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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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DIRECTOR

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMA HANA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In-person and online via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

Council Members Present:

Cheryl Cross, Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search
Keith DeMello, Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs, Ulupono Initiative
Derek Kanehira, Senior VP, Human Resources, Alexander and Baldwin
Sean Knox, President, Hawaii Employment Services Inc.
Robert Lietzke, Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton
Cary Miyashiro, President, Quad D Solutions
Sean Nakamura, Corporate Controller and Treasurer, Tradewind Group
Christopher Lum Lee, Chair for the Oahu Workforce Development Board
Rosella Guardascione, Chair for the Hawaii County Workforce Development Board
Kehaulani Kukahiko, Kauai Workforce Development Board
Rosalee Agas-Yuu, President, Hawai'i Nurses Association, OPEIU/Local 5
Amber Akana, Seafarer's International Union of North America
Scott Collins, Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)
Dion Dizon, Director, UH West Oahu Center for Labor Education and Research
Carla Kurokawa, Employment and Training Manager, Alu Like Inc.
Pane Meatoga III, Deputy Political Director, Operating Engineers Local 3
Tui Scanlan, President, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 665
Andrew Garrett, Representative, Hawai'i House of Representatives
Jade Rojas-Letisi, Executive Assistant, Office of Economic Development on Maui, Designee for Mayor Richard Bissen
Nalani Brun, Director, Office of Economic Development on Kauai, Designee for Mayor Derek Kawakami

Benson Medina, Director of Training, Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust

David Rodriguez, Equal Opportunity Officer, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), Designee for Director Jade Butay

Lea Dias, Administrator, Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Wanelle Kaneshiro, Director for Workforce Development Branch, Department of Education (DOE), Designee for Superintendent Keith Hayashi

Keala Monaco, Director of Workforce Innovation, University of Hawaii System, Designee for UH President Wendy Hansel

Rona Fukumoto, President & CEO, Lanakila Pacific

Gina Anonuevo, Vice Chair and Chief Administrative Officer/ Chief Human Resources Officer, First Hawaiian Bank

Leslie Wilkins, President, Maui Economic Development Board

Excused:

Manu Bermudes, Vice President of Human Resources, Hawaii Gas

Shelli Ihori, Workforce Development Director, Hawaii Pacific Health

Trang Malone, Workforce Initiatives Manager, CVS Health

Lorna Woo, Assistant Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, Intl Union of Painters & Allied Trades, D.C. 50

Donovan Dela Cruz, Senator, Hawai'i State Senate

Rick Blangiardi, Mayor, City & County of Honolulu

Josh Green, Governor, State of Hawai'i

James Tokioka, Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Noted Guests:

Jung Yun "Kelly" Ha, Deputy Attorney General

Lee Ann Yamashiro, Deputy Attorney General and Chair of the Labor Section

Hong "Julie" Radke, Administrative Services Office, Department of Labor & Industrial Relations

Erin Fernandez, Oahu Workforce Development Board

George Denise, Director of Project Management, Turner & Townsend

Daven Kawamura, Oahu Workforce Development Board

Lei Ana Green, Workforce Development Division

Lisa Pereira, Oahu Workforce Development Board

Guests (in order of presentation):

Tim Carlton, Director of Legislative Affairs, National Governors Association

Teri Ushijima, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, Hawai'i Department of Education

Abey Qureshi, Director, Curriculum Innovation Branch, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, Hawai'i Department of Education

Staff:

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Jeanne Ohta, Employment Service Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Margaret Miura, Program Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)

In-person meeting (830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu, HI 96813) room was changed from Room 310 to 317. Signs were conspicuously placed to direct attendees to the new meeting room.

I. Call to Order (00:03:05 – 00:14:13)

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. by Council Chair Keith DeMello. Chair DeMello, in accordance with Hawai'i's Sunshine Law, reminded everyone to identify themselves and others present in the room or on Zoom and as a public meeting under the Sunshine Law, members attending via Zoom must keep their cameras turned on and inform the Chair if you leave the meeting prior to the meeting adjournment to assess quorum. He welcomed attendees, reminded Zoom participants to keep cameras on, and emphasized the importance of notifying staff if leaving early.

Jeanne Ohta, WDC staff, conducted the roll call. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha confirmed 25 members were present. Per Workforce Development Council By-law Article 5, Section 7, under HRS 92-15 and HRS 202-1, until the Council has 41 members, 16 Council members shall constitute quorum to do business, and the concurrence of at least 16 council members shall be necessary to make any action of the Council valid. Chair DeMello confirmed quorum was established at 9:43 a.m. with 25 members present.

