

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

Online Only via BlueJeans

February 4, 2021

CONVENE: 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tasha Kama, Chair
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (arrived at 3:17 p.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member

STAFF:

Wilton Leauanae, Legislative Analyst
Laksmi Abraham, Legislative Analyst
Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney
Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary
Lenora Dineen, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Lois Whitney, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Davideane Sickels, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Axel Beers, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King
Dawn Lono, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci
Jordan Helle, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sugimura

ADMIN.:

Mimi DesJardins, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel
Lori Tsuhako, Director, Department of Housing and Human
Concerns
Curtis Jamison, Grants Management Program Manager,
Department of Housing and Human Concerns

PRESS: Akaku Maui Community Television, Inc.

CHAIR KAMA: . . . *(gavel)* . . . Will the Human Concerns and Parks Committee meeting of February 4, 2021 come to order. It is now 1:32 p.m. I am Tasha Kama, and I'm the Chair of the Human Concerns and Parks Committee. The PSLU Committee Chair has chartered a course to complete the Council's review as soon as possible, and because they are unable to complete public testimony this morning, I am going to recess this meeting until 3:00 p.m. today, so that PSLU may continue their testimonies and whatever work that they may do before the time has exceeded. So I would like to call a recess at this point and at this time, and reconvene at 3:00 p.m. today. The HCP meeting is now in recess. . . . *(gavel)* . . .

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RECESS: 1:33 p.m.

RECONVENE: 3:17 p.m.

CHAIR KAMA: . . . *(gavel)* . . . Will the Human Concerns and Parks Committee meeting of February 4, 2020 [sic] reconvene and it is now 3:20 p.m. Thank you, Members, for that brief recess, and thank you all for being here today. At this time, I'd like to be able to again take roll. I didn't take roll this morning, earlier today, but I want to take roll now. So I'm Tasha Kama. I'm the Chair of the Human Concerns and Parks Committee, and I'd like to introduce the Vice-Chair. Aloha 'auinala, Vice-Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good afternoon. Nice to be here.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you for being here. And thank you also, for...Chair Alice Lee for being here this afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, my pleasure, Madam Chair. [Da-go-ta] from the Apache Nation, that means hello.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh. [La-go-ta], [la-go-ta]. Right, so...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: [Da-go-ta], da --

CHAIR KAMA: [Da-go-ta].

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

CHAIR KAMA: Like...like North Dakota, South Dakota?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. That's where they're from.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, okay. Cool. Okay. So aloha 'auinala, Councilmember Tamara Paltin and [da-ko-ta] to you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: [Da-ko-ta] and aloha 'auinala kakou.

CHAIR KAMA: Aloha 'auinala to Councilmember Shane Sinenci, and [da-ko-ta] to you, too.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha 'auinala, Chair, [da-ko-ta]. Looking forward to being part of the newly formed Human Concerns and Parks Committee. Aloha.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, thank you, thank you for wanting to be a part of this Committee. So that's our Committee. We have five members, which is pretty exciting. So we have Councilmember Gabe Johnson, who's not a voting member, but certainly welcome to come, as is Councilmember Kelly King, Councilmember Mike Molina, and our Vice-Chair, Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. Should they come and want to participate, they

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are more than welcome. And today we have with us from the Department of Corp. Counsel, Mimi DesJardins. Aloha 'auinala, Mimi.

MS. DESJARDINS: Aloha, good afternoon, everybody. Nice to see you.

CHAIR KAMA: We also have, from the Department of Housing and Human Concerns, Director Lori Tsuhako. Aloha 'auinala, Lori.

MS. TSUHAKE: Hi, good afternoon, Madam Chair and Members. Thank you for having us.

CHAIR KAMA: So we have our Committee Staff with us. We have Wilton Leauanae, our Legislative Analyst. We...aloha, Wilton. How are you?

MR. LEAUANAE: Aloha, Chair, Members.

CHAIR KAMA: And we have Laksmi Abraham, our Legislative Analyst. Aloha, Laks.

MS. ABRAHAM: Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Members.

CHAIR KAMA: And we have Pauline Martins, our Committee Secretary. Aloha, Pauline.

MS. MARTINS: Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Members.

CHAIR KAMA: And then we have with us Richard Mitchell, who is our Legislative Attorney. Aloha.

MR. MITCHELL: Aloha, Chair. Aloha, Councilmembers.

CHAIR KAMA: So thank you, Members, for being patient and taking that recess and, you know, going back and forth between PS LU and this meeting. So we have only one item on the agenda today, and that agenda item is HCP-11, Grant Performance and Evaluation Reports for the Department of Housing and Human Concerns. So I'd like to begin with testimony. Do we have any testimony, Laks, this afternoon?

MR. LEAUANAE: Chair, this is Wilton.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MR. LEAUANAE: We have one listed --

CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MR. LEAUANAE: -- one testifier listed, Curtis Jamison.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. So let me go ahead and just review real quickly the testimony rules. So we're going to begin with testimonies. All testimony is...can be by phone or videoconference.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, he's Staff.

CHAIR KAMA: What?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I thought Curtis Jamison works for the County, so he's probably not a testifier. And then if you want some testimonies, I'll...I'll be more than happy to share mine with you.

CHAIR KAMA: I love your positive attitude. So...so did...was Curtis here to testify, or was he just watching? Can we confirm that?

MS. TSUHAKE: Madam Chair?

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKE: This is Lori.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKE: Curtis is here as a resource for the Department.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, okay. Okay. Thank you for...for letting me know that. So with that in mind, I'm not going to read the testimony pledge, I should say, or rule. So if there are no testimonies, or anyone out there wishing to testify, please let us know so we can hear from you. Okay, Members. I guess we don't have any testifiers. So without objection, I'd like to be able to close public testimony.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: No objection.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No objection.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objection.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. And if there are no objections, I'd like to be able to receive written testimony into the record.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: No objections.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objection.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you so very much. So public testimony is now closed. So Members, we're going to continue on with our agenda item for today, our Grant

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Performance and Evaluation Report. And so I'd like to be able to allow Lori to just go on and continue with her program, her information, her presentation. So you'll be providing us with the Fiscal Year Report 2020 Grant Performance and Evaluation. Go ahead, Lori.

HCP-11 GRANT PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORTS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND HUMAN CONCERNS GRANTEES (CC 19-327)

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, and good afternoon, Madam Chair, Members. Thank you very much for this opportunity to meet with you and to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 Grant Evaluation that was submitted to the Healthy Families and Communities Committee last term. So along with me today is Curtis Jamison, who we've already discussed and I identified as the Administrator of the Department's Grants Management Division. Mr. Jamison is here as a resource should the Committee have any questions about the granting process and the principles used to evaluate grantee performance in Fiscal Year 2020. Before we begin and...begin with questions or comments, I think it's really crucial to put the Grants Management Division's efforts into a proper context. So for approximately the past year, Mr. Jamison has worked with only one program specialist and one operations assistant to accomplish the work that's before you in the form of this report. During Fiscal Year 2020, Grants Management...the Grants Management Staff of three worked with 55 different grantees to execute and administer 96 grant agreements worth about \$18,831,929. Over the past few years, the Department has begun to utilize subject area expertise across our different divisions to administer and monitor grants in different areas such as aging, housing, and early childhood resources. And that's taken little bit of that caseload burden off of Grant Management, but the caseloads remain pretty high if you calculate that out per person. So as you might imagine, this work in Grants Management (*audio interference*) really very detailed oriented. There's a...there's a constant need to juggle priorities, depending on which grantee responds in a timely fashion, which one takes too long, which one requires more assistance, and...and (*audio interference*) assistance. And I would like everyone to remember that the overarching commitment of our Department is to be accountable ourselves, as well as have the grantee agencies be accountable for the use (*audio interference*) funds. So with that, Curtis and I are here to answer any questions or respond to any comments that the Committee may have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Chair, you're muted.

CHAIR KAMA: Sorry. So with that being said, we're going to begin with Yuki Lei, the Vice-Chair, and we'll go on to...in order of how I see you. So now I see Chair Lee, and then Tamara, and then Shane, you're last. Sorry, guys.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: . . .(*inaudible*). . .

CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So I guess you were...does Curtis Jamison want to say

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anything? No? Okay. So...so I...I didn't realize that he has three people or...in your Division that put together all...I mean, that monitored and administered the 55 grants for \$8 million [sic]. Is that what I heard?

MS. TSUHAKO: Some of the...Councilmember Sugimura, some of these grants have been passed through to different divisions. So I'll give you an example. So if you look at, for example, the...the...where is it? Or, for example, Imua Family Services Inclusion Preschool, the Teddy Bear Corner, those grants are administered by our Early Childhood Resource Coordinator because it's...it's topic specific to her circle of influence and expertise. Likewise, the grants that go to some of the --

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hale Makua.

