

COMMITTEE ON BENEFICIARY ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT
April 30, 2025
9 a.m.
(via Interactive Conference Technology and In-person at OHA Maui Ola Boardroom)

To view this meeting's recording, please click on the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us4nqr_TMnI

MINUTES

TRUSTEES PRESENT

Brickwood Galuteria, Chair
Kaleihikina Akaka, Vice Chair
Keli'i Akina
Luana Alapa
Kaiali'i Kahele
Carmen Hulu Lindsey
Keoni Souza
John Waihe'e, IV

ADMINISTRATION

Kehaulani Pu'u, COO
Ramona Hink
Ryan Lee
Elena Farden
Hailama Farden
Leina'ala Ley
Bill Brennan
Kevin Chak
Arlene Aguinaldo

TRUSTEES EXCUSED

Dan Ahuna

BAE STAFF

Lei-Ann Durant
Kyla Hee
Nathan Takeuchi
Mark Watanabe

BOARD COUNSEL

Na'iwi Wurdeman

CORPORATE COUNSEL

Everett Ohta, Interim Corporate Counsel
Nietzsche Ozawa, Interim Sr. Legal Counsel

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brickwood Galuteria called the April 30, 2025, meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment to order at 9:10 a.m.

- A roll call vote was conducted:
 - Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e, and Galuteria llvoted **Aye**.
 - Trustee Ahuna was **excused**. (Chair Galuteria did acknowledge his presence in Boston, MA with OHA's compliance team the possibilities of repatriation of 'iwi and other artifacts.
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II. Approval of Minutes

Agenda Item II. a.: Approval of Minutes from March 5, 2025 (9:14 a.m.)

➤ *No testifiers*

- The Chair introduced the first item on the agenda: Approval of the minutes from the March 5, 2025, BAE meeting.
- A motion to approve the minutes was made (Trustee Waihe'e) and seconded (Trustee Lindsey).
- No discussion was raised on the matter.
- A roll call vote was conducted:
 - Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsay, Souza, Waihe'e, and Galuteria voted '**Ae**.
 - Trustee Ahuna was **excused**.
- **Motion passed unanimously** with 8 votes in favor.

Agenda Item II. b.: Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2025 (9:15 a.m.)

➤ *No testifiers*

- A motion to approve the minutes was made (Trustee Souza) and seconded (Trustee Waihe'e).
 - No discussion was raised on the matter.
 - A roll call vote was conducted:
 - Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsay, Souza, Waihe'e, and Galuteria voted '**Ae**.
 - Trustee Ahuna was **excused**.
 - **Motion passed unanimously** with 8 votes in favor.
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III. New Business (9:17 a.m.)

- Germaine Meyers requested to speak on agenda items III. a., III. b., III. c., and III. f. (9:16 a.m.)
 - The Chair confirmed the transition into the agenda space and invited Germaine Meyers to proceed once the Board was officially brought to Agenda Items III. a. – III. c. and was acknowledged formally. Germaine agreed.
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Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. a: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ulupono Initiative (9:18 a.m.)

- The item involved a presentation by Ulupono Initiative regarding a proposed MOU for capacity building to pursue federal grant funding in:
 - Local food systems
 - Renewable energy
 - Clean transportation
 - Freshwater initiatives
- Everett Ohta, Interim General Counsel, was called upon to provide background information in the absence of Ulupono representatives.
 - Everett confirmed familiarity with the MOU but was not the primary contact.
 - He offered to walk through the provided slides and speak to the background of the organization.
- The Chair and trustees expressed concern over the absence of a Ulupono representative.

It was agreed that the item would be tabled for a future meeting to ensure proper representation and engagement.

Public Comment: Agenda Item Access and Testimony Procedure (9:20 a.m.)

- Germaine Meyers acknowledged the Chair’s request to wait until the Ulupono Initiative presentation is officially conducted before providing testimony.
- He raised a concern that, as of the time she logged into the meeting (including the weekend prior), **no folder or presentation materials** related to agenda items 3A, 3B, or 3C were posted on the BAE meeting website.

- She requested permission to listen to the upcoming presentations and submit a **UIPA (Uniform Information Practices Act) request** for copies of the materials, after which she would provide her testimony.
 - The Chair acknowledged the oversight and took **responsibility** for the missing materials, expressing appreciation for Germaine’s patience.
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Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. 3b.: Strategic Plan Presentation (9:21 a.m.)

