

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

MINUTES

April 3, 2024

Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Social Hall

CONVENE: 6:02 p.m.

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

STAFF: Paige Greco, Committee Analyst
Samantha Tanck, Committee Analyst
Maria Leon, Committee Secretary
Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary

Additional staff

Executive Assistant for Councilmember Gabe Johnson:
Axel Beers

Executive Assistant for Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci:
Don Atay

Executive Assistants for Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura:
Jennifer Matsumoto
Michele Yoshimura
Jordan Helle

OTHERS: Paige DePonte
Jay Penniman
Tim Garcia
Will Spence
Lindsay Kosaka
Heather Long
Jennifer McGurn
Kenneth Kosaka

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Greg Smith
Kalena Lee
Marina Starleaf Riker
Shawn Moreland
Zoey Matanane
Arianna Matanane
Abigail Tamayose
Janelle Tamayose
Kyra Gamit
Christine Ho
Kari (Karen) McCarthy
Bruce Harris
Tanja Miller
Debra Lordan
Mick Mehlmauer
Kevin Spellman
Brooke Mahnken
Kassen Liliana Yamashita
Pete Voorhees
Krista Caldwell
Kyle Ellison
Joseph Abraham
Jasee Law

Others (14)

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good evening, everybody. Welcome to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. We're so glad you're here. It is now 6:02 p.m., and we welcome you to our Committee, and we want to hear from you. The purpose of the meeting is so that we, the Councilmembers, can hear from the community some of the issues or concerns you may have, and you want to share that with us. We are reviewing the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget that he gave to us. And we will listen to you. We'll come up with ideas, suggestions from your suggestions, and see what we can do in the budget. So, that's the purpose of this meeting. And so we look forward to hearing more from you. We're taking testimony today. And that is the purpose of the meeting. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I'm the Chair of the Committee. And I'd like to introduce our Chair Lee from Wailuku.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hi, everybody. Hi.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yay, Chair Lee.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yay, Chair Lee. Keani Rawlins-Fernandez is here from Molokai. Thank you. Member Gabe Johnson from Lānaʻi. And we have Tom Cook from South Maui. Thank you, Tom. Member Tasha Kama, she's a Vice-Chair of my Committee. Tamara Paltin, who is, all of you know, from West Maui. And Nohe U'u-Hodgins from Pāʻia, Makawao. And Shane Sinenci from Hāna. So...so, all of us are here. There's nine of us here today. And we are here, really, to listen to you. And if we do have questions, we may ask you after you speak. You will be given three minutes to give your testimony, and we look forward to learning from you. I wanted to also thank Maria Leon, Maria is there, which is OCS Staff...hi, Maria; Jennifer Yamashita, also taking in testifiers; Paige Greco, who will be announcing the speakers tonight; as well as Samantha Tanck. Thank you very much. So we have Chivo from *Akakū* who is filming this so that we can document your testimony for us. And it'll be aired on *Akakū* 53 and *Akakū* Facebook. I think tomorrow we'll put it on our...our County...County site. So, we will get this...your words documented well.

ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BILL 60 (2024), BILL 61 (2024), BILL 62 (2024), BILL 63 (2024), BILL 64 (2024), and RESOLUTION 24-66)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, at this time then, I'd like to call up the first testifier, please.

MS. GRECO: The first testifier is Lindsay Koska [*sic*], to be followed by Kenneth Koska [*sic*].

. . .BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Is this the STEM class from Pukalani? Okay.

MS. KOSAKA: Hello. My name is Lindsay Kosaka. I'm in 4th grade at Pukalani Elementary School. I came here today to speak about STEM, or as some of you know it, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. First, I'd like to speak about what amazing experiences STEM has given me. I mean, I have gotten to tinker with robots and program them in robotics, but tinkering is not all we do. STEM robotics has allowed me and my teammate Christine Ho to travel to Japan, Iowa, and O'ahu, receive a variety of rewards, and simply brought us closer together. Secondly, I would like to talk about what my experience with STEM was like in the past. I remember me being a six-year-old kindergartner, and STEM was the one thing I looked forward to. Not that school was bad, of course, but I just needed freedom, and STEM gave me just

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that. At the time, and now as well, I was looking up to my older brother, Wesley, and robotics was what he did. He was extremely good at what he was doing, and I wanted to be just like him. Now I'm ten years old, but STEM is still my pride and joy. So, I guess what I'm trying to say is that STEM has been an amazing experience for me, and I hope to continue in the future. And this is why we need MEDB funds. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions for...seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Kenneth Kosaka, to be followed by Zoey Matanane.

MR. KOSAKA: Hello, everybody. My name is Kenneth, and I am here to ask you to help fund for the STEM project. STEM has given me great opportunities to learn, and solve problems, and be kinder, and...and...and I enjoy going to STEM. And it helps the students learn about technology. That is...that is why I think you should help the STEM project. Thank you.

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

MS. Z. MATANANE: Aloha. My name is Zoey Matanane, and I'm a...in 5th grade, a part of the Pukalani STEMworks Robotics Team. I'm on the researcher team, and our most recent project has got us all the way to Dallas, Texas. I have been in STEMworks...in the STEMworks Program since kindergarten, and it has impacted so many things in my life. STEMworks has brought me closer to people I haven't met, brought me to places I've never been, and so many more things. STEMworks is a privilege for everyone who has been a part of it, and I'm so glad that I got to experience everything with it, including digital art, robotics, and movie-making. I'd like other kids to be able to experience these amazing privileges, so I hope that you think about continuing to fund the STEMworks Program. Thank you.

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

MS. GRECO: Arianna Matanane, to be followed by Abigail Tamayose.

MS. A. MATANANE: Here. This is good. Aloha. My name is Arianna Matanane, and I'm a junior at Seabury Hall. And today I'm testifying towards the Maui Economic Development Board to continue funds...funding for the STEMworks AFTERSchool programs in Upcountry, Maui. As a junior at Seabury Hall, I can definitely say that this program, STEMworks, has impacted my life greatly, and still continues to. One of the many skills I gained from STEMworks was when I was on the Pukalani research team as a 5th grader, and I learned the skill of

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public speaking, and I would not be here today without STEMworks. And I still use public speaking a lot to this day as a class president, and also when I gave a TEDx speech in 2022. So, I feel that funding towards this program would enhance so many children's skills, and give them lifelong experiences, including traveling and building team working skills. And we would really appreciate you to continue to support this program. Thank you so much.

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

MS. GRECO: Christine Ho...oh, sorry. Christine Ho, to be followed by Paige DePonte.

MS. HO: Aloha. My name is Christine Ho, and I'm a 5th grader at...and I am a part of the Pukalani Elementary School's Robotics Team. I'm on team 10704A with Lindsay Kosaka, and we've done so well this past year. So far we've qualified for the State Championship at O'ahu, the Japan Cup, and most recently qualified for the World Championship, which is an upcoming event held in Dallas, Texas, thanks to our STEM Research Team. We were also able to receive two energy awards and one inspire award together as a team. Some of the...some of the things that this program helped me improve on was better communication, problem solving with others, and creativity. To put some of this years' experience into three words, I'd say exhilarating, challenging, and unexpected. But being able to experience this year wouldn't happen without your funds. The MEDB funds are very crucial to us. We use the money to pay for our airfare to travel, purchase supplies, and much more. I would like to thank the Maui Economic Development Board for granting us this amazing opportunity. We hope that you continue to support our robotics team.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. No questions. Next testifier, please.

MS. GRECO: Paige DePonte, to be followed by Jay Penniman.

MS. DEPONTE: Hi. Good evening, everybody. I want to thank you for your time tonight. I spoke before you guys last year with the request for The Spirit Horse Ranch. I want to give you some updates. I know that the budget is tight this year, and we're hoping that we can inspire you to take another look at Spirit Horse Ranch after I tell you what we've been doing. So, up until August 11th, we had seen about 50 clients, and those were all children. After August 11th, we decided to open our doors, and we were stunned at the response. As of today, we've seen 830 people for equine-assisted services...equine therapy. So, I think that speaks a lot for what our community needs and wants. We've done 55 percent adults and 45 percent children, 0 to 18. As trauma changes--we are trauma-informed care--we are reaching back into really get support for our kids program. We recently heard that Congress approved our earmark, which is awesome, but that takes time. So, it is and has been funded, and I hope that

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will also inspire you that the United States has stepped behind The Spirit Horse Ranch program. It will accomplish a lot for us, but we're still going to need the County support. Our kids need the support. We have reached out to different schools, from Hāna to Lāna'i to Molokai, and with Gabe's help, also reached out and heard back from pretty much every end of the island in the County that our kids need help. Most of it is centered in their home life, and as we know, the whole island has been through a lot. So, instead of asking for money today, to just kind of think about what we want our future to be. And for me, our future is our kids, the kids 11 to 17, where there aren't a lot of programs. They're told to go back to school and to go on. They need help. They don't know how to articulate what's going on with them. We get them with a horse, they start talking. I've been able to hear things from kids that they won't tell anybody. We've been able to prevent suicides in children 9, 10, and 11, 12 years old. So, these are our kids that are our future. They might be sitting here one day. So, I'm asking you to think about that again, to maybe consider putting some funding towards our program so it stays free so that we can help our kids. We will continue to do our free trauma-informed care. We are fund...getting funding for our community and the rest of our adults, including programs for parents. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, did you say you got some Federal funding? You're a line item in the --

MS. DEPONTE: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- Federal budget?

MS. DEPONTE: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

MS. DEPONTE: So it's a...an earmark. So, the earmark was funded. It's just waiting for the writing into law. So, that was...we got an email last week. So, that was stunning, and we're very happy about that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. Congratulations.

MS. DEPONTE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody have questions for her? Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. DEPONTE: Thank you.

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MS. GRECO: Chair, the next testifier is Jay Penniman, to be followed by Abigail Tamayase [sic], and then Kalena Lee.

MR. PENNIMAN: Aloha, Chair Lee, Chair Sugimura, and Members of the Committee. I'm Jay Penniman, I live in Hāmākualoa, and I'm Manager of the Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project. I appreciate the time and dedication you all commit to serving the people as you contemplate the Fiscal 2025 County Budget. We are experiencing an increasing number of our brothers and sisters without homes who are taking up residence in our streets, roads, parks, and shorelines. Unfortunately, there's no infrastructure to support living in these places, so 'ōpala, inevitable wherever people live, is uncontrolled. Please look for compassionate means to address this situation. It appears that there are also individuals carrying out criminal activities associated with many of these unhoused encampments. Social services and law enforcement must be combined and given the funding and tools to clean up our communities. As many of you are aware, I've spent much of my working life striving to restore the 'āina and the wildlife native to our islands. I have focused on the manu o ke kai and the habitats which they depend upon to breed and raise their chicks. I appreciate all the support you have provided over the years, helping to forward the efforts of our projects. Seabirds are ecological engineers who have contributed over millions of years to building the island's soils, and to the health of our nearshore coral reef habitats and communities. As sea levels rise due to our burning of fossil fuels, we must take all practicable steps to ensure the resiliency of our islands. Seabird-derived nutrients can again be a significant driver in restoring coral reef health if we give them the opportunity to thrive. The funding that Maui County has provided to MNSRP to maintain predator control in and around the colony of 'ua'u kani at Kamaole Beach Park III has resulted in an increase from 200 to 2,000 pairs since 2017. Equally important as the predator control is the funding you have provided for outreach to raise awareness of the importance of seabirds among Maui County residents and visitors. My staff of five full-time, three part-time, and two Kupu AmeriCorps service members cannot possibly address all the needs of our seabirds. We depend upon informed citizens to make us aware when they encounter seabirds in distress, and call our hotline number (808) 573-BIRD. In the FY'24 Budget, the Council included us as a line item at a level that would have adequately addressed our budgetary needs for the year. Unfortunately, we are still waiting on execution of that funding. And the Mayor's proposed budget reduces our funding below even what we had been previously allocated. I ask that you please restore us to the FY'24 appropriated funding level. I'd also like to express my appreciation for your long-term commitment to watershed partnerships, the Maui Invasive Species Committee, and all the other organizations working to . . .(timer sounds) . . . restore balance to the environment, 'āina, and kai. Mahalo.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Perfect timing. Anybody have questions for Mister...is that Gabe Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. How about...there we go. So, you've been doing a lot of work with the seabirds. I know I worked with you on Lānaʻi, and the...the...the efforts that we've been doing over the years, has that...I...I know now that it's increased the population, there's new colonies coming up. And by having all of that great work that you're doing, are you finding an increase of down birds from lighting? Is...is that also actually increasing more work for you because there's more of a population growing?

MR. PENNIMAN: We actually have not noticed any increase in the number of birds. It's...it fluctuates more with the timing of the moon and the climate that's happening around. So, as our lights will be beginning to change with the new outdoor lighting ordinance, I think we'll probably even see a reduction in the number of fallout birds that we have to respond to.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you for that clarification, Jay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. GRECO: Abigail Tamayose, to be followed by Kalena Lee.

MS. A. TAMAYOSE: Hi. My name is Abigail Tamayose, and I'm in 8th grade at Kalama Intermediate School. I'm testifying on behalf of Maui Economic Development Board's STEM AFTERSchool Program. I've been in STEMworks since kindergarten, and it's taught me so much. I've done STEN...STEM exploration, coding, movie-making, and robotics at a competitive robotics at Pukalani Elementary School for 4th and 5th grade, and now I do robotics at Kalama. This is my second year driving for my team. We...we recently went on a trip to Japan for the robotics Japan Cup, and it was super fun. We had the opportunity to meet people from Hong Kong, Thailand, and Japan. We won first place and got three awards. In May, we are heading to Texas for the World...World's Championship. Robotics is very challenging, but I'm glad I did it because it gave me the confidence to do whatever I set my mind to. Robotics isn't easy, and pushes me to do my best, and never give up. It has helped me with things like responsibility, and creativity, research, perseverance, and much more. Being in this program also gave me the opportunity to meet new people, make new friends, and learn more things. Thank you for making this happen. This program has given me so many skills that'll help me in the future. It has taught me to dream and to not back down. STEMworks has taught...shown me that I can persevere through tough times and have a future in STEM. Thank you for your time.

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

MS. GRECO: Kalena Lee, to be followed by Tim Garcia.

MS. LEE: Aloha. My name is Kalena Lee. I'm in 3rd grade at Pukalani Elementary School. Here are some reasons why I think STEM is important, and why I like it. I think STEM is important because I...wait...because it helps kids like me to set goals and to...to be problem solvers. Now, I will tell you why I like STEM. One thing I like about STEM is digital art, because I can do things I can't do on a piece of paper. Another thing is I can let my imagination soar. The second thing I like about STEM is coding because it helps kids like me to gain confidence. Mahalo for your support, and thank you.

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

MS. GRECO: Tim Garcia, to be followed by Will Spence.

MR. GARCIA: How does this go up? I would like to say if STEM does this, support STEM. My name is Tim Garcia, I live in Makawao. Thank you, Yuki, for having the Committee on. It's nice to see everybody here. It's really a pleasure to see so many of you all here today. I'm speaking in support of the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center and their Youth and Family Outreach Programs [sic], and the new one, Art with Aloha Programs. Hui No'eau's Youth, Family, Arts Education Outreach Programs [sic] eliminate costs and logistic barriers to arts participations for more than 8,000 Maui County keiki annually, including the keiki of Lāna'i and Molokai. In 2023, this included more than 1,500 Lahaina keiki who benefited from the Hui's arts outreach and arts supply distributions for Lahaina schools, field trips to the Hui, and art-to-go art kits. Hui youth outreach programs are delivered at no charge to participants, schools, or partner organizations. We are all heartbroken over the devastating fires on Maui...on Maui that have caused...last August, and we know how important art for the children affected by the fire is as part of their continued healing and recovery. I ask the County of Maui to please consider supporting the Hui's youth outreach effort with their \$50,000 line item in the F'25 [sic] Budget so that the Hui can continue this important work at the same level as it has in the past. The Hui No'eau Arts Art with Aloha Program provides demonstrations, hands-on workshops, art events, and youth programs with native Hawaiian cultural practitioners. Art with Aloha Programs encourage authentic cultural exchange while inspiring appreciation and understanding of Hawaiian people, culture, and...and arts. I ask the Council of Maui to please consider supporting the Hui Arts with Aloha Programs also, again, with the 50,000 for the '25 budgets. The Hui is a treasure for us here on Maui, and I hope we all continue

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to support it, and all as I see is it growing. I've been associated with them for over 25 years, and the outreach that we've done since COVID and through just continues to grow. So, I hope you all see that and can support it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for Mr. Garcia, Members? None. Okay. Thank you. Next, Will Spence, huh? Next speaker?

MS. GRECO: Will Spence, followed by Heather Long.

MR. SPENCE: Aloha, Councilmembers, Chair Sugimura. I'm also here to testify in favor of...of the Hui No'eau and their arts programs. And if I didn't say my name, I'm Will Spence. The two programs, like Tim was saying, was Arts with Aloha, where supporting cultural practitioners to participate at the Hui, either teaching...teaching classes or participating in events. And to me, the biggest thing is the cultural exchange. The...wherever we can get that interface with the host culture and to learn from them, whether they're...whether it's residents or whether it's visitors, I think that's super important. And, you know, it's outside of the context of the hotels, and the resorts, and all that. So, it's...it benefits a lot of people. The...the Family and Youth Program [sic], I'm so amazed with this program because it reaches out to the keiki in the community. And I think, especially for Lahaina right now, they've been reaching out to the schools over there. And if you just look online just a little bit, art has a very therapeutic part of it, especially for trauma victims. So, you know, we've seen with what's...pardon me. We've seen what's happened over there. The...the art is an opportunity for these kids to have an expression, and it's very beneficial. But it also...this program also reaches out to the homeless, you know, the different programs that are already being funded. But we collaborate with them, and we participate with them. So, anyway, the Administration has been supportive, and it's proposed in their budget, but at a...at a smaller amount. And what I'm asking is...is for the Council to fund the full 50,000 for each program. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Mr. Spence. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much.

MR. SPENCE: Thank you.

MS. GRECO: Heather Long, to be followed by Jennifer McGurn.

MS. LONG: Aloha. My name is Heather Long. I'm the Program Director for adolescent treatment for Maui Youth and Family Services, also part of Maui Behavioral Health. That's also part of Aloha House and Malama, which is our female treatment. It's an honor here to speak to you today. It's just kind of ironic that I'm sitting here listening to all these rich, wonderful programs. We

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just opened up a brand-new adolescent treatment center. We are not Upcountry anymore. We moved it to Central, 1498 Lower Main, and now we're really addressing and getting teens in there. So our teen...the teens in the community-based, intensive outpatient...outpatient are normally identified. They get in trouble at school or through probation. We also have school-based counselors in all the schools, middle schools and high schools. But what's interesting is to hear like the equine therapy, and the art therapy, and the STEM, because that's what we need to kick...we have to teach kids better coping, right. Because otherwise, they're seeing...they...they go to drugs, or they start using that. That starts to be cooler. And I don't know if you guys know, but it's not like when we were growing up, when we had to stand on some shady corner, and go to some shady part of town, and wait for a drug dealer, right. They just go on the Instagram, and it's like...I'm not saying it's like...it is kind of like Grubhub, it's like...or DoorDash. It's drug dash, right. They don't have to...it's so easy for them to get marijuana, and to get alcohol, and to use vapes. And so, it's very interesting to hear what's going on with kids. And, I mean, that's my passion. I'm a child and adolescent therapist, that's what I do. And like what he was saying, I was just in Lahaina all day talking to kids, and they need help. And nobody's really addressing a lot of assistance to the families. There's a lot of assistance to the keiki, but the...kind of the teens feel forgotten, I think, a little bit. And...and we're trying to get more programs, but it's going to take all of us. And I really appreciate the continued support that we do get from Maui County and the Council, and so, that's been a fabulous thing. But it...it is a constant battle. And so, it takes all of us to get our feet in the door and create those coping...healthy coping skills, which could be art, which could be STEM, which could be all of these things, before they get to the place where they're hopeless, right. And we're seeing a little bit more of that right now. And the drug use is getting a little bit more alarming, so, you know, we need to address that. And it's going to take everybody in the community to...to help us do that. So, I feel really honored that we have all these rich programs to help us do it because it's going to take everybody. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. What is the program that you're speaking on behalf of?

MS. LONG: I'm speaking on behalf of Maui Youth and Family Services. This is community-based treatment, so mandated treatment. And also we have adolescent...we have community-based, school-based counselors in each one of the high schools, except we don't have anybody at King Kekaulike, but all the middle schools, the high schools. I been at Baldwin for 20 years. I'm their...I'm their drug counselor, so...yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions?

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MS. LONG: Any questions? Nobody wants to talk about drugs. No.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. LONG: Adolescent drug use. She has one. She's...she's brave. Adolescent drug use. Whew.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just was wondering if you had...if you had funding in the budget, like...kind of like how Mr. Spence said it was...need 5,000 more in each one. Did you have a line item that didn't get all the way funded?

MS. LONG: I think that we have...we've been continually funded, but I --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

MS. LONG: -- I will--I will check with our--our Executive Director, Nicole.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, it would be under Maui Behavioral Health.

MS. LONG: Health Services [*sic*], yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MS. LONG: And we're...I'm part of the youth treatment. So, there's also...we...we run a safe house, and we do all of that Upcountry. I'm the youth...I'm the treatment part. So, we have a whole...Che Arnold does the safe house. We have a girl's safe house, so we're fairly big. But anything to do with adolescence is either Che Arnold or myself. So, we do all adolescent.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. LONG: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next testifier?

MS. GRECO: Jennifer McGurn, to be followed by Greg Smith.

MS. MCGURN: Hello. Aloha. Good evening. I am testifying for MEO Head Start. You've seen me up here in several different MEO hats, but I'm now a preschool teacher, which I love. I'm going to read one of my parent testimonies. I've got another parent that's going to testify. Anyway, here's my parent's testi...testimony. Thank you. Thank you, County of Maui, for your support in funding to MEO Head Start. This funding has kept centers open for full days,

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and continue to stay open during the summer months. Our community is beyond blessed to have this program for our keiki and the parents. Having the centers open and available not only helps the keiki thrive, it also helps us parents in getting the help and things we need, and better our families and community together. My son continues to learn, grow, and maintain a healthy lifestyle being in this program. Thank you. So, I have a few of those. I'm just going to turn them in personally. But you guys have always been great funding us. The Federal Government funds us until noon, County of Maui funds us so we can stay open until 3:00. I don't think many people could have a functional job between 8:00 and 12:00, so that full-day program is really important. And then the summer too, to keep that going for the kids so they're not home doing nothing all summer. So, thank you for your support in the past. And we ask that you please continue to support us. And I just wanted to say thank you to all of you in general. It's been a rough time to be in your guys' shoes for the past...well, a while, but particularly the last eight months. So, thank you for all you guys do. I know it's not an easy job. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Jennifer. Any questions, Members, for Jennifer? Seeing none. Thank you.

MS. GRECO: Greg Smith, followed by Marina Starleaf Riker.

MR. SMITH: Well, aloha and good evening. My name is Greg Smith. I am one of five of the pickleball ambassadors here on the island, and I'm here this evening to suggest...we understand that you're under a tremendous problem of funding with the problem that happened on the West Side, but I'm asking you in any way that you can, when you see a pickleball concept come across your desk, if you would think about the benefit that we get from recreation. And I'm an...80 years old, and love to play pickleball. It gives me exercise, and it's a great deal of fun. It's very social. And we also want to invite all of you, that if you're not familiar with this game, to come out and experience how really amazing this funny game with a crazy name really is. It's good exercise, it's played on a much smaller court than a tennis court, and it's really quite fantastic. When we started playing about eight or nine years ago, there were about seven people that were playing pickleball. Just this last year, there were 640 people playing in the tournament in Wailea. And we tracked the usage at Waipuilani for two weeks in October, and there were 760 pickleball players in two weeks. So, you all know, this sport is blowing up. You see the TV ads with the little kids playing pickleball. It's...it's a terrific sport. It's a great deal of fun. And we know you're under a lot of pressure, but in any way that you can, we would really appreciate your support. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Mr. Smith. Any questions, Members? Seeing none. Next testifier.

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MS. GRECO: Marina Starleaf Riker, to be followed by Shawn Moreland.

MS. RIKER: Hi, everyone. My name is Marina, and some of you guys know me. I'm going to read my testimony because some of what I'm going to talk about is hard for me to talk about. And first off, I just want to thank you for listening. Today, I'm just here as one of your constituents, and also as someone who lost everything last year in two separate, yet entirely preventable, tragedies. On July 27th, my stepdad, the man who raised me when my own father couldn't be there, was riding his bicycle with friends when he was struck and killed by a driver passing multiple cars on a County roadway with a narrow shoulder and no bike lane. Twelve days later, on August 8th, my home burned to the ground. Now, I firmly believe that whoever built that narrow road with no bike lane, or whoever decided that we didn't need to bury the power lines in my old Kula neighborhood, believed that they were making the best decision they could at the time. I'm sure they were trying to be fiscally prudent while juggling numerous competing demands. But I'm here to remind you that this isn't just about balancing a budget. This is about people's lives, and this about the future of our community. Budgets are living documents that show what our values are, and our State doesn't have a great track record of putting our people first. I've known this since I was young because during my senior year at King Kekaulike, our State decided that my education wasn't important enough to fund for the full five-day school week. I'm sure you guys all remember furlough Fridays too. Yet, somehow, just four years later, the State cobbled up more than \$300 million to build the fancy new rental car parking garage at the Kahului Airport. And here we are, ten years later, and our State lawmakers are now balking at our Mayor's request for \$400 million to help us recover in the aftermath of the deadliest catastrophe in Hawai'i's recorded history. Yesterday I learned of a last-minute attempt to switch out the text of a resolution in what political insiders know as a gut and replace. The initial measure looked to create a legal pathway for homeless folks to sleep in their cars, which I would argue might be necessary after more than 10,000 of our community members lost homes. But instead, the new text inserted without a transparent...or...but, instead, the new text that was inserted without a transparent process urges Maui County to adopt a quote, unquote, financially-prudent budget. It calls out three new departments by name; the Department of...of 'Ōiwi Resources, the East Maui Water Authority, and the new Department of Housing. Now, in November 2022, tens of thousands of voters showed up to tell you that we needed more focus in these areas. Especially after the fire, I think it's clear that housing, water, and cultural resources are exactly what we should be investing more and protecting. Take housing, for example. The County sat on \$8 million in Federal grants that could have helped homeowners struggling to make mortgage payments. All they needed to do was issue an RFP. . . .(timer sounds). . . That's just one example...can I have like 30 seconds? Okay. Sorry.

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That's just one example, but I think there are countless others that show why Maui needs a department dedicated solely to housing. And same with water. Remember how just months ago, the Upcountry water system was just three weeks away from running out. The cost of the new department that aims to better manage the water flowing from East Maui streams is proposed at \$400,000, at a time when construction of a new well can run into the millions. So, I'm here to ask you that this isn't politics. This isn't just about a budget. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . This is about the future of our grieving community.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions? Thank you very much. Oh, Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Thanks. Thanks, Member Johnson. I'm so sorry about what happened --

MS. RIKER: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- to you last year, and I really miss you at *Civil Beat*.

MS. RIKER: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I was wondering what the last couple sentences you were going to say were.

MS. RIKER: Oh, yeah. So, I said that this is about the future of our grieving community, and that the way you choose to invest or make cuts in our community can either continue to cause more pain for those of us who are hurting, or you can uplift and give us hope. So...and just thank you guys for listening.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Thank you so much. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. RIKER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Shawn Moreland, followed by Cheyenne Sylva.

MS. MORELAND: Hi. Good evening. Thank you for your time. My name is Shawn Moreland, and I've been a community member here on Maui for more than 45 years. I'm here to speak to this silly game called pickleball too. Super

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important for a number of reasons. I don't know if any of you are familiar with pickleball, but it...if you haven't heard of...heard of it, I don't know where you been because it's the fastest growing sport in America. The need here on Maui is gaining by leaps and bounds. What we, as the pickleball community, have to do in order to play is bring temporary nets, chalk, tape, and...and set ourselves up on existing tennis courts, which the tennis courts...every...practically every one is full of cracks and just...everything just low maintenance. What we need is dedicated pickleball courts throughout the County. There are really none. There's some in...at Waipuilani, the majority of those are used by tourists, locals by the hundreds. We are a huge community. I can't go somewhere without finding a pickleball friend at the grocery store, the movies, wherever I go. The benefits of pickleball I would love to speak to are mental health, physical health, social. It gained popularity, huge, during COVID because of its obvious...of outdoor social. And what I found coming out of the fires too, people need to be social, they need to feel part of the community, they need the...the mental health, the physical. We need to be supported in better...better surfaces to play pickleball. So, if we could get some of these tennis courts that are not being used resurfaced, netted...you know, at least half of them would help tremendously. We're not asking for a lot, just a little. I played this morning up at Eddie Tam, and there are, on any given day, 20 to 40 people. We have to wait for courts. We have to sit there and wait 20, 30 minutes because we rotate, it's an open play. And there's more players than there are...there are nets, just so you have an idea of what we're up against. We're a great bunch of people, all, you know, part of the community, and we just ask your consideration to look into making it just more accessible to the community of all ages. So, thank you so much.

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

MS. MORELAND: Okay, thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Cheyenne Sylva, to be followed by Janelle Tamayose.

MS. SYLVA: Hello. Aloha mai kākou. Aloha. I am the mother of Kapono (*phonetic*) and Anna Katherine (*phonetic*). Might...heard her in the bathroom, I apologize. They are two students at MEO Head Start, Makawao location. I am here, first, to say thank you for all the support we receive as parents of the Upcountry community. Please continue with all the support you can give to MEO Head Start. It is a great place where my children are at a full-day program, which allows me to work, and I am a single mother. So, this time for me is very crucial to provide for these two little babies. And summer school is equally

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important, Anna is going to go. So, yeah, thank you for all the support you give MEO Head Start. All right.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. SYLVA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions?

MS. SYLVA: Hi, Shane.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Janelle Tamayose, to be followed by Kyra Gamit.

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Good evening. My name is Janelle Tamayose, and I am the site coordinator of Pukalani Elementary School's STEMworks AFTERSchool, a program of Maui Economic Development Board. This semester, we have over 100 students in our program in classes like STEM exploration, digital art, game design, eGames, and math enrichment. We also, like you heard from the kids, have two competitive robotics teams that have competed in the Maui League, went to the Hawaii State Championships, recently competed in the Japan Cup, and went...and one team will be competing in the World Championships next month. Another branch of our robotics team, the STEM research team, has also submitted a...an entry in the world competition and was a finalist in the Girl Power Challenge. In STEMworks AFTERSchool, students are not only learning new technology, they are learning to use power skills that allow them to be successful in school, in their future careers, and in life. Yesterday, a 2nd grader in my class was using a 3D pen, and having a difficult time completing the task I gave them. He ended up walking away from his project and giving up. I reminded him of the power skill we learned that day, perseverance, not giving up when it's hard. After complaining for a while that he couldn't do it and it was too hard, he ended up going back to his project, figuring out how to make it work, and overcoming his initial failure. STEMworks AFTERSchool gives students a safe place where their failure only leads to even better ideas. Our hope for them is that they carry this with them throughout their lives, and use it to make our island home a better place. Thank you for investing in STEM education, and...for Maui's keiki, and for supporting Maui Economic Development Board, and STEMworks AFTERSchool. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? You have a question? Member Paltin has a question. Okay. Wait, just second. I thought you were...wait.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Ms. Tamayose, for your testimony. I just was wondering, you know, if you were aware that we really need some engineers.

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: I know. I'm trying to push the kids.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Good answer. Thank you. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: What's your job description?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'll...I'll email it to you.

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Yeah. And if there's any...like we try to expose the kids to careers. So, if there's anybody to come talk to the kids and get them interested.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. Because I think the Mayor said the County is a campus in his State of the County Address. So, I'll send him an email and then maybe --

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Okay. Yeah, --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- what...is it Kula --

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: -- get him in contact with us.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- you said Kula...or

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Pukalani Elementary.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Pukalani Elementary.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Pukalani Elementary.

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. J. TAMAYOSE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Set it up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good job. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Kyra Gamit, followed by Karen McCarthy.

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MS. GAMIT: Aloha, everybody. My name is Kyra Gamit, and I would like to speak in support as a past parent of MEO Head Start. Back in 2012, I started off as a practicum student at MEO Head Start trying to thrive [*sic*] for a degree in early education. I was very passionate and eager to be a teacher ever since I was young because I've witnessed it firsthand as a child myself, who also came from MEO Head Start. This also impacted my family...me and my family. If it wasn't for MEO Head Start, I would have not been able to pursue my classes and graduate with my bachelor's in early education, let alone gain quality services for my son, Cabrian (*phonetic*). As soon as I graduated, I seek employment for MEO Head Start and now is a lead teacher. The reason behind it is because I wanted to be part of an organization that gives back to the community as much as what they have given me. Now, how are we supposed to accomplish this without funding if centers are closing early, and as a teacher myself, would secure a job? With this funding, our classrooms are able to open until 2:30 to 3:00 to serve the keiki and our families and, of course, summer. Without it, it makes me sad in knowing how many children can benefit from this program. My son is now seven years old and still remembers his teachers, as well as still receiving SPED services led by a dedicated team from MEO Head Start. I will forever be grateful of this program. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very nice. Thank you. Any questions, Members? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Karen McCarthy, followed by Bruce Harris.

MS. MCCARTHY: Thank you for being here. I only wish I could have one of those STEM kids read this for me. My name is Kari McCarthy, and I'm a resident of Kula, and I'm here as a private citizen to support budget allocations for two separate organizations. The first one is MISC, Maui Invasive Species. I lost my home of 40 years in the fire. And the day after the fire, a MISC truck showed up to help...offer to help. Volunteers with a truck and a water tank, men and women, just out to help wherever they could. Because of their smaller truck equipped with a water tank, they were able to reach areas the fire trucks couldn't. They ended up working tirelessly, dousing flames and hot spots for that day, and several more. Their volunteer efforts effectively saved the property above mine, which I rent as my art studio, and where I'm currently living with my 91-year-old mother. Their immediate and nimble response and can-do attitude set them apart from all others. I find them to be an extraordinary team of well-informed, hard-working, and caring individuals doing selfless work. I urge you to support, approve whatever budget they requested. If it were up to me, I would double it and allow them to do more. I can't praise them or their extraordinary efforts enough. In my opinion, they are a model of how other County and Government agencies should respond in a disaster. I hope you'll take that last comment to heart. The second unrelated is

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Hui No'eau. I share comments that Tim Garcia and Will Spence made earlier. I began taking classes at the Hui almost 40 years ago, and I'm a working artist today because of Hui No'eau. The Hui is a treasure beyond measure. It means so much to our arts communities. It's where I send visitors wanting a real arts experience. I work down at the Four Seasons two days a week, and I get that question a lot, of where do the real artists go. It's become so much more than just an arts education place in the 40 years since I've been taking classes, and the impact of the arts education on children is proven and profound. But the Hui's extraordinary programs celebrating Hawaiian culture deserve our support as well. I therefore request the continued support of Hui...the Hui's youth and arts education and outreach programs, and humbly ask that the Council consider supporting the Hui's Art with Aloha programs with 50,000 for the next fiscal year. The arts lift the human spirit, and I think we all need more of that. And I thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very nice. Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testify --

MS. GRECO: Bruce Harris, followed by Tanja Miller.

MR. HARRIS: Squeeze. Uh, too mechanical. Thank you for having...giving us this opportunity. My name is Bruce Harris. I'm a resident of Kula for over 50 years. And while not an ambassador, I'm a...I'm a pickleball enthusiast, much like Shawn. The...the growth in pickleball, as everyone should recognize, is phenomenal. On Maui, we have very...very few public pickleball courts. More private pickleball courts are being built than...than anything else, but we do have some aging tennis courts that could be repurposed, I think, for less than the cost of...of construction of new things. The...the Pukalani courts, the Makawao Eddie Tam courts, the Hāli'imaile courts, the Ha'ikū courts, all could be established as pickleball courts. We have in...in Kula, just at the community center, just in two days a week...Greg gave you numbers on...on a lot of things...but for two mornings a week, we have over 50 people coming to play pickleball on two tennis courts that we tape, and bring our own nets, and establish five courts on those two tennis courts...60 people going through there in a...in a morning. It's a phenomenal sport. Can I ask a question? Do any of you play pickleball? Interesting. Interesting. Do any of you play tennis? And you can...and you...it's all right. We...we...we saw that. . . .(laughing). . . It's just we...the pickleball community would just like you to...to begin looking at pickleball as a legitimate line item for either maintenance or capital improvement to provide these courts for the growing community on Maui. I don't know how the community is on Lāna'i or Molokai, but it is certainly a...a growing sport here. Thank you, and have a good evening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

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MS. GRECO: Tanja Miller, followed by Debra Lordan.

MS. MILLER: Hi. Good evening. I'm a Lahaina fire survivor, and I have had extreme PTSD, and I'm here to support pickleball because it has helped me gain confidence. It's helped my memory. It's gotten me back into social situations. I, you know, retreated for quite some time. I did a lot of EMDR therapy for PTSD, for my trauma. And so, I know everyone says it's fun, and it is, but it's...it...it's giving me joy, which I had been completely disconnected from. It's made me super happy again, helped me get over my survivor guilt...just so many benefits. And, you know, the Eddie Tam court, we have a indoor gymnasium, it's two minutes from my house. It's open one day a week. Can we at least just get it open? Like give the keys to the pickleball community or something different? It doesn't cost you any more money. It's right there, sitting, waiting to be used. And I know the community has been asking and requesting, and I just have to say from my...my perspective...I mean, I can practically walk there. And if I could go play there three, four days a week, it would just...and for everybody else in the community, it would just probably be one of the easiest and most rapid ways to let people play on larger scales. Also, the Waipuilani court has a tennis court right behind the one that the County has done something with that sits empty, and we just practice while everyone else is trying to play. So, that would be another court that is right there. There's already the big hub, way too many people playing, and we have to sit there and wait...which is fine, we talk. It's super social. It's really fun. And I...I encourage you...if you do take some time...you know, take up some offers of learning how to play. I mean, coordination, strength, speed, agility, and again, the memory thing is amazing. Like, I really lost my memory. I couldn't remember people's names, people that I know, I couldn't fill out...filling out those FEMA forms was so hard because I had a hard time tracking, you know, thoughts and stuff, and they'd have to keep correcting me. So, all that is pretty much gone now. I start work on...after being off work for eight months with my PTSD, I go back to work on May 8th for Hilton. So, I finally get to go back. So...yeah, and pickleball is a big part of that. Also, the Hui No'eau...please, please, please, give them money. They're just doing so much for our community. And I have a lot of artist friends that have really benefited from that as well. Thank you.

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

MS. GRECO: Debra Lordan, followed by Manuel Lopes.

MS. LORDAN: Well, I think you have the picture on pickleball. I had a lot of things to say, and they've all been said and then some. So, I hope that you can support

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this sport. And I invite you to come and join us at Eddie Tam next Thursday from 10:00 to 2:00. We have extra paddles, and we'll show you how to play. It's really fun, and you'll see that for yourself. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifiers [sic], Members? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Manuel Lopes, followed by Mick Mehlmauer.

MR. MEHLMAUER: The crazy game pickleball. My name is Mick. Thank you for having me. These people here behind me, I would have never enjoyed the later years of my life without their help and playing this game. We have some gymnasiums that sit vacant. Waiakoa Gym, Kula, I used to play basketball there, hardly ever see anyone there. This game has given my wife and I...where we would just maybe get to go for a walk, we can do an activity together that helps our hand-eye coordination. It gives us something to do in a group, and these people behind me have said it all. It's...if you could all take a little time to find out what this is really all about. and especially...you know, it's not just for us older folks. Kids love it as well. And it keep...gives everyone a sense of community and doing something good together. So, thank you for your time.

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

MS. GRECO: Manuel Lopes, followed by Kevin Spellman. Manuel Lopes? Moving on to Kevin Spellman, followed by Brooke Mahnken.

MR. SPELLMAN: Hello. Yes, it's super-fast, like they're already, like, fill out your financial forms, cost of governance meeting next week. Like get the ethics people. I'm, like, whoa. I'm here. Let's do this. All right. For this year's budget cycle, I recommend employing a framework zero-based budgeting. This begins with a core of critical functions and personnel essential to the operation of the Government, as a whole, not department-specific. The budget sphere then expands outward in prioritized concentric circles with a component for each department within the circle. Additionally, each departmental component contains a time-based triangle with the items requiring funding for this year's cycle that are critical at the top, and then moving downwards into requiring funding for implementation in future fiscal years, with the base representing an item wish list. Critically, each item requires an associated justification summary. For this budget cycle, I recommend the Council create a single full-time staff position in Council Services dedicated to managing the legislative aspects of redeveloping areas affected by disasters or climate change. Within the budget sphere, I recommend prioritizing infrastructure, specifically setting aside monies for a West Maui land purchase to construct an Olympic-style

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village to house displaced citizens. Critically, after citizens return to their homes, the village would remain in the Government's possession for conversion into an institute of higher learning outside of the University of Hawai'i system, including trades training, climate change related . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . sustainable development, and a medical school. Sorry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice to see you again.

MR. SPELLMAN: Nice see you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody have questions for Mr. Spellman? And you going to give us your testimony...written testimony?

MR. SPELLMAN: What, you want --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MR. SPELLMAN: Oh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Sure. Oh, we have a question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha, Mr. Spellman.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice seeing you again.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony, Mr. Spellman. So, you...you think that one position in OCS would be able to handle all of the work that you just proposed that person do?

MR. SPELLMAN: I think one dedicated person to just the legislative aspects of it --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah.

MR. SPELLMAN: -- I think, yes. I think they could...you know, you have to prioritize, and you're definitely going to have a big inbox, but...for sure.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Hopefully you have a long list of really skilled people who can fill that position too. Mahalo, Mr. Spellman. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Next testifi --

MS. GRECO: Brooke Mahnken, followed by Kassen Liliana Yamashita.

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MR. MAHNKEN: Aloha, Councilmembers. Brooke Mahnken. I've worked for Maui Invasive Species Committee for 19 years, I lived in Makawao for 6. And my parents had a pickleball court in 1982, and I recycle clay at the Hui No'eau for their ceramics program. But I just want to talk about little fire ants tonight. I know you heard from my boss, Teya Penniman, last night in Pā'ia, and probably got an earful about Holomua Road, very important topic. But I just wanted to share some successes about the little fire ant program here on Maui. It wouldn't be possible without the funding...visionary funding from Maui County, of course. There have been 20 locations across Maui that little fire ants have been detected since 2009 beyond the ports of entry. Only eight of those are still in treatment because the rest are eradicated or being monitored. And all eight of those are greatly reduced in size, and well under control, and on their way to eradication. And just to give you a little bit of context, that is not the situation on the Big Island. On the Big Island, residents there, just to live with little fire ants, they must treat their properties every six weeks, and they would do that forever. They're putting a lot of pesticides out to...just to be able to sit in their own yards. Veterinarians report that most of the animals that come into the clinics are...have cloudy eyes. Being stung by little fire ants if...will eventually cause blindness. There are...sorry, ancestral hunting and gathering grounds have been completely abandoned by some people, and farmers cannot get anybody to work for them if they know that they have an infestation. So, that is not the case here on Maui, of course, because of the support from Maui County. And there are other islands looking at us for understanding how we are structured and where our fundings come from. Teya and I were recently on O'ahu and met with Councilmember Esther Kia'aina, yeah, and Matt Weyer, so...to help them to understand how we do our work. And we...I just wanted to express my gratitude. Thank you so much for all of your support. And we will continue to innovate. And we are using...now using drones, and helicopter, and will soon be getting a sniffer dog. A fully-trained sniffer dog will be here in May, and that is privately funded. But that sniffer dog is going to really level up our ability to completely eradicate little fire ants from the Island of Maui.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Exciting. Anybody have any questions? Gabe Johnson, and Member Rawlins-Fernandez, and Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. First off...thank you so much. Okay. Got it. Thank you so much for all your work on MISC. I...we used to work in that field. I really appreciate what you guys do. My question is, is...you know, I'm really...I know you guys have it under control, but how about...are you...do you have any kind of biosecurity plans so that we get them at the ports of entry, we get them coming off the boats, coming off the planes, getting them at the big box stores --

MR. MAHNKEN: Right.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: -- before they get in the fields, before they get at the houses in the jungle. Like is...are you guys plan...do you have any plans to get them at the...the...the bottlenecks?

MR. MAHNKEN: So, that's the kuleana...Department of Ag. And so, they do that work. They --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: The State...the State Department of Ag.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- State, yes, the State Department of Ag. You know, they survey containers and whatnot. We are hoping to use the sniffer dog to help aid in that work, but otherwise, we don't have any jurisdiction there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay. I think you answered my question. I wanted to clarify that the sniffer dog is for LFA for the...the fire ants.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yes, it is specific to LFA. It can tell the difference between a little fire ant, and a tropical fire ant, and an African ant.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Amazing.

MR. MAHNKEN: It is, yeah. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Do...do you know where it was trained?

MR. MAHNKEN: In Brisbane, Australia. I'm going there later this month --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: To get him.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- to...with our trainer to learn how to take care of the dog --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Nice.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- and then bring it back.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Amazing.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then when they...when they sniff out the fire ants, will they be far enough away so that they don't get blinded?

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MR. MAHNKEN: Yes. They're...they're well-trained in this. But they can...they can detect where they are, and they will indicate--the...the animals that get stung in the eyes are usually going to their food bowl and they're eating. There's ants on the food, and it's getting on their face, and stinging their eyes. And so that's not the situation on Maui.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: All right. Mahalo.

MR. MAHNKEN: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thanks, Brooke. We understand that O'ahu has spent up to \$1 million try...\$18 million to try and combat this coconut rhinoceros beetle. I was just curious, what is Esther and Mr. Weyer asking Maui MISC on what types of...that...that they want to use from...from Maui?

