

Majuro Chamber of Commerce
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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Marshall Islands Resort

Meeting called to order by President Carlos Dominick at 12:15 P.M. Over 20 members and guests were in attendance.

- **Minutes** – Minutes of the January meeting were accepted and approved
- **Guests**
 1. Mr. Tom Demott, US Embassy Vice Consul and General Services Officer. He arrived 1/30/2006 for a two-year assignment. Introduced by Greta Morris, US Ambassador
 2. Mr. Steven Cook, Educational Services Specialist, Honolulu Military Entrance Processing Station. Introduced by Tom Maus, US Military Liaison/Public Affairs. The Chamber welcomes his return to the Marshall Islands.
- **Outgoing Presidential Report – Executive Committee consultations**
 1. Robin Yarrow, Vice Chairman – NTF Council, Fiji, working with RMI Foreign Affairs. Mr. Robin Yarrow who is the foreign policy adviser/consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At this meeting, we came to the conclusion that the foreign policy of a country should support the national development and goals of that country. It was reiterated at this meeting that the RMI has so many development goals and economic reports but the implementation of the recommendations of these reports have been somewhat stagnant.
 2. The Chamber Executive Committee also met with a team from Palau Shipping. As you may have read from the Journal, these gentlemen were proposing a deal that would replace Matson with another shipping line that would come 2x (two) times a month from West Coast through Guam.
 3. The Executive Committee met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Resources and Development. We had good discussions at this meeting and the Chamber was able to bring forward some of its concerns on specific

Nitijela bills that are being proposed. We discussed at length the postal issue and how we could help each other make the system better than before. This meeting was a true testament that the government and the Private Sector can work together and we have the same aspirations to better this country. I hope that these dialogues can continue and that meaningful outcomes derive from them.

4. The Chamber Executive Committee also met with Ms. Joanna Gordon who is the Senior Adviser in RMI World Bank Constituency Office in Washington, DC. We also met with Mr. Sibtain Fazal Halim who is the Executive Director of our Constituency at the Asian Development Bank. We were able to share lots of information with these people and they were very understanding (or a better word may be “sympathetic”) of the situation our Private sector faces here.
5. The Executive Committee also met with Mr. Poesi Bloomfield, the new Attorney General. Good discussions came out of the meeting and we came from the meeting feeling very positive that we have a young and very active Attorney General that we believe will really beef up that office.

- **Incoming Presidential Report – Inaugural Address**

Continue Carlos’ good work to bring public and private sectors together. Increase membership.

- **Mail**

Letter from Marshallese High School Student asking donation. Chamber authorized Bill Wesa to hand deliver a check for \$250 to the Hawaiian High School of the Pacific to be given to the student if he makes the trip. Bill is expected to meet with Ms. Helen Mwarey, person in charge of the program, during the first week of March.

- **Financial** - \$5,237 balance in BOG plus \$400 in new membership dues collected this date

Guest Speaker - none

Committee Reports

- **Government Relations** – Jerry Kramer

Discussed and distributed copies of pending new labor bill.

- **Business and Trade** – Ben Chutaro
- **Financial Services** – Jim McLean

BOMI now offers MoneyGram service. Western Union also provides cash transfers.

- **Tourism** – Bill Weza

Statistics

- Statistics for 2005 are currently being finalized.
- Visitors statistics collections with Air Marshall Islands launched in January 2006.
- From August 2005 – January 2006, Majuro welcomed approximately 36 yachts.

MIVA Japan Office

- Sales activities continue...
- Yumekukan Kids 21, who had a successful visit to Majuro back in December, will conduct their second visit to the RMI on March 26 - March 30 and March 30 – April 3. Two charter flights have been organized with Continental Airlines with 150 passengers for both flights. The first date of arrival to Majuro falls on a Sunday when the airport is closed for resurfacing, therefore negotiations are being held with the RMI Ports Authority to allow for the plane to land.

MIVA

- Satoshi Yoshii selected as MITA's second representative to the MIVA Board of Directors.

Indies Trader

- The Indies Trader visited the northern atolls including Wotje, Ailuk and Likiep. They were in Ebeye last week for provisions, visited Namu this past weekend and are currently in Ailinglaplap. Next stop is Jabat Island and back to Majuro. Mr. Daly continues to be very optimistic about doing business here in the islands.

Customer Relations Training

- The training that was held during the last week of January went very well with 55 attendees from various business and organizations in Majuro. The Education Committee of the PATA Micronesia Chapter and the Small Islands Business Center, look forward to more training sessions held here in Majuro. All participants will be issued certificates of completion of their training.

Adventures in Travel Expo and Hawaii Ocean Sports Expo Update

- Loreen Bigler and Neiar Kabua attended the Adventures in Travel Expo in Long Beach in January 28-29, 2006. Our "Magnificent Micronesia" booth was represented by Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, and the Marshall Islands. The event was another well-promoted and well-planned event. The booth was very busy and had many inquiring participants throughout the 2-day show.

- On February 4-5, Loreen Bigler and Neiar Kabua also attended the Hawaii Ocean Sports Expo in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Hawaii Ocean Sports Expo featured exhibits by companies from Hawaii and the US Mainland as well as the South Pacific, Asia, Australia and the Caribbean. In comparison to the exhibit in Long Beach, the attendance was smaller in numbers. We also noticed that the event was not as well promoted and advertised such as the Expo in Long Beach. Since Hawaii is a destination in itself, it was quite a learning experience to see and hear what visitors from this market are seeking in a destination such as Micronesia.

Upcoming Events

- February 20, 2006 – One-day visit from the MS Delphin, a German based cruise ship with approximately 300 passengers.
- March 1, 2006 - Australian Sea Patrol visit (ten)
- March 6-12, 2006 – ITB Berlin Show (MIVA will attend in 2007)
- March 17-18 – PATA Micronesia 3rd qtr meeting in Chuuk.
- March 20-22, 2006 – Japanese school vessel visit to RMI.
- **Transportation** – John Hawley
- **Communications** – Tommy DeBrum
- **Education** – Jack Niedenthal

CMI was promoted from “Show Cause” to “Probation.” This was the productive result of many individual efforts. New President Wilson Hess deserves much credit.

- **Health** – Dr. Alex Pinano

Problem with citizen lack of interest in seatbelt logo contest is that no specific prize was decided. Chamber voted to authorize a cash prize of \$200.

- **Environment** – Don Hess
- **Membership and Public Relations** – Ben Graham
- **Special Projects** – Hirobo Obeketang and Bill Weza

Old Business

Membership Dues

Only paid-up members could vote. Many members paid their dues.

USPS

Sam Smith confirmed no USPS registered or insured mail into or out of the US from/to the Marshall Islands.

New Business

Elections: Jack Niedenthal, President
Hirobo Obeketang, Vice President
Salome Andrike, Treasurer
Jim McLean, Secretary

Chamber endorsement of Palau Shipping

No. Secretary to clarify with MIJ. EC to meet with Matson Shipping as soon as possible to correct appearance of Chamber support.

Executive Committee (EC)

Minutes to be made available to general membership

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.

Minutes prepared by:

Jim McLean

Approved _____
Approved with Corrections _____