

PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 13, 2026

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kauaʻi was called to order by Mel Rapozo, Council Chair, on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Suite 201, and Meeting Room 106, Historic County Building, Līhuʻe, and the presence of the following was noted:

Honorable Addison Bulosan
Honorable Felicia Cowden
Honorable Fern Holland
Honorable Arryl Kaneshiro
Honorable KipuKai Kualii
Honorable Mel Rapozo

Excused: Honorable Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.

Pursuant to Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes Section 92-9(a)(4), because a video recording of this meeting is available online, this is to provide a link to the video recording (valid as of the approval date of these minutes): https://kauai.granicus.com/player/clip/3079?view_id=2&redirect=true. Additionally, meeting videos are available at: www.kauai.gov/Government/Council/Webcast-Meetings.

The Clerk read the notice of the public hearing on the following:

“Bill No. 2988 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE OPERATING BUDGET AND FINANCING THEREOF FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2027 (*Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operating Budget*),”

which was ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kauaʻi on March 25, 2026, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on March 28, 2026.

The following communications were received for the record:

1. Ando, Tammy, dated May 12, 2026
2. Brady, Leelynn submitted for Bolden, Roxanne, dated May 13, 2026
3. Brondy, Heather, dated May 13, 2026
4. Bruce, Adriann, dated May 4, 2026
5. Carlson, Michelle, dated May 13, 2026
6. Ecker, Mariah, undated

7. Fonda, Natalie, dated May 12, 2026
8. Garabirez, Nicole, dated May 13, 2026
9. Gentry, Kelly, dated May 13, 2026
10. Harvey, Diana, dated May 13, 2026
11. Houck, Matthew, dated May 13, 2026
12. Issler, Kaitlyn, undated
13. Kamen, Tiana, dated May 13, 2026
14. Kern, Sarah, dated May 12, 2026
15. Kershner, Katie, dated May 14, 2026
16. King, Donna, dated May 13, 2026
17. Lewis, Theresa, undated
18. Neumann, Cheryl, dated May 12, 2026
19. Nordgren, Kenneth, dated May 13, 2026
20. Nordgren, Makayla, dated May 13, 2026
21. Poai, Maile, dated May 13, 2026
22. Poland, Scott, dated May 13, 2026
23. Smith, Haley, dated May 12, 2026
24. Smith, Kaulana, dated May 12, 2026
25. Swift, Ursa, dated May 13, 2026
26. VanWingerden, Katie, undated
27. Wiedner, Barbara, dated May 13, 2026
28. Zeilman, Blaze C., Bruce, Adriann, Bruce, Thomas, and Eastman-Bruce, Lois Clare, dated May 1, 2026
29. Zingray, Isabelle, dated May 13, 2026

Council Chair Rapozo: Is there anyone on Zoom or has anyone signed up to testify on the Operating Budget? Okay, come up.

DONNA CHARRON: My name is Donna Charron. I am a marriage and family therapist, and I work in the YWCA here in Kaua'i, Līhu'e. I have worked there for about twenty-one (21) years, and I am proud of the agency and the positive impact it has on the community, because of the excellent services we offer. I would like to tell you how the YWCA makes a difference in this community. We work hand-in-hand with the Child Welfare Services (CWS) by providing therapeutic services to children who have been impacted by sexual child abuse or domestic violence in their families. We offer sexual assault services to people of all ages and genders across a wide diverse population of Kaua'i. The sex assault may have happened recently or in the past, we offer therapeutic help with those who are or have been negatively affected by domestic violence. We run a domestic violence (DV) shelter that is open to both men and women with their children who are seeking a safe environment from their immediate threat of harm. We help members of the community to prepare temporary restraining orders (TROs) and we even show up in court to give moral and emotional support to victims. We accompany children to Children's Justice Centers (CJC) interviews for the same reasons. Some therapists have even testified in Court hearings and trials for their clients. We have recently

opened a transitional housing project to help people making the scary leap of living on their own, refusing to return to an abusive situation. They are able to continue to heal in a safe environment. We continue to make a difference here on Kaua'i by treating the perpetrators of domestic violence with our alternative to violence program and the anger management program. Both of those programs have a youth component. We are a nonprofit agency depending upon funding from outside sources to carry out our necessary and very important work in this community. The funding we have received over the years from the County is an integral part of the funds that allow the YWCA to make a difference. Personally, I provided services to a couple of hundred clients or more, so I have seen firsthand the positive impact of our work and the change it can bring. I stand before you to ask you for your continued support. Please keep the YWCA of Kaua'i by name in your budget, Bill No. 2988. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo:

Is there anyone else?

JACQUELINE VALOY: *Aloha.* I am Jacqueline Valoy, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and lead therapist at the YWCA Kaua'i. I am providing testimony for Bill No. 2988. Right now, the YWCA's officially designated as the sole source contractor for the Family Violence Shelter Services and the Sexual Assault Treatment Program. No comparable provider exists on Kaua'i that provides an umbrella of resources including a family violence shelter, crisis services, offender and clinical services for both domestic violence and sexual assault. Transitional housing and culturally relevant services geared to our Native Hawaiian and pacific islander community. The competitive bid process poses an unacceptable risk to the services we provide. If we lose this funding, we lose the organization's ability to provide 24-hour emergency shelter services for survivors of family violence and will no longer have the Sex Assault Treatment Program, hotline services, TRO advocacy, and participation in the Kaua'i Police Department's (KPD's) sex assault response team. If there is a disruption in funding, it will result in the immediate cessation of these services leaving our most vulnerable community members without help. The YWCA is known throughout the community to provide quality services twenty-four (24) hours per day. Over the past two (2) years as a therapist, I have seen vulnerable members of our community find stability and empowerment through our family violence shelter, transitional housing, access to emergency funds through our sustainability fund, as well as emotional healing for themselves and their children during clinical and crisis services. I am always surprised to hear the horrors of sexual assault and domestic violence that regularly happen in our community. Most people come to therapy in a place of shock. Some want to give up on life or give in to the abuse, but then we do the work. They have that moment where the shift happens and we find a new capacity to breathe and do life without having to look over their shoulders and be in a consistent state of fear. That shift and newfound hope is what motivates me to come to work every day. It is scary and unthinkable to imagine how our vulnerable populations will cope without access to these services. Please help

keep the YWCA Kaua'i open and allow us to continue serving our community. *Mahalo.*

Council Chair Rapozo: Is there anyone else?

SCOTT POLAND: *Aloha*, Council and Members of the Kaua'i County Council. My name is Scott Poland, and I am the Director of Operations for the YWCA. I am providing testimony for Bill No. 2988 regarding the proposed change in funding for the YWCA, specifically for the transfer of funding from the Office of Economic Development (OED) to the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney (OPA). I respectfully ask that the Council reconsider this change and maintain stable support for YWCA's essential programs and services. YWCA Kaua'i is not simply a nonprofit organization, but it is a critical safety net for women, children, families, survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and other vulnerable members of our community. For decades, the YWCA has been here for this community standing with individuals and families during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. The needs on Kaua'i have not decreased and in many ways they have grown. With the rising costs of food, housing, utilities, transportation, and numerous other financial needs. All of these have increased financial pressure and stress on families throughout our community. These pressures increase instability and make it harder for vulnerable individuals and families to access safety support and resources. As the Director of Operations, I have the unique perspective of the very real consequences, the changing or redirecting this funding could mean for YWCA Kaua'i. Maintaining safe facilities, responding to urgent repairs, keeping the shelter and the program spaces functional, supporting staff, meeting compliance requirements, and continuing essential services are required to stabled and predictable funding. While the transfer funding may appear to be simply an administrative change, it could have real consequences for us. A change in the administrating department could affect how funds are accessed, how quickly they are released, what expenses are considered, allowable, and what recording or compliance requirements are placed on the organization. For YWCA Kaua'i, this could create uncertainty around staffing, facility, and maintenance, emergency repairs, shelter operations, programs, planning, and our ability to respond quickly. County funding is not just financial assistance, it is a statement of community priorities. Supporting YWCA Kaua'i means survivors, safety, family stability, violence prevention, youth and community programs, and the wellbeing of residents across this island. I respectfully urge the Council to maintain the stable funding for the YWCA Kaua'i. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to testify?

TODD GORDON: Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the County Council. My name is Todd Gordon. I am testifying today both as community member and in my professional capacity as a LCSW and lead therapist for the Sex

