

# **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, ETHICS, AND TRANSPARENCY COMMITTEE**

**Council of the County of Maui**

## **MINUTES**

**Online Only via BlueJeans Link**

**May 4, 2022**

**CONVENE: 9:01 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Michael J. Molina, Chair  
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Vice-Chair  
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member  
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Member (arrived at 9:10 a.m.)  
Councilmember Kelly T. King, Member  
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member  
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member  
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member  
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (arrived at 9:18 a.m.)

**STAFF:** Kasie Apo Takayama, Legislative Analyst  
David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services  
James Forrest, Legislative Attorney  
Brittney Sunderland, Legislative Analyst  
Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary  
Jocelyn Moniz, Committee Secretary  
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant Clerk  
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Anabelle Hernandez, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Molina  
Angela Lucero, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Paltin  
Axel Beers, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King  
Christian Balagso, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Paltin  
Daniel Kanahele, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King  
Davideane Sickels, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama  
Dawn Lono, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci  
Ellen McKinley, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King  
Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama  
Gina Young, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sinenci  
Jordan Helle, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sugimura  
Kate Griffiths, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson  
Lois Whitney, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama  
Miki Yokouchi, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sugimura  
Roxanne Morita, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson  
Sarah Sexton, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King  
Sarah Pajimola, Executive Assistant to Councilmember  
Rawlins-Fernandez

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Zhantell Lindo, Council Aide, Molokai Council Office  
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, Hana Council Office  
Denise Fernandez, Council Aide, Lanai Council Office

**ADMIN.:** Keola Whittaker, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the  
Corporation Counsel  
Ipo Mossman, Executive Assistant, Office of the Mayor  
Helene Kau, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Water Supply  
Sananda Baz, Managing Director, Department of Management

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

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**GREAT-1(4) APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEADS OF  
DEPARTMENTS (RESOLUTION 22-86, APPOINTING HELENE KAU AS  
THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLY)**

CHAIR MOLINA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . The GREAT Committee Meeting for Wednesday, May 4, 2022, will now come to order. The time is 9:01 a.m. I'm your Committee Chair Mike Molina. And for the record, I am transmitting out of our District Office here at Heritage Hall over in Pā'ia. And I'm accompanied by District Office Specialist Anabelle Hernandez. Good morning, Members. Let's do a quick Committee roll call and find out who's here with us today, and let's start off with Council Chair Alice Lee. Malu Ulu o Lele, aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Malu Ulu o Lele, Chair and Members. Good to see you after our little vacation, and looking forward to your meeting. Thank you. Oh, I'm here alone in my workspace.

CHAIR MOLINA: Mahalo, Chair Lee. Okay, let's go to Committee Vice-Chair Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. Malu Ulu o Lele and aloha.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair, mai Moloka'i nui Ahina. I'm at the Moloka'i District Office, alone on my side of the office. And on the other side of the office, we have our Community Outreach Specialist, Zhantell Lindo and Community Visitor, Dager Oreo *(phonetic)*. And I think that's everything. Looking forward to a great meeting.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. I love the play on words, Vice-Chair. All right. Before I recognize South Maui Councilmember Kelly King, Chair has been informed that Upcountry Member Yuki Lei Sugimura is running a little bit late, and she'll be joining us shortly. And Malu Ulu o Lele and aloha to you, Councilmember King.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Well, Malu Ulu o Lele. That's a great...that's a great greeting for the GREAT meeting. So I am currently transmitting out of my home office, and nobody

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else is in the vicinity at this point, they're all at the farm. I don't have any...at this point, we don't seem to have any testifiers at the District Office. So ready to go.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you very much, Member King. And thanks for that reminder. Yeah, we too here in Pā'ia, no one here to testify as well. Let's go out to West Maui and check in on Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Malu Ulu o Lele, and aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka and Malu Ulu o Lele. Surf is up here on the West Side. We got three to five foot faces and light and variable winds, mostly sunny, partly cloudy skies. Broadcasting live and direct from the West Maui District Office Suite 205, just across the way from West Maui Sports. And with me we have my EA Angela Lucero and Christian Balagso, and we have no testifiers at this time. Aloha.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Well, mahalo, Member Paltin, and appreciate the surf forecast. And I guess today no one applying for a marriage licenses or anything like that through your district office, right? Okay. All right. Let's go out to Lāna'i and check in on Councilmember Gabe Johnson. Malu Ulu o Lele and aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Malu Ulu o Lele Chair and Councilmembers. I'm in the Chambers, my first time, kind of exciting. There is no testifiers in the District Office for Lāna'i, and I'm happy to be here. Looking forward to our meeting. Aloha. Thank you so much.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Aloha, Mr. Johnson. And let's go out to East Maui and check in on Councilmember Sinenci. Malu Ulu o Lele and aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Malu Ulu o Lele Chair. [*spoke in Hawaiian*] mai Maui Hikina. We are here at the Hāna Cultural Center, and I've got our...my EAs Dawn Lono, Gina Flammer Young and District Staff Mavis Medeiros. Aloha, everybody.

CHAIR MOLINA: Aloha, Mr. Sinenci. And let's find out how the neighborhood is doing and check in on Councilmember Tasha Kama. Member Kama...I know she had logged on earlier. Maybe having some technical difficulties, but I'm sure we'll be updated by our Staff and she'll be joining us shortly this morning. All right, Members, that completes Committee roll call for the time being. Let's go now and find out who's here from the Administration. We have Corporation Counsel Richelle Thomson--First Deputy Corporation Counsel--and Deputy Corporation Counsel Keola Whittaker. And from the Office of the Mayor, we are expecting Managing Director Sandy Baz. And of course, our nominee for our Water Director, Acting Director Helene Kau. And our hard-working Committee Staff Kasie Apo Takayama, Legislative Analysts and also another Legislative Analyst helping us out today is Brittney Sunderland, followed by Legislative Attorney James Forrest, and Committee Secretary Pauline Martins, Lei Dinneen from Council Services, and also Jean Pokipala. Mahalo to all of our Committee Staff Members assisting us today for our one item, which is GREAT Item 1-4, which is the Appointment and Removal of Administrative Heads of Departments (Resolution 22-86, Appointing

