## **Transportation Agency**

Honorable Addison Bulosan Honorable Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr. Honorable Felicia Cowden Honorable Bill DeCosta Honorable KipuKai Kuali'i Honorable Ross Kagawa Honorable Mel Rapozo

The Committee reconvened on April 9, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., and proceeded as follows:

Council Chair Rapozo: Good morning. Welcome to our final day of budget reviews. We will start off with public testimony. Is there anyone in the audience wishing to testify? Seeing none, we will start with the Transportation Agency. You can start with your overview, if you want to just go over that and then we will open it up for questions.

There being no public testimony, the meeting proceeded as follows:

CELIA M. MAHIKOA, Executive on Transportation: Good morning, Council Chair and Councilmembers. Celia Mahikoa, Executive on Transportation. I have two (2) of my team members here.

LEONARD PETERS, Assistant Executive on Transportation: Aloha, Councilmembers.

WINNY HOEPPNER, Accountant III: Hi. I am Whitney.

Ms. Mahikoa: I will briefly review our budget and operation synopsis that was provided ahead of time. If you have any questions at any point, please feel free to ask. I will start with major changes and variations in our operating budget. We have two (2) funding sources that we are provided through the County. The first is the Highway Fund, of which the benefits and expenses are decreased by about twenty-three thousand dollars (\$23,000) as adjustments in the fringe estimates. The Highway Fund supports approximately fifty percent (50%) of the full-time bus driver payroll expenses. The General Excise Tax (GET) Fund is the other funding source we are provided to operate public transit for the community. The major changes that occurred from the current fiscal year to the requested fiscal year 2025, we are looking at an increase of four hundred seventy-two thousand dollars (\$472,000) in salaries and wages and four hundred seventy-one thousand dollars (\$471,000) for fringe benefits, due to collective bargaining pay and the corresponding fringe increases that come along with that. There was also the item that was discussed during the Department of Parks & Recreation's budget session where there was a transfer of the Janitor II, 9457, from the Department of Parks & Recreation to the Transportation Agency to help provide the level of custodial service required by our twenty-hour-per-day operation. Utility expenses are being decreased, or are appearing to decrease by eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) primarily to reflect the software subscription costs that are now being properly classified in the information technology (IT) arrangement, the Subscription-Based IT Arrangements (SBITA) account, rather than the Internet, Data, Cable Utilities account. Our operations budgeted expenses increased by one hundred thirty-seven thousand dollars (\$137,000) primarily due to software subscription costs described in the utilities paragraph above, which I just mentioned, and some anticipated increases in transit operating expenses, which will include our integration and implementation of the electric fare payment system.

Operational challenges that we have had is we have been continuing to keep our sights on the goals provided through the Short-Range Transit Plan that was completed in 2018. Even with the challenges going on, we keep our sights there so that we know as things start improving and coming together that we are able to continue towards those goals of more effectively providing transit service for the many communities on the island. The number one challenge, which is very similar to what everyone else is dealing with, is personnel shortages. Through this last fiscal year, we needed to eliminate bus service on Sundays, which we know is extremely challenging and straining for many individuals who rely on the transit service to get to and from work, appointments, and other commitments that they have. Again, we are keeping our sights on being able to get our manpower built up to the point where we can reinstate Sunday service for the sake of our riders. We have been using different strategies that we have identified, such as having the signage on our buses. I do not know how many of you noticed the "Now Hiring" on our signage. We have that advantage of vehicles on the road constantly, so we are able to utilize these different strategies. We have seen some increase in attention coming towards the recruitment that we have for drivers and are hoping that we will be able to hire and have fully trained those drivers that we need to get us to the point of reinstating Sunday service. At the same time, we also need additional clerk dispatchers to fill the operation need as well. Those are the two (2) key positions that are needed at our operation. As long as buses are operating, we need the drivers and clerk dispatchers present in the office or in the vehicles at all times. The other challenge that we are facing and that we are actually going through a project to address is our basevard space, which has been an ongoing challenge that we have had. It forces us to be extremely creative in the way in which we park vehicles, assign vehicles, and manage the incoming and replacement of the existing overused life vehicles that we have. We are extremely grateful that the other departments the Department of Public Works, the Department of Parks & Recreation-have been assisting us and providing space as needed. We are going through the electric fleet transition. It is exciting and at the same time challenging. The commitment of the State and counties to be committing entire fleets to electric power...we have been working with the other transit agencies on Maui, Hawai'i Island, with the Hawai'i Department of Transportation's (HDOTs) planning office, and with consultants. Thankfully, over this fiscal year, we have been able to award the contract for four (4) electric buses that we anticipate being delivered and available for service by 2027. The timeframe does seem rather extensive, however, there are backlogs at the manufacturing level, so we are working within what is available. That is the timeframe we are seeing. At the same time, we are working through what is needed to have the appropriate infrastructure available for charging these vehicles. At their point of arrival, we would have them already installed.

Next are the top three (3) highlights that we have. One (1) highlight is having the contract to Gillig for the purchase of the four (4) electric buses for Kaua'i Bus. Another operational highlight was the success of our applications (apps) that we have implemented for the community and for those planning on visiting. There are many who utilize our apps and the information available prior to arriving, so they know the live time arrivals for our buses. They are able to know how many minutes before the bus will arrive at the stop and where it is. As a bus rider, it is extremely useful to have this information available to you. That has been doing well. The third, which I always...we thoroughly value the input that is provided to us by our riders and their families. We appreciate having that open line of communication available with the customers that we serve each day. We love to have that open. They contact us, and we respond promptly through our management team to be able to

address any concerns they may have. Sometimes, they call in to relay positive input about the experiences they have with our drivers, dispatch team, and others. That is about the bulk of what I have to share for now. Did anyone have any questions?

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember Kagawa. We are on the overview.

Councilmember Kagawa: I am looking at your overview. The transportation fund from fiscal year (FY) 2024 to FY 2025 went down. It went down a little bit. From FY 2024 to FY 2025, the GET fund went up over one million dollars (\$1,000,000). In the last budget, I think the direction was that the County needs to use the GET fund to fix roads and bridges, and to not use more for the buses. This year, you did exactly that. You are again using more GET fund to subsidize the bus. Is this the direction the County is going? The Transportation Agency is being funded eleven million five hundred thousand dollars (\$11,500,000) from the GET fund. The Highway Fund is only three million two hundred thousand dollars (\$3,200,000).

Ms. Mahikoa:

Yes, that is what is proposed here.

Councilmember Kagawa: From 2020, when we approved the GET fund, the message to the taxpayers was that the GET fund would increase by a half percent (.5%), because the County is going to fund the Transportation Agency totally out of that. Is that the message the County was sending?

recall	Ms. Mahikoa: exactly what the message was.	I do not recall that being the message. I do not
to 202	Councilmember Kagawa: 0? Where did the money come from	How was the Transportation Agency funded prior to fund the Transportation Agency?
	Ms. Mahikoa:	It came from the Highway Fund.
Highw	Councilmember Kagawa: ay Fund pay for it?	You did not have the GET fund. Did only the
	Ms. Mahikoa:	It was the Highway Fund and General Fund.
	Councilmember Kagawa:	What was the ratio of that?
answe	Ms. Mahikoa: r.	I would need to research that to give you a correct
the his	Councilmember Kagawa: story. Thank you, Chair.	Okay. I need all that information. I need to know
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: In your opening, I appreciated that you elaborated on listening to your constituents and bus riders, and that you take that into consideration. A lot of the constituents come to us with information and things to improve the bus. Over the

last two (2) years, I asked for two (2) things from your staff. A light at the Kalāheo bus stop and for bus coverage on the bypass road that goes to the Grand Hyatt Kaua'i. You do not need to look confused. You know what I am talking about. I asked you on the phone more than once. Did you fix those two (2) things that I and the constituents asked for? It is a light at the Kalāheo bus stop next to Kalāheo elementary school, and a bus stop coverage on the bypass road, where the Grand Hyatt Kaua'i intersects our alternate route. There are only lawn chairs. There is no coverage. I know we are waiting on that grant with Michael Moule to do all of Po'ipū, but if it is going to take another two (2), three (3), or four (4) years, do you expect the constituents to sit in the hot sun and the rain while waiting for the Kaua'i Bus? Could you answer that?

Ms. Mahikoa: We are addressing it through our partnership with the Department of Public Works, getting the project done in that area. I apologize for the time it takes, however, that is how we need to address that issue.

Councilmember DeCosta: Thank you for that answer. It is not the answer the constituents and I are looking for.

Ms. Mahikoa: I am sorry.

Councilmember DeCosta: You said you will have a facility for the new electric buses and will start construction based on the approval of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Will that site have restrooms? Will you have bathrooms in that warehouse or maintenance shop that will be constructed? It says, "Construction anticipated to commence upon approval by FTA." Will there be bathrooms in that maintenance shop?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes. It is adding on to the existing repair shop facility in which a bathroom currently exists, so there is no need to add on another restroom to that same structure.

Councilmember DeCosta:	Okay. Is that structure next to the soccer park?
Ms. Mahikoa:	Yes.

Councilmember DeCosta: We talked about you allowing the children to use that bathroom during soccer games, so I was just wondering if you will make...I guess you do not remember that conversation that we had either.

Ms. Mahikoa: stating we did.	I am sorry. We may have and I am sure if you are
Councilmember DeCosta: not going to expand on it.	That is fine. You already have a bathroom and are
Mr. Peters:	Can I respond to that?
Councilmember DeCosta:	Go ahead.

Mr. Peters: The initial plans were for the expansion to encroach into the soccer field, but that is not the case at this point, because of the Federal regulations involved with doing that, so we are staying within the same footprint that we are currently in. The plans, to-date, call for just expanding without encroaching into the soccer field, which I am happy about, because that field is very well used on the weekends.

Councilmember DeCosta:	Thank you. I am done, Chair.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember Cowden.
Councilmember Cowden: to you folks and for being warm.	First of all, I want to say thank you for everything

## (Councilmember Kagawa was noted as not present.)

Councilmember Cowden: When I ride the bus, I have never had anything below neutral that I have seen towards anyone. Usually, it is above neutral. I am proud of your bus fleet and the bus drivers for that. I am also happy to see that you quadrupled the ridership. That is a big achievement. What do you think is the main reason for that? Is it the routes? For what reason do you think it has quadrupled?

Ms. Mahikoa: Primarily, with the time period that we are including, there is the major increase that took place in February 2021.

Okay.

Councilmember Cowden:

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes. We added Sunday service and I believe two (2) to three (3) hours were added into the evenings, of which we have needed to scale back on some of those hours in going through the COVID-19 pandemic. That is primarily what a good portion of that is, as well as there being many more who use it sustainably now.

Councilmember Cowden: I am seeing more at the bus stops. At the bottom of page 3, it says, "A net increase of hiring six (6) full-time bus drivers and two (2) dispatchers into existing vacancies should provide a level of staffing sufficient to reinstate Sunday bus service." How many of those have you hired? Have you hired any?

Ms. Mahikoa: As far as dispatchers are concerned, we are still working on getting those vacancies completed. I believe we have interviews scheduled for this week, so we are hoping for success in that arena. As far as the drivers go, we have one (1) scheduled to start next week. It appears another one is scheduled to start at the beginning of May. We have others who are going through the interview process right now, so it is a very slow process. At the same time that we are hiring, there are also individuals who want to retire or need to move.

Councilmember Cowden: My next question was going to be, "If you get half (½) the amount hired, can you maybe do one (1) of the routes, such as the South route or the North route?" Maybe that would make people happy. Was the Federal Transit three-million-five-hundred-thousand-dollar grant requiring no local match funds for the repair shop approved? Are you getting that grant?

Ms. Mahikoa:We have the funds available already. It is a<br/>matter of carrying out the project.Councilmember Cowden:Is the repair shop on the Capital Improvement<br/>Projects (CIP) plan?Ms. Mahikoa:This is not, because it came through a Federal

councilmember Cowden: Hooray for that. I have a couple of questions

Councilmember Cowden: Hooray for that. I have a couple of questions relating to this electric fleet transition. I am wondering how much flexibility there is. It will be great getting the first five (5) [sic] buses. It will be another two (2) years. Is that right?

Ms. Mahikoa:

I believe so, yes.

Councilmember Cowden: When we are seeing the environmental problems with creating the batteries, learning that they tend to catch fire in salt conditions, which we have, and it being hard to dispose of them...I am seeing Hertz, Ford, and others changing their strategy. They are not utilizing electric vehicles; they are moving away from them, because they are having a lot of problems. How committed is the State government? Can we still shift? You can get these five (5) [sic], but is there thought towards there being a directional change? If the County really invests heavily in an electric baseyard and then do not keep moving in that direction, is there conversation? Is there conversation going on with the State about the vulnerabilities that were not anticipated in electric vehicles?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes. When we meet with them and discuss the subject, there is some, however, there has not been a formal directional change or directive provided, for which I am extremely grateful that the process has been delayed. Typically, delays are undesirable, but I believe in this situation, because of these issues that we see coming up that are naturally going to occur anytime something new is implemented, there is a learning curve that comes with it. We are entering into this arena on a small scale. We are going with four (4) buses.

Councilmember Cowden:

The little pilot program....

Ms. Mahikoa: It is going to take a while simply because of the manufacturing delays. We are going to be able to keep our eyes on what is happening in the industry, learn, make adjustments as needed, and communicate what we are learning with our leaders for changes.

Councilmember Cowden: I am hoping the County does not get very invested and spend millions and millions of dollars just to have it not happen. It runs on diesel at night, right, so it is hard to see how it is really saving the environment, if not hurting the environment, because they mine the ocean and other vulnerable areas to create those batteries. It was a good idea. I am not sure it is a great idea. I just want to look at that. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo:

Councilmember Kuali'i.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Right now, do all the buses come back to Līhu'e and spend the night at the one (1) location?

Ms. Mahikoa:Yes.Councilmember Kuali'i:Is your plan to expand the location, but not to

Ms. Mahikoa: We have been provided a section within Kapa'a Baseyard near the armory that we are also looking at. I wish we had the ability to take on all projects at one (1) time, but we are staggering them. Right now, we are working on getting our repair shop expanded.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Would any extra areas be a replication of what you have in Līhu'e, or is it just a parking place?

Ms. Mahikoa: Primarily, it would serve as a place for the vehicles to be stored.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Would it be a storage?

necessarily add other locations?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes.

Councilmember Kuali'i: You are getting too big even for what you are expanding to with what is available here. You mentioned the charging infrastructure installation. Is that also just in Līhu'e?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes, for now. In Phase I of our expansion, yes. It is included in the repair shop expansion.

Councilmember Kuali'i: You originally talk about the goal of converting one hundred percent (100%) to renewable-powered fuels by 2035, and that because of all these different delays, it is very unlikely. Do you have another goal—sixty percent (60%) or something less than one hundred percent (100%)? Are you working as part of a statewide thing with the Hawai'i Zero (0) Emission Bus Pilot Project?

Ms. Mahikoa: We are adjusting more so just to see the reality of the situation with us learning more as we move forward with implementing vehicles. At the same time, just the delays and backlog in manufacturing with the assumption that we will have the funding available at that time, should we decide to proceed with electric vehicles. Again, as was discussed a few minutes ago, we are not certain whether or not there will be a change in direction in that. For now, we will continue in that direction, but as far as providing you an estimated percentage, I am thinking that based on what we have experienced thus far, I would not see us reaching half (½) our fleet being transitioned by 2035 if that is the path that we are directed to continue on.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Is it that all these things need to happen, and then you can go?