Chair DeMello welcomed a new board member and new WDC staff. Filling a board member seat under Labor, Chair DeMello introduced Rosalee Agas-Yuu, President of the Hawai'i Nurses Union. He also introduced Margaret Miura and Jeanne Ohta to the WDC staff. Executive Director Misalucha acknowledged Council member Rona Fukumoto's presence in the meeting changing the number of members present to 26.

II. Approval of Minutes: August 20, 2025 (00:14:14 – 00:17:35)

Chair Keith DeMello called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on August 20, 2025, found on pages 25–36 of the Board Packet.

Board Action: Council Member Tui Scanlan moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Council Member Christopher Lum Lee.

There were no objections or discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously by verbal responses to a roll call.

III. Welcome New Board Member and Staff

Introductions were done following the Call to Order.

IV. Presentation on Federal Funding Matters by the National Governors Association (00:17:36 – 00:41:23)

Presenter: Tim Carlton, Director of Legislative Affairs, National Governor's Association (NGA)

The federal government reopened earlier this month following a historic 41-day shutdown after which a Continuing Resolution (CR) was signed into law on November 12, 2025. The CR provides funding through January 30, 2026, that will give Congress a runway to figure out funding for fiscal year 2026.

NGA Director Carlton identified three bills that were fully funded and signed into law: the Agriculture Bill, Legislative Branch Bill (Congress), and Military Construction Veterans Affairs Bill. The Agriculture Bill, he noted, includes funding for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) throughout the remainder of the fiscal year 2026 despite CR funding ending on January 30, 2026.

The Labor HHS (Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education) Bill is one of 9 appropriations bills left to be decided upon by Congress. The Labor HHS Bill covers WIOA programming, apprenticeships, and other workforce-related programming that run through the Department of Labor. NGA Director Carlton compared the FY25 Funding, President's Budget, House FY26, and Senate FY26 dollar amounts for multiple programs that include Adult Employment and Training Activities, Youth Activities, Dislocated Workers Employment and Training Activities, Apprenticeship Program, Workforce Data Quality Initiative, Job Corps, and Veterans' Employment State Grant.

There were cuts to the appropriations to the WIOA program. In particular, the House proposed to cut Adult Employment and Training Activities and Youth Activities, reduce amounts for Dislocated Workers Employment and Training and Job Corps, and keep the Apprenticeship Program and Veterans' Employment State Grant level to last year. NGA Director Carlton mentioned the House was unsuccessful at passing the same proposed cuts last year and funds continued to flow at prior approved levels. The Senate has maintained level funding for FY26.

Following yesterday's announcement by the White House that the Department of Education will be entering into six inter-agency agreements, NGA Director Carlton reported a couple agreements, K-12 Education and Post-Secondary Programs, would pair the

Departments of Education and Labor. He further posed that these inter-agency agreements may complicate the funding levels if the Senate takes up their Labor HHS bill this week.

The House proposed cutting the Job Corps Program funding in half, about a billion-dollar proposed reduction from FY25. Overall, NGA Director Carlton suggested taking these numbers with a grain of salt concluding if congress reaches a full-year FY26 agreement on funding levels, we will not see significant cuts in the magnitude of what the House is proposing rather some small reductions. What is perhaps more likely, he adds, is another continuing resolution which continues the current level of funding.

In preparation for modification to the State (Unified) Plan due by March 15th, NGA Director provided a quick background for new board members. Every 4 years, the board and the governor are required to submit a state plan for WIOA to the federal government or the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to be specific. The most recent plan was submitted in the spring of 2024. Two years after the plan has been implemented states are required to submit modifications. State Plan Modifications provide an opportunity to update plans with priorities from the new Administration. NGA Director Carlton noted that the 2024 plan included the required components related to equity and the Biden Administration's Invest in America agenda. The current Administration's focus shifted to apprenticeship and the desire to have a million apprentices in America. The State Plan Modification will be expected to align with the current Administration. He, in reference to the current Administration's targeted actions, suggests replacing DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) language in favor of focusing on apprenticeship initiatives.

The TEGL (Training and Employment Guidance Letter) should be coming out in the next couple of weeks.

To help Hawaii with planning before the TEGL is released, NGA Director Carlton suggested apprenticeship, Workforce Pell, and the greater use of WIOA funds for training may be new areas of focus. The Workforce Pell, a provision included in the summer reconciliation law, and a greater use of WIOA funds for training have been a priority of Republicans. He noted the use of WIOA funds for training was also a priority of the ETA (Employment Training Administration) and that a few of the writers of the WIOA reauthorization are also part of the ETA staff.

America's Talent Strategy and AI (Artificial Intelligence) are areas to consider incorporating into the modified plan until the TEGL is released.

NGA Director Carlton reminded the Board that when the Workforce Pell goes into effect July 1, 2026, this will be a new, potentially big opportunity for states to open short-term training programs. The Pell Grant is currently a grant for traditional higher education. As a reminder, governors, together with their state workforce boards, and other higher education partners in the state, must certify eligible programs for this workforce pilot program to align with the economic needs of the state and lead to recognized post-secondary credentials.

In the coming weeks, the U.S. Department of Education will engage in negotiated rulemaking to untangle the complexities of the law, answer existing questions, and hopefully find a regulatory path forward. The negotiated rulemaking body consists of stakeholders from interested groups and states and individuals with other workforce boards. The Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven (AHEAD) Workforce Pell Committee will meet December 8-12, 2025, and January 5-9, 2026, to provide federal guidance to states (governors and workforce boards) before implementation on July 1st.

As we start thinking about next year, NGA Director Carlton recapitulates, there is always the possibility that Congress takes up another budget reconciliation bill such as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, or H.R.1, that could potentially open areas of reform or change. For that reason, NGA is monitoring the National Apprenticeship Act, the law that governs the Registered Apprenticeship program, which has been in effect without change since 1937. WIOA reauthorization continues to face some hurdles, but it is a priority for many in Congress.

NGA Director Tim Carlton opened the floor for questions.

Q: [Executive Director Bennette Misalucha] The US Department of Education announced that it is going to put forth interagency agreements. Any idea whether that would affect Adult Ed or Title II and the impact it might have on the modification plan? Do we assume that it's status quo? Is it a part of the planning process?

R: I have not seen anything specific to Adult Education at this point. What I know is that there's anticipation for additional interagency agreements to be signed. I don't want to speculate too much, but I wouldn't be surprised if you see future interagency agreements. From the direction they are going right now, it seems like they [The Department of Education] are doing their best to offload as much as they can to other agencies. Other groups will challenge this objective; so, they may not be successful in the end.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Do you know if the WIOA portal has already been transitioned from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor? I've been trying to get into the portal and I'm getting blocked.

R: I just clicked to go there, and I'm being blocked as well.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Is Workforce Pell substituting for the regular Pell or is it an additional Pell?

R: It's an addition. The traditional Pell will continue as it always has and offer benefits to students who are going to the traditional 4-year or 2-year program. The Workforce Pell is building on that. For example, the Workforce Pell program allows students to go to the 10-

week CDL (Commercial Driver’s License), assuming it meets the various requirements of the law that the traditional Pell would not. It is not supplanting but supplementing what the Pell is already doing.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Is it going to mandated that all our employment and training will go through the Workforce Pell?

R: No. This is additive. It is not a WIOA component. I view it as another tool in the toolkit for those looking to provide training services to job seekers. Hopefully, there will be programs in Hawaii that will qualify. Based on the requirements of the law, there might not be a lot of programs that are eligible. The bar is set high on the requirements on eligibility, i.e., 70% job placement rate, 70% completion rate, ROI (Return on Investment) components.

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha added that the Workforce Pell, to be implemented in 2026, was an important topic of discussion at the recent convening for the National Governors Association because state boards will be very involved in establishing policy, as well as determining the eligibility requirements.

Q: [WDC Council member Cheryl Cross] We have a huge transitioning workforce coming out of the military here [in Hawaii] per capita. I think we are the largest [or] second largest, even though we are a small state. What does the TEGL have an impact on for short-term credentialing/SkillBridge programs?

R: I imagine [the TEGL] will potentially address short-term programs. I also don’t know if they’re going to be specific towards military individuals or transitioning service members. In the NGA Director’s opinion, the military presence in Hawaii is unique—a bonus that every administration supports which would be a value add to the plan modification.

WDC Council member Cross stated 200,000 people leave the military each year, a small population nationally. In Hawaii, that number is 10,000. If they had opportunities to do SkillBridge, a lot of those people could be retained within the economy longer.

Executive Director Misalucha notified the Board and Board Chair that Gina Anonuevo was present (00:41:18) making the number of members present 27.

V. Proposed Amendments to the WDC By-laws (00:41:24 – 00:51:41)

By-laws Changes: Both the Special Projects Committee and the Executive Committee fully vetted the proposed amendments found in pages 38-49 of the board packet and recommended its passage. The intent of these changes is to:

- Align the WDC’s by-laws with WIOA §101(b) and 20 CFR §679.110,
- Provide greater clarity and transparency in membership and appointment processes, and

- Incorporate best practices used in other state, while preserving the Governor’s authority for final appointments.

The Hawaii Attorney General’s office reviewed verbiage to ensure consistency with Hawai’i statutes, including HRS Chapter 202 and Chapter 92, and confirmed compliance with WIOA.

No testimony was presented.

Board Action:

A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion moved by Tui Scanlan and seconded by Cary Miyashiro to approve all amendments was passed unanimously.

Effective Dates of By-laws Amendments:

The proposed effective date for all approved amendments found on pages 50-54 of the board packet is November 19, 2025.

Board Action:

A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion moved by Dion Dizon and seconded by Chris Lum Lee to approve effective dates of amendments was passed unanimously.

No testimony or questions were presented.

Between 51:18-56:22, WDC Council member Benson Medina stepped away or lost connectivity to the meeting.

VI. Council Leadership Changes (00:51:42 – 01:01:53)

According to WDC By-laws, we do not need to vote on the Committee composition, but the Board is required to vote on the WDC Vice Chair. Chair Keith DeMello and Assistant Vice Chair Senator Donovan Dela Cruz will continue in their current position. Former Vice Chair Cary Miyashiro was formally thanked for serving as Vice Chair for the last four years and will remain on the Executive Committee as the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee Chair.

Board Action:

Trang Malone was the only nomination for WDC Vice Chair before nominations were closed by member Chris Lum Lee, seconded by Lea Dias, and passed unanimously by roll call vote. By another roll call, Trang Malone was elected WDC Vice Chair unanimously. Trang Malone had indicated that she is willing to serve.

Workforce Development Council Officers

Chair: Keith DeMello (appointed by Governor Green on 10/22/2025)

Vice Chair: Trang Malone (newly elected)
Assistant Vice Chair: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz

The following is the proposed committee leadership having exercised the prerogative to have two Vice Chairs for each of the Committees:

Employer Engagement
Chair: Gina Anonuevo
Vice Chairs: Derek Kanehira, Cheryl Cross

Performance Management and Finance
Chair Sean Nakamura
Vice Chairs: Sean Knox, Lea Dias

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways
Chair: Cary Miyashiro
Vice Chairs: Lorna Woo, Rona Fukumoto

Special Projects
Chair: Dion Dizon
Vice Chairs: Pane Meatoga III, Thomas Chock

Youth Services
Chair: Tui Scanlan
Vice Chairs: Carla Kurokawa, Amber Akana

VII. Deputizing two members to pursue Military Spouses

Project/Permitted Interaction (01:01:53-01:13:09)

Chair Keith DeMello reported that the Military Spouses Project (the Project) will be moved from the defunct Military Veteran Affairs Committee to the Special Projects Committee. To continue work on this initiative under the Special Projects Committee, Chair DeMello suggested deputizing former Military Veteran Affairs Chair Trang Malone and Vice Chair Cheryl Cross to continue their work on the Project. Under the Sunshine Law, it is considered Permitted Interaction for two members to meet with other non-council members to discuss and garner information that is then reported to the Council via public Special Projects Committee meetings.

WDC Council members Tui Scanlan and Dion Dizon made a motion and seconded the motion to deputize WDC Council members Trang Malone and Cheryl Cross to lead efforts on the Military Spouses Project.

WDC Council member Chris Lum Lee interjected with a follow-up question regarding how long the PIG (Permitted Interaction Group) would be in effect. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha responded stating, in this case, this is not a PIG rather it is a Permitted Interaction between two council members. Chair Keith DeMello added that this is not a Permitted Interaction Group. It is a Permitted Interaction since it is not over two members, and they will be reporting publicly through the Special Projects Committee. These two members can interact outside of the committee meetings. In response to Chair DeMello's question about putting a timeframe on this Permitted Interaction, Executive Director Misalucha responded that a Permitted Interaction Group has three steps: 1) create PIG, 2) determine when PIG reports information, and 3) date will act upon the PIG's recommendation. In this case, Permitted Interaction may continue if there is an objective that needs to be met.

WDC Council member Dion Dizon asked for clarification that this was or was not a PIG since it's a project under the Special Projects Committee. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha confirmed this is not a PIG. Chair DeMello explained this is very similar to the Permitted Interaction of himself and Council member Scanlan representing the WDC's legislative priorities during the legislative session.

At 01:06:38, Executive Director Misalucha noted that member Derek Kanehira left the meeting to attend another meeting, and that member Cary Miyashiro was having technical issues and joined the meeting in person. 26 members were present at that time.

Deputy Attorney General Jung Yun Ha confirmed that Permitted Interaction allows a discuss between two council members and suggested the Board explain the role of the deputized members. Executive Director Misalucha explained that the deputized members would be able to meet with other non-council members to discuss and generate recommendations without having to post their meetings with each other and/or meetings with people outside of the Council. However, they cannot make recommendations on their own to the Board for action. Recommendations will have to go through the Special Projects Committee and be posted under the Sunshine Law. Then, if there is any impact where the Board is required to act, whatever is discussed at the committee level will be presented to the full board for further validation.

Prior to the vote, Council member Cheryl Cross thanked the Council for allowing the good things that came out of the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee to continue for the military-affiliated community and military spouses who continue to be underserved in the workforce.

The motion passed with 25 ayes and 1 abstain.

VIII. Labor Director's Update (01:13:10 – 01:27:41)

David Rodriguez, Designee for Department of Labor Director Jade Butay, shared that the government shutdown had minimal impact to the department's funding and DLIR received appropriations for the entire program year 2025. DLIR is working with the local areas on their budget details and remains focused on minimizing unexpended funds and the first-in, first-out methodology when using funds. DLIR is continuing to work with Maui County to resolve their outstanding WIOA findings by the US Department of Labor.

Mr. Rodriguez also highlighted the following honors recognized by the state Senate:

- Ho'okele Award – Hilo Benioff Medical Center for mentoring emerging professionals into public service
- Ka Liko Lawelawe Awards
 - Kiani Aburamen (Hawai'i County)
 - Justin Silva (Maui County)
 - Angela Lindberg (City and County of Honolulu)
 - Juliet Madrid (Kaua'i County)

On behalf of Director Butay, special recognition was given to Ms. Maricar Pilotin-Freitas and her team at the Workforce Development Division with the Hele Imua Internship Program. See Video (01:20:24 – 01:26:11)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha noted that Representative Andrew Garrett has left the meeting and Council member Leslie Wilkins is present. Headcount remained at 26.

IX. Hawaii Department of Education Presentation (01:27:42 – 01:47:00)

Teri Ushijima, Assistant Superintendent (AS) of the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID), shared and asked for input on the Hawai'i Public High School Graduation Requirements & General Learner Outcomes (GLOs). The Board of Education will be considering revisions to the current graduation requirements. A Student Achievement Committee was formed and with community input approved the latest draft to the vision of a Hawai'i public school graduate.

AS Ushijima presented the General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) which are the foundational standards of learning for all students across all grade levels. GLOs are part of the elementary school report card and criteria for high school capstone or senior projects. These durable skills, according to AS Ushijima, are important and applicable for the workforce because workers who know more than just content knowledge are important in any profession. These GLOs are embedded in our system:

- Self-directed Learner
- Community Contributor

- Complex Thinker
- Quality Producer
- Effective Communicator
- Effective and Ethical User of Technology

Links to the handouts and resources are in the board packet:

[Vision of a Public School Graduate](#)

[Current Graduation Credit Requirements](#)

[Current General Learner Outcomes](#)

Q: [Council member Pane Meatoga] How many respondents have you received so far?

A: [Abey Quereshi, OCID Curriculum Innovation Branch Director] Just short of 600 so far.

X. Fiscal Reports (01:47:01 – 01:52:08)

Hong “Julie” Radke, Fiscal Officer, who oversees the WIOA accounting, presented the financial reports for program years 2022 and 2023. There was no return of funds to the Fed for 2022 and as of June 30, 2025, there is \$2.6 million of unexpended funds for program year 2023. \$1.9 million will be used for the Ready to Work Program until June 30, 2026. There is a balance of unexpended funds (\$600,000) that have not been encumbered and a balance of \$341,582 for Rapid Response for PY23 and PY24 has not been used yet.

The NOA (Net Operating Assets) for program year 2025 is being formulated.

Q: [Council member Lea Dias] Do these expenditures include staff salaries and services to clients?

A: Yes.

XI. General Appropriations (GA) Funds (01:52:09 – 01:57:51)

Workforce Development Council (WDC) Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided an overview of the GA funds from the state legislature. Due to the uncertainty of federal funding, WDC was advised that it was not a good idea to ask the legislature to fund additional personnel. Funds were reallocated towards grants and research instead. Both Finance and Executive Committees have reviewed the redistribution and recommended approval.

Board Action:

Chris Lum Lee made the motion to accept the recommended changes to the budget and Tui Scanlan seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously with 26 votes.

XII. Fiscal Protocols (01:57:52 – 02:02:01)

On behalf of the Performance Management Committee, Chair Sean Nakamura presented the new financial protocols to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities related to fiscal matters at the WDC originating from the staff, reviewed and approved by the Performance Management and Finance Committee, and validated by the Executive Committee. The committee recommends adopting the financial protocols found on pages 89-92 of the board packet.

Board Action:

Committee Chair Nakamura moved to accept, and Council member Sean Knox seconded the motion. Motion passed with 26 votes.

XIII. Certification of the Kauai American Job Center (AJC) (02:02:02 – 02:08:15)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided an update of and following provisional certification granted to the Kauai AJC. While progress has been made, corrective action is still in the process of being implemented. It is recommended that provisional certification be extended to January 30, 2026, to conduct a follow-through assessment and provide time for WDD to demonstrate measurable progress.

At the October 29, 2025, meeting, the Executive Committee recommended that the WDC Board ratify the provisional certification of the Kauai AJC through January 30, 2026.

Board Action:

Council member Chris Lum Lee moved to extend the provisional certification to January 30, 2026, and was seconded by Council member Cary Miyashiro. Motion passed with 26 votes.

XIV. Executive Director's Report (02:08:16 – 02:13:35)

In addition to identifying some of the challenges to expand staff and board capacity, manage under the uncertainty of federal funding, and coordinate regional local boards, Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided third and fourth quarter WDC highlights:

- Hosted a webinar with the Strada Foundation on the Hawaii's Workforce Scorecard
- Began unpacking the challenges with the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and reviewed best practices from other states
- Held the Workforce Synergy Summit in July
- Partnered with First Hawaiian Bank and SHRM (Society for Human Resources Management) to provide training sessions for Hele Imua interns
- Reorganized the WDC Committees and updated the by-laws

- Sponsored the Future of Work Conference in September recognizing our Workforce Heroes
- Recognized as an advocate at the Hawaii Farm Bureau on Kauai

Executive Director Misalucha concluded with the need to strengthen WIOA operations making sure that the services we deliver are high quality and upgrade the use of technology particularly when it comes to ETPL. Looking ahead to 2026, and with gratitude to all, she states we can expect opportunities to grow and improve.

XV. Discussion of Written Reports from WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Core Partners (02:13:36 – 02:14:37)

Written Reports from the Workforce Development Division (Title I and Title III), Adult Ed (Department of Education Title II), and Vocational Rehabilitation Division (Title IV) are found in the Board Packet on pages 116 – 144.

XVI. Discussion of Written Reports from the Local Workforce Development Board (02:14:38 – 02:15:02)

Written Reports from the Workforce Development boards of Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island are found in the Board Packet on pages 145 – 156.

XVII. Discussion of Written Reports from WDC Standing Committees (02:15:03 – 02:16:47)

The Committee Reports from the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways, Special Projects, Youth Committee, and Performance Management and Finance are found in the Board Packet on pages 157 – 168.

XVIII. Next Meeting (02:16:48 – 02:19:40)

The next WDC Quarterly Board Meeting is tentatively scheduled for:

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Virtual Zoom and in-person at 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 310, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

2026 Board Meeting Dates (subject to change)

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

In reference to Council members Cheryl Cross and Trang Malone, Deputy Attorney General Jung Yun Ha made note that under HRS §92-2.5 and OIP's (Office of Information Practices) guidance, when two or more board members are assigned to investigate an issue for the board, that group is considered a Permitted Interaction Group or a PIG. However, because Trang and Cheryl will not be reporting to the full board and would instead be reporting to the Special Projects Committee, OIP's guidance states that the standing committee may create a PIG to report back to the committee that created it. Since the work falls under the standing Special Projects Committee, her understanding was that the committee and not the full board is required to create the PIG. However, Deputy Attorney General Ha stated, Cheryl and Trang may discuss the issues as a Permitted Interaction but not a Permitted Interaction Group. Before recommendations is provided to the Special Projects Committee, the committee must make the PIG and define the requirements for them [the PIG].

XIX. Adjournment (02:19:41 – 02:20:21)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM.