

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

MINUTES

April 16, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 10:06 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Vice-Chair (left at 4:16 p.m.)
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (arrived at 2:07 p.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member (arrived at 11:03 a.m.)
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Member (arrived at 10:18 a.m.)

STAFF: Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst
Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary
James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst
Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney
David Raatz, Director, Office of Council Services
Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director, Office of Council Services
Shelly Espeleta, Supervising Legislative Analyst
Tammy Frias, Supervising Committee Secretary
Marlene Rebugio, Support Supervisor
Nicole Kahinu, Senior Accountant
Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador
Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst
Keone Hurdle, Legislative Analyst
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney

Residency Area Office (RAO):

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

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ADMIN.: Lesley Milner, Budget Director, Office of the Mayor
Kristina Toshikiyo, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel
Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture
Travis “Koa” Hewahewa, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture
Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, Grant Coordinator, Department of Agriculture
Lauren Nelson, Food Access Coordinator, Department of Agriculture
Jeffery Jurickovich, Ag. Park Maintenance Specialist, Department of Agriculture
Shannon Endo, Administrative Assistant, Department of Agriculture
Cynthia Lallo, Chief of Staff, Department of Management
Tiare Horner, Budget Specialist, Office of the Mayor
Jolie Jenkins, CDBG Program Manager, Office of the Mayor
Priya Landgraf, Executive Assistant, Office of the Mayor
Cynthia Razo-Porter, Director, Department of Personnel Services
Kainea Aiwohi, Deputy Director, Department of Personnel Services

OTHERS: Mike Molina
Scott Lacasse
Bobby Pahia
Lisa Labrecque
Gretchen Losano
Desilee Santiago
Stacey Vinoray
Gail Fujiwara
Jill Senter
Toni Rust
Tamara Sherrill
James Langford
Anne Princess Tamayo
The Royal House of Hawai‘i
Jasee Law
Georgia Pinsky
Sanoe Kaaihue
Kristell Corpuz
Daniel Shupack
Jasee Law
Others (17)

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Today is April 16th, and the time is 10:07. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I’m the Chair of this Committee. And we are conducting this meeting in accordance with the Sunshine Law. And as a reminder, when your name

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is called, if you're not in Council Chambers, please identify by name who, if anyone, is with you in the room, vehicle, or workspace, and minors do not need to be identified. So, at this time, I'd like to welcome Member Kama. Good morning.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair. It's good to be here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Aloha, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. There's no testifiers at the Lānaʻi District Office, and I'm here and ready to work. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka kākou mai Molokaʻi nui a Hina. I'm at my private residence alone, and there are currently no testifiers at the Molokaʻi District Office.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good morning.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I'm here in Chambers. There's currently no testifiers in the Kihei Residency Office, and Jared is there on standby.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Sinenci, good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Hey, good morning, Chair, and aloha kakahiaka. No testifiers in Hāna.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Member Uʻu-Hodgins will be joining us, Chair Lee, I guess, and Member Paltin also. Thank you, everybody, for being here. From the Office of the Mayor, we have Lesley Milner, Budget Director. Thank you for living with us for this past couple of weeks. Good morning. And Department of Ag, we are taking them up this morning. Rogerene "Kali" Arce, Director; Koa Hewahewa, Deputy Director. Office of Council Services, we have David Raatz, who is our Director; Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director. Department of Corporation Counsel, Kristina Toshikiyo, Deputy Corporation Counsel; and Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel. Committee Staff, Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary; Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst; James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst; Jarret Pascual, Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst; Peter Hanano, Legislative Attorney; Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director of Council Services; Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk. I think I also see David Raatz here, who is the Director of Office of Council Services. Good morning. Welcome. Please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Members, for attending today's BFED Committee meeting, and we have one item on the agenda today. So, we'll be taking up is BFED-1, Proposed Fiscal Year '26 Budget for the County of Maui. And as you all know, you can testify on any item in the budget for three minutes, and I'll give you 30 seconds to finish. The...we're going to be continuing deliberations on the budget, and we're going to...we'll be receiving comments and information, deliberation on Department of Agriculture, Office of Council Services, and then we'll take public testimony and proceed with discussion. So, once we hear from Ag and OCS, I would like to revisit the Office of the Mayor, Department of Personnel Services. To end the meeting, we can review the budget...general budget provisions, Appendix A, Part II, and legislation received during the session. At this time, I'd like to invite Director of Agriculture to say good morning and give us your opening comments, as well as introduce any Staff you might have with you.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Welina mai kākou, aloha kakahiaka kākou. Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Councilmembers. And I want to say aloha to our community, and when I talk about community, I want to be inclusive of our environment, mountains, streams, land, ocean, and all the things that sometimes get forgotten, but also impacted when we make decisions here. So, I bring a little piece of our environment with us today. I also want to introduce our Staff before we move over to the Director that's going to be here as resources for us. Our administrative, we got Shannon Endo; we got our Ag Park Maintenance Specialist, who cares for the Ag Park, Jeff Jurickovich; we got Lauren Nelson, our Food Security...Food Access Coordinator for our Food Security Division; we got Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, our brand-new Grants Coordinator for our Grants Department; we got Kahea Ueshiro, our Private Secretary, who will also be sitting in; and Kaiea Medeiros, if he's able to make it, he's our Agriculture Advocate that are following up on our legislative actions and initiatives. So, aloha, everybody.

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmembers. Good morning and aloha. Thank you for this time to present the Department of Agriculture's Fiscal Year '26 Budget. The Department-proposed budget has increased by over 50 percent. For the wages and salaries budget, the increase is due to the addition of two employees, bringing the total employees to 12 of the 13 positions that were approved. For Fiscal Year '26, there is a request for three-and-a-half E/Ps to expand administrative capacity, to expand food security programs, to develop educational and informational programs for the Department, and to oversee the ag park CIPs. The operations budget has increased by a total of \$4,561,600, which is a change of over 64 percent. A large part of that is due to the adoption of the four Maui Humane Society grant programs that total 3.4 million. There is also a request for an increase to our grant subsidy of 1 million. This fiscal year, we received triple the amount of proposals over Fiscal Year '24, and we anticipate it...it growing every year as the Department goes forward in the future. The equipment budget decreased by 96 percent because we are not planning to purchase any large equipment or vehicle. The Department secured \$478,007 from a USDA NRCS Fiscal Year '25 strategic partnerships in the Pacific Islands Program to fund an agriculture conservation

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liaison position. But due to the president's executive order, the Inflation Reduction Act's funds are frozen. The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture green waste grant co-written in Fiscal Year '24 by myself and Department of Environmental Management Staff Cecile Powell for 200,000 to mitigate coconut rhinoceros beetle spread was received this fiscal year, and moved over to Department of Environmental Management in the amount of 160,000 for Fiscal Year '25, and \$40,000 for Fiscal Year '26. The \$3.97 million was encumbered for the construction of the new booster pump station, which is scheduled to break ground soon. Plans to construct a second water reservoir in the Kula Ag Park are being developed, which is estimated to cost between 15 million and 22.7 million. The estimated balance of funding of 17.9 million that the County acquired over the years from the State and County funds since Fiscal Year '19 will be applied to the cost of the construction of the second reservoir. The project is estimated to start in early 2026. A 12-inch main line to connect the new reservoir to the new Upper Maui Ag Park will cost \$1.5 million and slated to be built in early 2026. This concludes my opening remarks. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, at this time then--it looks like we have testifiers, okay, for this item--if there are anybody who would like to testify...oh, they got to do comments. Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. We'll have OCS do opening comments too.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Apologies.

MR. RAATZ: No problem. Glad to be here with the Committee this morning. I'm David Raatz, Director of Council Services. With me is Deputy Director Richelle Kawasaki to my left. And in the gallery, we have Support Supervisor Marlene Rebugio, Supervising Legislative Analyst Shelly Espeleta, Supervising Committee Secretary Tammy Frias. We also have our Senior Accountant Nicole Kahinu, who prepared the...the numbers in our budget. So, quick reminder, we're divided into three sections. We have our research section, which is where we have our legislative attorneys and legislative analysts; our support section, which is really the business operations of our...our Staff--information technology, human resources, accounting; and then we have the Committee Secretary section, which, as the Councilmembers who chair committees know, that's the group that really runs the committees, and makes sure that we put on these productions for the public and for the committees in compliance with legal standards, and to maximize the ability for the public to participate. So, as we explained to Councilmembers in individual meetings before this session, our official OCS budget proposal that's within Bill 41 has a 2 percent increase over Fiscal Year '25. The biggest increases come in four different categories. First is what we're calling the Voluntary Educational Assistance Program, or VEAP. It's an initiative that we'd like to try with the Council's approval to help our Staff, and also help Councilmembers' Executive Assistants, obtain tuition assistance for higher education that would allow them to advance their careers within the legislative branch. There are many new opportunities in higher education for remote learning or...or hybrid learning with interactive technologies. So, for instance, Staff could participate in the UH Manoa Law School's new online program to consider working

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towards a JD. University of Hawai'i's Department of Urban and Regional Planning has programs that would be relevant to many of our Staff members, and perhaps to EAs as well because land use is such an important category of work for the Council. So, that would be \$100,000 as a pilot project. We're also requesting an additional \$100,000 for our scanning and archiving project. We have over 600 boxes of papers that need to be digitized and uploaded to our SharePoint system. We've got a lot of material already on SharePoint, and kudos to our Staff who's gotten us this far. Much of OCS's work in our 50-year history is available on SharePoint, and that's invaluable because a lot of the same or similar issues keep coming up, and we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time we get a new project. So, that's an important effort for us. We did try to contract out this fiscal year with a private company to help us, and it just is not feasible, unfortunately. We would have had to ship paper to O'ahu, and then have it shipped back here, and it would have been very inefficient cost-wise and timing-wise. So, what we're proposing is to hire more part-time Staffers to in-house do the scanning and archiving for us...and again, that would be an additional \$100,000 appropriation. Our proposal also included a modest 4 percent increase for Councilmembers' offices accounts, and also salary adjustments for OCS, including a proposed new Legislative Analyst position. So, that would be our one expansion request, an additional Legislative Analyst. Thankfully we're just about at full staffing now. We really appreciate the Council's support in...in making sure that we're an attractive workplace, and all of our employees are Council appointees. So, it's because of you that we do have just about full staffing right now. But the workload does continue to increase, and an additional Legislative Analyst would be helpful to us in the upcoming fiscal year. In response to the Salary Commission's recent actions on department heads and elected officials, I have written to the Committee suggesting similar adjustments for our Staff to avoid a widening pay disparity within our organization. We recognize these are sensitive policy issues, and of course, we respect the Council's challenging responsibilities in...in balancing the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Ms. Kawasaki and I would be happy to answer any questions at the appropriate time. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you, Director. Welcome, Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone. Sorry for my tardiness. Both Deputy Director Hewahewa and I had events at Pā'ia School this morning. So, as always, our keiki come first.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Always. All right. So, then we have testifiers, and I will then open public testimony. So, please do sign up and join the online meeting via Teams link or call in the phone number noted on today's agenda. Testimony on the budget is not limited to the departments scheduled for today. As you know, you can testify on anything in the Fiscal Year Budget, '26 Budget, as proposed by the Administration. Written testimony is encouraged, and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas as well. Under the Sunshine Law, the Chair will receive oral testimony for agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and as the item is called up. For individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button. If calling in, please follow the prompts via phone, star-5 and...and lower your...to raise, and lower your hand with star-6 to mute and unmute.

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Staff will add names to the testifier's list in the order testifiers sign up or raise their hands. For those in Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added, and Staff will call the names you've logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it's your time to testify. At this time, I would like to ask Staff to also enable your microphone and videos when you're done testifying. Please unmute your name...please ensure your name appears in Microsoft Teams as the name you prefer to be referred to, and if it is anonymous and if you wish to testify anonymously, please so note. Or if you're in person, please identify yourself by name and any organization that you represent. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item, and if you're not done, I'll give you another 30 seconds to complete your testimony. I kindly ask you to complete your testimony, and please stay around because the Members have...may have questions for you. Once it's your time testifying or if you do not wish to testify, you can also view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. We'll do our best to take each member [*sic*] up in an orderly fashion. Member, [*sic*] please call the first testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The first testifier is Mike Molina, to be followed by Scott Lacasse.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow, an old friend.

. . . OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. MOLINA: Old. Good morning and mahalo, Budget Chair Sugimura and Budget Committee Members. It's a pleasure to be here. And aloha to Mayor Bissen's Department of Agriculture, as well as our Council Services and Mr. Raatz. Pleasure to be here this morning. Madam Chair, I have about ten items I'd like to testify on. Can I have three minutes for each item?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Of course. You're special.

MR. MOLINA: Just kidding, of course. I don't want you guys to throw me out of the building here. I just have two items I'd like you to consider. First of all, you heard from Terry Rommel (*phonetic*) the other day with regards to improvements for the Makawao Public Parking Lot...additional lighting, fixing, I guess, the wall or the fence due to some incorrigible activity that's been occurring in the parking lot for some time now, aka drug dealing, prostitution, et cetera. So, if you can add those extra lights and, you know, could serve as a deterrent, and also consider asking...requesting the Maui Police Department to do additional surveillance. And I'd like to thank Councilmember U'u-Hodgins for looking into this matter, as well as her Staff. So, please, whatever you can do for that. And also, the family that's affected there is the Nascimento family. They've been a long time kama'āina family. Of course, many of you know the late Herman Nascimento. So, if that could be done, that would be a wonderful thing for the community. The other item I'd like to testify on is the keeping property tax rates flat, especially for long-term rentals of property owners. My...you know, of course, all of us was floored when we saw the assessments. I never thought I'd live in a

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million-dollar house, but that's what my 56-year-old house is...has been assessed at. But...can be nice, but at the same time, you know, that means potentially additional taxes with the higher assessments. So, if at the very least, for people who own long-term rentals, I'd hate to see if there is a property...property tax increase, that cost will be passed on to the tenants. Many of the tenants are...are working families, struggling to make ends meet. So, I'll certainly leave it to your infinite wisdom. And over the years, the Council has consistently kept the property tax rates, you know, reasonable for kama'āinas and people who own, you know, long-time properties. And also with the Department of Agriculture's proposal, as well as Council Services, certainly all worthy considerations. And when it comes to capital improvement projects too, these days may be good to invest now because the cost of materials go up. Now we're looking at tariffs for materials made in...in foreign countries potentially. So, better to spend now than to spend later, then it'll cost you more in...in the long term. And certainly, with the immense...for Council Services, the immense, you know, paperwork and information that's coming down the pipe, what Mr. Raatz has proposed as well is something worthy of looking into as well. And maybe it's a way to potentially cut down on some of the overtime costs because if you don't implement a lot of these new, I guess, technologies or so forth, that could cause, you know, employees to work much later into the evening, and we don't want employees to work so...so long at night where, you know, there could be a potential . . .(timer sounds). . . safety issue. So, that's just my feeling. So, with that, my time is up. Thank you very much. I'm open for any questions. And if you do have, please go easy on me, okay?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice seeing you --

MR. MOLINA: Same here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Mike Molina. Really nice seeing you. And of course, you had to make us laugh, which is your...

MR. MOLINA: Hey, when times are tough, you got to laugh. That's the only thing you can do. You do the best you can with what you have.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Thank you very much. So, Member Cook has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Mr. Molina.

MR. MOLINA: Hello, Mr. Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I have a clarifying question regarding the parking lot. Is a fence appropriate there? The testifier said that there was a wall previously committed, and that was just on their property. I am not familiar with the property, but would a fence...the County putting a chain-link fence around that parking lot assist in the security and the management of that parking lot?

MR. MOLINA: I think in terms of cost feasibility, maybe a fence would be less expensive. If it works, it works. But I guess anything to prevent, from what I...I was told by

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Ms. Rommel, that, you know, people were running into her parents' yards and, you know, doing late-night dealings and whatnot. If that works, it's fine. Oh, one other thing I wanted to add for your consideration is maybe a gate to close that parking lot from maybe 10:00 p.m. at night to 6:00 in the morning, if there's a possibility that could be considered. That may be something...at least you can keep vehicles out there, so...and maybe additional surveillance by the police, that could help. But yeah, certainly. Anything's better than that broken wall or whatever at this point.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, my clarifying...my clarifying question, it's the...a fence on the property would enable the gate managing pedestrians, as well as that, and then doing a wall for the residents, as was previously committed, if we did all of that, it might save Maui Police Department and other labor overall.

MR. MOLINA: It could, yeah. Yeah. I guess anything to deter, you know. But the lighting, I think, is especially important. Like that old saying goes, when the lights go on, the cockroaches scattered, yeah? So, maybe with that, so that could help. I think start there first with the lighting. But...yeah. But by all means, the improvements with the fence, repair of the wall, and maybe even a gate will...would certainly go a long way.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have questions for Member...not Member Molina...that was the old guy--for Mike Molina? Oh, I see Member Rawlins-Fernandez's hand.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, former Councilmember Mike J. Molina. Fun fact, the J is an abbreviation for juicy.

MR. MOLINA: Oh, my goodness. Bringing back my past.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Nice to see you.

MR. MOLINA: Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Nice to see you, my friend. So, clarifying question on the property taxes remaining flat. Because property tax assessments have gone up by, you know, in some cases about 30 percent, when you ask that we keep residential property tax flat, are you advocating for Tier 1 to be...Tier 1 rate to be reduced in order to keep the bill flat from last year's bill?

MR. MOLINA: You know, that's a good...I was asked that question earlier, Councilmember. You know, I'll just leave it to your infinite wisdom. I...I...my big, major concern is just don't do anything that could cause a landlord to pass that cost on to our renters. And of course, rents are already outrageous. So, I'll just leave that to you guys, and...because you guys are in the know, and you guys certainly always have a very tough job. And when you have those property tax hearings, you know, it's going to be a long night, so that's kind of pretty much what I have to say. I hope that clarifies your question. That's a hard one.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Absolutely. You're relying on my wisdom, and my wisdom says yes, reduce Tier 1. Mahalo, Member...Member Molina. Mahalo, Mr. Molina.

MR. MOLINA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have any questions for Mike "Juicy" Molina? None. Okay. It is very good to see you though.

MR. MOLINA: Okay. Mahalo, everybody. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We have good memories of him working with us. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, apologies. The next testifier is Scott Lacasse, to be followed by Bobby Pahia.

MR. LACASSE: Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Council, department heads, citizens. My name is Scott Lacasse. I'm the CEO of Grow Some Good. Today, I'm asking for your continued support of our organization and the Maui Department of Agriculture, whose partnership drives our collective efforts towards a shared goal, a thriving, food-secure Maui. Together, we can make this vision a reality. At Grow Some Good, we empower keiki and families through hands-on agricultural education. Leilani Kato (*phonetic*), a parent from our program, said, my daughter used to shy away from new foods, but after working in the garden, she's excited to try what she grows. As Colleen Okuda, a fourth-grade teacher at Wailuku Elementary said, taking home food samples, being active in the garden, and witnessing plant life from seed-to-table is truly amazing. Students will remember and appreciate these experiences for years to come. These stories are just a glimpse of our program's transformative impact on students and their families. This year alone, we've reached over 8,000 students, helping them build skills, confidence, and a connection to the 'āina. Our partnership with MDOA is crucial. Their \$150,000 Fiscal Year '26 funding line item to Grow Some Good fuels our community farm at the Maui Family YMCA, and our farm-to-school program with HI DOE. As an action lead in MDOA's Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan, we're advancing access to fresh, culturally-significant foods and supporting local farmers. Your funding is not just a contribution, but a vital part of our collective mission. Unlike my colleagues who focus on the specific events and workshops, I want to underscore the ripple effect of our work and how MDOA's support amplifies it. County funding keeps us growing, reaching more and more families across Maui, and that is the bottom line. Mahalo for championing Grow Some Good and MDOA. Together, we're cultivating a future where every child knows the value of the land and the food that it produces. Mahalo for your time and consideration. Open to any questions.

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

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MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair, and apologies, Ms. Lacasse, for mispronouncing your name. The next testifier is Bobby Pahia, to be followed by Lisa Labrecque.

MR. PAHIA: Good morning, Chair Sugimura, fellow Councilmembers. I'm here on behalf of the...the farmers, all the farmers. And basically, I signed up representing the Kaialahui Foundation, which I am the President of that foundation. And basically, our three pillars are about educating our farmers, helping feed our vulnerable communities, and creating ag infrastructure, which is so badly needed across the pae 'āina, not only on Maui, but across the whole State. The Department of Ag has been supporting us on that initiative, and previously to that, before the Department of Ag was in place, we had the Office of Economic Development. And I believe that all the stakeholders in Maui realize the importance of continuing this pursuit of creating ag infrastructure for our farmers. As you all know, to make a profit being one farmer is real hard, very hard...just the cost, the cost of doing business, like everybody else. But it's especially hard for us farmers because number one, it's hard to find workers, right? And then now with the costs, with all these tariffs, all our costs is going to skyrocket. But I just want to be here to advocate and ask Councilmembers to please support the budget that Director Arce is asking for. In my opinion, it's minimal. Because food security is real, and it's not going to go away. And I believe that the Maui County is setting the example for the rest of the State having their own County Department of Agriculture. I've talked to many farmers. I work with many farmers. They all tell me that the Maui County Department of Agriculture has helped them more than the State Department of Agriculture because of the proximity and the relationships that they have with...with the Staff here. So, please support their initiative. Food security is an issue that's going to take a long time to address. And I think that the Council and the Administration is moving in the right direction. You know, they say, how we going to eat the elephant, right? It's one step at a time...you know, one bite at a time. So, let's continue moving in the right direction. And let's set an example for the rest of the State of what Maui no ka oi can really do. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Bobby. Anyone have questions for Mr. Pahia? Seeing none. Thank you for your advocacy.

MR. PAHIA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is signed in as Testifier on Teams. And that individual will be followed by Gretchen Losano. Thank you.

MS. LABRECQUE: May I go ahead? This is Lisa Labrecque. I...I...I thought the thing said I had to sign in anonymously, so that's what I did.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MS. LABRECQUE: But anyway, here I am. I'm from Maui Humane Society. As you know, I was...I testified in person last week with several from my team because we're all at a

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conference in Las Vegas this week. However, I was asked to call in today because apparently there are some additional questions for me. This is the first year...Fiscal '26 will be the first year that Maui's Humane Society's grants have moved over to Department of Ag. And so, I'm here today to...to...really, just to answer some questions. If you prefer, I can go back through what our budget requests were that we testified about last week, or I can just answer any questions. I was told that there was some confusion about our budget asks, and so I'm here today to address those.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much, Dr. Labrecque, for joining us. Did any Members have any clarifying questions? We'll just wait for the answers to come in, I guess. I don't see any hands up. Thank you very much for joining us. Enjoy your conference.

MS. LABRECQUE: Okay. Thank you. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Gretchen Losano on Teams, to be followed by Desilee Santiago on Teams.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We can't...we can see you, but we can't hear you.

MR. PASCUAL: Gretchen, you may need to go to the top-right corner of your screen and hit the mic button. If not, you may have to use the drop-down menu to change your mic settings.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. You can't? You know what? We'll...we'll go to the next testifier, and then maybe Staff can help you call in. Can you do that? Yeah?. Okay. They're going to help you with the call-in so that you can call in. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The next testifier is Desilee Santiago on Teams, to be followed by Stacey Vinoray in the Chamber.

MS. SANTIAGO: I'm ready. Aloha kakahiaka, everybody. Desilee Santiago. I was at the meeting last night in Pā'ia, which was really nice. It was...I've never been to a public hearing like out in the community, so that was actually really nice to testify. It was a little bit more personable, and I got to hear like lots of stories that...and lots of programs that I wasn't really aware of in the community for our kids, so that was good. Let's see. Okay. So, I didn't get to touch on the enforcement issues that Maui County is facing. And when I say enforcement issues, I'm saying like every kind of enforcement, whether it's the rents, whether it's tenant rights, whether it's DCCA not answering when it comes to professional vocational licensing. I have many, many complaints from homeowners saying like, who do we contact if our contractor is this? How do we know if they're licensed? And they're doing shoddy work. Like all these things that are happening now that we're rebuilding Lāhainā and Kula, and a lot of the homeowners being taken advantage of, of people that are unlicensed or are just price-gouging in the field. So, that's another thing, like I'm not sure where to send them. Because I keep sending

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them to Attorney General's Office, Governor's Office, to DCCA, to the website, file a RICO case. And these are elderly. I mean, they're like 60, you know, 65- to 85-year demographic. They don't know. And the language barriers, you know, a lot of our Filipino community, they have no idea where to go, how to file, how to email, and who to talk to. So, I mean, I'm just asking like can we...I don't know where to send them to is what I'm saying. So, that's a big issue that's been happening a lot. Another issue as far as the rebuild that's...that's happening is now homeowners who have their issued permits, they don't have any money for the design that they have, so they're scaling back. So, they're not doing the attached 'ohana, or they're not...they're just, you know, cutting like 4,000 square feet down to 2,000 square feet a home on their property now because they can't afford the labor and materials. Is there any resource that they can go to for these issues I...you know, I'm not aware of? And I think it was...I'm trying to think...sorry, one more. I can't remember the...the last one. Anyway, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any questions for the testifier? Okay. Thank you very much. Nice seeing you.

MS. SANTIAGO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Stacey Vinoray, and then we'll...we can try and circle back to Gretchen Losano.

MS. VINORAY: Aloha and good morning, Chair. Good morning, Councilmembers. My name is Stacey Vinoray. I am here to offer a unique perspective. I previously...well, I currently work at Department of Finance. I am here on my own personal time. I would like to offer my perspective as being a dispatcher for approximately five...five years, and also in working in OCS from 2016, about a year, and then last year, I transferred over. Anyway, looking at Bill 49, I would like to ask that you review that bill carefully and compare it to rest...to the rest of the County and all...you know, the rest of the employees that work. I understand that the Office of Council Services does do a lot, and so do the other employees. I am here to tell you, I witnessed it. In my Department of Finance, we have a lot of hardworking people that are going to get paid extremely less than the comparable positions within the Office of Council Services. I'm not here to put down anything, but there are a few things...and I brought my notes. Perhaps you could take a look at...you know, I was a Committee Secretary, so I can speak to that. There are a lot of things that the Committee Secretaries do, but the Analysts and the Attorneys, you know, pretty much get the bulk of it. So, as a Secretary, in comparison to the other counties, I can see that that job would be about the description of SR-20...SR-18, SR-20...SR-22 would be too much already, I think. But take a look at it, read the description. And then, you know, given what the Committee Secretaries do at OCS, the boards and commission secretary does a lot more, and they type their own minutes. As I understand it, you guys have way more minutes, way more meetings. Yeah, you got to send it out to eScribers, but wow, they get a big chunk, so take a look at that. Thank you for, you know, offering that...the education thing. That's...that's going to be of good use for OCS, so totally support that. As far as the dispatchers, their jobs, you know,

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they've been fighting for 5 percent increases, and you're going to offer a 30 to 35 percent increase for OCS? Please take a look at that because it doesn't sit well, and I'm sure it doesn't sit well with a lot of people. And you can get emotional about it, or you can bring facts, and I'm going to bring you facts. So, as far as attorneys increasing in their pay, look at our attorneys at Corp. Counsel and Prosecutor's. You know how many cases they have? Like...and they got to...they have a whole gamut, and they take care of the entire County. So, take a look at that and compare it. Also, I'm proud of the Council and what they're trying . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . to do with a lot of things, but this wage increase cannot. You guys are the checks and balances, but who's checking on you guys? It's going to be us, right? That's all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice seeing you, Stacey.