Ms. Mahikoa:	That is right.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Thank you.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember Carvalho.

Councilmember Carvalho: I have a clarifying question on the Space Needs Study. From my understanding, everything was already in place, but it says it is currently being assembled. Where are you at with that?

Ms. Mahikoa: We are still working with that consultant on that for guidance with these moving parts as far as our baseyard expansion needs...to be providing guidance with...in addition to space, there is also the added elements that need to be considered whenever new land-related projects are taken on. That includes the Federal requirements and those types of items that need to be taken into consideration. They are helping us as well with any type of communication that needs to be provided for the Federal government for us to maintain compliance.

Councilmember Carvalho:	Are you still continuing on, overall?
Ms. Mahikoa:	Yes, for now. Thank you.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: Hello, Celia. I wanted to ask you this since we are talking about these four (4) new buses that are coming in. What areas of the United States have you gauged the topographical map with the uphill and downhill roads, because there is quite a bit of uphill roads? Are these buses able to handle the terrain? For example, going into and coming out of Hanalei, there is the steep hill that needs to be climbed. Can the electric buses handle that climb easily with the load of people or is it that you do not know if it can handle that type of climb? Kalāheo and Wailua also have a bit of steep roads, so I was wondering in the United States are there buses that have the type of steep roads like we do in Hawai'i.

	Ms. Mahikoa:	That is a very good question. Thank you
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Mr. Peters: Councilmember DeCosta, we have been working with consultants from a company called CTE on this electric bus or zero (0) emissions rollout. We ran a pilot with electric buses on Kaua'i a couple of years ago. We also did a block study of all our routes based on today's technology and determined that the buses are equipped to handle all the blocks that we have for our routes.

Councilmember DeCosta:	Thank you for that.
Councilmember Cowden:	I have follow-up on his question
Council Chair Rapozo:	Go ahead.

Councilmember Cowden: What was interesting and why Hertz and some of these companies pulled away from doing it...probably more important than air conditioning (A/C) is heating. Heating dropped the battery capacity more than fifty percent (50%), so people would drive with the heater on and they would get stuck somewhere. It could absolutely be life-ending in a cold climate. When the electric bus was here, was the air conditioning fine? Typically, the buses are air conditioned. Were you looking at that and making sure they can handle running an air conditioner for x amount of hours every day? Okay. Is that a yes?

Mr. Peters: Yes. Councilmember Cowden: It is because it needs to be recorded.

Mr. Peters: Technology is changing on a daily basis. The capacity for the batteries is getting stronger. The goal is zero (0) emissions. Right now, the electric battery buses is the best option that we have available to us today, but the goal is zero (0) emissions, whether it be other fueling sources. We are keeping a tab on other fueling sources as it becomes available to us in Hawai'i.

Councilmember Cowden: Hydrogen is not something we can do. These buses emit at night when they charge their batteries out of the diesel (inaudible), but they do not go out the tailpipe.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any additional questions on the overview? Councilmember Kuali'i: Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember Kuali'i.

Councilmember Kuali'i: I fully support public transportation and I think there is a role, especially for our constituents who are very-low income, struggling financially, and cannot afford owning and maintaining a personal vehicle, so they need this as a way to get to work. Even when the buses are not full, if there are people on there who need it because it is just part of their life, I think it is important that we do it. I do not understand why, when Councilmember Kagawa expressed his frustration about the funding, you did not respond with, "When the GET law was passed, your allotment was in the law." There is an amount of money from GET that has to go to transportation, right? It is not all for fixing roads. Whatever that formula is...maybe the Managing Director knows, and we should know. We can go back and look at the law. I do not believe one hundred percent (100%) of GET money is supposed to be going to paving roads. A portion of it needs to go to you. Maybe Councilmember Kagawa is correct in saying you might be getting more than the amount that you are supposed to, but find that out, come back, and defend yourself.

Council Chair Rapozo: I think Councilmember Kagawa's frustration comes from the statements that were made in the past, that all the roads would be paved within a ten-year period. I think that is his frustration.

Councilmember Kuali'i:

Do we need more money for that?

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes. Initially, I believe the thought for the GET fund was just for roads. That evolved over time and it is eligible for transportation. That is why there are seven (7) Councilmembers.

Councilmember Kuali'i: I know there was at least one (1) Councilmember who was really fighting and got it in.

Council Chair Rapozo: The struggle is the staffing. It is hard. Councilmember DeCosta talked about the complaints. We get a lot of complaints about the Sunday service and there is a lot of finger pointing, but the reality is that the County just does not have drivers. Everywhere I go, I tell them to apply, drive, and become a driver. I wish I had the time. I would drive, but I do not have the time. That is the bottom line. If there were drivers, there would be a much more efficient bus system, but there are not enough. Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: Since we are giving some constructive information, I believe Councilmember Kagawa has a point. When roads are paved, every driver who hits that pothole benefits when that pothole is fixed. Councilmember Kuali'i made a comment that even if there is only one (1) person on the bus that gets to work...

Councilmember Kuali'i: I did not say one (1). I said, "Even if there are a few..."

Councilmember DeCosta: You said that even if there are a few people on the bus, then it is worth it. The justification is of a few people riding the bus on the GET funds versus everyone who passes over the pothole that was fixed. That is the point of attention I believe we are giving. My big thing is that the County needs to be very conscious of how tax dollars are spent. I told you this before, the morning, the afternoon, and the evening are the three (3) peak times for community contributors who need the bus. You can take a survey if you want. I think the lunchtime cruise around and the late-night cruise around routes are the ones that you can do away with to save funding. I am excited because the Managing Director (MD) came up.

REIKO MATSUYAMA, Managing Director: Reiko Matsuyama, Office of the Mayor. I just want to clarify some things regarding this GET split between roads and transportation. For Councilmember Kuali'i, there is no requirement that a portion of the GET needs to be used for transportation. However, we have always committed to using some of it. Initially, we tried to maintain a seventy-five percent (75%) to twenty-five percent (25%) split, where seventy-five percent (75%) of the money goes to the roads and its infrastructure and the remainder would go to transportation. We are committed to completing all the roads by 2030. By the sunset date, we should be able to have completed all the roads. For bridges, we would have been able to complete the ones that are in need of repairs and inspect every single one of them. That is what we are maintaining here. Celia and the Transportation Agency staff have no control over what their funding proceeds are. They do not have control over how much of their funds are funded by GET and how much is submitted by the Highway Fund. That is all done at the budget team's level. I should have come up earlier when Councilmember Kagawa was speaking. It is not up to them. It is up to us. We prioritize the

roads. That is why we have committed to doubling the islandwide resurfacing contract for this year.

Council Chair Rapozo: Go ahead.

Councilmember DeCosta: This is for the Managing Director. I will apologize ahead for sounding sassy. I do not want to be sassy, because I highly respect you and I think you do an excellent job. We have roads. There is a road in Kekaha that the County has not addressed, yet the County addresses the bus to take those exact same people in Kekaha to and from their workplace or place of enjoyment. The frustration and outcry comes from the Administration putting that percentage of what is used in transportation versus what is used on the roads. When the community asks for roads to be paved or fixed, or for potholes to be addressed, as a Councilmember, it is hard for me to tell them, "It will be fixed, but it might be 2030 or 2028." That is all I was bringing to the table.

Ms. Matsuyama: I can assure you that is a priority road. Those Kekaha roads are a priority. That is included in the budget, one hundred percent (100%). The reason why it has been slow up to this point...

Council Chair Rapozo: I do not want to get into the roads discussion when we are on the Transportation Agency. I think we did have that discussion when the Department of Public Works was here.

Ms. Matsuyama: You folks have not received the response from the Department of Public Works, so I am sort of reiterating some of the things that I have seen in the response, which will come back to you.

Council Chair Rapozo:	Let us stick with the bus.
Councilmember Cowden:	I have a very short thing on the bus.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Go ahead.

Councilmember Cowden: I just want to say thank you. I know many of the people who do ride the buses. Sometimes the buses are absolutely packed and it is a godsend in this year that has had a lack of school buses. When those people who are in that piece between stability and instability are taken care of, I thank God for the bus. Thank you so much for what you folks have done. When we help the whole canoe, we help ourselves. We have to take care of everyone. At least from me, you are getting a double thumbs up.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any other questions on the overview? If not, we will move on to the actual budget. We are on page 273.

Councilmember Kuali'i: On page 273, I see that you have no vacancies in Administration. Are there any expected, coming, or planned retirements? Can you confirm?

Ms. Mahikoa:	There are none that I am aware of.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	I have nothing else on page 273, Chair.

Council Chair Rapozo: Does anyone else have any questions on page 273? Page 274 is mostly blank. We are moving on to Operations on page 276.

Councilmember Kuali'i: On page 276, there are a whole bunch of vacancies. Let us start with the three at the top with 9326, 9420, and 9405. All are Clerk Dispatcher I positions. The shortest vacancy is one hundred forty-four (144) days, and the longest vacancy is two hundred nine (209) days. On the vacancy report, the status is, "Continuous," for all of them. I think I overheard you telling Councilmember Cowden that interviews are scheduled this week. Is it for all of these positions?

Councilmember Kuali'i: Have you gone through a list already and selected people for interviews?

That is correct.

Ms. Mahikoa: We went out for recruitment and we have three (3) who have responded for an interview right now.

Councilmember Kuali'i: You will interview all three (3) and hope that all three (3) work out, because you have three (3) vacancies to fill. If not, will you go right back to it and hope that more people apply?

Ms. Mahikoa:Yes.Councilmember Kuali'i:Did only three (3) people apply? No. Were there

Ms. Mahikoa: What we have been experiencing is that quite a few applications come in, however, when we attempt to schedule interviews, just a relatively small portion accept the interviews, and by the time the interview is held and we filter through...the challenge continues.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Is it a long wait? Maybe they are finding other jobs. Is that what is happening?

Ms. Mahikoa: That is happening with some of them, but we typically try to immediately contact them as soon as the posting is closed. However, there are varying factors out there. One, it does take quite a few more steps to actually get someone onboard with going through the County requirements and our own safety-sensitive requirements.

Councilmember Kuali'i: For the three (3) positions, the salary range is from forty-one thousand three hundred eighty-eight dollars (\$41,388) to sixty-one thousand three hundred thirty-two dollars (\$61,332) or at least that is what I see on the vacancy report. Are they posted with the range or do you start them at the bottom?

Ms. Mahikoa:

Ms. Mahikoa:

more? Did only three (3) meet the...

Right.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Do you start them at the bottom?
Ms. Mahikoa:	That is correct.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Obviously, what you post is what people are going to be attracted to, whether it works for them or not. If you are not getting a lot of applicants, it might be that the number is not high enough. The one (1) thing I will say about the budget in general before I go onto other positions is you list only one dollar (\$1) on here for these positions rather than the budgeted amount. Is it because it will show up somewhere else, because it is being paid for by the GET fund?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Are these positions partially paid for by the GET fund and partially paid by the Highway Fund or is all of it paid by the GET fund? Let us talk about the three (3) dispatchers for now.

Ms. Mahikoa: For the dispatchers, all except for the one dollar (\$1) you see here in the Highway Fund is funded through GET.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Is this representative of the Highway Fund?
Ms. Mahikoa:	Yes.
Councilmember Kualiʻi: dollars paid for by the GET?	Is the balance of the forty-whatever thousand

Ms. Mahikoa: That is correct.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Is that for all three (3) of these positions? Okay. The last one that is not a bus driver position is position 9306, Utility Worker. It just went vacant less than a month ago. You opened the recruitment and closed it. Are you having interviews? Where are you at with this?

Ms. Mahikoa: I believe interviews are scheduled for next week, and we will proceed in hopes of hiring by mid-May.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Alright. Now, let us talk about the bus drivers. In these instances, it only shows sixty-three (63). I am at the bottom of master page 276. All the Bus Driver positions are lumped together, and it says sixty-three (63) at fifty-eight thousand thirty-two dollars (\$58,032). It shows the sixty-three (63) there, which is from the Highway Fund. Is the balance, which is about three million six hundred thousand dollars (\$3,600,000) from the GET fund?

Ms. Mahikoa:	I am sorry. Would you mind
Councilmember Kualiʻi: GET fund?	Is the rest of the bus drivers' salaries from the

Ms. Mahikoa: Other than the lumpsum amount, yes. Other than the one million eight hundred twenty-eight thousand dollars (\$1,828,000).

Councilmember Kuali'i: This is where we see it, right? Will we go somewhere else in the budget to approve it? It is just the funding source. Of the sixty-three (63) bus driver positions, fifteen (15) are vacant. The newest vacancy is only fourteen (14) days, but the majority of them are three hundred (300) days or more. The oldest four (4) have been vacant for one thousand three hundred fifty-three (1,353) days, so they have been vacant for years. As you are filling these positions, do you pick which ones you fill? What would make sense to me is to fill the ones that have been vacant the longest, because they are equal types of positions, right? That way, it does not look so horrible on the vacancy report.

Ms. Mahikoa: I fully understand the point you are making. We have the technicality that we have within our vacancy list which is the fact that we recruit on-call drivers, of which we have had some come in and depart or move into a full-time positions, of which the on-call activity was not reflected in the one thousand three hundred (1,300) days you are seeing on the report. Upon review, I have seen where we have actually brought on-call drivers in and they either departed or moved into a full-time position with a different position number.

Councilmember Kuali'i: I see the on-call drivers on the next page. There is On-Call Drivers, fifty percent (50%). There are a few positions listed there, maybe ten (10) or eleven (11), but not sixty-three (63), like these. These on-call drivers that you hire have their own different numbers. Are these positions actually vacant until you put someone in them? If you are starting them as on-call drivers, then moving them into regular bus driver positions, then an on-call driver position becomes vacant if they leave that job position number and take one of these. To me, it still means there are a ton of vacancies. I know this is the problem and the reason why you had to reduce the Sunday service and evening service. I am talking about them all together rather than trying to go through each one. When you talked to Councilmember Cowden, you said that one (1) of the fifteen (15) vacancies was being filled this week, and one (1) in May. What about the others?

Ms. Mahikoa: Those are the interviews that are taking place. I believe they have them scheduled for next week for all applicants that have come in.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Do you have a lot of applicants and interviews after the two (2) of the fifteen (15)? Does the money sit in the GET fund until you hire them? Chair, we, as a Council, primarily focus on the General Fund with our cuts and our additions, but we still want to be accountable for how the GET funds are spent, but the GET funds are not funds that we add and subtract to.

Council Chair Rapozo: We can. We control that as well.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Obviously, you need to get the positions filled and I know you are trying. That is all on that page.

Council Chair Rapozo: Again, it is a pot of funds like the General Fund, but it is specified for transportation, roads, and so forth. Were you talking out the GET fund?

Councilmember Kualiʻi: paid for with GET funds.	Yes, because these positions primarily are being	
Council Chair Rapozo: dollar	That is correct. If you partially fundthese are all	
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	What we are looking at is the Highway Fund.	
Council Chair Rapozo: transfer from	Right. The Council does have the ability to	
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	But is it only for certain purposes?	
Council Chair Rapozo: not, we are moving on.	That is correct. Are there any more questions? If	
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Are we on the next page?	
Council Chair Rapozo:	Yes, sir.	

