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FIRE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION

COUNTY OF MAUI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

REGULAR MEETING

Held via BlueJeans, commencing at 10:02 a.m., on
January 21, 2021.

REPORTED BY: SANDRA J. GRAN, RPR/CSR #424

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ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Kyle Ginoza, Chair
- Lisa Vares, Vice Chair
- Jack Freitas, Member
- Travis Tancayo, Member
- Dwight Burns, Member
- Donna Sterling, Member
- Max Kincaid, Jr., Member

STAFF:

- David Thyne, Fire Chief
- Michael Werner, Battalion Chief
- Richard Kawasaki, Assistant Fire Chief
- Anthony Twarowski, Firefighter III
- Gary Murai, Deputy Corporation Counsel
- Richelle Wakamatsu, Commission Secretary
- Herman Andaya, Maui Emergency Management Agency
- Paul Coe, Maui Emergency Management Agency
- Everett Balmores, Maui Emergency Management Agency
- Gina Albanese, Maui Emergency Management Agency
- Rocky Balor, Maui Emergency Management Agency
- Kaho'o Kamakawiwo'ole, Maui Emergency Management Agency

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(January 21, 2021, 10:02 a.m.)

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CHAIR GINOZA: Good morning. It's 10:02. My name is Kyle Ginoza, Chair of the Maui Fire and Public Safety Commission, and I'd like to call the meeting to order this morning. Thank you, everyone, for joining us.

(Feedback.)

CHAIR GINOZA: People will have to turn off their mics for now.

So let's start off with roll call. Vice Chair Lisa Vares.

VICE CHAIR VARES: Here.

CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. Jack Freitas. Where did he go? I -- Jack? Well, he's there.

Travis Tancayo.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There he is.

CHAIR GINOZA: Oh. Hey, Jack. Okay.

Travis Tancayo.

COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Hello. Good morning.

CHAIR GINOZA: Good morning.

No Travis.

Gregg Lundberg.

(No response.)

CHAIR GINOZA: No Gregg.

Dwight Burns.

1 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Here.

2 CHAIR GINOZA: Good morning, Dwight.

3 Donna Sterling.

4 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Good morning.

5 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Here, Chair.

6 CHAIR GINOZA: Good morning, Donna.

7 Punahеле Alcon is excused.

8 And Max Kincaid, Jr.

9 (No response.)

10 CHAIR GINOZA: No Max.

11 Okay. I'd like to also have the chief recognize
12 fire department personnel with him, please. You've gotta
13 unmute yourself. Chief Thyne, you've gotta unmute yourself.

14 CHIEF THYNE: Hi. Can you hear me now? Sorry about
15 that.

16 CHAIR GINOZA: Yes.

17 CHIEF THYNE: All right. Great. So what I was
18 trying to say was thank you, Chair. Good morning,
19 Commissioners. So what I started to say was there's quite a
20 few firefighters you may see on your screen, I won't name them
21 all out, but they're participating virtually here. We also in
22 the room here on my -- across the table we have our guest
23 presenter today, Tony Twarowski from our health and safety
24 bureau. Behind him is Chief Kawasaki, to my immediate right
25 is Chief Werner, and then off the camera to the left here is

1 Richelle Wakamatsu. So that's who is present here, Chair.

2 CHAIR GINOZA: Great. Thank you.

3 And I see Herman. Herman, could you introduce
4 yourself and your -- your staff, please.

5 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Yes. Herman Andaya,
6 administrator, Maui Emergency Management Agency. And I have
7 Paul Coe here, Gina Albanese, Everett Balmores, and Rocky
8 Balor.

9 CHAIR GINOZA: Excellent. Thank you for the support
10 here.

11 And I see we have Gary Murai.

12 MR. MURAI: Yes.

13 CHAIR GINOZA: And I don't think we have Keola
14 today, so just Gary. Good morning, Gary.

15 MR. MURAI: Yes. Keola is in a hearing, so -- he's
16 in a water hearing today.

17 CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. Good that we got back first
18 string.

19 (Laughter.)

20 CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. Thank you. I hope everyone,
21 all commissioners got the minutes from the December 17th
22 meeting and were able to review it. Does anybody need more
23 time to review the minutes?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIR GINOZA: Seeing none, could I get a motion to

1 approve the minutes from last month, please.

2 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Motion to approve.

3 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Motion to accept.

4 CHAIR GINOZA: Motion by Dwight. Could I have a
5 second?

6 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Second.

7 CHAIR GINOZA: Jack seconds. Okay. All in favor,
8 raise your hand.

9 (Response.)

10 CHAIR GINOZA: Five people approve. All five, all
11 five commissioners approve, so the minutes are approved.

12 I'd like to next move on to the public testimony.
13 Richelle, do we have anybody signed up to testify?

14 MS. WAKAMATSU: No.

15 CHIEF THYNE: Did you hear that, Chair? She said
16 no, no testimony.

17 CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. No one signed up. Is anyone
18 on the call wishing to testify? Please speak up now.

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. Seeing none --

21 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Chair. Chair. I'm sorry.

22 CHAIR GINOZA: I'm sorry. Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Sorry. I just need
24 clarification. I wasn't sure if I should bring this up to you
25 to put it on the agenda, but it was a concern that I had

1 regarding the fire and police scanner app that was dropped
2 from Maui, for Maui dropped from our iPhones. And I've done
3 some research and I don't know if I should bring it up now or
4 later or -- I'm trying to get direction of where to get
5 somebody to pick up the sponsorship. I think I talked to Paul
6 Coe and Herman, I left a message, but -- anyway, it seems like
7 Maui doesn't have a fire and police scanner available to
8 listen to anymore and we in the back side all over Maui really
9 depend on Maui and I don't know where to go with this, Chair.

10 CHAIR GINOZA: Okay. We'll see what -- thank you,
11 Donna. We'll see what Herman can provide and if we need to
12 put it on the agenda instead, we can do that as well. So
13 we'll see how the meeting goes and then we'll agendize it the
14 next time if we don't get adequate responses. Thank you,
15 Donna.

16 If no other inquiries, I'd like to close public
17 testimony and move on to Herman and MEMA.

18 (No response.)

19 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Mr. Chair, Members of the
20 Commission, thank you very much for having us here today. I
21 want to introduce our -- kind of quickly, I wanted to tell you
22 a little bit about them. First of all, I've got at the table
23 Paul Coe. So Paul was just promoted to be our plans and
24 operations chief, plans and operations officer. And so I'm
25 not sure if I introduced you to him before, but he's a retired

1 fire captain, 25 plus years with the fire service. And so
2 he's been with our department now for three years and -- and
3 now we're very happy to have him be our plans and operations
4 officer.

5 Around the table also I've got Rocky Balor here. So
6 these are the new hires and I wanted to introduce you to all
7 of -- to all of them. Rocky Balor is retired army special
8 forces, has done a lot of planning with respect to like
9 special forces missions and whatnot and so he's -- he'll be
10 doing planning for our office. He also has a background in
11 cyber security response, so we're gonna have him do that as
12 well.

13 Next to -- next to Rocky, we have Everett Balmores.
14 Everett comes from the tourism industry. He worked in hotel
15 security, and he's also a graduate of the Emergency Management
16 Institute, EMI, which is a very, very select program, not
17 everyone gets to go there. So on staff we have two people who
18 are graduates of EMI, Paul Coe and Everett Balmores.

19 And then, lastly, we have Gina Albanese and Gina has
20 spent 13 years with the -- with FEMA and she was their public
21 assistance coordinator and has been -- has responded to, I
22 think, 40 or so, 40 plus --

23 MS. ALBANESE: Forty-seven.

24 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Forty-seven. I was corrected,
25 47 presidentially declared emergencies.

1 And so a lot of -- just a wealth of experience
2 around this table, so very, very happy to have these guys.

3 And then, you know, we also have -- behind, next to
4 me here, we have Kaho'o Kamakawiwo'ole.

5 MR. KAMAKAWIWO'OLE: The Hawaiian Superman.

6 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: The Hawaiian Superman. So he
7 was -- he's retired Air Force as well as Air Guard and, you
8 know, as you know, the guard are very much involved with
9 emergency response disasters especially, natural disasters,
10 and so he's also one of our planners as well.