MS. VINORAY: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody have questions for Ms. Vinoray? Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Ms. Vinoray. Always enjoy seeing you.

MS. VINORAY: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony.

MS. VINORAY: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, to...to clarify, what I'm hearing is, the workload on some of the employees in our Administration is heavy, and so to clarify, are you saying that they should get a 30 percent raise as well?

MS. VINORAY: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I agree, 100 percent.

MS. VINORAY: And if you're going to give raises before the collection...the collective bargaining agreements, I think that's not a good thing.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, I'm sorry. The collective bargaining agreement, what?

MS. VINORAY: Well, because a lot of the people are in unions, and they got to go through the collective --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah.

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MS. VINORAY: -- bargaining agreement process. And to offer raises because it's traditional within your department, I would say look at performance and workload. And to give a raise before the collective bargaining agreements have been agreed-upon seems preemptive, and I think we should see what happens first, right?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Preemptive as in they may not get a 30 percent, or they could point to OCS Staff getting a 30 percent increase, and say they also should get a 30 percent increase? Yeah?

MS. VINORAY: Absolutely. You are correct in that...in that fashion, and I agree with that. So, has that been what has been happening in the past then?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I don't think it's ever been this substantial of an increase, which our County employees should get.

MS. VINORAY: I understand. I agree with you. The disparity within Council Services you may think is wide and great, but the disparity between Council Services and the rest of the County of Maui employees is extreme.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Someone's got to be the tip of the spear though, right?

MS. VINORAY: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And...and...and take one for the team. And then that way everyone else should be getting the...this kind of raise to live on Maui.

MS. VINORAY: Yes. And actually, your EAs and such, they do so much for research and, you know, coming up with the rhetoric or the...you know, the decision-making, helping you as Councilmembers. I can see why their salaries should be increased.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Vinoray, for all that clarification. Appreciate you.

MS. VINORAY: Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any more questions? Seeing none.

MS. VINORAY: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we'll circle back to Gretchen Losano, and I believe she signed in under the last four digits 99 . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . a brief recess due to *Akaku* having connectivity problems . . .*(inaudible)*. . . take a short recess. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 10:52 a.m.
RECONVENE: 11:03 a.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Members, thank you for allowing us...and the public, thank you very much for allowing us to take this brief break. *Akakū* was having connectivity problems. We are back. And Gretchen Losano, are you on again? Okay.

MS. LOSANO: I am.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please proceed. Okay. Now we can see you and we can hear you. Please proceed with your testimony. Start from the beginning.

MS. LOSANO: Okay. Oh, the beginning. Okay. So, mahalo for having me. I...I wanted to share some information that I don't think that I included in the email testimony or in my verbal testimony in Lāhainā last week. But in talking to some of the Councilmembers, I...I realized they didn't know that our program exists in their district. So...okay. We also have a program at Kihei Charter School and Waihe'e School. We are excited to expand to more schools. We...we feel very ready...capable and ready. With our move is how we have...you know, the adjustments after the fire. We...we feel very ready for the fiscal year to expand. And I also wanted to share my support for the recycling program...the recycling grant program through Department of Environmental Management. We have been recipients of that grant in the past. In fact, it was...I think it was Fiscal Year 2017 or 2018. We...West Maui Green Cycle started with a recycling grant for \$19,000 for a feasibility study, and now we are able to compost a million pounds a year. And it all started with, you know, the recycling grants, Committee just taking a chance on us. And I...I...I think that other organizations really deserve that chance to be able to bring our waste diversion goals to fruition with creativity. And, you know, it's awesome what people have come up with. So, I...I...I'm in very strong support of their program. I also wanted to give a shout out to the Ag Department. They are so awesome, and I'm excited to hopefully work with them this coming year with our education program. And we are a huge supporter of Grow Some Good as well. They...the school compost program actually started through Grow Some Good. And after the first...I think it was the first year-and-a-half of the program, we transferred it over to West Maui Green Cycle. But yes, huge supporter of Grow Some Good. And we hope to be partnering with them moving into the future of our educational program because the...the school garden program and the compost education program, they really go hand-in-hand, so... Just also, in talking to Department of Environmental Management, they have specified that we should request a line item so that . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . yeah. So, I just wanted to share that. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much for repeating your testimony and allowing us to have our technical problems resolved. Anybody have questions for Ms. Losano?

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Seeing none. I have one quick question for you. So, are you saying you're in the Department of Ag with Grow Some Good, or are you with...with EP&S or both?

MS. LOSANO: Oh, no. I just have...I'm just looking forward to working with them, you know, not for funding or anything.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay.

MS. LOSANO: Just with --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Their program.

MS. LOSANO: -- the educational program. Sorry. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And how much funding are you asking for, for your line item?

MS. LOSANO: We're requesting for \$350,000 for the line item for the school composting program.

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

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Gail Fujiwara, to be followed by Jill Senter.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning.

MS. FUJIWARA: Good morning, Council Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Gail Fujiwara, and I work for the Department of Finance Claims Section, and I'm here on my own personal time. I am testifying to express opposition in Bill 49, which proposes adjustments to salaries of the Council...Office of Council Services. As a 31-year dedicated public servant who values fairness, fiscal responsibility, and recognition of skill and technical expertise, I am deeply alarmed and frankly, insulted by the implications of this bill. The...the revised pay structure is nothing short of a slap in the face to specialized employees in critical roles, particularly those in the Finance Department as...such as the Account Systems Administrator, who are slated to earn less than Senior...your Senior Accountant, and several committee secretaries, and other supporting positions under this proposal. How is it justifiable that individuals with high-level technical expertise, such as CPAs, and substantial responsibilities for the security, maintenance, integrity of the County financial system make less than the administrative Staff? I understand that everybody is entitled to a pay raise, but we need to be fair to all County employees in all departments. How can you give your Staff 30 percent when Finance Department processes all payments for the entire County of Maui, including Council Services? Does this mean that because I process the Council Services and entire County that I get a 30 percent raise also? The proposed plan...pay plan not only undermines the value of technical and analytical skillsets, but also threatens employee...employee morale across all departments. Rewarding titles over technical contributions sends the message that institutional knowledge and operational competencies are not valued in our County Government. I urge the County to reconsider

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the entire...the...the entire bill and...oh, gosh. I urge the County to reconsider this bill in its entirety. Passing Bill 49 will not only perpetuate inequality...inequity, but it also do lasting damage to Staff trust, inter-department cohesiveness, and the reputation of this body as stewards of public resources. Please defer Bill 49 until after collective bargaining. Do better for the people who keep the government running every day, not just the ones that sit close to the Council Chambers. Thank you.

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

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Fujiwara. I was wondering, did you ever apply for Council Services?

MS. FUJIWARA: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: How come?

MS. FUJIWARA: Because I work in the Department of Finance, and that's my choice.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

MS. FUJIWARA: But can...and nobody, like...okay. Never mind.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you can answer.

MS. FUJIWARA: No, you only have a Staff of 40, or whatever it is.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: She...she answered my question.

MS. FUJIWARA: You know, it's like...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Anybody else have questions? All right. Thank you, Ms. Fujiwara.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Chair? Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, Member Paltin? I mean...sorry, Member Kama has a question for you. Sorry.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: I want to thank you for telling us that we should wait until after collective bargaining is done. Yeah. But one of the things I think happens at those collective bargaining, we bargain with all the different unions, but the guys that make the decision about stuff like that are on O'ahu, right? That's where all that big decision's made. And because they don't have money, they keep the wages for our people low. We'd love to pay...everybody here would love to pay all of our employees in this County what we know they are worth. But we're stuck because of collective bargaining, because they don't

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bargain hard enough, or...or whatever it is you got to do to make sure that those wages are high. So, I'd encourage you to tell people, to please ask them to tell their union negotiators, negotiate better on behalf of them. Because of that, we're stuck. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. FUJIWARA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No further questions. All right. Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Jill Senter on Teams, to be followed by Toni Rust.

MS. SENTER: Aloha, Chair and Esteemed Members of the Maui County Council. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today in strong support of the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellowship Program. My name is Jill Senter, and I'm a proud fellow of the 2025 cohort. Through Ka Ipu Kukui, just two days ago, I was standing on the shores of Kaho'olawe. My father, a Lāhainā native who has never had the chance to visit Kaho'olawe, urged me before to deeply appreciate this incredible opportunity, and to learn more about the island's history. As I knelt in the earth planting 'aki'aki and 'ākulikuli, it became clear that this was more than just a unique experience, it was a life-altering one. Through the program's monthly hālāwai, I've been connected with so many inspiring individuals. My understanding of our island and County, its history, its culture has deepened immeasurably, and I've gained valuable insights into the current programs and services across Maui Nui. Over the past nine months, a recurring and crucial theme of our hālāwai has been the vital need to encourage our kama'āina to return home. Having moved back myself in 2022, after over two decades in the mainland, I recognize the importance of first seeking to understand Maui and its needs. So much has changed in the last 20 years. We have a Target, Mokulele Highway is now Maui Veterans Highway, and the airport looks completely different. I applied to become a fellow with the hope of gaining a deeper understanding, the pressing issues and challenges we face, so that I can contribute my skills and resources in a way that truly benefits our community. One of the difficult questions during my interview for this program was my motivation for applying to be a fellow, given that I'm in my 40s. My answer is deeply personal. My youngest child has special needs. Upon graduating from the program next month, I'm committed to partnering with organizations like Imua Family Services and Ka Lima O Maui to raise awareness, and work with them to enhance program services to provide crucial support for families in Maui County, navigating the complexities of a new diagnosis, and the journey of caring for a child with special needs. Ka Ipu Kukui has opened doors and illuminated pathways I never knew existed, profoundly shifting my perspective on how I can make a meaningful difference on this island. The Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows Program is a vital force shaping the next generation of bright leaders, and I'm incredibly grateful to be a part of it. By approving funding for the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellowship Program in the FY '26 Budget, you'll be directly investing in the future of Maui, empowering the next group of leaders with the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop into leaders our County needs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Anyone have questions? Seeing none. Well said. Thank you. Next testifier --

MS. SENTER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Toni Rust on Teams, to be followed by Tamara Sherrill.

MS. RUST: Aloha. Can you guys hear me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, we can.

MS. RUST: Okay. Thank you so much. Aloha, Chair Sugimura, Vice-Chair Kama, and Members of the Council. My name is Toni Rust, and I serve as the Maui Island Division Chief of the Hawai'i Government Employees Association, HGEA. I submit this testimony on behalf of HGEA, which proudly represents approximately 1,000 dedicated civil service employees throughout Maui County across five bargaining units. These individuals are not just job titles. They are essential workforce that powers our local government every single day. They are account clerks, secretaries, analysts, engineers, office assistants, and service representatives. They are the people ensuring our services go without interruption. They are the backbone of every department, division, and office performing the critical tasks that keep our County moving. The 40 positions identified in Bill 49 are no exception in their commitment or value to our community. In fact, many of these individuals perform identical duties to their civil service counterparts that I just named, some with the exact same job descriptions. Yet under this bill, only these 40 employees would receive substantial salary increases, ranging not just from 30 percent like is being talked about, but there are some areas that are getting 35 percent, 45 percent, and as large as 55 percent. Take a look at CR...salary range CR-6. So, let's be honest. This bill represents more than routine adjustment...adjustments. It represents unprecedented raises for a select few...few, while leaving behind hundreds of equally deserving employees who continue to shoulder increasing workloads amid vacancy rates...rising vacancy rates. In 2024, Maui County reported vacancy rates between 27 percent and 40 percent, with over 600 unfilled positions. That number has not improved. Civil service employees are being stretched thin, asked to do more with less, and now are expected to accept a system that rewards only a few, despite equal work and equal contribution. We are already hearing from our members, morale is dropping, resentment is building...talented, experienced workers are now considering leaving County service altogether. This bill, as currently written, risks deepening the workforce crisis our County already faces. But let me be really clear. HGEA does not oppose fair compensation or salary increases for anyone, but we do strongly oppose inequitable raises that ignore parity, transparency, and fairness. And we seriously question the process by which these increases were determined and introduced. . . .(timer sounds). . . We urge the Council to defer action on Bill 49, take a step back, consider the broader consequences, and ensure that any compensation adjustments

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are made with fairness, integrity, and respect for all County employees, especially during this negotiation season. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Ms. Rust. I see Member Paltin has a question for you, and Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Rust, for your testimony. And my question is, what is your strategy going into the collective bargaining if you'd like us to defer this? I heard a previous interaction that, you know, if you point to this, to raise the...this 20 to 40 percent, over 600 vacancies was going on long before this bill introduced. I mean, it's been going on since I started working for County of Hawai'i in 1998, and then when I came to County of Maui in 2001. So, I was wondering, what is the strategy of HGEA in fighting for their workers, for collective bargaining agreements, and in particular, especially as someone who has come out of HGEA Unit 3 for our central dispatch? You know, we were able to move Ocean Safety Officers out of Unit 3, and two times since I left, they've got new units. What is the strategy? Because it is unsustainable, and it was unsustainable long before this bill came along, and I'm not seeing any light at the end of the tunnel for HGEA. Like, you know, UPW went a separate way, which was not steps. Like, what is the strategy? What are you asking for when you go into collective bargaining? Because it is unsustainable, and it's been unsustainable, the whole civil service process for a very, very long time. I know people that can get an outside job --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- in the time it takes to...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin, we need clarifying questions. You're making a speech, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Waiting for the answer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Ms. Rust? In between your...

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. RUST: Thank you. I'm ready to answer, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

MS. RUST: Councilmember Paltin, your answer is within your question. We are dealing with an archaic salary system. The union has the obligation to fight for raises, but if you're already starting with a salary that is not competitive, no increase is going to create a sustainable living or a livable wage. So, the first answer is that the initial pricing, which excludes the unions, needs to be looked at, right? When you look at Chapter 89, unions

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are excluded from initial pricing, which means the entry rate of...of salaries. That is the system that needs to be overhauled, reformed. And we have called upon each DHRD director to look at this, and come up with creative ways to reclassify employees. The crisis that we're experiencing is going to get worse unless we look...like Director Raatz said, we look attractive, competitive. So, while we're not against these raises, we are against what it's going to do to the workforce, and we're urging the employer to look at a different way to view what's going on. It's not the raises, it's initial salary placements.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But if that's what you've already been doing and it's not working, I'm asking, what is the strategy going forward? Because it sounds like you've already approached each DHRD. Like what...what are you going to do differently that will get us that initial pricing that is a living wage? Because the whole system is going to implode with or without this...this thing, and we only have two years. I've seen our Staff get let go at the end of two years with no notice, no nothing, just because their contract was up. That doesn't happen for HGEA.

MS. RUST: It...absolutely, it doesn't, and because the protections are different from your...from who is in Office of Council Services as opposed to who we represent.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, the question is --

MS. RUST: What you're asking is, you're...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- what are you doing differently?

MS. RUST: Right. So, we do what is...what we are allowed to do within the law. We can take...we can take salary raises and increases to arbitration, but where has an arbitrator done a wow factor? When the employer offers 4 percent, have you ever seen an arbitrator give us 8 percent? It doesn't happen. And one of the main reasons why is because the EUTF premiums are not allowed to be talked about in arbitration, which is another strategy HGEA has addressed for decades. Reform the fact that EUTF cannot go to arbitration. Our only out is arbitration. We cannot strike like some units can. UPW can still strike in Unit 1. We cannot strike. Arbitration is our out, but there has been no arbitrator that has given us the wow factor on salary increases.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then if I can...

MS. RUST: So, when you ask me what our strategy is, we have done what is allowable to us within the confines of Chapter 89.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So...so, the clarifying question to that answer is, Chapter 89 is a law created by the State Legislature, and you guys have a political action committee. Do you bring in the State Legislature to change the law when it's election season? Because that's the crux of the issue. That law is not working for our collective bargaining. And if you've tried that for decades, and we're trying to work within the confines of the law and the law is not working, the legislators that you endorse are the ones that have the ability to change the law. So, is that a part of your strategy?

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MS. RUST: Yes, Councilmember Paltin, that is a part of our strategy. And you know just as well that we bring in legislators to talk about our issues all the time. And when it goes up to the...up for a vote, eh, maybe sometimes you win and sometimes we lose. We have had victories over...over many years. HGEA has been in existence 95 years. So, in 95 years, if you look at what people got before to what we got today, it's substantially different. Every political season will yield a new politician we have to work with, and will also yield the issues that are the most pressing.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I haven't really been invited in recently, like...you know, in the past where like a lot of efforts were made. I forget who used to call me up, but I haven't...I haven't really been pursued for in...that kind of thing. So, I just was wondering if you're still doing it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Johnson has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Rust, for joining us today. I just have to say that...you know, I was raised in a union family. My single mom was a construction worker in a 400-man union back in the '80s when there wasn't women in construction. So, I'm a supporter of unions, and thank you for doing what you do.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I just think...you know...now, my clarifying question is, why...why wait until after collective bargaining? I...I'm really surprised that when I have had talks with the unions, when I said let's lift up the bottom folks because they don't make any money and they can barely live. And the pushback I got from unions was well, then we would have to lift up everybody's wage. And I said yes, a rising tide lifts all boats. That's...that's the feature, not the bug. And here...and now I get...I'm understanding the pushback from the unions. I never in my lifetime would imagine unions pushing against higher wages. It's shocking to me. So, I want to know why you would say that waiting until after collective bargaining would give you a more...a better position. You said that it's ridiculous for us to go in and ask for...when we're saying 4 percent, it would be ridiculous to ask for 8 percent. You're giving up your position of negotiation by doing that. Wouldn't...wouldn't you throw the long ball? Go deep, and try to...and negotiate back down, as opposed to just saying well, we...we get the...we just want the crumbs. That doesn't make any sense to me. So, why wait until after the collective bargaining?

MS. RUST: First of all, Councilmember Johnson, you and I did have talks about raising the bottom half. And I don't remember anywhere in there for HGEA specifically that we would have come against raising any salaries. But how we did it was...was the crux of the issue. Submitting a bill for the employees we were talking about at the time was not the proper way. It's collective bargaining. That's what the law allows for. So, we are never against raises. We're against the process by which these raises are given. It needs to be done in accordance with the law. The second part of your question is asking me why wait after collective bargaining. It's not a matter of putting us in a better

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position...because we have offers on the table that we are not publicly talking about right now. It will soon...eventually come out, maybe later this week. But the offers are nowhere near this. So, waiting for you guys to see...you, Councilmembers to see what we actually get as opposed to what is being proposed is important. You guys, by doing...by putting this bill in now, raising salaries now, and then when we get what we get, you guys are going to create dissension in your workforce. Your workforce, not our workforce. Our members.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Rust. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha, Ms. Rust. Thank you for phoning in. And my clarifying question, is there anything that Department of Personnel Services could be doing to raise up the pay from the bottom...changing tide...changing the categories, et cetera, et cetera?

MS. RUST: Thank you, Councilmember Cook. Yes. And I think that goes directly back to what I had referred to. The...the salary, the pricing of jobs are archaic. A review of all job descriptions, a review of what is being given nationally, needs to be had. And there are processes for that to be done, for DPS to look at each job description and determine, are they getting compensated fairly and competitively?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, that's a DPS...my clarifying question, it's a Department of Personnel Service ability?

MS. RUST: I...I would say yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And not necessarily limit...they're not necessary limited by the union to do that. That's basically an in...in-office decision management deal?

MS. RUST: It...it...yes, it is. When you look at compensation and...classification and compensation, according to the law, it is not within the union's purview. Because that is the initial pricing. The union is only responsible to get the raises thereafter. So, if we have a higher jumping board, where...what we bargained for will bring people up to livable wages. So, it is...yes, it is within the employer's control to start doing better initial pricing.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you very much. That's my questions, Chair. Mahalo.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Rust. Can I ask, when was the last time HGEA had a contract negotiation? And at that time, what was the percentage raise increase for the thousands of employees?

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MS. RUST: Okay. Good question, Councilmember. So, our last one was for contract year April 2021 to 2025. As you know, that was a lot during COVID. We didn't ratify our agreements until 2022. Each unit gets a little bit different, but I'll give you an example of Unit 3, which is your largest unit within County. For the contract year 2021 to 2025--now, keep in mind, we ratified in 2022--so they got retroactive lump sum bonuses of \$1,000 for the year 2021.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RUST: That does not count towards their retirement. Okay. Then October 2022, they got 3.72 percent.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: 3.72...

MS. RUST: July 1st...yeah, 3.72 percent. We call it an ATB, across the board raises.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RUST: July 1st, 2023, they got a 5 percent ATB. July 1st, 2024, they got a 5 percent ATB.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: 5 percent . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

MS. RUST: That is for Unit 3.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RUST: Yes, for Unit 3. For Unit 3, for the last contract period. We are currently right now in our new negotiation period for contract year 2025 to 2029.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Sinenci, you have a question? No? Anybody else? Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, I have a quick question for you. I'm sorry we kept you here so long --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair? Oh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- but it sounds like you have a lot of perspective. So, are you...are you saying that it would be a possible idea--like I'm...by just listening to what you said--to get...and have our Personnel Department sit down with union--you, departments...our individual departments--and look at all of the current job descriptions, and make sure that they are representing the employees that hold those positions? What is your creative idea to move us forward?

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MS. RUST: Yes. That would be the first start, is to first start at the bottom of the pay scale, right? Because those are the ones that are most needing review. So, start at the bottom. And look at the job description. And...and some job descriptions are old. It...it may need to be revised to exactly what people are doing. If there is a revision, there could be a salary adjustment. And that's where I would start first, is looking at the bottoms, making sure what they are actually doing is what is written, and then determining if a compensation adjustment needs to be given. First...first step. And move up the chain as you go. Look for shortage areas, places where...for example, MPD dispatchers, they are...since 2018. When I was working in O'ahu, I came to handle the issue here for their differential. It is a long time. At one point, there were nine dispatchers answering 24/7 calls for the County of Maui. And luckily, the Department and...and the employer recognized it, and started instituting differentials. So, look for areas where there have been historic shortages and institute differentials. I'm not a huge proponent of differentials because they do not count in retirement, but let's get something to them for...you know, for now. So, those are two creative things that we could start to do.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. Anybody else have any questions for Ms. Rust? Okay. Seeing none.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair...Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Oh, here's Member Rawlins-Fernandez has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. I'm in my vehicle alone on the side of the road. Okay. Aloha, Ms. Rust. Mahalo for your testimony, and for answering a lot of our questions today. You're...you're correct, that this is not routine. This salary is...is what is needed across our County. But as you know, we don't have direct control over the salaries of civil service, as we've been discussing. Council and Admin has been work...have been working around the shortcomings of the collective bargaining agreements by providing our employees sign-on bonuses, retention bonuses to try to increase their pay because the cost of living on Maui is ridiculous. And you pointed out correctly that we have so many vacancies. And part of it is because the salaries aren't competitive enough to...to provide them a living wage. My understanding is that HGEA can have the...the...the raises apply retroactively, and the salaries to...to match the cost of living here. So, can HGEA tie the salaries for Maui County employees to the cost of living of an area? Because it's...it's...it's so much more expensive to live on Maui than other counties.

MS. RUST: I...I am going to tell you that I don't think so because we bargain in a unit. So, we have Unit 3s across the State, Kaua'i to the Big Island. And I hear you, Councilmember, that Maui's cost of living is ridiculous compared to the rest of the State. We're not oblivious to that. But when we bargain for unit members--so you have Unit 3 members in...in County, and then you have Unit 3 members in State. We cannot separate that. They're one unit. So, my initial answer is going...is...would be, I don't think we can separate due to a region. But maybe we need to find something out too. Because we

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have salary adjustments for people who work in rural communities, like Hāna. Maybe we need to do something like that. Maybe the employer needs to come up with some sort of adjustment for Maui County residents...I mean employees.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: My time on the Council, anything is possible. Anything and everything is possible. Let's make it happen. And HGEA members should be pissed, and they should rally at the capitol and demand that the State make sure that they get fair wages. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have questions for Ms. Rust? Thank you very much for speaking out for your members. Appreciate it. And we learned something.

MS. RUST: Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the next testifier is Tamara Sherrill, to be followed by the Royal House of Hawai'i. Tamara, we do see you online. You would just have to unmute in the top-right corner of your screen.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Maybe somebody can help her, or you can call in. Okay. We're going to go to the next testifier, and maybe...Staff, can you contact her to get her the number to call in so we can hear your [sic] testimony? Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we're not seeing the Royal House of Hawai'i online, so we'll move to the next testifier, and that's Georgia Pinsky on Teams, to be followed by James Langford. I apologize. I don't see Georgia Pinsky on Teams anymore, so we'll move to James Langford.

MR. LANGFORD: Aloha. I'm James Raymond Charles Siewert Langford, a sovereign. I just wanted to make sure that I...that I submitted some eComments to you folks in writing, and they probably require executive session to discuss. So, I was hoping we could schedule that, perhaps this afternoon, to discuss my testimony under the Rules of the Council. Please.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, do you have testimony or no? You don't have testimony?

MR. LANGFORD: The testimony's in writing, and I believe it would require executive session to discuss.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MR. LANGFORD: So, it's in line with the...I'm testifying on the salary raises, I believe, Bill 49. So, it directly relates to that and disclosures within the Bill 49 framework.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LANGFORD: Thank you, Ms. Hodgins [sic]. Appreciate you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. LANGFORD: So, I'm going to need a call back on that because I have Federal paperwork to file, and this is obstructing the justice. I was attacked for the information that I presented, so I really need you all to talk to me about this today. Thanks. You've been legally informed, and I'm ADA protected, so you have less than 72 hours from when I sent the notice to discuss it with me. Thank you. Any questions? That's how the law works.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Our attorneys--do you have any comment for that, Mr. Hanano?

MR. HANANO: Chair, there's no agenda item for going to executive session, so we can't --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, I know.

MR. HANANO: -- consider that at this time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: But his statement, like he's threatening us? He's going to file something against us?

