

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Marshall Islands Resort

Meeting called to order by President Carlos Dominick at 12:05 P.M. Over 30 members and guests in attendance. .

- **Financial** - \$5,667.00 – 50 members have now paid
- **Guests** – Terry Chiwi – CMI yearbook committee – selling and designing ads
- **President's Message**

Welcome to Ambassador Morris

Thanks to Daniel for last year's work

Congratulations to Jerry – Pacific Executive of the Year

State of the Chamber address – Vision – high speed internet access by submarine cable, private sector to take hold of industry with the government allowing this and becoming a regulator for business to operate more smoothly. Work together to improve the economy. Solid Waste management system becomes a reality. Decompression chamber for the hospital. Strong membership in the chamber with all sectors represented. Future young leaders will take charge and set things on the right path.

Key is participation, cooperation and collaboration. Need to have unified team not a one man show. Need a more hands-on approach.

We don't want to lose the tourism industry and need to resolve the credit card problem. Need high speed internet for e-commerce activities.

Chamber needs to work together with MIVA and MOH for decompression chamber – treat bends, diabetes, wounds, etc.

Solid Waste Task Force – time to end the rhetoric and put into effect real waste management

Strong campaign to get new members especially Marshallese and Taiwanese.

Also small business need to get more involved.

The chamber needs to be flexible and accommodating to all members.

Anyone can speak in any language

- **Guest Speaker** - none

Committee and Other Reports:

- **Education** - CMI – search for new president. Jack is the chair of the committee. Ads have been placed in the paper and on websites. Most important decision for the future of the college. Eight applications so far. Also hiring professional search team from Hawaii and including opinions from the community
- **Website** – Chamber website has been upgraded. Look at the directory page. Look at the information on companies – will expand if the companies give the information to Jack

- **NTA** – Yoda Lakjuan – Credit cards – rumor is that BOG and NTA cannot agree on the rate – this is not true. January 21 – installed 128K line at the bank. Bank is waiting for machines to distribute to merchants.
Although the bank paid for the line does it have to pay additional rate to clear credit cards? Don't know answer to this
Complaints – for the past two weeks fax line dead then fixed. Now phone line dead. Also courthouse phone line is dead. Is there a problem with NTA's cable? Do not know answer will get back to us on that.
When will be able to use credit cards? As soon as the bank gets their machines, NTA is not holding this up.
- **Financial Services** – BOMI still trying to pursue issue on credit cards. Asking U.S. Treasury Department to look at all laws regarding RMI banks. Amended Compact implies non-foreign relationship with U.S. It is going to take awhile. Use of BOMI credit cards overseas? – still good until they expire – no new cards and no merchant services or credit cards.
FDIC coverage? – never was an opportunity for non-U.S. banks in the RMI to get coverage. Opportunity at end of Compact I – cost \$500,000 and the process would take a long time. Time ran out and cannot do it now.
Ebye – no direct access to off island disbursements other than wire transfers. Can deposit U.S. checks. No ability to write checks and send off island. BOMI considering free wire transfers.
If BOMI got FDIC coverage many Marshallese could not qualify for loans that would have qualified with BOMI before.
No central bank like other countries and we also use U.S. currency. So in essence the central bank is the U.S. treasury. This was not considered during the compact negotiations. Need to bring in front of appropriate parties.
Also will lose postal money orders at end of the year. No replacement at this time. BOG or BOMI might be able to do it.
Can we set up a branch in the U.S.? – Very difficult and very lengthy process.
- **Business and Trade** – Co-chairs – Ben and James – have not met yet with. Fred Muller - Kwaj - trade and business opportunities. Met with Major Coffey – small business shops like barber shop and dive shop. Also possibility of another trade fair.
- **Government Relations** – new bills
 - Extension of COM treaty – Land Grant
 - Amend judiciary act – qualification for judges in District Court to allow non-lawyer judges
 - Evidence code amendments
 - Traditional Rights Court – term of office – hold office for ten years regardless of age
 - Social Security Act
 - Clear Windows Law – can put tint on sides and back
 - Driver's License Law – 21 years old
 - Land Registration Authority – basically eliminates it
 - CMI Board – in committee
- **Tourism** – Japanese Cruise Liner – February 22
February 25 – March 1 – Marine Diving Magazine
March 12 – 13 – Australian dive show

ECO Air Lines – expected to arrive yesterday but did not come
New ATM at MIR soon

- **Communications** – Army will go ahead and pay share of submarine cable to Kwaj and NTA will cover Kwaj to Majuro. Still being discussed but moving forward. Check your phone bills!
- **Ulga Dry Dock** – Ben – never got a response as to where exactly the dry dock is to be located. Owner says at Ulga dock and the government is supporting this. Supposed to be here sometime in May. 375 feet long. EPA – no impact assessment. Father Rich is organizing a forum to discuss this issue. Planning and zoning law – never implemented. Coast Conservation Act – EIAs not being followed. The bigger issue is transparency of government. No response from the government to any letters. Chamber needs to be more proactive. The dry dock will take up 50% of the yacht moorings. Encourage members to sign the petition. Ben and Jerry to draft letter to the President to voice Chamber's concerns.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 P.M.

Minutes prepared by:

Donald Hess

Approved _____

Approved with Corrections _____