- The Chair introduced **Elena Farden**, Senior Director of Strategy and Implementation, to present Item 3B.
 - Elena provided an overview of the current strategic plan and acknowledged the potential for future updates.
 - The administration is **not opposed to refreshing** the strategic plan.
 - Trustees were encouraged to remain open to hearing more about current **tactics, programs, services, and initiatives**.
 - The S&I team, though still building capacity (e.g., lacking a housing director), has made significant progress in a short time.
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Recommendation for Strategic Plan Review Timeline

- It was suggested that trustees consider revisiting the **Mana I Maui Ola Strategic Plan** after **FY2027**.
 - This would allow time for the rollout of initiatives planned for FY2026 and FY2027.
 - By then, **program data** would be available to inform us of any necessary adjustments.
 - Trustees were reminded of their roles in:
 - Setting strategic direction and policy priorities
 - Approving budgets and major initiatives
 - Ensuring alignment with OHA’s mission and fiduciary responsibilities
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Trustee Feedback and Suggestions

- Trustee Akaka expressed appreciation for the strategic plan flow chart and recommended pairing it with a **dashboard** to track metrics and measurable impacts.

- The dashboard would help communicate OHA’s work to beneficiaries, legislators, and the public.
 - It would provide transparency and clarity on how initiatives are being implemented and their outcomes.
 - Trustees emphasized the importance of making OHA’s work visible and understandable to the community.
 - Common questions such as “Why does OHA exist?” and “What does OHA do?” could be better addressed through these visual tools.
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Strategic Plan Review

- Trustees discussed the importance of conducting a **strategic plan review** given the current plan is approaching its sixth year.
 - It was noted that regular reviews allow for:
 - Assessment of progress
 - Updates to assumptions
 - Minor course corrections
 - Identification of new opportunities
 - Trustee Akina recommended updating the strategic plan within the current calendar year.
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Administration Response

- Administration acknowledged trustee interest in reviewing the strategic plan and expressed support for their leadership in initiating revisions.
 - It was noted that the **Strategy & Implementation (S&I) team** is still relatively new and has not yet fully rolled out programs that would generate measurable data.
 - The team emphasized the importance of waiting until sufficient program data is available to inform meaningful adjustments.
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Data Dashboard Development

- The next presentation will focus on the development of a **data dashboard** to support strategic decision-making.
- Key points included:
 - Identification of primary and secondary audiences
 - Data governance and protection, especially for Native Hawaiian data

- Use of metrics to track program impact and inform future planning
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Challenges in Measuring Impact

- Trustees discussed the difficulty of attributing **Lāhui-level (statewide)** outcomes to individual programs.
 - Emphasis was placed on the need for **partnerships** with other Native Hawaiian-serving organizations and government agencies to collectively move the needle on systemic issues.
 - Example: Helping 50 Native Hawaiians acquire land or build homes is impactful, but difficult to link directly to broader population-level change.
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Restorative Justice Initiative

- Elena Farden expanded on the example of incarceration rates among Native Hawaiians:
 - Native Hawaiians represent 40% of the incarcerated population but only 21.8% of the general population.
 - A target has been set to reduce incarceration rates by 21.8% by 2035.
 - The S&I team has developed a **restorative justice initiative** involving specialty courts as an alternative to punitive incarceration.
 - This program will generate specific data to evaluate its effectiveness and will be presented to trustees for alignment and rollout.
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Public Testimony: Germaine Meyers (9:54 a.m.)

- Germaine Meyers, an OHA beneficiary and Nānākuli Hawaiian Homestead lessee, provided testimony on the **Mana I Maui Ola Strategic Plan Flow Chart**.
 - She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak and raised concerns regarding **beneficiary engagement** in the strategic planning process.
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Key Points Raised

- **Community vs. Beneficiary Engagement:** Germaine emphasized the need to distinguish between partner input and direct beneficiary voices. He recommended

adding a step in the planning process to ensure **Native Hawaiian beneficiaries** are consulted before partner feedback is incorporated.

- **Data Integrity:** He cautioned against relying solely on institutional reports and advocated for incorporating “**reality data**” from lived experiences of beneficiaries.
 - **Hawaiian Registry Program:** Suggested leveraging OHA’s Hawaiian Registry Program as a tool for outreach and data collection:
 - Transitioning from paper-based to digital format
 - Using contact information to conduct surveys and gather feedback
 - **Local Planning Models:** Referenced the **Sustainable Communities Plan** in his moku (district), which includes community-driven zoning preferences (e.g., limiting building heights to preserve rural character).
 - **Strategic Planning Input:** Advocated for mechanisms that allow beneficiaries to contribute to strategic planning decisions, ensuring that data and direction reflect community realities and not just institutional perspectives.
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Closing Remarks

- Germaine concluded by encouraging OHA to ensure **inclusive and meaningful engagement** with Native Hawaiian beneficiaries in all aspects of strategic planning.
 - She offered blessings to the trustees and reaffirmed her commitment to supporting the process.
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Presentation: Strategy & Implementation (S&I) Team (9:58 a.m.)

The S&I team responded to prior testimony by outlining their approach to community engagement and data collection. Their methodology is grounded in **community-based participatory research**, treating community members as co-researchers and co-developers.

Key Engagement Strategies

- **Community Data Dialogues:** The team will host sessions where population-level and program-level data are presented in digestible formats. Community members will be invited to interpret and contextualize the data based on their lived experiences in specific regions such as Nānākuli, Kohala, and Ka‘ū.
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Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. c.: Informational Briefing by Administration on OHA's Participation at 2025 O'ahu Neighborhood Board Meetings (10:01 a.m.)

- **Neighborhood Board Outreach:** Beginning in May, OHA will participate in neighborhood board meetings across O'ahu. The agenda includes:
 - Introduction to OHA and its mission under Chapter 10
 - Overview of the Mana I Mauiola strategic directions
 - Biennium budget highlights
 - Native Hawaiian Registry Program updates
 - Board of Trustees and community engagement schedule
 - Recruitment efforts and signing bonus information
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Outreach Schedule

- Planned quarterly participation for the remainder of the calendar year: **May, June, August, and November**
 - Proposed quarterly schedule for 2026:
 - **January:** Legislative package overview
 - **April:** Biennium budget updates
 - **July:** Fiscal year closeout and reporting
 - **October:** General updates and community engagement
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Additional Materials

- Legislative briefing packets will be tailored to each community, including:
 - Grants and sponsorships awarded
 - Partnerships and initiatives specific to the region
 - These materials aim to demonstrate OHA's impact and presence in local communities.
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Next Steps

- Trustees discussed the need to expand outreach beyond O'ahu to neighbor island communities.

- The board agreed to begin with the current plan and assess its effectiveness before scaling further.
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Public Testimony and Feedback (10:08 a.m.)

- A member of the public (Germain Meyers) expressed appreciation for OHA's plan to engage with neighborhood boards on a quarterly basis.
 - The speaker recommended increasing the frequency of OHA's presence, suggesting that **monthly updates** would be more impactful than quarterly presentations.
 - It was noted that even brief, **2–3-minute updates** at monthly meetings could provide valuable visibility and allow for consistent community feedback.
 - The speaker referenced the **Nānākuli Neighborhood Board**, where OHA is listed alongside other government agencies and given a 3-minute time slot for updates.
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Discussion and Administrative Response (10:15 a.m.)

- OHA staff acknowledged the recommendation and shared that while quarterly presentations are planned, there had been internal discussions about attending **monthly meetings** to listen and take notes, even if not presenting.
 - The challenge of **staff bandwidth** was noted, but the team expressed openness to reassessing priorities and exploring hybrid participation options.
 - It was suggested that a **robust annual presentation** be scheduled during a strategic time of year, such as prior to the legislative session, while maintaining **monthly presence** for brief updates.
 - Remote participation was supported as a practical alternative to in-person attendance, especially for maintaining consistent engagement.
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Next Steps

- The committee will consider adjusting its neighborhood board engagement strategy to balance **impact, presence, and capacity**.
 - Further planning will be done to determine how best to maintain monthly visibility while delivering strategic updates at key points in the year.
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Discussion: Expanding Community Engagement Beyond O’ahu (10:20 a.m.)

- Trustees and staff discussed the importance of extending OHA’s outreach efforts to **neighbor island communities**, complementing the existing neighborhood board engagement on O’ahu.
 - Trustee Lindsey shared historical context about the **Hawaiian Organization meetings**, which were held quarterly on neighbor islands (Moloka’i, Lāna’i, Maui, Kaua’i, and Hawai’i Island). These meetings brought together leaders from Hawaiian organizations to share updates, challenges, and build collaborative relationships.
 - Maui was noted as a model for successful inter-organizational collaboration.
 - The meetings fostered a sense of unity and direct communication among Hawaiian leaders.
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Recommendations and Reflections

- Trustees expressed support for **reviving and formalizing** similar quarterly gatherings on neighbor islands to mirror the neighborhood board model on O’ahu.
 - Trustee Akaka reflected on past participation in the Nānākuli-Mā’ili Neighborhood Board meetings, highlighting the value of presenting OHA’s mission, strategic plan, and legislative package in a collaborative setting.
 - It was suggested that OHA’s presence at these meetings be **strategically timed**, particularly around the **opening of the legislative session**, to maximize impact and community alignment.
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Operational Considerations

- The Strategy & Implementation team was encouraged to:
 - Review **past meeting minutes** from neighborhood boards to identify recurring concerns and prepare targeted responses.
 - Coordinate with **island trustees** to develop tailored engagement models for each island.
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 - Maintain a **robust and consistent presence**, starting with O’ahu and expanding based on capacity and community needs.
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Conclusion

- Trustees affirmed their commitment to strengthening statewide engagement and building meaningful relationships with Hawaiian communities across all islands.
 - The committee will explore ways to **institutionalize neighbor island outreach**, leveraging existing models and trustee leadership to guide implementation.
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Neighborhood Board Engagement Strategy (10:20 a.m.)

- A trustee recommended that OHA provide a **robust annual update** to each neighborhood board, ideally timed around the **start of the legislative session**.
 - It was further suggested that OHA maintain a **monthly presence** at neighborhood board meetings, offering brief **2–3-minute updates** to share current activities, events, and receive community feedback.
 - Monthly updates were viewed as more impactful for maintaining visibility and responsiveness to beneficiary concerns.
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Remote Participation

- Trustees expressed support for **remote attendance** at meetings when in-person participation is not feasible.
 - Remote access was seen as a practical solution to ensure consistent engagement while managing logistical challenges.
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Neighbor Island Outreach (10:28 a.m.)

- Trustee Lindsey shared historical context about **Hawaiian Organization meetings** held quarterly on neighbor islands, which served as a counterpart to O'ahu's neighborhood boards.
 - These meetings included Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Island.
 - Trustees chaired the meetings, bringing together leaders from Hawaiian organizations to share updates and collaborate.

- Maui was highlighted as a successful model due to strong inter-organizational relationships.
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Recommendations for Expansion

- Trustees discussed the need to **revive and formalize** similar gatherings on neighbor islands to ensure statewide engagement.
 - It was suggested that OHA's outreach efforts be **strategically aligned** with key milestones such as the legislative session and budget planning.
 - The Strategy & Implementation team was encouraged to:
 - Review **past meeting minutes** to identify community concerns and prepare relevant updates.
 - Collaborate with **island trustees** to develop tailored engagement models for each island.
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Conclusion

- Trustees affirmed their commitment to expanding OHA's outreach and engagement efforts across all islands.
 - The committee will explore ways to **institutionalize neighbor island engagement**, starting with O'ahu and building out based on capacity and community needs.
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Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. d.: 2025 OHA Legislative Package – Matrix 1 (10:39 a.m.)

➤ *No testifiers (10:39 a.m.)*

Various bills were reviewed. **This item was for information only. No vote was taken.**

Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. e.: 2025 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills Naming OHA – Matrix 2 (10:34 a.m.)

Board of Trustees' Discussion and Action on SB903

- This bill was a funding vehicle for the audit and inventory but also had different versions of the language addressing the settlement that OHA opposed.
 - This bill died in conference.
 - The Hawaiian chairs' perspective was that the passage of this bill would have forced OHA into settlement discussions.
 - Because the language did not promote clean funding of the audit and inventory, the Committee was not willing to move the bill forward, so the bill died.
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Public Testimony and Feedback (10:29 a.m.)

- Germaine raised concerns about OHA's absence from the Ala Moana–Kaka'ako planning list, emphasizing that OHA has a **constitutional mandate** to be consulted on matters involving **Native Hawaiian crown and government lands**, also known as **ceded lands** under the Public Land Trust.
- The testimony highlighted the importance of OHA's role in educating legislators, the governor, and other officials at all levels of government about this mandate.
- The speaker urged OHA to assert its **kuleana** and ensure its voice is included in all decisions affecting these lands.
- Germaine Meyers extended her mahalo to Senator Richards and Representative Tarness for deferring this bill indefinitely.
- She expressed she does not agree with a global settlement.
- She suggested OHA may want to consider figuring out the inventory and what is due OHA on its own and not in a working group.

- Chair Galuteria offered a closing statement that if the Trustees choose to proceed at OHA's expense, participants need to ensure that whatever the Trustees settle on is recognized by whomever it needs to be recognized by (Trustee Lindsey stated it should be the Governor).

Since SB903 died, there was no action on this item.

Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. f.: 2025 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills Affecting the Public Land Trust – Matrix 3 (10:39 a.m.)

Board of Trustees' Discussion and Action on SB739 (10:40 a.m.)

- Staff recommended that the board adopt a position to **veto SB739**, a bill affecting the Public Land Trust.
 - Trustees discussed the timing and legislative process, noting that the bill was already advancing and that OHA's next opportunity for action would be at the **Governor's office**.
 - A **motion** was made (Trustee Lindsey) and seconded (Trustee Alapa) **to adopt/amend the approval of staff's recommendation to oppose SB739 affecting the Public Land Trust and request a veto from the Governor.** (10:44 a.m.)
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Roll Call Vote (10:45 a.m.)

- Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsay, Souza, Waihe'e, and Chair Galuteria – **'Ae**
 - Trustee Ahuna – Excused
 - **Motion passed** with 8 votes in favor
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Next Agenda Item

Agenda Item III. g.: 2025 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills Affecting HRS Chapter 6E ('Iwi Kūpuna – Matrix 9 (10:45 a.m.)

- The committee discussed OHA's 2025 position on bills affecting **Chapter 6 – 'Iwi Kūpuna**.
 - Germaine Meyers was confirmed as a testifier for this item.
 - Germaine Meyers acknowledged that the agenda item in question had been **indefinitely deferred** and recommended that the board not proceed with discussion unless deemed necessary.
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Board Discussion

- This bill was introduced many years ago and was a good bill.
- Over the years, the definition of historic property has changed and currently excludes residential property that is nominally sensitive areas from a historical perspective.

- A good example is the Naue property on Kaua'i that might have qualified according to the current language because it has already been developed and has a house on it.
 - The current definition doesn't allow for that possibility that there are properties that have already been developed that might have a high concentration of burials on the property even if they have not yet been disturbed.
 - OHA should lobby for the Governor to veto this bill.
 - SHPD is also concerned that this language was slipped into the bill and opposes the current language.
 - Administration's recommendation is to oppose the bill and lobby the Governor to veto this bill.
 - A **motion** was made (Trustee Akaka) and seconded (Trustee Waihe'e) to **adopt/amend the approval of staff's recommendation to oppose this bill regarding HRS Chapter 6E ('Iwi Kūpuna) and request a veto from the Governor.** (10:51 a.m.)
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Roll Call Vote (10:52 a.m.)

- Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsay, Souza, Waihe'e, and Chair Galuteria – **'Ae**
 - Trustee Ahuna – **Excused**
 - **Motion passed** with 8 votes in favor
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Next Agenda Item

V. Community Concerns and Celebrations (10:52 a.m.)

This Agenda Item was taken out of order pending discussion regarding the Board recusing themselves into Executive Session or not.

➤ *No testifiers*

No community concerns or celebrations were brought forward.

Next Agenda Item

IV. Executive Session (10:52 a.m.)

- Chair Galuteria called for a discussion regarding Executive Session pertaining to SB903
- Prior to this meeting, SB 903 died in conference
- Everett Ohta, OHA Interim Legal Corporate Counsel explained that Executive Session was added to the BAE Agenda in anticipation of discussing SB903 not knowing what would happen in conference committee prior to the BAE Committee meeting.
- Given that SB903 has been deferred indefinitely by members of the Legislature, it is his opinion that there is no need to have this discussion unless the Board members choose to do so.
- Board members agreed to defer this item until CEO/Ka Pouhana, Stacy Ferreira, is present.

This item was deferred indefinitely.

Next Agenda Item

V. Announcements (10:54 a.m.)

- Before adjournment, BAE Vice Chair Akaka shared highlights from recent events:
 - Shared her participation in the **Merrie Monarch Royal Parade**, with Chair Emerita Lindsey, Board Vice Chair Souza and Board Chair Kahele also in attendance.
 - Celebration of the **blessing and reopening of the Hilo Office of Hawaiian Affairs**, attended by trustees, staff, and community members.
 - Reflections on the cultural significance and community engagement during the parade and festivities.
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Next Agenda Item

VI. Motion to Adjourn (10:56 a.m.)

A motion was made (Trustee Alapa) and seconded (Trustee Lindsey) to adjourn the April 30, 2025 meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment.

- *No testifiers*
 - *No discussion*
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Roll Call Vote

- Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsay, Souza, Waihe'e, and Chair Galuteria – **'Ae**
 - Trustee Ahuna – **Excused**
 - **Motion passed unanimously** with 8 votes in favor.
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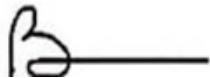
Adjournment

- The meeting was **officially adjourned** at **10:57 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted.



Lei-Ann Durant
Trustee Aide



Brickwood Galuteria, Trustee At-Large
Chair, Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment

Date Approved: 17SEPT2025