MR. LANGFORD: There's no threat. I'm just informing the law, ma'am. I'm sorry you feel threatened. I have a paperwork to file. What's...how is that a threat?

MR. HANANO: He...he can submit or file whatever he wants.

MR. LANGFORD: It's been filed through the eComment to be discussed today. As it says on the website, this is the best place to testify, if you look at your eComment section.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. LANGFORD: So, how are --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. LANGFORD: -- how are we going to handle this legal demand? Are you going to blow it off and obstruct justice, or are you going to not? I need to know.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Members, anybody have questions for him? No? Okay. Mr. Hanano, you have anything to say? We're going to close this.

MR. LANGFORD: Are you going to obstruct justice or no, Mr. Hanano?

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MR. HANANO: If he submitted something --

MR. LANGFORD: In writing.

MR. HANANO: -- in writing...

MR. LANGFORD: And to the clerk via email for the...every day for the past...since I was attacked. So, I've been ignored 100 times. The tort on that is really expensive, by the way, sir.

MR. HANANO: I don't know exactly what he's talking about, but whatever he submitted will be looked at and responded to appropriately.

MR. LANGFORD: Okay. You had --

MR. HANANO: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MR. LANGFORD: -- 24 hours to do that with an ADA-protected whistleblower who...yeah, thanks. So --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LANGFORD: -- you all are...you know, legally been informed... I'm sorry, yeah. I need you guys' help doing the right thing.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. LANGFORD: Yes, ma'am. God bless you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. Next testifier, please.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we'll return to Tamara Sherrill on Teams, to be followed by Anne Princess Tamayo in the Chamber.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, there. Okay. We can see you. Can you speak?

MS. SHERRILL: Aloha mai kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good. We can hear you now.

MS. SHERRILL: Sorry for the technical difficulties. Aloha, Chair Sugimura, Vice-Chair Kama, Councilmembers. Thank you. I'm Tamara, Executive Director of Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, located in Kahului at the Old County Zoo site, across from the War Memorial Stadium. We've been open to the public for five days a week for the last 24 years, and I'm here to testify in support of the \$150,000 line item grant with Department of Agriculture. So, we welcome about 15,000 visitors a year, the majority of which are Maui residents. We're especially proud of the crops cultivars collection that we have

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grown here over these past two decades, more than 100 historic Hawaiian varieties of kalo, 'uala, kō (*phonetic*), 'awa, mai'a, which we grow and maintain and distribute at cost or for free to residents. We do not allow these cultivars to leave the state. There's so much work still to do to be done to verify and conserve these old crop varieties, which are part of Maui's history, you know, way before hula, way before other traditional Hawaiian arts even developed. Every day we are fielding emails, visits, and phone calls multiple times a day, asking questions about landscaping with native plants, growing these canoe crops, and this demand, of course, has grown very, very much in the last two years because of the fires, because of the economy, because people care, and this is something that they have been caring more and more about over the last two decades. So, last year we had 180 volunteers, 3,000 hours they've donated. We held 27 different workshops on topics like recognizing 'ōhi'a varieties in the . . . (*inaudible*). . . field, growing and processing Hawaiian awa varieties, taste-testing different kalo varieties. We have big community events, annual events every year--Ho'omau, Lā 'Ulu, Arbor Day. We donated more than 5,000 plants to Maui residents, and last year we hosted 63 school groups and field trips, and made 70 seed collection trips. We still have a seed storage facility that's storing wild collected native species for 43 different Maui conservation partners, and most recently we really improved the leased area, finally, owned by Department of Parks and Recreation by building a new nursery with two new storage and work area buildings, and replacing a large area of hazardous asphalt with new ADA-compliant sidewalks. So, mahalo for your attention.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. I see Maui Nui Botanical in the Ag budget for 150,000.

MS. SHERRILL: Correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: On page 3 of Bill 41. Thank you very much. Anybody have questions for her? Seeing none. Thank you very much for all that you do. Next testifier, please.

MS. SHERRILL: Mahalo.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the last testifier is Anne Princess Tamayo in the Chamber.

MS. TAMAYO: Aloha, and good morning, Councilmembers. I am Anne Princess Tamayo, and I am...and I am here on my personal time. I work at the Department of Finance for ten months now. First of all, I enjoy working here, and I appreciate the challenges that my position provides me every day. Though I am grateful for the professional opportunities that Maui County offers me, I am not sure if I will be able to survive the current pay that we have. I am all in favor of the OCS employees having a raise, but how about the rest of the County employees? Don't you think the rest of us deserve a 30 percent raise too? I used to work at a private sector, and I came to the County because I heard of the great benefits that the County offer. However, when I received my first paycheck, honestly, I cried. It's barely enough to pay my rent and buy food for my four kids as a single mom. This 30 percent would definitely a big help for the rest of the County employees. I ask that please, be fair to the rest of the County employees. Mahalo.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Anybody have questions?

MS. TAMAYO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Seeing no questions. Thank you very much.

MS. TAMAYO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, the Royal House of Hawai'i has rejoined on Teams, so we'll circle back to them. They are unmuted on our end.

ROYAL HOUSE OF HAWAI'I: Aloha. I'm testifying...oh. Aloha. I'm testifying as allodial land tenant and royal patent tenant. Hewahewa Helu 3237, Apana 2. All the decisions being made and all your guys' jurisdiction is all illegal in my papa's kingdom, and the laws everybody should be abiding by is Kamehameha III's constitution, and all his laws that he created. And no Hewahewa descendants has been talked to, or no discussion has been disputed with us with any development in the...but metes and bounds are the boundaries of Hewahewa Helu 3237 and...yeah, there's...you guys need to round up all the beneficiaries of every single royal patent and allodial title because all Hawai'i is allodial title, yeah, which is foreign allodial titles, and...but then *Elon (phonetic) vs. Milton (phonetic)*, America, an illegal state, does not have jurisdiction, power, or authority over our decisions, and is participating in a silent genocide onto my papa's people and...yeah. And there's no discussion with us period, and you got to round up every single royal patent in every ahupua'a no matter. And it's all illegal if there's decisions being made on top of our kingdom. And God bless you guys.

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

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We have a testifier approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: It's me, Jarret. Jasee Law. Aloha, Ka 'Aha, Ke Kalana o Maui. Department of Agriculture? Yeah, we need them. I support their proposed budget. And thank you, Mr. Mike Molina, for coming in here. He reminds me of the Jones Act. And this last testifier was right on time, Kingdom of Hawai'i, Queen Lili'uokalani, royal line, the Jones Act they put in after she died, and...and that was a plot to make money from the sugar cane without paying taxes on it. So, that's very relevant to the situation with the United States President. If...if anybody ever out there doesn't know about the Jones Act, it's we have to get American ships in Hawaiian ports, and China's right on the other side. So, how come they got to get American ships to come to Hawai'i? I don't know. So, I'll switch on over to OCS. I'm not sure why both departments were here at the same time today, but that's not up to me, Madam Sugimura. I...I fully support, even...if you

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guys can find any pennies laying around--well, not pennies, but the...yeah, the King Kalākaua pennies laying around--they're probably worth a lot more than Hawaiian pennies, to fully support the OCS budget request because mainly, they have to deal with me every day. But it's not about me, it's about big brother David Raatz over here. Big things come in small packages, and I mean he's big brother, he's watching everything. I've been through a dozen budget seasons now with the County Council, and this seems to be the most stressful one, if that's the correct term. I wouldn't say stressful, but it's...you know what I mean, Chair. So, and...and in conclusion, 1883, Kalākaua sent Claus Spreckels...well, he didn't send him, but he made a deal with him to get some Hawaiian currency going on, so I...I...I encourage the Council to look at that option, and the Finance Department also. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Any more testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we have no other individuals signed up to testify. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, please.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(gavel)*. . . Oh, I'm sorry, didn't mean to do that.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: No objections.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Too excited.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No objections.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks. Okay. So, we're going to then close public testimony and receive written testimony.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: The responses for...letter and responses for Department of Ag is Granicus number 8, and again, number 80. And thank you very much for finishing your responses to us. So, Members, AG-1 and AG-3 for this Department. I'm going to start off with Member Kama and go down, and have three-minute questions.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, thank you for being here. So, in your key activity goals and measures, under Goal 1, Objective 1, regarding increased knowledge and awareness of grant proposal writing and departmental grant programs and other financial resources, a success measure in the number of grant workshops conducted

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during the fiscal year. In FY '25, the Department estimated three workshops. How many workshops are held to date? And why is the Department only planning two workshops in FY 2026? Is there less demand or interest in grants? And this is on page 106 in your Program Budget.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Okay. Mahalo, Councilmember Kama, for the question. Yeah, I made a mistake on the answering of...

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, workshops, we're looking at conducting four next year. We didn't have any workshops from July up until the current point, but moving on forward, we look at putting on a workshop on Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and...and two over here on Maui in this coming fiscal year. Mahalo.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Is there an interest from our farmers in wanting to learn to do grant writing, or are they just saying, you guys do them, we just like farm?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, absolutely. There's a huge need for grant writers for...and that's coming from our farming community.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: That is true.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, the Department offers an agricultural microgrants program. The description of the program in the budget stresses the need to equitably distribute County funds to applicants with a preference given to socially-disadvantaged [sic], such as women and Native Hawaiians. For the current FY '25, how much in grant funding has been awarded to women farmers, or farmers who are Native Hawaiian? And this is page 113 on your Program Budget.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, mahalo for the question. The...the current Fiscal Year '25 hasn't been awarded yet, they're still going through deliberations. But I do have the answers

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for Fiscal '24, where we had 88 women-owned farms, up to \$2 million, and then Native Hawaiian farmers, 39 Native Hawaiian farmers were funded.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Do you...do you perceive that number increasing as we go forward?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yes.

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

MR. HEWAHEWA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, it's almost noon, and I wanted to suggest to take a hour-and-a-half break. You want to do one round of questions, and then do a lunch break? One round of questions. Okay. So, we'll do one whole round, three minutes each, and then we'll recess for lunch.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Yeah, and let Ag go.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. No Chair Lee, so Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I got two questions, so I might talk fast and cut you off when I got that answer. For Member Kama's one, what was that total, if 88 was women and 39 was Native Hawaiian? Was there some intersection, and what was the total number awarded? And then the rest of my questions will be going off of AG-2, April 7th correspondence.

MR. HEWAHEWA: I need MEO in the house with me. . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Let me find that answer, and then I can get back with you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MR. HEWAHEWA: If that's okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If I can get it in writing, that's cool.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: For question 8 on that document, what was the HGEA deadline to respond on the admin rules?

MS. ARCE: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Paltin. We have not developed our admin rules yet. We're working on amending the Maui County Code, Chapter 22, Agriculture, and also the Bill 160, then we will be looking at developing the rules.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I thought...

MS. ARCE: But we did develop our house rules, which is different than...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What is the deadline for them to respond on the house rules?

MS. ARCE: I don't have an answer for that. We've been in communication with them back and forth with the draft from August, and we're still waiting for a response from the union.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. So, no deadline for HGEA's --

MS. ARCE: No deadline.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- response. And then for your answer to...on page 9, about the Kula Ag Park Committee, like, it sounds that, you know, it could maybe not be a board and commission type of committee. We already have an ag working group, and then there's no Sunshine Law requirements, and quorum, and they just meet and discuss as they want, so it...it sounds like that that could be something alternative to the Kula Ag Park Committee. The response about the change in Code, I was wondering, did you...what was the pathway forward on that? Did you want to work with a Councilmember to introduce amendments to MCC Chapter 22.04A, or were you going to work with Corp. Counsel and submit it from the Mayor through Chair Lee? Like what was your path forward?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. So, first of all, the function of the Kula Ag Park Committee was appropriate in the early years during the...during the development of the park and establishment. But with the UMAP expansion being planned, the Code needs amending due to the ambiguity in the chapter that is unclear if it pertains to Kula Ag Park or the UMAP expansion. So, our plan . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . is to move forward and work with Corp. Counsel on the first draft of the...of the amendments, and then we will be including Councilmember Sugimura.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, we're in discussions.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And the bell went off, yeah?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: The bell went off.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. Thank you all for being here. This is kind of a follow-up from our previous meeting about the desire to put funding in for grants, and I was looking at sheet...on the answers of how many positions were filled in FY 2025 that were not expansion positions. And one Grant Management Program Specialist III was filled with an emergency hire as we continue to recruit. Then when I look at the professional services that were outsourced...so, just sort of clarify to me where you're at with Grant Specialist hiring, how you're handling the grants, and has anything happened in the last month that you could...you could handle and process the grant money that we would like to give to the Department?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, thank you, Councilmember Cook, for the question. I can share a little bit on the status of our Department right now. We did emergency hire for a Grants Management Specialist finally in the last month, and we also brought in our...a new Grants Coordinator. So, no pressure, this is Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, so we're happy to have her on board. Definitely understaffed in the Grants Department, and I think I talked about it last time in Council where getting the funding is one thing, but having the positions to administer these things has...has...hasn't been equal. So, taking on more, I support, yes; however, it's ensuring that we get enough positions to properly administer. Because we don't want to do a disservice to our community by getting the money and not being appropriately staffed to do it. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I...I...

MS. ARCE: May I add?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Please.

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Councilmember Cook, for the...for the question. In the beginning of the Department in Fiscal Year '23, we did have a fourth GMPS, and we decided to reallocate that to become an Administrative Assistant because we needed the clerical support. And since then, we have grown, and also the interest in grant funding has grown in the public. So, I think now is the time to have that consideration by the Council, although we did not ask for it. But any more work that is going to be asked upon us, if we can fulfill it with our current Staff, we will. But if we cannot, I am going to say that we are not going to accept any more funding unless we do have more support. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for that answer. And I just want to say how much I really respect your leadership in the Department because continually, I have heard we . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . won't...we don't need and won't accept money if...if...beyond our ability and capacity. And that just shows real fiscal prudence and management. So, I really respect hearing that. Would you accept an expansion position with, say, four months funding for that to enable you? Would that help the Department?

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MS. ARCE: Yes, it would help. With four months funding, we wouldn't be able to hire until the last quarter.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. My...

MS. ARCE: And those...that class is already established.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you for clarification. My...my...my only reason for limiting the funding was what I've heard before of how long it takes to kind of get it going. If you're...have no problem, I think it'd be great to fund for the full year because...so they could provide the service.

MS. ARCE: No...yeah, we don't have a problem. We've --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay.

MS. ARCE: -- average...develop and hire in four months average.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, that's not something --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- asked for, but it's something that's needed and you would accept?

MS. ARCE: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Great.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, your timer went off, okay? So, next.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: . . .*(inaudible)*. . I'm pau.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: He asked a couple of more questions for clarifying. All right. Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for being with us today. Like Member Cook, I do appreciate your answers about what you can reasonably handle. Deputy Director, last time I spoke to you, we were talking about some of the ag benefits. Maybe this County has that. Even you, as a longtime farmer, and now Deputy Director, were not aware of. Have you been able to meet with the other departments and figure out how they can best capitalize and optimize all of the things we have for ag and its farms? And then have you let others know that they can take advantage of these too?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Okay. Thank you for the question. Chair? Yeah, just a little bit of historical context on the question. Prior to the Department being established, agriculture had a

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role in a bunch of different departments. So, early on, with the establishment and coming on board with Director Arce, we're looking at...and we met many times...not many times, but a few times with the different departments to understand what their roles was--RPT, Fire, Planning, Water. You know, all of those have some type of duty in understanding definition of agriculture. This coming fiscal year, I think we finally...because of the recovery efforts, we...we never...we...we...we haven't met as consistently as we wanted to. But this coming fiscal year, we did put in a position, which is a Information Research Specialist that will help the Department to gather all the information from all the different departments, and help to streamline this information. And hopefully, we can provide--and we're talking about RPT, Water, other things, agricultural water rates, put it together in one space, in one place on our...on our Department website. So, that is a goal for our Department this year.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Cool.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Anything I missed?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, I do like that you're going to have it virtually, but when you do your workshops, and you go and physically talk to all of the farmers, are you going to maybe bring either that research specialist along, or somebody from Water, somebody from Planning and RPT. to like, here's the forms, here's what you do, and here's how you get a discount on your water, here's how you get a discount on your property taxes?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, absolutely. That's definitely one of the goals that we want to do. We do have an ag research directory, we're hoping to put in an ag research directory fair sometime in the fall. But for...for myself and for Director Arce, outreach is a big thing.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: So, having like clear communications with our community is...is --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Oh, good.

MR. HEWAHEWA: -- is top priority.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And then I see in your guys' responses, I think it's on page 12 where you're talking about the places you are going to market and promote your folks' Department, and Maui Cattlemen's Association is one of them. I think the last time you folks were in front of us, I was talking about when I went to the Cattlemen's Convention on Hawai'i Island. I hope to see you guys there too. I thought it was very informative, and you can have all of the intersectional parts of agriculture come together. So, that'd be a great one for you guys to go to too, and I would love to see you folks there if I go this year.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Mahalo for the suggestion. We'll be there.

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COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thanks, Chair. Pau.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Department, for being here, Director, Deputy. Just a couple questions for your grants for the Agriculture Operations Infrastructure Education. Is that a competitive grant, or that...that funds have been...will be utilized for specific programs?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MR. HEWAHEWA: It's competitive.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, it is competitive, so people can come up. Okay. Thank you for that.

MR. HEWAHEWA: You're welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And then I did see a testifier this morning from the Maui Humane Society, and I know at the last meeting they had asked...or she did mention that there was some confusion about her, but at the last meeting, they did request some increases in animal enforcement, sheltering on Moloka'i, as well as the spay and neuter program. Have...have they contacted you about those issues?

MS. ARCE: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Sinenci. They did not contact us since the transfer of the Maui Humane Society's grant programs. I believe the management wanted to allow for transition time and are wanting to streamline the animal programs. However, we...the Department of Agriculture should be focusing on livestock, and we haven't had much communication with that discussion, but we will try to do our best to manage that money if it doesn't get moved to somewhere else.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Right. This is more like for domestic animals and --

MS. ARCE: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- not for livestock, yeah. So, I can see the...you know, the disparity. So...okay. Thank you for that. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, thank you. So, one quick question, and then we're going to break for lunch. So, tied to that, are you then saying that the Humane Society doesn't quite fit the Department of Ag...your mission?

MS. ARCE: Thank you, Chair. Yes, that's correct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. So, are you thinking that it shouldn't be in your Department and should go somewhere else? And where?

MS. ARCE: Well, we'll take it on if...if Management sees that it should be in our Department, but we will need another person, which is what we just talked about. I wouldn't know what department would be the best fit unless it goes back to Human Concerns, but we will do our best to manage those funds and...and provide services...so they can provide services to our community, which is greatly needed.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, interesting. So, before this was made, were you informed of this switch?

MS. ARCE: Yes. We were told that these funds would be transferred over, and we were being prepared by Management, and also Human Concerns Department.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Interesting. Okay. Thank you very much. I will now...Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Chair...

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, apologies. This is Staff. The Chamber screen is unmuted. Oh, never mind.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Chair, would it be okay for us to do our final round of questions so that the Ag Department isn't...are we going to be here?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I was trying to --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- break for lunch and then, you know, take the hour-and-a-half and then come back, and...I mean, I think...not unless you folks don't have very many questions for the Department of Ag.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Member Rawlins-Fernandez . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. You look like you're flying.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, I'm...I'm...I'm getting on a plane right now. Yeah, I'm boarding. But I have...I have my questions. I...I...I think I can just do one round --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- after I get on the plane.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead, ask your question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: You want me to do that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you able to ask your question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Wait, wait, wait, I'm getting on the plane. Yes. I'm just...I'm getting on the plane at the minute. One minute.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, fast, fast. She's so familiar with Mokulele. Okay. So, once she gets situated. Members, you just want to do one more round of questions, and then we can be done with Department of Ag? Okay. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. I just need one round. I'm good. Okay. So, my first question is regarding grants, the Moloka'i agriculture grant. I asked about it last year. 100,000. Can you share what that ended up going for? And then...I'm just going to ask all the questions, and then I have to go mute because they're going to give us the instructions on strapping in and all that. So, on-island composting to reduce risk of CRB and other invasive species. And then the farmers microgrant. Mahalo to David Bailey at MEO. At MEO, they listened to our feedback, and immediately incorporated those suggestions into the process. Deputy Director Hewahewa and I met with Mr. Bailey to go over the application process and left feeling good about the current process, and with so many more ideas, particularly to collect data to provide the information to show the . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you done?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: 100,000? Is the 100,000 for data collection . . .*(inaudible)*. . . for the microgrants?

MR. HEWAHEWA: I think I believe the question was about the 100,000 for the Moloka'i bucket, and that's still in place, and that doesn't restrict Moloka'i from not going after the other competitive funds.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, no, that wasn't my question. The...what was the FY '25 100,000 for Moloka'i ag used for? And then the second question is, if I put

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100,000 into the microgrant, farmers microgrant, would that be enough to collect data for the...to show the return on investment after the multiple years of allocating funding to this grant program?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yes, the 100,000 for the Moloka'i is...is open, competitive to any type of programs from Island of Moloka'i. Definitely we say yes to MEO and restoring that budget to help collect data. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Wonderful. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Boy. Amazing, that ride. Okay. Anybody else have questions for one last round? Raise your hand. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You know, with HARF no longer being in existence and how you're saying, like, you know, they were the one or the only ones that get animals from Moloka'i because they don't have a veterinary and like that, like...kind of like invasive species. I mean, not calling people's pets invasive species, but you want to prevent like strays from reproducing. And so, I was wondering if you supported giving the Humane Society what they're asking for, for spay and neuter? Because it's prevention versus --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Overpopulation.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- overpopulation. And it's like one way to solve the problem before it starts. I'm not sure if you met with them in the creation of your budget, or if it was just a handoff, cold handoff, and it's like, here, this is what we gave them last year, do it again, if...your thoughts on that.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Go ahead.

MS. ARCE: Yes. To answer your question, we...we would support that program, and we would give them what is indicated on the budget. And your second part of that question was?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I guess it wasn't what was indicated in the budget. They were saying that the cost...or what they're asking for is more than what was indicated in the budget. And the question was, if the handoff from Department of Human Concerns to Ag involved conversations with the Humane Society, or if it was just, here's what they got, put it in your budget.

MS. ARCE: Yes, it was a handoff. And I know there was communication recently about increasing, but I...I didn't see it in time. But I can have Budget Director continue on answering that. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But you...you indicated that you're supportive of what's in there. Are you supportive of what they're asking for?

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MS. ARCE: I don't know what the ask is, but I would support it if we get the funding.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

MS. ARCE: If you...if you give us the funding...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Put it in there, don't...go take your money.

MS. ARCE: That one we'll take.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Got it, got it. Okay. Sorry. Sorry to...go ahead, Ms. Milner, if you had anything more.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. I think Director Arce ended up addressing the majority of your question, so I will keep it short so we can go to lunch. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. All right. You're done? Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Since we're talking about the Maui Humane Society grant, so you guys were voluntold [sic] that it was going to move to your Department? Did they give you a reason?

MS. ARCE: Yes...yes, we were told. I did see the reason in our responses, which we provided, and --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Oh, okay. Let me double-check.

MS. ARCE: -- yeah, and it was because Management is trying to streamline agricultural programs that are in different departments, and slowly merge them into our Department since we've been created. And we understand that, and we know about that. And I think they're doing it slowly so that we can transition into being able to efficiently manage those programs.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. What page is it on? Because I...I don't see the connection between the Humane Society and like, let's say, the spay and neuter program and ag, unless we're doing some weird fertilizer.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Page 18 of the second questions.

MS. ARCE: We don't either, but it...it was something that we were told would be transferred to us. And like I mentioned earlier, we'll do the best we can to manage that program. And we've been prepared, and we've worked with Human Concerns on their processes to understand so that we're able to utilize the same process, or even bounce back to them if we need any assistance.

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COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. Thank you so much. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any other Members have questions? Seeing none. Okay. So, just quickly. So, my office will be...to answer Member Paltin's question about the Kula Ag Park and the changes that we will be proposing policy that I've been talking to the Department of Ag and with Corp. Counsel. So, we'll come forward with that when it's the appropriate time, but it is in the works. And because of the new ag park, and there's...you know, it's still growing, but it's still happening. Also, I...just one quick question. So, did you hear back from any of the congressional offices about the funding requests that you made for the second ag park?

MS. ARCE: Okay. Thank you, Chair. For...are you referring to the 10 million that the State is matching?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No, the Federal...Federal money. When I went to D.C., I did hand out...

MS. ARCE: Oh, the congressional earmark.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. ARCE: All we heard was that the funding may not be awarded for any of the congressional earmarks, but we're still waiting for further instructions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, so you're...okay. So, you don't have final word either way then?

MS. ARCE: No.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. That you would have heard from, I guess, Management or the Mayor's Office regarding that for your . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's all...that's all we know of right now.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had one...one follow-up question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: On Lot 30 and 31, you said they would be available this month for people to apply for, and I...I see the answer is citing Code. I just was wondering for, you know, all the farmers out there that might want to apply to it and don't have a section of the Code handy as don't I, if you could give some guidance on people that might want to apply for Lot 30 and 31 that's been cleaned up. Like what...what's step one?

MS. ARCE: Sure. Chair?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

MS. ARCE: Thank you. So, they can refer to the Code, Maui County Code Chapter 22.02, I think, .04, and it's in 22. The basic process is to look for...be aware of the advertisement. If they are on our list as interested individuals, which we are keeping...keeping track of, we are mandated to let them know that the lots will be available. And they would put in the application, the Kula Ag Park Committee would review, score, screen, and the...the recommendations would come to me.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...

MS. ARCE: I have final decision on award.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: There's something in place currently that if they mess it up...like how we had to clean up, they're going to be held responsible. And if we have to contract somebody to clean it up, we're coming for them to pay for the damages or destruction that was caused?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for that question. In each lease, there...there should be something like that. But if we, through our final review, which we are working on, looking at every lease, we will work with Corp. Counsel to make sure that those...that language is in there.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I appreciate it. Thank you.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. All right. Members, so with this time, I'd like to thank the Department. Would you like to share any thoughts with us?

MS. ARCE: Yes, I do. The responsibility of developing a new department from the ground up presents a very different scope of work for myself and Deputy Director Hewahewa compared to established departments. While we build the Department's organizational structure, at the same time, we are advocating for the ag industry and agriculture stakeholders by developing programs to meet their needs, as well as working with Councilmembers to develop and push policies. Thank you, Budget Director Milner and your team, in preparing our Department for this budget season. I want to commend our Staff for advancing the mission of the Department by creating and implementing programs for market development, for infrastructure and facilities development, for increasing access to capital, and for their expertise in food security, grants, advocacy, ag education, and field operations. Chair Sugimura and Councilmembers, I sincerely appreciate your time and attention this morning in considering the proposed Department of Agriculture's budget. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Deputy Director Hewahewa, you want to say something?