Councilmember Kuali'i: There are eleven (11) On-Call Driver positions and one (1) Utility Worker position. Are any of those vacant? I did not see any of those in the vacancy report. Are all the On-Call Driver positions filled and are they helping with the other problem of filling the Bus Driver positions?

Ms. Mahikoa: Our strategy has been to bring them in as On-Call Drivers, then get them fully qualified. That has been another challenge that we have had over the past couple of years. The Federal requirements for licensing have also increased.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Are these enough on-call drivers? I think you have eleven (11) positions here. Do you need more to help with your strategy and to help with the problem?

Ms. Mahikoa: I believe the way it is structured right now is effective, as long as we can get individuals in. Thank you.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Thank you, Chair.
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Council Chair Rapozo: That is page 295. Are there any other questions on page 295? Are there no other questions? Next page. Are there any questions? Right now, we are on page 295.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	When we look at page 292, is this the GET fund?
Ms. Mahikoa:	Yes.

Councilmember Kuali'i: That is a repeat of those five (5) Administrative positions that I asked about. I think we should go to page 292, because other things and people will show up that did not earlier, like Consulting Services and other things.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay.

Councilmember Kuali'i: My only question on page 292 is at the bottom. I want you to tell us more about the Outreach Program and the Low-Income Annual Bus Pass Pilot Program. As you know, I am especially interested in this and I probably want to propose increasing this amount so we can help more people. Maybe you can follow up with a report, too, if there are a lot of details. For right now, can you give an overview of what it is, what it does, and then later you can give us the details on how it might be maxing out and you could possibly serve more people?

Ms. Mahikoa: Okay. Thank you for the opportunity. We were provided a total of one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000) for these purposes for this current fiscal year of which we submitted a formal application process for those agencies that were interested and had the need, of which we had twenty-one (21) that we were able to allocate resources to for the current fiscal year.

Councilmember Kuali'i:

Is that twenty-one (21) agencies?

Ms. Mahikoa: Yes. Thankfully, it has greatly expanded since the prior years. So far, the distribution has been just shy of seventy-five percent (75%) of the funds that have been allocated and distributed. We are doing a second round reach out to all of the agencies to identify anyone who could use additional amounts. Particularly, as we near the end of the fiscal year, we want to make sure that everyone who needs, has. At this point, it appears that the one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000) is very generous and has been sufficient for the needs shared.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Thank you, Chair.

Councilmember Cowden: In this school year, do you have an estimate...I know there eventually was a school bus going from the North Shore to Kapa'a High School. How much has the lack of a school bus in Kapa'a impacted your normal ridership? Are you seeing it for many of the children in the school district?

Ms. Mahikoa: It did for a while, when they were in an extremely challenging situation. Thankfully, they have been able to somewhat recover. I do not know if they fully recovered.

## (Councilmember Carvalho was noted as not present.)

Ms. Mahikoa: I still see some students catching the bus to school in the morning. We always see the rush regardless of the situation with school buses. We always see the rush at the end of the school day. Children are going to and from their sports practices and everything else. It has been relieved through their ability to add service back in, but I have no statistics related to the specifics.

	I also want to give gratitude for helping in that	
pinch.		

Ms. Mahikoa: I am thankful we were able to help.

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember DeCosta, you are next. The advertising line is currently budgeted for one hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$115,000).

(Councilmember Cowden was noted as not present.)

Council Chair Rapozo: The year-to-date is six thousand dollars (\$6,000). I am trying to figure it out.

Ms. Mahikoa: That is because of the outreach program passes that are distributed to the agencies. Prior to the fiscal year end, a journal entry will be completed to move the expense to revenue.

Council Chair Rapozo: I got it. Thank you. Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: I have a clarifying question on the ridership. Celia, I think I asked this quite a bit in the prior budget meetings. Our *kupuna* go to and from the activities at neighborhood centers. Does the County have a certain bus or ridership program for that group to feel safe on the bus and feel they can get to and from their destination? Does the County have enough of a ridership to commit a route, a bus, or some type of scheduling for that group?

Ms. Mahikoa: Historically, we have had a contract or an agreement with the Department of Parks & Recreation for support of the senior center meetings and events that they have.

(Councilmember Cowden was noted as present.)

Ms. Mahikoa: However, with the manpower shortages and during the pandemic situation, that service was discontinued. Since then, because we have not been able to provide sufficient manpower, we have not been able reinstitute that. That is certainly still in our scope, however, we do have Paratransit service available for those who register and are qualified. They are able to utilize the Kaua'i Bus for traveling to and from their events.

(Councilmember Carvalho was noted as present.)

Councilmember DeCosta: Please keep that in your hindsight for the future of those routes.

Ms. Mahikoa: Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any more questions on pages 292 or 293? Let us move on to Operations on page 295. Page 296. Page 297. Page 298. Thank you.

Ms. Mahikoa:	Thank you.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Thank you.
Ms. Mahikoa:	You are welcome.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Next is the Housing Agency.

## Housing Agency

(Councilmember Kagawa was noted as not present.)

ADAM P. ROVERSI, Housing Director: *Aloha*, Chair. Adam Roversi, Director of the Housing Agency.

Council Chair Rapozo: Aloha, and good morning.

Mr. Roversi: I have a summary or my brief summary to start things off, if that is how you would like me to proceed.

Council Chair Rapozo:

Yes, could you go over your overview?

Mr. Roversi: Each year I do this, I like to point out as a starting point that...because personnel costs and staffing costs are always a concern for Council that more than fifty-five percent (55%) of the Housing Agency's personnel budget is paid by non-County funding sources. The total General Fund cost of staffing at the Housing Agency is roughly one million five hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$1,570,000). In exchange for that expenditure, our Section 8 Rental Assistance Program alone pumped eleven million six hundred thousand dollars (\$11,600,000) into the Kaua'i economy last year, helping over nine hundred (900) families afford housing and affordable housing projects. Just those currently under construction equate to over one hundred seven million dollars (\$107,000,000) in investment to just Kaua'i. That does not include projects on the books that have not yet broken ground, which will add an additional one hundred sixty-four million dollars (\$164,000,000) of investment to Kaua'i. Quickly going over the two (2) major changes that you will see this year in the Housing Agency's budget, as compared to the prior years.

The Administration is proposing a new five-hundred-thousand-dollar grant-in-aid program to support local non-profit groups working to address homelessness on Kaua'i. The Federal and State funding picture of these organizations appears to be dimming, the Administration wants to step up and provide additional important financial support for these local non-profit groups to be distributed through a competitive application process. We started that in a limited way this past budget year using a small amount of remaining COVID funds to issue a grant to Family Life Center to continue their outreach program. They have seen a reduction in their State funding for that program and they are one of the sole organizations that provide that service here on Kaua'i, so we thought it was important to support. The five-hundred-thousand-dollar ask will allow continuation of programs like that and an expansion to assist with their nonprofits. Additionally, you will see that the Administration is requesting roughly eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) over and above the statutory minimum annual allocation to the Housing Development funds. These funds will

enable the near term buildout of Phase II at Lima Ola, which will add another one hundred seventy-five (175) affordable homes to our islandwide inventory. It will also allow the continued initial development of the Waimea 400 housing project, as well as the Kīlauea Town expansion project, and hopefully the expansion of our existing supportive housing projects' design to serve homeless families modeled after our Kealaula project by the Department of Water here in Līhu'e.

Some quick highlights from our prior year. The Rental Assistance Program has increased to serve just under nine hundred (900) households, that is compared to the prior annual average, around six hundred fifty (650) per year. We have begun construction this past year on two hundred twenty-one (221) new affordable homes, which to my understanding is an annual record for housing production on Kaua'i. We did our first ever twenty-five-million-dollar private equity bond issuance to build eighty-five (85) new homes in Lima Ola Phase I, that did not cost Kaua'i taxpayers a penny. We completed a 50-acre land acquisition in Kīlauea, including Council's use of eminent domain for the first time to secure critical land for affordable housing and we are just now in the master planning process for that project. Beginning last year, we and our private partners, it is important to remember them, the Housing Agency is not doing all this work alone, are on track to buildout more than five hundred (500) new homes in the next three (3) years, which is more than the County of Kaua'i has built in the past decade. With that, I am happy to answer any questions.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any questions on the overview? Councilmember DeCosta and then Councilmember Cowden.

Councilmember Cowden: Okay. First of all, thank you for all the work you are getting done. I really appreciate it. The five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) is going to the existing nonprofit that is largely for helping people, that is largely filling in the gaps where the State has stepped back, is that what I am hearing?

Mr. Roversi: Yes, exactly. An example of that is last year the State announced that it would no longer apply for or accept federal emergency support grant funds. That left a hole in a source of funding that a lot of these organizations have depended on in the past.

Councilmember Cowden: Okay, so it just sets my expectations, it is not new service, it is continued necessary service.

Mr. Roversi: Correct. It will be distributed and administered through a competitive process, so it is up to nonprofit groups to come to the County with their proposals. If there are exciting and beneficial new programs then there would be opportunities to fund that, alternatively, it can continue good work that is already happening.

but	Councilmember Cowden:	Okay. Simple answer, I do not need a long answer	
	Councilmember Kuali'i	Stay on this one	
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Go ahead.	

Councilmember Kualiʻi: you just asked?	Do you have a new question or on the same thing	
Councilmember Cowden:	It is a new question.	
Councilmember Kualiʻi: in case they have follow-up.	So, then you should stop and give people a chance	
Councilmember Cowden:	Okay.	
Council Chair Rapozo:	Hang on. Just finish up.	
Councilmember Cowden:	I can stop.	
Council Chair Rapozo:	Finish up.	

Councilmember Cowden: Finish up. We had an almost finished affordable housing building burn down that is with one of our public/private partnerships, I believe, the Ahe Group. How does that impact our story? Is any of that our moneys...it is good that there are other moneys from other places, but is any of that investment that we put in that caught fire?

Mr. Roversi: The Council had provided a five-hundredthousand-dollar grant to that project, it was fully insured, so all of those funds will be reimbursed via insurance and they are working as we speak to tear down the damaged structure, assessing the viability of the foundation and whether that needs to be rebuilt, and intend to rebuild the building exactly as it was previously built, as soon as possible (ASAP).

Councilmember Cowden: It should go up pretty fast because most of the construction effort is in the foundation and all the infrastructure?

Mr. Roversi: And the permitting is complete, so it is ready to

go.

Councilmember Cowden:

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: Thank you for all you do. You mentioned a lot of projects coming down the pipeline, but I never noticed you asking for funding. Could you use more funding?

Okay.

Mr. Roversi: If there were more funding available, we would expand our vision of potential projects and intend to do more work.

Councilmember DeCosta:That is all I need.Mr. Roversi:We feel good about where we stand.

Councilmember DeCosta:	No, I know, but could you use more funding?		
Mr. Roversi: funding as the County had provided.	We could successfully utilize virtually as much		

Councilmember DeCosta: You mentioned an important point in your opening about this nonprofits and five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) that you folks are allocating to assist nonprofit groups who would like to help, I believe, houseless people.

Mr. Roversi:

Correct.

Councilmember DeCosta: Well, I think you should talk to the Office of Economic Development (OED), because they just helped people on that private land to assist in agriculture (ag). Could you do a program for private landowners who would like to help houseless people, create a partnership with the County if you folks put in septic or an Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU), and then they would rent it out to a houseless person. Would that be something the County would want to look at? I do not think the partnership should only go to nonprofits, in your division, if we are doing it for other private properties out there. Can you just think about that?

Mr. Roversi: Okay.

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember Carvalho.

Councilmember Carvalho: I am following up on the Lima Ola, Waimea 400, and the Kīlauea projects, but then also looking at potential acquisition for the Līhu'e Town Core.

Mr. Roversi:	Yes.		
Councilmember Carvalho:	Where are we at with that one?		

Mr. Roversi: We started some preliminary investigations of potential land acquisitions in Līhu'e. We would like to expand our affordable housing efforts to every geographic region on Kaua'i, and as you all know Līhu'e is the employment center for Kaua'i that has a dramatic lack of housing opportunities and our General Plan calls for development in the Līhu'e area. We are researching the potential for a substantial land acquisition in the Līhu'e area, but I do not want to go too much into the specifics because we are still in negotiations and research. That is an important goal of the Administration.

Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember Cowden.
Councilmember Cowden:	On the bottom of page 3.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	You skipped me.
Council Chair Rapozo:	I am sorry. Councilmember Kualiʻi.

Councilmember Kuali'i: My question is a follow-up about the new fivehundred-thousand-dollar program to address homelessness. You said it is for nonprofit organizations, but will it be run by a nonprofit like how the credit union ran the federal funding program for...

Mr. Roversi: No, we feel that the pool of funds is small enough for our office to administer the application process and review the applications and issue and administer the funds. I do not think it is enough money to necessitate a third-party.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Okay, so when do you plan to start this, who will it be available to, what is the smallest award you would give, what is the biggest award you will give, or are you wanting to leave it all flexible? Can you say a little more?

Mr. Roversi: I can offer some broad outlines but we still have a lot of details to work out. We are going to review the templates that both the Administration and OED have used for similar grant programs and get feedback from them on best practices and what they have found to be good and bad practices in the Administration. Learning from our Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which operates in a similar way, grants to nonprofit groups, but for a different purpose. We have found administratively that it is more manageable for both the Housing Agency and more useful to local organizations if given the size of the pool of funds, we were to offer three (3) to four (4) large grants as opposed to trying to distribute and administer fifty (50) small grants. Therefore, our target is to do, which is not written in stone, but broadly speaking, we want to do a handful of large grants that can make a substantial difference to these organizations that are going to receive it, and not sort of "nibble" around the edges with fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) here and there, which is an administrative burden to track and administer it and collect reporting on.

Councilmember Kuali'i: My hope is that anytime we talk about grants, for the community nonprofits and what have you, that we start putting the word out now for people who are listening in. My other question has to do with big projects and Councilmember DeCosta's question about, "Can he use whatever money you have and can get." You pointed to "We will put the money to productive use during the continued development of Lima Ola, Waimea 400, the expansion of Kīlauea," and then I think to Councilmember Carvalho, you talked about the lands in Līhu'e. For Lima Ola, Waimea 400, and Kīlauea, do you have totals in mind of what it is going to take and what portion of that big amount of money it is going to take to do these projects, that the County needs to play a roll in infusing the funds to?

Mr. Roversi: In a very broad sense, yes, we do.

Councilmember Kuali'i: If you do not have all the numbers now, maybe you can just follow up with something, so that we can see more or less. I know you are not necessarily bound to it, because when the time comes, you are going to put the money towards what is coming fastest and needed most, and ultimately just to get more affordable housing in your inventory.

Mr. Roversi: I would be happy to follow-up with a long-range funding plan that incorporates those projects. It might be more productive than me winging it.

Councilmember Kuali'i: I think it is just such a significant amount of money and investment that we are all happy about, but I think we should put more detail to it. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember	Cowden	and	then
Councilmember DeCosta.				

Councilmember Cowden: At the bottom on page 3 regarding the Housing Choice Vouchers, first, good job in serving the record number of participants, eight hundred seventy-five (875). I have underlined this sentence, "With the Housing Navigator/Landlord Engagement Program launched in 2022, we are striving to establish a link between landlords and property managers with potential rental units and households," so that as we have talked about is really a difficult thing. People sort of feel like they won the lottery when they get the Housing Choice Voucher, only to find that they cannot find a place or every place they apply for costs a fifty-dollar filing fee. What is this Housing Navigator/Landlord Engagement Program? How are we moving forward with a one-stop place where they can put their application in? I know it takes the landowners to want to be able to participate, but where are we on that?

Mr. Roversi: That program is administered by a branch of Women In Need through a grant program. They responded to and were awarded a multi-year grant to operate that program. I know we have talked about it in the past a long-term desire to have a one-stop shop for applications. This program is not quite that. It is designed to assist. It was launched during the COVID emergency, with the initial specific intent of helping...COVID rental assistance could be provided to people who were already housed, in which case they did not need help finding a place to live. It could also be provided to people who were seeking housing and in that case the program was initially established to help someone who essentially had a COVID rental check in their pocket but was having difficulty finding a home to move into. The Navigator Program intention was to reach out and make connections to both the affordable and market-rate rental projects on the island to attempt to place seeking tenants with landlords and assist, even after people move in, with mediation in landlord/tenant disputes, so once people are housed, they can stay housed. They operated an incentive program that offered landlords an initial financial bonus to accept people who were receiving rental assistance, and it also offers potential damage payment. Landlords under the State Landlord/Tenant Code can only collect a deposit equal to one month's rent. so this program is able to step in and tell landlords...there is a fear of landlords about damage to their units, if a tenant were to damage the unit over and above the one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) deposit that you are allowed to receive, we can step in with an extra one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to help you out only if it is necessary. We also provided an incentive program so that after one-year, if a landlord agrees to renew a lease, we can give them an extra little bonus check to incentivize that.

Councilmember Cowden: Is this continuing?

Mr. Roversi: It is. We expanded that program beyond COVID as it evolved to be available to anyone who is receiving any manner of government assistance. That is a larger pool, but it is not the world, yet. It is now focusing primarily on people who are receiving our Section 8 Rental Assistance, so it has transitioned from the COVID Rental Program, which is no longer in existence, to serving anyone who receives our standard

Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance or an emergency housing voucher rental assistance check. So, serving a little bit different clientele but basically doing the exact same thing, a middleman between landlords and tenants to try to help more of the people who receive a voucher to actually find a unit before that voucher is going to expire.

Councilmember Cowden: Thank you.

Mr. Roversi: More importantly to keep them housed once they are housed. There is an ongoing interaction.

Councilmember Cowden: Thank you so much. Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: Since I mentioned funding and I asked if you needed extra funding, I noticed in today's dialogue you talked a lot about and only about affordable housing, but I know that you are working on several shovel-ready projects that might incorporate workforce housing, it might focus on essential workers. When we do give you extra funding or find you funding, or want to contribute funding to the Housing Agency, do you or do we as the County have two (2) separate accounts, one called affordable housing and the other called workforce housing or essential workforce housing? Can we put those funds all in one account and then the Housing Agency decides how to spend that money on the projects and what portion of the money goes towards what type of housing?

Mr. Roversi: Although HUD makes the distinction between affordable, which to HUD's definition is eighty percent (80%) and below versus workforce housing, which is one hundred twenty percent (120%) and one hundred forty percent (140%) and below, the County of Kaua'i Housing policy considers those two (2) things the same. It makes no distinction between, for the County's purposes, affordable and workforce housing, it is all the same. All of our projects are endeavoring to create a blend of incomes, whether we are talking about Lima Ola, Waimea 400, Kīlauea, or future projects, our desire in all of those projects is to create a mix income community up to our current statutory maximum, which is one hundred twenty percent (120%) AMI. All of the funding goes into the Housing Development Fund and then those funds we strive to use them to serve the entire block of (inaudible).

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any further questions on the overview? If not, let us move on to page 242.

Councilmember Kuali'i: This one (1) vacancy, Position No. 9666, Program Specialist I, who would assist the homeless coordinator. Vacant since July of last year.

(Councilmember Kagawa was noted as present.)

Councilmember Kuali'i: I guess it is a little bit higher than the minimum salary range. The recruitment status says, "List referred." Does that mean you are about to...

Mr. Roversi:

We already referred an applicant for hiring.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Oh, you have selected.	
Mr. Roversi: an applicant, they have accepted, so pend (HR) paperwork, they are tentatively sch	We completed the interview process, we selected ling the final completion of their Human Resources eduled to begin May 1 <sup>st</sup> .	
Councilmember Kuali'i: The budgeted amount here, fifty-nine thousand two hundred ninety-six dollars (\$59,296) is higher than the minimum range, the range is fifty-six thousand two hundred eighty dollars (\$56,280), so is this an internal promotion or someone had a higher skill level? I know in some of the other multiple positions, they just started at the bottom of the range.		
Mr. Roversi: what is listed.	I believe the actual starting salary is less than	
Councilmember Cowden:	Yes, forty-two thousand dollars (\$42,000).	
Councilmember Kuali'i: money I can spend?	Okay, is that a correction you will make or is that	
Mr. Roversi: submittal.	We will address that at the Supplemental	
Councilmember Kuali <sup>(</sup> i:	Sure. Okay, thank you.	

Councilmember Cowden: On page 242, when all those positions are dollar funded, does that mean the money is coming from some other source?

Mr. Roversi: Broadly speaking, yes. Many of our grants can ebb and flow throughout the year, and by having a dollar funded notation in the account, it allows us flexibility if there are available general funds to move percentages as a grant...an award maybe received or maybe kind of spending down, there is just a little flexibility.

	Councilmember Cowden:	Okay, thank you.
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Is there anything else on page 242?
worksl	Mr. Roversi: heets, but my page numbers are not	Chair, I apologize, perhaps I pointed to the wrong matching.
	Council Chair Rapozo:	At the bottom right.
	Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Master page number.
	Mr. Roversi:	It looks like my printer had blurred all the bottom.
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Okay. Page 188.

Okay, got you.

Mr. Roversi:

Council Chair Rapozo:	I am going to be using the top right number.
Mr. Roversi:	Okay, thank you.
Council Chair Rapozo: that this year, right? Did we have grant p	Page 188. Page 189. The grants-in-aid, we had programs this year?

Mr. Roversi: We had grant programs utilizing COVID funding.

Council Chair Rapozo: Oh, okay.

Mr. Roversi: So, the COVID program allowed us to give a portion of those funds as grants, so in practice we did have a grant program that was focused on homelessness, but with the General Fund funding.

Council Chair Rapozo:

So, is the first year with the General Fund?

Mr. Roversi: Yes. Specifically, two (2) years ago, the Council allocated one hundred eighty thousand dollars (\$180,000) of ARPA money to our homeless program, and it was largely those funds that operated for the grants.

Council Chair Rapozo: How many grants do you envision? How many different sizes of the grants?

Mr. Roversi: Preliminarily with the pool of funding we have, I would estimate a maximum of five (5), and potentially fewer. As I was mentioning in response to Councilmember Kuali'i's question, we feel it is more valuable and less burdensome administratively to offer fewer large grants that can be put to more productive use and are less of an administrative burden than to offer forty (40) twenty-five-thousand-dollar ones.

Councilmember DeCosta: That five-hundred-thousand-dollar grant and the grants you talked about saying five (5) to eight (8) grants one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), how does a one-hundred-thousand-dollar grant affect houseless people to house them? I do not understand. Is the money used to feed them or is this money to try to create a housing project where they will be housed? I am not sure.

Mr. Roversi: Here is a simple example, and I do not want to plant this in Council's brain that this organization is going to get a grant, but there is a single nonprofit organization that provides mental health services to the homeless community, and they have a single employee. They have one (1) person to go out into the community to visit homeless encampments to provide any...the only mental health services that are available on Kaua'i. One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or less would provide another staff person for that organization, potentially to provide islandwide mental health services to the homeless community. I am not prejudging whether that is an organization that should get it or not, but that is an example of how that money could be very productive to an organization operating on that scale, it essentially doubles their capacity to provide services on Kaua'i.

Councilmember DeCosta: I see the logic, but how do you measure the value? So, yes, of course, a nonprofit has one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to hire another staff person, goes out into the community and provides mental health services, but how do we measure the value of that service working, how do we measure the value that people are getting services? If there is a place that they can come to, then we can monitor how many people came in, got served, what is the reoccurring of that person coming back for more services. I just wanted to see the value of funding that we are putting out.

Mr. Roversi: We attempt to measure that at the application stage and the way we craft the request for proposals, and assorted characteristics that we use for scoring the potential applicants before we give the money. We attempt to track that on the backend and throughout the year that they have the grant, they are required to provide monthly or quarterly reporting, assessing the success, how many clients are served, the information about the clients, what were the outcomes with those clients, so we are collecting information to understand the success of the programs along the way.

Councilmember DeCosta: And those clients will have to provide identification (ID) to make sure that they are not just arbitrary numbers that the personnel would say, "Hey, I went out serving forty (40) people in the community"? Again, it is the County's money, it is the taxpayers' dollars, I want to be able to show value that it is going to work.

Mr. Roversi: Without creating a paperwork nightmare for a recipient of a grant, we attempt to require them to provide a reasonable and sufficient amount of information that we can successfully judge their project. We do not want to know, "I served one (1) person who was a male," we want to know how long that person has been on Kaua'i, what is their ethnic background, how long have they been homeless, what are their medical conditions. Depending on the type of grant, this is not just potentially for outreach workers who are doing what I mentioned about the mental health services, it could be for an array of other opportunities. Another example, there are...I will just pick one off the top of my head, the YWCA operates a new domestic violence shelter. It could potentially provide additional funding to the domestic violence shelter to increase their bed count capacity at an existing project. In that case, we are not talking about doing outreach work to clients at an encampment somewhere, we are talking about the concrete provision of beds to people suffering from domestic violence and they can provide specific information about the women or not just for women, anyone suffering from domestic violence that are served.

Councilmember DeCosta: The only reason why I brought it to your attention is we are currently cleaning up Keālia. Many homeless families. The County was there. The Department of Public Works was out there trying to get them services, trying to get them to relocate to a shelter, trying to help them. I believe only one (1) person wanted the help. One (1) person out of all of those people that were moved wanted the help, and that one (1) did not hang around. That person actually left, so we gave them no services. All of those people in the area, no services. I just wanted to make sure that the funding you are asking for would not be better going to a soup kitchen or an area where the County can put on. "Hey, you come to the Kaua'i Bus, we are going to meet there and provide you services, you can sign up on this table," sounds like the best "bang for the buck." I am trying to help you get more "bang for the buck."

a soup	Council Chair Rapozo: kitchen.	It could very well be that too. It could very well be
	Mr. Roversi:	I have used an outreach example
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Yes.

Mr. Roversi: ....simply because we gave a grant to Family Life Center last year and that was an example, but it is available to the world of nonprofit groups who are focused on serving the homeless community in a myriad of ways, which can be from providing meals, it can be providing medical assistance, and for providing physical units that someone can sleep in. There is a wide range of possibilities.

Councilmember DeCosta: Why only nonprofits? Why would you not give this opportunity to a private landowner who has twenty (20) people on their property already, who could use this. I look right down here in Līhu'e, private property, there are a bunch of homeless people with cars, people living in pallets, tents, and what if that private landowner say, "Hey, I need one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), I am going to put bathrooms and sanitation, shower, and clean up some of the trash." Why are we always limiting it to nonprofits and other divisions do not? I do not understand.

Mr. Roversi: There are programs that provide funding to outside and nonprofits and our soon to be launched cesspool program is an example of a program that goes to individuals. Broadly speaking, when we give out money, we want to give money to organizations that have a track record of being able to succeed in whatever program it is that they are doing, not someone with no experience who is trying to create something from the ground up. We typically require when the County contracts or gives grant moneys to organizations, we can require them to have various types of insurance. Those sorts of things are mostly found with nonprofit organizations that are experienced in the area that we are looking to address whether it is building physical housing units or providing some sort of social service.

Councilmember DeCosta:	Thank you.
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Council Chair Rapozo:

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Councilmember Cowden.

Councilmember Cowden: I am just going to let us move on. There are so many examples where it is needed, but I will keep the conversation going. I think we need to move beyond...

Council Chair Rapozo: The flexibility will be with the Housing Agency and their process to pick where this goes.

Councilmember Cowden: Okay. Yes, just continuum of care, I wanted to give that example. Like, how many people they can sign up so they can go on a continuum of care. State funded projects, a whole lot of things, a lot of time cannot pick up or service people unless they are on this qualification called, "Continuum of care," so when you go out into the encampments, there are certain nonprofits that can sign them up on the continuum of care and that is a really important layer, and so even just being able to go out and put

people on the paperwork. It is better if you can find them in the same place, but that would be, especially like Family Life Center or Catholic Charities, they fit together like a puzzle.

Mr. Roversi: The continuum of care is one (1) part of the giant of pie pieces that fit together in the world of homeless services.

Councilmember Cowden: And a lot of times that is the very missing piece. When you send someone out, that would be helping that...

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember Kagawa.

Councilmember Kagawa: I have always been under the thought when I think about homeless and I think about the limited funds and how do we best address it that helping local homeless individuals or families was our best bet at success, because if you get them better, they can reconnect with family who can then have some type of housing and shelter and take them in, rather than putting efforts toward Joe Doe who just came off the plane with a backpack. I feel for me the strategies should be to help local individuals or families that have fallen into homelessness and drug addiction, putting our efforts to them because they have support here on the island where they are born and raised. Is that out of your strategy?

Mr. Roversi: Well, that has been as a practical matter what our supportive housing projects have primarily done. For example, the Kealaula project that we built in Līhu'e for supportive housing for homeless families, I think fifty-eight percent (58%) of the tenants who have stayed at Kealaula and have moved on have been Native Hawaiian. Those are people from Kaua'i, most of them have grown up on Kaua'i. The shortest duration that someone has been on Kaua'i for someone who was not born here at Kealaula was sixteen (16) years. We are not serving people who are from straight off the airplane looking for a handout.

Councilmember Kagawa: When these grants go out to these nonprofits, the grants are written so that they follow these types of procedures or protocol? We can put something on the agenda to address...

the Ka	Mr. Roversi: aua'i community.	We will design the program to do our best to serve
	Councilmember Kagawa:	Do we have the homeless coordinator onboard yet?
eight (	Mr. Roversi: 8) months now.	Yes. We have had someone onboard for about
	Councilmember Kagawa:	Terrific. Thank you.
	Councilmember Kualiʻi:	And they just hired the other position.
	Mr. Roversi:	Tentatively to start May 1 <sup>st</sup> .

Council Chair Rapozo: Page 244, or page 190, for Adam. Moving on. Page 262, top right. Can you explain the top Buyback and HOME Loan Program, seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) for each?

Mr. Roversi: For a little background, this 211 Account is...we have two (2) Housing Revolving funds. The 211 Account funds our revolving federal funds, so in the past we have gotten federal funds...an example is we have historically given out CDBG home loans, so as people make payments on those loans over time, those funds go into this account. This is where this money is coming from. The programs that are proposed here, so the Buyback Program is for repurchasing housing units that have been sold with either fee simple with a deed restriction or as a limited appreciation leasehold program. At any point in time, individuals can sell those homes if they choose to. In either case, a deed restriction or leasehold, the County has the first right of refusal to purchase back. This is a pool of funding to use to repurchase homes if they are offered for sale during the upcoming year. As an example, we have one (1) that we are buying back now in the subdivision in Kilauea. That would be the sort of thing we would do with those funds in the coming year. The HOME Loan Program—we are kind of rejuvenating that program. We typically offer second mortgages, not first mortgages, to help with gap financing for people who cannot quite qualify for market-rate loans, when we are offering our own homes for sale. As an example, we are breaking ground very shortly on the first eight (8) homes at Lima Ola. If buyers of those homes are unable to fully finance in the private market, this program would step in to offer a fifty-thousand-dollar second mortgage to close that gap and make financing possible for them. All those funds, as they are paid, are recycled back into the same fund. It is effectively revolving and not an exhaustion of funds.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are you able to move funds between the two (2) in the event we do not have any buybacks, but we can utilize the funds in the HOME Loan Program? How often do we buy back homes?

Mr. Roversi: I would average once per year.

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes, so if there is an opportunity, let us say when Lima Ola opens up, you have multiple people in that category, would you be able to move funds from the Buyback Program into the HOME Loan?

Mr. Roversi: It is my understanding, and maybe someone from the Finance Department would correct me, is as long as we have the budget line items approved, that during the year we can move funds from the Buyback Program to the HOME...

Okay.	Council Chair Rapozo:	Yes, that is not a federal restriction, that :	is okay?
	Mr. Roversi:	Yes, we have the freedom to do that.	
	Council Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember Kuali'i.	

Councilmember Kuali'i: When you said on average once per year, is that because that is all funding available? Have we ever refused buying?

Mr. Roversi: We have never not bought a house back, if we had the opportunity.

Councilmember Kuali'i: We have never? That is good. Because it is a lost opportunity if we did not have the money.

Mr. Roversi: Right.

Councilmember Kuali'i: In fact, these houses are at a lower price, right, because we helped with the investment on the front end.

Mr. Roversi: Correct, so then the buyer initially received a subsidized home at a lower than market-price and then in exchange for that, they have to agree to this buyback provision, so that we can keep the house affordable. We do not want it to just flip to one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) market-rate home in some arbitrary point in time. The reason why we do not see more of these buybacks is generally when people purchase these houses, they stay there.

Council Chair Rapozo: Especially in today's market. You cannot sell it and buy something else.

Councilmember Kuali'i:

Unless they move to Vegas.

Mr. Roversi: We are usually buying homes back, I am sorry to say, when someone has passed away or they have health issues and need to move somewhere else.

Councilmember Kuali'i: On the Buyback Program, how does it work with the pricing and equity? Does the equity all come to the County or is it split?

Mr. Roversi: There is a slightly different formula. Going back in time, the Housing Agency sold most houses as fee simple homes with a deed restriction. In a more modern time, we have primarily sold leasehold homes that are limited appreciation leasehold, each have a slightly different formula, but there is a share of appreciation with the homeowner, so they do not leave empty handed. They are realizing some of the equity in the growth of the home, but not so much that it is driven to market-rate and the County shares in that equity and we utilize those funds to be able to resell the home again at an affordable price to make sure it is available to another Kaua'i family at a price they can afford.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there further questions on page 262? If not, moving on. Page 14. The Housing Fund.

Mr. Roversi: This is our large Housing Development Fund, revolving fund in addition to the 211 Account. It is funded from the General Fund, the other source of funds for this fund just for context would be in-lieu fees that are paid by private developers. They would go into this fund. I have some small line items at the top, ongoing

maintenance expenses at Waimea, Lima Ola, and Kīlauea. Until we really get the projects built-out and we are selling them off, we are responsible for keeping the grass mowed, keeping the fences intact, and this is what these items are covering. The larger special project fund is the flexible pools of money that we used to fund our housing developments. The most near-term project that we will be looking to put funding into is Lima Ola Phase II. We expect to break ground on Lima Ola Phase II, meaning all the roadways, waterlines, sewer lines extensions, underground electric and cable, within the next fiscal year.

Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Primarily, infrastructure.
Mr. Roversi:	Yes.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Investments. And it costs millions of dollars for

Mr. Roversi: Yes, so Phase I for example at Lima Ola was eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000). That was funded with a share of County CIP funds and the dwelling revolving fund loan from the State which we successfully paid off last year. It is a moving target because every year we are applying for federal funding opportunities, potential State funding opportunities, so while we cannot predict, as you asked for earlier, sort of the overall project cost going out five (5) years of these projects, we are always chasing other funding opportunities to supplement the amount of funds that we are receiving from the County. It is often difficult to say exactly how much County money we are going to need for project x because if project x is three (3) years away, I am still applying for federal money to help with that project. If we get those funds, my County ask could potentially be less, but it is always a little bit unknown.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Right. It is important to have those funds to have the ability to leverage them to get other funds.

Mr. Roversi: Definitely.

that.

Councilmember Kuali'i: And you will always be trying to get other funds, right? Like the eighteen million dollars (\$18,000,000) from, I think it was Senator Schatz who helped with that.

Mr. Roversi: In the last three (3) years, we have managed to win applications for just under twenty-four million dollars (\$24,000,000) in federal funding for various, including Waimea, Kīlauea, but primarily Lima Ola. Having these County funds is a demonstration of the County's commitment to the project that the Federal Government looks at when they are considering whether to give us additional funding.

Councilmember Kuali'i: The only other question on that, because we talked about some of this earlier too when we talked about the overview, what kind of funding do we...and it comes out of this pot, do we provide when others are the developer? Is that always only with nonprofit developers?

Mr. Roversi: Not always nonprofit developers. The Ahe Group, who we work with regularly, is a for-profit affordable home developer, they are not technically

a nonprofit organization. We regularly provide small pools of funding either as grants or low interest loans to our nonprofit partners. Those funds are usually relatively small amounts per project, two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). They serve two (2) purposes. The primary purpose is that a County's financial stake in a project increases a project score on their state application for funding. We have a pool of funds, if approved this year, of twelve million five hundred thousand dollars (\$12,500,000), the State has three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000), so they vastly have more funding available than we do. Most affordable housing projects participate in the State's annual application process every February to try to get an annual piece of that three hundred plus million dollars that the State is loaning or granting out for affordable housing projects. The County giving as little as two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to a project, it gives that project more points on the State application and makes it significantly more likely that they will receive State funding. The second benefit that our funding has is that all of those State programs can only be used for hard construction costs, where we allow our funds to be utilized for pre-development costs: the planning, the architect work, which is a big help to smaller developers that do not have millions of dollars of equity sitting in the bank for the projects. Going back several years, those funds were often given out as grants. We have shifted our focus to giving them out as zero interest loans with no payments due for five (5) to ten (10) years, so even though it will be awhile, the funds will revolve back to the County and can be used again, so rather than a one-time expenditure, as a matter of internal policy, we are trying to use them as loans that provide the same exact benefits, scoring-wise for the State applications and financing-wise for the projects, but eventually we get the money back.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Thus the name revolving fund, because the money comes back and then you put it into other projects.

Mr. Roversi: Yes.

Councilmember Kuali'i: The example you talked about with the Ahe Group is a smaller project, typically closer to existing infrastructure, so it does not necessarily have the big price like Lima Ola. In the case of Lima Ola, is that...because there are so many different pieces, one developer might be doing senior housing, another developer might be doing something else, but is that a big picture County development?

Mr. Roversi: Yes. It is a County master plan development and the County is the owner of the land and the developer of the project.

Councilmember Kuali'i: It is kind of a one-of-a-kind for us.

Mr. Roversi: First time that I am aware of that the County has done that; I know that in the '80s, the County and the State partnered on some subdivision developments. Many of the smaller subdivisions, for example, Wailua Homesteads are County/State partnership projects from back in the early '80s and late 1970s. Technically speaking the County/State were the developers of those projects, but to my knowledge...until Lima Ola, the County had not done it in a very long time.

Councilmember DeCosta: I noticed you have the three (3)...Waimea 400, Lima Ola, and Kīlauea, you have very small amounts there, but I know Lima Ola is the one

project we are focusing on at the forefront with Phase II coming up. On the Waimea 400, how far away are we from putting in funds to actually roll out the plan? Are we still waiting on the EIS, soil testing, and floodplain survey?

Mr. Roversi: We are about fifty percent (50%) through the environmental review process, so you can think of the environmental review in two (2) phases and I would say that we are just about finished with Phase I. There are an array of studies that you have to do on a piece of land no matter what you are going to build. You have to do soil testing, flora and fauna investigations to understand what is there, you have to do historical and cultural surveys of the property to understand what historic things might be available. All of that you have to do no matter what it is you are going to build. For Waimea, most of that preliminary work is finished. Hopefully we do not take much of a pause and it is fluid, but then you have to do a second layer of environmental review that is based on the specific parameters of the project: how many homes are you going to build, where the road is going to go, where the waterlines are going to go, how many people are going to live there. how many cars are going to be associated with those people. Those all trigger a second layer of environmental review, like your traffic study. You cannot do a traffic study unless you know how many people you are going to estimate are there, so you cannot do that on a blank slate. We have done the predevelopment work, now we are in the community planning process, engaging with the community to come up with that vision of exactly: Are we building multi-family projects, are we building single-family homes, where the walking paths are going to be, what types of parks will be there. Once we complete that community plan, that informs that second layer of environmental things that have to be completed. All of which gets packaged together for the 201H application that then comes back to you for approval of the zoning and subdivision map and request that goes first to the County Council, then to the Land Use Commission, so that we can rezone the property and redistrict the property from agriculture to residential and urban, and then we can break ground and start building.

Councilmember DeCosta: Are we using federal money, have we used federal money or can we fund this project just basically by the County so we can address our housing needs for the Westside people who are asking for that...not so much low-income housing, but that workforce housing for teachers, hospital workers, the people that we forgot about? Are we already taking federal money for this project or is there a possibility that we could fund this project on our own and we would not be tied in creating the sixty percent (60%) AMI housing?

Mr. Roversi So far we have not used any federal funds for the housing portion of the Lima Ola project.

Councilmember DeCosta: about Waimea 400. I am not talking about Lima Ola, I am talking

Mr. Roversi: Sorry, Waimea 400, I misspoke. Where that does come in, generally speaking, we will create a master plan subdivision. If we use Lima Ola as an example, we got to that point only using County and State funds. There were no federal moneys that went to that point. Where those income requirements come in is primarily when we build multi-family rental projects and whether we rely on or do not rely on low-income housing tax credits. That program, if utilized and accepted, requires primarily that the unit serves sixty percent (60%) and below households. It is almost exclusively for rental projects,

it is never for single-family homes, although there are some exceptions. There are not many sources of funding to pay for those types of projects, so if that is part of the community's vision, multi-family rental projects, there are very few opportunities to fund those sorts of projects other than the low-income housing tax credit program, which requires those income limits. If the community's vision for that project does not include many of those types of projects, then there would not be that federal fund involvement that is driving those income requirements.

Councilmember DeCosta: Okay.

Mr. Roversi: That community planning process is still...we are attempting not to impose a top-down view of what the community has to have, but let the community tell us what they want and need with some reasonable feedback from the County.

Council Chair Rapozo:

Councilmember Kagawa.

Councilmember Kagawa: I think back when we purchased that property and feel like a fool, because I grew up on the Westside, but we did not know when we bought it that a lot of it when it is rainy season, it becomes a swamp. Have you gone out there and checked it out during the rainy season?

Mr. Roversi: Several times. I went out with the County, too, after we purchased it and almost all of the vans got stuck in the mud.

Councilmember Kagawa: Is it not addressing that problem, the first huge hurdle?

Mr. Roversi: Of the four hundred (400) acres, roughly only thirty-two (32) are designated for housing, and it is the thirty-two (32) acres that is the highest elevation outside of the flood area next to the existing subdivision that is uphill from the elementary school.

Councilmember Kagawa: So, the thirty-two (32) acres we have designated are not in that swamp area?

Mr. Roversi: No.

Councilmember Kagawa: Okay. That is good.

Mr. Roversi: We are doing all the required federal wetland studies to demonstrate that and be able to quantify it and show it on a map, but we do not intend to build housing in any of what would be considered wetland areas.

Councilmember Kagawa: During that rainy season, which is rare, how much of the area becomes swampy, of the four hundred (400) acres.

Mr. Roversi: I am not positive. I know that the Planning Department is currently doing a separate very detailed hydrological study of the entire

property, which is federally funded, targeted to restore a portion of the land. They would have more details about the map.

Councilmember Kagawa: I will send a request to the Planning Department, because I observed it with former Managing Director Dahilig and it really looked like a large area that was a swamp. I was just blown away. I voted on that not knowing that it was a swamp.

Mr. Roversi: My guess, just having quickly looked at maps is maybe it is one-third of the property, but I do not want...you should get the specific information from the Planning Department.

Councilmember Kagawa:	Are those vans 4-wheel drive?
Mr. Roversi:	No.
Councilmember Kagawa: get stuck.	Even with a 4-wheeler, if the mud is soft, it will

Council Chair Rapozo: If you look in the budget, they are asking for a 4wheel drive vehicle for the Waimea 400 project.

Councilmember Kagawa: What I am saying is do not try, because that swamp can be like quicksand.

Council Chair Rapozo: I am sorry to make fun of it, but I was not here, you are saying about one-third?

Mr. Roversi: That is my rough guess from seeing some big overview maps, but I did not do any measurements or see acreage.,

Councilmember Cowden: Even from the beginning in the drawings, it was acknowledged, and the community wanted bananas down there and the kids wanted a paintball field, not that they are going to get that, but as it was going out, there is agriculture and restored wetland. It has been all the little drawings, and it is probably more than onethird, but it is a big piece of property. They want to return it to being a wetland with...like you can have taro in there, etcetera.

Councilmember Kagawa: I understand that, but when we purchased the property, it was not a big issue brought to this Council. I do not recall. It seems like what we thought was getting a bargain, kind of seems like maybe not so much a bargain. I just want to be honest and transparent. Had I known what I saw upon complaints, I would have thought twice about the price, actually.

Council Chair Rapozo: I was not here, but I guess we can get the map from the Planning Department. I am curious to know how much useable land we have, because I do not think that the County intended to purchase, I hope not anyway, wetlands that we have to restore.
Councilmember Kagawa:	Yes.
Council Chair Rapozo: should be for housing.	I think if we purchase those types of lands, it

Councilmember Kagawa: We were celebrating something that we really did not know, because rainy seasons do not occur often on the Westside. From really celebrating a moment for the Westside people and then only to find out that when we have some heavy rains, a lot of it is unusable. It is pretty concerning for me.

	Council Chair Rapozo:	I hope we did not buy
time.	Councilmember Kagawa:	We should be a little bit more careful the next
	Council Chain Ponorae	four hundred (400) acres only to use thirty two

Council Chair Rapozo: ...four hundred (400) acres only to use thirty-two (32). We will see.

Mr. Roversi: I would offer that there are dozens of very informative maps in the Waimea 400 Master Plan that the Planning Department put together.

Councilmember DeCosta: I bought and sold houses in my lifetime and there is a thing called "Disclosure," when you go to a realtor, escrow, there is a thing called disclosure. Those floodplain maps were around during the plantation era, I am pretty sure they were, you must have some areas with some sketch lines that show flooding. I do not know who the salesperson or entity was to the County, but if they did not disclose that information to the county and we bought that land, with that portion not disclosed to us, that is a disclosure suit that can possibly happen.

Mr. Roversi: I have no details.

Councilmember DeCosta: I do not expect you to, but I am telling you there is a thing called disclosure and the landowners have to disclose everything about the property before they sell it to the buyer. Maybe that is something to talk to the County Attorney about. How long ago...

Councilmember Cowden:	Wait, we had a cheap price.
Councilmember DeCosta:	I am going to continue.
Councilmember Kagawa:	It is a very cheap price, but I mean
Councilmember Cowden:	Cheap price.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Okay.
Councilmember Kagawa:	Yes, we are drifting.

Council Chair Rapozo:	Let us hold off on that discussion.
Councilmember Kagawa:	Let us have that as an agenda item piece. If we
Council Chair Rapozo:	We will get an update.
Councilmember Kagawa:	Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Let us see where the Planning Department is at on their study. Are there any further questions? If not, move on to page 15, top right. On the bottom right, page 365.

can.

Mr. Roversi: I see page 15. This is Kalepa Village operations budget, so these funds all come from the rents that are received at Kalepa Village, essentially the cost of operating the rental project including wages for the management staff, so we contract out management of both Kalepa Village and Pa'anau Phase I, which is the next set of budget sheets. What you are seeing on the budget charts is essentially the cost of the housing contract, which also includes things like the water, sewer, the landscaping, the painting of the unit when someone moves out, etcetera. They are self-supporting and to date have not required infusions of additional County funds.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any questions on page 15 or page 16?

Councilmember Cowden: If you go back to page 364 where we see Other Services, the price of it was...twenty-one (21), twenty-two (22), twenty-three (23), it really jumped to more than doubling for 2024 for a couple of these different housing programs. Page 368, it has gone from one hundred forty thousand dollars (\$140,000) to one million three hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$1,330,000). I am just trying to look at what caused that. It looks like siding and window repairs, so maybe we have made significant improvements to the building and that is why Other Services has jumped up.

Mr. Roversi: The Other Services cost covers things like capital improvements and those commonly come in waves, like parking lot refurbishment or at Pa'anau, for example, we are doing five (5) buildings of eight (8) units each, do not hold me to that but we are going one-by-one now replacing the siding and windows, repainting the buildings. That would be a one-time annual expense that you would not have seen in past years' budgets.

Councilmember Cowden:	That makes sense.
Council Chair Rapozo:	So, we do not end up like the Kapa'a low-income.
Councilmember Cowden:	All beat up
Council Chair Rapozo:	Unlivable.
Mr. Roversi:	With a large percentage of units unoccupied.

Council Chair Rapozo: We do a really good job, Adam, with Kalepa, Pa'anau compared to the State projects, the managing companies do a good job, and they are strict.

Mr. Roversi: The tenant complaints prove that.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay. Anything further for pages 15 or 16? If not, moving on. Page 17 is Pa'anau. Similar expenditures. Other Services, basically it is fixing up...

Mr. Roversi: You will see that the Pa'anau budget largely is roughly fifty percent (50%) of Kalepa Village, but it is also roughly fifty percent (50%) of the size, fewer units, less work.

Councilmember Kagawa: What is the general condition? We talked about how the developers are going to fix up the Kapa'a, State project on Kawaihau Road, what is the condition of Pa'anau? The last time I walked it was probably eight (8) years ago.

Mr. Roversi: Pa'anau Phase I is definitely showing its age, and that is why we begun, as I was mentioning to Councilmember Cowden, redoing the buildings one at a time.

Councilmember Kagawa: What are the major problems?

Mr. Roversi: Siding rot on the lower, so they are two-story buildings, we are finding that a lot of the T1-11 siding on the first floor is starting to show signs of rot. Especially first floor window trim is showing signs of wood decay, so we are going building-by-building, we are doing Building 1 right now replacing all the first-floor siding, replacing the windows, replacing the window trim. The other major repair item over there...we did the roof several years ago, so the roof is in good condition, but some of the exterior stairs that are exposed to rain are showing signs of wood rot, so as part of that building-by-building review we are fixing. The interiors of the units are repaired as people move out. There could be a couple of older units that someone has been in for ten (10) years that are showing signs of needing new cabinets, but usually we do that on a unit-by-unit basis as people move out to try to keep them upgraded.

Councilmember Kagawa: How old are those units?

Mr. Roversi: I would have to get back to you with the exact date. I am pretty sure more than twenty (20) years.

Councilmember Kagawa:	Way more, right?
Council Chair Rapozo:	It has to be.

Councilmember Kagawa: I am just thinking about the bathroom, kitchen, appliances must be at that stage of being in bad shape.

Mr. Roversi: There are frequent move outs and there are more units at Kalepa Village, but we assess the condition of the cabinets and the appliances whenever someone moves out and recently, especially for...so Kalepa Village internally has four (4) phases, especially for Phase I, which is the oldest. We are generally doing cabinet and countertop replacements when people are moving out now. There are very few units that still have their original appliances, most have been replaced at least once already.

Councilmember Kagawa: Alright. So, we have something going on every time they move?

Mr. Roversi: Yes.

Councilmember Kagawa: I am just hoping that we do not neglect it like the Kawaihau Road project. It is an old project, but I think the neglect of continued maintenance and then you get into a total rebuilding of a building.

Mr. Roversi Whenever someone moves out, especially if they have been there for a long time, it is repainted, if necessary, counters and cabinets are replaced.

Councilmember Kagawa:

Okay. That is good.

Mr. Roversi: There are not many with carpets, but carpets are often replaced, so the new tenant is moving into a...not brand new, but as nice as we can make it.

Councilmember Kagawa: Very good. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay, are there any further questions? We need to take a caption break. If there are no more questions for the Housing Agency in general, we are going to end it here, take our caption break, and come back with the Agency on Elderly Affairs. Thank you.

There being no objections, the Committee recessed at 11:06 a.m. for a caption break.

The meeting reconvened at 11:19 a.m., and proceeded as follows:

# Agency on Elderly Affairs:

(Councilmember Cowden was noted as not present.)

The Committee reconvened at 11:19 a.m., and proceeded as follows:

Council Chair Rapozo: We will proceed with the Agency on Elderly Affairs. Thank you for being here.

There being no objections, the rules were suspended.

LUDVINA K. TAKAHASHI, Executive on Aging: Good morning. Kealoha Takahashi, Executive on Aging.

Council Chair Rapozo: If you can just go over the overview you sent over, and then we can open it up for questions.

Ms. Takahashi: Okay. Just some highlights, some of the major changes of variances in operations budget, there are several items in the salary and wages. an increase of five percent (5%), as well as the employee benefits, increase of two percent (2%). The increase in salaries and wages is due primarily to across-the-board salary increases for union positions. The increase in benefits is the result of an added cost and health fund contribution. An increase in operations of the seven thousand six hundred thirty-one dollars (\$7,631) addresses RSVP volunteer mileage, hotel cost for RSVP recognition luncheon and the Older American Awards ceremony. Some of the operational challenges, I will just highlight quickly, involved are funding of service providers to meet those needs, also proved to be a complex and pressing issue. The unit prices for all service providers had increased substantially over the last few years. We have lost several service providers, some due to the impacts of COVID, thus workforce challenges have impacted services tremendously. As a strategy to recruit and retain staff, service providers have increased the rate of pay, thus impacting our unit rate pricing. During the past year, we switched from a new home delivered meals provider, and that was a major factor in the increases of the unit cost of home delivered meals. The next operational challenge was the funding for our volunteer mileage reimbursement. Volunteers are reimbursed at fifty cents (\$.50) per mile, capped at fifty dollars (\$50) per month, per volunteer with the grant funding they received. Volunteers requesting mileage reimbursement average is a collective total of two thousand one hundred thirty-eight (2,138) miles travelled each month. There has been a steady increase over the years and in the number of volunteers requesting for mileage reimbursement, then of course the rising cost of fuel prices and automobile expenses can make it more feasible for the volunteers to contribute their time, and they have been such a force in helping us make deliveries; we are able to partner with the food banks to deliver those groceries to our older adults in the community. Of course, another operational challenge is that we have not had fitness instructors and in order to keep them still employed, we are down to three (3) or four (4). We increased their rate from forty-five dollars (\$45) to fifty dollars (\$50) just to help maintain our program with Enhance Fitness. Some of our priority operational highlights, we all know that our aging population increases and (inaudible) the need for long-term services and support also increases. For the period of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, we provided personal care, also homemaker services, and in my reports, indicates the number of units that were provided and the total cost for each service. We also contracted with a new provider, Garden Isle Medical Transport, because of the need for transportation. Kaua'i Medical Support has the capability of transporting those persons on wheelchairs, which make it really difficult if they have to go in personal vehicles. This service allows them to not have to wait for the bus, they can go from their home to their doctor's appointment. Another operational highlight is our RSVP program and volunteers, they contribute so much. The value savings through their volunteered contributions total three hundred sixty-seven thousand five hundred seventy-six dollars (\$367,576), almost thirty-three dollars (\$33) per hour that they spend providing services throughout Kaua'i. They are really in high demand. We have about thirty-six (36) to thirty-eight (38) volunteer stations that use our volunteers. The two (2) projects that the volunteers address are food insecurity and social isolation. We cannot forget our staff. They are the greatest asset that we have and have been able to

address in doing the home visits and addressing the community, the seniors via home visits, phone calls, they are available to help, and they are the ones that go into the homes and make the assessments. They are the ones who do the recording, because they are mandated reporters, if they find people who have been abused or have fraud, which is a high prevalence among our elders. That is about it.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Are there any questions for Kealoha?

Councilmember Cowden: First of all, I just want to thank our Elderly Affairs program, you folks rock and are so worthy of getting national recognition. How many *kupuna* are typically living in older houses? Is there a good number of them living in our more traditional houses?

Ms. Takahashi:	Yes, I do not know the figures, but
Councilmember Cowden:	Quite a lot, right?
Ms. Takahashi:	Quite a lot.

Councilmember Cowden: I happen to live in a (inaudible) home, so I know I got my (inaudible) insurance as have some of my friends. When we look at this convergence of problems like not having enough to help. I am just wondering if I wasn't knowing to look for it, people might not understand that they might be losing their insurance and not really wanting to insure the older, more traditional housing. Hopefully everybody has paid off houses but when somebody helps with these senior home assessments, are you just looking for safety or is anybody helping them figure out things like their bills?

Ms. Takahashi: We do. We have a case manager that goes in and does a thorough assessment of their needs. Especially when we are assessing our services. They assess if they have a disaster plan made up, they assess to their needs. They look at a whole bunch of things that I cannot mention because. It is a set assessment that they go through. It is recorded. We have a database that keeps all of those records and we can assess.

Councilmember Cowden: I think that would be good. We should be looking for that and hoping that most of our *kupuna* have houses that are paid off. But if people can no longer get insurance and they have a mortgage, is it possible that the broker called? I think that is a challenge across. We are going to find that in a lot of different areas if we are not careful. I know it is in my own personal world. I am not sure if it landed anywhere yet, but it is likely to have a high impact on where people can keep their insurance. It is still likely to go up substantially. We might have from all these people with fixed incomes or even with unearned incomes, we need to be ready for another wave of challenges that we have to help people through. I would think that the *kupuna* community they are more likely to have these buildings that they are no longer wanting to insure which is the wooden houses.

Ms. Takahashi: Usually, the request that we have is for medical insurance and help to apply for advantage plans with MediCare A/B.

Councilmember Cowden: This is a new challenge since the Lahaina fire. I would try asking your people.

Chair Rapozo: Kealoha, I am looking on page 2. A couple of things that trouble me are the first one and A. The need for services has increased but Federal and State funding have not. Then you go on B. When you talk about mileage reimbursement and currently your budget is only sufficient for seven months. Is there a reason why you did not put in for more funding for the mileage reimbursement? Even at fifty I cannot believe why we are capping it, but at fifty cents a mile I think the IRS reimbursement is higher than that, right?

Ms. Takahashi: Perhaps Donna can address that.

DONNA LYNN LOO: Assistant Executive on Aging. As far as the six thousand, one hundred fifty-five (6,155) we just been relying on the federal grant funds that were allotted for the RSVP programs, but I believe in this budget, year Mayor asked for additional funds for reimbursement for mileage for volunteers.

Chair Rapozo:	So, you do have in the budget?
Ms Loo:	Yes.
Chair Rapozo:	So, you will be okay?

Ms Loo: To cover for that twelve (12) months and we were looking at how we can...there is about twenty (20) volunteers out of the two hundred (200) active only twenty (20) ask for reimbursement so that would cover for our twelve (12) months' worth of reimbursement.

Chair Rapozo: But then again, they are capped at fifty (\$50) dollars a month?

Ms Loo: We are looking at raising the cap to the mileage reimbursement rate of sixty-seven (67), which I believe is the IRS rate.

Chair Rapozo: That is the IRS number yes.

Ms Loo: And also raising the cap looking at either leaving it...sorry raising it to seventy-five (\$75) dollars per month.

Chair Rapozo: I do not understand the cap. Why would we put a cap if we are relying on these volunteers to provide...every year we go to the RSVP banquet, every year we brag about much money you guys have saved the County. I don't understand if you have ambitious volunteers they are not doing if the money and this reimbursement basically pays for their gas which is rising and rising so I do not understand why we are putting a cap where we should be compensating them or reimbursing them, I should say. It is not even compensation, it is reimbursement for services that they provide.

Ms Loo:

Then we would need additional funds...

Chair Rapozo: And that is what I am asking. I have never seen this much money thrown around in a budget this year. I just have not. It is like a hundred thousand was the old twenty (\$20) dollars. There are hundreds here, two hundred, nine hundred, seven hundred, it is just everywhere. I want to make sure that we take care of our  $k\bar{u}puna$ . I want to do it this year because we can. Even as far as positions because with the meals on wheels program as you talked about in your overview, there are challenges. We lost a provider, and you guys are out and even with the providers that we have, and I hope it is not due to funding. We are not serving as many people as we could. If we have more money, we could serve more  $k\bar{u}puna$  right.

Ms. Takahashi: Yes.

 $\begin{array}{ccc} \mbox{Chair Rapozo:} & \mbox{So, let us look backwards and try to figure out how} \\ \mbox{many $k\bar{u}puna$ do we really want to serve and then figure out what the cost is and let us know.} \\ \mbox{When we do not have money, we do not have money, but we do.} & \mbox{I can tell you there is a lot} \\ \mbox{of money that I think is being placed in accounts or lines that we do not even have a plan.} & \mbox{I} \\ \mbox{want to know what is it going to take to fulfill this mission Elderly Affairs and get as many} \\ \mbox{$k\bar{u}puna$ as we can possibly service.} & \mbox{I need to know those numbers because this is the year to} \\ \mbox{bring you guys up to where you need to be.} \end{array}$ 

Ms. Takahashi:	Thank you.
Ms Loo:	Thank you.
Chair Rapozo:	And it is not you guys, it is the $k\bar{u}puna$ .
Ms. Takahashi:	Yes, thank you.
Chair Rapozo:	Mr. Kagawa.

Councilmember Kagawa: Thank you. By the way I have four hundred thousand (400,000) in cuts so I can support you if we have some funds that we can support you guys with to do your job. I just wanted to ask generally, and I said I was not going to ask questions so I am sorry and then I want to declare conflict of interest because I play  $k\bar{u}puna$  softball.

Chair Rapozo:

We are all  $k\bar{u}puna$  except Addison over here.