MS. TSUHAKO: -- such as the Hale Mahaolu Adult Personal (*audio interference*) is administered by the Office on Aging. So some of the work that's very specific and utilizes the expertise of other Staff have been farmed out to them for management, but it's the...Grants Management is responsible for compiling and ensuring that all of the administrative burdens are met for these grants.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Good job. And I know that, if I remember, Curtis Jamison created this standard for all the departments to follow for your spreadsheet. So thank you very much in advance. And I just have one question. Because last year was COVID...and I just wondered if any of the grants were affected because of COVID. I...I...just by looking at some of the names, I don't know them as well as you, but they are familiar from Budget, you know, looking at the recipients, but I just wonder if you have seen any impact from COVID that maybe we should be aware of for a...next budget cycle, which is coming up in March.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you for your question, Councilmember. I'm going to talk about the big picture response to that question, and I'll let Curtis go into more detail because he has more hands-on work with the actual grantee. So this report reflects work that was done all the way up until June of 2020, right, that was the end of our fiscal year. So if we all recall, the COVID pandemic sort of hit us at the end of February, and then rolled into much more seriousness through the spring and into the early summer period. So I'll say that systemically, COVID did have an impact on...on grantees. Many of our programs rely on in-person work with...with...direct work with clients. Activities, of course, were reduced and...and prohibited because of the social distancing requirements and things like that. So many agencies had to...had to sort of switch. But the...the impact on the Grants Management staff of having to make those adjustments was also pretty significant because if you can imagine grant...the Grants Office having to sit...sit with and communicate with each one of those grantees as they're trying to figure out what can we still do that's within the scope of this...this grant agreement to serve the community, to address the need, and yet reflect on us really doing something (*audio interference*)? So it was a...it was a long, and I would say it was a pretty . . . (*timer sounds*). . . tedious process, but one that had to be accomplished very quickly. Because by the time the COVID pandemic had really hit us, it was already into the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, which is normally not a time that we make budget (*audio interference*)

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and program changes and things like that. So it required everybody to be very nimble. And I'll say that, you know, due to the advocacy of Curtis and his staff, the Department gave a lot of latitude to the non-profit partners to try and...and craft solutions that would still meet the Human Services needs, but also maintain our accountability, and their accountability, for how funds were to be used. So we weren't...we weren't encouraging anybody to spend willy-nilly and just do stuff just because. There had to be a nexus between why you're changing your program to address the need. But we...we did have a little bit of...we...we did give a little bit of space for that flexibility in there. Curtis, you want to respond to particular issues about agencies?

MR. JAMISON: I...I mean, if we can...yeah. In short, all of the grants were affected by COVID-19. Some of them saw a lot of difficulty in delivering services as in...you know, if they were a program that operated in a school and the schools went virtual, they were no longer able to deliver program as originally described, and we'd have to make adjustments. So in some ways, their programming was reduced a lot, whereas other grantees, like the Food Bank and things like this, we saw a huge need for increased services, rental assistance programs and things like this. So the...they were all affected greatly by it, and...and in general, I would just resonate with what the Director said regarding trying to become flexible to work with grantees, and...and assist them to deliver services, maintain employment, maintain assistance in the community. So that required a bit of flexibility during that time, so...

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Wow, three people. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hello?

CHAIR KAMA: Chair Lee, do you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Hi, Lori. Hello, Curtis. Not sure who this goes to, but the 18 million in grants, was it for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1st, 2020?

MS. TSUHAKE: It was for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1st, 2019, no. The...the...it was for the year beginning July 2019 up until June of 2020.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So the following budget, beginning July 1st, 2020, was it pretty much the same amount, 18 million?

MS. TSUHAKE: I would say roughly it was. I...I don't have that exact number right now, but the Department...actually, the...the grand total might be a little bit higher because of some supplements that were provided in...to address the pandemic. But we also used CARES Act funds to provide a lot of different programs that, you know, you...I think you and the entire community is aware of the H.E.L.P. Program and things like that. So there was that extra supplemental from the CARES to --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Were you folks required to manage those grants?

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MS. TSUHAKO: We did, Chair Lee. We...we were asked to administer the funding that went to MEO for the H.E.L.P. Program. We also did additional CARES Act grants for Mediation Services of Maui, for Food Bank, for Feed My Sheep. So there were additional contracts that were asked of us for administration due to the...due to the receipt of that federal funding.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I have two more questions. One is the Tri-Isle RC&D, they're the, like, an umbrella agency for smaller non-profits; is that correct?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Chair. Tri-Isle has historically had that function, but I believe that they have...they have ceased that operation within the past year.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. Did somebody else take it over?

MS. TSUHAKO: I don't believe anybody took over the agency, but I think what has happened is that Lokahi Pacific, Susie Thieman at Lokahi, has sort of expressed the agency's willing to have some of that additional work subsumed under her. So it's...I know that Lokahi has been an umbrella, a sponsoring agency, for several of the smaller grants that we administer.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Think there's a huge need for that. And then finally, did you submit your budget for the next fiscal year? Is it going to be the same or less?

MS. TSUHAKO: I did submit the Department's budget to the Mayor for his consideration. It was...the Department's budget was crafted based on the...the directions from our Administration that we were to have a flat budget. So it did not increase significantly, and it did not decrease significantly.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: You know, if I may, I'd like to request the...this past budget and the budget going forward, if you could put the 18 million into categories. For instance, substance abuse, homeless, social services, and those kind...senior services. If...in...in those big blocks, yeah? If you could just provide that information. Okay? Thank you very much, appreciate it.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Oh, Ms. Paltin, any questions for the Department?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes. Thank you, Chair Kama. Thank you, Director Tsuhako and Mr. Jamison. It looks to me like there's a little bit of a new format with the alphabetical order, which I really appreciate and like, but it...it did make it a little bit difficult for me to compare one year to the other because one was not in alphabetical and one was in alphabetical. And I just was wondering, you know, maybe...and...and I'd love to keep the alphabetical order because it makes it so much easier to find the grant that you're looking for. And...and I would just request, maybe, in that case if...if we can have their previous year percentage of max score so that we can see, you know, if their percentage is moving up or down. Through the years from 2019 to 2020, I noticed, like, Aloha House seemed to move down on both of their ones. And I guess part of my question is, you know, like, we're really limited on the providers for drug and alcohol abuse and

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things like that. So, I mean, I don't...regardless of the lower score, it's not like we have other options, and I was wondering if you could speak to that a little bit. Because we really need these services that, like, Aloha House provides. And I think there was one about Lānaʻi's drug program, but technically speaking, their scores are...are, you know, not A pluses. And I just was wondering if you could speak a little bit to that, like, how we can...what...what does that mean for...for us moving forward, and us wanting to have, you know, top-notch drug and alcohol substance abuse treatment programs? Like, how would we get better?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you very much for your question, Councilmember Paltin. I...I think you raise a really good issue. So my first (*audio interference*) is that I want to address the formatting of the...the data that the Department is reporting. So if every...if every grant, year by year by year, had the same objectives, yeah? If...if the measurements and everything...if the program proposed by that agency stays exactly the same, having it reported so that you can compare their...their performance from year to year, would...would be okay. Some of the challenges for us in thinking about that formatting is that many times, the actual details and the objectives that are determined and are negotiated between Grants Management and the grantee agency change. So...and it may be due to programming, it may be due to staffing, it may be due to trying to accommodate different needs in the community. So it...it's just something to keep in mind when you're thinking it...of trying to look at a year to year comparison of actual performance, that it may not be comparing exactly apples to apples from one year to the next, yeah? So just something to keep in mind. I think the second concern that you raise about the lack of capacity in the community for certain social service areas is a very legitimate one. It's something that I think all of us who are involved in social service have...we have an acute awareness that our choices are limited. So here's what we've tried to do over the years at the Department, and I think Council Chair Lee understands this because she's been here and she's had to do this work herself is...part of it is working with the agency to try and address the shortcomings, to try and address that...what might be perceived as deficiencies in the service provision to...to elevate the agency, right, is asking, what more do you need? Can we help to advocate for you to get more money from the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division? We've also had partnerships face Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division to address what we perceived as shortcomings in different programs. And as funders, ADAD and the County have a little bit of leverage with providers because we're the...we're the chief funders of those programs. So we try to do things in that way that are collaborative with the other major funding source, which is the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of DOH. I think that's...the other piece of that developing of services...let me give you an example of that. So if there's only one...there's one provider of a certain service, and they're not doing that great, and they're very close to losing their County grant funds because they...they just not have the capacity to do the work, you know, my call would be...let's say if that service provider is in Lāhainā...my call will be to you. And I'd say, you know, we're having a lot of problems with...with this community provider, and we need...we need to have your help in, maybe talking to the community, or trying to create discussions within the community, try and develop an alternative to that service so that the community has...still has access to the actual provision of the social service, and yet...and at the same time, the County can provide the technical assistance to an agency who's willing

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to do it because the...the incumbent is not doing its job very well. So I think those are the things that, you know, the Department does on a regular basis, is address those issues, provide the technical assistance, help identify other potential service providers that we might talk with, might pursue pilot projects with, try to help develop those services. Curtis, did I miss anything in that?

MR. JAMISON: . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you and I...I really appreciate that answer. I just was thinking, you know, as to your first comment, like, things like records and reporting or responsiveness, especially are...are what I would like to know that there's been a...a improvement on, like, if you're talking to them. Because it's that much harder on your three people that you have doing it if there's not responsiveness and not good records and reporting. So if we can track from year to year, if there is an improvement, I think that would be helpful to us. And if I can just do one follow up...I don't want to monopolize the situation, but during the previous years' budget with COVID and everything...and I imagine more so now with the situation we're in, an emphasis was, kind of, put on projects that were...were shovel-ready. And I see that some of the capital improvement ones didn't receive their funds because they didn't get matching State funds or for whatever reason. And so I was wondering, you know, if...if these projects aren't shovel-ready and the County isn't giving them the money--which I'm glad we're not if they're not ready to go, you know, I...I think that is prudent--if there's a way this time around that we...we identify that so that the money that we have to...to grant folks is going where it's most needed, that it will be used within the fiscal year, is...is there a...a way that you think that we can do this in this upcoming budget period?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember. I don't believe the Department has...has forwarded any capital improvement project request in Fiscal Year '22's budget.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Member Paltin. Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair, for my opportunity. And Mahalo, Director Tsuhako, nice seeing you. So just clarification, 55 grants, \$18 million, and then there was a 90...you mentioned 93, 95 or some...some other figure?

MS. TSUHAKE: Yeah, it's...thank you, Councilmember Sinenci, and nice to see you too. The number was 96 and that's the total number of grant agreements that were executed in Fiscal Year 2020.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: So meaning...I mean, grant...is that a difference from the 55 grants? Can --

MS. TSUHAKE: Oh, okay. So the 55 is the actual number of different agencies. So the 96 is the total number of grant agreements. So you know that we...I mean, if you take a look at the list, you can see that we...sometimes agencies have multiple grants --

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- for different (*audio interference*), yeah. So it --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- important...I think the 96 is the most important number because it tells you how much of an administrative requirement that is to administer 96 grants.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification. And then the 18 million is strictly County funds, yeah?

MS. TSUHAKE: Yes, that is correct.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And then the non-profits can also qualify for other...other funding, whether it be from...from Federal, State and other funds as well, yeah?

MS. TSUHAKE: Yes. Many of them do get funding from other sources, and we always, very consistently, encourage agencies to seek other sources of funding so that they're not...their programs are not totally dependent on County funding because of a very important clause in our...in our grant agreement which says, pending availability of funds.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, and...and did...did some of these non-profits also qualify for CARES Act funding?

MS. TSUHAKE: Some of them did, and it depends on what the function was. So for example, Food Bank received CARES Act funding, MEO received CARES Act funding. So there were a handful of different agencies that got CARES Act funding.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And so it was up to the Administration to decide whether, you know, they were supplementing of some of the non-profits' operations or...or if they were just giving...giving them a...just a set figure to help...to increase their services?

MS. TSUHAKE: Yeah, the...the nexus between the granting of the CARES Act funding, most of it was done after the beginning of the current fiscal year. The...the nexus between the granting of the...the funding was based on the...what was seen as a community need. So there was a great need because of...of potential for people not having resources for food. So there was a lot of...of resources dedicated to the purchase and distribution of food for families. There was a huge commitment made by the County through CARES Act for rent, utilities, insurance, gas, other...other really basic needs that would help keep households afloat while they struggled to get, you know, unemployment benefits that were due to them and...so there was a real...there's a real concerted effort to sort of just meet the immediate needs and try to keep people afloat until they could access those benefits to which they were also entitled, but took a long time to get to them.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. The CARES Act funding, though, it wasn't funneled through your Department to the...to the actual non-profits. It was just from the Administration directly to the non-profits, not necessarily through the Housing and Human Concerns?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you for that question, Councilmember. Some of the funding was funneled through our Department and granted to non-profit. Some of the funding, the CARES Act funding, was also granted through the Office of Economic Development, and I believe some other Departments had funding from other federal sources related to CARES Act that were also funded independently of us. So we didn't take...we...we did not have responsibility for administering all of the CARES Act funding, but they...the ones that we carried were those associated with Housing and Human Concerns.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, I see. Okay. And then finally, you know, the last meeting I had with the Administration was that they were looking at doing some cuts, ten percent cuts down the line for this next budget. Have you had that conversation with the Mayor, and...and has he, you know, asked the Department to make some cuts within the Department?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Councilmember. The Mayor has not asked us to propose any reductions in our budget. The...the directions given to us was to come in with a flat budget from the current fiscal year. The Mayor has always been very cautious with us though, and he's always reminded us that at this point in time, we...we don't know what the revenue projections are, and we have to be able to...to very quickly assess what our basic operational needs are, and be able to propose a budget that fits with what is anticipated in revenue. So very...I would say, very responsible, and very realistic guidance from the Mayor and the Budget Director about preparing our Department for the possibility of having reduced budgets going forward in the next fiscal year.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah. Thank you for that, and I too agree, I mean, for your Department of how our...our funds are directly to those most needy people in our community. So I...I agree that we...there shouldn't be as much cuts within your Department. Also, the fact that, you know, funding the employment of the non-profit workers within our communities have...has kept them afloat during this pandemic. So appreciate all your work. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Mr. Sinenci. So...so, you know, I have a question, couple of questions, pretty straightforward though. So, you know, if...if an entity is waiting for...for their State funds to come through as a match, and the State funds don't come through, what happens to their County match?