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Helene Kau as Director of Water Supply). We'll start first with public testimony. Oral testimony can be done via phone or video conferencing, and those wanting to testify...provide video testimony, you can hook up on the bluejeans.com link at 175 115 369 as noted on the agenda. And those testifiers wanting to provide audio testimony, you can do that via phone conference by dialing 1-408-915-6290 and entering the meeting code just mentioned to you. And written testimony is also highly encouraged using the eComment link listed for today's agenda on mauicounty.us/agendas. And with that said, the Chair will lay down the ground rules briefly for testimony, and that is you'll be limited to three minutes on the one item. And if you're still testifying beyond that time, we will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. And those of you planning to testify, please state your first and last name. And if you're testifying on behalf of an organization or if you are a paid lobbyist, please inform the Committee of that. And please don't use chat during the meeting. Or if you do, chat should not be...if you...you know, chat anyway should not be used to provide testimony or chat with other testifiers. Okay, so those are the basic rules for that. And please, when testifying, be courteous by turning off your video and muting your microphone while waiting for your turn to testify. And of course, you can always view our wonderful meeting proceedings on *Akakū* Channel 53, if you choose to do so. So with that being said, let's ask, I guess, Ms. Apo Takayama, do we have any testifiers this morning?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, we currently do not have anyone signed up to testify.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay, we'll wait a few seconds. Possibly someone...someone may want to hook up to give testimony. Wait about 30 seconds or so. Okay. Ms. Apo Takayama, has anyone signed up for public testimony this morning?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: No, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you very much. All right. Members, if there are no objections, the Chair will close public testimony for our one agenda item today, as well as accept written testimony. Any objections?

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS**

CHAIR MOLINA: All right, thank you very much. All right. Let's get right down into it, for our one agenda item, which is, of course, the confirmation for Water Director for Helene Kau. And let's recognize the Administration representative first to provide us opening comments, that would be Mr. Baz or whoever is representing the Administration. If no one is there, we can go directly to Acting Director Kau for her opening comments. Administration, other than Ms. Kau, are you there? Okay, they must have complete confidence in you, Acting Director, so go for it. Please give us a...take about a minute or two, give us some opening comments as to why you would like to be considered. And right after that, we'll go right into questions from the Members for you. Proceed, Acting Director Kau.

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MS. KAU: Mahalo.

CHAIR MOLINA: Aloha.

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Chair Molina, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez, and GREAT Committee Members. I'm Helene Kau, Acting Director of the Department of Water Supply, and I humbly ask for your confirmation of my appointment. Mahalo to Mayor Victorino for his confidence in me, and mahalo to you, the County Council, for this opportunity. As you may know, I've been with the County for 17 years, and with this Department for more than 13 years. I'm proud to help lead a fine team of dedicated people who work tirelessly to provide clean and safe drinking water. Deputy Shayne Agawa and I, we now have about eight months to do our utmost to ensure that the Department of Water Supply will continue to reliably provide clean and safe drinking water. Shayne and I have discussed on more than one occasion that our goal is to attempt to do what we can, knowing that we have, hopefully, at least eight months to ensure that, you know, the Department will continue to move forward with initiatives and source development. We've prioritized the repairs of the main breaks in upper Kula, and we're also dedicating a fair amount of resources, essentially our time and effort, and we're trying to think out of the box in terms of succession planning. It started last year, and within a span of about 24 months, we will see the retirement of a collective 200...yeah, 200 years of experience; various division heads, various other personnel with considerable longevity in the Department. Shayne and I are trying to ensure that we're going to be able to fill those vacancies with people who are qualified. We're also faced with some considerable engineering vacancies right now. And so we're trying to do what we can to, again, ensure that we can become more fully staffed and attempt to, you know, accomplish what we would like to accomplish, that's provided in the budget. That's it. Do you have any questions?

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you, Acting Director. Oh, I'm sure our GREAT Committee will certainly have questions for you. But before that, I just want to remind the Members that the Council 60-day deadline for taking action is May 15th. And Members, in your Granicus files, you'll find that correspondence relating to this item, and the Mayor transmitted Resolution 22-86 to approve the appointment. And as a formality, I also transmitted a proposed resolution to disapprove the appointment in case it is...that is considered by the Committee. Chair requested the Administration provide a copy of the job description and Ms. Kau's resume. And due to our upcoming deadline, these resolutions were also posted on...for this Friday's Council meeting agenda. And based on your Committee's discussion today, the Council may consider the proposed resolution to approve or disapprove the appointment of Ms. Kau as Director of Water Supply, and the filing of the alternate proposed resolution on Friday. So we will not be voting or taking action on Acting Director Kau's nomination today, that action will occur...will occur at the Council meeting. So today's process is just a vetting out the Acting Director. And so have your questions ready, and we'll take it from there. So...

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Chair?

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CHAIR MOLINA: Yes...yes Member King?

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Thank you, Chair. I just noticed that Managing Director Sandy Baz is on, so I didn't know if you wanted to let him say a few words first.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Committee Members, any objections to having Managing Director Baz say a few words?

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS**

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay, seeing no objections. All right, before I recognize Mr. Baz...oh, I'm sorry. Member Kama has joined us for the proceedings. And Committee Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez?

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, yeah, I just wanted to make sure that you saw Member Kama on.

CHAIR MOLINA: Oh, okay. Well, let me ask...thank you for that. And let me ask Ms. Kama to, I guess, share her thoughts with us this morning. How's things in the neighborhood, Member Kama?

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Oh, the neighborhood is doing well and swell. And I just had some issues with my Internet. The light's been going off and on all morning. So that's what's going on. But I'm here now, I'm present. And for the next hour or two, I am with my GREAT Committee. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Well stated, Member Kama. All right, let's go now to Managing Director Sandy Baz. Good morning. Mr. Director, you're muted, if you could unmute.