Councilmember Kagawa: The thing is, it is the seniors that I worry about. They pay seven thousand dollars (\$7,000) a month for full time care for the mom to outside agencies. She needs attention around the clock, and I get it. What is the most...people are going to say I cannot afford seven thousand so I am going to keep mom where she is and both parents are working, or care givers or kids are still working age so what is the most we can go and deliver food and the things that you guys do. Sometimes they do minor house cleaning. What is the most we get out there to those most in need for the super senior?

Ms. Takahashi:

So, meals are five (5) days a week.

Councilmember Kagawa: Wow. A lot of times they do not eat all of it. When they get to be super seniors, their appetite is not as big.

Ms. Takahashi: Then we have personal care services which helps with the bathing. I believe it is two (2) times or three (3) times a week. It is kind of limited and homemaker could be once a week or two times a week and that is because like you mentioned the funding we have to be sure that we have enough funds available so that we serve everybody and so we have to play. So it is not like everyday services that we go in to do personal care, it is just couple of times a week.

Councilmember Kagawa: Is there available people to service should we need a little bit more with funding TO enable us?

Ms. Takahashi: We do have a waitlist for homemaker services. Ms Loo: We have twenty-seven (27) on (inaudible) the waitlist for homemaker services.

Ms. Takahashi: cleaning the bathroom, kitchen. Homemaker is like cleaning up, doing laundry,

Councilmember Kagawa: Again, just the bang for the buck with your office providing some of that help is enabling some people not have to pay that seven thousand a month. I mean I do not know how these people are taking off their home equity until they are maxing out on their home values. It is sad to hear stories and there are cases where you guys are saving people from going in that direction. So, thank you guys so much. And again, my conflict of interest, I still hundred percent (100%) support the seniors even though I have a conflict.

Chair Rapozo: I want to follow up real quick Felicia. You said you have a waiting list of twenty-seven (27)?

	Ms Loo:	Correct.
	Chair Rapozo:	For
	Ms Loo:	For homemaker services.
that?	Chair Rapozo:	That is just to come in and cleaning and stuff like
	Ms Loo:	Yes.
of pro	Chair Rapozo: viders?	Is that waiting list because of funding or because
	Ms Loo:	Both.

Chair Rapozo: Okay, so how do we...so if we have more funding that does not necessarily mean we would clear the waiting list?

Ms Loo: Correct. We are trying to get more contracts for all of those services expire September 30 of this year. We are hoping we can get more providers. Right now, we have two (2) providers that do personal care and three (3) providers that do homemaker services with the potential to partner for personal care.

Chair Rapozo: Okay, so do this for us, I am not going to go through each waiting list, but I know there is one because I called for my Mother-in-Law, and they said they had a waiting list. If you could provide to us what would be needed to clear the waiting list. Let us start there.

Councilmember Kagawa: Mister Chair, can I just follow on your round robin? You know a lot of these people may be starting with dementia and stuff, they want to remain at home. It is just so maybe this little support that we can provide can keep them there. Maybe the family just needs these random, periodic checks that you guys have been providing for years and that way if we can address it together as a team, I have my four hundred thousand in cuts that I am willing to share for the group.

Chair Rapozo:

Councilmember Cowden.

Councilmember Cowden: So, Chair you basically asked my question. I think Councilmember Kagawa tried to ask my question, but so lot of clarity, if money has no object, if you had plenty of money coming in and you could even pay thirty-five dollars an hour to these people coming in to help, you probably still could not find the people to do the work, but it is not the money even though having the money is helpful? I know people who have enough money to pay for help. Plenty money to pay for help and they cannot find help. What I would like to see on the list that he is putting together of the service providers is how many of them still have any capacity, because I am hearing that challenge too.

Ms Loo: Right now, with the service providers that we have, I think there is availability for three (3) to be added on.

Councilmember Cowden: Three (3) people?

Ms Loo: In homemaker's services, personal care just one (1), because of the staffing. We can double check and make sure.

Councilmember Cowden: Yeah, and we send stuff...roughly what the pay wage is because that is also if they are paying nineteen (19) and twenty (20) dollars and hour and you have extra...and they cannot fill it, but I am curious if it is not an easy job and it is not every temperament that can handle it.

Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember Bulosan.
Councilmember Bulosan:	My question was asked, thank you.
Chair Rapozo:	Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: Yes, I like to think my mind is working again. Mister Kagawa says he has money to put into this. Councilmember Cowden addressed the staffing. Have we ever talked to Kauai Community College (KCC) and our upcoming nurse's, aides to see if they could get some hours in, because I know for a fact Wilcox Hospital does not hire fresh graduates? They want them to go to the mainland to get experience. How cool if they could get experience caring for our  $k\bar{u}puna$ . Taking the blood pressure, the bathing, the feeding, the temperature. Are we looking at that in our scope or our vision to partner with KCC's young medical attendants coming out of college or during college to earn a stipend through the County and address our  $k\bar{u}puna$  needs. Have we thought about that?

Ms. Takahashi: The statewide level they have at the Executive Office of Aging in partnership with, I believe, with legislature. They have looked into work shortages and have set up some...

Councilmember DeCosta: I am not talking State, I talking County. Can we do this in our own County? We have a situation where we need some staffing, Our Council wants to support you with some funding. Can we ourself just go to KCC and say look you guys have some nurse graduates in the next couple of years, want to earn a few extra money for stipend? Our county can provide and then we can fill the need of servicing our  $k\bar{u}puna$ . So we do not have to wait. The State takes too long. Let us do things on our own. Can we look into that Donna?

Ms Loo: Yes, I believe Ohana Pacific Health, they have some programs in place working with high school students to encourage them to go into this field and working with graduates to see if they can go to a place and start...

Councilmember DeCosta:	But we have not implemented that right?
Ms Loo: something that	I can check on that because I thought there was
Councilmember DeCosta:	But it is not implemented in your agency?
Ms. Takahashi:	Not sure.

Ms Loo: Not sure.

Councilmember DeCosta: And you guys are the ones who know the numbers who know who need it, who have them on the waiting list, so I am saying you guys going to lead this march.

Ms Loo: Yes. We have tried to reach out to KCC and we were told that the person was really busy, and that the nursing program, they are trying to make sure they graduate, but we can try again and see if we can collaborate.

Councilmember DeCosta:	I know her, I will help deliver.
Ms Loo:	Thank you.

Chair Rapozo: I look at this budget but the other part is the instructor, the master instructor. How is that? Are you having problem retaining instructors?

Ms Loo: Same with the work force. It is difficult. I think when the program first started, we might have had eight (8) instructors and over the years it has dwindled down to three (3) plus the master instructor, which is why we raised the unit rate up to that dollar amount, so that we can hopefully retain and recruit more instructors. They are prior group fitness instructors and so that is something that is required to be part of the program.

Chair Rapozo: Thank you, and a unit is an hour?

Ms Loo: It is a little over an hour because they also have to prepare the registration sheets as part of the program.

Chair Rapozo: So let us say with five dollars (\$5) it is the flat or are they getting seventy- five (75) an hour?

Ms Loo:

Per class.

Chair Rapozo: Per class. Okay. Anymore questions on the overview?

Vice Chair Kuali'i: On that unit rate, have you thought about raising it even more? I mean if you are not getting people that is not a lot of money. Some of them can go teach a class on their own and charge each person twenty bucks (\$20) and get two (2), three hundred dollars (\$300).

Ms Loo: We have thought about that as well. But it is really difficult, I guess it is because they are independent instructors so they have to pay their own taxes and do all their own to be an instructor. So I am not sure if that had anything to do with....

Chair Rapozo: That is true. It could. Up to a hundred bucks (\$100) and incentivize some of them who want to do it.

Councilmember Kagawa: So is that the program like the Zumba at Kalaheo Neighborhood Center? Is that part of the service?

Ms Loo: That is totally different.

Councilmember Kagawa: Oh, separate? Funding like that, I just want to say that I watch that and tears come to your eyes that super seniors, you know some in the chair that are doing and the smiles on their faces. I think Kaua'i, we do I mean our neighborhood centers, they do a great job and with our seniors there is no other place, but we need just because it is good I think we need to even supply more. Mayor Carvalho one of the

true guys that supported them. Again what ever we can do I think from our end let us make Kaua'i best in this area and I want to again use my four hundred thousand to you guys.

Chair Rapozo: I think a lot of people, I think we should truly make that investment. We should make the investment in our seniors. Councilmember Carvalho then Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember Carvalho: Yes, just following up. I am totally supportive. Get the  $k\bar{u}puna$  that need additional support and you get the ones that are pretty healthy and they just need to continue to be healthy. So how do we continue to do those programs? And even if we are directly or indirectly involved, I am totally supportive of figuring out a way from this Council that we can put additional resources to continue that support for our  $k\bar{u}puna$ , and go from there because you know how the different classes and programs come about. The thing I am hearing is that lot of  $k\bar{u}puna$  like to go out and exercise and go swimming in the swimming pool and that kind stuff, that is what they want. So whatever we can do to submit a list to support that...

Chair Rapozo:

Councilmember DeCosta.

Councilmember DeCosta: I am hearing the cry about transportation and this is great, but and there is no sorry, this is great, no but included. Although we have our County bus and I ask...I am not a big supporter of the County bus. I honestly think sometimes there are a lot of people doing joy rides around that should be working, but I am a big community believer in taking our  $k\bar{u}puna$ . So I asked Celia about how do we care for our  $k\bar{u}puna$  with our Kauai Bus and she said we have a program. I not sure when but now it is not in effect, so please can you guys bring back the County bus to assist the  $k\bar{u}puna$  if they need to get to certain services or get to a luncheon that you guys provide?

Ms. Takahashi: Okay, that is a separate issue but we do have a contract with Kaua'i Transportation Agency to provide paratransit services.

Councilmember DeCosta: Okay, I know paratransit is just for the ones that are disabled, but the ones that can actually walk and get on and off the bus, do we have a service with the Kaua'i Bus to assist those people?

Ms. 7	Takahashi:	Yes.
Cour	ncilmember DeCosta:	We do?
	lakahashi: k. Was for	Yes. But it is forbut it is for medicalI have to

Ms Loo: I think what you maybe...correct me if I am wrong, I think you maybe are referring to some of the senior centers were using the Kaua'i Bus to go to their activities.

Councilmember DeCosta: Yes, and how do we incorporate that into what you guys are doing and what services you need to fill the gap between the individuals who use their own vehicle and ...

Ms Loo: That is different. We at one time partnered with the Kauai Bus to transport our volunteers to get to the RSVP event. However, over the years, because they had limited staff and limited resources, they had to sign up to receive or sign up to make a reservation to the regular routes to get to the program. When we did our area plan, when we went out to the communities, what we heard was because of that they are not able to utilize the bus to go to their events like they used to do. Or do shopping once a month.

Councilmember DeCosta: We have to fix that. I would rather take a bus load of  $k\bar{u}puna$  shopping at Safeway than take a bus load of people from one area to another because it is lunch time and they should have a job and be working at least at McDonalds or weed eating or something. So, yes, please let us know how we can help you.

Chair Rapozo: We need bus drivers. I think this is cool. They told me that you do not need a CDL for the smaller bus. So maybe we can, the Council can drive for those events.

Councilmember DeCosta: The only driver is Councilmember Bulosan, because we all  $k\bar{u}puna$ , we have activities, we all like care.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any further questions on the overview? Page 238. Go ahead Councilmember Kuali'i.

Councilmember Kuali'i: The one (1) vacant position, Position No. 137, Program Specialist II, and I noticed the fifty percent (50%) marker there. Vacant since December, not too long, only a couple months. The recruitment status says, "We recruit continuous," but where are you at with that?

Ms. Takahashi:	It is still recruiting. We did not get any
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	You went through a round and then you did not

have...

Ms. Takahashi: Yes. So, it is continuous, yes.

Councilmember Kuali'i: You still have time, so maybe you will have an update in May on whether you are going to fill it or not. The salary is at fifty percent (50%), because the fifty percent (50%) is paid from another source of funding?

Progra	Ms. Takahashi: am, the director position.	This is our Program Specialist for the RSVP
	Councilmember Kualiʻi:	What is the other source of funding?
	Ms. Takahashi:	It is the grant funding from RSVP.
	Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Oh, grant, yes. Thank you.

Councilmember Cowden:	I have a follow-up.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Go ahead.
Councilmember Cowden: my memory is that the State contributes	In this, it is all coming from the General Fund, but to our program as well.
Ms. Takahashi:	Yes.
Councilmember Cowden: through the General Fund?	Where does the State funding go to? Is it funneled
Ms. Takahashi: part of the funding sources here for staff,	We have State and Federal dollars that help with as well as for our programs.
Councilmember Cowden: hundred thousand dollars (\$1,800,000)? amount?	So, does that feather into this one million eight Do you get all of what you need done for that
Ms. Takahashi:	It is separate.
Councilmember Cowden: budget. Do you have a rough estimate? D	Okay, it is not here because it is not part of our oes the General Fund pay fifty percent (50%)?
Ms. Takahashi:	No. A rough estimate is probably a third or less.
Councilmember Cowden:	Okay, because that is what I was thinking.
Ms. Takahashi: one-third.	If you add the staffing as well, so, yes, about
Councilmember Cowden: less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), closer to six million dollars (\$6,000,000)?	Because otherwise you get a big amount done for so really everything you spend might be something
Ms. Takahashi: thousand dollars (\$3,800,000).	No, ours is about three million eight hundred
Councilmember Cowden: (\$3,800,000) including all sources of fundi	Three million eight hundred thousand dollars ng?
Ms. Takahashi:	I can get that
Councilmember Cowden: coming out of the General Fund. Okay, th	Alright, it looks like then maybe we are half ank you.
(Councilmombor Kagawa was noted	d as not procent)

(Councilmember Kagawa was noted as not present.)

Council Chair Rapozo: positions in the past?	With respect to positions, did you have more
Ms. Takahashi:	Are you thinking about Wade or far back?

Council Chair Rapozo: I was gone for four (4) years, so let us say in the last five, six, seven? Is this the staffing that you had for a while?

Ms. Loo: Yes.

Ms. Takahashi: Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Councilmember DeCosta brings up a really good point about the Kaua'i Community College (KCC), but while he was talking, I was thinking, my light bulb went off, mine usually stays on, typically, but is it possible for us to contract with...because right now we are contracting with companies or businesses.

Ms. Takahashi: Businesses, yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Do you know how we do with Summer Fun; we bring on contracted employees, is there a way or have we explored that maybe we can bring in a cadre of home cleaners, etcetera? Basically, they would work for the County. Not as a full-time employee, but you have a contract. There are a lot of people out there that own their own businesses, but they can come in and work two (2) or three (3) days per week on contract that we could directly bring them on board, rather than trying to get business. Most of the businesses are small businesses, they have staffing issues, they cannot afford to pay a wage to their employees. I know, I was a business owner, and it was tough. My employees were paid before I did, and that is just how it is. Is there a way that we could create a cadre of resources that we could deploy and dispatch?

Ms. Takahashi: What we have currently is a listing for private hire, so we have a listing of individuals who are willing to provide in-home services, but the elderly and the worker would decide on their own cost.

Council Chair Rapozo: That is like a referral service, like a network, like we are saying to check a list.

Ms. Takahashi: Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: I am not talking about that. I am talking about a  $k\bar{u}puna$  calling and says they need home services, and we dispatch our contracted employee to do the home service and we pay them based on whatever that rate is. As I look through this budget, the County does not have much "skin" in this game if you think about it. There is very little County money aside from staff. We have not put in much. Consultant Services at two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) and the rest are all benefits. If you look at what the County—we do not put much in here. Even the mileage that you talked about, I was trying to find it in here, but I could not find it. I am not sure where it is. There is very little County money in your operation aside from the staff.