11 So that's -- so that's the team. Altogether, we
12 have right now eight and we're recruiting now for a ninth, a
13 ninth person, and that would be -- that will be a full team
14 for us.

15 Just quick highlights. We activated on Monday,
16 partial activation, so there was heavy rains. It was pretty
17 uneventful that day, but that was -- I was very grateful that
18 the fire department was -- was there. One of our -- one of
19 the representatives, was in our emergency operations center,
20 Chief Werner, so thank you. Thank you, Chief, for allowing
21 him to be there.

22 We're still in partial activation with respect to
23 COVID. We are assisting with wraparound services for the
24 clusters and those clusters include the Harbor Lights and
25 Moana Gardens. So we're helping coordinate, like, food

1 distribution and testing and, you know, things like that, so
2 we're trying to contain the spread there.

3 We've also been involved with the vaccination
4 planning, involved and really, in fact, coordinated
5 vaccinations for the first responders, so -- which include --
6 included the fire department.

7 And, then, finally, you may have heard in the
8 papers, the county purchased the old Hawaiian Tel building and
9 so -- and that will be our new home and so -- in the future,
10 yeah.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

12 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: So we will -- they -- we're
13 told it'll take about 12 to 18 months to -- to make the
14 necessary renovations and all of that. We're -- it will -- it
15 will double the size of our -- our offices here and with
16 respect to our EOC, it will triple the size of our EOC. So as
17 you know, as I've said before, we have about 60 to 80 that
18 respond, that come here during activation, and -- and Kyle,
19 Kyle is aware of this. Our room is about a thousand square
20 feet and so that's a lot of people to put into a small room,
21 so we're very happy that the -- that the council and the mayor
22 is supportive of wanting our -- our space to grow.

23 That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

24 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you, Herman.

25 And I see Commissioner Travis Tancayo joined as

1 well.

2 Does any commissioner have any questions for Herman
3 or his staff.

4 VICE CHAIR VARES: (Gesturing.)

5 CHAIR GINOZA: Yes. Yes, Lisa.

6 VICE CHAIR VARES: Hi, Herman. Lisa Vares. I've
7 just got a question for you. (Inaudible) what you mean
8 (inaudible) --

9 CHAIR GINOZA: You're breaking up, at least for me.
10 I can't hear anything you're saying.

11 VICE CHAIR VARES: Sorry. Herman, I was wondering
12 if you could explain what need (inaudible) Harbor Lights
13 cluster (inaudible). If you all are going to be (inaudible).

14 MR. ANDAYA: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, we weren't able
15 to hear.

16 CHAIR GINOZA: Yeah. Lisa, for some reason, you're
17 cutting in and out.

18 VICE CHAIR VARES: It was a good question, too.

19 CHAIR GINOZA: Oh, right there. Now, now we can
20 hear.

21 VICE CHAIR VARES: Okay. I'll try it again. Okay.
22 Can you hear me (inaudible).

23 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: You're gone.

24 VICE CHAIR VARES: Yeah?

25 CHAIR GINOZA: Yes.

1 VICE CHAIR VARES: Pardon me. My question is
2 getting shorter and shorter every time. Herman, what was
3 MEMA's role in the (inaudible) Harbor Lights cluster, Moana
4 Gardens (inaudible)? Moving forward, what -- what did you all
5 learn from that and what can we expect (inaudible)?

6 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Mr. Chair, it was -- it was
7 still going in and out, but I'll try to answer as much
8 possible. I think she was asking about, Commissioner Vares
9 was asking about Harbor Lights, our response to Harbor Lights
10 as well as to Moana Gardens. So what -- the DOH had been the
11 lead with respect to that, both responding to Harbor Lights
12 and Moana Gardens, but we were asked to help, help them
13 coordinate wraparound services. And so we activated our human
14 services branch, we coordinated with our partners, which
15 included organizations such as Salvation Army, Feed My Sheep,
16 Maui Food Bank, coordinated getting food to those that are
17 quarantined in those facilities. And so remember, you know,
18 we want them to stay in their rooms, stay in their -- you
19 know, and that's one way to stop the spread of the -- the
20 virus to other people there and so that's the reason why we
21 provided like food. We also -- like some of the supplies they
22 may need, whether it be toiletries or even diapers, you know,
23 there was requests for diapers, and so we provided that as
24 well. There -- there is a population there that English is
25 not a -- is not their primary language and so we helped

1 provide guidance to them with respect to what they can do in
2 order to prevent the spread of the virus. And so this
3 included, you know, washing your hands, wearing a mask,
4 physical distancing and whatnot. So that's been -- that's
5 been our -- our role. And then, you know -- yeah, that's --
6 that's been primarily our role. There's been other things
7 that we've been doing there as well, but primarily that's
8 what -- that's what we're doing.

9 VICE CHAIR VARES: Thank you, Herman. (Inaudible.)

10 CHAIR GINOZA: Travis, you have a question?

11 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Yeah. Sorry I logged on
12 late, I had trouble logging in. Can you guys hear me okay or
13 am I breaking up also?

14 COMMISSIONER STERLING: You're good.

15 CHAIR GINOZA: Good.

16 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay. I had a question in
17 regards to the recent storm that passed through. I received
18 several alerts on my phone and my house phone. I think I
19 asked this question several years ago, but I can't remember
20 what your answer was. So as far as the alert goes, is that
21 being approved and sent out from the weather service or is it
22 activated locally from Maui?

23 MR. COE: So this is Paul. In regards to that
24 question, so it's -- it's kind of a combination. Most of the
25 alerts for this weather event came directly from the weather

1 service. The program we have, the Makaala program -- is
2 that -- I would imagine you're signed up for, that's how you
3 were getting the messages, it has an automatic feature that
4 it's referred to as Smart Weather where when the National
5 Weather Service issues an alert, it will send it to those
6 people who have signed up for that service and have chosen to
7 get those alerts.

8 You know, a lot of advisory level alerts and stuff,
9 the lower level alerts, go out based on what have been chosen
10 by the -- the subscribers. Warning level alerts are set up to
11 go out to the subscribers as well as also sent out to other
12 recipients within the county whose -- whose data is -- is in
13 their -- through their cellphone company and/or Hawaiian
14 Telcom that we have access to that data to send alerts to.

15 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay. Going a little deeper
16 into the question, like we receive (inaudible) area, Pulehua
17 is where I live, that we were having, you know, flash floods
18 warning, was that warning going throughout the county or just
19 in my district?

20 MR. COE: So it's -- it's based on what the
21 national -- the region that the National Weather Service
22 assigns it to. The county is broken up into -- well,
23 obviously, Molokai has got two different regions, Lanai is
24 one, and Maui Island, I believe, has seven that the National
25 Weather Service has -- has arranged based on, you know, the

1 different alerts they send out. So they -- they identify what
2 region that warning is gonna be in effect for and will send it
3 out specifically to those people in that area. So someone in,
4 say, Hana, if there's a flood warning there, someone in Lanai
5 isn't gonna get that warning for Hana.

6 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay. Okay. I understand
7 that. And, like, the reason I asked that question is recently
8 when Maui or Molokai, we have these big fires and they're
9 moving fast, do we have the ability to execute an evacuation
10 recommendation with this system using that?

11 MR. COE: Yes. Yeah, yeah. That -- that side of it
12 doesn't have to do with the National Weather Service, that
13 is -- that is on our side putting out the notifications to
14 those people if it's -- in conjunction with the fire
15 department and the police department. If they're saying, Hey,
16 this fire is moving towards this community, we need to get
17 people out of there, we're going to start putting out
18 notifications through our system as well as the EAS system,
19 which is the -- like the bar you see on your TV, and over the
20 radio, and also the WEA, which is the wireless emergency
21 alerts that we can send out that will hit cellular phones
22 within a specific tower's range.

23 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: So, Chief, we have used -- we
24 call it Makaala or Everbridge, but we've used it in the past
25 to do evacuations.

1 MR. COE: Yeah.

2 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: In order to alert the public
3 that they need to evacuate.

4 MR. COE: Yeah.

5 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: So -- but as Paul has
6 explained, you know, we -- we have it focused in a certain
7 area, so not everybody gets it. Because the last thing you
8 want is for everyone to now think that they need to evacuate
9 and so, of course, what we do is we do what's called geo
10 fencing.

11 MR. COE: Yeah.

12 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Just a certain area and we
13 tell them evacuate, you know. So this has happened during
14 the -- the fires in the plains, the central plain, we sent out
15 evacuation alerts for certain areas of Kihei, for Maalaea,
16 even in Lahaina. So we've --

17 MR. COE: Yeah.

18 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: We've used it in the past.
19 It's just that, you know, you haven't gotten it because you're
20 on Molokai, you know.

21 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay.

22 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: But --

23 MR. COE: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay. Yeah, that was my main
25 question. My first thought was -- that comes to mind when

1 that fast moving fire came several years ago in Lahaina, you
2 know, and that was a lot of the people's concern. And I
3 didn't know that it was just activated -- and just checking:
4 As far as activating, the process, is done through -- I guess
5 through you at a BC level or incident command level? Is all
6 that all --

7 MR. COE: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. It's -- it's
8 throughout, but in coordination with the fire and police
9 departments. We rely on them to provide us the information on
10 whether an evacuation is gonna be needed for a specific -- for
11 an area that they may feel is threatened.

12 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: And that's the reason why,
13 Chief, it is so important that we have a representative from
14 the fire department here in the EOC. So it's based on that,
15 that information that they provide us that we can make a
16 determination whether we need to --

17 MR. COE: Yeah.

18 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: -- use Makaala to evacuate a
19 certain area.

20 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay. I know some --
21 sometimes that things can happen fast and move quickly. Then
22 department (inaudible) as fast as need to. Sometimes, from
23 what I understand, in a matter of 15-20 minutes, you know, the
24 fire was moving really fast and, you know, I want to make
25 sure (inaudible) you guys -- we have the ability of notifying

1 our -- the district, the area. Thank you.

2 MEMA OFFICER ANDAYA: Yes. Thank you, Chief.

3 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you.

4 And since we're on the topic of alerts, perhaps,
5 Donna, you could ask your question.

6 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Thank you, Chair. I -- I
7 spoke to Paul Coe, but my question is this: Besides myself,
8 many people I've educated to jump on board the fire and public
9 safety app, it's a yellow and brown one, it's free. But for
10 years we've been using that app to give us a heads-up on
11 issues, whether it's a rescue, fire, ocean, whatever the
12 emergency is back side because of the distance far from
13 Station 13. Recently, in -- a couple weeks ago, I have
14 noticed Maui's been dropped. So I did my homework, legwork,
15 backtracked to Maui Watch used to sponsor the app, they
16 dropped it. So now when you call it up as an app, only Hawaii
17 Island and Honolulu have -- you're able to listen to their
18 scanner. I think Paul called the police public relations,
19 they have no problem with the scanners. So my question is:
20 Is this a private sponsorship to get the app for Maui up and
21 running? And what are the steps to -- how do we get another
22 sponsor? Is that simple or is it difficult?

23 CHAIR GINOZA: Herman or Paul, do you have a
24 response?

25 MR. COE: You know, so, kind of -- Donna, as we

1 discussed, I talked to Walt Pacheco, who is the -- kind of the
2 communications guy for the county as far as the MPD and -- and
3 in conjunction -- working with the fire department, also. He
4 says that the frequencies are out there, they're available for
5 anybody to pick up in a scanner and such. But as far as
6 promoting a specific app, we as a county cannot do that
7 because these -- 'cause these apps are really being put out
8 there for the app developers. They just provide as kind of a
9 through-put -- they take the signal that's -- that's coming in
10 and just rebroadcast it, basically, through the app and then
11 make money off of advertising and -- and the sponsorships that
12 go through it, so --

13 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Okay.

14 MR. COE: We -- there's kind of that whole -- you
15 know, that conundrum with the ability for the county to -- you
16 know, can't really promote -- and sponsor a specific app to do
17 that.

18 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Okay. So you answered my
19 question, that was great. And I had a feeling it was -- you
20 can't mix public with -- the fire department and police
21 department --

22 MR. COE: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER STERLING: -- with private because the
24 app and commercials. I understand that.

25 MR. COE: Yeah.

1 COMMISSIONER STERLING: From this point, I think
2 I'll just run with it and approach different people,
3 organizations to pick it up for -- as a community outreach,
4 maybe. And I called Harmor for the technical step by step on
5 how you do a scanner and so I -- I would -- hopefully, I can
6 get some action from someone else who can sponsor and get the
7 community served on the app with -- anyway, it's a good app.
8 It's -- you know, anything you can get information out to the
9 people, it's good. So I'll get back to everybody.

10 Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to speak. Thank
11 you.

12 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you.

13 Does anyone else have any other questions for MEMA?

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIR GINOZA: And -- okay. Seeing none. Richelle,
16 I don't know why Max's screen is being -- it seems like it's
17 being shared or -- I don't know if everybody sees it, but
18 perhaps you could stop his sharing of his screen.

19 Okay. So it looks like Max Kincaid, Jr. joined us.
20 Welcome, Max.

21 So let's move on to the fire department. Chief
22 Thyne, would you please give your report.

23 CHIEF THYNE: Hi, Chair and Commission Members. I
24 don't think we can unshare Max's screen just from our end,
25 so -- I know he -- it looks like he's working through it and

1 Richelle's on the phone working with him, hopefully, so
2 apologies for that.

3 A Happy New Year, everybody. Good to see everybody.
4 I think we're all happy to get that -- this past year behind
5 us with all of the things we had to deal with individually and
6 as families and all of that, so --

7 Can you guys hear me all right? I don't know -- I
8 know there's some audio (inaudible) --

9 CHAIR GINOZA: Very good. Very good.

10 CHIEF THYNE: And just real quickly, Chief Ventura
11 is actually crossing a threshold that some of us also did,
12 myself personally, and he's took his oldest daughter, oldest
13 child to college, so an exciting time for him. So he's not
14 here with us today, but he's in the great state of Colorado,
15 actually, with his family going through the college process
16 with his oldest daughter.

17 So I'll do his brief report. I'll start off with
18 mine, but I'd just like to really quickly go over the two
19 reports that you have in front of you regarding our operations
20 and then our training. All I'll really say is if you ever
21 have any questions with any of the numbers and/or the types of
22 training that we do, please just let us know if you want any
23 more descriptors or have any questions regarding what type of
24 training that is. I know I just gloss over them, typically,
25 and I -- and I know you get them every month. So if you do

1 have any questions, please feel free to ask or send us a note
2 and we can go into more detail. But -- but those are the two
3 reports that you'll have.

4 You'll see a slight increase to the -- obviously,
5 the visitor numbers and then, of course, you know, with the
6 weather systems that come through with the surf and whatnot,
7 that's gonna be some increases that you see in our number
8 typically this time of year, so... Anyway, just wanted to
9 touch on that. If you do have any questions as we move
10 through those at any point in time, let us (inaudible) 'cause
11 there's a lot of descriptors that you may not be familiar
12 with, so...

13 You know, regarding my report, just real quickly,
14 you know, we do have that morning conference call with the
15 mayor and, typically, the managing director and all of the
16 directors from the different departments. And that's just
17 really a cohesion thing, any updates from any of the agencies
18 and/or the managing director or liaison office comes out in
19 that meeting. That's done, you know, again, every day via
20 this platform, which is BlueJeans, so it's a good information
21 sharing mechanism for all of us within the county.

22 We're working on an MOU with the union, it's also
23 mentioned in Deputy Chief Ventura's report, but it's regarding
24 some jet ski operations. As you know, those have become quite
25 a useful tool for us both on the fire side and the ocean

1 safety side. It's kind of our go-to now when it comes to
2 ocean rescues as well as our helicopter operations. And so
3 we're just cleaning up some of the language and some of the
4 responsibilities and -- and the way they allocate their pay
5 for those folks that take that additional risk operating a
6 rescue water craft or informally known as jet skis.

7 We are working with the budget office on some budget
8 amendments. Like everybody else, there was increased cost to
9 us. We hope next meeting to have our training staff here to
10 talk about our recent recruit school. Just -- just when you
11 saw you last, which was on December 17th, the following day we
12 actually, I believe, graduated our most recent recruit class.
13 So they have a really great video about their training that
14 would kind of give you a visual on what they go through as
15 recruits and then I may also ask our training captain to be
16 here and answer any of your questions.

