachelor degree in social science, political science, while raising my two kids by myself, you know, chipping away at my degree for years and years and years so that I could pass bills through the Hawai'i State Legislature , which I feel the County should work with the State because we have 155 homes trying to go through Lahaina Leialii Hawaiian Homes for us Lahaina fire survivors, and we need you guys to help the State. We already have Maui Commissioner Archie Kelapa, former lifeguard for the County, right there. You know, we know where he lives, and there's our in for us to try to get Leilai'i built. And I'll tell you how that's going. Basically, you know, we went to do lots of...we got paper lease, ooh, it's a paper, it's not a house, it's a paper. And it's like we pass bills through the State legislature; they get killed. We need your support, you guys go to the first day of the legislature, you guys work there, so why can't you guys help us? You know, work with the State. We didn't get House Bill 2049 passed through, that's the conveyance, you know, restructuring to get Hawaiian Home funding, but we still have Senate Bill 3028 that also has a conveyance tax, it's not too specific on how much they're going to put in Hawaiian Home infrastructure, but it does help. You know, we need this funding in order to get our projects developed so we can get housing here in Lahaina, you know. So another thing too is, as you know, my brother is still missing, Kanalu Higbee, father of three, you know, husband, and the Maui Police haven't done much about him. They basically told me the cold case. You had the two detectives, they said if we look for him, we're going to have to look for over 100 other missing people. That's like...that's your job, you're the cold case unit. You know, every time you find somebody who's missing, that helps us. We don't need to go to a fricken counselor, we have our answers to what happen to our family, we have closure. You know, forget this mental health crap, and let's address the real issues we have, you know. So, you know, it'd be good if my brother's children can't go through their whole lives . . .(timer sounds). . . not knowing where their father is. And he also...they lost out on Hawaiian Home because he's a Hawaiian Homes wait lister, too and they really need a house. So that's just, you know, really pay attention to what is going on here. We don't need mental health, okay? They know what their problems are. What we need is we need housing, and we need things like missing people found. You know, the whole town was able to find their loved ones. What about people before the fire? You know, we're still waiting. Any questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. What Bill number did you say?

MS. HIGBEE: Okay. There's two Bill numbers, House Bill 2049, that's the conveyance Tax Bill --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wait...wait 2059?

MS. HIGBEE: 49.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 2049.

MS. HIGBEE: Yeah. That was killed by Mililani State Senator, Donovan Dela Cruz, in Ways and Means, which is really sad because they went through both the House and Senate, and it was going, it was nearly done. And then we still have a live Senate Bill 3028,

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barely, and that's gone through the whole process. But we really need this funding so that Hawaiian Home infrastructure can get the money that they need, so we can get our homes because, you know, we've been waiting for a long time. And my poor mom, she fricken busted her okole working at Lahaina Shores her whole life, she 40 years on the waitlist. I said, can she please get her Hawaiian Home, you know what she didn't wait for nothing, she wanted her Hawaiian Home, you know, and it's not just for kids, yes, or her grandkids, which she...but it's, you know, for her as well, as well as for me as well as my sister as well as --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. HIGBEE: -- you know, others.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Thank you.

MS. HIGBEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Mikey Burke, who'll be followed by J. "Kamiki" Carter.

MS. BURKE: Hi. Before I begin, I wanted to provide some clarity on the FEMA situation because it...when he was telling you that he didn't qualify for FEMA, a lot of you looked baffled. In the very beginning, when homeowners were going to FEMA representatives here on island, and even calling, the narrative that they were telling homeowners who had loss of use or ALE, insurance funding, was that you do not qualify for FEMA until you exhaust that. And so, what a lot of us homeowners were doing, we were going out and finding rentals on our own, using that money to exhaust it, and then trying to get into the FEMA program. So depending on how much money you had, or the length of time that you had that money, put you up against the expiration date of whether you could sign up for FEMA because they did not allow you to even put in an application until you had zero of those funds. But what the real FEMA directive should have been, that they didn't tell us, was that you can get into FEMA direct lease, or any of the programs that they had post disaster, you just had to give them your ALE money. You didn't have to exhaust it on your own and then enter. You could have entered right away and then just use your ALE to pay all the rent in all the FEMA housings and all the things. And so, there was a real disservice in our disaster when it happened, and then it's affecting folks like Uncle right here. You know, he's not the only one. He's just the bravest one to come and talk about it. So that's the...that's the FEMA disaster situation for homeowners who had insurance, now do not qualify for FEMA. Okay. Now I can...now you can make my time go because I'm going to need all three minutes. Yeah. I was a resource. Aloha kākou. My name is Mikey Burke. It's always hard for me to indicate who I am testifying as because I come before you representing all the things that make me, inspire me, and nourish me. I'm a Lahaina girl, a mother trying to protect my keiki's village, a concerned citizen that wants you to support everything, keiki to

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kūpuna, and a passionate advocate for community organizations like Ho‘ōla iā Mauiakama, whom I’m just going to say is actually asking 500,000 per testifier, and that’s five plus me, so we’re actually asking for 3 million in the budget, and Lahaina Community Land Trust, to name a few. Mahalo for being here tonight, and mahalo for the way that you’ve shown up for Lahaina over the past several years, and for the land trust. In the beginning, you may have thought that you were just funding a program, but in actuality, you invested into a community led vision. You stood with us early, and that trust is already shaping what Lahaina has become. So far, there are ten ohana in the Keep Lahaina Home Insurance Gap Program, and those ten ohana equal 1,600 lived years in Lahaina. Just ten families that you’ve helped to save, 1,600 lived years. We have three legacy homes that are going to be transferred upon death, and 20 pieces of ‘āina that we’ve secured. And based on that zoning, we could construct up to 55 housing units. I want to take a moment to ground us on what that really is. This is just not affordable housing, this is not just recovery, we are in the middle of once in a generation land transition where land that could have been lost forever is instead being secured for our community in perpetuity. And we are in a very narrow window to do this. Right now, properties are coming up for sale, families are making really tough decisions, and we have maybe one to three years to meet this moment of urgency. Our recent acquisitions have ranged between 500,000 and 700,000 per property. It’s a lot, but each one represents a home that will never again be priced out of the reach of our people. So tonight, I am asking you to restore the 6 million in unrestricted funding for Lahaina Community Land Trust that the Mayor had initially announced in his budget and to also retain the 2.4 million already allocated for vertical construction through the grant from the Affordable Housing Fund. We need both to secure the land and build homes. And I want to be clear; this is not going to be a permanent ask from the LCLT. This is about meeting a moment that will not come again. In a couple of years, I hope to come in front of you again only asking for the things that I ask for, like supporting MEO transport services, and for the Headstart program that’s so important to income restricted and special needs children on this island. Because this isn’t about land on paper, this is about whether the next generation of Lahaina families will still recognize themselves in the place they call home. And years from now, when people ask how much Lahaina was saved or how Lahaina was saved, the answer will be tied directly to the decisions that you guys make in this very Council. This is your legacy too. This is our window, to bring Lahaina back into Lahaina hands. If we miss this moment, we are not going to get another one. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you for your testimony. But you said the Mayor originally...well, said to you that you had 6 million that he was going put in his budget and then took it out?

MS. BURKE: When he did his roadshow in this very building, and we came here to testify, and in his opening remarks, he had indicated that he had put \$6 million in for the Lahaina Community Land Trust. So we stood here that night, and we advocated for everything

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else under the sun, you know, pickle ball, all the things, you name it because we thought, oh, we got it in the bag. But what happened was, when this affordable housing application opened for vertical construction, we also put in an application for that, not thinking that one would change the other. And so, when the affordable application came in for that specific grant that we were asking for for vertical construction --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Which was for how much?

MS. BURKE: 2.4 million. I think, you know, the County saw that and said, oh, they only need 2.4 million, not the 6. So they made the change in the budget before it got to your hands. So what I'm trying to say is, we need it all. We need the 6 million to secure the 'āina, and then we need the 2.4 to help to construct.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So that 2.4 million is in the budget and comes out of the Affordable Housing Fund?

MS. BURKE: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MS. BURKE: Yeah. But the 6 million that he had in there was coming from an unrestricted fund.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And you absolutely need it in this upcoming budget?

MS. BURKE: Yes. You know, what's happening right now is the settlement is coming to...to the end, right? And what...what we've been told by our lawyers is you're...the value that you're going to get in the settlement changes immensely whether you own property or not. And so, families have been holding onto their property with this intent of, depending on what comes with the...the settlement, I may have to sell. And so, we're approaching this cliff right now. Once...once the first payment in the settlement goes out, that value is permanent. So once they sell afterwards, it doesn't change the further settlement that installments that they get from the settlement. And so, we're waiting for this kind of wave of families who are on the precipice of selling or not. And so, in the next, you know, two to three years, is what we're thinking, we're going to see this mass influx of families wanting to sell their homes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

MS. BURKE: I'm sorry, properties.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Very good. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member, okay you got it. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

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MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is J. “Kamiki” Carter, who will be followed by Steve Fisher.

MS. CARTER: Hi, you guys, again. I wasn’t going to testify, but I was told by my kūpuna that I have to read on her behalf. So I’m just gonna listen. So when I...when I never had a DCMP through the State, Kamiki and Hoola became my DCM. She came with me and supported me through different things that I was doing. She emotionally was there when I attended the Hawaiian Homelands meeting, all the way up until I got my award letter. We later worked on getting me a DCMP with the State because, as a resident of Ka Laʻi Ola, I was required to have one, and I could lose my place because I wasn’t in compliance. Kamiki helped to connect me with the DCMP, and now I’m in compliance. She also supported me to obtain services with the community and worked with me step by step. We need more DCMs like Kamiki and her team to work with us kūpuna step by step and do what we need so that we are not alone. So, like, I...I’m gonna cry because, like, this is what you guys don’t hear, like, and see, like as Anakala (ph.) was talking earlier. Like, I was like that’s what we do. Like, we listen, we sit down, we gather the information, we actually see where not only financially gap, but where they are mentally, and how we can support, and sometimes they just need to talk through the whole process. And in the last two and a half years, they’ve been just alone and, like, trying to navigate through whatever they are...are able to tap into. And so, now, like, I’m thankful that Auntie told me for do this because hearing, like, we are important and I’ve...I’ve shared with you folks what we, you know, on a small aspect, what we do. I just, you know, encourage that you continue to fund our program so we can continue to fund our lāhui as Mikey was saying earlier 500,000 per testimony. I testified at Kīhei, that’s 500 and then another 500 for me. So, but mahalo. . . .(laughing). . . Any questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you

MS. CARTER: Thank you. And I’m happy they were able to answer your question about the faulty contractor.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier, please.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier is Steve Fisher, who will be followed by Carolyn Auwelo.

MR. FISHER: I’m Steve Fisher. I live in the fire zone, at the top of Fleming Road, which at the time was a dead-end street. I actually evacuated with a two-year old and a five-day old baby. And I was the last one on my street to evacuate. I got...made sure every neighbor on my street was gone before I actually left. And I have two things to bring up. One is a fire prevention idea that I came upon, and then the other one is a big safety issue that I work with...with Roland Tanner and Lahaina Strong in Lahaina. If anyone knows what pencil cactus is...or it’s also called fire cactus in other parts of the island. Just imagine 100 or 1,000 green pencils, you throw them down on the ground and they grow just like that. I planted pencil cactus around my property, and it grew 15 feet. I did not know

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this prior to the fire, but the pencil cactus saved two-thirds of my property from burning, and it scalds, but it won't burn, it's kind of like banana leaves. And so, there's a...there's a sap on the inside, it's toxic, the pencil cactus is really easy to grow, it grows 15 feet. After the fire, I spoke with a representative of fire prevention from the Big Island, and actually, today, I talked to a MECO tech that was up there, and he was asking me about the fire, and...and I showed him the pencil cactus. It'd be really easy to put pencil cactus anywhere there's a field with strong winds. I exampled Kihei, Mā'alaea, all through Lahaina here. You could plant it, irrigate it, and walk away, so very low maintenance post putting it in the ground, and it grows 15 feet. And when...when it gets up and it grows full, you can't see through it, and embers can't get through it. So I actually think that the pencil cactus saved my house...my houses because I had multiple properties. The other thing is is that I do work with Roland Tanner in Lahaina Patrol, Lahaina Strong, and Neighborhood Watch, and there's a serious issue with speeding coming down Wahikuli Road and Fleming Road. I'm on Fleming, so I'm little bit more hands on that. Prior, when they built FEMA housing up there, I knew all the superintendents at Kiewit. That was the main contractor, and I actually spoke with him about putting in speed bumps above me. They did not. There's not one speed bump above where my home is, and there's a stop sign. And their answer was, well, people are going to stop . . . *(laughing)*. . . just stand out there any day and watch them fly through at 40 miles an hour because they can come down the hill. I see people walking, I see people in wheelchairs . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . up there, it is going to be a serious issue, somebody is going to get hit. I don't want to be the one going out there and rendering aide. I would be because that's my nature, but I've actually spoke about this numerous times, and I've seen zero follow-up by anyone in charge for safety.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Have you put in a speed bump request form with the Department of Public Works?

MR. FISHER: With Roland Tanner, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And have they gotten...

MR. FISHER: I've also spoke with Archie Kalepa about where it would be best to stop people. And again, and this has been going on for...I've been helping with Lahaina Patrol for about two years, doing drive-arounds at 2:30 in the morning and also trying to prevent people from stopping, but I'm not going to get out in front of a car and try to stop somebody, but I'm going to try to do my due diligence because, again, I do not want to be the person having to go there and rendering aide before the, you know, first responders get there.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So I know one of the requirements is they want, like, 80 percent of the affected property owners to agree with it. You guys filled out the form and...

MR. FISHER: Yes. I'm going to put that on Roland Tanner, but I'm going to guess, over the conversations and the meetings we've had, we have brought this up numerous times.

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He's even put cameras on the street to get people. You know, it's...it's action happens after somebody gets killed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you know if they've responded to the request at all?

MR. FISHER: I do not know.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MR. FISHER: Roland would know, or I can get with you on that. But again, actions happen after somebody gets killed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I'll try...follow up with him.

MR. FISHER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thanks. I got two questions. From your observation, is it the same people all the time? Or is it just like anybody and everybody driving on the road?

MR. FISHER: I hate to say anybody and everybody. I won't...or lean that yes, there are people that are consistently doing it, but I'm not actually out there watching them, so I...I can give you hands on, but I'm not going to give you 100 percent, you know, visibility on it.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And I'm just getting at it, if it's, like...so, thank you. And then my other question was, the pencil cactus, 15 feet tall, what's the diameter on a pencil cactus?

MR. FISHER: It'll be about 6 inches, 8 inches. So, it's solid.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So they're pretty rigid, and they don't blow over.

MR. FISHER: They didn't blow over, and I was out there in the 80-mile hour winds. And prior to the fire I was right up against the former cane fields. So it was a free line for all the embers to come on the property, and it did not come on where the pencil cactus was planted. And I actually lost my shop, it was a different part of the property, and the pencil cactus did not burn, it got scalded, but the intact tree was still in place.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you.

MR. FISHER: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. No further questions. Next testifier.

MS. NAKATA: The next testifier, and last person who is signed up, is Carolyn Auwelo.

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MS. AUWELoa: Didn't know I was going to get last place, but I'll take it. Hey girl. Aloha, my name is Carolyn Auwelo. I am very proud to stand here with my community and many, the many partners that we work with in...in this work of recovery and staying strong for Lahaina. I just wanted to say, the part of what you want to hear is not just what we need, but what worked well. And I was so proud of Bhejay and the Yadao's and the long-term recovery group because two years ago, when you guys trusted us with \$3 and half million for an insurance gap program, we made good on that, and we got ten families so far. We spent that 3 and half million. The ten families so far, that Bhejay and his family are the first family that went home. And that was a huge...that's a huge win, and a huge testimony to what's yet to come. We have two families that actually made it home already, and eight more that are in the lineup, and they just keep coming, and that was possible because you guys trusted us to do this work, and we're doing it. And so, I just wanted to start out with that big thank you. And thank you for trusting us. We have made good on the trust. Every dollar you've given us, we have leveraged, and we have doubled, and brought in more private funding to help support our work. And again, that was like you guys were the igniter for that, and we just really appreciate it. We are making real progress towards to helping to keep Lahaina lands in Lahaina hands. As Mikey shared, 20 properties are already secured forever and will never be sold again. Ten families rebuilding and coming home, we disrupted three foreclosures, we have preserved 1,600 of still living...1,600 years of people still living in this generation. Doesn't even count the ancestors before them, that are going to continue to call Lahaina home. We're so proud of those metrics. And we are working very carefully with our first two opportunities for open space along Lahaina's ocean front. We're just now, the...the time is coming, if it's ripening, and just now finally getting that opportunity. And so, we're working carefully through that. And as, Mikey said, you know, we're...we're asking to please restore that original 6 million. There was some kind of misunderstanding. We...we believe that we were already in the Mayor's budget for 6 million, and we applied for an additional 2.4 to help us move faster, to get houses on all this land, and bring more of our families home. And there's plenty of evidence of precedence for this kind of funding, where you get funded through a budget with the General Funds, and you can get funding through Affordable Housing. So if anybody's wondering about that, there's plenty precedence, we did the research. And where we are now. Yeah. The settlement checks are coming, decisions are going to be made, a lot of our kama'aina that still want to live in Lahaina they're doing everything they can to come home. But, you know, we feel like the people that are holding out and that are going to be making these decisions to sell, when the settlements all start to get locked in, and they start getting their checks, really going to be maybe the folks that were long-term rental or nonowner-occupant anyway, you know, that were just it's too much to rebuild and...and so, we know because we see more and more properties are beginning to...to be marketed, and we want to be able to continue to stay, and it's super responsive . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . posture. And so, we need your help. In ten years, when we look back, will we be looking back with pride that we stayed steady and supporting this initiative, and we were there when the...the moment really mattered, when the disaster capitalism wave really peaked, or will we have regret that we fell away just before that happened. Please, we ask you to please continue to trust us and support Lahaina in this way. We are changing our future here. Together, we can continue to expand the safe harbor that we're building, to ensure that Lahaina remains a

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community with deep roots and pilina with this place and each other, a community that shows up . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . and takes care of each other. And that makes Lahaina special. The work that we're doing is rewriting the story of disaster recovery, and that's only possible because of all the ways we are all working together, and the way that you guys are helping us make this happen, and the world is watching. This is all of our story, and we want to thank you guys for being a big part of that. Also, wanted to give a shout out to SeeClickFix. Thank you, Tamara, for turning me on to them and 4LEAF. There are a fair number of what appears to be very illegal retaining walls, a huge one is right behind one of the homes that we're helping to rebuild. We filed a report, we filed a complaint, they went out and did an investigation, there's no permit, no design, it's totally unsafe, we saw it go up. The footing was only three feet deep, and this thing is nine feet tall. And there's, like, five feet of fill that the guy brought in behind it so . . . *(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. NAKATA: Four minutes.

MS. AUWELOA: So it's really unsafe, and it's so important, the role that 4LEAF has, and that they are doing these investigations. And I just want to give a shout out to them and ensure that whatever needs to be done to address these unsafe circumstances get addressed. And turned off my hat. . . *(inaudible)*. . . anything agricultural, please support, anything to reduce deer, please support. Fences are great, but if we don't reduce the numbers, we're not going to get anywhere. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Wait...wait...wait. I gotta say, when I first met you, --

MS. AUWELOA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- I think must be six years ago, when I did the axis deer task force, and her idea was doing bounty hunting, I said, hey, how we going do bounty hunting, and she said, it can be done. I did research, it's being done. Okay. Now we can talk about Lahaina. Chair Lee.

MS. AUWELOA: . . . *(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hi. Okay. You mentioned something about the houses being marketed. How many homes are being sold, and it...are they, you know, market priced or affordable?

MS. AUWELOA: Not...not homes, I'm sorry, if I was not clear. Folks that were nonowner-occupant, that are still holding onto their land because they're waiting to see what's going to happen with the settlement, those are the properties that we are anticipating, if they haven't started rebuilding yet, maybe they're not going to, and they're going to sell it and...and move on. And those are really the ones that we're trying to get out of that speculative market and put into a permanent affordable housing inventory for Lahaina.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, have you seen a trend of homes being or properties being sold?

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MS. AUWELoa: Oh, yes. We monitor that very closely. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: How many are affordable, and how many are market-priced?

MS. AUWELoa: How many are affordable? None.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I'm sorry, percentage?

MS. AUWELoa: For land or homes?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Land...land.

MS. BURKE: I wouldn't call any of them affordable to the area median income in Lahaina.

MS. AUWELoa: My resource person. Go ahead.

MS. BURKE: Nothing is affordable.

MS. AUWELoa: 500 to 700,000.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: For the land?

MS. BURKE: For the land.

MS. AUWELoa: Just the land. Bareland.

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

MS. BURKE: It depends.

MS. AUWELoa: Everything from, uh. . .

MS. BURKE: Four thousand square feet up to 13,000 square feet. Yeah.

MS. AUWELoa: Yeah. That's where the higher prices are coming in.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: If you were to guess, how many sales like that? How many sales like that have been done?

MS. NESS: You remember that annual report I gave you guys, there's a summary of total land sales in Lahaina since the fire. And it says, like, who's buying them. Sale prices for land, like she said, 5 to 700, right now. There's a property listed that I think it's a new build on a burned lot, they rebuilt their house, a two-story, it's being listed for almost 2 million, 1.9 I think. When you look at the TMK RPT information, it was a property that was bought back in the day, with a house on it for, like, 700. I...I know I think the tax value is 700,000, they rebuilt their house, and they're flipping it for 2 million. That's

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going to be the trend. If people don't want to stay, and they rebuild their house that they didn't live in, they're going to sell it for 2 million. That's going to be the new average in Lahaina unless we step in.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Probably a lot of resales, and not too much long-term housing, then.

MS. NESS: If we don't, every parcel that we don't nab, that doesn't get rebuilt by a Lahaina family that's going to stay, or that we don't nab, if it gets rebuilt and sold, those sale prices are going to be 1.5 minimum. And our best, most conservative math, a basic starter home that's rebuilt in Lahaina on a burned lot, in 15 years, it's going to be worth \$3 million. That's going to be the sale price. So if we don't touch it that's going to be the median price of homes in Lahaina in 15 years. I hate that math, sorry. . .(chuckling). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That's a big variable. What's the cost per square foot, or for a three-bedroom house, 2,000 square feet, ballpark. What's the vertical cost?

MS. AUWELoa: 400.

MS. NESS: If we can control it, it's 400 square foot, but that's not what the....

MS. AUWELoa: There's people paying more.

MS. NESS: . . .(inaudible). . .

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No, no. I'm just saying what the hard costs? From your experience. You're building a few, so if you you're going to build...

MS. NESS: Our cost is 400 square foot. But people who are building to resell, they're going way double to that.

MS. AUWELoa: Yeah. There's people paying a lot more.

MS. BURKE: I got...for my property alone, I got...so far, we're owner-build because we just can't afford to pay a contractor to do it. But I got one estimate that was at 400, 450 a square foot, totally reasonable. They're looking at the same set of plans, my next one came in at 1.9 million to build the same house that somebody said they could build me for 450, you know, and that was double. It literally came in at almost 900 a square foot. So that's...that's what they're up against, that's what we're up against in Lahaina.

MS. NESS : If you're a nonowner-occupied property, and you're planning to stick around and rebuild your house, you're only rebuilding it to sell. That's the plan.

MS. AUWELoa: Or make multiple rentals that you're renting out for several thousand dollars

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apiece.

MS. NESS: Yeah. That's the plan.

MS. AUWELoa: Making it still hard to live here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. AUWELoa: Yeah. I actually have to move to Wailuku because I can't find a rental I can afford in Lahaina.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And we have too much traffic in Wailuku.

MS. AUWELoa: I'm sorry if I contribute to it, but it's like it's that or live in Wahikuli.

AUDIENCE: . . .(laughing). . .

MS. BURKE: We don't want to live in Wailuku, trust us. . .(inaudible). . . We want stay over here.

MS. AUWELoa: Badly. But it's just not in the...it's not in the cards right now. Yeah. Any other questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. AUWELoa: Yeah. Check out that report, please.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. AUWELoa: In 2025 we put some really great stats in there and a lot of kudos to you folks. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Next. Testifier.

MS. AUWELoa: That's it. That was it. That's all folks. I was your last one.

AUDIENCE: . . .(clapping). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any more testifiers?

MS. NAKATA: No, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, that was the last one. Okay. Oh. Last call. Last call. Last call, any more testifiers? Last chance. Okay. Members, I'm going to close public testimony.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: All of you, thank you very much for being here, and we hear...we hear you, you know. We live you, because we have this lady sitting next to me. . . (laughing). . . Everything's related to Lahaina, so we get it. So at this time, then, I'm going to adjourn this meeting. Thank you very much. And we will see you again. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

ADJOURN: 7:48 p.m.

bfed:min:260417-West Maui:cvk

Transcribed by: Cheryl von Kugler

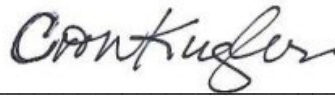
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CERTIFICATION

I, Cheryl von Kugler, hereby certify that pages 1 through 40 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 2nd day of May 2026, in Wailuku, Hawaii



Cheryl von Kugler