

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, ETHICS, AND
TRANSPARENCY COMMITTEE**
Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

February 27, 2024

Online Only via TEAMS

CONVENE: 1:44 p.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Chair
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Vice-Chair (left at 4:22 p.m.)
Councilmember, Tom Cook, Member (left at 3:36 p.m.)
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (arrived at 2:05 p.m.)
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member

STAFF: Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst
Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst
Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary
Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary
Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney
Shelly Espeleta, Supervising Legislative Analyst
David Raatz, Director, Office of Council Services
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Zhantell Lindo, Council Aide, Moloka‘i Residency Area
Office

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency
Area Office

Jade Rojas-Letisi, Makawao-Ha‘ikū-Pā‘ia Residency Area
Office

Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office
Christian Balagso, Council Aide, West Maui District Office

Angela Lucero, Executive Assistant to Councilmember
Paltin

Autumn Ness, Executive Assistant to Councilmember
Johnson

Axel Beers, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson
Christi Keliikoa, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

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Paltin

Davideane Sickels, Executive Assistant to Councilmember
Kama

Dawn Lono, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci

Don Atay, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci

Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama

Gina Young, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci

Haunani Madela, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Rawlins-Fernandez

Jared Agtunong, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Cook

Kate Griffiths, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Johnson

Keomailani Hirata, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Rawlins-Fernandez

Laura McDowell, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

U'u-Hodgins

Michele McLean, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Lee

Nayleen Kamai, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Kama

Noelani Ahia, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Rawlins-Fernandez

Sarah Sexton, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Rawlins-Fernandez

Stacy Takahashi, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

Cook

Susan Clements, Executive Assistant to Councilmember

U'u-Hodgins

ADMIN.: Victoria J. Takayesu, Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel

Kristin Tarnstrom, Deputy Corporation Counsel,
Department of the Corporation Counsel

John Gores, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of
the Corporation Counsel

Thomas Kolbe, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of
the Corporation Counsel

OTHERS: Christopher Fishkin
Sam Small
Chris Salem
Jasee Kanawai (aka Jasee Law)

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PRESS: *Akakū Maui Community Television, Inc.*

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: . . .*(gavel)*. . . That’s really loud. Good morning...good afternoon. Will the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting of February 27th, 2024, please come to order. It is 1:44 p.m. I’m your Chair Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. Let’s begin with Committee Vice-Chair Tamara Paltin. Good afternoon.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Good afternoon and aloha ‘auinalā. Streaming live and direct from *(audio interference)*.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Councilmember Tom Cook, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Good afternoon, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Councilmember Gabe Johnson, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Chair. There is no testifiers at the Lāna‘i District Office. I’m here and ready to work. Mahalo.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Councilmember Tasha Kama, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Good afternoon, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Council Chair Alice Lee is excused for now. Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, good afternoon. Oh, she’s stuck. Kasie, she’s stuck. We’ll get back to her in a bit. Councilmember Shane Sinenci, good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I’m back. I’m back.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Oh, wait. Okay, there you are.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Sorry. I’m sorry, I got frozen.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: No, you’re good.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I’m good now?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Awesome. Aloha ‘auinalā kākou. Mai

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Moloka'i Nui A Hina. I'm at the Moloka'i District Office. Alone on my side of the office. And we currently have no testifiers here.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. *(audio interference)*

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: *(audio interference)*

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, and I hope Rosco joins us again. Thanks.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, he's sweet. From Corporation Counsel we have Victoria Takayesu, Corporation Counsel; Kristin Tarnstrom, Deputy Corporation Counsel; and John Gores, Deputy Corporation Counsel. From our Committee Staff we have today Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary; Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst; Clarissa MacDonald, Legislative Analyst; Richard E. Mitchell, Legislative Attorney; Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk; and Jennifer Yamashita, the Committee Secretary. Please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. I'm going to go into the testifier language now. So, testifiers wanting to provide testimony should sign up at the beginning, join the online meeting via Teams link, or call into the phone number noted on today's agenda. 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 well 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. For those calling in, please follow the prompts via the phone. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order the testifier sign up or raise their hands. For those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added. Staff will then call the name you're logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it is your turn to testify. At that time Staff will also enable your microphone and video. If you wish to testify anonymously, please notify Staff. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you are still testifying beyond that time, I will kindly ask you to please complete your testimony. Once you are done testifying or if you do not wish to testify, you can also view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. We will do our best to take up each person in an orderly fashion, and we will now call on testifiers wishing to testify at the beginning of the meeting. Staff, can we please call our first testifier?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The first individual signed up to testify is Christopher Fishkin, to be followed by Sam Small. *(Audio interference)* is unmuted on our end.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Mr. Fishkin. Why don’t we go to our next testifier. We can call him when we’re done.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The next testifier is Sam Small.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Mr. Small. Is he unmuted on our end? If you could unmute on your end, you can begin your three minutes of testimony.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. He’s unmuted on our end.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Do we have anybody else signed up?

MS. MACDONALD: Just those two, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Well, why don’t we --

MR. SMALL: Wait a minute.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh.

MR. SMALL: Hang on.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay, we can hear you.

MR. FISHKIN: Hello. Hello.

MR. SMALL: Hi, we were previous...neither of us were previously unmuted until just now.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Well, if Mr. Fishkin is on, he can testify, since his name was signed up first, and then Mr. Small, you can follow.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. SMALL: Sounds good to me.

MR. FISHKIN: Okay, can you hear me?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We can.

MR. FISHKIN: Can you see me?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We cannot.

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MR. FISHKIN: Why not?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: I’m not too sure.

MR. FISHKIN: I mean I’m...I mean I can see all of you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah, your name is just in a bubble. But we can hear you.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: You have a screen...do you have like something over your camera, so that it’s blocking --

MR. FISHKIN: No, nothing. Nothing over the camera. It went on at the beginning.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Mr. Small’s camera is blocked. Mr. Fishkin’s camera we can’t see. But you’re welcome to continue to testify.