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MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair? Yeah, thank you. How much minutes I get? We'll get to lunch. No, I never have closing comments, but I was thinking of a few things, some suggestions, but also to talk about, as a kanaka, I know this, but in the agricultural sector, it's far...far too long it's been underprioritized and overlooked. So, it really is the mission of the Department to just...to just bring that priority up within government, and within our local community. So, I just kind of asking for that. Also, maybe suggesting Council meetings outside in the open area. Because sometimes for people like me, the guys from the land, I often got to like connect to something natural to be comfortable. However, when we in the Chambers, just that word alone, you know, it puts us in a really uncomfortable position, and I know you folks know that as well. So, maybe suggestions in the future, redesigning Council meetings to maybe be in the open field so that we can actually connect to something that is natural in our environment...and to include our environment in the decisions that we make in the spaces. Because far too often, we make decisions that impact them, but we only talk about impacting our community of humans, but not the rest of our community. So, I just wanted to mahalo and commend our Staff who is out working and that are not up here as well, in the office, out in the fields, mahalo for all the work that they do. Really small Staff with a huge task to take on. I mean, I relate this to also the recovery work, but like, the Department is so small, a really small ship, little navigational tools in a really rough condition. So, I think now, as we build Staff and we build capacity in the Department, we get the tools we need to...to go somewhere, and I think we all want to go somewhere, and I think we all have a common goal. But agriculture, I just wanted to bring that priority up again, just because ag touches every single person. Looking on a computer or our Councilmembers, every single day, food is cultivated by hands that you don't even know. So, every single day, a couple times a day...and not just food, flowers for Mother's Day, you know, all those types of things. So, want to give shout out and aloha to our agriculture community, farmers and ranchers, and hopefully we can bring priority of ag. People talk about it, but are we actually valuing it like we should? And that's my closing comments. Have a wonderful day, wonderful lunch. Aloha kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, Department, as...just so you know, as one of my priorities was a question to you, is that the Maui County Farm Bureau was not listed as...or I don't know why there was a disconnect with your Department. So, I have their request, and I'm going to be putting it as a priority as they talk to...you know, as they...as they work with a lot of the other...or broad breadth of their agriculture spread. So...all right. Members, at this time then, we're going to be breaking for lunch. And I appreciate you staying on, and also, Department, thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So...Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just a clarifying question. It's the same as the other departments, if we have written, we just get it in by 9:00?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Always. Yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. I think Member Johnson had questions, so we're going to ask him to submit it in writing because he had to leave to go to a blessing or something. But you'll hear from him. So, 9:00 tomorrow, if any of you have questions for the Department, please do submit it. And we'll be back here then. Is it okay, 2:00? So, hour and a half. Okay. Thank you. This meeting is in recess. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 12:30 a.m.
RECONVENE: 2:07 a.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(gavel). . . All right. Members, here we are. Thank you very much for coming back. It is now 2:07, and we will continue on with this meeting. We have Office of Council Services, I just apologized to David, our Office of Council Services Director and Deputy that they were sitting there the whole time Ag was in discussion. And I'm sure he could have used his time more wisely than to listen to us, so apologies. All right. So, we are going to be talking about Office of Council Services. The Members have three minutes, first round. And I'm going to start off with...is Chair Lee there? Yeah, Chair Lee? Member Kama's going to be joining us about 3:30, so...and then Member Paltin, Johnson, Rawlins-Fernandez, if she's back, and then Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Actually, I have no questions. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Raatz. You know, I was...before they announced our raises, I was kind of going to start clocking my hours and make sure I make like, you know, \$20 an hour for the amount of work I do. And then they were saying, oh, you got this raise. And I'm like, oh, okay, I'm not going to clock my hours, and I'm going to keep on, on this slightly unsustainable pace of working all day, working all night, working on weekends, and whatnot. And so, I was wondering, you know, with the raises for Council Services, I kind of feel similar...similar, and I was wondering if the choice was between the raises and the VEAP--because I feel like if you're getting the raise, I don't know that you have the time, effort, and energy to pursue a graduate program or what. So, then what would be the choice?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. Chair, if I may? Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. That's a great question. We haven't thought about that. You know, in...in any management decisions, I like to consult with our management team. That's a fair question. I don't mean to dodge it, but I...I...I don't have an answer. And you know, I don't want to immerse ourselves too much in your policy deliberations as well. You know, we...we have put forward some items for the body's consideration. And as much as possible, we like to defer to the body making those choices, and not trying to exert too much influence. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did you want to try answer in writing or just leave it to the policy situation?

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MR. RAATZ: Thank you. Chair, if I may? I...I'd be happy to leave it to the body's discretion, but of course, if...if we receive a written question, we'd be happy to answer it as quickly as we could. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. And then, you know, there was some testimony where they talked about the transparency of things. Would you liken...I mean, it's not quite the same as the private secretary policy in the Secretary class of civil service, and then you have the private secretary as a noncivil. Is it similar to that, where they don't have the continuity like civil service, and they don't have the same salary schedule, and it's kind of similar to that?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. I...I think, Councilmember, that's probably a fair summary. Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And similar to the noncivil on the 9th Floor as well? But it seems that while these salaries are posted, the 9th Floor salaries are not posted and voted on in the same way?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you. Chair, if I may? ...*(timer sounds)*... Yeah, thank you, Councilmember. We are in a little bit more of a fishbowl, for lack of a better term, in our office. We...we...we understand that when we sign up, we're part of a process that is very transparent, and I think that's mostly good. It does create some sensitivity and awkwardness, frankly, in some ways, but, you know, on balance, I think the transparency is a good thing, and, you know, we accept that that's part of our role.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And if we know the details from the Budget Details on the percentage jumps on other floors, or private secretaries, or what, we were told those were confidential, so we're not to say what those are?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. That might be a question that Corp. Counsel would want to weigh in on, but my understanding, our office's legal team understanding is, for Executive Branch salaries, at least in civil service positions, as opposed to, say, department heads, the salaries, exact salaries shouldn't be tied to a particular individual for privacy reasons. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did you mean civil or noncivil?

MR. RAATZ: In...in civil service, yeah, they have the privacy protection, as I understand it. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then...but a lot of their appointees on the 9th Floor are noncivil, right? They don't go through the civil service hierarchy?

MR. RAATZ: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

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

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Okay. Thanks for joining us today. I know you guys are busy. I just...I have a question about the...about the communication we've had. I don't know if you guys have...have heard, or if you've gotten any blowback from this, but I certainly have. I've gotten a lot of emails, a lot of upset people. Don't even look on the Internet. That's...I'm just going to say that. The blowback is...is strong. The testimony this morning, you know, this building has been rocked and shocked by this kind of increase in raise. So, I want to ask you, Director Raatz, have you considered the...the blowback from this?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you. Chair, if I may? Yes, thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Before we moved forward with this proposal, we knew there would be some negative reaction. The actual reaction that we've received has been a little bit jolting to some of us, but I...I fully respect public commentary, whether it's in testimony, or online, or wherever. Again, that's part of the process of transparency. And I apologize if the Councilmembers feel they've been put in an awkward position. And, you know, I've...I've personally retraced my steps over how we got to this point. And again, consulted with my management team, thought about what we could or should have done differently. We haven't really identified anything that we would have done differently as much as we feel bad about the hurt feelings. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, I'll just suggest, you know, communicating...well, I'm only going to speak for myself. The body might feel differently. But for me, my team, we often skip OCS because of some of the product that we get back from you guys. Sometimes we got to re-correct mistakes. Like some PAFs look like they were just done with a quick Google search that we...you know, and I...and we've just been doing some of the work ourselves, which stresses myself and my team's capacity because we're doing more OCS work. So, let's just...let me form this in a question, Director. If...if you do get a 30 percent raise, will I be able to expect an increase in, you know, production? I mean is it...or is it just you catching up to where you think you should be?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. We have a very motivated, mission-driven Staff. Nobody would be here in these roles if they didn't want to perform good public service. And I think irrespective of what anybody's salary is, come July 1st, we will take the constructive criticism to heart and...and try to improve and do better. And we...we appreciate that feedback.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: The takeaway from my line of questioning, Director, is just please communicate with me. I mean, there was one time I had a OCS Staff member in my Committee, and you guys just let her go, and I didn't even know until like it happened. You know, I would've...there was a time before where . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . you guys would ask us feedback on our...on the OCS, and then that stopped, and I know that there was...there might be a reason behind that, probably because of the...well, whatever, you can speak on that, but I don't...I don't have...I don't have any

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input now. It's just you guys hire and fire whenever you want, right? Isn't that how it works now?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. We do try to have a constant feedback loop with Councilmembers on Staff performance, and I apologize if...if we failed in the instance that you're talking about. Communication is key. We emphasize that at Staff meetings every week, if not every month, that Councilmembers need to know what we're doing. We work for you, and you need to know exactly what's happening in your name.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: You guys work for us, but you're going to make more money than all of us, I mean, even our Staff, but either way, that's a different story. And my time's up. I know, it's...it's...it is kind of, it's considered, this is a part-time job, doesn't make much sense to me. But okay, thanks so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. Aloha, Director, Deputy Director. Mahalo for being with us. Okay. Let's see. I'll start with comments, and then I'll go to questions. I fully support the proposal that you sent to us, Bill 49. I did get an opportunity to speak about it before it was posted, and I said I fully supported it then, and I fully support all of our County employees getting appropriate raise so that everyone can have a living wage. It shouldn't be a race to the bottom. It shouldn't be crabs in a bucket dragging us all down so that we all stay poor until we get priced out of Maui County. That's not how...that's not...that's not what I'm fighting for. That's not the quality of life that I'm fighting for, for our people. I knew that there was going to be blowback. Of course I knew there was going to be blowback. I expected it, every time, every year. OCS always ends up being the scapegoat, blamed for other people's...the union's shortcoming, whoever doesn't, you know, fight enough for the rest of our County employees to get a raise. My question is, I guess, to clarify, because I didn't do the math all the way through. One testifier said that there was like a 45 percent increase in one of the steps. Would you be able to clarify that for us?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember. I...I heard that testimony, and I...I don't think that's accurate. That doesn't equate with our math. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. And then, in the Bill 49, it talks about the collapsing of the A, B, and C accounts. Could you please elaborate a little bit more on why that would be good policy for us?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Councilmember. And this is another area that's a pure policy question for the Council, and the Council has made different decisions over the years in different Council terms, different budget sessions on whether, in the Legislative Branch realm, it's appropriate to have those same types of restrictions. We generally believe more flexibility is helpful in the...in the legislative budget, simply because the Council doesn't have the ability to recognize new revenue on its own and propose a budget amendment during the fiscal year. But there...you know, it's something that we've just put forward for the body's consideration. Because again, there's been

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different viewpoints by the Council over the years, and we...that was a response to just kind of murmurings I've heard throughout the fiscal year that more flexibility would be beneficial. Thank you. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, perfect timing. Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo, Director.

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

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Good afternoon, Director and Deputy. We...we met, and basically I felt that this was excessive. Two years ago, I believe there was a small increase, and then last year, there was an increase. The conversation that we've had, I under...I...I want to say I mapped the conversation that we've had previously, as far as like the appointed positions as opposed to civil service, wanting to have quality people, wanting to be able to maintain them. So, I agree with all of that. My problem with this is the percentage. If it had been...I fully expected it. I think in a previous conversation, six weeks or so or so, when we went over the budget, I was expecting another 5 percent like increase, and I didn't have any problem with that whatsoever. I appreciate what OCS does. Nothing's perfect. I'm far from perfect. But I have a real big problem with the percentage, and I think that the blowback on that is kind of justified, it took a lot of people by surprise. So, I'm supportive of OCS. I'm not supportive of this particular increase.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Was...I guess my question is, was it done by a committee? Like who, what, when came to meet and determine that OCS was going to propose this pay raise?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember. It was OCS management team. Moving quickly, I would say, we got notification of the Salary Commission action on March 28th. I think that afternoon, Corporation Counsel sent their bill, which is very routine, to have their Staff Attorneys' pay scale in the Code go up by the same percentage. That triggered our normal response, which I believe we've done every time we've gone through this scenario, to have our attorneys match Corp. Counsel and Prosecuting Attorneys, so that the three offices that have licensed attorneys would have the same pay scale. And that's been a longstanding Council policy. It is purely a policy choice, but to allow the body to consider perpetuating that policy, we quickly started working on that legislation. And simply because the...we looked at the numbers for legislative attorneys and compared it to the rest of the Staff. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we saw that we would have a widening disparity in pay across the organization, which I didn't feel comfortable with not addressing, and putting forth a suggestion to the body. There's nothing scientific or magical about that particular number that we came up with. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . It was lower than the attorneys' percentage, a little bit higher than the Councilmembers' percentage, and that's about it. Thank you.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chair.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Chair, before I begin, you know what we forgot to do is have me read the summary from last night. Do you want me to do that now? And then I can ask questions, or do you want me to do that at the end of the meeting?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is that all right with David? Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. So, last night, we had a really nice turnout. We had 31 residents at Makawao-Ha'ikū-Pā'ia Residency Budget Meeting. We heard from members of our...of our community, including our youth, many organizations, highlighting the importance of supporting youth programs, food sustainability, social services, environmental protection, cultural activities, and of course, the arts. There was widespread support for MEO Head Start, of course, STEMworks, Pūnana Leo, the Boys and Girls Club of Maui, and all of the opportunities that these groups provide for our youth, and their safe spaces to learn, places where they can succeed. We heard from the Maui Farmer Support Network and the importance of food sustainability, Grow Some Good, share the value of promoting healthy eating through schools, and what kind of education our children get from touching the earth. I think even Deputy Director Hewahewa noted something quite similar to what we heard last night. I will say separate to these notes, the Maui Farmer Support Network, when they were talking about their tool library and their tool repair, I thought was really interesting. And I didn't ask last night, but I wonder if they do small engine repair. My husband, now I realize from yesterday's testimony, can probably be qualified as a farmer. I don't call him a farmer. I think he's like a part-time guy with a nice yard. But he constantly gets into issues with his lawnmower and his small engine equipment. So, listening to them, how they support each other, because if not, it's an expensive repair. Anyways, I digress. Residents expressed concern about road safety, the need for roadway improvements, spoke about everyday challenges living on Maui, needing tax relief, rental support, and housing assistance. Mālama Hāmākua continues to do their fantastic works, stewarding open space lands. And the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council continues their critical environmental projects on Maui County. Residents shared how they continued support for the Makawao rodeo parade, help keeps our tradition alive. And our local arts program through the Maui Film Office keeps our residents engaged in how they want to have them considered blue-collar work. How restoring the Pā'ia Sugar Mill will benefit Pā'ia and the entire community. And overall, I think one of the things I learned last night is a lot of the people that we work with have never been to Tin Roof, so I'm really glad we got to support our local chefs and eat at Tin Roof --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It was very good.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- so we don't have to be brand-new. For future reference, it's best to order online because the lines are usually long. But anyways, that's the summary from last night.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. It was very different than last year.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And...oh, special shoutout to Parks for helping us break down, and they always stick around late at night for my meetings and help break down. So, I always like to mahalo them. They're awesome people.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. It was very good. Okay. So, we were all there.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It was a good meeting, and good food, you're right. Great community.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Now --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- OCS. Thank you, David and Richelle, OCS.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you for that little sidebar. I did not have the luxury to meet with you guys before this hit the floor, so all of this is a little bit new to me. We did have a quick meeting, David, where I asked if you could maybe provide us the breakdown of the previous raises that OCS has received. I know...I think we were discussing, maybe last year was 4 percent, was it the year before that was also 4, and then another year was 8. Do you have that, or do you know? I think when we were discussing, you're like, let me get back to you.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Councilmember. I...I think...and I'm sorry we didn't get back to you yet on that. Over the last two fiscal years, I believe there was an 8 percent across the board and a 4 percent across the board.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And then this year would have been another 8...I'm sorry, 4, without Bill 49.

MR. RAATZ: I don't think we requested another 4 percent across the board. It would have --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: -- just been routine step increases. Those...those across-the-board pay increases were unusual --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

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MR. RAATZ: -- where there was a separate ordinance enacted that was different than the normal annual steps. So, the...our original proposal, the one that's in Bill 41, would just allow for the routine annual steps.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. You guys have annual steps. County government is kind of new to me. I worked in private sector before this. The only touch I had with County Government is my husband being a fireman, and they take three years to have a step. The first three years, as I learned, they get a step every two years, and then they get one step every three years. So, OCS has an annual step raise?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember. That's the basic plan. In reality, it hasn't always worked that way.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: There's been some terms where there have been step freezes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: There's even been furloughs.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: And so, that...that is the normal --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: -- plan. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And then Bill 49, and your 30-ish percent across-the-board raise, is that before or after the annual step raise proposed in Bill 41?

MR. RAATZ: The 30 percent would be compared to what's in the Code now.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: What's in the Code now. So...

MR. RAATZ: Yeah, so Bill 41 doesn't change the Code.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: No. But Bill 49, does it acknowledge the increase, the amount proposed from bill...from '26 proposed? And then is it an additional 30 percent to what's proposed? Because nearly everybody in Bill 41 got a raise, except a few people that's recognized, which is you two in front of us, and it looks like maybe a few that were empty...or vacant, rather, not empty. So, does the 30 percent start from what's proposed in '26, or the 30 percent starts from what's...what you guys were paid in '25? . . .(timer sounds) . . .

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MR. RAATZ: We might need to look at a specific example. I'm not sure we're getting exactly what you're looking at.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. I'm sorry if I'm not making myself clear. So, Bill 49 calls for 30 percent raises.

MR. RAATZ: Well, it calls...and if I can just respond?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Sure.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you. It calls for the pay scale that's in the County Code to go up by 30 percent.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. So, does that...is that starting from the 2025 adopted amount, or the proposed 2026 amount?

MR. RAATZ: Well, it's starting from what's in the Code, so it's not...it's not --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: '25.

MR. RAATZ: -- looking at any annual --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: '25.

MR. RAATZ: -- budget ordinance per se.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. RAATZ: So, it's looking at what's in the Code as of today.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. That's the '25 then?

MR. RAATZ: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. I heard the bell.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And thank you, David. Just for clarification on what Member U'u-Hodgins said. So, the 30 percent, the...the step remains, but the 30 percent changes...I mean, everybody just goes up 30 percent. And so, everybody is at a different step, and then they can continue that remain...that continues from the...the new raise, and they can continue from there.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember. Yes, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. I just wanted that clarification. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, you're done?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, thank you very much, Director. And on the program, so that you can have further education, right, and are you also...did you also say you're going to offer it to the Staff for the Councilmembers?

MR. RAATZ: Yes, thank you, Chair. That is a question we got in writing, and it came up in some of our discussions with Councilmembers. We think that's a great idea. It can be...if it's successful, this pilot project, I think, can provide a lot of benefits to bolster the capabilities of a lot of folks in the Executive Branch. So, you know, we'll...if...if the body approves it, we'll have to develop some standards on, you know, if we get a bunch of people interested, how we're going to prioritize it, what would be an eligible program. There's details to look at. We can look at some examples in the Executive Branch where they have similar programs, but yeah, the short answer is, we think that's a really good idea. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, when you're putting this together, since you still need to formulate it if it does get approved, I always had a question, even with the Administration. So, somebody goes off and...and does a sabbatical, then what happens when they come back? Are they obligated to then give time back to the County, or is...is...is there some kind of accountability that you can describe?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. I'm glad you brought that up. We would not be proposing a sabbatical program. So, back to what Councilmember Paltin was alluding to, this would be educational endeavors that would happen on the employee's own time, is what we're thinking--at night, on the weekends. That's how a lot of these new hybrid programs at universities have set up or structured. It's for working people. So, that's...that's a key distinction between what some Executive Branch employees are allowed to do. I understand they essentially have return rights when they go away on an approved educational sabbatical, but that wouldn't be an issue for us.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. So, it's...it's different.

MR. RAATZ: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I shouldn't use the word sabbatical, right? It sets you off --

MR. RAATZ: It's just, you know, it's not...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- in a vein that you're not talking about. But I guess when you put it together, will you then discuss it with the Members for review?

MR. RAATZ: Absolutely. And, you know, we may even want to adopt formal policies that maybe the Council Chair would issue, or maybe even, for transparency, have it in a

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resolution, or an ordinance, just so the body is on board with what we'd be doing. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And I can see the merits of it, based upon some of the talent that, you know, we see in OCS, as well as in our offices. So, I also...one of the things that I think is different than maybe what little I know of the...the other County employees is that I think we pay overtime to our Staff; is that correct? And who is eligible for overtime? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MR. RAATZ: Thank you. We...we do have a policy of allowing overtime compensation for, I believe everyone except the Director, Deputy Director, and Legislative Attorneys.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, your supervisory personnel also get overtime? Besides --

MR. RAATZ: Yes. With...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- what you just said? No...

MR. RAATZ: With approval by...by myself. So, they'd have to get pre-approval from the Director, but it is possible.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. And my office did have a chance to meet with you yesterday, and we had some questions. So, I look forward to hearing your responses for that. And yeah, I appreciate the...you know, the work of OCS. I also think that the 30 percent was kind of a shock. Out in the community, even last night, I talked to somebody, and they were talking about it like...and their reaction was, my taxpayer has to...my taxes has to pay for it, right? We're talking about the public, and its perception as it...as it is out there for being a lot in these times of us worrying about, you know, the rebuild of my...my Upcountry, as well as, you know, West Maui, and all of the challenges that we face, you know, as policymakers. But for the residents of, you know, our whole County, and how we interact in, you know, many different levels. The wildfire is one thing, but everybody's saying, you know, other things that are coming up now. So, I...I...I received that, and, you know, it's probably in testimony that, you know, is available, and probably will come out even more. But that's kind of, you know, a very similar kind of reaction that I just wanted to share with you, and you'll hear more about that from me. Thank you. Anybody else...oh, did I see Chair Lee's hand up? You did? Okay. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: There's a glare on my screen, so I can't see if it's off. Sorry. I fully support the proposal. Every time there is a raise, there is opposition...always opposition, and criticism. In this particular case, I believe the reaction was greater, not because of what our Staff proposed, but because what happened with the Salary Commission. They increased the administrators and deputies 30, in some cases 40, and in some cases 50 percent. So, this is what happened. Under the circumstances, I feel that if...if the money is available, certainly the people deserve...they deserve the raises because they work very hard, and they have zero job security. Unlike civil service, they have zero job security. They might not even last the two years. So, under the

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circumstances, people shouldn't compare them as equal. Our Staff is not protected by civil service, nor a union, nor collective bargaining, nor anything else. So, I feel that we should look at this in that light, and also remember that...you know, we shouldn't rely on...or have this idea that we should only consider 3 percent, 4 percent, or some little percent that will not cause any reactions. We should pay people for what...how they work, and what they deserve, and their commitment to the job. I think we should look at that, and not be concerned about the outside chatter. Because we are all taxpayers too. And many of their bosses are getting huge raises. There's no complaints about that. It's just our Staff, and I think it's really unfair. And I'm hoping that everybody will look at it in that light, and...and support the proposal. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Members, do you have any more questions? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify. One of the testifiers did mention the CR-6, and you say that doesn't get any overtime as the Legislative Attorneys? Zero overtime, it's just straight salary?

MR. RAATZ: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then my next question is on the April 7th correspondence, page 5. Is there any update on the West Maui Fire Affected Area Public Infrastructure, Road Improvement, and Road Extension Master Plan? It says the completion date is pending.

MR. RAATZ: Yes, thank you. In fact, you'll get a memo on that, perhaps this afternoon, it's in progress. Thanks for asking.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, how exciting. And then the independent audit of the former Finance Director's account, is there a status update on that as well?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. That has been a real struggle for us. That's a Charter mandate, when a Finance Director leaves in the middle of a term, for the Council to commission an audit. We posted an RFP, we've been reaching out to CPA firms throughout the state. We have not yet been successful in executing a contract. It's a very high priority for us because of the Charter mandate, but that's also in progress, but we don't have anything definitive to report. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And it's not something that we can request for help from the County Auditor, since we're encountering this difficulty?

MR. RAATZ: We have consulted with them, and they're not available to do that work.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. And then was there a timeline in the Charter mandate?

MR. RAATZ: No, there isn't. But it's...because it is in the Charter, we regard it as a high priority.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then, you know, regarding the range of reaction from my colleagues and stuff like that, I think that there's a lot of things that are going on, like this reaching out to all the CPAs, and trying to get an audit, and not getting any answer on the RFP, while concurrently running the West Maui Fire Affected Area Public Infrastructure, Road Improvement, and Road Extension Master Plan audit. It could be helpful that we know all the work that is going on behind the scenes that we're not aware of. Because if I were to judge a salary amount based on what I see versus what I don't see, my reaction may be different. Like all I see is, you know, things running somewhat smoothly. I know there's contingencies upon contingencies, but, you know, say everything ran smoothly and there was no contingency needed, I don't know the hours that were put into a contingency. And this is the first that I've heard that our Legislative Attorneys are on salary with no OT, because I see Ms. Nakata all the time working. And I mean, I don't get OT . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . or TA or TR anymore, and I miss it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's a statement then, no question. Anybody else?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That is a statement. I also miss other aspects of civil service.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Free time. Anybody else have any questions for OCS? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. Let's see. Okay. So, what triggered this proposal was the action of the Salary Commission, and I...I support the Salary Commission's work. It took courage to make the decision that they did, and I support all the recommendations that they made. So, because our past practice has been to keep all our County Attorneys on par with each other, salaries, in looking at moving forward from here in accepting the proposal or not accepting the proposal. One, our Attorneys would not get paid the same amount as other County Attorneys; or two, OCS Attorneys do get paid the same as the other County Attorneys, but it significantly widens the salary gap within OCS. Is that a fair assessment of two of the options we have before us?