17 So we did have some substantial increased costs
18 because of the COVID mitigations, right, as far as distancing.
19 We had to have, basically, two instructors versus one, so
20 it's almost double costs in our overtime budget for, you know,
21 bringing in those specialized instructors. So, anyway, that
22 triggered some budget amendments as well as some of the other
23 areas that we need to increase costs, so we're having those
24 conversations. It's that time of year before we get into our
25 new budget, so those are due at the end of the month. We'll

1 update you as we go through that process, but we shouldn't
2 have too many budget amendments, but we do have some.

3 We've been working with Piihana Farms. I know
4 Commissioner Vares has -- has probably seen a lot more smoke
5 and whatnot. She's asked about it in the past, Lisa, so we
6 are working with that landowner. He also, ironically, popped
7 on the radar with another issue over by the former Y. Hata,
8 which we're working through as well with some cleanup and --
9 unfortunately, with -- with, you know, the economy being what
10 it is and some folks having, I guess, lack of housing and
11 whatnot, it's created some conditions that have grown over the
12 years in regards to homeless and those types of things, so --
13 anyway, we're working through those with the various agencies,
14 Piihana Farms as well and the Y. Hata property, also down at
15 Kanaha as well.

16 We did get the resolution signed on the rescue
17 tubes, so that's a great resource for the lay rescuer, as we
18 say, or even somebody who's trained that's down at the beach.
19 They're primarily in South Maui, but it's an opportunity to --
20 much like AEDs of the past where you had the access to the AED
21 in public buildings and whatnot, rescue tubes are available.
22 And that's what the lifeguards use from time to time, they
23 have other equipment. But it's a way to go out and
24 potentially rescue somebody in a surf situation, that's caught
25 on a riptide or something of that nature. And so we -- we got

1 that passed through. They added some rescue tubes and we
2 signed a new agreement. Chief Werner worked on that with our
3 rotary club representative and attorneys in-house here with
4 the county and so that's official now, so that's -- that's
5 great news.

6 Another meeting going into the miscellaneous area
7 there was the virtual meeting we had with the -- at the state
8 level and that's all of the players within the state from, you
9 know, state department of health all the way through Hawaii
10 Emergency Management Agency, our local emergency management as
11 well as (inaudible) have Monday, Wednesday, Friday meetings,
12 typically, again, talking about COVID and all of the issues
13 that come along with that. So that's listed there.

14 I just talked about our graduation.

15 We do have these sprayers that were finally
16 introduced, electrostatic sprayers. The only thing I wanted
17 to mention about that is Commissioner Lundberg isn't,
18 apparently, on today, but one of the questions he brought up
19 when we talked about COVID mitigation in past meetings was if
20 we're collectively working with our county on getting, you
21 know, the latest/greatest out to our facilities and whatnot
22 and if we had any issues with that. And so the only comment I
23 would have is the electrostatic sprayers that we were looking
24 at were not the ones we wound up with. So it was a county
25 purchase, it was -- it was a way for them to kind of keep

1 everybody uniform, but it's not what we said -- we're a little
2 bit, I believe, of a unique agency in the sense that we live
3 and work in the same facility. I don't know that there's any
4 other agency that that's the case. So this is basically our
5 second home and work space, so it's pretty unique for us, we
6 cook and things like that in our -- in our work areas. So
7 that being said, some of the chemicals and some of the
8 processes that may work in county offices or other locations
9 don't necessarily work as well for us. So we asked our health
10 and safety bureau and some of our -- our hazmat captains to
11 look into alternatives and we found some alternatives. And so
12 now we have not only the electrostatic sprayers, but also a
13 more viable alternative for us being that we have eating areas
14 and things like that in our physical work location. So just
15 wanted to touch on that.

16 And, again, we're going through some union
17 negotiations, those are happening. Some of them happened
18 already and they got the increases you see listed there for
19 the HGEA units and the UPW, which is our mechanics and some of
20 our office staff.

21 And just kind of glossing over some of the other
22 things, our -- our last thing I have listed is our battalion
23 chief meeting and that's really a chance for us to sit with
24 our six battalion chiefs and talk individually about projects
25 they're working on as well as any issues coming back from our

1 line personnel at our various stations and our 18 companies
2 that are out there amongst our county. So, you know,
3 different locations, different issues, different concerns, but
4 it's a chance for us all to get together. We do that meeting
5 monthly and it's very productive and it keeps us all on the
6 same page. So we're -- we're glad that we have that and we're
7 gonna continue on with that.

8 So real quickly on Fire 2, Deputy Chief Ventura's
9 report, as I mentioned, I was going to cover that really
10 quickly. He mentioned the graduation as well. Right above
11 us, actually literally right above us here in our conference
12 room is our training classroom 2 and we're excited to tell you
13 that we have our captains and newly promoted drivers in a very
14 focused and topic specific training over the three days here,
15 the past -- this is the last day. And it's very exciting
16 because it really gives them a chance to get started off
17 having, hopefully, all of the knowledge they need to take on a
18 job right when they get to the station as opposed to learning
19 as they go, which is kind of a process that we used to use
20 maybe more often than should.

21 And if you worked with a good company officer like
22 former Chief Tancayo or somebody like that that was motivated
23 to teach you, then you really could hit the ground running.
24 If you didn't work with somebody like that, then you really
25 were up against it when you had to take the helm and grab the

1 radio from first time or, you know, fill in a fire report for
2 the first time or talk to an agency administrator for the
3 first time. So they're going through some focus training
4 upstairs right here above us, we're excited about that.

5 So we promoted captains and drivers you see listed
6 there. He talks about some of the union things. And then the
7 transmittals from the public were -- were, for the most part,
8 all mahalo's and thank you's and that's a good thing for us.
9 We will bring to your attention any negative ones we get as
10 well, so don't feel like all you hear about is the good ones.
11 If we hear any complaints, you're gonna hear those as well
12 from us. So in this particular case, it was mahalo's and
13 thank you's.

14 And I'll close with that. If there's any questions,
15 I'll be here; otherwise, I'll open up the floor to you folks.
16 And, again, Happy New Year.

17 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you, Chief. Happy New Year to
18 you, too. Looks like we have a question from Travis.

19 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Chief, as far as the rescue
20 tube program, is that the one that -- are we mimicking the
21 ones from Kauai where it was started? Is that the same kind
22 of program or --

23 CHIEF THYNE: You know, I don't know where it
24 started, Chief, but I believe it started under former retired
25 Battalion Chief Yamamoto working -- he was approached by the

1 rotary club. So I don't know if it started on Kauai, but I
2 know it started when I was working in operations. I remember
3 getting a request to approve from Chief Murray, meaning
4 provide me your thoughts, do you think this is something we
5 should do. And we had concerns about liability by us
6 supporting it, I guess, for lack of a better description, but
7 they went through the process with corp. counsel and had all
8 of the whereases documented. So I'm not sure where it
9 started, Chief, to answer your question directly, but we've
10 done it for many years. This is the second 5-year agreement,
11 so it's been around for at least 5 years, let's put it that
12 way.

13 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Okay, all right. Thank you.
14 Thank you, Chief.

15 CHAIR GINOZA: Any commissioner have any other
16 questions for the chief?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIR GINOZA: Seeing none, I have a question. Can
19 you give a little bit of background on the COVID testing of
20 the staff? I volunteered one day at MCC and I saw a few of
21 the office -- a few of the firefighters there. Were -- has
22 your staff been able to get through it? Or is that something
23 Chief Werner will talk about later?

24 CHIEF THYNE: Well, I can tell you that we have been
25 tested and we've offered testing and we've had three cases

1 internally here that resulted in follow-up testing. But I
2 will cede the floor to Chief Werner to talk a little bit more
3 in detail, because we also have quite a few of our personnel
4 going through the vaccination, very soon to go through the
5 second round. So if -- Chair, if that's okay with you, I'll
6 just turn it over to Chief Werner.

7 CHAIR GINOZA: Yeah. I actually was talking about
8 the vaccination side, but, yeah, when we get to his report,
9 then -- then I'd like to have a little bit of background on
10 that.

11 CHIEF THYNE: Okay.

12 CHAIR GINOZA: (Inaudible.)

13 CHIEF THYNE: It's good news, let's put it that way.

14 CHAIR GINOZA: Awesome. So if no commissioner has
15 any more questions for Chief Thyne, let's move on to Chief
16 Kawasaki.

17 ASSISTANT CHIEF KAWASAKI: Good morning, everybody.
18 Yeah. So you guys have my report there. December we did have
19 a bunch of brush fires, it was kind of unusual for that time
20 of the year. We were very dry in December, as everybody
21 knows, and then we did have a fair amount of, you know, high
22 wind days. There was a big fire on Olowalu on the 26th of
23 December which burned over 760 acres. Like I said, pretty
24 unusual for that time of the year for us.

25 On New Year's Eve, we typically -- New Year's Eve,

1 any kind of 4th of July type of days that we do staff what we
2 call call-back crews. So we had two crews, extra crews for
3 that -- that evening. They were very busy. I think Tony
4 was a -- he ran one of the crews. They did nothing really
5 big, but they did -- they were kept busy by a bunch of
6 smaller -- smaller calls, which is good, you know, we get --
7 with the extra manpower, it may have potentially kept
8 something big from happening.

9 And as far as apparatuses, we do have a hazmat
10 utility truck coming, it should be here by the end of the
11 month. Their deadline is December 31st -- I'm sorry, January
12 31st. We do have two engines that are in production right
13 now, this is Engine 1 for Wailuku and Engine 3 for Lahaina.
14 We were just notified yesterday that we do have a midpoint --
15 we normally have a midpoint construction inspection, which
16 Travis probably knows about. So what we normally do is we go
17 up to the factory and we go through the truck and find any
18 kind of errors that -- you know, any mistakes or whatever that
19 can be, you know, caught before they put the -- the truck
20 together so that it's easier for them to fix, but -- so
21 because of COVID, we're gonna have to do that over Zoom, which
22 I think will be probably very ineffective. We get into those
23 inspections and, you know, it's the mechanics and us crawling
24 under the truck and looking at everything that -- you know,
25 just the details. So I think through the video conferencing,

1 I think it's gonna be hard there. We -- there may be some
2 stuff that's gonna get missed and we're gonna have to deal
3 with that, you know, at the final inspection.

4 We did do a final inspection last -- a few months
5 ago, anyway, I forget what exact month, but it was during
6 COVID. We were actually -- we went up there and did it that
7 way. So I think the reason why they're not letting us go up
8 is because they're not letting anybody on their production
9 floor. So when we did our final inspection, we did it on an
10 off-site area where we weren't affecting any of their
11 employees.

12 We do have Utility 4 for Kaunakakai, that that truck
13 bid came in at a little bit over -- over what the budgeted
14 amount was, so we decided to -- for us to be able to get that
15 truck, we're gonna give up some relief equipment that was
16 budgeted for our relief trucks in order to purchase that, that
17 truck, so some of the money will be coming from other budgeted
18 areas. And also the Engine 2 bid for Paia did come in under
19 budget, so we -- that's good for that one.

20 Recruit Class 36 graduated, like we said, on
21 December 18th, so they're off at their stations right now.
22 And just so you guys know, we do already have seven openings
23 even after that recruit class graduated. So we're currently
24 in the planning phases of Recruit Class 37, which we're trying
25 to get started about May this year. And then one ocean safety

1 retirement.

2 That's all I have, if anybody has any questions.

3 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you, Chief Kawasaki.

4 Any commissioner have any questions?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIR GINOZA: Seeing none, Chief Werner.

7 ASSISTANT CHIEF WERNER: Good morning, guys, and
8 Happy New Year to you all. I'll start with the vaccine
9 question. So did you want to know how many or -- I'll just
10 give you a quick overview.

11 CHAIR GINOZA: Sure.

12 ASSISTANT CHIEF WERNER: So the DOH is in charge of
13 providing the vaccines, so they had a point of contact for all
14 of the first responders. I was the point of contact for the
15 fire department. And we put out three separate opportunities
16 for those firefighters and ocean safety personnel who wanted
17 to receive that vaccine, to provide that information. And
18 then we used that list to get everybody who wanted to be
19 vaccinated, vaccinated. And we have completed the initial
20 shot, so everybody who wanted to get it has received their
21 initial dose. Yesterday we started with the second round of
22 doses and we're continuing on this Saturday.

23 Was there anything else specific you wanted to know
24 about it?

25 CHAIR GINOZA: That was it. I just wanted to make

1 sure that our first responders had access.

2 ASSISTANT CHIEF WERNER: Yes, we did. Yeah. Thank
3 you for -- for that.

4 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you.

5 ASSISTANT CHIEF WERNER: Continuing on with my
6 report with the fire prevention bureau, Captain Haake, after
7 18 years, did retire. He had his last alarm on December 30th
8 and he will surely be missed. We have a new captain in there,
9 Otsubo, who's coming in with a lot of great ideas, some fresh
10 ideas. One of them is the fire inspector 1 -- one of the
11 issues that we have in fire prevention is retention. Most
12 people who sign up to become firefighters look forward to
13 putting out fires, so the -- those positions in there are
14 firefighter 3 positions and they tend to be a revolving door,
15 so retention is hard. One of the challenges has been once
16 those guys get spooled up to the point where they're able to
17 actually do inspections and investigations, when an opening
18 comes out online, they'll transfer out. So it's really
19 frustrating for the captain of that department. So Otsubo had
20 an idea of creating another pathway towards that position, so
21 we're working with the union right now and with DPS to see if
22 it's possible. And what it is, it's gonna be a firefighter 1
23 moving up through the ranks into that position, which we're
24 hoping will give us more return on our investment as far as
25 the training of that person.

1 One of the problems with COVID-19 is that our guys
2 who do public ed, they're not able to go out to the schools,
3 'cause most of the schools are now doing online learning. So
4 what we've decided to do is to put together some videos that
5 we can send out to the schools so we can do pub ed that way.
6 So for the month of January they're creating scripts and then
7 starting in the month of February, we're gonna actually start
8 filming and putting together some pub ed type videos that we
9 can share with the schools that they can share with their
10 students. We have a talented guy in the training bureau who
11 knows how to do editing, that type of stuff, so we're gonna be
12 working with him. Hopefully, we'll get that out for the
13 spring session of school.

14 One of the issues for investigating fires on Molokai
15 and Lanai is we don't have inspectors there, so with our six
16 new inspectors that were promoted, we also brought in a
17 captain from a Molokai and gave him that exact same training.
18 So now he's trained up to do fire investigations on Molokai,
19 so any time there is a structure fire or a brush fire that
20 requires an investigator, he can now be there right away
21 instead of waiting for us to try to fly over an investigator.
22 So that's a huge bonus for the island of Molokai.

23 Moving on to health and safety, Chief Thyne covered
24 the e-misters. We got those and we got all of the chemicals
25 that we needed and we also got the proportioners to make sure

1 that the chemicals are diluted properly, so all of that has
2 been issued to all of the stations.

3 Moving on to our grants team. Our grants team
4 applied recently for the CDBG grant and we put in for a mini
5 for Hoolehua, Engine 9; a replacement tanker for Engine 7; and
6 we put in again for the main apparatus, Engine 7, on Hana.

7 So that's pretty much the highlights that I have.
8 If you have any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

9 CHAIR GINOZA: Commissioners have any questions for
10 Chief Werner?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIR GINOZA: All right. Seeing none, Chief Thyne,
13 would you like to introduce our guest speaker, please.

14 CHIEF THYNE: Okay. Yeah, I would. Thanks, Chair.
15 We've -- we've had some conversations, I think, although
16 briefly, with you folks about, you know, the stresses of COVID
17 and the stresses on our responders or even outside of the
18 COVID issue that we've all dealt with recently. More so, you
19 know, the burden on our -- on our responders for the -- the
20 wellness aspect and their mental health and (inaudible). You
21 know, we all know that physical health is something you can
22 take care of with the proper diet and (inaudible), but mental
23 health is another area we've focused on more recently.

24 So with that, we have Tony Twarowski here from our
25 health and safety bureau. He's been one of the leaders in our

1 agency and trained to the national level as well, so we --
2 we'll turn the floor over to Tony to provide you with his
3 presentation.

4 MR. TWAROWSKI: Okay. So I'd like to thank fire
5 administration and the fire commission for allowing me to be
6 here to represent our bureau. I'd also like to quickly say we
7 have a bunch of our firefighters here, some of our key players
8 in this whole program. Starting with the Wellness Fitness
9 Coordinator, Captain Jay Fujita's here. Today we have Terry
10 Irvine, he's our -- one of our union reps, really into this
11 stuff. Chuck Nakoa is one of our CISM main guys, as is Shawn
12 Giso, who is our peer support, one of our -- one of those
13 coordinators for that. And a whole bunch of our peer support
14 and other firefighters, so I'd like to thank those guys for
15 being here because this presentation is about you.

16 So I'd like to bring up the PowerPoint and I'll try
17 to get through this in about ten minutes, but -- and then
18 after that, I'd be happy to answer any questions or if there's
19 any questions for the chiefs.

20 Some of -- some of you haven't seen this yet. It's
21 gone out to the fire commissioners, so I hope you had a chance
22 to kind of view it. Because I'm not gonna go in depth, but
23 I'd like to bring up the key points and highlights and kind of
24 elaborate a little bit on that.

25 So these are the -- the main topics of this

1 presentation and it goes -- what you need to know is all of
2 this stuff is based on the facts, based on the data. None of
3 it is our opinions and it's really the hard truth of -- of
4 what this depression, PTSD, and the effects of those things
5 occur.

6 So chief had talked about we often think about
7 taking care of our physical health, getting ready for -- to
8 fight a fire, do all of these things, but it's just been
9 neglected over time, the mind, the effects of all these
10 things, the stress levels. And in order to be effective, in
11 order to be healthy, you've gotta take care of your mind as
12 much as you've gotta take care of your body. So this is what
13 this is talking about, the effects and what can we do and what
14 programs we have and what people we have working on this stuff
15 and for you to know our chiefs have been the initiators of
16 these programs. Peer support and CISM, all of these things,
17 they've been our motivators, so know that they've done our
18 backing. At some point we may need to reach out to council
19 or -- or higher levels of government and ask for some support,
20 but -- but we'd just like to show you what we have now and
21 what we're working towards.

22 So I'll get into this first slide here, which is
23 just some quotes and some -- some evidence of what people in
24 the industry have been going through and what their thoughts
25 are. I'm not gonna really talk about it, but that first one

1 that's highlighted in red, it's really talking about you can
2 only really take so much, so -- and if you don't -- if there's
3 no way to let it out, there's no way to kind of clear the
4 palate, then it's just gonna overflow and bad things are gonna
5 happen.

6 At the top here, we looked at that top line about
7 firefighters, more dying by suicide than there's been in the
8 line of duty. That's just kind of a staggering thing, that's
9 a very sad thing, really, to tell you the truth. People are
10 taking their lives. This is a dangerous job already and, you
11 know, if bad things happen, you know, we've signed up for it.
12 We try to be as safe as we possibly can, but things happen.
13 But when guys are volunteering to take their own life, that's
14 something that we need to work on, that's something we have to
15 address.

16 That second part there, the rates of PTSD and
17 depression are five times higher than -- in the fire service.
18 Now, think about what COVID's done to society in raising that
19 depression and anxiety, PTSD, all of those things. I don't
20 know if we're five times or seven times or -- I don't know how
21 that metric works, but I can tell you that it's at an all time
22 high right now for our guys. So the stress is on for
23 everybody, but our guys are really facing some -- some
24 unprecedented times as far as stress and mental health goes.

25 This is what they were talking about during the last

1 slide. So you see on the bottom there, it's about double in
2 2019 in terms of line of duty/suicides. Pay attention to the
3 bottom there, the 2009 graph, bar graph, and the top. You see
4 the blue there where it's line of duty, that's how many
5 people -- it's about two to one, right, line of duty versus
6 suicide. Look at the top, it's flip-flopped. So you see a
7 trend, though, if you go through that whole -- from the bottom
8 to the top. We're seeing -- you can see it's getting safer
9 for us in terms of what we're doing and the things we're
10 putting in place to keep our guys safe on scene at work, but
11 the suicides are going up and that's something that we need to
12 figure out how to control. Sometimes we can't control if a
13 building collapses or something like that, but I sure hope we
14 can find a way to control our people with this stress and all
15 these things happening, find a way to keep them -- get that
16 number back down, because it really shouldn't be a long period
17 thing.

18 Here's another stat. We look at 85 first of career
19 firefighters reported past month drinking. So this might be
20 just I had a drink or I had two drinks or whatever, but those
21 guys, career firefighters, which is what we are, are drinking
22 ten days a month, half of their off-duty days. Another coping
23 mechanism. We know how awful drinking can be for our health
24 and other behaviors, so it's just another kind of staggering
25 number when you look at this. And this is all -- all of this

1 data and these articles and this research, you'll find it in
2 our references in the last page of the PowerPoint. So you can
3 really kind of look into this and gain from the research as --
4 as you want.

5 Seven thousand firefighters -- IAFF, that's our
6 union. And if you look at the bottom there, the last two,
7 start with 65 percent are haunted by memories of bad calls.
8 Two-thirds of our people have these problems and that's where
9 chronic stress comes in, that's where -- that's where that
10 buildup of this -- of the anxiety, depression, and anger, all
11 of those emotions, they start to compile. And I can tell you
12 I'm one of those guys that have had memories of bad calls,
13 thinking back comes out of nowhere, you have a dream, and it
14 wakes you up and you don't know why, but it's there. And it's
15 very difficult to deal with and it's very unsettling. So I
16 know I'm not the only one, but -- 59 percent, now that leads
17 now into family relationship problems. So you see this is all
18 trickle, trickle effect, everything kind of works together and
19 they start compounding upon each other, so --

20 Florida State University, this is another one I --
21 it was tough when I found this, when I saw this one. Nearly
22 half of our firefighters in that -- in that survey reported
23 suicidal thoughts. Okay. Well, that's one things, but 15
24 percent, one out of six reported one or more suicide attempts.
25 We have crews of five, typically, that's almost like one of

1 our guys had tried suicide at least once, which -- just by the
2 numbers. But that is something that is startling to me and we
3 need to do something about that.

4 So if we extrapolate this data, all of this stuff
5 that we've sort of talked about and is in these articles and
6 this research, here's what Maui Fire Department might look
7 like. Now, this is not facts and don't -- don't have to look
8 at this like this is what's happening, but if you just go by
9 the numbers. The bottom of -- the bottom there, 45 of our
10 firefighters will attempt suicide during their career. That's
11 tough, that -- if that somehow becomes true or if that is
12 true, that number has to get down, we have to start doing
13 things. And this is the industry itself.

14 So I'm gonna go into the programs that we're doing
15 and things we're trying to do and things we're trying to
16 improve, but that -- if you look at all of these different
17 numbers here, this is what -- the effects -- these are the
18 effects of everything that we have to deal with or go through
19 some of these and why that happens.

20 Traumatic events. So we get either the thing -- the
21 thing that really catches you off guard, really startles you,
22 that's the PTSD, that's where that comes from, is high risk
23 ops: You know, the car crash, you know, the child involved
24 or, you know, at the bottom, the third one there, you look at
25 family and friends. And we live in a community that's small

1 enough that we've had plenty of stories of people who went to
2 their mom or dad or their grandpa and, I mean, think about
3 what that does, or your child, you know. It's -- it's
4 probably the worst day of anybody's life and -- and how do you
5 deal with that? I mean, I don't have that answer.

6 Physical trauma. So when you look at the next
7 bottom part down there, get these injuries and the reports of
8 these guys having illnesses and problems, well, that's what
9 happens when your mind's not right. When you have constant
10 chronic stress on your body, your body starts to break down,
11 you get ill, your body can't repair itself, and it just
12 leads -- it snowballs into other things, cancer, all these
13 other things. And this is where we have to start taking care
14 of ourselves, our mind, not just our bodies.

15 Feelings of guilt, a lot of us have had this. No
16 matter how hard we train, how well we are at our job, to be
17 there and to lose somebody -- you do your best and everything
18 you're trained to do and still lose them, sometimes that's --
19 it's not enough in our minds and it's gonna haunt us. Is
20 there anything we could've done? It really doesn't matter in
21 some cases and it's just -- that's just gonna happen and it's
22 gonna be an effect. But what happens is now you have some
23 coping mechanisms there: Gambling, risk taking, drug and
24 alcohol abuse, and then physical abuses of your loved ones or
25 yourself. And that's definitely, obviously, not the way we

1 need to go.

2 So the red highlighted is what I'd like to pay
3 attention to here: 250 percent higher rates of cancer than
4 the general public. So, you know, throw in another thing, you
5 know, the things that -- not just your body breaking down and
6 getting inflammation, now cancer has a better chance to be
7 created or survive in your body. But the environments we have
8 to go in, it's just the nature of our job. Now, throw that on
9 to the fire, for lack of a better word, and that's another
10 thing we've gotta worry about. And it's controllable, but
11 it's not -- we can only do our best on it. It's just one of
12 the hazards of the job.

13 Sleep deprivation. This is, obviously, very common.
14 If you look at this, there's a study that noted 40 percent of
15 our firefighters sleep from -- suffer from sleep disorder.
16 That's huge, that's enormous, that creates another snowball,
17 another -- compounds all these other problems. And maybe
18 that's something we definitely have to work on, but it's very
19 difficult with the nature of the job and the work schedule.

20 More stressors at the bottom there, unique and
21 oddball, sometimes, work schedule. You're missing your
22 child's graduation, your anniversaries and birthdays. Child
23 care is always a big issue. And your part -- you're away from
24 your loved ones, you're spending a third of your career with
25 strangers and some that you, you know, come to know very well

1 and appreciate and like coming to work with, but, you know,
2 that's not your loved ones at home and so that creates even
3 more stuff to go on your shoulders.

4 So here's the five things that we've really started
5 to look at and try to combat, all of the things I just said,
6 all of the problems.

7 At the county level, we've got the EAP.

8 We've got our CISM team, they deal more with the
9 immediate stuff, the bad things that happen all of a sudden.
10 We try to handle that PTSD kind of stuff right there.

11 But mental health first aid, that's a program where
12 we're gonna start teaching our firefighters how to -- how to
13 deal with themselves and the public when we're facing mental
14 health issues, so depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, whatever
15 it might be.

16 Our peer support program, that's a huge one, that is
17 really the one-to-one every day identifying -- have the
18 training how to talk to guys and deal with your problems.
19 We're here with each other ten days a month, at least, and so
20 that's really, to me, the bread and butter of where we need to
21 start going and really -- and start really helping our guys.
22 And, of course, I work in the health and safety bureau, so
23 health and safety just kind of really coordinates all of this
24 stuff and tries to support these different programs.

25 This slide is mainly about EAP, I'm not gonna read

1 about that, but it's offered to all of our members and their
2 families, so -- so there is something there in place.

3 There's another thing called the Center For
4 Excellence and we've had members go there. You can ask more
5 about that later, but that's -- that's huge, it's really a big
6 thing that we work with our union on. And that's when things
7 get really bad, but we can send guys there and they can
8 really, really get the help they need.

9 CISM, again, on-duty traumatic calls and one of
10 those 24-hour things that's health and safety. I'll talk
11 about it a little bit later. We have someone on standby not
12 just to support fires and stuff, but also to -- if someone's
13 going through something at 2:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the
14 morning, we can start some -- you know, a lot of these
15 different -- whatever's needed in terms of CISM or peer
16 support, we can get that going. And confidentiality is
17 critical and all of these things, it's confidential.

18 Peer Support, it's a 25-member team that we want to
19 start -- we want to build off of that. It's one to one
20 mostly, it's sort of like someone's going through something
21 and you find the person that you connect with, the person that
22 you can relate to, and -- and that's really where the work is
23 done, because people can open up and people can really start
24 to -- they can move to where that person needs help and needs
25 more support.

1 Mental First Aid is a new -- we're starting with the
2 recruits where we've had a successful recruit class
3 presentation and we want to start getting to our comments.
4 But you see emerging worldwide concerns, this is a burgeoning
5 topic around the world. This is where, really, now
6 everybody's looking at mental health as something we've gotta
7 as people start taking care of. So we've held (inaudible) and
8 it's nationally recognized. And I think this thing is just
9 gonna grow and grow and we need to be a part of this. We need
10 to be part of this program here.

11 Health and safety, I kind of mentioned that, I won't
12 go through it, but we did distribute some stuff and we're
13 always trying to get the message out to our -- to our workers,
14 our employees, and help them, support them in any way we can.
15 It's sort of what we do. So the only reason I brought this up
16 is you see this is just -- this isn't all we do, there's other
17 things that we do, but there's three of us in health and
18 safety -- not all the time, sometimes there's been two,
19 there's been one before. And you look at the top left, the
20 second and third one down, that's where -- all the things that
21 I just talked about, that's (inaudible). But look at all of
22 this other stuff and all of this other stuff is important too,
23 so that's what I'm saying is the resources that we have to
24 look in and request and need if -- it goes beyond money, it's
25 the people, the manpower, all of these things. And so we're

1 trying to build this, but in the future we may need some help.

2 Moving forward, this is what we want to do, more
3 training, let's get CISM out there. We'll find the calls that
4 really trigger that need for CISM, we'll go there and do that
5 for our guys and women. Continuing education, more of the
6 instructors and those people that are the helpers, all
7 components.

8 But we have to change the culture and changing the
9 culture's really getting everybody involved and that means
10 training as many as people as can. If we train the whole
11 department, great, because you may not be the instructor, even
12 if you're the person in need, at least you have a perspective.
13 Right? You have a perspective of what person may do for you,
14 what the process is, and that's very important, that's gonna
15 start to get all those -- all those coping mechanisms, all
16 that stress, the chronic stress, that'll start eroding if we
17 can really get these things moving and change the culture.
18 Around the clock reinforcement, they talk about that, but also
19 a strategic plan, we'll start getting some of that stuff in
20 there, and policy change.

21 But, you know, I appreciate the time, I really
22 appreciate the time and -- and this is something that's super
23 important to all of us and I hope that -- this is healthy to
24 understand a little bit and if you have any questions, please
25 free to ask.

1 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you very much, Tony, that was
2 very informative. I never realized that was occurring.

3 Any commissioners have any questions for Tony on his
4 presentation?

5 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: (Gesturing.)

6 CHAIR GINOZA: Travis.

7 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Just a comment. Thank you,
8 Tony, for that presentation. For the other commissioners,
9 just to highlight what Tony's talk about -- talking about,
10 I've had early morning calls -- I've had many calls like
11 many -- a lot of the chiefs sitting there, but I had a call
12 early in the morning where we lost a child and my whole crew
13 was disfunctional at that point on, this is about 6:30 in the
14 morning, and it really -- this is really important stuff that
15 they're trying to address, so, you know, I would like to just
16 back up what Tony is saying and I've seen it, I've lived it,
17 like many of the chiefs sitting there, and I'm glad that
18 we're -- we are addressing it and acknowledging it. I think
19 it's happening nationwide. It is a big deal. It is a deal --
20 big deal, so thank you, Tony, for your presentation.

21 MR. TWAROWSKI: Thank you, Chief. Appreciate that.

22 CHAIR GINOZA: Any other commissioners have any
23 comments? Donna.

24 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Yes, Chair. It was a
25 wonderful presentation, something we are acknowledging with

1 the added COVID 19 in any emergency agency and I think we're
2 on the right path. I too in the emergency room years ago lost
3 a sick child, I was a ward clerk, a clerk, and what we did was
4 we talked to each other. We put our paperwork down, we had
5 time to immediately address that crisis that occurred, and it
6 was closed and we moved on, but it was -- it's a way of
7 healing and talking, getting it out of your -- what you
8 witnessed, observed. But you're on the right track.

9 What do you -- do you have -- when the firemen -- do
10 they have any gardens? Do they have any kalo gardens? Do
11 they have any native plants around the fire -- is it --
12 something that they can care for at the stations. Is that
13 something -- it's just an idea. But great presentation.
14 Thank you.

15 CHIEF THYNE: Yeah, Commissioner Sterling, we do --
16 at some of our stations, they have gardens, to answer your
17 question directly. Probably more of our stations should have
18 gardens, to be honest with you, because it makes us eat more
19 healthy and gives us a constructive outlet, for sure. But,
20 yeah, so we're limited sometimes on space and location and
21 all -- we can think of many excuses, but I know almost every
22 station I worked at, we had -- at the very least, had a raised
23 bed garden for green onions and (inaudible) that we used all
24 the time just because we're firemen and we do that kind of
25 stuff. But we should probably do it some more, that's for

1 sure.

2 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Anyway, thank you for your
3 presentation.