MR. FISHKIN: Okay, well I’ll just...I’ll continue to testify. You don’t need to see my good looking face. Okay. I’m going to be testifying on all three resolutions. Briefly on two and mostly on 24-13, the reso. Good afternoon, Councilmembers. I’m Christopher Fishkin of Maui Public Advocacy. I was a paralegal for one of Mr. Salem’s attorneys in the subject matter case before you requesting additional funding for special counsel. Being that it’s lent, it must be penance for you having to listen to me, so I will try to be helpful. As many of you are aware, I conducted an investigation pertaining to violations of the Administration’s procurement of special counsel KSG in this case. I also requested access to government records from Corp. Counsel, who handled the procurement for the Finance Director. They denied me access to what I requested, that is the billing invoices of special counsel to date and the names of the selection committee members, which are Corp. Counsel attorneys responsible for qualifying KSG attorneys to be special counsel. Upon Corp. Counsel’s denial, I contacted the OIP, which determined that Corp. Counsel’s response to me was “indeed incomplete,” quote and quote, “defective”. The OIP letter to Corp. Counsel informing them about that, as well as my official letter to Scott Toriso *[sic]* of...the Chief Procurement Officer now for the Administration are in my written testimony. Two important things to note. First, one of the attorneys who is a partner at KSG, Craig Shikuma, was not one of the attorneys who was in the procurement letter requesting to be qualified for procurement. And this attorney has been actively representing the County as special counsel, and quite poorly I might add. KSG attorney Max Ching also in a recent filing was not validly procured as special counsel either. So, they were not lawfully procured to represent the County as of about a week ago when I received that qualification letter from Corp. Counsel. Moreover these attorneys have misrepresented the claims in this case to the court, which is exposing the County to additional liability. Second, you are deciding upon authorizing new funding for a reso

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brought to you by Corp. Counsel on special counsel's behalf. They only made that resolution after I called out special counsel for clearly exceeding the previous funding authorization as their work product has been far in excess of that amount. So, where are the invoices between then and this additional funding request for all the previous work done? Has some other funding source like a Corp. Counsel slush fund paid any of these invoices? In violation of your funding authorization, because essentially special counsel is trying to cover their okole and other administrative directors in this case. Your special counsel wrote in a letter to Mr. Salem, which I've included in testimony, that it would be unlawful for them to settle on these claims by enforcing County laws, rules, or ordinances as part of a settlement. Did you actually approve that? I doubt it. Because that has to be approved by the client, which is both you and the Administration. Of course, you didn't see that letter, which is also a violation of the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct, which should result in disciplinary action against Mr. Shikuma. This is the tip of an iceberg, and they are the captain of your County Titanic. You have more problems coming down the line with this case than you can shake a stick at. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Councilmembers, included in my written testimony is a summary --

MS. MACDONALD: This is timer for the first item.

MR. FISHKIN: -- of Mr. Salem's case. Excuse me. Can I just finish this last sentence that I was reading, please?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yep, you can. And then you got to move on to the next.

MR. FISHKIN: Councilmembers, included in my written testimony is a summary of Mr. Salem's case so you can better understand why the Administration has been concealing records for decades pertaining to how the deferral agreements and the SMA permits work together to defraud the County. In this case Mr. Salem was just caught in the middle of that and has been trying to undue the harm to him and the County ever since. Thank you. Do I get to be asked any questions on that or do I go through all the others first?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You can go to the others, and then at the end of your testimony, we can ask you questions.

MR. FISHKIN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You're welcome.

MR. FISHKIN: So, thank you. So, the...as far as the resolution authorizing the McCorriston firm to represent the County, I just want to say that they are a very good firm, and I think they'll do very well. They're actually witnesses, ironically,

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to Christopher Salem's case. They wrote a letter to the County some time back confirming his claims to be noted. Secondly, the other resolution which revolves around Ron Ogomori. I just want to mention that he was the attorney that represented the Sand Hills development when Pat Wong had this Council buy it back from them when there was an affordable housing development proposal on the table. I have requested for decades forensic...a forensic review of Ron Ogomori and Pat Wong because Pat Wong never gave his...the former Corp. Counsel never gave his tax records to this Council, and so I personally believe that there was a private deal there that never got investigated. So, I'm just putting all this stuff on the table for whatever it's worth. And I am done. Thank you. If you have any questions, I am absolutely available to answer them.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Members, do we have any questions? Member Johnson, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Fishkin. I just want to clarify, what letter were you talking about? Do you know the date that letter was sent?

MR. FISHKIN: Oh, it is...yes, I do. But it's...hold on. I can tell you right now. The letter that I was just referring to in testimony you mean?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. FISHKIN: Yes. That...the letter was dated October 13th, 2023.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you for clarifying that up. Thank you, Chair. No further questions.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Johnson.

MR. FISHKIN: No further questions for me about any of this investigation I've done freely at my own expense. Okay. Thank you very much, Councilmembers. Have a nice day.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You too. Mr. Small, your three minutes can begin.

MR. SMALL: Yeah, well it's going to be more because all three of your resos. So, we'll start --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Sounds good.

MR. SMALL: Thank you. We'll start with Chris Salem's case and KSG directly. You know, I usually start saying that it's a pleasure to participate in the democratic process, but it's getting a little dicey. We're losing our ground here in our

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democracy, even this chat...this new format that I have to use. Bluejeans worked great. It actually had a side chat that I was able to communicate with Councilmembers privately that proved very valuable, and that's been removed here, and I think that's at the public's disadvantage. All right. So, getting on to Chris Salem, I'm sorry. Does something about this case feel off to you, Corporation Counsel's vigorous defending of themselves? Has Corporation Counsel ever been recused? Have the court forced Corporation Counsel to not represent the County? It happened this time, because Corporation Counsel is itself the source of the problem. Corporation Counsel wrote and hid from everyone thousands of deferral agreements that allowed developers to skip out for paying their capital improvement contributions to County projects for over 40 years. A program got killed because Chris Salem blew the whistle on it. Why is Corp. Counsel committing decades of obstruction regarding the deferral agreements? Because those deferral agreements also contain and hide fraud by department directors in SMA and subdivision permits, and every citizen has standing on SMA and subdivision permit fraud. So, this issue is not just about Chris Salem; this issue is about all Maui citizens, and it's not going to go away. If you think the fraud that allowed developers to avoid infrastructure improvement like firebreaks and waterlines for fire hydrants, if avoiding that infrastructure...building that infrastructure, if you think that that was not a contributing factor to the devastation in Lahaina, there are no kind words to describe you. And that is going to be dredged up by the lawyers who are suing everybody in sight over the fire. The County's negligence in...in...in supervising these directors and Corporation Counsel is going to get you in trouble. And you have the responsibility because the Council has the authority and the obligation to perform investigations into past behaviors by the departments. You can't tell them what to do, but analyzing their past behavior is part of your job. We've got to --

MS. MACDONALD: This is the timer for the first item.

MR. SMALL: Great. We'll move over into...into the fire or whatever you want to call it. We...we...we finally educated the Council. Maybe David Raatz will tell you all about the phone call that we all had with Mike Molina to explain to the Councilmember that the County has...the Council has the authority to investigate any department actions, and you have to do that with the fire. You have to do that with all the contributing factors, and that includes the deferral agreements. The Coun...Corporation Counsel penetrated the independence of the County auditor. They got the auditor to shut down his audit of the deferral agreements. That is not legitimate. That is a public issue, and the County will be held accountable for it. We're not going away. KSG here, Mr. Fishkin just detailed you, you know, how the procurement of KSG in this case is completely fraud...in the Salem case is completely fraudulent. That will come back to bite this Council today because you're accepting lies from Corporation Counsel. I...I

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was in court last week where KSG attorney lied directly to Judge Cahill saying that Chris Salem's emails and work product were destroyed, that the hard drives were wiped clean when his employment was terminated. That does not happen. No one in the department would ever consider that that being appropriate procedure. Chris Salem, you know, is there...was there working for the County documenting these many issues of fraud and corruption from within the department, because I helped convince Mike Victorino that that would be a good thing. He was going to be the man who fixed all of this crap, and obviously Corp. Counsel got the better of him and shut him down. But we're not going away. So, KSG is going to ask you for \$75,000 today; that is way under what they've already spent. Are they going to bill you retroactively for the work that they've already done? It's probably over half a million dollars by now. I've been tracking --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Small, if you could stick to the agenda item as posted, because your three minutes for the other one has expired. So, if you would like to move on and stay on task, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

MR. SMALL: Thank you very much for your indulgence. These issues are conflated, and it's difficult to just stay on one of them. That's why this is such an important issue. It's not necessarily about Chris Salem. It's about the issues that he blew the whistle on. And we, as citizens, have a right to pursue this, and you're being asked to destroy that right in court. So, please consider that --

MS. MACDONALD: Timer for the second item.

MR. SMALL: -- and thank you very much for your time.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You're welcome. You still have time for the last item if you said you were going to, but if not...if you're done, we can ask the Members if they have any questions for your...regarding your testimony. Okay, Members do you have any questions for Mr. Small? Seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. SMALL: We'll be back.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Sounds good. Staff, do we have any more testifiers waiting?

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, we have one other individual, Jasee Kanawai.

MR. LAW: Aloha awakea, Chair U'u-Hodgins, and Councilmembers, and distinguished guests of the Chambers. I'm glad you're my friend, Madam Chair, because if I ever have to sue the County for my violation of freedom of speech, then I would know you'll be impartial and give me a fair hearing.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Any questions? Seeing none. Any more testifiers?

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, there’s currently no one else who is signed up to testify. If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know or on Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand. This is going to be final call. Three, two, one. Chair, it appears that nobody wishes to testify.

. . . END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Let’s proceed with our agenda.

**GREAT-11(38) LITIGATION MATTERS (RESOLUTION 24-13, RELATING TO
AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR
SPECIAL COUNSEL KOBAYASHI SUGITA & GODA, LLP, IN
CHRISTOPHER SALEM V. COUNTY OF MAUI, ET AL., CASE
2CCV-21-0000048)**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We have before us Resolution 24-13, entitled “AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL KOBAYASHI SUGITA & GODA, LLP, IN CHRISTOPHER SALEM V. COUNTY OF MAUI, ET AL., CIVIL NO. 2CCV-21-0000048.” Resolution 24-13’s purpose is to authorize additional compensation in the amount of \$75,000 to Kobayashi Sugita and Goda, LLP, as special counsel to represent the County of Maui, Richard T. Bissen, Jr., in his official capacity and Kathleen Aoki in her official capacity in the case noted in the title of the resolution. At this time, I’m going to request opening comments from Deputy Corporation Counsel Gores. Mr. Gores.

MR. GORES: Yes, we’re here today to request additional funding as stated in the resolution. Any questions, I’d be happy to answer them in executive session.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Okay, before we get into discussion, if we could do one last call on testimony for this item, GREAT-11(38).

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair there is currently no one who is signed up to testify. If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know or on Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand. This is final call. Three, two, one. Chair, it appears that nobody wishes to testify.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay, thank you. Members, seeing there are no individuals wishing to testify on this item, without objection, I will now close oral testimony.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

. . .END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(38). . .

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. And written testimony is continuing to be accepted. Members, let’s start with the three-minute questioning period before we move into executive session, if need be. So, Mr. Gores, if you have anything you’d like to share with us in open session, we can do so and ask questions on that. If not, we can move into executive session if we’re ready.

MR. GORES: I would request we move into executive session.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. So moved. Thank you. Okay, let me find my notes. Give me a second. Okay. Members, we will now entertain a motion, which we did, to move into executive session in accordance with Section 92-5(a)(4), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to consult with legal counsel on questions and issues pertaining to the powers, duties, privileges, immunities --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Watching your faces.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Can we please mute them? And liabilities of the County, the Council, and the Committee; and Section 92-5(a)(8), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to deliberate or make a decision upon the matter that requires the consideration of information that can be kept confidential pursuant to the State or Federal law, or a court order.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So, moved.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Second.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: And we have a motion made by Councilmember Sugimura, and a seconded by Councilmember Kama to move into executive session for this item, GREAT-11(38). Is there any further discussion? Member Johnson, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Chair, real quick. I know we can ask certain things in executive session that we can’t ask out here, so I wanted to kind of ask, can we get a breakdown of the case, but we want to go right into executive session, or I may have to come back out here and ask that?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Sure. Well, a couple of things, this isn’t the first time we’ve had this case in our committee, so you should be relatively familiar about the basics.

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If he would like to provide us a brief overview before we go into executive session...is that what you want Member Johnson? We can do that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Sure. If you can provide us any information in open session, I’d appreciate that, Mr. Gores.

MR. GORES: Sure. This matter has been litigated for quite some time by Mr. Salem against the County. And there has been extensive motion practice. There was a settlement conference that failed. And the matter for trial has been continued, and I don’t recall the date at which the new trial date is set. I don’t think it has been, at least the last I had heard. But that will be coming up, and I anticipate based on the history there will likely be additional motion practice.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. I just wanted to inform the public of where we were at and at this point in time. So, thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Okay. Well, I appreciate that discussion. Do we need any further discussion before we vote? You good? Okay. Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Sorry.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: That’s okay.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Can you hear me?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We can.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay. I was wondering if Mr. Gores can explain what is a motion practice for us non-lawyers.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: He can.

MR. GORES: Most generally motion practice is requesting the court to take some type of action as requested in the motion. And it can vary from almost anything depending on what the petitioner or the movement is asking for at that point in time.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: And to clarify, the petitioner is us?

MR. GORES: There have been motions made by both sides throughout this lawsuit.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, okay. And we’re the petitioner?