MR. MAHNKEN: Well, they were asking us where the County was getting the funding to support our program. and it was mostly little fire ant and coqui frog-focused. There was not a lot of discussion about coconut rhinoceros beetle.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So, I just...you...you just mentioned that you're going to Brisbane to visit where the dogs are being trained. So, do you think that dogs could be trained to sniff out other things besides fire ants --

MR. MAHNKEN: Yes --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: -- like --

MR. MAHNKEN: -- absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: -- coconut rhinoceros beetle?

MR. MAHNKEN: Yes, I...I understand they have a CRB dog on the Big Island.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

MR. MAHNKEN: I don't know much about that. And that might be Conservation Dogs Hawai'i [sic].

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay.

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MR. MAHNKEN: But the...the dog we're getting is the --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: For the fire ants.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- premier outfit --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- for training. They've got little fire ants in Australia, and so, they've done a lot of this already.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay. Thank you. Interesting.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Oh, Miss...Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Mr. Mahnken, for your testimony. I just was wondering if one dog can smell the LFA and the CRB, or it has to be two separate dogs.

MR. MAHNKEN: That, I don't know.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

MR. MAHNKEN: I think that that may be possible because I believe there is a dog that is trained to smell yellow crazy ants and devil weed being used on O'ahu. But I don't know a whole lot about training dogs to sniff things out. I'm going to learn that pretty soon.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then--oh, sorry. And one other question, is...when you...when you said that the State Department of Ag monitors the ports, and harbors, and things like that, do you know if they're able to do the military bases as well, or is that not something that they're able to do?

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah, I don't...I don't think that they work in military bases...the Department of Ag. I'm not sure about that, but I don't think so. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because that's where I heard CRB came in from, Hickam.

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MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah, very likely. Yeah, I don't think that it's certain, but that's definitely what I think it all got to Guam, and...and so, same with the little fire ants.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then it spread...they didn't contain it, and it spread up the Waianae coast, and now it's on all the islands.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah. That was probably nurseries and --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Uh-huh.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- on that side that were selling infested material for a long time without regulation.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah, on O'ahu --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- that came from the Big Island.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, I...I did see also people at...like bought Home Depot compost and...and that.

MR. MAHNKEN: That's the CRB.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah. And the interim rule expired, and...last year, and we found CRB on Kaua'i, Maui, and the Big Island.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: After the rule expired.

MR. MAHNKEN: After the rule expired, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Got it.

MR. MAHNKEN: It was preventing compost from being produced on O'ahu and shipped to outer islands.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, then you support us making our own compost?

MR. MAHNKEN: Yes. Absolutely.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. So, that's the --

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- other half of the coin.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Got it. Thanks.

MR. MAHNKEN: Uh-huh.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Just one...one last question.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, regarding the sniffer dog, do you have...who owns the dog? Would...or who would own the dog? Or do you have to buy the dog? Or can you rent the...I mean, how is that...or you lease the dog and --

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah, we bought the dog and paid for the training through the Dorsey (*phonetic*) Foundation. And it was about \$45,000, which is a deal for a dog that's been trained for three years. And I believe ultimately, the University of Hawai'i will own the dog. But the trainer, which is a staff of mine --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Uh-huh.

MR. MAHNKEN: -- the dog will live at her house and effectively be her dog for its working life, which is about eight years.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Okay. I was going to ask that. Thank you.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very interesting. Thank you.

MR. MAHNKEN: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Kassen Liliana Yamashita, to be followed by Pete Voorhees.

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MS. YAMASHITA: E nā pua lokelani hiwahiwa o Maui Nui a Kama mai ka ulu o ka lau 'āhinahina o Haleakalā a i ka ulu o ka limu kohu o ke kai. Welina mai kākou. 'O wau 'o Kassen Liliana Yamashita, no Hali'imaile mai au, 'o Haleakalā ku'u mauna, 'o Maliko ko'u kahawai a 'o Ho'okipa ko'u kai. He haumāna papa ki'eki'e loa au no Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Kekaulike [*Spoke in Hawaiian*]. Aloha, everyone. My name is Kassen Liliana Yamashita, I'm a senior at Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kekaulike. I stand before you today to thank you for your support to the MEO Youth Services Program. I've been volunteering with the Youth Services since I was in the 1st grade. I am currently reigning Vice President, and have been in a leadership role since the 8th grade. This program has given me a safe substance and bully-free environment to make new connections and experience my island and culture in ways I never could have imagined. MEO has allowed me to play an active role in my community, as well as shape me to be the person I am today. They have assisted me in my education, taught me real-life skills, and prepared me for my future career. In fact, they have helped me get my first job, and I am forever grateful for that. Overall, Youth Services have made a real impact in my life, and with your continued funding, will be able to support Maui's youth for years to come. Thank you for your time and continued support for MEO Youth Services. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Well done. Any questions, Members? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Pete Voorhees, to be followed by Krista Caldwell.

MR. VOORHEES: Hi. . . .*(laughing)*. . . I'm just winging this. I'm a pickleball guy, and I started playing pickleball about nine months ago. And I go up...I play here at Eddie Tam, and then I go up to Kula. And we have to put...we have our own nets, and...you know, which is totally workable. But the thing that I'm thinking is, maybe it would be possible to put some permanent markings on the tennis court so you don't have to just be running this tape all the time. It would make it much, much easier. And I...and it...it wouldn't wreck the tennis courts. It would be all cool for it. And it's...it's...pickleball has been a big addition to me. I'm like 80 years old, and...hey, it works. You know, it's a good deal for us old guys. And...and...and so...of all ages. We can do it, you know, it's...thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Krista Caldwell, followed by Kyle Ellison.

MS. CALDWELL: Aloha. Good evening, Council. Thank you so much for being present here. We're thankful for all the work that you do. I work with native plants, and I'm here just to speak to the County buying the land in Ha'ikū, and restoration in Lahaina, also some restoration projects that could happen in

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Kula. So, often we plant plants on Maui that...you know, they've just built this whole new area at the airport, and very few of the plants are native species. Native species use less water. They maintain the integrity of the island by having the proper root systems to not allow erosion, which we're having so much problems with erosion on our island. Another problem that we're having is that not all of the rivers are touching our shorelines, and so, all of the waterways that are dry are actually causing harm to the integrity of our island. The island's ability to sustain us is less and less. The less the water is free to touch the shoreline, the ecosystems, the...the plant and animal life that don't have the opportunity to live in those waterways because the water isn't flowing is actually causing harm to the land that we're calling our home. And there are so many inexpensive ways that we can use native species in restoring some of the integrity to our land, while using so much less water than all other plants that are not native use. And if the water is allowed to run to the shorelines, then we also have more assuery [*sic*] that the 'āina is going to stay healthy. Because right now, we're watching...slowly, in so many places, we're actually losing land...the land is falling off into the water. And there are bicoastal grasses, there are native ground covers that can stop this within a year. And so, I'm imploring you all, in every project that you're looking at, can you please look to the integrity of our island because we won't even be able to live here if things continue the way that they continue. I worry for my children's ability to be able to maintain here, not just because of our housing problems and our money problems, but because our island's integrity is . . .(*timer sounds*) . . . being compromised by the coqui...by so many things. But, really, the bottom line is native plants and the water's freedom. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you all.

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

MS. GRECO: Joseph Abraham, who's the last person on the list at this time. If anybody else would like to testify, please see our Staff members by the front doors. Joseph Abraham?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Did you...did you have Kyle Ellison also? I thought I heard you --

MS. GRECO: Oh. I'm sorry.

MR. ELLISON: It's okay.

MS. GRECO: Sorry about that.

MR. ELLISON: I mean, Joseph can go . . .(*inaudible*) . . . --

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MS. GRECO: Okay. I'll call you next. Sorry about that.

MR. ABRAHAM: Hello, my name is Joseph Abraham. Many of you know my sister Laksmi Abraham, she works in local government. I'm a computer teacher over at Pukalani Elementary. I'm here on behalf of MEDB's Kalama Intermediate after-school program. I've been in that program working this...I think I'm in my seventh year now. Currently we're serving about 80 kids in our...in our normal offerings, and a little over 100 when you include trips and a couple other things. I actually was the robotics coach this year, and I heard one of my...one of the members of my team, Abby (*phonetic*), over there--got to embarrass her some more, you know--she did a great job. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to be here yet. But we actually went to the State competition. We had two teams that got second place, and Abby went with her team to Japan, and they won. They beat all the Japanese students over there, and very proud of them. I...we also do workshops. I offered a workshop in Kalama during the spring break where we...we did, basically, like 8 to 12. We did entrepreneurship, and I did computer programming and application development. I'm just going to give you a little bit about my background, real quick. I...I grew up on Maui. I went to Pukalani Elementary and Kalama, both schools that I work at now, and it's really fantastic to see the difference between now and then. If I had a lot of those opportunities...I didn't really get to be an...a respectable citizen right away. And if I would have had those opportunities when I was in elementary or middle school, I think maybe I would have a much better chance at getting, maybe, to the point I am now earlier. And I just really implore you to continue your support of MEDB's Kalama Intermediate program, and I think that's it, so...oh, I just want to say too...also, sorry the students aren't here. We're going to O'ahu tomorrow. We're taking like 35 kids to O'ahu and I think eight teachers. So, none of them really wanted to come because they all got to wake up at, like, 4:00 a.m. tomorrow. So, I'm the lone warrior here. But, trust me, we do have kids, even though we weren't able to bring them all today.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. And we love your sister.

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah, me...me too.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: She works hard.

MR. ABRAHAM: Don't tell her I said, though.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anybody have questions for Laks' brother? Go ahead.

MR. ABRAHAM: Always Laks' brother.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Mr. Abraham, for your testimony. I just like what you're doing, and I'm wondering if Laksmi has appraised you of all the vacancies we have in ITSD for like computer stuff, and engineers, and --

MR. ABRAHAM: Oh, yeah, she...she gets free work out of me all the time. . . .(laughing). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did...did...did she offer to send, like, any engineers to your school and say like, hey, you could grow up and do this kind of stuff or anything?

MR. ABRAHAM: Usually, when I talk to my sister, she's more concerned about me helping her with her yard and trimming her trees. We don't really go too much into the professional collaboration. Or she's asking me to like maybe make them dinner or something. So, it's not...we don't really talk too much about our professional lives at home, but we are very close. We do probably see each other three or four times a week, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just planting that seed.

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah, maybe I will talk to her. I'm...I'm the little brother, though, so she doesn't do anything I say. . . .(laughing). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'll...I'll tell her then.

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah. Yeah, tell her...she tells me what to do, I don't tell her what to do. . . .(laughing). . . That's not how it works.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. ABRAHAM: Good?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, you...you grew up on Awalau [sic]?

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Awalau has a lot of really dynamic kids. My oldest...my kids grew up there, too. I just want to --

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah, yeah. I lived in Awalau until I was about 6. And I actually moved back to Awalau, and I stayed there for about two years. You know, it's a very dynamic atmosphere. You have some really great people and others.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, you got a great family cause. Thank you for coming tonight.

MR. ABRAHAM: Okay. Thank you guys. Appreciate your time. Thank you for being up here, Upcountry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: *(Audio interference)* one last question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: One last question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And this question is for Abby because you...you...you embarrassed her. To clarify, has anyone ever asked you if you remind them of Jokoy? . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MR. ABRAHAM: No, not really, you know.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay

MR. ABRAHAM: That's...that's a very nice. I mean, he's very charismatic, so...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: He is. And your voice *(audio interference)* --

MR. ABRAHAM: Yeah, I'm not nearly as funny, but, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, you are. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MR. ABRAHAM: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

MR. ABRAHAM: Thank you very much. I'll see you guys around. See you at Foodland.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good luck tomorrow. Next testifier is Kyle Ellison. Is it? Okay.

MR. ELLISON: All right. Thank you for being here. Thanks for giving me the time. I know, too tall, have to go down. I'm Kyle Ellison, I'm Executive Director of Mālama Kula. All of you know how much I love talking about the Kula fire, but you know what? I'm going to take a second to throw it down for the pickleball guys, all right. So, like...for real. I'm...I'm a two-time past MIL tennis

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champion. And, like, we got to do more pickleball courts, you guys, for real. Right now, the Eddie Tam courts in Makawao are being used for dog training classes. For real. No one plays tennis on them. They're covered in cracks and grass, and they're training dogs on them. And meanwhile, everyone's crammed in Eddie Tam gym, playing pickleball with a line out the door. So, anyway, we need more pickleball courts. MEO Head Start...MEO is a great program. I think we should fund them. MISC is amazing. Brooke helped save my house--howzit, Brooke, good to see you...thank you--with his water truck, for real, these guys help save our house in Kula afterwards. Got to fund these guys. And I actually don't have anything prepared for this evening, I just came down. I've been chain sawing burned wood all day. Because just as a reminder, we're still chain sawing burned wood all day with unpaid volunteers and church groups in Kula eight months later. Could use some help still. So, I don't have anything officially prepared. But I just want to advocate, as in this budget, for all programs this year that are proactive in nature, as opposed to reactive. I advocate for everything that's going to move us forward and help us be visionaries in moving forward. I understand the intense responsibility that all of you have in allocating these funds for our community after everything we've gone through. And I want to make sure just that the goal is not to go back to where we were on August 7th. The goal is to go to where we can be far in the future. I spent much of today pulling invasive black wattle, that is one of the reasons why our community burned. And with many hands, we're going through and pulling all the babies as they're coming back up so that they never come back. And I guess that's kind of a metaphor for, you know, we have an opportunity on this island. We've had a lot of bad things happen, but we have an opportunity to use this to take a step back and reassess at where we want to be in the future with this budget, with these funds. And I just want to advocate for all programs--pickleball, MEO, MISC, whatever it may be--that move our community forward and help us take us to a place where we can be, rather than just simply trying to get back to where we were. So thank you for that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Ellison. Any questions for him? Thank you. Thank you, Kyle. And next testifier.

MS. GRECO: Chair, there's no one else signed up to testify, but there is a person approaching the podium.

MR. LAW: Aloha pō, BFED Committee. Jasee Law, Kula Uka, Waiakoa ahupua'a. Chair Sugimura, the last Pearl Harbor survivor has died, so I won't use the Jap...oh, the "J" word anymore. Welcome to Kula, BFED Committee. Thanks for coming Upcountry, and aloha kākou, everybody. Thank you, County of Maui, Parks and Recreation for refurbishing the community center, looks really good. And I have a simple request from the...the County Council, for the budget, is a cardboard dumpster. If not here, then one up at the Kula

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Community Center. And if we can't get one because it's not zoned as your...your environmental people say over there in Wailuku, then maybe you can eminent domain the Kula Roman Catholic Church, and I'll do all the recycling over there.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's not nice either. Anybody have a question for him? Last testifier? Another testifier?

MS. GRECO: Chair, there's nobody else that's signed up to testify. If anybody would like to testify, please come to the podium now. Chair, not seeing anyone else indicating they'd like to testify.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, everybody, for being here.

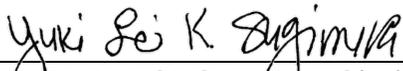
. . .END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, this will...we're going to close this meeting. It is now 7:29. Appreciate everybody who's made the time to let us hear your thoughts. So, this meeting is now adjourned. . . .(gavel). . .

ACTION: **DEFER** pending further discussion.

ADJOURN: 7:29 p.m.

APPROVED:



YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, Chair
Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

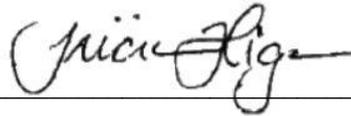
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Council of the County of Maui

April 3, 2024
Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Social Hall

CERTIFICATION

I, Tricia Higa, hereby certify that pages 1 through 36 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 25th day of April 2024, in Mililani, Hawai'i



Tricia Higa