MR. RAATZ: Chair? Thank you, Councilmember. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes. Okay. Because I heard in testimony that folks feel like left behind, and I don't want anyone in OCS that we have direct control over their salaries to feel left behind...or, you know, for us to also struggle with hiring. We...we've been fortunate to have mostly...to be mostly fully-staffed, while there are 600 vacancies in the Administration. And, you know, as Member Johnson spearheaded the PALS' staff salary, there's...when we were on Moloka'i, Darin shared with me that the line for the PALS positions, the line goes out the door now. So, there is a direct correlation with salaries and filling positions. And I want...there's a lot of important work that we are all doing. And we only have two years to do it. And, you know, the electorate and our community is depending on us. And we depend on OCS to help us get that work done. And, you know, as vacancies, you know, occur, like I feel it. And we're...and thankfully, our leadership, our OCS leadership is very quick in filling those

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vacancies. And it's because we're able to have competitive wages. I also received the emails that everyone else did...and I responded to the emails. One email said, if they get a raise, we should too. And I said, absolutely. And this Council has tried to provide sign-on bonuses, retention bonuses, different ways to get around the collective bargaining agreement to try to retain our valued employees. And so, you know, unfortunately, we don't have control over civil service pay, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't provide the competitive salaries to the salary...to the positions that we have direct control over. I think . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . yeah. I guess the last thing I'll say, and as a comment, not a question, is there's different taxpayer dollars, as we heard also in testimony at the hearings. There's resident taxpayer dollars, and there's empty homes, multimillion dollar luxury mansions that we said we were going to tax appropriately, that we need to be taxing so that our people can get paid enough to live here. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. Thank you. Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. I want to ask some follow-up questions, even what based on Member Rawlins-Fernandez was just saying. So, I was looking at our proposed...well, rather your folks' proposed 2026 salaries. They seem competitive enough to me. Do they...are they not competitive enough for you guys? Because you guys agreed to this before, obviously, Salary Commission. Is it not competitive, in your opinion?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. I think they're competitive.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And so, with the 30 percent, if Bill 49 does go through, discussing the widening disparity, OCS would be paid significantly more than the rest of the government counterparts. Yes? They're going into collective bargaining. I understand that. We have never seen a 30 percent raise in HGEA, or UPW, or anybody else. So, realistically, we can expect that that's not going to happen. When we had Toni Rust here, that was my question because I wanted to understand how this all works, which is why I asked the raises, what you folks got before, where they got the 3.2, the 5 percent, and the 5 percent, which, cumulatively, looks about 13.72 percent over four years, with a \$1,000 bonus. And they probably should get paid more. Let me make that very clear. They should probably get paid a lot more than that. My point is, is that if we were to give an across-the-board salary increase of 30 percent of all County workers, we couldn't afford it. We couldn't afford it with the budget we have now. And I don't disagree that we can probably change our tax structure, but that would mean an increase in the budget of about \$80 million in salaries. That's a lot of money. Yesterday, we were discussing Public Works, or the day before, and finally, the engineering pay schedule has changed. Finally, they have competitive wages. And right now, you take in the highest person, the highest-highest person, at an EN-28, working here for about 25 years, for a civil...for an engineer that does...that has to design something, like a road or a bridge, is going to get paid 146...well, more like 147,000. That is what they're maxing out at, after 25 years of service, after going to school--which I would support them to go to school, as we were discussing earlier--but that is it. That's their cap, and they just got that. They just got that. And I know that we are short engineers. And let

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me make it very clear, I love OCS staff. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Every single one of you folks, I completely appreciate, and I don't disagree with anything that has been said on the floor today, that I couldn't do my job without you folks. I mean, my first meeting, Kasie had to write me notes that says gavel and move the mic close to your face. That is how specific and wonderful my notes were, and she is incredible. So, I say all the things with just an understanding of how we got to this point, and an understanding of where everybody else is, and how this would affect the bigger picture. I know that we can only impact your folks' salaries, which is why I think we're...you know, you folks, hopefully, are paid well. And I wouldn't be opposed to a small salary increase, but 30 percent is quite big. That's all I have to say, Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Anybody else? Any questions for OCS? Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. I think Councilmember Sinenci was asking about the 30 percent on top of FY '26, and that's what I'm looking at. I got...you guys came...you know, we had meetings about the salaries, and that was you guys' proposed. So, this is 30 percent on top of the FY '26 salaries; is that correct, Director Raatz?

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I think it's '25. Director, please answer. Sorry.

MR. RAATZ: Yeah. Thank you, Councilmember. And the 30 percent figure is adjusting the salary scale that's in the Code. So, without...we just rely on Bill 41 in our proposal that's there. Without this Bill 49, we wouldn't be adjusting the pay scale at all in the Code. We...we would have some salary adjustments based on routine step increases. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, if I could just tie into that then, just so I understand. So, you're saying routine step increases would automatically happen, and the OCS Staff would get that, and then plus the 30 percent is on top of that, or no? I thought it was only on...not...it's only on '25 further, and then 30 percent on '25.

MR. RAATZ: I apologize, Chair. And we're doing public math, which I apologize, I know that it's a struggle sometimes. I've been informed by our very reliable Senior Accountant that actually, in our Bill 41 proposal, we retracted the annual steps. We did not assume that annual steps would happen. So, I think...she's typing now, so I...in Bill 49, excuse me, so Bill...okay, that makes sense. Bill 41 had the annual steps. Bill 49, we retracted the annual steps. So, that's...I hope that makes more sense. It does to me now, at least. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thanks for that clarification. And I want to go back to A, B, and C accounts. And I...I think I talked to you about this yesterday. In years past, this body had a discussion about collapsing A, B, and C accounts. And I believe that at that time, the body said that if we do that for ourselves, then we should look at...we should do that for the rest of the County, right? Make it fair. And I still believe that, in that if we...I

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mean, what we do, we should be an example for, you know, the policy that we're setting for everybody else. Departments like Fire, Police, you know, maybe MEMA, those that you know, handle those kinds of emergencies--I don't mean to exclude anybody, but this is just an example--maybe those departments, you know, they...if they need to react quickly to an emergency, not having the hindrance of A, B, and C accounts, like what you saw with Police coming back with the 3 million in the bill that's on Chair Lee's agenda tomorrow, then they would just be able to do the things that they said in their bill and the attached, right? But again, I...I...I still stand, but I...I believe that what we do should be...mirror, you know, the...the respect that we have for the other departments, and that I do not support collapsing A, B, and C accounts. And that then your actions, our actions, are then, you know, transparent to the community and transparent to each other. So, any other questions? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Mr. Raatz, can you go over the procedure for a Councilmember if they'd like to transfer money, then they have to write a resolution to request money from A, B, or C, and then put it on the Council agenda?

MR. RAATZ: Well, thank you, Chair. And it's...it's ultimately a complete policy decision by the body how closely you want to model the Executive Branch, for instance. But the way things stand now, a reso wouldn't be needed under that scenario. So, you already do have a little bit more flexibility. There's an internal transfer between OCS funds. We can work with the Council Chair, and our...our budget team, and...and we can kind of make that happen. As long as it follows established policies...it's not an automatic thing, but you wouldn't have to have a resolution, to answer your question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like God forbid, if someone of my Staff resigns--don't do that--and I had to, you know, recruit at a higher amount that I hadn't budgeted for. Then I come see you folks, and I'd like to take money out of my B or C, and then go over to A, what's the process on that?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Councilmember. And I think you've hit on a scenario that shows why, if you didn't have A, B, and C, you'd have a little bit more flexibility. Because we wouldn't be involved. You wouldn't seek, you know, our review to see if you're following appropriate procedures, et cetera. So, that's...again, it's a pure policy decision for the Council on how you want to set up the Legislative Branch, and how restrictive or...or flexible you think is appropriate. And I...I think Chair made some excellent policy observations. And...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I mean, ultimately, we have two years to accomplish anything--to hire Staff, to get legislation through--and then the...the votes, I guess, are our feedback as to like if you did well that two years or whatever. And you know, I really don't feel...I worked civil service, and I've worked this job, and they're nothing alike, trust me. And so, like...especially with that two-year time frame, like maybe if we had four years--I don't know, I haven't had four years--but in a two-year time frame, we've looked at how long the vacancies are. There's so many 1-1-1900s, which mean they've been vacant for six years. And so, if...if the position has been vacant for six years . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . that's three terms we'd be sitting with a vacant position. We've

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already seen Administration loot our Staff. They...they want to cherry-pick whomever they can, and then sometimes we...we get some back from Planning or something. But I think that's the fundamental difference. And it's been a Charter thing to last four years, or something like that, and they don't want that...the public...voting public doesn't want that. And so, to me, that's the thing. We can't just sit on our fingers for two years. Like we got a mandate to like do stuff, and improve stuff. And I think...I feel before I came onto the Council, there was very little change, and then in...in the very first year, we switched to an entirely online system. I told some folks back in the day, I used to have to drive from Nāpili on what was supposedly an off-week of my part-time job--like I get out of the water surfing, like come down in my swimsuit and towel, still yet I got to go sign a paper before 12:00, you know. And we've totally overhauled that system. And because of COVID and the uncertainty, we didn't appropriately compensate because of that, you know. We don't know what's going to happen. We didn't realize there was pent-up demand for Maui. And because people are relatively new...like for me, I feel like I have 30 years, almost, County experience. I started with the County in 1998 on the County of Hawai'i, and I've seen a lot of change, but I haven't seen the pay scale keep up with that change of what is constantly added on. and it's reflected in the antiquated PDs. Like I remember when I was hired in the '90s, that the position description was typewriter writing, you know...and so that was from the '70s when I was hired in the '90s. And it's...it's kind of funny to watch the HGEA lady put down these raises, and admit that it's an antiquated system...and have time to come over here and put down these raises when if she's on salary, should be doing everything. Like I didn't even get phone calls or reach-outs to go to do an HGEA PAC interview. I don't know if the rest of you did, but if the laws are the problem, that's why they put us here, is to fix the laws, to fix the antiquated system, to do that. And most of it is in the State level, and I'm not sure what kind of conversations are being had with our State representatives. But from what I see in what we're paying people, no adult could live on an SR-11 in Maui. And if we know that, what are they paying their HGEA dues for? And...and I guess because of the Col brothers (*phonetic*), they don't need to if they don't want to. And I would...I would hold out until I see some results from HGEA, from the top all the way to the bottom.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any...oh, Member Kama, I'm sorry, behind my taro plant, I just saw you. Sorry about that. Oh, and Chair...Chair Lee too. Okay. Chair Lee? Welcome, Member Kama.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You're next.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Is it my turn?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. All right. I believe it was my suggestion to David to...to collapse the A, B, and C accounts for the ease of administration. I know that you've had a longstanding position, Chair Sugimura, about making it easier for...for the Legislative

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Branch, but not allowing the same gesture for the Administration. Well, the Administration deals with millions upon millions of dollars, and each Councilmember has, I don't know, what?...400,000 per account? So, it's like loose change, you know...loose change --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Not yet.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- compared to the...pardon me?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No. Oh, nothing.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: How much? How much? How much?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It's...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: The office accounts are how much --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It's like 300.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- David?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 285.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 285.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: 300,000. Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: But not...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, that's what I'm saying. My point is, it's like loose change. I mean, everybody talks about this and that, but you're not comparing apples to apples. Even with our Staff and civil service are totally different...totally, totally different. And same with the Administration and the Legislative Branch. 285 or \$300,000 should not take, you know, all the wheels turning just to make changes in...in individual accounts. And that's what I've seen over time. So, I'm just trying to make it easier for the individual Councilmembers to operate, and to administer their own accounts when we're talking about those funds because they have to make changes for whatever reason. And that...that's all it is. It's...it's nothing sinister or anything like that. It's trying to make your life easier. It has nothing to do with the Administration. They're...they're in the millions upon millions of dollars. We're with, you know, loose change, as I said. So, I'm...I'm hoping that you guys will be flexible in this regard. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. All right. Any other questions for OCS? That's where we are.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: I do.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, sorry. Member Kama.

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VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you. So, I'm looking on page 145 of the Program Budget for the County Council. So, this is supposed to be a chart, right? So, at the head of the chart, there's the County Council, and then there's a direct line that has each Councilmember's...well, I put all your names according to how we sit, and then I put Chair Lee at the end. And then there's another solid line from each of us Councilmembers to the residency areas. And then at the very end, there's the Office of Council Services. So, can you help me to explain what that hierarchy means in terms of hierarchy?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. I'll...I'll...I'll do my best. Thank you for the question, Councilmember Kama. So, Council Chair is the administrative head of the entire Legislative Branch. And under...under her authority is Office of the County Clerk, Office of Council Services. And for administrative purposes, only the Office of the County Auditor, we...we help OCA with some accounting, and financing, and just logistical things, but we, of course, let them operate completely independently. And then within OCS, we have Director and Deputy Director as management, OCC has County Clerk and Deputy County Clerk as management. I don't know if I'm helping you, Councilmember, but I...I'd be happy to clarify anything.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Well, what you said is not what on...that's written on this page. So, is there something missing from the page that would help us to understand clearly the lines of authority, I guess?

MR. RAATZ: . . . *(inaudible)*. . . Thank you, Councilmember Kama. I now see exactly what you're looking at. That...that graphic may not provide the information that you're...you're actually seeking necessarily.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MR. RAATZ: So, I...it may be...I think it's been a longstanding graphic. Maybe we can improve it in future budget submissions to make it more useful for you. And I...I apologize that it, you know, may not actually be that useful.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, the way it's written now, the Chair is...because you got the County Council on the top, right? So...but the Chair should be at the top, is that what you're saying? I'm trying to get a good grasp.

MR. RAATZ: Well, yeah. I mean, I always think of the Council Chair as the top of the hierarchy because she's the administrative head of the Legislative Branch in...in the Charter, but, you know, she's part of the County Council. So, in that respect, I see how this chart does have County Council at the top. Chair...Chair is a leader, but she's one of nine Members, and she's part of the Council.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, in terms of lines of authority...so it's the Chair, and then there's us, right? But she's the...she's, I guess, the chief executive officer, if you want to call it that. And then OCS falls under that?

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MR. RAATZ: Correct. And I would say, even, there's probably different ways of looking at it. I mean, Council Chair is elected by her colleagues. So, you know --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MR. RAATZ: -- that's another sense where maybe this hierarchy is correct, having the County Council at the top, and then the Council Chair below that. But again, on a day-to-day basis, she's the leader we look to when there's decisions that, you know, don't require the full body's approval, for instance.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, when it comes to putting together our office budgets and our district funds, who does that?

MR. RAATZ: Thank you. That's a great question, Councilmember Kama. So, the OCS management team and our Senior Accountant work closely with the Council Chair in submitting the budget proposal every year. That's kind of a routine process, and it's...it's a pretty lengthy process. I mean, it will start pretty early in this next fiscal year. We get ready for the Fiscal Year '27 proposal with a lot of analysis and meetings, et cetera. But then all we do have, and all that's in Bill 41 or anything else is before you is a mere proposal that this body will make decisions on.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Um-hum. Okay. Well, I understand that now. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

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

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Member Kama --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- I don't know if you were here earlier when I talked about having to go to the doctor --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- at 11:00, and I had to leave. And so, as you know, I've had this nagging cough for about four months...a long time. And so, I thought, oh, my God, Tamara Paltin picks the same day to go to the doctor. But that's how it was. But luckily, there was still a quorum. So, I go to the doctor, and she tells me, oh, I need you to get an x-ray...a chest x-ray. And I said, well, I'm sorry, but I can't. I have to go back to work. And she said, I'll write a note for you. So, she didn't know who was in charge either. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, I didn't pick today. They told me to come today.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I'm not...ho, you...I'm not picking on you.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: They don't get...I don't get to choose, like I'd go...I'd like to go to the doctor at 10:00 on a Tuesday or whatever, Wednesday. They just say, here's when it's open, you come now...because the doctor only works one day a week.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's our healthcare system.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Doctors are very important. I'm glad you're better though, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I've been taking all these pills. I hope it...I can. I mean, you know, I'm supposed to take it all at once and not one at a time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: You'll find out.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, just a general question, Chair Lee, for you, is that every now and then, I hope we have Chair's meetings. It looks like it's been something that's off the table, but to maybe talk about some of these things that we're talking about now could have been discussed at a Chair's meeting, but it's your call...it's your meeting.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, what's happened in the past, you know, it...you know, I started the Chair's meeting back in the '90s because there were times when, because of the Sunshine Law, we couldn't talk about scheduling and things like that. So, benign things, okay? But over time, you know, it's...it's wonderful to have community involvement, but then we...when we had Chair's meetings, we started to get a lot of testimony, and, you know, testimony, it doesn't quite fit with what we're trying to accomplish. We're trying to work out schedules, we're trying to, you know, talk about maybe the office structures, or locations, and things like that. And so, because of that, it became very distracting, and...and the meetings became very long. So, we never seemed to have an opportunity to just talk about these kinds of things that are not policymaking, and that, you know, really, are routine. It's just hard. It's hard to do that nowadays without getting into, you know, debates, and all these kinds of things. I mean, we could still have them, but again, it's not that easy.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. If we don't have any other questions for Director and Deputy Director, can we please excuse them? I have some last-minute things I'd like them to help me with before tomorrow. No, but I'd like to excuse them if we don't have any --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Members --

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- further questions for them.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- you have any other questions for Director? Okay.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. You have any comments you would like to share with us?

MR. RAATZ: Just briefly. Thank you, Chair. We really appreciate the time before the body today. We understand the...the challenges of budget session in particular, but your job every day. I speak for everyone in OCS when I say we're grateful to work for you. We don't take it for granted. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. How about Cissy *(phonetic)*? Oh, sorry, Richelle Kawasaki.

MS. KAWASAKI: I echo Director Raatz's sentiments. We're very grateful. We have a wonderful Staff, and we're so very proud of them. Our proposal does reflect our feelings about how our Staff should be compensated, and we appreciate the opportunity to present to you. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. All right. Thank you very much. So, I'm going to call like a brief recess, so we'll go...is 3:20? . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 3:17 p.m.
RECONVENE: 3:27 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . All right. Now we have quorum, and more. Thank you, Member Johnson. Okay. So, welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. It's now 3:27 in the afternoon, and we are trying to get out of here at a reasonable time, right? We have no night meetings, and it's just...just what we have.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. We'll come to your house for dinner.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Uh-hoo. All right. So, we have asked...we're done with Ag and Office of Council Services. Thank you very much, the departments. And I wanted to entertain a discussion again with the Office of the Mayor. They sent over to us a ton of information. You remember getting this, right? We got all this information, which is...send it to us in writing. So, this is all the send it to us in writing from their meeting with us on April the 1st. And so--you don't have to ask a question, I'm just going to ask if anybody does have questions, I do, and then we'll just take it from there. So, we'll do two rounds of three minutes, and we'll just see where we are. And after this, we are...we will be discussing...we wanted Personnel to come back. And as you know, Personnel is such a

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big issue every time a department has come before us. I just thought in case any of you had any questions before we end this week, and...and it might help us as we proceed with making decisions forward. So, at this time...can I start with you, Member Johnson? Do you have any questions for the Office of the Mayor?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Not at this time, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez is not here. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And then to follow will be Member U‘u-Hodgins, and then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I guess my question, it's sort of...it's related to the budget because it's...how are you feeling the transition from the Lāhainā wildfire rebuild, and addressing all of the concerns of the rest of the County as far as the focus? Sewer, Water, everybody's been pretty all-hands-on-deck, admirably so. So, I just wonder if there's any...how the discussion is with managing CIP projects, and moving forward on the island as a whole?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question, Councilmember Cook. I would say that, you know, initially, out of the gate, the focus clearly on Lāhainā and restoring infrastructure. However, as you know, we were just out in South Maui addressing the South Maui crowd, and having a community meeting specifically about drainage issues, and flooding, and those kinds of things, right? We have also just ramped up our Holomua Kākou, where we take the County to Hāna. We take the County to Molokaʻi and Lānaʻi. So, those have just come up on the calendar. So, I would say that the conversation is getting upright, obviously still focused on the...not only the infrastructure, but the water issues, and all of those things out, right, in West Maui as we go from temporary to permanent, and the challenges of balancing those two things, right? But really taking a step back and looking at the County as a whole, and really refocusing on the whole constituency to make sure that we are following-up, and following-through, and do what we say we're going to do.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thanks. I found everybody to be responsive, so I don't have any criticism at all. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, Members, I'm going to cut in line because I have some questions.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And I think this portion, Member U‘u-Hodgins, if you would like to ask this question, this is something...you were the one that brought up if we were to increase our...our district pots, can OED handle it? That was you that I thought, hey, that's a really good question because of the inundation of, you know, grants. If all of us...all

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nine of us decided to then increase the number of grants that we would send to OED, can they handle it? That was your question. So, you want me to go? You go.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, for the Office of the Mayor, your OM-3 responses...thank you very much for that packet. And how were the JCI year-one savings calculated, and what was the amount of savings, and how was it applied in the Fiscal Year '24 Budget? And that's on your response, page 7, number...number 3.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. The JCI savings, we're going to get our first report this October, and at that point is when we will have the third-party auditor come in to verify that the savings are what JCI says they are. So, until we start getting those reports and confirming the savings, we haven't reflected it in the budget.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, it's not yet then, it'll...it'll come. All right. Second one was--I think Keani talked about this too with DEM--regarding the State cesspool conversion pilot project. Your response on page 10 of OM-3 states that the next step in the initiative is to develop a formal application and vetting process for prospective applicants. How much of the 1...1.2 million is available, and what is the status of the application development? And you...can you provide the recommendations from the working group, which is 9 to 10...pages 9 to 10, number 9?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I believe a lot of the working group work--sorry, that's redundant--was done by the Department of Environmental Management Wastewater Division. But if you'd like to send that in writing to Office of the Mayor, we'd be happy to work with them to get you the report and the status of the remaining funds.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, that was our question that we did send to the Mayor. So, you want us to send it again? We can.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I know we provided an answer in OM-3, but it sounds like you...you'd like further information than what was provided in there. So, yes, if you could detail the report and remaining funds, that would be helpful. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Regarding the MEO shutting down the National Displaced Workforce Grant Program, what is the status of the remaining funds, and was a request for additional County funding to keep the program going considered? Page 10, number 11.

MS. LALLO: Thank you for the question. In relationship to the MEO funds, the \$2 million that you're referring to--I'm sorry, I was just looking up the questions on my phone--those funds still sit in the County coffers. No...no funds have been distributed to date. MEO was looking at covering some of the costs for that program that were not reimbursed, but some additional funding came through...Federal funding came through. So, they're looking at reinstating some of those programs.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, MEO can come to you, or others can come to you for that...is a grant.

MS. LALLO: ME...well, it sits with MEO. The grant sits with MEO right now, right? So, MEO can come to us.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay.

MS. LALLO: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: To put that program . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

MS. LALLO: That is correct. Yes.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Before I begin, I will have to say, I have a bone to pick with you. You stole Jade, and now we can talk about it since it's out. Oh, I found out the day after we had them, or else I would have not been so nice. No, I'm just joking. So, talk about poaching. I'm just joking. It's fine, I...I fully support everybody seeking their best life.

MS. LALLO: So it's fair.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: So, she's...she's stoked to go. I'm stoked to see her be happy.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: I do pay my Staff well, but yes. Okay. So, now that that's a bit more out in the open --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: A bit.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- since I just aired it, is her position an expansion position? And can you describe what she's going to be doing after she leaves me?

MS. LALLO: I would be happy to.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Great.

MS. LALLO: Thank you for the question, and thank you for sharing. Thank you for sharing. The good news is, is that she's still on our team collectively --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

MS. LALLO: -- right? So, that's...

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Tomorrow’s her last day, guys, just FYI.

MS. LALLO: Yeah. That’s the celebration. So...so, in relationship to OED, we’ve talked about the fact that OED needed to refresh, and re-strategize, and reorganize, and all of those things, right? So, in relationship to what Jade is going to be doing, we’d really like the Office of Economic Development to focus on economic development, right?...and not just be a grant-making division.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Hold on, she’s texting me. No, I’m just joking.

MS. LALLO: Not to make a grant...a grant-making division. So, in relationship to that, you can see, in this budget, we’ve tried to really filter out the things that aren’t economic development and put them where we think they fit best.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: We’ll try those shoes on, that’s great. But...but Jade will be focusing on four priority areas in relationship to economic development. We are looking at convening and facilitating partners for four big, big levers, big economic strategies, and those would include tech, and those would include healthcare --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: -- and construction, and...so, anyway, and on, right? So, we would like Jade to help us build those pieces out, join the folks that are already at OED --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. LALLO: -- and provide some structure.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Last night at...was it last night, or...yeah, maybe last night, we heard that we will probably soon see a nursing shortage as our population ages. Not only do we expect to lose some nurses to retirement, but also, we’re going to need more as our population ages. So, I hope we can invest in some workforce development when it comes to nurses. Secondly, I’ll ask the question that Chair asked the...right now we’re having a discussion about potentially increasing our district pots. And I don’t know what that would look like for everybody else because we can’t talk about it, but I’m assuming it’s going to be more work for OED. And I would hate to give false hope to grantees if you folks can’t execute the grants because we can’t execute the grants. We can happily tell them, and be everybody’s best friend, and say, yeah, you can have some money, but if you guys can’t execute that grants, then it kind of puts us...and all of us in a position. So, would you guys be able to accommodate an increase in our district funds, or what?

MS. LALLO: Yeah. Thank you for that.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: I’m not asking you if you think we should. I’m asking you if you think...

MS. LALLO: I clearly --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

MS. LALLO: -- hear that.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: I want to make that clear, because --

MS. LALLO: I clearly hear that --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: -- I think the last time I had that...

MS. LALLO: -- and I will keep my opinion to myself. Yes. So, in relationship to the district funds, everybody knows that I forwarded you the district funds, and how much were left, and had some questions about what do we do with this, and . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . how do we get this money out. So, I would say that OED would need additional staffing to manage that level of increase. One of the things that we need to remember is, is that when we have grantees that submit quality applications, those move pretty quickly. When we have brand-new grantees, it’s tough. It’s a steep learning curve. Happy to work with them, but that always takes a little bit longer, right? And so, yes, we would be happy to facilitate that, and yes, we would need additional Staff.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Can I please ask one follow-up question? It is indeterminate yet what that increase, if any, will look like, but if it’s quite significant, let’s say \$500,000 per Councilmember, how much more Staff would you need to potentially execute those grants? And again, it’s hard to quantify the amount of grants, but rather, you know, just a theory of having an extra 4.5 in total, million dollars’ worth of grants. How much extra Staff would you need?

MS. LALLO: Sure, great question. So, certainly, it depends, right? If we give big grants, so much easier --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah, yeah.

MS. LALLO: -- than giving small grants, also it makes deeper impact. That’s my opinion, and you didn’t ask for it, but there it is. And I would say we would be looking at additional two or three Staff, right?

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: But love to talk about those...those residency area funds, and how to make deep impact, right?...and do that as a collaborative between the Administration and OED and Council so we can do big things.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Would those two or three Staff basically just be dedicated to the Councilmember’s grants?

MS. LALLO: Of course, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, that would make sense.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Sinenci, followed by Kama, Lee, Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo. And I wasn’t sure if you were able to meet with some of my Staff members upstairs, so thank you for carving out some time to meet with them, appreciate it. I just had some follow-up questions on the grants for the cultural and arts program. Is that a competitive grant? It is?