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MR. GORES: We would be the movant with motion; we would be the respondent when we were opposing; and Mr. Salem would have been the movant when we were responding.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, okay. So, it's fluid.

MR. GORES: Fair assessment. Yes.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay, got it. Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. We have any further discussion before we take the vote? You have a discussion, Member Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So, I just have a question.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: In the resolution, it says that Kathleen Aoki in her official capacity, but now that we have a new planning director, does that name have to be substituted or does it not matter?

MR. GORES: Good question. I anticipate there will be another motion to substitute.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Any more discussion before we take the vote to go into executive session? Member Paltin, go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify, so then Ms. Aoki is no longer...have anything to do with this? She's off the hook?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Gores, that's definitely for you.

MR. GORES: I think I would like to answer these questions in executive session at this point if I may.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: It's fine with me.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Main thing they get answered.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yep. Okay. All those in favor to move into executive session, please raise your hand and say "aye".

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that's nine "ayes", zero "noes", motion carries.

VOTE: **AYES:** **Chair U'u-Hodgins, Vice-Chair Paltin,
Councilmembers Cook, Johnson, Kama,
Lee, Rawlins-Fernandez, Sinenci, and
Sugimura.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ABSENT: **None.**

EXC.: **None.**

MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION: **APPROVE; RECESS open meeting and
CONVENE executive meeting.**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. For the record, the following personnel will be attending the executive session meeting. All Councilmembers in attendance, including myself, Committee Chair Nohe U'u-Hodgins, Committee Vice-Chair Tamara Paltin, Councilmember Tom Cook, Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Councilmember Tasha Kama, Council Chair Alice Lee, Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Councilmember Shane Sinenci, and Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura. Office of Council Services Staff include Richard E. Mitchell, Legislative Attorney, and Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary, as well as Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary. And from Corporation Counsel, if you could please state your name, even though I know it's John Gores, for the record and your title, please.

MR. GORES: John Gores, Deputy Corporation Counsel, and Corporation Counsel Victoria Takayesu will be present.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. And at this time, we will --

MR. GORES: Actually, no, she won't be.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. So, just you, Mr. Gores. Okay. Just you for the record,

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Deputy Corporation Counsel. And at this time, I am going to call for a 10-minute recess until 2:24 p.m. for us to get settled into executive session meeting. Members, if you could stay placed, and Committee Staff will move you into our closed session. Thank you. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 2:14 p.m.

RECONVENE: 3:44 p.m.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . . (gavel). . . Good afternoon. Will the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee please reconvene. It is 3:44 p.m. Members, we have just completed our executive session meeting on Item GREAT-11(38), and I am now going to refer to Remi to please provide us a summary in accordance with Act 19 (2023), please.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. The Members...the Committee discussed Resolution 24-13, entitled "AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL KOBAYASHI, SUGITA AND GODA, LLP, IN CHRISTOPHER SALEM V. COUNTY OF MAUI" litigation and specifically the request for additional compensation in the amount of \$75,000 to the firm. No other non-litigation or compensation related matters were discussed.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Remi. Members, is there any further discussion? Is there any further discussion before we move on to Chair's recommendation?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Recommendation.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. I'd like to entertain a motion to recommend the adoption of Resolution 24-13, including any non-substantive revisions.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So moved.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Second.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Can we decide? Okay. Motion made by Councilmember Sugimura, seconded by Councilmember Kama. Any further discussion? No. Seeing none, all those in favor, please raise your hand and say "aye."

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that's eight "ayes", zero "noes", one excused, Councilmember Cook. Motion carries.

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VOTE: **AYES:** **Chair U‘u-Hodgins, Vice-Chair Paltin,
Councilmembers Johnson, Kama, Lee,
Rawlins-Fernandez, Sinenci, and
Sugimura.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ABSENT: **None.**

EXC.: **Councilmember Cook.**

MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 24-13.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you, Members. Member Paltin, before we continue, if you could please for the record state your location, and if there is any peoples with you.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you. I am in my car. I’m going to be going to the townhall at the Civic. I’m gonna...I have one unnamed minor, and I’m going to pick up a named adult, Angela Lucero.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. Okay. Moving on, Members, we have before --

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Paltin.

**GREAT-11(31) LITIGATION MATTERS: RESOLUTIONS 24-16 AND 24-17,
RELATING TO ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR SPECIAL
COUNSEL IN LITIGATION MATTERS ARISING FROM THE
AUGUST 2023 WILDFIRES)**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We have before us Resolution 24-16 entitled, “AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL MCCORRISTON MILLER MUKAI MACKINNON, LLP IN LITIGATION

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MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AUGUST 2023 WILDFIRES ON THE ISLAND OF MAUI,” and Resolution 24-17, entitled “AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL MEYERS NAVE IN LITIGATION ARISING FROM THE AUGUST 2023 WILDFIRES ON THE ISLAND OF MAUI.” Resolution 24-16 and Resolution 24-17’s purpose are to authorize additional compensation in the amount of \$250,000 to McCorriston Miller Mukai and MacKinnon, LLP, and \$250,000 to Meyers Nave, as special counsels to represent the County of Maui in current and anticipated litigation matters related to the August 2023 wildfires on the Island of Maui. At this time, I’m going to request open...opening comments from Corporation Counsel.

MS. TAKAYESU: Good afternoon, everyone and thank you. We are here to request additional compensation for the two firms that we have retained to assist us in defending the litigation involving the wildfires. To just give you a snapshot of where we are right now, we have approximately 83 cases that have been filed against the County. We’re representing approximately 363 plaintiffs and entities. That is what it is at current, but new cases are being filed every day. At present, we are also divided jurisdictionally between our Federal courts and our State court, which means that that divides our ability, of course, to litigate. I think you’ll find that the firms that we have retained who are present on this call, Mr. Jordan Inafuku from McCorriston, Ms. Deborah Fox from Meyers Nave, are also available to discuss these cases with you and why they feel that additional compensation is required. We have at this time exceeded or are about to exceed the invoices that we are being billed for, so we’re here to request Council’s approval of additional compensation. Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify on this item?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The first and only individual signed up to testify is Christopher Salem.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Is Mr. Salem unmuted on our end?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. He’s unmuted on our end. Christopher, if you want to unmute yourself, there’s the camera and mic icon in the top right corner. If there’s a line through it, it means you’re muted.

MR. SALEM: There we go. How about now?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We can hear you now. Yep, you’re good.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(31). . .

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MR. SALEM: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Council Chair. Thank you, Councilmembers. I wasn't prepared to testify today, but there is...you know, the nexus between these three matters I think I'll warrant a little bit of further insight and dialogue. In regards to the McCorriston firm, I would support a hundred percent whatever is necessary to defend the County of Maui. As mentioned earlier, McCorriston firm represented my housing group, Anuenue Housing Group, which is the entity that's...we are the ones who resolved the Palama Drive litigation. That was not resolved by Corporation Counsel. It was a wonderful gentleman on the nationwide affordable housing who I grew up with in San Clemente, who spent a year and a half with Randy Schmidt from McCorriston and Ron Okomori. There's a nexus to the next item. And that complexed litigation was settled by us. Unfortunately, which is a parallel here---and I need to mention that I was trying to testify earlier on the other item and I don't know why in this new system it wouldn't let me in, so I feel a little bit of prejudice of not being able to testify prior to the executive session. That was not fair, but...and I would like the opportunity to do so before this meeting is over with. So, I support the McCorriston firm. I can tell you what they did for Palama Drive in that situation for the Cabebes, et cetera, and also a very, very troubling situation at the end with Adrian Owen, who actually died of cancer fighting that battle and as that land still sits there. We had an amazing affordable...hundred percent affordable housing project all ready to go. My background, many Members may not know me, but I built over 450 residential units in my career, and I was fully prepared, and we were as an affordable housing company, to show this County how it's done nationwide to actually build out that development. Unfortunately, that settlement agreement, which I think is the nexus to today, was withheld from the Maui County Council. Mayor Victorino has affirmed that. Instead, the developer was paid upwards to \$13 million. They originally wanted \$22 million. Through my expertise, we negotiated that down by proving that they actually...the civil engineer Unemori--the same name comes up--intentionally violated the grading ordinances which allowed that project to get approved. So, I feel it's important just for a little bit of credibility in all of this, because I don't understand--and I'll speak to the next item when it's appropriate. I don't understand why you people are doing this to my family. What have I done wrong, except for to uphold your laws? Why are you allowing...it was nine hours of depositions and getting drilled by KSG about trying to paint me as some villain on the ninth floor. When I spent hours and hours on COVID and in the Olowalu fires helping our community. I live in West Maui. It's horrific what my children and their friends' families are dealing with. I'm going to come back, and I want to be able to speak to my item, but I don't know why you're doing this to my family. You have driven us to poverty. All I've done is bring you recovery, and I can't deal with it anymore. I lay in bed and I look at these rafters up there and I just literally...all I visualize is a rope and ending this life. If I didn't have two children, I would end this life. You have destroyed my life by not standing next

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to me. Thank you. I'll speak to the next item when it's time. You have destroyed my family.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Salem. Members, do we have any questions for Mr. Salem before we take our next testifier? Seeing none. Thank you. Staff, next testifier, please.

MS. MACDONALD: There's currently no one else who is signed up to testify. If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Sorry.

MS. MACDONALD: Oh, I see an individual coming to the podium now.

MR. LAW: Jasee Law.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: One moment.

MR. LAW: They're confused all like me there, Mr. Salem. Thank you, Remi. Madam Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You're good to go, Mr. Law. Go ahead.

MR. LAW: If you'll indulge me, I just wanted to tell Christopher Salem that somebody is listening. It's not...the Council is kind of in between; it's not really their fault I guess. Thank you. I leave the rest of my time to the people of Hawai'i.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Staff, do we have any other testifiers?

MS. MACDONALD: No. We...sorry, Chair. We don't have any other testifiers. I can do one last call.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Please.

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

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, seeing there are no individuals wishing to testify, without objection, I will now close oral testimony for this item.

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

. . .END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(31). . .

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. And as a reminder, written testimony will continue to be accepted. Members, we will now move on to a three-minute questioning period with a one-minute follow-up round for the things we can discuss in open session. So, if anybody has questions before we move on. Oh my gosh, does anybody have questions? Are we sure? Okay. Oh, Member Paltin. Go ahead, Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I would like to know what we can know in open session if there is anything we can know?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Me too.

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. Well, as discussed, we are looking at over 80 individual lawsuits. Again, representing a multitude of plaintiffs and entities, with more coming every day. Our inhouse department is...has only so much resources to expend on the defense of all of these cases, so it is imperative that we continue to use the law firms that we have retained in order to assist us in getting the best possible defenses for the County. If there’s a specific question, I can answer it, but because this does, you know, involve litigation and our special counsel, I think I’d prefer to answer any other questions in executive session if they are more detailed.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I just have a follow up. So, it’s about...we’re about maybe seven...six, seven months out from the fire itself and maybe six...five, six months since we retained special counsel. This tranche that is being asked for, it’s not supposed to see us through to the end of things. It’s just to tie us over until like another five months pass or so?

MS. TAKAYESU: They're...well, we have some issues I think we could discuss more in-depth in executive session, but I would...I would project that at the end, their bill will...this...this money that we’re requesting today will not carry us all the way through to the end of litigation.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Members. Member Sinenci.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. I was just curious, these funds do not come out of like the settlement fund? It's from another?

MS. TAKAYESU: These funds are coming out of our own general fund. They are self-insured retention. This is what's...we're paying out until we reach the limit where insurance...we can tender it to our insurance carrier.

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

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Of course. Members, any other questions before we move into executive session? No. Okay. Seeing none, I will entertain a motion to convene in executive meeting in accordance with Section 92-5(a)(4), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to consult with legal counsel on questions and issues pertaining to the powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities of the County, the Council, and the Committee; and Section 92-5(a)(8), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to deliberate or make a decision upon a matter that requires the consideration of information that must be kept confidential pursuant to a State or Federal law, or a court order.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So moved.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Second.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Motion made by Member Sugimura, second by Member Kama. One second, as we confirm some things. Give us a minute, Members. Okay. Members, one second. Remi is going to have to provide us some legal advice in the moment, so Remi.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. I believe Member Paltin has someone else in her car. Is that correct, Member Paltin?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: That's correct, but I'm passing Kā'anapali Parkway right now, and when we get to Lahaina Civic, I can lock myself alone in the car, and I can have them do my other work that I'm supposed to take care of.

MR. MITCHELL: Member Paltin, how far away are you from the Civic Center?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I would guesstimate five to ten minutes, but there is quite a bit of traffic. I don't know if you guys are aware, but there's only one way in and one way out of West Maui. And so the eight o'clock and four o'clock hours are the worst times to be traveling. There is no rapid transportation from Central to West Maui, as was alluded to earlier. So, I'd say ten minutes. Maybe less.

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Member Paltin. I think what we would like to do is proceed with the vote for executive session without you voting if that's okay, because you would count towards the vote, but there's no ability to bring you into the meeting timely since it's going to take you maybe ten minutes to get to where you are, so we might need to have you excluded from executive session.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, or your other option would be to recess for five to ten minutes now to allow her to get there, then we take the vote and then go into executive session.

MR. MITCHELL: Your pleasure, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Or, we're passing . . . *(inaudible)*. . . right now and it's pretty smooth sailing. I think I could be there in five minutes.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Let's take a seven-minute recess. Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I support a recess so that Member Paltin can be included. I was also wondering for future reference if all Councilmembers would need to be present at time of gaveling in into executive session, because I think I've been late before.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Good question. Not for me, though. Remi.

MR. MITCHELL: We can...let's see. Let me think about this question. No, because we can take a recess if a member, who we have previously identified is going to be in executive session, then shows up late, but we've already identified them. So, but I think it would be safer, as you've indicated, to take a recess now --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yep.

MR. MITCHELL: -- for a few minutes, and that way we can have the vote and then have Member Paltin present in the meeting and skip that issue.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: For sure.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: We're turning left into the Civic past the post office.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay, so you have *(audio interference)* minutes?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Two minutes.

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Is there any other questions? Well, since we have two minutes, is there any other questions we have for Corp. Counsel before we move into executive session? Member...Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Can I just say something to Member Paltin?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Sure, I think.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I don't think I can make the meeting today, Member Paltin. Okay.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay, we'll let you know how it goes, and I'll communicate that in English.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Muchos gracias.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Muchos gracias.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: De nada.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Well, how about we take a three-minute recess to return at 4:07? Member Rawlins-Fernandez, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yep.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Did we already do the motion and vote? Because that kind of takes like a minute or two.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, so the part of the issue is, is whether or not Member Paltin can vote to go in executive session. I think that was part of the discussion we were having as well. So, we're going to hold off on the vote so she can participate in the vote and then go into executive session with us.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I don't understand. Why would she not be able to vote right now to go into executive session?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: That's what they told me. So, we can have somebody else --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I don't think that's correct.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: We can have somebody else answer you.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Mitchell?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yep.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, so currently Councilmember Paltin is not in a secure location, but we need to confirm that she's in a secure location before we go into executive session.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I'm (*audio interference*) secure location.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Right. But my question is, can we do the motion and take the vote, because it takes a couple of minutes to read the long list of names of all the people who will be executive session, so instead of just killing time, we can get that done. She can vote; it's open session.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Yes, but we would like her to be in a secure location before we take the vote so we can make sure she's in a secure location for the public to see, because once we recess into executive session, they won't know where she is.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I'm in a secure --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: And then because now on Teams it just kind of moves over. We all just stay where we are and we transition into executive session. It's just a little bit cleaner if we take a few minutes now.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Looks like she's in a secure location.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: We're going to give her a moment to not give us motion sickness with the camera. Are you in a secure location?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Sorry.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: No, you're good.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I'm locked in my car alone, by myself.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. We're locked and loaded. All right. So, perfect timing. Okay. So, now we had a motion made by Councilmember Sugimura, seconded by Councilmember Kama to enter into executive session for Item GREAT-11(31). Is there any further discussion before we take the vote? Seeing none. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say "aye".

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: All those opposed say “no”. Aye. We have eight --

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that’s eight “ayes”, zero “noes”, one excused, Councilmember Cook. Motion carries.

**VOTE: AYES: Chair U‘u-Hodgins, Vice-Chair Paltin,
 Councilmembers Johnson, Kama, Lee,
 Rawlins-Fernandez, Sinenci, and
 Sugimura.**

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

EXC.: Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED.

**ACTION: APPROVE; RECESS open meeting and
 CONVENE executive meeting.**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. For the record, the following personnel will be attending the executive session meeting. All Councilmembers in attendance, including myself, Committee Chair Nohe U‘u-Hodgins, Committee Vice-Chair Tamara Paltin, Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Councilmember Tasha Kama, Council Chair Alice Lee, Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Councilmember Shane Sinenci, and Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura. Office of Council Services Staff include Richard E. Mitchell, Legislative Attorney, Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary, and Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary. And now please list the names and titles of Corporation Counsel who will be in our executive session meeting please.

MS. TAKAYESU: Yes, Chair. Thank you, Kristin Tarnstrom, Deputy Corporation, Thomas Kolbe, Deputy Corporation Counsel, also available is Jordan Inufuku, from McCorrison, and Deborah Fox from Meyers Nave our special counsel will also be available in executive session to answer questions and give updates. Oh, and myself.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: And yourself.

MS. TAKAYESU: I’m Victoria Takayesu.

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. So, Members, at this time I'm going to call for three-minute recess to reconvene at 4:11. And Members, stay right there and we will be moved into our session. Thank you. We are now in recess. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 4:08 p.m.

RECONVENE: 5:11 p.m.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . .(gavel). . . Will the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting please reconvene. It is 5:11 p.m. Members, we have just completed our executive session meeting on Item GREAT-11(31). And if Remi could please provide us a summary in accordance with Act 20...Act 19 (2023). Remi.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. The body discussed the Resolutions 24-16 and 24-17 in relating to additional compensation for special counsel in litigation matters arising from the August 2023 wildfires, GREAT-11(31). No other matters were discussed.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Remi. Is there any further discussion before we go on to the recommendation? Anything else?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Recommendation, please.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay, thank you. I would like to entertain a motion to recommend the adoption of Resolution 24-16 and Resolution 24-17, including any non-substantive revisions.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So moved.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Second.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Motion made by Councilmember Sugimura, and seconded by Councilmember Kama. Any further discussion? No. Seeing none, all those in favor, please raise your hand and say "aye."

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that's seven "ayes", zero "noes", two excused, Councilmembers Cook and Paltin. Motion carries.

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VOTE: **AYES:** **Chair U‘u-Hodgins, Councilmembers
Johnson, Kama, Lee, Rawlins-Fernandez,
Sinenci, and Sugimura.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ABSENT: **None.**

EXC.: **Vice-Chair Paltin and Councilmembers
Cook.**

MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS 24-16 AND 24-17.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you, Members. This item will move on to full Council for its consideration. Now moving on.