Offender Treatment Program at the YWCA Kaua'i. I worked for the YWCA for the past fourteen (14) years providing specialized sex offender treatment services here on Kaua'i, in addition I have more than twenty-five (25) years of experience, providing social work and behavioral health services throughout of island community. Over the course of my career, I worked in multiple systems of care on our island, including adult mental health division, with a background in forensic social work, Department of Veterans Affairs providing mental health, and homeless services to our veterans of Kaua'i, Wilcox Emergency Room (ER) as an on-call site social worker where I responded to individuals experiencing suicide ideation, homicide ideation, severe mental illness, crisis situations, trauma, addiction, and family instability. My educational background is in social work from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Mayron B. Thompson School of Social Work where I hold a license in clinical social work and specialize in mental health care. I am here today because I am deeply concerned about the removal of the YWCA of Kaua'i as specifically named line item within the County's budget. While services may still be mentioned generally in the budget language, removing the YWCA by name creates uncertainty, instability for varied programs that our community depends on. These are not generic services that can be simply shifted overnight without major disruption to staffing, continuity of care, infrastructure, community trust, and client safety. Programs such as the Sex Assault Treatment Program and family violence shelter requiring years of specialized experience. Trained personnel, inter-agency coordination, confidentiality protections, and deep community relationships in order to operate effectively. These are lifesaving services. The Sex Assault Treatment Program supports victims and survivors during some of the most traumatic moments of their lives. The family violence shelter provides safety, protection, advocacy, and hope for women, children, and families feeling abused in dangerous living situations. In my own program, I work daily with high-risk individuals in treatment, supervision, accountability, and rehabilitation directly impact community safety. The work we do is difficult, specialized, and essential. Without stable funding and organizational continuity, these systems become vulnerable. I also want to emphasize that Kaua'i is unique. We are a small island community. We did not have an abundance of specialized providers waiting in the wings to take over these responsibilities if programs destabilize or experience staff leave. Once these systems are disrupted, rebuilding them is extremely difficult.

Council Chair Rapozo: Hang on. That was your first three (3) minutes. Is there anyone else wishing to testify to this Bill? Okay. How many more do you have, sir?

Mr. Gordon: Two (2) minutes.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay. I am going to ask if you can come back up at the next round. Thank you. Next speaker.

SALLY RIZZO: *Aloha*, my name is Sally Rizzo. I have been a Crisis Case Manager at the YWCA for the past two (2) years. I work directly with victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, and I have seen firsthand the importance of the shelter. I respectfully request the following: 1) that the YWCA be formally designated as a sole source contractor for the Family Violence Shelter Services and that the Sex Assault Treatment Program, recognizing that no comparable provider exists on Kaua'i and that a competitive procurement process poses an unacceptable risk to the continuity of care in victim safety. 2) If funding is transferred from OED to the OPA, that one hundred percent (100%) of the funds designated for these services remain specifically earmarked for YWCA Kaua'i's Family Violence Shelter and Sex Assault Treatment Program, without reduction, diversion, or reallocation. The YWCA Kaua'i has served this community for decades and remains a critical part of Kaua'i's emergency response system for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. I respectfully ask the County to continue supporting these essential services and the individuals and families who rely on them. Thank you for your consideration.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you.

(INAUDIBLE): My name is (inaudible). I am a domestic violence survivor. I have been utilizing the YWCA for the last, maybe about twenty (20) years. They have seen me at my worst and now they see me at my growing best. Without them, I would not be me today. Sorry. That is pretty much all I have to say. Please continue to fund them so they can support families like me. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you for being here today.

RENAE HAMILTON-CAMBEILH: *Aloha* Chair, County Councilmembers. Renae Hamilton-Cambeilh. I am here as a community member and I have a long history with the YWCA, I think as many as you know, and let me first thank you for the years and years of support that the County has given the YWCA. I can tell you firsthand how vital that is and would continue to be...you heard from the staff. I cannot say it better in terms of what they do and how the work that the YWCA touches the community. A concern as a community member that if the funds...that if I was there, I knew by name what those funds were for and what we could do with them, and how we can continue services without any interruption, without any changes that our hotlines will be open and we would be fully staffed. We would not have to change anything. If funds are not designated by name, I would be concerned about a competitive process that other agencies and organizations that may do good work in the community, but they are not as specialized. I think you can hear that in the testimony of the staff that are here today, that they also would not be able to be up and running with the years of experience, with the trust, with the confidence that the County has had in the YWCA for years, which have been proven for years. The funding is used for incredible work, for the safety of our community to better the

mental, physical health of men, women, and their families. I really encourage and support reinstating that the funds are designated for YWCA Kauaʻi. It was a very simple process when they were with OED. I do not know if it is an option to move the funds back under that office. Another concern I have is that if it is with OPA, there are other programs that are semi-related, like Victim Witness Program, specialized attorneys that we would not want any of the funds designated for services to be allocated for use for anything else. I appreciate your time, your support, and ask for your continued support for the YWCA. *Mahalo*.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to testify?

Councilmember Cowden: Anyone else for any topic?

Council Chair Rapozo: For Bill No. 2988.

Councilmember Kualiʻi: Operating Budget.

Council Chair Rapozo: For the Operating Budget.

ISABELLA ZINGRAY: Good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Isabella Zingray and I am the Family Violence Shelter Program Director at the YWCA of Kauaʻi. I am also a survivor of interpersonal violence and sexual assault. Thankfully during those experiences and in the years that followed, I had trusted loved ones and experienced professionals who help protect me, support me, and navigate what came next. Through their combined support, I am alive today to stand before you and say this. Many survivors are not so lucky. My team and I work with these individuals and families every day. We see firsthand what happens when survivors do not have safe shelter, advocacy, crisis support, or people they can turn to. We also see what becomes possible when those supports do exist. Emergency shelter is often the difference between someone remaining in a dangerous situation and having a real opportunity to survive, stabilize, and rebuild. For many of the survivors we serve, our shelter is the first place in a long time where they are able to sleep safely, where their children are able to feel secure and play, to act like children, and where they are able to begin thinking about something beyond immediate survival. One of the most common things we hear is from residents who are able to leave our shelter and move into safe living conditions as I could not have done this without you. That is the impact of these services. YWCA Kauaʻi currently operates our island's only 24-hour emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence, as well as critical sexual assault responses and advocacy services. There is no comparable provider on Kauaʻi as many as my colleagues have pointed out. Interruptions to these services would have real consequences for real people in our community and that is my primary concern. I respectfully urge the County to continue to designate YWCA Kauaʻi as the sole source contractor for the Family Violence Shelter and Sex Assault

Treatment Program budget line items and to protect the continuity of these essential services. I have also submitted written testimony containing additional details, but I wanted to be here in-person tonight as well because these services, as far as I believe, are not abstract programs or even budget lines. They directly impact the safety, dignity, and survival for people in our community every single day. Thank you for your time.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you very much. Is there anyone one wishing to testify on Bill No. 2988 or for a second time? Sir? The hardest job I have is to interrupt someone in the middle of a testimony.

Councilmember Kualii: They are on a roll.

Council Chair Rapozo: Yes.

Mr. Gordon: Seeing you folks in action, this is my first time here. I will pick up where I left off. Over the years I personally witnessed the impact that these services have had on our community. I have worked with victims who have arrived terrified, isolated, and traumatized, only later to regain stability, safety, and hope because someone from the YWCA stood beside them during their darkest moments. I have worked with families impacted by violence, addiction, sex abuse, mental illness, who were able to remain safe because shelter services and advocacy were available when they had nowhere else to turn. I have also worked with offenders in treatment who through intensive supervision, accountability, therapy, and community containment, were able to confront the denial reduced risk factors and have become safer members of our community. That work protects future victims. These programs matter, the staff matters, and the continuity matters, and naming the YWCA of Kaua'i specifically within the County budget matters because it provides stability, accountability, and protection for these critical services and the people who depend on them. I would like to share a statement from one of the clients that I treated at the YWCA in our Sex Offender Treatment Program. "YWCA Sex Offender Treatment Program has impacted my life in many ways. The program has helped me identify the high-risk behaviors and thinking errors that lead to my offense such as low self-esteem, stress, poor communication, and depression. I have learned to recognize high-risk solutions, emotions, and thoughts and to respond to them in healthier ways. It has taught me how to control my emotions, communicate more effectively, and make choices that keep me and others safe. Most importantly, the program has guided me in taking full responsibility for all my actions, all my sex offending, and understanding the impact those actions on my victim, my family, and my community have had. Through developing empathy, self-awareness, and practical coping strategies, I feel equipped to live responsible, honest, and a positive life and committed to growth and making amends wherever I can." With that said, I respectfully urge the Council to continue supporting and protecting these programs

by maintaining YWCA of Kaua'i as a named line item within the County's budget. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the people of Kaua'i.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Come on up.

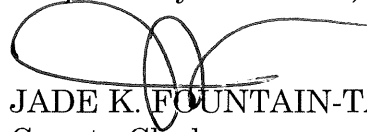
YELENA OKHMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Yelena Okhman. I am here to request more funding for houseless, homeless situation on Kaua'i. To create a safety parking zone and find solutions for people who are caught in this difficult situation and cannot get out. The funding that we can provide, we can create beautiful programs, and we can find places where they can park and will be able to have internet service, charge their cellphones, and save their food...anything we can do to help. The homeless population is growing, and we do not have any programs, as far as I understand. Is there any committee who can actually receive calls and as for the YWCA, it is existing structure that helps people already, so we can support those organizations that are already running programs on that and create new ones, so if we can add to the budget more funds for the homeless people and programs that will be provided as funds come in. That is my request. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you very much. Is there anyone else on the Operating Budget? If not, this public hearing is now closed.

(Note: No one from the public testified on the Bill via oral testimony taken at the beginning of the meeting via the Zoom remote technology platform. Additionally, no one from the public testified at Meeting Room 106.)

There being no public testimony on this matter, the public hearing adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk

:dmc