Ms. Takahashi:	It is on page 238.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Oh, here, mileage.
Ms. Takahashi:	Yes.
Council Chair Rapozo:	The mileage is for employees and volunteers?

Ms. Takahashi: The ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) is for volunteers and the two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) is for employees.

Council Chair Rapozo: Oh, okay. It is a little confusing, because that is all employee benefits, correct? That entire section. So, the mileage that you have here is for the volunteers?

Ms. Loo: Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) of that, yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: And that should cover you with the sixty-seven cents (\$0.67) and a cap at fifty dollars (\$50)?

Ms. Loo:

Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Maybe you folks can figure out what it would be without the cap. I do not think we should cap any volunteers, especially for what they do for us. Are there any further questions on page 187? Councilmember Bulosan.

Councilmember Bulosan: I want to echo that comment on the mileage, even if we raise it two thousand dollars (\$2,000), I do not think that budgets much.

Council Chair Rapozo: Do you know how many people would go beyond the cap?

Ms. Loo: We have a handful. We have been tracking. There are about twenty (20) volunteers each month and maybe about five (5) might go over the cap, I think, some of them go upwards...if we did not have a cap, it would be like two hundred dollars (\$200) per month that they travel to get to their volunteer stations.

Council Chair Rapozo:	And	they	are	also	paying	gas	to	do	that.

Ms. Loo: Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: I do not see it as a...yes, I would definitely ask that you folks reconsider taking out the cap, and that might provide more incentive for the people that are living on the outlying districts to come and volunteer, because it is a deterrent. The gas is a deterrent for some.

Ms. Loo: And for some, the deterrent is the wear and tear on their vehicle. A lot of them are going into the "boonies" to deliver these produce boxes and

grocery bags, like up to Pākalā, up into Kīlauea, dirt roads, etcetera. We had a couple of volunteers drop out because their vehicle could not...they had to replace tires, etcetera.

Council Chair Rapozo: I was thinking to try to look at getting a car, but that is another issue with volunteers driving County equipment, so scratch that.

Councilmember Bulosan: delivery.	With the RSVP drivers, that is for the food
Ms. Loo:	Food security through both food banks.
Councilmember Bulosan: provide all of that.	So, that is not in our budget, the food banks
Ms. Loo:	Correct. Yes.
Councilmember Bulosan: and	Okay, so the RSVP volunteers pick up the food
Ms. Loo:	Yes.
Council Chair Rapozo: page 239? Alright. Okay, thank you.	Okay. Is there anything else on page 238 or

Ms. Takahashi: Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay, this is where we are at. We only have the County Clerk left. There are a bunch of students out on the lawn from Waimea High School, so let us take a break. I am going to ask staff if you can bear with us and we will take a ten-minute break, come back and wrap up the Office of the County Clerk, without taking a lunch break.

There being no objections, the Committee recessed at 12:01 p.m., for a caption break.

The Committee reconvened at 12:13 p.m., and proceeded as follows:

## Office of the County Auditor

(Councilmember Kagawa was noted as not present.)

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA, County Clerk: Good morning. Did you want to start with the Auditor?

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes, let us just get that out of the way.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: The budget for the Office of the County Auditor reflects both dollar-funded personnel positions, and it also reflects an increase in our annual cost for our external audit. We entered into a five-year...first year of a five-year contract, so the first year is three hundred thirty-six thousand dollars (\$336,000). I will be meeting with

Malia Kagawa and other members of the Department of Finance on Friday to discuss the audit and timing. It is a little delayed this year.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any questions for the Office of the County Auditor? One of the questions that come up from the constituents, and I try to answer them, but I was gone for a long time, but the fact that there have been attempts to fill that position, but were just unsuccessful.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: Yes. I believe it is on for continuous recruitment and we just have not had qualified candidates. We originally had numerous people contact the office with interests, from Pakistan to across the United States (US), but nothing really seemed to pan out.

Council Chair Rapozo: I remember my last involvement was a woman that we actually made the job offer to from Seattle and was a good fit, and her husband got another job somewhere else, and she declined. It is a tough position to fill.

Councilmember Cowden: Is the three hundred thirty-six thousand dollars (\$336,000) largely for the audited County financial report?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: Yes.

Councilmember Cowden: A few years ago, we did four (4) separate audits and we do not have funding for that...

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: No. We do have funding for performance audits and that is in the Office of the County Clerk's budget. The funding in the auditor's budget is just for the financial audit.

Councilmember Cowden: Okay.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: Again, it is the first year of a five-year contract.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any further questions on the Auditor? If not, we will move on to the Office of the County Clerk.

## Office of the County Clerk

#### (Councilmember Kagawa was noted as not present.)

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: We really would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support this year, both for myself and the staff. We really appreciate it. The budget for the Office of the County Clerk, Council Services Division increased approximately two hundred thirty-four thousand dollars (\$234,000), which is due primarily to personnel costs, salaries, wages, and benefits. Operational costs have increased slightly. Over the past year, we lost two (2) employees to retirement, and another employee is on leave, hoping to return in the next few months. We have been very fortunate to have hired some pretty wonderful employees this year, as well as we have had the opportunity to promote from within. Did you want to go through the operational challenges?

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: As far as operational challenges are concerned, accepting public testimony via interactive conference technology is a cumbersome effort due to aging infrastructure. The patchwork connectivity between the various systems and use of livestream to capture meeting proceedings. We also had issues with building security and staff safety, and that is a growing concern due to individuals of what appears to be substance abuse or mental health issues entering public areas of the public, loitering, and in the surrounding areas. Another challenge has been fulfilling legislative projects and public requests in an expeditious manner, which continues to be a challenge. We really try and turn it around quickly and we have been, I would say, pretty successful, but it sometimes can be taxing on the staff. We are also working very hard to achieve a high level of employee morale. As far as operational highlights, all of you know that we were very successful in hosting the Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC) this year, and that really is thanks primarily to our staff, Allison, Randall, I mean really the entire group, everyone jumped in and did an exceptional job. Net proceeds of the conference were one hundred twenty-eight thousand nine hundred seventy-three dollars (\$128,973) and that goes back to HSAC to fund the operations of the organization.

Council Chair Rapozo: go right into page 14. Are there any questions on the overview? We will

Councilmember Kuali'i: I heard you say two (2) retirements and one (1) on leave, to return in a few months. Specifically, the Records Management Analyst V, Position No. 3703, newly vacant, only a couple of months. What is the status of recruitment, filling, or promotion from within?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: We are in the process of evaluating the Records Section to see. Currently, the Record Management Analyst IV has been temporarily assigned (TA) into the V position, and we have asked her to take a look at her existing structure to see if she wants to hire, whether it is an entry level or a little higher level, so I would say we would start that in the next two (2) or three (3) months.

Councilmember Kuali'i: The other vacant position is a three-month funded position, but the other retirement, EA-3 Council Senior Clerk Typist, only vacant now for a couple of months, what is the plan for filling that position?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: That is also another position that we are talking about to see if we need a Senior Clerk Typist or maybe a higher level...someone who would staff meetings. It would be a Council Services Assistant position.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Are you working to do that in the next couple of months?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: We are hoping to hear back on whether the person who is out on leave will actually be returning. She did go to the mainland.

Council Chair Rapozo: Are there any questions on page 14?

Councilmember Cowden: The one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) at the bottom that has the potential to adapt salaries...if that needed to be a little bit more, when I look at how many people that maybe need adaptation. How firm is that number?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: I would say that is a good estimate of what is needed.

Council Chair Rapozo: Page 15.

Councilmember Cowden: Right here, the three hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$315,000), the performance audit is what you were speaking of earlier?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes.
Councilmember Cowden: fund it from?	If we choose to do an audit, that is where we would
Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes.
Council Chair Rapozo:	Page 16. Page 17. Before we get to the Elections

Division...

Councilmember Kuali'i: I am not sure which line item it is, but if we need any upgrades to our computer type of equipment, what line item is that?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Computer or?
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	Like in our offices.
Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes, we have funding for those types of computers.

Councilmember Cowden: When we are wanting to fix the equipment in this room and our projecting, is that all in our existing budget for the year that we are in?

Council Chair Rapozo: Well, the budget was prepared not with the intention of...I have asked the Clerk to look into a complete...

Councilmember Cowden:	Fixing	<i>.</i>						
Council Chair Rapozo: working to the level that I expect.	Yes.	Something	that	works,	because	it	is	not

Councilmember Cowden: Okay, is that in here?

Council Chair Rapozo: That is not in here. I know we will be working with IT but I am going to be honest, I cannot wait any longer. I do not think we should wait any longer.

Councilmember Cowden: There might be some existing money that was set up for training from this past year.

(Councilmember DeCosta was noted as not present.)

Council Chair Rapozo:	Yes.
Councilmember Cowden:	So, if there is money there
Council Chair Rapozo:	That is where it will come from.
Councilmember Cowden:	So, we should do that between now and July.

Council Chair Rapozo: Logistically and procurement-wise, I do not think we would be able to get it procured. The first step would be having someone come in and look at what we can do and what we need to do. I would assume that will take a while, and so for all intents and purposes, I would...I mean we could do some short-term fixes, but I really do not think we should be investing big money in this room if we are going to redo the entire process. That is a discussion to have with IT, because even with computer equipment, whatever the councilmembers or the staff needs, we determine that.

Councilmember Cowden: Because I think some good things came out of COVID and one of them was remote attendance as a Council person, if you were sick or somewhere...

## (Councilmember DeCosta was noted as present.)

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes, that is still in place, but I have to tell you that we went through a lot of headaches... I got blasted because we stopped the stream because of technical issues, but of course, when you have Gary Hooser out there blaming me, everyone just believes, so I got blamed. After all of that and we opened the Zoom again, it is like very few people use it, but I agree that we need to have it, but the fact is we have to comply with the Sunshine Law, the Office of Information Practices (OIP), and we cannot go out there with a substandard product. That is just the way it works. We want to get it right. We want to get this system right. It really bothers me because we are not getting it. I do not know how long now. It has been pretty much as long as I have been here. We have not gotten the response that I expected. I know we have parts someplace in IT that still have not made it here, and I am just saying, "Forget it, we will just do it ourselves, we will fund it, build it, and we will have our own system." I just do not think that we should have to wait. I do not watch these shows. I do not go home and watch. This is not for us; this is for the public. The reason why I am so upset is because the public is the one telling me, "I cannot hear, quality sucks, I cannot see the screen." I am hearing that from the community, and we cannot even get it fixed. It is not that we are not trying, we put in the request, we have asked, so I instructed Jade to pursue getting it done once and for all. Yes, it will come at a cost. Yes, we will fund it, but I just think that is a priority and that we need to get it done. Is there anything else? Page 16. Page 17. You folks all know how this place works, so it is not as...let us go right into the Elections Division, page 19.

Councilmember Kuali'i There is one (1) vacant position, Position No. 2702, Elections Administrator. On the Vacancy Report, it says, "List referred," what does that mean? Where are we at as far as filling this position?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: The Elections Administrator position, we did go out and we received two (2) candidates that the Human Resources (HR) sent over. We are in the process of taking a look at that and seeing... I know one (1) was from the mainland. We are evaluating the two (2) interested applicants.

Councilmember Kuali'i: Did this position not have any ability for promotion from within or that the person would have been open to apply? Were certain requirements not met.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes.
Councilmember Cowden:	I have a follow-up.
Councilmember Kualiʻi:	So, you have interviews coming?
Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	We are going to see, yes.

Councilmember Cowden: Among the team in the two (2) buildings, we have existing staff that we feel confident can handle the upcoming election that might be vibrant?

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:

Absolutely.

Councilmember Cowden: I want to appreciate that we did have a discussion vesterday for a good half hour, forty (40) minutes going through all our steps and processes, and I think that we will be more comfortable and more successful than 2022, which was difficult. It sounds like we are confident and good.

	Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes.
electio	Council Chair Rapozo: on year.	And understanding that this budget is for a non-
į	Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	No, this is for
	Council Chair Rapozo:	This is for next year.
bigger	Councilmember Cowden: salary cost.	This is an election year. That is why there is
in her	Council Chair Rapozo: e?	Is that enough Election Clerks, you have four (4)
	Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa:	Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Is that sufficient? Because last year...and I do not know if it was an anomaly at the last election, that final day was just insane, everyone decided to vote on the last day. Is that sufficient? Is this the same staffing we had at the last election?

LYNDON M. YOSHIOKA, Deputy County Clerk: No, we actually added two (2) bodies. At the last election, we actually were at least a body short. We had a hard time finding someone, so we just ran short and that is part of what contributed to a lot of the things that we encountered.

Councilmember Cowden: I was pleased to see that we bought a different piece of equipment that might be more costly. What capacity is that? What is the difference that this new piece of equipment will offer that will speed things up?

Mr. Yoshioka: This new envelope sorter has envelope throughput of roughly four thousand (4,000) pieces an hour. The other one was maybe several hundred.

Councilmember Cowden: Okay, two (2) years ago, we had six thousand (6,000) votes on the last day, but actually it would not go through the envelope on that day, right? Do you push everything through on that last day? Will this speed things up on that day?

Mr. Yoshioka: Yes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay. Are there any further questions? If not, that was quick and painless. Let me just say because this is the final end of the Budget Reviews, *mahalo* to the Elections Division. I think you folks work hard. You are so pleasant. Thank you. Then, of course, to our Council Service Staff, Jade, thank you and Lyndon for all you do, and to our staff. I am sure everyone will share a little bit, but I have to say that our staff is incredible. If you look at the narrative, it is sort of deceiving, because when you look at the overview and see all the things that were done and it only shows a number, you cannot show the work that goes into that number for every project request, resolution request, or every non-agenda item request. It is this staff collectively that makes it happen and it takes hours and hours of work. As Councilmember DeCosta always says, "They make us look good," and that is true. I just want to say thank you to our staff and to the leadership because nothing happens here without our staff.

Councilmember DeCosta: Thank you. I know this year some of us have personal staff, but I am very confident and complacent about all the help that I personally have received. I am amazed, I wish I could thank everyone who sits there every day, but there are only two (2) of them today. Behind the scenes, we have many of them in different offices, and I always call you our leaders and Jade and Lyndon, we could not ask for better leadership here in Council Services. Thank you so much.

Councilmember Carvalho: I echo that. Same, Jade and Lyndon, *mahalo* for always being there and following up on requests, sometimes last minute, but following through. Also, the team members, just working so hard and following through on many things. Big *mahalo*. I am totally in support of everything.

Councilmember Cowden:

I will just echo, thank you very much.

Councilmember Bulosan:

Ditto.

Councilmember Kualiʻi: enough. Mahalo nui loa. I will never be able to thank you

Council Chair Rapozo: Budget Reviews for FY 2024. Thank you.

With that, that will conclude our Departmental

There being no objections, the Committee adjourned the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Departmental Budget Reviews at 12:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, anell mem Calderia

Darrellyne M. Caldeira Council Services Assistant II

Shara K. Shinagan

Shara K. Shinagawa Council Services Assistant I

Shari L. Rabaino Council Services Assistant I

APPROVED at the Committee Meeting held on May 22, 2024:

Munu

MEL RAPOZO Chair, Committee of the Whole