

PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 24, 2023

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Mel Rapozo, Chair, Committee of the Whole, on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Suite 201, Historic County Building, Lihue, and the presence of the following was noted:

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

Excused: Honorable KipuKai Kualii

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

"C 2023-118 – Communication (05/06/2023) from the Mayor, submitting his Supplemental Budget Communication for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 and Proposed Amendments to the Budget Bills, pursuant to Section 19.02A of the Kaua'i County Charter,"

which was ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on May 8, 2023, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on May 13, 2023.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Do we have anyone registered to testify?

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA, County Clerk: We have two (2) registered speakers. The first registered speaker is Lonnie Sykos, followed by Alice Parker.

Council Chair Rapozo: Mr. Sykos, welcome back. I know you know the rules.

The hearing proceeded as follows:

LONNIE SYKOS: For the record, Lonnie Sykos. I would like to start by saying I became politically involved sixty (60) years ago. Sixty (60) years ago and three (3) weeks was when the children's march occurred in Birmingham, Alabama. It was a horrific event. Every one of us has seen the pictures of the police holding teenagers while they put dogs on them and allowed the dogs to repeatedly bite the teenagers. We also saw them use firehoses to literally strip the clothes off of them, blind them, deafen them, and break their bones. Politics is a very serious business; it affects all of our lives, and it even impacts whether we live and die, which is why I am here today. I am in complete support of the Mayor who wants to maintain the size of our reserve. This morning I watched the news from Guam. I went to middle and high school in the Central Pacific. In my adult life, when I was much

younger, I worked for a defense contractor in the Western and Central Pacific. I experienced a category five (5) hurricane at sea, we spent three (3) days within one hundred (100) miles of the eye. I experienced a category four (4) hurricane, we spent four (4) days within fifteen (15) miles of the eye, and another five (5) hurricanes during that season in my life. I have been in hurricanes in Pennsylvania. I have been in hurricanes in Mississippi. I have been in hurricanes in Hawai'i, and in the Central Pacific. I know what a category four (4) or five (5) hurricane will do to this island. The damage done by 'Iniki is nothing compared to the damage that that exact same storm would do today to this island. The idea that we have a few million dollars more than the minimum that the agencies and groups that come up with what percentage of your Operating Budget creates a sufficient reserve, we are just barely above the minimum, and the idea that because we are some degree above the minimum that extra money is somehow wasted, and is just sitting there doing nothing, to me, is utter foolishness. I own a Hick's home. It was built the same year I was born. My home will not survive a category five (5) hurricane.

Council Chair Rapozo:

Thank you.

ALICE PARKER:
I wait?

Can he do another three (3) minutes now, and

Council Chair Rapozo:

Sure. Thank you, Alice. You may continue.

Mr. Sykos: Thank you. My home is not unique, it has termite damage, it has dry rot and wet rot. A large hurricane is going to knock my home down, it is going to knock down thousands of homes on this island. If that hurricane impacts us, it is probably going to impact Honolulu, I know because it is the industry that I came out of. Honolulu Harbor is very much at risk, always, at being closed to vessel traffic, because there is only one (1) channel in and out, and it is quite narrow. The gantries, the devices that move containers are only hurricane three (3) resistant, so larger hurricanes on its way, they have to physically disassemble those and lay them on the ground, at which point they become susceptible to the containers being blown around and damaging the gantries. There is not some warehouse with extra gantries in it waiting to be sold, so in order to replace our damaged gantries, we are going to have to have some other harbor disassemble theirs and ship it to Hawai'i and reassemble them in Honolulu. An 'Iniki arriving today can conceivably leave us on our own for up to ninety (90) days that your relief will be coming by helicopter, my relief will be coming by helicopter, it will be coming airplane, that is after we get our runways reopened, and we have the other problem of all of this solar farms that I see, how hurricane resistant are they? Right? All these solar panels, how are they going to handle getting hit by a coconut going two hundred (200) miles per hour? It is not a joke. The little island I lived on going to middle school, we had a category one (1), and one (1) of my neighbors sixty (60) foot trailer, like I lived in, got impacted by a two (2) by four (4) that was tumbling through the air, unfortunately hit the trailer perfectly parallel, went through every single wall, went through the oven, went through the dryer, and came out the other end with a perfect "*puka*" of a two (2) by four (4), and it passed three-feet above the family laying in their beds at night. So, that extra money needs to be saved. The Federal government has its issues, Slava Ukraine, I am the grandchild of Ukrainian immigrants to America. The Soviet Union could very easily cut all the internet traffic in the world in the sub-sea cables.

Council Chair Rapozo: Okay, Lonnie, I need to stop you there. Thank you so much.

Mr. Sykos: Save the money.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you.

Mr. Sykos: Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Ms. Parker.

Ms. Parker: Alice Parker, for the record. My comment is much more minor. I read an article in The Center for Science in the Public Interest magazine, and it says, there is funding available from the Federal government, so residential homeowners can convert their gas appliances to electrical appliances, because it turns out gas in the air, even when you are cooking is detrimental to human health, and to the air. The Federal government has money for us to convert, and I know we have gas appliances here, I had friends in Kapa'a who are cooking by gas, and I loved it, and when I could not cook by gas and had to switch to electricity, I used a microwave. For sixty (60) years microwave only, but it is electrical, and it does not pollute the air, except when I burn things. Anyway, consider requesting that money and go for it. Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo: Thank you. Mr. Hart.

BRUCE HART: For the record, Bruce Hart. Wow, I remember being here every budget review meeting. Okay, so, I think that we ought to be prudent, and we ought to take the reserve that we have and save it for a "rainy day." Now, my interest...Mr. Sykos had reasons that I agree we have to be cautious, but my concern is over the debt, and I do not mean the debt of this County, I mean the debt of the Federal government. Silicon Valley Bank failed, one (1) of the largest in the nation. Even the Mayor in his address brought this forward, as I am sure you all remember. It is not any better today than it was when it failed, it is worse. Councilmember Kagawa, he is concerned, too, I have talked to him. We are thirty-three trillion dollars (\$33,000,000,000,000) in debt. We have reached the point around twenty-eight trillion dollars (\$28,000,000,000,000) or twenty-nine trillion dollars (\$29,000,000,000,000) where we cannot generate enough gross national product to even pay the interest, we are in bondage. The word of God says, "The rich will look over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." There are over five hundred (500) small banks that are on the watchlist, they are in worst condition than Silicon Valley Bank was. What is happening is there is an outflow of cash from the small banks to the larger banks, people thinking that they are going to be safe. We now have a horrendous battle in Congress over the debt ceiling between Congress, Republican-controlled and the Democratically-controlled Administration of the Presidency. It seems you are in a game of "chicken" that will affect all of our lives. I think the public is very ignorant about what is going on, I do not think it is their fault,

I think it is kept from them from corrupt press, so I think we should be cautious.
Thank you.

Council Chair Rapozo:
testify? Seeing none.

Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to

There being no one present to testify on this matter, the public hearing
adjourned at 8:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk

:jy