4 Thank you, Chair.

5 COMMISSIONER TANCAYO: Just one more comment on
6 that. You know, there -- those calls that affect people, a
7 lot of times -- and I've lived it myself -- they're ashamed to
8 show weakness. It's a sign of weakness when it hurts you
9 deeply and amongst the crew, you can have guys that are just
10 ashamed and they'll hold it in for years and I've witnessed
11 that, too. And then it was funny that we were on the same
12 crew and not till 20 years later did we talk and he -- this
13 other fireman shared about how disturbed he was, but when I
14 reached out to him when we were just, you know, two years in
15 and how you feeling, he was like, Yeah, I'm fine, I'm fine.
16 And he was not fine and it affected him. So, you know, just
17 amongst the crews and being ashamed of coming forward, I think
18 that's one of the biggest roadblocks that most of the guys --
19 just by nature, you know, it's an alpha job, you know. We --
20 we test to show your smarts and then you physically test,
21 there's a lot of alpha guys there and it's -- and it's hard to
22 show that side when you get affected. So I hope the guys can
23 break through and help each other in healing. Thank you.

24 CHAIR GINOZA: Yes, thank you. Thank you.

25 Yes, Jack. Do you have a question or comment? Jack

1 you've got to unmute yourself. Unmute.

2 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Am I mute?

3 CHAIR GINOZA: Now you're good.

4 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: (Inaudible) let me unmute
5 this, then.

6 CHAIR GINOZA: You're good now, Jack.

7 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Huh?

8 CHAIR GINOZA: You're good.

9 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: You can hear me?

10 CHAIR GINOZA: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER FREITAS: Okay, okay. Yeah. What I
12 call (inaudible) like all challenges. 250 times more cancer
13 in the fire department than other units and people around the
14 world, is there any other contributing factor that you folks
15 have found other than, you know, dealing with hazardous
16 chemicals in the fire and what have you? Have they looked
17 if -- because that rate is very, very high. And I understand
18 that we deal with hazard materials every fire, because every
19 fire is plastics and stuff like that, yeah. That's my
20 question, you know. Is there an answer?

21 CHAIR GINOZA: Chief.

22 CHIEF THYNE: So -- yeah. So, Commissioner Freitas,
23 thanks for that. Yeah, there's -- there's, you know, ongoing
24 research into the many, many different causes. Like you said,
25 we do respond to hazardous scenes, obviously, with fires

1 and -- you know, there's been advancements in protective
2 technology, the different layers of protective clothing, which
3 has helped. But it's even things like our -- our exhaust from
4 our vehicles. Several years ago we started putting the
5 exhaust capture systems on our vehicles and that was something
6 that we -- for some of us, quote/unquote, old-timers, we
7 didn't have before. As Chief Travis knows, we used to hang
8 our turnouts, as we call them, (telephone interruption) in the
9 what you call, in the bay of the station hanging on one hanger
10 just like your clothes you would hang in your closet at home.
11 Well, every time the trucks would take off and go back and
12 forth, start up and cough up that diesel smoke, it would go on
13 top that ensemble. So, you know, two hours later, you grab
14 them off the rack and you throw it on and you go work a fire
15 for four hours, all of that's soaking into your bloodstream.
16 Basically, you're getting cancer by virtue of wearing your
17 protective ensemble. So that's something that became an
18 awareness nationally, trickled down to us here locally, and we
19 started installing exhaust capture systems for use on the
20 vehicles. You see some on the mainland where they get that
21 snorkel-looking thing and as they drive off, it separates,
22 that's an option. For us, it was an engineering issue because
23 our stations weren't built that way, but they had a
24 (inaudible) diesel system that was an onboard system that was
25 leading edge technology at the time, this is about 15 years

1 ago, that we installed on all our apparatus moving forward.

2 So things of that nature or things that increased
3 our percentage, like you said, 255 more percent, but we're
4 trying to reduce that and reduce that as much as possible,
5 Commissioner Freitas. And the awareness in having a health
6 and safety bureau, which didn't exist in our department until
7 probably about 12 years ago or so. It never even existed. So
8 there's people like Tony that that is their job is to look at
9 all of these different things. And as we start finding out
10 information, we start writing it into our budget and we start
11 changing the culture to make it a more safe culture for our
12 firefighters. I hope that answers your question.

13 MR. TWAROWSKI: Can I add something?

14 CHIEF THYNE: Oh, Tony's gonna add to it.

15 MR. TWAROWSKI: Commissioner, so I'd like to add to
16 that real quick. And the thing is that part of the
17 presentation, just to reinforce that, it's many different
18 things. Right? So it's the burning process, going -- you
19 know, getting the smoke and all this kind of stuff, yeah,
20 that's -- there's factors in that. But as we talked about
21 stress, right, we talked about stress previously on the
22 subject of anxiety and depression. Stress creates
23 inflammation, inflammation breaks down your body, cancer can
24 come in, that inflammation process, that's also -- that also
25 contributes to that number, that 250 percent higher. So it's

1 all these things that are compounding on top of each other
2 that create that -- those staggering numbers. And it's all
3 cancers. I can bring in the graph that shows all the
4 different cancers that were so much higher than the regular
5 public. So if we can work on one thing that we know we can
6 control, like mental health, if we can get support there, we
7 can start to lower that somewhat. And we can start working
8 on -- as we always do, working on the smoke and the
9 environments and all those things, but here's, just in this
10 presentation, here's one component. We've gotta work on this
11 'cause we can control it. So thank you for your -- really,
12 thank you for your guys' time. Really appreciate you giving
13 me the chance.

14 COMMISSIONER STERLING: Chair. Chair, one last
15 thing for Tony.

16 CHAIR GINOZA: Go ahead.

17 COMMISSIONER STERLING: You know, if you need -- if
18 you need any support on the mental side of programs and
19 services and outreach to the fire department, I'd be more than
20 happy to sit down and listen to it and -- as a commissioner
21 here, as an organization, but the mental health needs to be
22 addressed. Thank you very much.

23 MR. TWAROWSKI: Thank you.

24 CHAIR GINOZA: Lisa, you have a question?

25 VICE CHAIR VARES: Yeah. I actually I also

1 want (inaudible) excellent and eye opening and I'm thankful to
2 listen to. And I can see where firefighters have an armor up,
3 especially (inaudible) traumatic experience and I can -- I can
4 appreciate if they do have to have that armor up every time to
5 get through, but I also really appreciate the firefighters
6 (inaudible) anyone in that kind of stressful situation that
7 are also able to still feel, process, but mostly still
8 (inaudible) and that kind of stress that they're having to go
9 through (inaudible) stop. Not because of the armor, but stop
10 because you just don't care anymore, that's not the type
11 (inaudible) person you should be and there's -- there's
12 (inaudible) also absorbing that (inaudible). And my hat's off
13 anyone is still able to do any of that and still move forward
14 with such a difficult (inaudible). Thank you guys very much
15 for bringing that (inaudible).

16 CHAIR GINOZA: Thank you, Lisa.

17 Any other commissioners have any other comments or
18 questions?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIR GINOZA: All right. Seeing none, that's the
21 end of our agenda unless any commissioner has anything they
22 want to bring up or announce.

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR GINOZA: I'd like to just say that for
25 commissioners who haven't turned in the board of ethics annual

1 filing, the original needs to go to Richelle, so please do so
2 when you have a chance.

3 Our next meeting is Thursday, February 18th, and
4 Richelle will send out a notice to see what kind of attendance
5 we'll have. But other than that, thank you very much for your
6 time. And if anyone wants something on the agenda, please
7 reach out to me and I'll consult with Lisa and we'll vet all
8 requests for the agenda.

9 If nobody else has anything else, thank you very
10 much for your time. And it's 11:25, the meeting's adjourned.
11 Thank you.

12 (The proceedings were adjourned at 11:25 a.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF HAWAII)
) SS.
COUNTY OF MAUI)

I, Sandra J. Gran, Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of Hawaii, hereby certify that on January 21, 2021, at 10:02 a.m. the proceedings was taken down by me in machine shorthand and was thereafter reduced to typewritten form under my supervision; that the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings had in the foregoing matter.

I further certify that I am not an attorney for any of the parties hereto, nor in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED this 5th day of February, 2021, in Maui, Hawaii.



Sandra J. Gran, RPR
Hawaii CSR 424