MS. TSUHAKE: I think part of what we do is we consider how likely it is that they'll get the match. I think agencies who might have been granted grants in aid by the State and had their grant funding not being released by the Governor because of the State's current financial situation.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

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MS. TSUHAKEO: And I think that, you know, the...the Department needs to...well, actually, the entire County needs to look at that situation and make a decision about whether that funding should be sequestered continually without having a...a date certain by which the State would fund or would...would decline funding for that and then...and then move forward and just, you know, have...give the...the agency some guidance and say, you know, when you...when things change and you feel more confident that you can get the funding from the State through a GIA then, you know, we can talk again about the possibility of asking for that matching funds from the County. But I don't think that there's been a real...I don't think that there's been a real hard and fast rule about that, but it...it feels like the need for that is going to become imminent --

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah, yeah.

MS. TSUHAKEO: -- . . .*(inaudible)*. . . based on the economics.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes, yes, yes. So then my next question is, you know, so what are we doing to help the non-profits to become a little bit more sustainable without having to even depend on full grant or even a matching grant from the County?

MS. TSUHAKEO: Thank you for that question. I think Chair Lee probably has given the same speech to non-profits, you know, 15 years ago, that I give to them, which is please don't put all your eggs in the County's basket because the County's basket might one day have pukas in it.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKEO: It would fall out.

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKEO: Right, Chair? We...we've sort of both adopted that...that guidance to the non-profits?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKEO: And...and continue to do so because it's not...it's not an empty sort of...it's not an empty or simply ominous threat; it's the truth.

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

MS. TSUHAKEO: If anything else, this pandemic has taught us that.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKEO: You know, maybe, five years ago you would have thought, eh, I just going turn in this stuff and I going get the money from the County and I'm going to, you know...I'm

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going...going around, talk to all nine Councilmembers, and I'll get my money. Well, not true anymore. That's not true anymore. And I think it's a hard...it's sort of like a hard reality to deal with, that no agency (*audio interference*) 100 percent dependent on the County for all of their funding for X, Y, or Z program because the County may not be able to (*audio interference*) --

CHAIR KAMA: Right.

MS. TSUHAKE: So I think in 2019, we convened meetings with all of our County grantees, I think every...all the agencies showed up except maybe a handful. We'd be able to count with fingers of one hand. But what the agencies were told was that exact message, you need to diversify your funding.

CHAIR KAMA: Uh-huh.

MS. TSUHAKE: In years past, the County has helped agencies pursue funding from the USDA or from HUD or from (*audio interference*) sources, Hawaii Community Foundation. We...this Department has helped a lot to try and generate funding for agencies who are seeking alternative funding to the --

CHAIR KAMA: Uh-huh.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- County, and I will continue to do that because I understand that it's going to hurt when the County cannot...cannot --

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- fulfill what is expected of them in terms of...in terms of full funding for programs.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes. And I think that's what Member Sinenci was alluding to. That as we all know, as we go into this next budget, that many of our...so they're knocking at our doors already, and we don't know what we're looking at, and I don't think we're accustomed to saying the word no yet. So maybe we should be accustomed to...just...just mouth that, no, we have no funding or whatever. But think it's very difficult at this time, but...well, we shall see what we're going to see. So we're looking forward to, you know, the Mayor passing on his budget, looking forward to your . . . (*inaudible*). . . what you're going to recommend to him. So I don't have any other questions. Members, do you have any other questions for...for the Department? Okay. So let's go. Okay. So we'll start with Mr. Sinenci, and then go back to Ms. Paltin, and then Chair, and then Yuki.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. I just...my question was maybe for you, Chair --

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- when you were expecting to invite the Department to go over their budget, maybe in the next --

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CHAIR KAMA: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- are you going to do that in...in the Committee?

CHAIR KAMA: Yes, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

CHAIR KAMA: Probably one in...the one in March, probably. Because, you know, we have two meetings in February, right? This is my first one. The second one...probably the one in March, I think, so probably look forward to that in March.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Like March...March 4th, I believe. Okay.

CHAIR KAMA: Or I think there's another one too, in March. Yeah, we have two meetings in March. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you. That's...that's all I have.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, okay. Thank you. Ms. Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. It was a similar question. I guess we have...I...I have access to the FY'19 year end grant evaluations and now the FY'20 year end grant evaluations. I was wondering, before we go into budget, will we get anything more, or this is it? Like, is there a...a...like, a updated updated or...or this what we're...we're looking at going into budget of this matrix, which is very beautiful and alphabetically arranged?

CHAIR KAMA: Well, what...what would you like to see, Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just was, you know, if the most updated information as we go through and make decisions. I think this is from September of 2020 and, I mean, I understand if there isn't anything more recent, but I just wanted to know if this was it, then I'll...I'll work off of this one as I go in.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. So Lori?

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you, Member Paltin. The report that you see before you for Fiscal Year 2020 is the last one that we have compiled. So we...we don't do this in the middle of the year, so we're technically, like, right in the middle of the Fiscal Year '21 right now. So we won't...we won't finish the compilation of data for Fiscal Year '21 until after the end of the fiscal year. So this is the last report that we have.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. That's totally understandable. I wouldn't want you to work any harder than you already do. I just was wondering, I guess, if you guys ever have so poor a...a reporting or a score, that sometimes you recommend that an

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organization or a program no longer be funded?

MS. TSUHAKE: We actually have done that, Member, and that is...or Curtis and his Staff is...very tolerant group of people, and very helpful. So this is after probably years of repeatedly outreaching to that agency, making suggestions, writing letters to...to document corrective action that needs to be taken, repeated meetings, sometimes which include me...really a lot, a lot of offers of support. And I think some Members probably have some experience with those...those agencies that we've had contact with who require that level of support. And some...some agencies do respond in a...in a positive and affirming way, and make those corrections and they do better. Other agencies have chosen not to. And as a consequence of that, if we...if we cannot certify that these funds are being used the way they're supposed to be used, we will...we will not execute that grant. We will not.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And so then is it safe to assume that anything that comes down from us from the Mayor is...is...that any of those that don't meet that criteria won't be coming from us...won't be coming from the Mayor to us?

MS. TSUHAKE: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

MS. TSUHAKE: You can read...you can read the comments and see that some agencies remain fairly challenged to meet those requirements, but we haven't...I would say that as a...as a Department, we haven't reached the point where we don't think that there's any more that we can do to help these agencies conform and comply. It's...it's very...it's a painful process for us as well because there's no...there's no glee in...in terminating a...a grant agreement with an agency that we know would like to do good work for the community. But we have done it because we've been...our hand has been forced, essentially.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you so much, Director. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Ms. Paltin. Ms. Sugimura? Oh, no, Ms. Lee. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I just wanted to make a comment, probably Director Tsuhako agrees, but it's also to the Councilmembers that when you ask people to apply or you inquire (*audio interference*) people in wanting to apply for funding from the County, I often advise these agencies to look at their Boards, their Board of Directors, because you...a lot of them fill up their Boards with people with maybe program experience who feel sorry or compassionate about the clients, but have no clue how to generate funds. And that is the most important thing for an agency, is to have Board Members who know how to get money. Because...because without money, you can't deliver services. You know, you cannot run an agency, you know, just feeling sorry for people. You have to be able to buy the services and the products that they need. And oftentimes, the Boards are just filled with people who agree with the Executive Director, and that right there is a recipe for disaster. You know, you...you have to have a (*audio interference*) well-balanced Board with people who are familiar with finance, and who are able to

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contribute a...a more diversified revenue base to the agency because that's how the agency can be sustainable. It cannot be sustainable relying strictly on the County because the County's funds is, like Director said, it's subject to availability, and sometimes it's just not available. So, you know, oftentimes people don't realize...because they're doing a great service, they don't realize that that money is being...is under competition by many, many, many other...hundreds of other people. So that's one area that I think the Council can help is...because a lot of us belong to different Boards and, you know, non-profits. You know, we should...we can be most helpful by strengthening the Board than only looking for money from the County. That is probably the weakest strategy you could encourage them to do is...is only...only apply for money from the County because that's very limited. That's all I have to say. Thanks.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair, for those pearls of wisdom. Ms. Sugimura.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's a very interesting thought that I think...I will tell you that during this...during this year, I...I've been asked, you know, visits from organizations. And I will honestly tell you that my opening statement is, we are in a pandemic, and I don't think that we're going to have extra money to give out. And so if you're sitting here...I open it that way just because I want people to understand the economic conditions we are. Twenty-two thousand people still not working, and I...I just go through my routine, and I...I really, really believe those things, that we got to tighten our belts and walk the talk and...and live that, along with the non-profits. So Lori, any way that, you know, you see that we need to do whatever, let us know...I mean, for me. And thank you very much, Curtis. I mean, you do a excellent job, and thank you. It's amazing. I didn't realize just three of you...oh, plus your Department is what Lori clarified, but appreciate that a lot. That's it, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. So is there any other Member that has any other questions they'd like to ask the Department or comment on? Because I don't have any other questions. Curtis, did you want to say something now?

MR. JAMISON: No. No, thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Well, Members, this is our wonderful first Committee of the year, and I'm so thankful that you all showed up. Thank you so much. Eh, 100 percent attendance first day. So earlier, before everybody came on, I was talking to Tamara and told her that, you know, in many ways, I think it was really a godsend that, you know, both of us have the Committees on the same day. We did this last year. Last year was Wednesday, now it's Thursday, but and...and her effort to want to try to move things along...and I...I would almost...after today, I'm almost...tend to agree with Chair Lee that we're not going to probably get this done in the amount of time, but...but, you know, our fearless leader at PSLU, she's going to forge on and I'll be able to support her on that. So we may have other times when we might start our meeting recess and then go back in and then come back out, only because I think...I'm really excited about PSLU. I wasn't last year, but I am this year because I think the Community Plan is really worth, you know, looking at. And seeing as how the Central Maui Community Plan is coming up in a couple of years too, that...you know, I want to get some, you know, stuff under

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my belt so when that time comes, we can just be right...ready for it so it doesn't take so long to do a community plan, that we can actually do this in...in a timely manner. So Members, if there are no further questions from anyone, I'd like to be able to...yes, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: One last one.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: One last one. I know...Curtis, I don't...I don't think the Director wants to hear this, but when I was the Director we had six grants managers...six. And you know, I don't know how you do it with just three. You know, even though you might send some out to Housing and someplace else, you know, it's...I think it's really hard. We had...we had a whole Division of grants called Grants Management Division. So I...I take my hat off to you guys, you know, but what if...you know, if the...if it's at all possible, you know, we'd certainly like to give you at least one more position if that's, you know, that's workable, and if...if we find some extra money in the budget. But I just thought I'd float that idea. Thank you.

MS. TSUHAKE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Actually, you know, we had one of our staff members leave to take a job at Parks, and so that's a vacancy that's been for almost a year now. But we've gone through two different recruitments, and Curtis' guys have made an offer and was accepted. So we expect to have a new staff member joining us in about two weeks to start...to start work. So Curtis has a lot of training to do, but at least we'll have another --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh, okay. Good.

MS. TSUHAKE: -- so thank you very much.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I take back my offer then . . . *(laughing)* . . .

MS. TSUHAKE: Too bad. We got you on tape.

CHAIR KAMA: Well, Members, this item was posted for no legislative action. And so without objections I will defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS

ACTION: DEFER.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No objections. I just wanted to let you know that your Vice-Chair's computer cut out, and then she was having trouble get [sic] back in. But Wilton unlocked it...not sure...oh, she's just coming back for you to adjourn.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Chair of the PSLU Committee. Okay.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And thank you for the extra time today and...and my deepest apologies to Director Tsuhako and Mr. Jamison for holding up your...your item. Sorry.

CHAIR KAMA: Nah, you're good. We're going to get through this. Going to do it. So thank you, everyone, for attending today's meeting. And so the time is now 4:13 p.m. and today's Human Concerns and Parks Committee is now adjourned...*(gavel)*...

ADJOURN: 4:13 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



TASHA KAMA, Chair
Governance, Ethics, and Transparency
Committee

hcp:min:2010204

Transcribed by: Susan Leong

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CERTIFICATION

I, Susan Leong, hereby certify that pages 1 through 19 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 11th day of March 2021, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Susan Leong