**GREAT-11(37) LITIGATION MATTERS (RESOLUTION 23-248, RELATING TO
SPECIAL COUNSEL AUTHORIZATION: RONALD T. OGOMORI TO
REPRESENT HERMAN ANDAYA IN AMIR HOSSEIN SHEIKHAN,
ETC., ET AL., V. HAWAIIAN ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES, ETC., ET
AL., CASE 2CCV-23-0000260)**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We have before us Resolution 23-248, entitled “AUTHORIZING THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL RONALD T. OGOMORI, ATTORNEY AT LAW, A LAW CORPORATION, TO REPRESENT HERMAN ANDAYA IN AMIR HOSSEIN SHEIKHAN, ETC., ET AL. V. HAWAIIAN ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES, ETC., ET AL., CIVIL NO. 2CCV-23-0000260.” Resolution 23...23-284’s [sic] purpose is to authorize the employment of Ronald T. Ogomori, Attorney at Law, a Law Corporation, as special counsel to represent Herman Andaya in Amir Hossein Sheikhan, etc. et al. v. Hawaiian Electric Industries, etc. et al., Case 2CCV-23-0000260 for a total compensation amount not to exceed \$150,000. At this time, I’m going to please ask for opening comments from Corporation Counsel.

MS. TAKAYESU: Thank you, Chair. This resolution seeks Council approval to hire special counsel for Herman Andaya, who was named as a defendant in the complaint attached to the resolution. The complaint alleges that Mr. Andaya, as the MEMA administrator, owned a duty to warn the public generally of the pending emergency and breached that duty. All of the facts that are alleged in

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that complaint are considerably within the course and scope of his employment. Typically, the County does provide a defense to its employees when they are sued for acts or omissions that are within the course and scope of their duties. So, as this matter is in active litigation, we are going to request executive session to address further issues in this matter. Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Before we get into discussion, can we please do a last call on testimony for this item GREAT-11(37)?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The first individual signed up to testify is Christopher Salem, to be followed by Sam Small.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Mr. Salem. Is Mr. Salem unmuted on our end, and he just needs to unmute on his?

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, he is unmuted on our end. He’ll just have to unmute the camera and mic button on his end.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair, it doesn’t look like his mic is enabled. It has the circle with the line through it.

MS. MACDONALD: Chair, he is unmuted on our end, but I think it’s showing because he needs to unmute his mic on his end.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, but it has the circle with the line through it. It doesn’t have just a line through the mic. That’s what I’m seeing.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. That’s not what they’re seeing on their end, so...yeah. There might be an interesting Teams issue. Okay, well --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, now it...there’s the line through the mic. Now it should work.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Mr. Salem, please unmute yourself. Okay. Well, maybe we can go to Mr. Small and then we can come back to Mr. Salem after Mr. Small. Can we unmute Mr. Small, please? Thank you.

MR. SMALL: I have been activated. Look at that.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep.

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MR. SMALL: Okay.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep, we can hear you.

. . .BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(37). . .

MR. SMALL: Okay. Before we get into this, if I may, I’m trying to understand how...I tried calling in because I...I needed to leave the computer, and I tried to call in using the telephone number that’s on the agenda that tells me public testimony can be made by calling in, and I entered the code to get to this meeting, and on the telephone my telephone accessed the meeting. There’s no way to raise my hand. So, how can someone call in and testify?

MS. MACDONALD: Sir you should be able...the telephone should prompt you, and it’s star five to be able to raise your hand. Star five.

MR. SMALL: There was no prompt. There was no prompt. I was prompted to enter the code for the meeting, and then I was told you...you will be let in, and then I was let in, and that was the end of it. No more communication, and it’s only a telephone, so there’s no way to...there’s no way to get anybody’s attention. In the online tool, there’s a way to raise your hand.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Mr. Small, if you could please...we hear you. If you could please continue with your testimony, and for future reference, it’s star five.

MR. SMALL: Well, that’s not on your agenda. So, if that’s a part of your instruction --

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. So, would you like to testify on the item we have on the agenda now, because this is not agendized?

MR. SMALL: I will, but this meeting is in violation of Sunshine. Is it not?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: No. Would you like to please testify?

MR. SMALL: How is it not? I tried to call in and testify using my phone as per your instructions, and I wasn’t able to do it. It says nothing about star five. So, unless--I had to come back to be able to raise this issue with you using the online utility not my phone. My...it is a Sunshine violation. How is it not?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Mr. Small, one second. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, did you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I just wanted to note

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Staff's practices. When we do have a phone number, Staff does make the effort to try to ensure that the phone number calling in, if they want to testify, they have that opportunity to testify. I see your number now, but I didn't see a phone number earlier. But I agree with you, Mr. Small, that Teams has been not...nowhere near as user friendly as BlueJeans, and we are trying our best.

MR. SMALL: Is there any intention to go back to BlueJeans?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: BlueJeans is no longer an option.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: BlueJeans no longer exists. Yeah.

MR. SMALL: Okay. Thank you for the distraction. I don't know what to do about, you know, this is...today, I mean--they do their best, but it's not accomplished. So, that's not my...I'm glad they do their best, and they're failing. So, that needs to be addressed. Simply add it to the agenda, you know, star five. Great. Great information. But the fact remains is it's not there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We can look to adding that in, Mr. Small.

MR. SMALL: Okay. Thank you for that.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: If you want to provide your testimony.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Yeah, Mr. Small, we're going to have to move on. We can have this conversation offline, but if you would like to start your testimony. Go ahead.

MR. SMALL: Thank you...thank you very much. Look, the...the...the research that I've done around the law firm and lawyer that is being proposed here is problematic. I would ask you guys to ask for additional disclosures on conflicts of interest, which appears to be based on the procurement of KSG that appears to be problematic. It's something that is not properly pursued. In the KSG situation, you've got attorneys that are representing the County that were never procured. In Ogomori's case, you've got a prior relationship related to Palama Drive, and that's how all these things, you know, are interrelated. Because Christopher Salem was part of an initiative to develop Palama Drive with a 100 percent affordable housing proposal that never got presented to the County Council because of Pat Wong, who was Corporation Counsel at the time. Pat Wong has a...we believe an undisclosed relationship with Ron Ogomori. And Ron Ogomori was representing the developer, Pat Wong was representing the County, and both were involved with the affordable housing proposal that Mr. Salem and his team presented. Pat Wong at the last minute withheld that proposal from the County Council, stating that there were procurement issues over it, that the Council

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could not accept the proposal because it didn't ask for a request from proposals for a third-party to purchase the land, and that that was a procurement violation. But all of a sudden today, this Council is entertaining giving those same properties away to an affordable housing initiative with no procurement provided. There's...they're not paying anything for it. So, there's no...why was Chris Salem's proposal illegal? Because there was no proper procurement. How can the County possibly give the same land away now with no procurement? Because what Pat Wong manufactured as an excuse with Ron Ogomori's participation was a fabricated lie. And we believed that Pat Wong's gambling winnings--which this Council had the opportunity to ask for his tax returns, the specifics, and the Council did not do it. You had the opportunity to verify the citizen's suspicions that those gambling winnings over...up to a million dollars were not gambling winnings. They were related to the side deal that was cut between Pat Wong and Ron Ogomori. I have no direct proof, but there's certainly enough to investigate the situation. And Ron Ogomori is a problem --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. SMALL: -- because of his prior relationship with Pat Wong. So, your disclosure...your lack of disclosure on all of these attorneys is a problem with KSG, it's a problem with Ron Ogomori, and it's a problem with Corporation Counsel, who as Councilmembers --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay, Mr. Small if you could wrap up, please.

MR. SMALL: -- you should not trust. I'm done. Thank you. You should not trust Corporation Counsel, because we will get them to the Supreme Court.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Small. Okay. Thank you very much. Members, do you have any questions for Mr. Small? No. Seeing none. Thank you, Mr. Small. Staff, can you please call the next testifier?

MR. SMALL: Good luck.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. The next testifier is Christopher Salem.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Salem, if you could please unmute yourself on your end.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes. He's been fully unmuted on our end.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Mr. Salem.

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MS. MACDONALD: Christopher, it's still showing that you're unmuted. You are...we've enabled it, so you may just need to go on the top right-hand corner. If there's a line through the camera and mic icon, you'll have to click that to unmute yourself.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Salem? Okay. Well, can you unmute yourself? If not, we will have to move on. Okay. Staff, if you could just please do final call.

MS. MACDONALD: Yes, Chair. There is currently no one else who is signed up to testify. If somebody would like to testify in the Chamber, please let Staff know or on Microsoft Teams, please raise your hand. This is going to be the final call. Three, two, one. Chair, it appears that nobody wishes to testify.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Members, seeing there are no individuals wishing to testify, without objection, I will now close oral testimony, and as a reminder, written testimony is continuing...continue to be accepted.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . .END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON GREAT-11(37). . .

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Members, we'll be implementing a three-minute questioning period, before we move on to executive session, which I assume we will need. So, Members, do we have any questions we would like to ask Corporation Counsel in open session? Member Sugimura, please go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: It may be the same questions that we've been asking you. What can you tell us in open session?

MS. TAKAYESU: Sure. The complaint is a matter of public record. It does make various allegations against several of the plaintiffs. It is the only suit to date that has actually named anyone individually. But again, looking at the allegations, they are all within, in our opinion, the course and scope of Mr. Andaya's employment. So, we do believe that it is appropriate to recognize that he should be represented by special counsel.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Members, any other questions? If not--excuse me. I will entertain a motion to convene in executive session meetings in accordance with Section 92-5(a)(4), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to consult with legal counsel on questions and issues pertaining to the powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities of the County, the Council, and this Committee; and Section 92-5(a)(8), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to deliberate or make a decision upon a matter that requires the consideration of information that must be kept confidential pursuant to a State or Federal law, or a court

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order.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So moved.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Second.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. I have a motion made by Member Sugimura, second by Member Kama to enter into executive session for Item GREAT-11(37). Do we have any further discussion before the vote? No. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say "aye". All those opposed say "no".

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that's seven "ayes", zero "noes", two excused, Councilmembers Cook and Paltin. Motion carries.

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**VOTE: AYES: Chair U‘u-Hodgins, Councilmembers
 Johnson, Kama, Lee, Rawlins-Fernandez,
 Sinenci, and Sugimura.**

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

**EXC.: Vice-Chair Paltin and Councilmember
 Cook.**

MOTION CARRIED.

**ACTION: APPROVE; RECESS open meeting and
 CONVENE executive meeting.**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. For the record, the following personnel will be attending this executive session meeting. All Councilmembers in attendance, including myself, Committee Chair Nohe U‘u-Hodgins, Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Councilmember Tasha Kama, Council Chair Alice Lee, Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Councilmember Shane Sinenci, and Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura. From the Office of Corporation...no, I’m sorry. For the Office of Council Services Staff, we have Richard E. Mitchell, Legislative Attorney, and Pauline Martins, Senior Committee Secretary, and Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary. And now, may I please ask from Deputy...from Corporation Counsel to state who from the department will be with us and their titles, please.

MS. TAKAYESU: Thank you, Chair. Victoria Takayesu, Corporation Counsel. Also present are Deputies Corporation Counsel Thomas Kolbe and Kristin Tarnstrom.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Right now we’re going to take a three-minute recess until 5:32 p.m., and Members just stay right there, we will move you into executive session meeting. We are now in recess. It is 5:29. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 5:29 p.m.

RECONVENE: 6:26 p.m.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: . . .(gavel). . . Good evening, Members. Will the GREAT Committee please reconvene. It is 6:26. Members, we have just completed our executive meeting on Item GREAT-11(37). Remi, if you could please provide us a

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summary in accordance with Act 19 (2023).

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. The body discussed Resolution 23-248 relating to special counsel authorization, Ronald T. Ogomori to represent Herman Andaya in the Amir Hossein Sheikhan versus Hawaiian Electric Industries matter, GREAT-11(37), by discussing the factual, strategic, and liability issues related to the case, and no other matters were discussed.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Remi. Members, do we need any further discussion before we move on to the recommendation? Seeing none, I would like to entertain a motion to recommend the adoption of Resolution 23-248, including any non-substantive revisions.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So moved.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Second.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Motion made by Councilmember Kama, second by Councilmember Sugimura. Any further discussion? Do we need roll call? Okay. Staff, can you please do a roll call vote?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, proceeding with roll call vote. Councilmember Cook.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Excused.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Councilmember Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: No.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Councilmember Kama.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: You can use this mic right in front of you.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Council Chair Alice Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aye.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aye.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Councilmember Shane Sinenci.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aye.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Aye.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Committee Vice-Chair Tamara Paltin.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Excused.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Committee Chair Nohelani U'u-Hodgins.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yes.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, that's six "ayes", one "no", two excused. Motion carries.

**VOTE: AYES: Chair U'u-Hodgins, Councilmembers
 Kama, Lee, Rawlins-Fernandez, Sinenci,
 and Sugimura.**

NOES: Councilmember Johnson.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

**EXC.: Vice-Chair Paltin and Councilmember
 Cook.**

MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 23-248.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you, Members. This item will move on to full Council for its consideration. And this concludes our Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting. Thank you very much, Members. I appreciate your patience. The time is now 6:29, and this meeting is adjourned. . . .(gavel). . .

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ADJOURN: 6:29 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



NOHELANI U'U-HODGINS, Chair
Government Relations, Ethics, and
Transparency Committee

great:min:240227

Transcribed by: Terianne Arreola

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CERTIFICATION

I, Terianne Arreola, hereby certify that pages 1 through 38 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 7th day of March 2024, in Makawao, Hawai'i.



Terianne Arreola