MS. LALLO: Sorry. The bucket, yes, cultural and arts is competitive. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. All right. Thank you. That’s all I have for now, Chair. I can wait for the next round. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Kama, followed by Chair Lee.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, you know, in the...the work that I guess Jade will be doing. You know --

MS. LALLO: Surprise.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: -- I don’t want to give her more work to do, she hasn’t even started, but, you know, I went to your training workshop that they had. I thought it was very well done. I liked the fact that he worked with everybody, and they could follow along, but I also thought that in order to really apply for these grants, you’re right, you would...you would have had to...have to really have done this before, and you’ve got a good grasp on it. Because the new people who were in the group were kind of lost. You know, you talk about you got to get your compliance, or what is, you know, it’s like, okay, then you got to go to grant writing 101 or 100, right, to learn it. So, do you folks anticipate doing more workshops like that to be able to ensure that...because the same people come all the time, right, because they’ve kind of like got this down pat, but we want other people to come, but we also want them to be able to come with a really highly-qualified grant, right, in the way it’s written. So, do you anticipate having more of those workshops?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, thank you for the question. That’s an excellent question. So, the Office of Economic Development, in relationship to the Grant Division, right, I mean we...we give grants and we manage grants --

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VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Right.

MS. LALLO: -- but we really need to diversify the revenue streams within the County. So, teaching grantees --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. LALLO: -- how to write quality proposals --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. LALLO: -- not only to the County --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Exactly.

MS. LALLO: -- but also other...other --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. LALLO: -- revenue streams, 100 percent. And that's a piece of that Grants Division that we've been talking about --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Right.

MS. LALLO: -- that we will be implementing.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Wonderful. So, when's that going to happen?

MS. LALLO: How...when is Jade's last day? No, I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. No, we will be looking at implementing that before the end of this fiscal year. And the reason why is because we want to be able to hit the ground running --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. LALLO: -- in FY '26.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Right. Okay. Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Chair Lee, followed by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Cynthia, I was wondering if you would consider, under the OED grants program, some kind of incentive aspect so that...like as Housing Director, we oversaw a lot of grants, but what happens over time is people rely on those grants, and only those grants. So, you don't...you don't make money available to new entities when that happens. So, sometimes you...you might want to think about incentivizing the grantees. Like, in...in the...in...you can say that you can probably, let's say, gain more in your grant request if you have matching funds. And then, you know, like, over time,

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you kind of wean them off of the grants in a way that it doesn't hurt them, but helps them over time. And then it makes room for other new people to come in and apply for grants. So, you may want to consider something like that. The other thing is, these...the grants...for the district grants for the Members, I don't see why it has to be strictly economic and cultural grants. So, it could actually fall into the purview of other departments. Can that work?

MS. LALLO: That is a great question, and thank you for that. I want to say yes, absolutely, because it makes the most sense in relationship to the logistics of that for the other departments. I would hate to...to speak on their behalf. Hold on.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chair Lee. Right now, the description of the residency area funds is very specific for economic development, cultural, and environmental programs. If you would want to expand, I would recommend you change the name of the fund to encompass everything you want to do. And as we discussed yesterday, when DEM was here, I believe another option is, if you have 140,000 in a residency area fund, but you want to give 40,000 to Parks for an initiative, I think my recommendation would be to reduce the fund to 100,000 and just place that 40,000 under Parks for that initiative. But I'm happy to discuss further. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, I realize that we would have to make changes to the...the verbiage, but I just wondered if it was possible to do that because not all of the...the needs are in, you know, cultural improvements, and environmental improvements, and so forth. It could be other things in other departments. And...and then I do want to remind the Members, we are called upon to approve over a \$1 billion budget, and now we're asking for help on . . .(timer sounds). . . 140,000 each. So, remember the scale, okay? I think if...if we ask hard enough, that the Administration will be cooperative in that we have to approve a billion dollars. So, can we get their cooperation in return? Thank you.

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

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to clarify, we're still expecting an OM-4, right, or no? Because one of the questions was about vacancies, and DPS transmittal says there's 34 vacancies in Office of the Mayor, but I don't believe that's right...because even OCS vacancies listed in DPS doesn't seem correct either, and maybe we don't communicate with them because of our noncivil status. So, I...I didn't see in that packet that Member Sugimura showed the vacancies with the position IDs, and stuff like that, that we asked for last time that you were here.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. Yes, OM-4 was sent on April 8th, so...and that has the updated vacancy list that you asked for in it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Sweet.

MS. MILNER: I will also note, I did have a conversation with DPS--and this is an ongoing thing--but I think the way our Workday system generates reports when it comes to

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vacancies may leave some in there that shouldn't be in there, as you have all seen with the clerks and things like that. So, I'm just trying to pursue--we didn't have time to get into the weeds this year, but pursue a way that we could clean that up and really get you guys as much accurate information as possible.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. And then I had several other questions. We just had Ag, and it doesn't really feel like Humane Society is necessarily as good a fit as like maybe feral animals. I know it was packaged up and given to them, and they had time, but maybe next fiscal year, wondering if you would consider giving them feral animals, and OED taking back maybe Humane Society or something like that. Just, you don't need to answer now. The other thing is, when the MEDB STEMworks' kids come up, those kids are articulate, amazing...and I'm not saying quid pro quo, but something in the money that we give them should let them know like we have engineering bonuses, we have women engineers, you get stuck in traffic daily and you don't like it, come work for the County. This kid last night was into cybersecurity, and I said, we got even more ITSD vacancies than we know what to do with. So, something along those lines. Plant the seed. Because I would love to have some of those STEMwork kids working for the County, and I would love to pay them a living wage. The other thing...I was looking at this grant stuff, and the things that are concerning to me is like, you know, if it says something like missing reports, fully-funded by COM--like that's kind of a red flag. And I'm not...I'm not saying about the West Maui ones because we all know what went on in West Maui, but...but most of those were only partially-funded stuff. But, you know, the ones...it seems weird to me that some of them are like, exceeded all goals, and nah, nah, nah, and they got a 90 percent. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And then you got some that are like, no reports received, fully-funded by COM, you know, or something like that. It's kind of concerning. And I'm not sure if the climb highs were given in two separate years, or the same year, but one says EXP 2023, and one says 2024. And if we had no reports or reimbursements received, and it closes out 2023, why would we give them more money in 2024? So, those are some of the things. And I'm sorry I didn't catch the OM-4, but is Jade going to be the OED Director, or are we still looking for one?

MS. LALLO: That's a great question. No, Jade is not going to be the OED Director.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aw, shucks.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Maybe someday.

MS. LALLO: But maybe someday, yeah, absolutely, or try these shoes on and see...see how they fit. Can I comment on...on...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Please.

MS. LALLO: Okay. Wonderful. So, in relationship to the grantees that are missing reports, et cetera...so we have been working very closely with the Finance Department and with Corporation Counsel to really screen all of the previous grantees, and the current grantees, and we have added onto our paperwork, in good standing. If that in good standing is not checked, I don't sign it. So, in good standing means they have all of

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their grant reports in. And remember, we had also talked previously about applications that come in are graded, and we were looking for a C or better, right? And if they were below the 70...and it's difficult with some of our grantees because they're not experts, as Councilmember Kama was saying, right? And so, we're going through and vetting that. And some of our grantees call you and say, hey, how come...how come OED is not performing? And those are some of the reasons that things are being held up.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And they're aware that's the reason that...

MS. LALLO: They are aware.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And so, we should ask them?

MS. LALLO: You should ask them, yeah...and then refer them this way.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had some follow-up, but the bell rang, so I'll wait until my next go-around.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Johnson, you have questions now?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Chair. As this discussion went on, I...I...it brought up a question in regards to one of my priorities for Cody Tuivaiti's work in the Hui O 'Āina Kukoa (*phonetic*). Ku'ukoa? All right. Thank you. I was thinking about provisorizing that...their work in the Economic Development and Cultural Programs Revolving Fund. I'm curious if that's a pot that you guys would think that would be okay, but...

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

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: It's...I...I think that's...that's what I wanted to ask. There's two pots that are very similar names, and I see Director nodding her head. So, can you guys clarify?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson. I'd need to know more about what they were going to do with the funding, and I'd need to look at that specific Code section. I know there are two that have very similar names, and --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right.

MS. MILNER: -- one is West Maui-specific, and one is not.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Exactly.

MS. MILNER: So, if it's not the West Maui-specific one, and their work falls under the uses of that fund --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah.

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MS. MILNER: -- I think that would be fine.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. We'll talk more. I just wanted...just what we brought up is that their fund's a very similar name, but I just wanted to make sure. But it...it's basically the same as last year. So, if it was in that same pot last year, I would...and you don't seem to have a problem with it...

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

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right, that one's Hawaiian Culture Restoration Revolving Fund. So, very similar names. I wanted to be clear on that. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, then Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Thanks, Yuki. I don't have any questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I told Yuki, I didn't.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. The Experimental and Demonstration Housing Projects, 4,750,000, is that something I should put in writing? I'm just curious...I'm a builder, I'm super curious about what, if anything, is planned for that, who's managing it, and if that's something that any particular departments are in charge of?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Cook. That falls under the Department of Housing. Their intention is to issue an RFP, if the funds are approved, to move into the Experimental and Demonstration Housing Fund and solicit applications from throughout the community. So, I'm sure you will get more information when that RFP is ready to go out from the Department of Housing, but Director Mitchell can definitely address your questions on that.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. I'm just looking at this Chapter 3.36.120 annual OED report. So, what are the consequences when we don't get reports submitted? How do we remain fiscally responsible if they're not giving us reports, and we're still giving them money?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for the question. So, in relationship to advancements versus...versus reimbursements, this is where the reimbursement is super beneficial, right? So, if they do not...if they do not provide the appropriate documentation, then their funding gets held up.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. I understand that. I was having a conversation with a former OED employee, and I completely understand you shouldn’t give money to somebody who’s not supporting reports. But so often, super small nonprofits, their issue is capital. That’s why they’re seeking a grant. So, it puts them in a position where they can’t even do what they need to do because they can’t even afford to buy it. Would OED be willing to work with like...how come I...like a credit union, and use their grant as collateral so they can get some upfront funding?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that thought and that question. That is a bigger conversation than a yes or a no, right?

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: Because we’ve got to have Finance, and...and Corporation Counsel, and all of the people in on that. But I would add that in relationship to the grant workshops, right, there are opportunities for nonprofits outside of County funding, much easier...much easier to work with.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LALLO: And so, we will continue to facilitate those ideas with those small nonprofits.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. You know, we just had OCS in here, as you probably saw, and we were discussing A, B, and C accounts, which obviously, one of those placements is equipment. And we don’t own the equipment, obviously, that’s bought with the funds from this government. We have a little sticker with a little barcode. What do we do with the equipment that’s bought with these grants when the grants are over? Over \$1,000, like how we have to do. Do we collect them? How are they logged? How are they tracked?

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Catalogued.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: What do we do? Auntie Tasha, your mic is on.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: I’m sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: I think it’s logged. But like if when Jade leaves--because we’re all talking about it--her computer will come back to my office, and it would be re-disbursed to whoever takes her place. She doesn’t get to take that with her. So, what do we do with the grantees who buy expensive equipment, like drones or Polarises? Do we collect it for the next grant?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember U‘u-Hodgins. No, the purpose of the grant is to allow them to procure that equipment. So, that remains the property of the grantee.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Hmm. I’m going to double-check on that because I don’t think . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . that’s what I heard from somebody who used to work in OED. But that would be interesting. Thank you.

MS. MILNER: There...there may be some OED folks online, but we can also follow-up in writing. But it may depend on the type of grant as well. There may be some that are equipment-specific or other.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Rawlins-Fernandez? Like school.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have the answer.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have the answer. Call on me. It depends. Okay. So...okay, okay, okay. Let me explain. So, we asked the question when we met with Dave Daly at MEO about the equipment...so micro...the farmers microgrant...because there’s some equipment that I know, you know, like, for various reasons. And so, Dave Daly let us know that in the grant execution...in the grant contract when it’s executed, it states multiple times in what they signed that this is the property of the County, and that the County reserves the right to, you know, the equipment, if it so desires, to have it back or to, you know, return it--or not return it, but, you know, to possibly give it to another farmer, farming business, or something. So, it would depend on what the...the contract says, if it...if it clearly states that. Because I did ask that about the farmers microgrant. So, for the farmers microgrant, it says that. But for OED grants, you would have to check the grant agreement. Mic.

MS. LALLO: Thank you. I would just add, thank you for that information. And I’m getting a text that says they’re logged. So, I want to let you know that we have...our team is online. And while you think I do lots of things, they do lots of things. Yeah. So, they’re online if you want additional info.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: No, thank you. I was just curious. Because we...like we have to buy things, and they don’t belong to us, and they shouldn’t belong to us. You know, I do use a lot of Post-its, so I apologize to...in advance to the world. But like I won’t take this computer with me when I leave, and...nor should I. But I just wanted to understand how that works. Thank you. And thanks, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And just continuing on with grants...we have a proposal deadline tomorrow, so that’s where my questions are coming from. Both the small business and the tourism management are also competitive grants? Okay, great. Thank you for that. And then for Open Space, it...there was...there’s a couple projects, but up to 3.7 must be for the acquisition of Open Space properties in West Maui. Has...have those been already gone through the process, that chunk of change?

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MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. The Administration's in discussions on several properties that might be eligible for Open Space funds. They haven't been identified yet, but when they are, those resolutions will come to the Council for approval before the acquisition proceeds.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Because Mr. Delos Reyes in Lāhainā was...he was working with...with some Open Space areas and doing his planting project. So, he'll be happy to hear about that one. And then we've been hearing about some properties that...that want...wanted some surveying done. And I was just wondering if resurveying properties was part of the...the Special Management Area Revolving Fund.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. I'll have to look at the exact language, but I don't believe that's an allowable use of --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: For...for...

MS. MILNER: -- the SMA fund.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: It's...it's more for shoreline?

MS. MILNER: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: For that . . . *(inaudible)* . . . Okay. Thank you for that clarification. Thank you, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Very good. Member Kama, followed by Chair Lee.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So, you know, as the Department moves away from, and moves towards more economic development kinds of activities, what are some of those economic development things which are worth looking at?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for the question. So, in relationship to the big levers I was talking about --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. LALLO: -- right? So, healthcare is one of them, tech is one of them, construction is one of them. So, we have a total of four. I remember three. And those...the...those three are the primary pushes. Now, that doesn't mean that we won't be doing economic development, or supporting economic development in other areas, but we're really trying to hone in and focus on some big ones so we can do it well, as opposed to a scattered approach.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. So, how do you...how do you look at, in terms of healthcare, as one of those levers?

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MS. LALLO: So, when we take a...thank you for the question. So, when we take a look at our need, right?...our local community need, and how that's reflected in the economy. So, clearly, to...to Member U'u-Hodgins' point about nurses, right, we have a declining health market, and we need people that need healthcare, et cetera, right? So, that is a huge need, right, and also can be an economic driver. So, when we talk about workforce development, when we talk about partnering with UH, and then when we talk about intern programs, and things like that, right, boosting that piece of the economy --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So --

MS. LALLO: -- the service-oriented.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: -- so, when you look at that, you look at, in terms of housing them, right? Are these people here? Are they going to come here? Or do you feel like we're going to import them?

MS. LALLO: Right, that's a great question. So, we would always start with kama'āina, right? That's Mayor's focus. So, that means when we talk about workforce development, and when we talk about Member Paltin's point about the MEDB and the STEMworks, right, we need to get those kiddos, and ignite their passion for healthcare, and create a pathway for them right into that. So, 100 percent focusing on kama'āina.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. And the IT?

MS. LALLO: And the IT. So, the IT is same. We already have our...our partnership with MEDB and STEMworks. We have our tech park out in Kihei, we have the entities that are out there. And it's like, how do we create a pathway for our kiddos to fill those job positions?

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

MS. LALLO: Yes, thank you.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Our job. Okay. Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Very good. Chair Lee, followed by...by Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, following-up on...hello?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Following-up on...on...following-up on Member Kama's questions, what in...in construction are you prioritizing?

MS. LALLO: So, thank you for that question, Chair Lee. It's really around workforce development, right? And we also have to take a look at supply chain. When we take a look at the reports that we've gotten in relationship to when the highest need is going to be for our...our folks out in West Maui, and the build-back, and those kinds of things,

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right? So, trying to...to partner, and collaborate, and empower those pieces with the County support. So, again, workforce...and also, the diversified workforce there, partnering with CNHA in relationship to CDL, and...and hazard, and internships for builders, and construction, and electricians, and plumbing, and all of those kinds of things.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, do you...are you planning additional housing units for those you expect to come from O'ahu and the mainland...construction workers under...doing work on the recovery?

MS. LALLO: So, that's a good question. Obviously, we want to start with locals first, right?...our locals here in Maui. Obviously, there's no way we can expand that workforce quickly in relationship to what the need is. So, the housing piece...we're going to have to work on the housing piece, working with Director Mitchell, and with Mayor Bissen, and Department of Management, and also some other partners within the community to address the...the housing issue with that particular group.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I would like to start off by thanking the ten people who immediately sent me OM-4. I really appreciate all of you having my back. The other questions I had...you know, last night we had Mo'i Kawa'akoa talk about some of her business corporation ideas, and like that. And I know you're talking about big levers, but sometimes there are small levers, you know. And there was another testifier, I think Ms. Hansen after her, that was saying--and I don't think it's correct that she got a four washing machine thing for 150,000 trailer--but if it is true, we need a laundromat in Lāhainā. And if, you know, someone like Mo'i and her group could run that, you know, and it could be solar and off-grid, that would be a huge economic development that would truly serve our Lāhainā community. I don't know how many complaints I've got about the one existing laundromat only serving short-term rentals and icing the community out, but those kind of things, you know, that...that are just, I mean, economic development for our existing residents. I'm...I'm not sure all the ideas, but she had an abandoned vehicle towing company, hot food truck, trash removal. And I see the work going on at mile marker 13.5, and I've tried and tried and said, like, I mean, if DHHL could make it a campgrounds, low-impact with native restoration, but unless we have an idea, and if we tie in economic development, we're going to continually be pulling out rubbish like for \$700,000 annually. And I'd rather be...it be a circular economy where we put our people to work, restoring the place. And, you know, I don't...I don't feel safe taking my kids camping on the other side of the guardrail when I see a car flip off into Olowalu and end up in the ocean right next to somebody fishing. You know, I don't want to take my kids camping on the side of the highway, really, that close. But any plans for a laundromat for Lāhainā?

MS. LALLO: I think that's a great question. I wanted to tell you the fourth, I'm getting texts, cultural protection and preservation. So, it goes with what it was you were just saying.

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I want to draw our attention to Ms. Priya Landgraf, who is on...who is online to...to answer some of these questions. I...I think she can add to that. But in relationship to laundry facilities and those other things, like I said, though we're focused on those four, it doesn't mean that we won't do...or support additional things like that, right? We need to take a look at what our community needs most. And to...to your comment about circular economy, right, we need to be self-sustainable because nobody's coming to save us, right? So...yeah. So, we need to definitely focus on that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Land surveyors too. Was Ms. Landgraf going to talk?

MS. LALLO: Priya, do you have anything to add?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then the other question I had, do we know...the Maui Marathon, you know, a lot of times when I was working the beaches, the people that came from the other side were like, oh, Maui Marathon today. Because it like...you know, they go across the Pali. And with...with all the construction . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . and heavy trucks, and like that, I just would hope that it doesn't interrupt the recovery. Like, I don't know what their route is, if they love the Pali because of the ocean views, but maybe they could...they could still do West Maui and go north or, you know, the lower road, or...I don't know how it would work. But it is...I mean, every day is a cluster on the Pali. As I was driving in today, there was like a car accident to the side, which was really backing up people coming into work. But that is the one thing. And during normal times, it's like, it's just one day, deal with it. But it's every day nowadays. So, that's the one thing about the Maui Marathon...like can they not add to our existing traffic woes for that one day out of the 365 days where we have traffic woes?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for the question. Priya, are you there? You want to take that?

MS. LANDGRAF: I am here. Hi. Sorry, I was muted earlier. I am now off mute. Thank you, Member Paltin. So, is the question, can the Marathon not affect the traffic? Is that your question?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can it not go over the Pali?

MS. LANDGRAF: I guess that would be a question for the organizer. I don't know that that's an option to reroute the Marathon, but one we should absolutely explore. And again, you know, when we look at what's good for all of the community, that absolutely has to be a part of the conversation, and one that we'd be happy to explore...if you want to email that, and we can absolutely set up that conversation.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then I think the one that...that wasn't the question that they asked for you online for. I think it was like about maybe laundry and camping or something. Like, we really need another laundromat in West Maui. And one of the testifiers from Maui Rescue Mission last night--I'm not sure if it's accurate because I think she was speaking on behalf of her husband--but said they have a trailer with four off-grid washers and dryer...oh, three off-grid washers and dryers that they procured for \$150,000, and they can fill up water at one of the churches, and assist houseless folks

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with their laundry. We have housed folks in Lāhainā that need assistance with their laundry, and it's a big issue. There's one laundromat left, and from community feedback, they're prioritizing the short-term rental industry to the exclusion of many of the residents. So, there really is no laundromat for people with houses without washers and dryers. And when Mr. Smith was here, and they said they were renting out a place for appliances, they weren't talking about washers and dryers. So, in terms of economic development, like if...if somebody got a grant for a washer-dryer trailer, and like set up a business, and...I don't know if it's off-grid, and community-owned laundry, you know? I don't know.

MS. LANDGRAF: I think that's a great idea. Where there's...you know, when we have a need, that's when some of the best ideas come out. This might be something that DEM or Human Concerns would want to be looped into the conversation about. Again, I think it's something worth exploring. I'd love to see a grant application that wants to do that business plan. And it's something we should explore. I'd also be curious who that individual was, and I'm wondering if we could have it...look at the log sheet and explore how they did it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: The...the individual --

MS. LANDGRAF: So, it's something to explore.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- with the washer-trailer, I think it was from Maui --

MS. LANDGRAF: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- Maui Rescue Mission. Her name was Tania Hansen. She testified last night at the Pā'ia Community Center. Was her husband Scott? Oh, yeah, Scott. Scott. So, he...she was, I think, testifying maybe on his behalf, so he might be the one to...or both of them, reach out to. And then, you know, maybe Mo'i would add that to her list of corporations that she'd like to start. And then...I don't know, you know?

MS. LANDGRAF: Yeah. And we'll have to...I'll run this by Administrator Smith because you said he was there as well. So, I'll double-check the logs and see what can happen.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Great.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, John Smith was in Pā'ia?

MS. LANDGRAF: Oh, I thought that's who you said was there for Recovery. Did you mean a different Smith? Sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I...I talked...

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

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. He... he said he rented out the old Home Maid site. And I asked him, you're not storing clothes in there, right? And he's all like --

MS. LANDGRAF: Got it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- appliances, and I'm like, any washer and dryers in there? And he said, no --

MS. LANDGRAF: Any washing machine.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- no washers and dryers in there.

MS. LANDGRAF: But if we could get another site...or a mobile one, to your point.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That'd be awesome for...for West Maui. I mean, I...I did approach them, if that could be some of the CDBG-DR public services, but I don't know that we can wait that long because...I mean, it's an issue.

MS. LANDGRAF: Okay. Thank you for that idea and comment. I look forward to exploring it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Are you done? Okay. So, I have one last question, and I thought Member Paltin would have asked this, but...

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Office of the Mayor...is the Office of...of the Mayor okay with moving resiliency hubs to MEMA? It's page 8, number 6 of your response.

MS. LALLO: Thank you for that question, and it's a good one. So, when we talk about resiliency hubs, we're talking about emergency resiliency hubs. Everybody has a different definition of that, by the way. And I think that...I don't want to speak for Amos and his team. I would not want to overburden them. We are working in collaboration with them. We would be absolutely open to having that conversation with them if they feel like they can manage that. They are the ones that utilize that tool, so it certainly makes...in my opinion, it makes really good sense, so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So...okay. Member Paltin...well, wait, let's let Member Rawlins-Fernandez go. Member Ramos-Fernandez, then Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Okay. I just, I have a quick one. Okay. So, you said with OED, you wanted to try to make it more economic development-focused. Do...do you...are you able to share now how you're planning to

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do that? Because we did do, like, the comprehensive economic development strategy two years ago, three years ago?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: CEDS.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, the CEDS. And it's...it's...well, I don't have to go over all the critique that I have of the CEDS. But when we...when Deputy Director Hewahewa and I met with MEO micro farm...farmers microgrant administrator Dave Daly, we had talked about connecting the microgrant to the recently published Food and Nutrition Security Plan, and then that way, we're achieving the objectives outlined in our plan. And so, I was just looking for the application for an OED grant, and I saw like this scoring, and it doesn't have any connection to like the CEDS or anything. And I think that's the only economic development plan that we have for the County?

MS. LALLO: Thank you for your comment and question-ish.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes.

MS. LALLO: But I think we probably have the...the same opinion about the CEDS, by the way. I have probably about five different assessments/plans on my desk that have to do with economy. So, we have the...the reports that came out in relationship to what happened in West Maui, right? So, we have a Federal plan, we have the CEDS plan, we have the long-term recovery plan, and then we have the sustainable...the food sustainability plan. So, there's...there's a variety of different ones.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Food...Food and Nutrition --

MS. LALLO: Yes, the food...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- Security Plan?

MS. LALLO: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay.

MS. LALLO: That one. So, I think we have to take what it is that we have in relationship to our assessments and plans and pull a lei string through all of them. Otherwise, it doesn't make sense. So, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Are you also going to include DMAP in that, tourism management? Or is that its own animal?

MS. LALLO: That is its own animal.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay.

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MS. LALLO: But I think we...I think it needs...no, I think it needs to...I think it needs to inform, but we're looking at diversifying, right? And so, we have the visitor industry, and, you know, Mayor Bissen's focus on the visitor industry is about focus on the kama'āina, and the workforce, and...and that kind of thing. So, it's a little bit different lens to look at the visitor industry through in relationship to, you know, how we've done it in the past. So, while we absolutely need to be aware and informed by that, I don't think it needs to be ruled by that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Agreed. In order for...for us to not be over-reliant on one industry, then we have to beef up the other industries. So, is...is one of your ideas...cause I'm looking at like the grants evaluation Committee scoring. So, is that scoring evaluation sheet going to be different? Because right now, it doesn't have any connection to any...any of County plans.

MS. LALLO: Yeah, that's a great question. And so, the answer to that is yes. So, we're looking at revamping the application vetting and scoring. Right now it is kind of a closed circle, we need to open it up. When we talk about residency area funds, probably our Councilmembers should be helping to vet those. Not that you . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . need more to do, but...yeah. So, we're going to be shifting that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I would be happy to in all my free time. So, send me an email, loop me in. Thank you. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Any more...oh, you have? Member U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. I just wanted to follow-up with what I was asking about earlier to get some further clarification. Going back to the equipment that's bought with...for the grantees for, you know, with the County monies and their grants. Is that still considered County property, the equipment that's bought over?

MS. LALLO: Yeah, I'm going to actually let Priya jump in here. Priya, do you want to speak to this?

MS. LANDGRAF: Sure. So, it's kind of one of those, it depends. Thank you for the question.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. LANDGRAF: It's...it's one of those it-depends scenarios. So, your question is, is the equipment property of the County?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

MS. LANDGRAF: And it...it would depend based on how the grant application was written, received, and then approved. But even after that, there can be a revision of assets. So, the grantee cannot dispose of the equipment --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

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MS. LANDGRAF: -- and they cannot sell the equipment for profit --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LANDGRAF: -- but they can continue to use it for its intended purpose beyond the duration of the grant.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LANDGRAF: So, those are kind of the absolute pieces.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LANDGRAF: But beyond that, there are always amendments that could be made.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And to make clear, like I'm not trying to collect on a pen or like a used notepad, but some people do buy really expensive products to --

MS. LANDGRAF: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- to conduct their grants. And what do we do with those like expensive products when they're done doing whatever they need to do? I'm not saying the work is ever completed, but let's say they stop seeking funding, or they stop doing it. And as we've learned throughout at least my last few years here, everybody pivots, and course corrects, and goes and does something else. So, what do we do if, for instance, the person who bought a drone no longer wants to count deer? Do we recollect it?

MS. LANDGRAF: Then they...they should be filling out a form saying they are no longer using it for the intended purpose. And then the County should collect, and store, or reallocate as needed.

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

MS. LANDGRAF: That's what should happen.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Oh, thank you for...

MS. LANDGRAF: But that's on the grantee to report it to us.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you for putting the emphasis on should. So, does it not happen?

MS. LANDGRAF: Well, the grantee has the right to continue using that item. And so, it's not that it doesn't happen. It's that if it were to stop happening, it would need to be reported. The grantee has the onus, and they need to take responsibility and report it. So, I would

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urge if there is a for-instance that you'd like to bring to our attention and . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . email us about, then we could...we would need to look into that.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. I'm just curious how this all works. Because like I said, when Jade leaves her office, she has to return her computer. When I leave this office, I got to return my computer. This mic cannot come home with me. I don't want it. But I'm just curious, and I appreciate your answers.

MS. LANDGRAF: We would take it back and store it. That's what would happen in that scenario.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Where's our storage facility for all of the things that we take back?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Priya's office.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Home Maid Bakery.

MS. LANDGRAF: Jade's former office. It depends. You know, are we talking about a lawnmower? Are we talking about a computer? Different...different items would be housed in different areas.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thanks. Can I just ask one quick question that I think would be not necessarily so complicated? Who's keeping track of the log of all the equipment that's bought? Do we have like a running tab? I'd assume. You guys keep track?

MS. LANDGRAF: We do keep track, but it's by department. So, because this is the Office of the Mayor that our OED specialists have a log on their grantees.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. LANDGRAF: Yes.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Following-up on Member U'u-Hodgins, you know when we got the COVID expenditures, did this Administration receive all the coolers and things that were bought during the COVID era? And then...so, those things, did they go home with the previous Administration?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmember Paltin. I know we've submitted reports on all the purchases, but I don't have the details on exactly where everything is at this moment. So, if we could get that in writing, I'd be happy to work with Finance and get that back to you.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. Because there was very fine-print writing about all the COVID expenditures, and there was hesitation from this body to accept the COVID money without knowing what it would be spent on. And so, the compromise was, they would give us a report on what they were spent on. And like if you look through those reports on what was spent on...like coolers and things like that, that was my question at that time. Like I hope these coolers are going to be staying with the County in case a whole town burns down, and we might need coolers, you know, or how...how that would be tracked. And I don't know if this is something that rises to the level of the Auditor, or who it would be, and what authority this Administration has over what previous Administrations took with them, to Member U'u-Hodgins' point. And for future Administrations, you know, like how are these things tracked from Administration to Administration? Where is the continuity? And I mean, to some extent, it also goes along with, you know, the procurement or purchase procedures of the Emergency Fund as well. Like, you know, when we looked over what was purchased during that time--I understand you don't want to go through a procurement process when a whole town burnt down--but there should be specific guidelines that we're all aware of, and it doesn't seem like that is there yet. So, I'm not sure if Staff got the essence of the question. Oh, she says yes. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. So, Members, we're going to close out the Mayor, and we have the Department of Personnel Services coming. It is now 4:31. You want to take a ten-minute break as Personnel...yeah. So, Budget Director, Personnel's available? Look at the time.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. I...I asked her to stand by, and told her it might be a little later, but I will confirm.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, we'll come back at 4:45. . . .(*gavel*). . .

RECESS: 4:31 p.m.
RECONVENE: 4:47 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(*gavel*). . . The Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee is now...4:47, and we have the Department of Personnel Services before us. Thank you, Director, very much for hanging around. And I wanted them to come back because we've heard from many of the departments, and they spoke to us about the challenges of hiring, and how can we, you know, make it so that it's successful, and...and not have so many vacant positions...and not have departments trying to work around your system is what I'm hearing, is my interpretation. And so, at this point then, I'm going to ask for two rounds of three minutes. And before we start--I'm going to start with Member Rawlins-Fernandez, go to Cook, U'u-Hodgins, Sinenci, Kama, Lee, Paltin, Johnson. And I wanted to ask you...so we're going to do this Department, and I had also thought I would do the budget provisions as part of the bill, Bill 41. But I'm going to hold that for Monday after we do RPT certification because I'm hearing that there may be some additional provisions that the Members might have wanted. So, Mr. Hanano, can...can you find out whatever it is, and then we'll work on it for Monday, and share it

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with the Members? Okay. So, then that'll end our meeting for today after...after we do DPS, and we continue then on Monday with certification. We are waiting for the RPT certification books, or RPT books, Member...Director Milner?

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Yes, the Department of Finance anticipates you will have those by tomorrow afternoon.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, afternoon. Okay. So, you will let us know, and we'll put it in everybody's box...or what is the process? Because we don't...we have Council meeting in the morning.

MS. MILNER: Yes, thank you, Chair. I believe Finance delivers it directly to the 7th Floor, and then the BFED Staff will put it in all of your boxes. But I'm also happy to email the Councilmembers once Finance lets me know that it's been delivered.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Oh, very good. Okay. So, we look forward to that. And then also, Kirsten, we also have another document that we wanted to share with the Members. Okay. Proceed.

MS. SZABO: So, Members, we've prepared a summary, at the Chair's request, of the reinstated labor and the expansion positions. So, we'll be passing that out for you to just evaluate as you look at your proposals for the next week.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. So, at this time then, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, three minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: First round.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I did not request DPS, so I don't have any questions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay, great. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Hi. Welcome back. My question for Director would be, I would like to place into the budget one E/P for the Department of Agriculture for a Grants Management Program Specialist; is this possible? And the other question is, if I'm going to give this position, what's an adequate amount of funding should I allocate for this E/P? Because how long does it take for the process?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Hello. I would say yes, you could add an E/P for that position. And depending on how they describe the duties and responsibilities, we do have a Program Specialist classification. So, like I said, it depends on how they, you know, craft the position description. But I would think eight months. So, it would take...you know, from when they submit it, it would take us a couple months to do it, a couple months to fill it.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, that would be...that would fit in the org chart if you have a position already with that part of it?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, so, it depends, again, where they put it in the org chart. Because we do have requirements from Management that requires a reorg, so that could add time to the process. But I'm...their organization is pretty flat, so I don't know that it would actually impact, you know, the lines of supervision.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, is that something where the Department of Personnel Services works with that Department, and working with that, since...especially since it's a new department? And they're...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We have worked closely, yes, with those new departments.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, approximately...you're thinking approximately four months, and then eight months' worth of funding?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next we have Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you so much for coming back to sit with us. The other day we had Public Works in front of us, and I think Member Paltin asked them about their Business Administrator. And they were having some issues, maybe, coming up with a position description. And their response was, maybe DPS has a difficult time understanding specifically what they need for this position...and maybe sometimes overall. How can we bridge that gap? And how can we make it so it's a little bit quicker for people to hire the people we need, and go through the position descriptions?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the question. So, I was not at that meeting. However, I do recall...so for one, that requires a reorg. And so, you know, we're kind of meeting with them just to kind of understand exactly what their needs are. And there was some questions that came up, and we did have some kind of do you need this position? Because you have this position here that's doing this. It felt like a lot of duplication. So, maybe that was part of our challenge. And I believe they're still going through the reorg process. And we do recognize that they're a growing department. They have, you know, increased substantially. And just the placement of where they were supposing to put that position, we had lots of questions about.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you, I appreciate that. And for Public Works, I do feel for them because they're kind of our catch-all Department. Wherever...anytime this Council wants to buy something, or do something, it's sometimes in Public Works. So, they do have a lot of additional work put on them that

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sometimes they can't really plan for. No different than probably a lot of the departments. How do...how do you guys flex with...like Public Works, or other...the...the other departments, and their ability to have a little bit of flexibility when it comes to some of the unforeseen...and just like even Police, unforeseen...all the unforeseen stuff that can happen throughout the year, and years?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay. That's a tricky question. I think...you know, we do our best to understand their needs. When it comes to flexing their positions, you know, they took positions from Parks, and kind of...you know, things got shuffled around a little bit. And so, you know, it's us understanding. So, in order for us to classify a position, it requires us to understand like, you know, what is the work, and who does it report to? And I think that's kind of where the struggle is, you know, is where is this position, who is this position reporting to, where it exists in the structure? And we sometimes get into a tug of war because they expect it to be this, but they're putting it here. And so, kind of working through some of those things, I think, can --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- maybe help.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Do you have anything? I saw her with the mic. I'm sorry.

MS. AIWOHI: So, going back to the Business Administrator --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. AIWOHI: -- class, so that class historically has been reserved for Police and Fire because of the complexities . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . of Police and Fire departments. They are 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operations, which...and they have shift work, and they have multiple and unique unions, and members of those unions in those classes. So, it's...the Business Administrator class also looks at the complexity of a department, where Public Works is not a 24-hour, seven-day operation. They don't have the same shift work. So, that's been the conversation that we've been having with them. But...so, normally, there is a reorganization guideline policy --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. AIWOHI: -- that exists, which does not allow DPS to classify positions until that process is completed.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Can I ask another question? Because her answer just sparked a question. So, I hear you--I think we're both married to firemen, so we understand the difference of, like, what that schedule is like, and how they're 100 percent not at home when they're on shift. But let's say a tree was to fall down on a County road in the middle of the night. Who's going to clean that up? Is it going to be

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Public Works? Do they take home their cars so that they can respond to those kinds of emergencies?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the fire.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And the fire?

MS. AIWOHI: So, I'm not sure if all of them take home all their cars. So, in the past --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yes, yes, it's not all.

MS. AIWOHI: -- employees used to take home cars.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. AIWOHI: So, I'm not sure which employees still take home cars. There is that motor vehicle policy --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. AIWOHI: -- that the County has. So...but yes. So, all departments, including Water Department, Parks, they all have callback or standby.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. AIWOHI: So, those employees who are on standby or on callback, they would get called out to those emergencies.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, it seems like...like an interesting gray area, where I don't disagree that they're not like Police and Fire, where they sleep someplace outside of the house, you know? But if something was to happen in the middle of the night, I would need Public Works to probably clean it up. And so, it is arguably sometimes 24 hours, but I hear your point. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Next we have Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And mahalo, Director and Staff, for coming back and answering our questions. Who?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Deputy Director.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, Deputy Director. Nice meeting you. We did have some of the conversations during our other department reviews. And so, some of them mentioned that oftentimes, for those entry-level applicants, they wouldn't be able to see those applicants. The department would first do the first review to see if they qualify. Is that their process? And do they get to weigh in on those entry-level applicants?

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, typically, when we accept applications, our Staff evaluates, screens for qualifications. There are times where we have questions, you know, that maybe the person is close. We contact the candidate, you know, and kind of do a more deeper assessment so that we can qualify them. We have, on certain circumstances, like reached out to the department to say, you know, we're excluding these candidates because they're missing these qualifications, and have worked with departments to maybe loosen the qualification requirements. I wouldn't say that that happens 100 percent for every category of work that we recruit for. I was watching one of the meetings that you had with Corporation Counsel. And, you know, when they were talking about their Legal Clerk and they don't, you know, understand how we're not qualifying them. So, I reached out to them and I said, hey, let's sit down, and we can go over the...you know, these qualifications with you, and what we're looking at, and what you expect to be, you know, people meeting your qualifications. I mean, let's talk about it, and...and kind of close that loop because we should all be on the same page, obviously.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah. And that...that has been the conversation like today, to see if we can kind of, you know, redo some of the...the job descriptions. I remember trying out for a GIS position back in the day, and having to take a test. Are those tests often updated? I didn't get the job...but are those tests --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Did you pass?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- intermittently being updated?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we use SMEs, so we call them subject-matter experts, and they come from the department. So, we sit with them and say, this is the test. How does this look? And they go through, you know, if it's a good question, if it's not a good question, if we need more questions, or less. We're trying to limit the amount of questions on a test, and even limit the test because people don't like to take tests.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, I...I tried to study for it, but obviously not enough.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: And so, you know, just...I mean, we've made some changes, but we...you know, the...the law, so HRS says there shall be competitive tests. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And so, you know, just trying to work through that. So, I think at Corporation Counsel, when they were here, they explained we do some kind of evaluation system. So, that's called a training and experience evaluation. And we also sit with departments and SME and say, hey, this is...if this candidate just meets the MQs, we're going to give them 70 points. If they, you know, have so many years of experience, you know, this is 80 points, or...and we sit with them and we say, hey, is that, you know, reasonable? And so, we do...probably not every time we do a recruitment, but, you know, after a year or two, or depends on how frequently we recruit for that class, we will sit with the SME again.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Deputy?

MS. AIWOHI: And for GIS, I believe we no longer have the test. We do training and experience. So, you...you could get in now.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's pretty cool. All right. Things change, very good. Next we have Chair Lee, then Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Now, Cynthia, how's the...you can hear me, right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: How's that study coming along, to improve and make the system more efficient?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Has that started?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thanks...thanks for the question. No, that's in our current ask this year.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, who...who wrote up the description and the procurement for...for the study? Was it your Department?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Are you talking about the salary study?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I thought there was another study that would promote more efficiency and...within the DPS, and the...the whole County system, with regard to helping to fill all the vacancies that we have.

MS. MILNER: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: There's no such study?

MS. MILNER: I just wanted to jump in. Those funds are included in the FY '26 Budget. So, if the Council approves those funds, DPS will work with Department of Management and other appropriate departments to develop the RFP for that study, and it will be conducted after July 1st.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, okay. All right. So, it hasn't started yet. Okay. So, the other thing is, you say you're...you commissioned a salary study? Cynthia, did you commission a salary study?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Hi. Thank you. Thank you for the question. That was through the Department of Management. That was at the request of the Salary Commission.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, I see. So, when you go to the table...a bargaining table with all the unions, and all the other county council...I mean, counties, what's the impediment to giving our employees more compensation? Why is it so hard to give them raises?

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, as the public employer, the objective is to negotiate a fair and reasonable collective bargaining agreement. And so, you know, at...at this large scale, it's difficult to get, you know, large increases. And so, oftentimes, you know, we're talking about more than just salaries. We're talking about, you know, other cost items. So...and that's kind of the process that it goes through. Chapter 89 describes the collective bargaining in public employment, and so it kind of outlines for us, you know, how that process continues every odd year or every four years.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. What other cost items? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Do you mean medical...medical insurance?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's one of them. It could be travel, it could be per diem, it could be meals, and all kinds of other areas.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. My time has expired.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. My first question is, you know how the Summer PALS got an increase because they're not union? Could we do something similar for the school crossing guards?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Isn't that DOE?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah. Their...their current salary right now is \$30 an hour, and it's really just...the Department can increase their salary based on the funds that exist in their budget.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So...and we could too, like how we did for Summer PALS? Because...I mean, how come there's no crossing guards? Kamehameha III has to cross the highway, and...and they're so tiny, and cars are like *(sound like speeding vehicle)*. There's no crossing guards.

MS. MILNER: Chair, if I could just briefly jump in? Thank you. Councilmember Paltin, I just wanted to clarify, the Department sets the salaries, you guys provide the overall funding, and they decide what to do with it. So, the idea was to increase the PALS' salaries, but ultimately, the Department was the one who decided to set them higher based on the available funds that you all set.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. MILNER: But I don't know about why we don't have crossing guards, so I'm going to pass that...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: More questions. Okay. My other question, when the Police and Fire came to us like...I mean, the Police said, we're almost filled up with our Police

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Officer Is, and we're like we want to move people up so we can put more. Those lieutenants, sergeants, captains, whatever their titles are, isn't it a standard, like shouldn't it be ready? Like okay, we're ready to fill one, just put it out, or...they're saying it's taking inordinately long?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we typically recruit --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: From within.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- from within, and...you know, we talked about a test, that requires a test. And so, we work with another agency, CPS, to create this test, and...is it every two years?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I mean, like you have to create a new test? Like are we not anticipating people getting promoted? Like can...you got to wait for a whole class to give a test, you can't give a test whenever they're ready to promote someone?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, it's typically done annually, and so yes, we ask the Police to...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's not really working for us, apparently. I mean, apparently, that's not...we can't wait one year to...with all the vacancies.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, no. The list is good for a year, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, the list --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- is good for a year. Okay. And then, I mean, I can...when people complain to me, I can totally see where they're coming from. Like I tried to apply for the Chief of Aquatics position, you know, and they said that my math and education degree was not equivalent to a Parks and Rec degree, and my over a decade of Ocean Safety experience was not good enough to be a training and experience equivalent, and I think that's BS. Because, I mean . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . what does the Chief of Aquatics do? Budgets? I understand math. So, I...I can feel where people are coming from when they say Personnel doesn't understand what the job requires, and they're looking at a piece of paper that could be from the '90s, could be from the '70s. Like, we had the HGEA lady testify, and her exact words, look at the archaic positions in DPS. And I mean, like, okay, so we all know that it's archaic positions. Like is it...is it the case like typewriter skills are on there, and nobody has typewriter skills because we don't...you got to go to an antique shop to find a typewriter, or...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think...I think our class specs have been updated to a keyboard, but typing skills is...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, not typewriter.

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah, not typewriter.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MS. AIWOHI: So, I'm sure when you applied for that, it was a while ago, where we do allow substitution for the degree, but for positions in that BU-13, the professional class, they do require a bachelor's degree.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I have a bachelor's degree in math and education.

MS. AIWOHI: Right, yeah. And...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And over ten years of experience in Ocean Safety.

MS. AIWOHI: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Lifelong swimmer at the aquatics.

MS. AIWOHI: I would have hired you, but...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. That's...that's the answer I was looking for.

MS. AIWOHI: But, you know, the...right.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But it's not even --

MS. AIWOHI: But...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- that I could get hired, they wouldn't even accept my application.

MS. AIWOHI: Right, right. And I do understand a lot of applicants who come through there, they come with a lot of experience, maybe not the degree. So, we did make changes to that substitution. It used to be on a two-for-one basis, where you needed two years of the related experience for one year of the degree, which would be like eight years of the related experience just to meet the degree requirement, and then on top of that, whatever years of experience for that, so the education plus the experience. So, we did change the substitution method. We did find that it is very hard for applicants who don't go to college for whatever reason.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And even those with a double degree from college.

MS. AIWOHI: To a one-for-one --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just not in Parks and Rec.

MS. AIWOHI: -- method. So, one year of experience equates to the --

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, physical education.

MS. AIWOHI: -- one year of education. And then we are looking at bachelor's degrees. Because right now, a lot of our class specs, they have...they limit the bachelor degree. So, it has to be in certain fields in order to count. So, I'm guessing that's what happened. It wasn't in the right field. So, we're looking...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Really, how far away is physical education from math education with training and experience in Ocean Safety, and a lifelong career in swimming? Like, really? I mean, it seems pretty common sense.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I'd qualify you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You didn't, but...okay. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for joining us. It's a...it's a long one, so pardon me if I'm not as articulate as I usually am, I'm tired. But basically, my question is about the steps. You know, we want to pay our folks as much as we can. And I know you might say union's going to get involved with this, but what...what is the reason we can't hire people at higher steps, or just eliminate the first step? Because the first step ain't cutting it. Nobody is...is...the...the idea that you got to come in and kind of suffer a little bit as your wages catch up to be livable, it just doesn't work. So, can you talk about reducing the steps, eliminating steps, hiring people at higher steps, something like that? I'd like to hear your opinion on it.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay. So, we do that--maybe not for Bargaining Unit 3, I don't think we have any Bargaining Unit 3 positions that are currently recruitment above the min. I'm trying...I'm trying to choose my words carefully. So, we're currently in collective bargaining negotiations right now with all of the bargaining units, with the exception of Bargaining Unit 1. So, UPW is, at the moment, this week, ratifying their...a settlement that they took out to the...to the membership. I believe that there are ways for us to move the needle on those bargaining...all the positions that, you know, should be looked at. But, you know, it...it becomes a question of like how far do we want to move them, like what is the goal? I know when I listened to Toni's testimony today, and she talked about, you know, repricing and, you know, initial pricing, and that language is in the law. So, there's not much that we can do there. But I would say, like we move the engineering salary schedule, we move them to a new salary schedule, and I'm not suggesting that, but I am suggesting taking a look at, you know, the BU-3 salaries. And...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, there is a actual number of a livable wage in Maui County.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: It's...it's a lot.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. That's --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- I under...it is a lot, but is what we're doing now working? What's...how many vacancies do we have? Is it 600, I think? The cost in overtime, the cost of turnover, that's a lot when you compare it to, hey, here's a livable wage, here's something you can...again, and I'm...I'm...I've been in this bucket. I work a full 40, and I don't make enough, so I turn to the County and ask for assistance, so I can...so...so I can...now, let me clear, I worked within the County...I didn't work for the County, but I worked within Maui County, and I wasn't making enough, and so . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . I would turn and ask the County for assistance as a single father. And so, we, as a County, we're paying out our citizens through all these, you know, programs, and I'm...and...it's not like I was doing well, I was on assistance. So, I mean, that brings up the diseases of despair, you know, the...the lack of hope that...that plagues our community...and it does go back to food, clothing, shelter. And there is a livable wage, it's written right there, you know, it says this is what you need to make if not want to...not...not be eligible for all these...and all these programs, and also not feel so down. So, it's just like a winner across the board when I look at, like, trying to increase wages from the bottom up.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, I mean, there's...you know, it requires funding.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- I totally hear where you're coming from on the funding side. We have a billion-six-budget, we have one of the lowest property taxes in the nation. I just think that the...we shouldn't be...and it's so expensive to not do it. It costs more, I feel. Maybe when you guys do this study--and I know my time's up, so I'll just end it here--but when you guys do all these studies, think of the cost of what it is when we underpay our people. I thought there was a study being...oh, is...okay. Ooh. Okay. Never mind. But I do want you to think that--see, it is getting late, so I'm sorry--I was thinking of another study. There's so many studies. But basically, think of...when you guys are thinking about all these discussions...you said you're talking about steps, and other creative ways to come around, and what is the cost it takes, or what are the costs we're paying when we underpay our workers? You know, just all the...all the things that are listed. So, please consider that on new ways to try to keep our people. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. Oh, yes? No? Oh. Okay. That was one round. Do you need more? Member Paltin, Member Rawlins-Fernandez, everybody. Okay. Member...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'll defer to Member Rawlins-Fernandez as the Committee . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. So, she's first. So, who...just go down the list again then. Rawlins-Fernandez, then Cook, U'u-Hodgins, Sinenci, Lee, Paltin, Johnson. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo for being with us. Since we're going to talk salaries, I do have questions about salaries. I thought we were just going to talk about positions. Yes, it takes money, and the...the Legislative Branch is the branch that's...that has the authority of the purse strings. And so, we're saying that we want to pay our County employees a wage that they can survive here, that they aren't getting priced out, that morale is thriving. It takes money to pay our people, and they are the waiwai of this place. They are the wealth of this place. It also takes time for us to do the things that we need to do for the...for our people, for the environment, for 'āina, for...for everything. And we don't...we can't get time back. And so, what is the cost to having all these vacancies? So, if we don't have the people to do the work that we need to do, and we have all these Carryover/Savings because we don't have the people to do the work. And then it's like there's over \$100 million in Carryover/Savings and 600 vacancies. I want to pay our County employees the wages they...they deserve. And the Councilmembers are saying that we will figure out the money part. I asked Ms. Rust this morning about carving out, or tying salaries to the cost of living, negotiating for a minimum, but also, enabling salaries to be...to cover the cost of living for Maui County when it's so expensive. And I understand, I'm looking at HRS 89-D1 [sic] for bargaining units, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and the problem is 3 and 13. The Governor shall have six votes, the mayors, the Chief Justice, and the Hawai'i Health System Corporation Board shall each have one vote. So, in negotiating with all these different parties, they...I don't know if they're experiencing the kind of vacancies our County is--the Chief Justice, the State for Maui County, Hawai'i Health System. I would think it would be in their interest as well to tie salaries to the cost of living here. Any comments on that?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, the County of Maui could set the standard...and you're right, 89, you know, limits our vote to one, the Governor, you know, holds --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Six.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- four or six, depending on the bargaining unit.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Six. Oh, 3 and 13 primarily are the ones that are --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- being not a living wage.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, I...I...so...so, I guess what I was trying to say...so we were successful in implementing a salary...a new salary schedule for the engineers, and that's not really what I'm suggesting for, you know, the other bargaining units, but we could. I mean, looking at, you know, where do we want to fall, you know, in this salary schedule that

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we have, because Bargaining Unit 3 and 13 have...you know, although they don't have steps . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . they do have, you know, a range of salary ranges. So, I mean, we could look at, you know, doing more creative ways to elevate their pay. And, you know, I think as this body, you know, clearly is interested, you know, in increasing salaries, you know, again, I go back to it comes to funding, appropriations, and you know, how do we get the money in the pot that we need to pay people more? And...you know, and just recognizing the competing priorities of our community, you know, just the needs of, you know, one, our employees, and also just, you know, all the various projects when I look at the budget. And so, as the legislators of this body, you know, I think it's, you know, partially on this group to say, like, this is, you know, what we want to dedicate in salaries, in increases, and working, you know, to give that opportunity to achieve that for our County workforce.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, we're not in the negotiations. How do we make our say known? And when you say Maui County should set the standard, how does this Council help to set that standard?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Funding salaries.

MS. AIWOHI: So, outside of negotiations, yes, the Governor has the most votes for negotiations. But once a master agreement is in place, we can do like a supplemental agreement just for Maui County. We will just need to have the unions on board with us to sign these supplemental agreements to give our employees more.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, we can do that this year, or we would have to figure that out for the next fiscal year?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, as long as we have a master agreement, which...

MS. AIWOHI: So, we currently have a master agreement right now until June 30, 2025. So, if this body wanted to do something now, we could look at it if there was money now to do it. If there's not a master agreement in place come July 1, 2024 [sic], we would need to wait until there is a master agreement in place to...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: 2025.

MS. AIWOHI: Yeah, July 1, 2025.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: This coming...this coming fiscal year.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, the master bargaining agreement expires.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Is still in discussions right now.

MS. AIWOHI: The current one expires June 30.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: June 30, and our --

MS. AIWOHI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- fiscal year starts July 1st.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: July 1st.

MS. AIWOHI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: All right. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Cook --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- followed by Member U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, Director and Deputy Director, I have like four...four questions that are kind of quick. The first is a statement. We're...I see that we have our experienced members retiring, and we have a lack of new hires coming in. So, we have this attrition that's occurring that is compounding the challenges that we have in manning the departments. One of the...like how are we responsibly going to increase and come up with the money? One of the areas is the cost, the current...currently we have a cost of pending work when it's taking a long time to process permits, when it's taking a long time to execute CIPs, when it's costing a long time to do a variety of things. The less efficient we are, and the more it costs. So, that's one area where if we become more efficient, we could...that's one place we can get money. So, it's not like we're going to print money, it's not like we want to be irresponsible. But to have a well-paid workforce with a better morale and more productivity is going to basically be, in the private sector, more profitable, and therefore, everybody's boating. So, I'm just saying that's sort of the...my mindset. Who are the Maui County bargaining representatives at the table? Like when they're sitting down, who is representing us at the union tables? And is it different representatives for different unions, or is it one? Explain that for me, please.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we represent the Mayor at the bargaining table.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: You two. That's a pretty big responsibility, how's it feel? I'm serious, that...that is...we're talking to the right people then. We're definitely talking to the right people. And like you would be in them...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, the Mayor has the vote, but yes, we're his representatives, so...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. I think one other aspect of the cost that I wanted to get some feedback on is the fringe multiplier. So, one of the departments I spoke with, and they said they wanted to hire somebody, and it was like \$69,000 salary, but it was

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\$130,000 or \$120,000 what the actual cost was to hire that employee. So, we have this situation where people aren't really getting paid enough, a livable wage, but we're paying them a lot, but they're not seeing it because it's future benefits. And it's a commitment by the County that is in the distance, and it's a big deal to make on that commitment. Could you kind of help me during the negotiation, does the fringe ever come in there? If we give somebody a buck, is it always 62 percent more or whatever that fringe is? Or is a negotiation like we want to give them \$10, but we don't want that to impact the fringe? . . . *(timer sounds)* . . .

MS. RAZO-PORTER: It...it just kind of depends. So, we use the State...or the State is with us at the table, obviously, and they do the costing. So, anything that we offer, you know, they're also calculating how that's going to impact the fringe. So, you know, it's...it's the entire cost of it. Even though, you know, this employee is going to appreciate, you know, "X," you know, it's really...the employer's cost is going to, you know, increase. So...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Did the bell ring?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Could I finalize my question, and then I won't ask any more questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Last one.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Is the fringe a significant part of the negotiation, or is it just basically the base wage, and the fringe is just tacked on?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think as the employer group, we're looking at the whole package, but when we're talking to the, you know, the...the union, they're more interested in, you know, what is that going to look like on my check? You know, we're weighing everything.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Good. Well, I'm kind of like with the union, what am I bringing home? Thank you. That's it, Chair. Thank you for your latitude.

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

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you so much. My husband is nearing retirement. He can retire in like seven years, so not only do we have to consider what we're bringing home, he has to consider what our life is going to look like in seven years when he's too old to drag a hose. Not joking.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . . *(inaudible)* . . . retire in three years.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: You can retire in three years? Good for you. He passed 55, but he got to wait until he's 62. We have young kids. I was just about to text Tamara, and then the bell rang. Can you clarify who votes right now so we can

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understand who we got to write letters to in the State? I know we just kind of talked about it, but I want it like specific. Can you please?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right, so thank you for the question. So, it's the Governor's negotiating team, so they're talking to the Governor. The Governor holds the votes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: He holds four. So, he...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Or six.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Six.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It depends on the bargaining unit --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: The bargaining unit, right.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- and I can send you the section.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, thank you. Because I was just trying to look for it, and then I was getting lost in all of the things.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: It's a thick chapter.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Yeah, it was. I was like, you know what? I'm over it. I'll just ask. Also, when we were talking about the engineering special pay scale, we were talking about how the EMs, they didn't get an appropriate raise to match the schedule. Are we going to do that? Is that in your purview? Is that in our purview? What do we got to do to make that make sense?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, we did recognize that that was going to push up on the EM schedule --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- but the EM schedule pushes up on the deputy and the director's schedule. And so, it was kind of a decision that we're like we're not going to push...because already, in a number of departments, EMs make more than the deputies. And so --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- we didn't want to kind of make that more pervasive than it already is.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. And then now with the Charter...I mean, I'm sorry, the Salary Commission's --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: -- decisions, we can make that adjustment?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah. So, that’s --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Cool.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- the plan going forward.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: When do you think we’re going to make that adjustment?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: July 1st.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Oh, okay. So, did we already figure out a schedule for the EMs?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well...so, yeah, we do have to wait until after the collective bargaining agreements are settled and agreed-upon because we need a master agreement, and the EMs follow their included counterparts, so --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- it kind of...yeah, it’s kind of connected.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Yeah.

MS. AIWOHI: We do backdate it to July 1st, so --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, okay.

MS. AIWOHI: -- if anything, we do go retro.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: We’re going to have retro. Okay. Cool. So, unlike my colleagues, I have never applied to work in the County, except when I decided to run for office because, you know, a little bit off. How long does it typically take somebody to get hired? Like, let’s say if Shane was to...well, now I can call him Shane, because in this scenario, he’s you know, applying for a County job. If he was to do his test tomorrow, how long would it take for him to like hear back from you folks, or get started? We heard about this physical that like Public Works . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . needs to take. Like how long does that entire process take?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, it depends.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Every time, yeah?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right. So...so, it really just --

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: I’m going to need an Excel spreadsheet --

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- it really...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- pretty soon on the depends.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I can...I can share that with you. So, depending on the recruitment, if it's a continuous recruitment, we're going to, you know, review the test. This candidate qualifies, he passed the test. We're going to send the name to the department. The department schedules an interview. You know, they...they decide that they want to select him. I mean, I've heard it move in like a week.

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

MS. RAZO-PORTER: And then I've also heard the other side of it, that it took two months.

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

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, it depends. And then if they have to, you know, do a pre-employment drug test, or do --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- a physical, that's you know, extra time. And a lot of times, it just depends on, you know, did they answer the phone? Did they come pick up the form? Did they make their appointment?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Wait, I have a couple more questions. I know we're leading towards the end, but right now, like, I have kids. And in the seventh grade, to go from sixth to seventh grade, you got to take a physical. And I have to schedule that like a year in advance to take the physical. So, where are people getting their physicals done that they can do it within a few months' notice?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Because I got to...I got...like, Member Paltin says, we don't get to tell them, oh, we're good at this time. They tell you, we have an opening from, you know, 11:58 to 11:59, we better see you.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We have a couple...there's a couple providers on-island that accommodate, and they can get an appointment. Generally, we have one provider in Kihei that is open seven days a week. And --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- I think both might be open, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- extended, not --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- the usual.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: And then I do have another question, and then I pau, I swear. How do we plan for new hires? Do we wait until that position...that person who fills a position is vacant and retired? Or do we understand, okay, 14 people from over here, they're going to retire, so let's anticipate that and prepare for that retirement, and then hire? Or do we wait until it's vacant?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's a great question. Thank you for that question. So, a few months ago, maybe in October, we met with directors and deputies, and kind of encouraged...because we see that. You know, it's like, oh, this person retired a month later.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Oh, we need to fill this position. And --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- so, there's a budget provision that allows departments to hire, you know, as long as they have the funds, like 90 days in advance. And so, we say, like, if you know this person is leaving--and some departments do take advantage of it--but if you know this person is leaving, let's anticipate the vacancy, let's recruit ahead of time so that they have that lead. You can bring this person on earlier, and, you know, kind of get familiar with the job, the landscape, you know, everything that they need to do. And that's, you know, a work in progress right now. I think everybody's busy, there's a lot, you know, going on, and so sometimes that may not happen. And sometimes, even when they do, you know, it's...it's hard to find, you know, qualified people, especially for, you know, some higher-level roles. And so, we also encourage departments to, why don't you recruit at the lower level and promote from within? And again, that's like an ongoing conversation that we have. And, you know, there's pros and cons to everything, so...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Thanks, Chair, for the extra time, I appreciate it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. Just a couple more questions, following-up on Member U'u-Hodgins. Do you have a number, an average of people that are retiring, and just...what's the percentage, or that number that's adding to the vacancy list that are leaving the County?

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, it's hard for us to predict the number of employees that are retiring, just because, you know, everybody has different expectations and, you know, just desires. I think we see about 90 to 100 employees retiring a year. That's kind of just been the average. I think during COVID there was a little bit...there was a --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: More.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- little bump in that number.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think that impacted us too, just, you know, COVID made things a little bit complicated. So, if people were like at that home stretch, they were like, peace out.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, got it. And then what would be the process if we would have to revisit the job descriptions? Would that be something in-house, or would you require an RFP to go out to kind of --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- to go through the departments and all the different job descriptions?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right. So, departments are responsible for maintaining the accuracy and...of their position descriptions. Typically, you know, it's encouraged to look at it once a year, you know, at least when they're doing their performance evaluation, and kind of understanding, you know, like is this accurate? Is this true? You know, does it need to be updated? And I would suggest, you know, maybe looking at, you know, starting from there, but a wholesale kind of looking at all of our class specs may require some assistance from --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: An outside...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- an expert. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, consultant. Okay. Thank you for that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Chair Lee, and then Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Cynthia, do you have enough...sufficient Staff to process 6 to 700 vacancies...to fill those vacancies?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's a great question. We certainly do our best. We do not have space in our office for any more Staff members. And, you know, just...I mean, whatever we can do.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So...okay. Let me...let me put it this way.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Given the size of workforce that you have, on average, how many people can you actually fill per month, let's say?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: How many vacancies can you fill per month?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Well, so, departments actually are the ones that interview candidates, make offers, and onboard. We have been helping departments onboard Staff, so actually, onboarding employees would be, you know, kind of parsed out with all the departments. I think we could...you know, is it 100 employees a month? Is it 50 employees a month? I think we could handle both.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Both?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. What's stopping you now?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Getting 600 qualified candidates who accept County positions.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Apparently, the departments and your Department are probably not enlisting the right strategies at this point, don't you think?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, I'll give you an example. We have one department--and I won't mention names--we gave them ten lists with qualified candidates. And they never hired anyone. The lists remain in referred status. And so, you know, there's moving parts to this, to...to solve this problem. And when asked, you know, they said, we'll just...you know, we...we want to see different names. We'll just wait for this...you know, I don't know what they said. They just didn't respond. And then when the director was pressed, they did make offers. But that was a significant amount of time.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. To every problem, there's a solution.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And so, I'm just wondering that, you know, maybe it's not you, maybe it's the Mayor himself, or somebody else that has to push this forward.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Right. So...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Since the departments come under him anyway.

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: If...if I can just make a plug. We talked about it at the last...the last time that we were here, last week. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And we are doing a County Career Expo at the mall. It's going to be a hiring event. We are encouraging interested candidates to apply ahead of time, be ready to get interviewed. And it's a pretty big deal. We're working hard to, you know, get all the pieces in place and make it happen. So, we're very excited. Departments are...the Mayor's instructed all departments to be there and be ready to interview. So, we hope to make a dent in that, you know, 600 vacancies.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: All right. My time has expired. But can I ask one last question?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: You know, your specialists...are most of them, or all of them, EMs?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: No.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: No.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: None of them are EMs?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: No, we have three. Three EMs.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Because usually an EM has to have a Staff to oversee. So, in these three cases, you have that situation?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: There are senior...there are leads. So, yes, I would say that Staff responds to them, reports to them, and yeah, they're kind of overseen by that group.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Is it not Member Paltin's turn?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I'm sorry. Member Paltin? Sorry. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I might need an answer in writing. I was wondering what the cost would be if we raised all the people below SR-7...SR-15C to SR-15C. And what the cost would be if we raised everyone below SR-14C to SR-14C, and SR-13C to SR-13C.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Can we get that in writing?

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You guys got my back over there? Thank you. And then --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- following up with what Member U'u-Hodgins said. When Public Works was here, they said that some counties did it concurrently so that there wasn't like chiefs or whoever looking at, and like, why don't I just become an engineer, you know, like because of the bonus, and why...why didn't we do that concurrently? Or is that the right word? Concurrently.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: That's a great question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you need it in writing?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, I think...no. So, when we looked at it, all of our EMs were already paid at the max...or for the most part. I think there was one that we recognized was not, and so we, you know, adjusted his salary.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then the other thing that like both of you and Ms. Rust said like it's the law. And like that's what we're here, like that's...isn't that the beauty of the American Constitution? Like it's a living document, and you know, if adjustments need to be made, then you go and...like, I mean, one thing that I really admire of the trades unions versus the public unions is, they fight for their workers. You know, like you're not going to find a beginning operating engineer that's not able to make a living salary, you know? And...and HGEA endorses, UPW endorses, SHOPO, HFFA, and they endorse at the State level. And so, like if you see a problem, and...and then it's...the problem is the law, then let's work together to change it. I'm the HSAC representative, and if you see the law is the problem then, you know, draft a bill with me, and I'll present it to this body, and Member U'u's...like, you know us. You know how...I mean, I don't know if you know how laws get made, but like to say, oh, the problem is the law, then why aren't we working together to fix it...what the law says? Like maybe before I had . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . this particular job, I would say, oh, the law is a problem, but I think that our job is to make laws, and fix laws, and oversee the budget. And like Member Rawlins-Fernandez said, not being able to hire into vacancies that serve the public is an all-around bad thing. Because then people see the ones that did get the job, the ones that showing up for work, doing the job of five people, and say like, oh, they're doing such a horrible job...because the job is meant to be spread out among five people. And...and there...it's like, you know, the one person that shows up with the shitty salary is getting all the thing, and like why would they continue to do that, you know? And so, if we were to fill all the vacancies, even out the workload, provide great public service, I think people would pay for that, you know? Like, I think that's what they're expecting. And instead, what we're doing is we're paying a not-living-wage, recruiting one or two people to fill ten positions, and then kind of blaming them...like, why isn't these services getting delivered correctly, on time, and in a great way? And I...I...with the Police vacancies, it's not just a Maui County thing. Like when I go to the HSAC, and I speak to other colleagues on different jurisdictions, it's a Statewide problem, and vacancies is

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a Statewide problem. So, if we all know there's these archaic positions, we all know that the law is the problem, like, you...you know who we are and what we do. And if you identify what parts of the law are the problem, and you'd like to change it, like just send me an email. There's nothing illegal about that, right? And then...and then we could try and change the law that's the problem. And I would...if it's me or somebody else, I don't care--actually, it would be better to be somebody else, because my plate is a little full--but then you introduce it in Member Nohe's Committee, and then I would take it to the HSAC, and maybe it could be part of the HSAC package. But earlier, when I asked that stuff that you're going to get in writing, is that a supplemental thing we can do? Because that's the other thing Ms. Rust was talking about, like if we do that, she said you start from the most vulnerable lowest first, and bring it up to level. Is that what you meant by supplemental agreement after a master plan thing is pau?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think the supplemental agreement can be crafted to be however we want it to be crafted. So, it doesn't have to be, you know, what you suggested, or what she suggested, it's just, you know, what is our end goal?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because, I mean, I...I don't think anyone, really, it's...it's hard to make ends meet below a SR-15C, personally. I got hired as a SR-11 back in, like, '90...'90s. And...and I still lived at home.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We can do math.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. And like if I had to pay for like a household expense on an SR-10 or 11, I'm going to be living at home for the rest of my life, you know? And...and...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: If I can just comment on kind of what you were saying. So, I feel like everybody's got a lot on their plate, right? So, when, you know, we're asking for this money to do, you know, this study, and how do we...you know, what part of our rules are archaic? Are they all archaic? Like, you know, we want to understand, what do other jurisdictions do? And I think you shared with me that you met at the NACo.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did you give them the stuff? Did you give it to them? Oh.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: No. So, you know, just kind of understanding, like, what other jurisdictions do. Like I mean, I was hired before you, and so this has been the law. It is the law. I think in 2003, they, you know, tried to modernize the law. And I think just when we went through it, you know, it didn't...it made some changes, but not, you know, enough for this day and time that we're in. Because, you know, 20 years ago is very different than it is today. And I think all of you sitting here is...you know, this is...this is that moment where, you know, we say, we want to pay our people more and taking that stand. You know, you read 89, and you know how the votes go, and...and, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: She read 89.

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MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- our seat at the table. And, you know, if we want to make change for Maui, we...you know, just...our community's been through a lot. Our employees have been stretched. So, you know, just honoring, you know, the...the wish of the Council, and even our employees, just...what about us, you know, is what I heard them saying today. And I agree, you know, and I'm looking at all of you, you know, holding the purse, you know, just...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, it doesn't have to be minimum SR-15C, it could be everybody 30 percent raise?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think I did the math on that. I don't know if my math was correct, but it was like 42 million.

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

MS. RAZO-PORTER: But you would check my math. Because everybody's on a different...you know, I'm just taking salaries and...and the minimum. But, you know, I think the number that I saw was, you know, 1,500 a month. And then I did that times 12, times 2,700 employees, and that was the 42 million that I came up with, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: But you said the supplemental agreement could be crafted in any way.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: In any...right. So, you know, how much money do we want to put toward? And, you know, acknowledging that we are in negotiations and, you know, I'm probably going to...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And you said it was 42 million?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: So, the number that I saw was \$1,500 a month...and I did the math. So, times 12 is 18,000. So, 18,000, and I just averaged out...you know, we have 2,700 County employees. So, if we added 18,000--and that's just for one year--times that 2,700, it's 42 million.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And we got 120 million in Carryover/Savings, and 50 million floating around that we don't know how to designate.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: And then I think I added what it would cost if we paid 100 percent of the employees', you know, health benefits. And that would be another--again, we got to, you know, run the numbers--but it's about 10 million. And that's...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, we could do that? We could pay 100 percent, even regardless of collective bargaining?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We would have to do a supplemental agreement.

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MS. AIWOHI: But there is another jurisdiction in the State that currently does that. And so, the supplemental agreement they have is, they pay 100 percent of the 75/25 of the HMSA plan and of the Kaiser standard, 100 percent.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What jurisdiction is that?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Kaua'i.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Kaua'i.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I would like to do at least that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And what about fringe benefits?

MS. AIWOHI: So, we can...we can ask for their supplement agreement to see what...how it reads.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I mean, if...if we hired everyone that was in a vacant position, then there would be a lot less overtime, right? I mean...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I'm sorry?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Or I mean...and then, so too, the...the...the chronically vacant positions, those on continuous recruitment, we could make special...specialized for that? Lowest...lowest paid, chronically vacant.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: We would want to develop some kind of criteria, like how we arrived at those decisions. But yeah, I mean...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You guys would want to, or you'd want us to? Or I mean, I'm...I'm cool with it if you guys want to.

MS. AIWOHI: I think I'd want to work with this body, and...as well as the...you know, the Mayor's Office too.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Let's do it, then.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Okay. So, your math...your math, right? Did you add fringe benefits? Because fringe is --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I did not.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- like another --

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I did not --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- 89 percent.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- add fringe.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. That's almost like doubling whatever it is, right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Yeah, it's usually --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's pretty high.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: -- like 89 percent or something.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: You can check with Finance, they do that number.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: In one of the responses, 89 percent was fringe. Yeah. Okay. So, Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I don't have a question, so I'll make it quick because it's late. I do have a statement, though. The idea that like...I like what that discussion was happening about bringing up the wages across the board. Because what the middle class does--and any economists worth their salt will tell you--they spend 100 percent of their income, sometimes 110 percent of their income, every year, and that generates our economy, right? So, you go out to eat a little bit more, you got...remember that term, disposable income back in the '80s and '90s? We don't even use that term anymore. There's nothing disposable, right?

MS. RAZO-PORTER: There's no...there's none.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So...but that's what generates the economy, right? So, if you raise the wages, they're going to spend it. Then OED doesn't have to find these grants to kind of give, you know, help this guy and that guy. It's just good policy if we give these folks money. They're going to spend it right in town, right in our communities, and jobs are being created, and, you know, it's just a winner. So, I really liked that discussion, what you guys were doing, and let's do it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Okay. Members, so that was like our second round. I...I want to see if we can dig...dig deeper into this discussion that we're having, and seeing how we can help, you know, more people...not people, but more of our employees.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Employees.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. And as you heard...right? You...you...did you listen to the testimony this morning when we talked about OCS, and the 30 percent increase for all

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its members, and the pushback that we got...or from, you know, the other employees, the 2,700? Well, there wasn't 2,700 people speaking, but...

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Representing 2,700.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Yeah. And so...and then we had Toni Rust from HGEA saying that these are the things that could be done. So, we can get, you know, you on the table with the unions, and figure out something that we can, you know, have solutions that's better than, you know, doing like these random one-offs, and maybe set the standard for what the State can look at, you know, and something realistic.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think...you know, when I first started working for the County, you know, it was...I thought the salary was low, but, you know, you get your lifetime pension, you get your lifetime medical. You know, it was all those things in the future. And I feel like I was in a good place where, you know, I could take that little pay cut, or the pay cut to invest in my future. There's not that possibility today for many people because, you know, the housing market is crazy. No one can afford to buy a house here that...on a County wage. And, you know, I think that's a fact. My son has...has a good job, but he still can't afford a house. It's, you know, 1.5 million. So, I mean, I don't know that we can fix that, but at least, you know, give people, you know, something that they want to come and apply for the County. And we have something to...to promote.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Agree, right? So...okay. Members, I'm going to close out Personnel. You have another last question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, just on timing of the...so, the master agreement ends June 30. Can the supplemental agreement go beyond the expiration date of the master agreement, or does it...it expires at the same time? Okay. All right. That was my question. And...and I think, you know, to comment on the last statement you made, you know, two birds, one scone [sic]. We can increase salaries and help the housing, you know, prices kind of stabilize by increasing Tier III, and, you know, capturing a lot of that real property tax, and deterring all this...that demand of luxury houses on Maui. So, yes, it is a good policy. Mahalo. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All tied together. What a great discussion. I'm glad you came back to visit us. You know, it's kind of...it's something different that we did.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you for having us.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. And again, because we heard from all the departments at this point, that...and we heard almost similar frustrations. And then we heard from you in the very beginning, right, when you came with the Mayor, and you have similar frustrations too, because you're all trying to do your best in a very difficult situation.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Thank you for your support, everyone. We look forward to kind of fixing this problem.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Let's work on it. So, we'll try to get your discussion today, and then, you know, we can work together.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: I think there's some questions from Tamara.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. So, by tomorrow, Members can submit by 9:00 any further questions that they may have for you or the Mayor. And on this, then, we'll try to figure out how to...memorialize, is kind of the wrong word, but to kind of document what you said, and try to figure out we can work together. All right. Members, so, at this time...thank you very much. Thank you very much.

MS. RAZO-PORTER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, it is 6:03, thanks for staying extra. I was going to take up budget provisions today, but I understand that some of the Members might have some more that they want to suggest. So, 4:00 tomorrow, if you have any. And in there, I think we...we hear Chair Lee always talk about DR funds, so we're going to put in there something about the DR funds and reporting. And I heard, Tamara, you might have something?

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, I am...budget provisions. Are...you have any budget provisions? Anyway, 4:00 tomorrow, if you do, is due so that we can incorporate it into discussion. And then...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can you clarify what you mean by --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- budget provisions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, here. It's in...it's in Bill 41. Wait, let me look for a page number.

MS. KAWASAKI: Chair, those are the general budget provisions towards --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MS. KAWASAKI: -- the back of the budget bill.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If we want to change them?

MS. KAWASAKI: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: If you want to add, or delete, or...yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, towards the back of Bill 41?

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I'll take that home then.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Oh, I thought maybe you did. Somebody had said you might have. But I'm going to take this up on Monday instead. I was going to take it up today. And probably ask our...our attorney, Mr. Hanano, to basically take sections of it where we had suggested changes of that provision so we can tighten up our budget communications with the...the Administration. So, that would be...we'll take it up...so Monday, we are doing budget, we're going to get certification from the Finance Department. So, after that, we'll take up this particular item that I'm talking about, and then continue on with decisions, is what Monday's going to be. So, tomorrow by 4:00, if anybody has amendments you want, or changes you want to add to the general budget provisions, please submit that by 4:00. Also, don't forget your priorities. And then, after we hear from all of the residency area meetings, next week Monday also, we're going to hear what your wish list is for that. I'm going to call it the cultural economic development, the 140,000 fund at this point. So, that's due next week at noon, yeah. Any questions? Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did you mean like...I think I had a budget provision that if our cultural economic development is line-itemed, for me, I didn't want that to prevent the entity from going after competitive funds as well. If my language was up to so much for Kaibigan ng Lāhainā, then would I write a general budget provision should be that I don't want my line-item to Kaibigan to prevent them from going from any competitive grant because the wording in my line-item says up to? Is that understood, or do I --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, I think --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- have to include it?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- because you must have had that conversation with somebody, and so, therefore, Mr. Hanano...is that what I should call you, Mr. Hanano? I want to call you Peter.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, I'm in the webinar too, so it's a lot.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay. Anyway, is...is that conversation that you had with...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Them.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. So, therefore, they said, oh, there might be another amendment. So, I said, okay, I'm not going to take it up today because we have a bunch...not a bunch, but we have several that we're going to make some revisions with your approval, and then pass that on Monday.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, you want me to turn that in in writing, what I just --

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- said --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: By 4:00.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- in words tomorrow?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: By 4:00. You can work on it with them, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. My...I'm not a lawyer, but I can turn in like what I want it to say.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Perfect.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. That's it. All right. So, see you all tomorrow. Tomorrow is Chair Lee's Council meeting at 9:00, and we're honoring some special resolutions.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Three ceremonial resolutions.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Three ceremony...yeah, we have three ceremony resolutions, one very special from Moloka'i. So, I'm quite sure you're going to see a lot of people from Moloka'i.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It's going to be a long day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. I will now...and we're going to defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TK)

ACTION: DEFER.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And this meeting is now adjourned at 6:07. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 6:07 p.m.

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 123 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 21st day of May 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck