

The Garden Island

Video streaming, public document posting will wait 6 months

## Council postpones online policy

Léo Azambuja - The Garden Island | Posted: Saturday, July 17, 2010 11:45 pm

NAWILIWILI — The Kaua‘i County Council years ago approved funding to drastically improve Internet accessibility to county meetings and public documents, including posting the minutes, agendas and bills. But it wasn’t until Wednesday that a resolution was introduced to finally establish concrete policies.

“It took four years since we funded this, but this should be available to the public as soon as we iron out a few technical difficulties,” Bynum said at the beginning of a lengthy presentation in support of the resolution he crafted.

“Soon” will likely be at least another six months. Pending legal and operational issues prompted a majority vote on a deferral until December, after the council reviews the county’s furlough plan.

The deferral until December came as a surprise to most. Every single testimony at the council chambers, from public or council members, showed unilateral support for government transparency.

“This is going to make this dialogue richer if we supply the information,” Bynum said. “Information is the life’s blood of a democracy.”

Bynum said that despite thinking a deferral was unnecessary, he wouldn’t object to it. At least not until he heard at the end of the meeting that it would be for six months as opposed to two weeks.

Councilman Jay Furfaro said he remains just as anxious as he was four years ago, but added that he was “very cautious.”

“This council is subject to the sunshine law,” he said. “What goals can we achieve without finding ourselves possibly distributing information that now can be considered serial communication amongst council members?”

“We should ask the county attorney for some commentary,” Furfaro said.

Despite reservations due to being hit twice by “serial communication” complaints that cost him \$1,700 in legal fees, Furfaro gave the impression that if the resolution would be deferred it would be for a few weeks.

“We are very close to live-video streaming,” Furfaro said. “We felt by July we would be live-video streaming.”

Just like Furfaro, other council members also spoke on a possible deferral, but gave the impression it wouldn’t be for long.

“Internet access and Internet information is no longer viewed as a tool, but as a way of life,” Councilman Derek Kawakami said. “I’m dialed in almost 24 hours a day.”

Kawakami, however, said he would support a deferral in case council members would like to work on the resolution further.

Councilman Dickie Chang said he agrees that the website improvement is long overdue, but he would like to consult first with staff members, who have a heavy workload the day after the weekly Wednesday meetings.

“Furlough Fridays is taking a very, very big toll not only for our county but the state,” said Chang, explaining his concern that if the information is turned out immediately without proofing there might be mistakes.

“If there are gaps and errors, then that becomes the truth,” he said.

Councilman Daryl Kaneshiro said he used the Internet many times to treat his animals at his ranch.

Kaneshiro said he had no doubt of the benefits of the resolution, but did have some concerns with legal issues.

Councilwoman Lani Kawahara gave an exciting account of her support, which drew applause from the audience.

“This resolution to me is a beautiful thing,” she said. “This will be a gigantic step forward.”

“What we’re going to have in front of us is a primo, excellent way of providing service and transparency to all of our community members,” Kawahara said.

Chair Kaipo Asing, however, denied Bynum some of the credit for introducing the resolution. He said before the sophomore councilman was elected, the council had long anticipated the resolution and allocated \$130,000 for its purpose.

“What Mr. Bynum is proposing is what we had planned all along,” Asing said. “It’s not proposing anything new and different.”

Asing said he would recommend the resolution be deferred until December, after the furlough plan is revised by the council.

Bynum looked in disbelief as most council members seemed to agree.

As a motion to defer was about to hit the floor, Bynum kept his hand up, trying to stop it.

“Somebody is making a motion, let’s respect it,” Asing told Bynum, who answered that if a deferral was called, he wouldn’t be able to make comments anymore. And that was exactly what happened.

Bynum and Kawahara voted against the deferral.

The issue is slated to resurface in December.

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