MR. BAZ: I'm talking to myself, thank you. But Chair and Members, thank you for allowing me the opportunity. I apologize, you know, I didn't expect there would be no testimony, you guys got through your morning protocols really quickly. But I do want to acknowledge Acting Director Helene Kau, and the Mayor is in full support of her appointment, you know, we've been working closely together with her. I've been working closely together with her for all...couple decades almost probably. But, you know, she's definitely experienced in County Operations. She's very experienced in Department of Water Supply and, you know, Fiscal Management oversight. She's been the Deputy Director, and providing leadership to the Department. So we look forward to her providing leadership at the Director level. And we...you know, as we've seen her resume, I won't go too much into detail about that, but she has a lot of experience, even at the budget level, working for Mayor, you know, so there's a lot of broader aspects that she brings to the Department, and she works really well with her peers, the other directors, and I think that's something that we will benefit. You know, it's a short time frame that we have before this term ends. And, you know, reappointment will be something that

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a...or new appointments will go through in the beginning of the year. So there will be another opportunity for a Council to review the directorship, but we really encourage you to support her appointment, and...so that we can move forward and she can complete the actions needed for the rest of this, especially, calendar year. So I'll leave it at that, Chair. And yes, we're both available for questions, but thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Managing Director. All right, let's start our line of questionings. We'll start first with subject matter Chair Member Sinenci, then followed by Committee Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. So Mr. Sinenci and Members, you have...Chair will give all of you up to three minutes for your Q&A session. And Acting Director Kau, please, if you can be as concise with your responses as possible so we can stay within the three-minute parameters. So go ahead, Mr. Sinenci, you have the floor.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Molina, for the opportunity. And aloha, Ms. Kau, and congratulations on your appointment to the directorship. And we did get to speak to you during the budget sessions, and during that time, I believe you had an expansion position for an engineer and also we talked about improving communication with the public during emergencies. So I guess my...were there any other top priorities for you in the Department of Water Supply?

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Member. Thank you for bringing that up. I just attended the Kula Community Association meeting last night, and it was nice for us to mutually discuss how we can improve communications, that is definitely a high priority. We learned a tough lesson with the storms last year, and there is much room for improvement. That is definitely a high priority so that we can attempt to address communication better, you know, the next time that there's a public emergency. I have worked with Herman Andaya in Emergency Management and will continue to do so that we can...so that we can attempt to improve that. Filling the vacancy in engineering or...excuse me, with reference to that expansion position and attempting to fill vacancies, we're actively...we're going to be participating in recruitment efforts, including the effort next week. So, you know, we're doing what we can to ensure that we have adequate resources as we go forward. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you for that, Ms. Kau. And then is there anything that the Council can help you with in this new position?

MS. KAU: Oh. Some time ago, we had drafted some legislation, and I will have to revive it, but it referred to establishing a revolving fund to address the impact of sea level rise and whatnot. I think it would be beneficial for the Department of Water Supply to put some funding towards that to address a problem that we know we will be addressing in the short-term future. So I will...I will find that and present it to the appropriate Committee.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thank you for that, Ms. Kau. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Sinenci. Let's go to Committee Vice-Chair

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Rawlins-Fernandez for her line of questionings. Go ahead, Committee Chair [sic].

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Acting Director Kau, mahalo for being with us today and answering our questions. You're singing Member Paltin's song with that last response to Member Sinenci's question. So I'll start with my first question regarding your qualifications. And so the Charter requires either the Director or the Deputy Director to have a degree in Engineering. The Director or Deputy Director of Water Supply shall be a Registered Engineer. And so your background is in accounting, as it says on your resume. And so, I'm...and Deputy Director Shayne Agawa is a registered engineer?

MS. KAU: Yes, he is.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay mahalo. So my next line of questions are regarding an anonymous letter that we received from employees in your Department that are concerned with morale and projects and, I guess, not being heard and uplifted. Again, it was anonymous, so...but I wanted to give you an opportunity to speak directly to them to hopefully uplift morale. And that's...this is not a political appointment that you, you know, being selected to be in this position, is deserving.

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. I'm not quite sure how to answer that question, other than to address the fact that I am keenly aware of some of the morale issues that we have. Unfortunately, some of them are directly related to pending litigation. And so oftentimes we can't directly address some of these matters, as there is before us ongoing investigations and litigation.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I see. Mahalo. So I guess my next questions, I...you know, I appreciate you and former Director, as well as, you know, Support Staff meeting with me. In my time being on the Council, you folks have been very responsive and accommodating to my ideas on restructuring the rates so that we can incentivize and disincentivize certain practices, to conserve more water, and to provide more equity throughout the County. And so I appreciate that support. I know that some...some of the people who've served on the Board of Water Supply may have not felt as supported by the Department. Would you be able to speak to how you may plan to make the Board of Water Supply feel more supported by the Department?

MS. KAU: Certainly, thank you for the question. More recently, we've had some changes in Members of the Board. And we believe that some of these changes will result in a more positive interaction between the Department and the Board. And so...in fact, I recently met with Corp. Council, and we're going to try to improve communication. And I think that's certainly a good step, initial step.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Perfect timing. Mahalo, Acting Director Kau. Mahalo, Chair.



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CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Excellent timing Committee Vice-Chair. Let's go to Council Chair Lee for her line of questions. Go ahead, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hello, Ms. Kau. I really don't have too many questions, I...but I was wondering how you plan to deal with your vacancies. Because as you said, people are retiring, plus you already had a couple of vacancies, and then you may be having more projects to deal with in this upcoming budget. So how do you plan to handle that?

MS. KAU: First and foremost, Member Lee, I recently approved the ability for us to recruit above the minimum for some of the engineering Staff. As we all know, most of the County positions don't offer, you know, substantive salary rates, and it's very difficult for us to attract and retain white collar professional engineers. So I'm hoping that by recruiting...us, you know, having the ability to recruit at a wider range, that we'll be able to attract qualified personnel.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That's good to hear. Because I understand you had over 30 million in Carryover/Savings. So that means you didn't get to a bunch of projects. So hopefully you can fill your vacancies and catch up on those projects, as well as undertake all the new ones that you will probably have in the upcoming budget, right?

MS. KAU: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you, Chair Lee. Before I go to Member Paltin, Chair would like to recognize Upcountry representative Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura. Malu Ulu o Lele and aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good morning, everybody. I'm in the Chambers listening. Thank you. Thank you very much.

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Okay. Let's go to Member Paltin for your line of questions for Acting Director Kau. Proceed.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, if it's possible, can you come back to me? My computer is loading the information that I was trying to access...technical difficulty.

CHAIR MOLINA: No problem. We'll certainly come back to you. Okay, let's go to Lānaʻi representative, Councilmember Johnson. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Ms. Kau. So I have a few questions for you. The first one, of course, is one of my passions, all of our passions, is about affordable housing. Do you have any ideas on how the Department of Water Supply can help solve the affordable housing crisis? Does your Department have...do you plan to help with the large infrastructures for affordable housing projects?

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MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Johnson. And Shayne and I...Deputy Shayne Agawa and I have recently had some discussions regarding that very matter. And we are supporting Mayor's efforts to promote affordable housing whenever possible. Moving forward, we're hopeful that we can support increased source development that should aid in that effort as well.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. So the next question is, you know, I...we just came out of budget. And I'm curious, is...like during...during the budget, I watched you come in with a lot of Staff, a lot of your...a lot of the Department was with you and answering our questions. Is that typical? Do you work collaboratively with your Staff and have large meetings like that, where you...you kind of come together and talk about things? Is that a typical day in the life of Ms. Kau?

MS. KAU: We do have meetings. Generally speaking, at least once a month, we'll have senior staff meetings to touch bases. On a weekly basis, of course, we'll touch bases with Staff as needed. Part of the reason why I wanted the Division heads present at this budget meeting is because I had...I was not very involved in the preparation of this budget. In my former position as Assistant Fiscal Officer, I was more actively involved in preparation of the budget, and had a very detailed understanding of what we had proposed. Being that I'm new to this position, and the Former Fiscal Officer had prepared most of the proposed budget, I wanted to be sure that the Division heads would be able to speak to some of the needs that they represented in what we had proposed.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you. My last question is just right to you...right to the point. Do you have concerns with the short term of your...of your appointment?

MS. KAU: Thank you for that question, Member Johnson. I do not have concerns. I have a vested interest in ensuring that I do whatever I can to ensure success of the Department. And in fact, I'm so committed to this position that...as some of you may know, my former boss, Holly Ho retired end of last year. And I have served as her assistant for the better part of my career here. That was a prime opportunity for me to seek that position. But rather than do that--and again, I'm looking out for the best interests of the Department--I tried to ensure that that position was filled with someone who would be there, and be there now, and be able to support development of the fiscal division.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I guess what I'm reaching at is that . . . *(timer sounds)* . . if you start...if you start a project, you might not see it through finished. So does that concern you, is what I was going for.

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Johnson. And that doesn't concern me because the way that Shayne and I are approaching things is that we're approaching projects with a long-term view. We are ensuring that the resources are there and the people are there to ensure that the project will proceed to fruition.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, that was my time. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Kau.

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you, Member Johnson. Okay, let's go back to Member Paltin. Is your computer back on line? You're ready to start your line of questions? Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Acting Director Kau for your willingness to serve. I guess my first question, we heard a little bit of your fiscal management prowess from Managing Director Baz. I was wondering if you could share with us your human management or organizational style goals, and maybe share a little of the strengths and weaknesses, how you plan to address any weaknesses, and along those lines, because there's a lot of personnel that you will be the leader of.

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Member Paltin. I...I'd like to think that I try to work collaboratively, as Member Johnson had alluded to. I think that I have a good working relationship with the Division heads, I support the Staff as necessary. And...for example, earlier this year, when it was difficult to obtain COVID tests, and yet we mandated COVID tests for those who are not vaccinated, I personally went to the base yard, gloved up, double masked. And because I had County-provided COVID tests, I administered--I've just observed, you did your own swabbing and whatnot, but I observed people COVID testing themselves so that I could...could ensure that they could go to work. I didn't want any of my employees to be turned away, leave without pay, because they weren't able to get a COVID test. And those tests were very difficult to schedule at that time. But, you know, that's just an indication of my commitment to support the Staff.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And, you know, we talked about possibly the short-term nature, but all other logistical and realistic things aside. I was wondering if you could share with us, you know, your vision for the next year, five year or ten year. I might not be in this position next year, but I do have a vision, you know. So just wondering if you could share your vision for those intervals for the Department of Water Supply as it relates to the County.

MS. KAU: Thank you. And again, thank you for the question, Member Paltin. It's critical--it is absolutely critical that we attempt to fill the upcoming vacancies with qualified people. It...it'll help with efficiency, it'll help us to address, you know, some of the more critical concerns that we have. Source development will continue to be a high priority for this Department. And again, we're plagued by, you know, a lack of sufficient qualified Staff in engineering, so that will be a huge challenge. Continued dry conditions are going to be a challenge. Potential designation of the Lāhainā aquifer sector is going to be a challenge for us to develop much needed source in West Maui. But I think that within the next five to ten years, it is absolutely critical that we pursue source development.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then, you know, a little bit along the lines of Member Johnson's question, we're struggling working with the Water Department to get a second exit from the proposed Kaiaulu O'Kukuia 200-plus development. And the Water

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Department doesn't seem . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . to be collaborating on how to get us to that point. And I just was wondering if you had any comments on if you think it's possible, or if they should just cut the losses, give back the 5 million, and leave one entrance, one exit, that if it should get blocked and there's a fire, people could die?

MS. KAU: You know, I apologize, Member Paltin, I cannot speak to the specifics of that project, as I'm not familiar with it. But I can certainly check with engineering and get back to you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Member Paltin. Let's go to Member King. Questions for Acting Director Kau.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Thank you, Chair. And thank you to Chair Lee for asking one of my questions. My...I have...I'm hoping I can get through this. Are we going to do a second round, Chair, if we don't get through all the question?

CHAIR MOLINA: Yeah, Chair will give any member who wants it an additional minute for a follow-up question of the nominee.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay. Thank you, Chair. My first question...aloha, Ms. Kau. Thank you for being here and answering our questions, and stepping up to this position. My first question is, you know, looking at your resume, it is so strong in financial budget issues, accounting. What made you choose the Water Department over the Budget? You know, you...I know you used to work in the Budget Department. So what do you like about it better?

MS. KAU: Mahalo for that question, Member King. I...I have more familiarity with the people. At this juncture, I feel as though it was an opportunity to again, you know, have more of an impact on attempting to do some of the things that need to be done within the Department. Unfortunate, having had the experience in the Budget Office...because as Member Molina alluded to, as...and as Managing Director Baz, alluded to, it provided me with a really good perspective. And so it's nice to be back in the Department and to be able to attempt, you know, to do some of the things that we need to get done.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay. Great. Well, thank you for that answer. Because, you know, as Chair Lee said, there's a lot of projects that didn't get done this past year, and a lot of ambition for the coming year. But you talked about source development. So I wanted to find out if you would support...if the Council moves in this direction of purchasing or taking over either EMI and/or Wailuku Water, if you would support that move, and also if you would support...we had previously talked about a community-owned entity to manage it, and to be involved in ownership and manage it...management and/or management. So can you give me your thoughts on that?

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MS. KAU: Thank you for the question, Member King. It would all depend. It would depend upon what the agreements with those purchases...what those agreements entail. Generally speaking, it's not going to provide us with additional source. Those...the amount of water that we will get from East Maui and from Īao is clearly controlled by the State, and so additional management is not necessarily going to improve source for the Department of Water. But certainly, it may be beneficial, the extent to which the terms of that agreement would provide for better management.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: So what terms would you like to see in order for you to support it? Because to me...you know, I understand that CWRM...you know, CWRM has the final decision of who gets the water, but the delivery system is so important. And you know, in the past, the owners of the delivery system have been the ones that have been diverting the water. So what conditions would you like to see in that...in an agreement in order for you to support it as head of Water Department?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member King. Those delivery systems would have to be improved to a standard that would be acceptable for us to continue to receive potable water.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay.

MS. KAU: But we're not --

COUNCILMEMBER KING: So you would want to see the Wailuku Water System improved first before the County purchases it?

MS. KAU: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay, because that's a...that's a big-ticket item, you know. And we don't even know what improvements are needed. But yeah, I mean . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . I...I kind of agree with you, but...you know, it's...and I'm hoping that that gets done. We just don't know. We're not...we're not even being told what needs to be done to improve that system or to fix it. So hopefully you'll get on top of that. I'll save my last question until we do the next round. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you, Member King. Let's go to Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Ms. Kau. Thank you for being here. So my question is, you know, eight months is not a really long time. It almost seems like it is. Sometimes it depends. But in these eight short months, what is the most important thing that you would like to accomplish?

MS. KAU: Mahalo for that question, Member Kama. As I've alluded to in earlier questions, one of the most important things that I think Shayne and I need to get done is to ensure that we have adequate succession planning for some of these long-term Staff who will be retiring imminently.

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COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay, thank you. So my second question is, you have a morale issue in your Department. And I heard you mention that you thinking that maybe more communication would be able to help maybe relieve some of that. So what would your communication be to your...the people in your Department in terms of lifting that morale?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Kama, that's a good question. Perhaps some subtle changes in how we interact and manage some of our employees. And again, most of...most of the employees are doing a great job, and they communicate well, and they get along, but I have a few employees who are disgruntled, and...and, you know, it's...it's difficult to deal with those employees who are attempting to influence their coworkers, you know, not always in a positive manner. Again, some of our difficulties are embedded in...in actions that are involved with litigation. And as we continue to deal with that, that presents a challenge because I...it's difficult for us to directly address some of these issues.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes, yes. So for the next eight months, if you don't figure out how to mitigate this, it could present even more challenges, if not for you, maybe for the next Administration?

MS. KAU: Well, fortunately, we have an Admin. Officer who is attempting to manage some of these matters. And I want to say that he's managing them as effectively as he can. And so I'm hopeful that this situation will...situation will improve. It's just going to take some time, it won't be done in eight months.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Right. Yes.

MS. KAU: But it is possible that we could see some considerable improvement in the next year or two.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So...so the issue is regarding litigation, or investigations that may be going on that may present a issue in terms of morale. So you don't...you're not able to address them directly, or try to...you know, try to figure out how to maybe even not let it go through? I mean, is there a way to...because if people are not satisfied, they're just not satisfied, right? Maybe...maybe there's something that's there that...that you don't . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . see...you don't see, I don't know. Oh, gosh. Okay, Chair, I'm going to come back round two. Thank you so very much. Thank you, Ms. Kau.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay, thank you, Member Kama. Let's go to Member Sugimura with your line of questions for Acting Director Kau. Proceed.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you, Chair. Welcome, Helene. And I just wanted to start off saying that I support you. I've worked, through my years on the Council, different projects, and I have always appreciated your openness and willingness to

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assist. So I want to start off with that. I think for me, last night you probably went through something just as rigorous as this meeting as she, Members, was part of the Kula Community Association agenda last night. And I was at another function, so I didn't get to attend, but I will say that I got glowing reports, emails of...of your success through that, and...and Kula Community Association really appreciated you. So I just wanted to start off by saying that. During the Kona low storm in December, as you know, I also wanted to appreciate the communication that you did, as I was getting an influx of emails from my constituents, my neighbors, who were uncertain about what was happening with water, electricity. The storm did a lot of things, as you know. But communication is really important. So can you briefly talk about what the Department has implemented, or will be implementing, with emergency management for any kind of similar...similar situations in the future?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Sugimura. I've only had preliminary discussions with Herman Andaya. And I will have, you know, additional conversations with him, but it's going to involve a mechanism whereby the phone numbers are in a database, per se. And you know, the community can receive those messages --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. KAU: -- the same emergency management, you know, system, we're just going have to change the message and have those communications go directly to cell phones or emails. And I do believe that we've discussed contacting perhaps Kula Community Association, perhaps Kihei Community Association directly, and utilizing those avenues of communication, which may be more beneficial, particularly in instances where the electricity is out. So Herman...I have had discussions with Herman and will continue to do so to address that.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you very, very much. It was a evident puka, I want to say, if I could use that word, and yeah, my neighbors were...or my...my constituents were a little bit...fell out of touch with what was going on with the E. coli, and you know...and thank you for sending out the potable water trucks for my neighbors to get, you know, fresh water. So appreciate all that you did, doing that. I'm going to end with saying that on a...on a personal...personal note--because I've known you greater than just this, and I've seen you as a mother, and as...as you raise your children, and I just want to commend you on that with your busy life and what you're able to do with your family. So in that, with a well-rounded kind of life experience, I think, is what it takes to sit in that seat and take the questions about your employees, as well as hiring and putting all of this puzzle together. I just want to thank you very much for taking this challenge, and I fully support your directorship. So I'll be voting yes at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Member Sugimura.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Member Sugimura. And Acting Director, I got

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a...just a couple of quick questions for you. First, with the potential purchase of the East Maui Water System, maybe taking your hat off as a Director, how should water be allocated and to whom, in your view? How should water be prioritized from this area?

MS. KAU: Chair Molina, that's a difficult question. And I'm going have to revert to by law, we all...we...you know, we have an obligation to provide the water to consumers. We have competing interests with...with agriculture. And as you know, Acting Director of Water Supply, I'm going to prioritize providing water to my consumers. But we also support agriculture, as you know, so it's...you know, it's...it's not a clear answer. I...I...we support both interests. But of course, first and foremost, I need to be sure that my consumers have an adequate supply.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. And next question, over this last year or so, while serving as a Deputy, and now in the role of Acting Director, what have you done to expand your knowledge of the Department of Water Supply? What have you done?

MS. KAU: Thank you for that question, Chair Molina. I've attempted to learn more about operations, as I have...I've...former Director Pearson and I split responsibilities. And as...as Deputy, I oversaw field operations and treatment facilities. And I had had a fair involvement, fair degree of involvement at the treatment facilities because I was actively involved in budgeting with them and whatnot, historically. I am learning more about field operations, although I rely, needless to say, very heavily on Bobby Vida and his Staff, the fine group of people that he leads. There's far too much for me to learn. I'm working with people who have, you know, 100 years of collected...collective experience, and I'm fortunate that they're there. I am learning more about prioritizing what their needs are. And I feel that in my role, you know, that's my job. I need to help provide them with the resources that they need to do their job successfully.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay, thank you. Appreciate you taking the initiative. And very quickly, for my last question, you were employed in the private sector. What would your former employers say about your strengths, just in general?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Chair Molina. In general, I'm a diligent employee. You know, most of my private sector experience has been financial related, and I've always done what it takes and more in order to get the job done, even to the point--if I can pat myself on the back, when I announced to Amfac that I was leaving Honolulu and moving to Maui. I had announced that I was leaving, but as...as a show of appreciation, they gifted me a bonus, although I had already indicated that I would...I would terminate. But they were appreciative of my efforts to support, you know, the various plantations that I worked with, while at Amfac. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you, Ms. Kau. All right, we had two requests for follow-up questions. We'll start first with Member King, followed by Member Kama. You have an additional minute, go ahead.



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COUNCILMEMBER KING: Thank you, Chair. Just real quickly--and I do...I wanted to clear up for people in the public that when you talk about me and Shayne, you're talking about Shayne Agawa, and not Shane Sinenci--because I think that's a little confusing for folks. And then the other...the other question I had, Helene, was on the EPA watershed plans because they're under the Water Department. I've noticed that there's no...that...you know, and I've checked, and it seems like there's no...none of the watershed plans are...are written to EPA standards. So we've got a project in...in the budget this year to write two watershed plans to EPA standards, and then hopefully we can get the other ones up to that. And that will help us qualify for grants. So I just wanted to get your...your thoughts on that, and whether you would support that, and make sure that those projects...you know, you support those projects for the watersheds.

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member King. You know, I'd have to touch bases with our Water Resources and Planning Division. I know that the grants that we administer are directly related to identified needs of those particular watersheds. So the extent to which these organizations address specific needs, we would support, you know, their prioritized needs.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay. So, you know...well, I guess the question is that, you know, we've got these two new watershed plans that it will be written with this funding that the Council has put into the budget, assuming that it makes it through second reading. And...and, you know, just in my research, I found that we can't apply for certain EPA grants unless these...the watershed plans are written to EPA standards. So that's kind of what I wanted your thoughts on. Would you support...you know, if we get these first two on the...you know, kind of go...revisiting the other watershed plans and getting them up to the EPA standards so we can get more Federal money to support it . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member King. And I do believe that our water resources and planning Division head was going to check with those particular watershed partners to determine whether or not those plans would be written to EPA standards.

COUNCILMEMBER KING: Okay, great. All right. Well, I look forward to circling back with you at some point on that. Thank you so much, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you, Member King. Okay, we have a follow-up question request from Member Kama, followed by Member Sinenci. Go ahead, Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you again for coming back for round two, Ms. Kau. So I just wanted to talk about your succession planning. So how many...how many vacancies do you anticipate occurring over the next maybe eight months to a year or two, and how do you expect to go about recruitment for these positions?

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MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Kama. I'm going to say at least six fairly high-level vacancies within a 24-month period. And what we are attempting to do in each case is to identify other...either other potential personnel within the Department, and/or to shore up the job descriptions to determine what we would need to fill those positions when they become vacant, and we'd have to recruit externally. Our first preference in all cases is to recruit internally, to provide other people --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yes, yes.

MS. KAU: -- with opportunities, as well as to...as well as to provide, you know, some succession in terms of knowledge and, you know, experience and whatnot. But that's what we're looking at right now.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Is there a program within the Water Department to be able to help those who are already in the Department who want to obtain their engineering degrees?

MS. KAU: Thank you for that question, Member Kama. I do not believe that there is.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Would that be helpful?

MS. KAU: You know, that may be helpful, Member Kama, but what I need now are actually qualified --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Qualified.

MS. KAU: -- engineers.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: . . . *(Inaudible)*. . . Okay. Okay. Because if we're looking at something maybe within the next two years, you're right, you want kind of like the boots on the ground. But in long-term succession planning, you might want to take a look at that, maybe? I don't know, maybe that's a discussion for next time. But --

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: -- but thank you.

MS. KAU: That's a good question. And...and actually, what we should consider also is within the Department, providing better opportunities for, you know, lower-level engineers, providing them with opportunities to gain sufficient experience in the County system so that they can become professional engineers.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Absolutely. Absolutely, I agree. So thank you very much for your answers. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Member Kama. We have Member Sinenci,

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followed by a follow-up question request from Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. Proceed, Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair Molina. Yeah, just follow up. Ms. Kau, you mentioned that you met with the Kula Community Association last night. I was just curious, was there any long-term talks about possibly expanding water source treatment and water storage during drought season to serve the Upcountry residents?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Sinenci. There was some brief discussion about that. And unfortunately, I can't provide any...you know, any hard answers with regards to that. Historically, we've looked at other potential storage opportunities, land is always an issue with regards to the development of additional source. Right now, the State is...is developing a well, but you know, there's nothing that has significant capacity that would provide, you know, any substantive source. So, you know, that is something that we certainly need to evaluate going forward. It's a critical need.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thank you. And then my last question, during the Water Use Development Plan deliberations, we went through some of the strategies, and a lot of the Members supported policies for conservation and to reduce overuse of water by maybe the larger water users. Are you supportive of...of some of these policies?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Sinenci. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Yes. And by design, our water rates are structured to charge the highest rates to those people that use the most water.

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

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you, Member Sinenci. Let's go to Committee Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez, go ahead.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. I wanted to follow the same line of questioning that Member Kama was asking, and that's regarding succession planning. How competitive are the salaries for these positions, whether it's lower-level or higher-level?

MS. KAU: Mahalo, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. Unfortunately, I've been advised that the salaries are not competitive. So oftentimes --

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MS. KAU: -- what...what attracts employees is, you know, people who've done their stint in the private industry, they're already licensed engineers, and then they're seeking the long-term benefits that the County provides. You know, I myself, I'm not an engineer, but it took ten years for me to reach the salary that I left in Honolulu. So it's...you know, it's the...the attraction needs to be more about the benefits and less about the salary.

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VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscapers and Architects. My husband was a land surveyor and he never took the exam to become licensed. Do you...do you find some of your engineers not wanting to take that license, and would a program that would support becoming licensed be attractive?

MS. KAU: Thank you for that question, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. I do believe that if it...I believe it would be attractive if we were to support that kind of initiative and either work with UH Maui College for educational opportunities, work within other...other departments within the County to provide other work-related opportunities...because you need the work experience as well as the educational qualifications.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. For land surveyors, I think it was like 11 years if you didn't have a degree, or 7 years if you did have a bachelor's degree. I would love to explore that more with you and, you know, try to figure out how we can put that in the budget for next session.

MS. KAU: Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. And then I wanted to also dovetail off of what Member Sugimura was asking about with the alerts. And, you know, we...we met about this a few months ago, at the end of last year. One of the residents on Moloka'i, when Kalai found out that there was E. coli in the water, the person, you know, contacted my office and asked if someone could have like, knocked door to door to let everyone know that there was E. coli, because no one wants to drink E. coli in the water. But that's just not feasible. And so when...when I met with you and Former Director Pearson about it, I suggested using like a robotext or robocalls, because they're super affordable. I've used them with my campaign, and so I know what the price range is. And I really hope that you look into that because the...you know, water customers do provide phone numbers on you, and so those are the ones that would be immediately impacted by any, you know, danger in the...in the water. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Mahalo.

MS. KAU: Thank you, Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. And if I just may comment very quickly...and that's what we're working with in Emergency Management, they already have the system. So it's just a matter of, you know, setting it up, per se, and then targeting the necessary audience for each emergency.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you, Committee Vice-Chair Rawlins-Fernandez. Anyone else with a follow-up question for Acting Director Kau? Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. You know, like Member Rawlins-Fernandez, I did get the anonymous letter. In addition, mail addressed to me was inadvertently

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sent to all my colleagues from the public with complaints about answers to questions, I guess, that you gave to...to public regarding Upcountry water meter list. I also received, you know, a number of snail mail letters not...not satisfied with an asking to not confirm. And I just was wanting to give you the similar opportunity to respond to that criticism. One of the letters thought that you weren't very knowledgeable about the Upcountry water meter list, and had issue, I guess, with customer service, answer...type answers like in...in treating them. And I think one was saying that, you know, every year, Upcountry is asked to conserve through the drought, but they feel that nothing's being done. And they don't want to last eight months, you know, even. And I just was...wanted to give you an opportunity to respond to that criticism.

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Paltin. And they're right. I do not know very much about the Upcountry water meter list. It is a very, very complicated process. We attempt to...we attempt to send out 80 letters per year because it is so complex to determine, for each instance, what is required. There's some significant technical analysis that's required before those letters are offered. It will take us, as I alluded to in the Kula Community Association meeting yesterday evening, that at this rate, it'll take us 18 years to get through that list. It is very, very complex. I'm not going to pretend to know enough about it because it's a very, very difficult challenge. With regards to customer service, and particularly what had happened with the Kona low storms last year, yes, we have much room for improvement. We discussed that as well. Fortunately, after some time had passed, we improved the manner in which we communicated, and we were able to provide a more consistent message; but initially, it was difficult for us even to...to...you know, we tested the water every day. Today, it was clear; tomorrow, in the same spot, it wasn't. And as we were anxious to allow people to drink that water . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . you know, we still realized that we...we would need to get three or four days of consistent results before we provided that message. But we've learned the lesson, and we hope that going forward, that we will have improved communication and customer service in that regard.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you very much, Member Paltin. You know, you touched upon that good topic that I was interested in asking a question of, and that was customer service. So I believe, like in...in anything we do--well, as public servants--we need to respect our constituents, and I guess view them like customers because we're getting paid by them. And it's our duty to provide the best possible service. So I'm glad you...you made mention of that. Just a quick question, I guess, for Managing Director Baz, if he's still online. Mr. Baz, if you're there, were there other applicants considered?

MR. BAZ: Thank you, Chair. No, there was no other applicants considered for this position. Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you. Just wanted to make sure everyone knows how all this came to be. So...very good. Member Kama, I saw your hand up? Is there is a need for

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you to ask an additional question? I know I...you know, we went...I know you already did, but...

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Oh, okay.

CHAIR MOLINA: Members --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: I can probably talk to her offline, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: . . .*(Inaudible)*. . . Yeah. No, you know what? I...I understand the nature of this position. And this is a very, very demanding position. So --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah.

CHAIR MOLINA: -- Chair will be a little bit flexible with you guys. If you do want an additional round, another one minute to ask --

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay, good.

CHAIR MOLINA: -- a question, you can go ahead. All right, Member Kama, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you, Chair. So Ms. Kau, you know, when Hawaiian Home Land lessees apply for a water meter, what is that process for them?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Kama. I believe that there are credits provided to the lessees. We're required to provide the water meters...you know, they have inherent rights to those water meters, per se.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So what is the process for them to acquire that meter to put onto their property?

MS. KAU: I believe that when the development is...is...when the property is developed, that the application is...generally speaking, we receive a group of applications related to a particular development, you know, of...of Hawaiian Home Lands, and we just process those accordingly.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: So in that process, the lessee does or does not need to go to the Department to actually get a meter onto the property itself. Was the meter already there?

MS. KAU: I believe that the meter is...for most of those developments, the meters should already be there. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Okay, okay. Well, if not, I can call you later on and talk to you more about that. Thank you very much, Chair.

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CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Member Kama. Members, anyone else need a third and final one-minute round? Okay, Member Paltin, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, if I may, I had some process questions for Director Baz as well. Is that allowed?

CHAIR MOLINA: Sure. Member...Member Baz. Mr. Baz. . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Mr. Baz, I just was wondering, you know, with the previous ways, if...if Acting Director Kau is not approved, she can still remain as the Deputy Director; is that correct?

MR. BAZ: The Mayor has the option of appointing the Deputy Director, that...all Deputy Directors sit at his discretion. So he has appointed Shayne as the Deputy. You know what, and he's also appointed a Deputy for the Department of Environmental Management that Shayne did sit in. So should Ms. Kau not be confirmed, the Mayor has the option of appointing her as the Deputy of the Department of Water Supply, and then, you know, addressing Shayne's position and...in whatever manner he chooses. He could choose to go back down the line and...and move Shayne back to the EM, and then move the person that is in the EM back to...he has return rights to his position in the EM.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then in the beginning of this, in your first time of speaking, you mentioned like so if we were to approve Ms. Kau, and if Mayor Victorino is re-elected, she--or whoever is in that position--would need to go through another confirmation process, even if she was just continuing on?

MR. BAZ: Correct. All Directors are going to be required to be confirmed or reconfirmed at every term of the Mayor.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And that's a standard process, not just a policy for Mayor Victorino?

MR. BAZ: That's a Charter requirement. Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, okay. I think that's all of my process questions. Thank you so much, Director Baz and thank you, Chair.

CHAIR MOLINA: Okay. Thank you very much, Member Paltin. Follow-up question, third round, let's go to Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Kau, I keep...I keep going back to the first question I asked you on affordable housing. And be honest with you, it was a little disappointing when...when we're in a crisis. And I...I just want to kind of rephrase the

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question for you. So are you...are you just simply following the Administration's lead on whatever affordable housing projects come up? I would hope to see you maybe spearhead some innovations or creative ideas, thinking outside the box for our affordable housing crisis? Because I...I kind of look forward to you being a leader on that, you know, because, you know, I'm the Chair of Affordable Housing, and that's kind of my passion. I would like to work with you if you could, you know, come up with creative things. But if I'm...and I kind of want to rephrase the question, are you just going to wait for projects to come on your desk? Is that kind of your...your plan moving forward?

MS. KAU: Thank you for that question, Member Johnson. As Deputy Shayne Agawa is a licensed engineer, he has had more involvement with regards to these projects. And in terms of spearheading other projects, it...actually, our involvement, you know, is--as part of the Affordable Housing Committee and whatnot, there are discussions that happen early on, and we are involved. And then it appears as though the projects that...you know, that we proceed with or that, you know, we support are generally the projects that, of course, we would be able to...we think that we'd be able to provide water for. But early on, it's...and it's an arduous process, as I'm sure you can understand. So the extent to which we would spearhead projects would only be relevant...the extent to which these projects are already identified. And, you know, our involvement is...is early on. Otherwise, we address the priorities that are before us, because as you know, it takes a long time to get to the point of viability.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah, I hear you, it's arduous. I felt...I often hear that from . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . our...from our working-class folks, that it's hard to live on the streets, and it's hard to live in homes that are overpriced, it's hard for them. So I don't want to tell them that it's...yeah, it's...that's our excuse, that it's just, you know, hard...because they know what's hard, you know. So that's...that's just...we have to help those folks that need it. So I'm out of time. But thank you, Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your time.

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Johnson. And we certainly support the projects that are viable.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Thank you, Madam Director. I got a quick one for you. You know, I've always seen the directorship of the Water Department and Planning...the Planning Department, two very demanding positions that subjects you to a lot of scrutiny. You're in a pressure cooker, somewhat like us. Tell me, if you were hitting the proverbial wall and getting burned out, what would you do to, I guess, re-energize yourself?

MS. KAU: Thank you, Member Molina. I love to go fishing.

CHAIR MOLINA: All right. That's a simple, honest answer. And...and, you know, you're still happy whether you catch something or not, right?

MS. KAU: Yes.



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CHAIR MOLINA: All right. Good enough for me. All right. Members, I guess, seeing no one else with a final question for Acting Director Kau, I would like to thank her, as well as the Managing Director Baz for coming before the Committee this morning to respond to questions. So thank you again. And your Chair's recommendation, of course, as I stated earlier will be to defer this matter for final decision making at our Council meeting this coming Friday. So Mr. Baz, anything you'd like to add before we close...and Director?

**ACTION: DEFER.**

MR. BAZ: Just in appreciation. Mahalo, Chair, Members. We appreciate the diligent questions that you've asked of Helene...of Ms. Kau, and myself. And want to assure you that we will work together to do the best that we can for our community and for our County.

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you, Mr. Baz. Acting Director, final comments?

MS. KAU: Mahalo for the opportunity. And I look forward to continuing to serve our customers, your constituents, the Department of Water Supply. Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Thank you very much. Okay, Staff, is there anything the Chair needs to be made aware of before we adjourn our proceedings today?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: No, Chair. There's no further business before the Committee. Thank you.

CHAIR MOLINA: Very good. Well, thank you very much, Members, for making yourself available in an off-week to address this matter. I want to thank Staff, Administration, and everyone else joining us here for our proceedings this morning. And this is a rarity, Members, the GREAT Committee meeting only went an hour and 15 minutes today. So with that being said, I want to again thank you all for your participation. The Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee meeting for Wednesday, May 4, 2022...the time is 10:16 a.m., this meeting is adjourned. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

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**ADJOURN: 10:16 a.m.**

APPROVED BY:



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MICHAEL J. MOLINA, Chair  
Government Relations, Ethics, and  
Transparency Committee

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Transcribed by: Joon Lee

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CERTIFICATION

I, Joon Lee, hereby certify that pages 1 through 26 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED the 2nd day of June 2022, in Aiea, Hawai'i

  
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Joon Lee