

**Minutes**

Council Board Meeting

January 16, 2020

5:00 – 6:30 P.M.

Blazing Star Conference Room – Centennial Office Building

658 Cedar Street – Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Hoang called the meeting to order at 5:07 P.M.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment was made.

II. ROLL CALL

***Present:***

Dave Hoang

David Maeda

Faamati Winey

Grace Lee

Dr. Tsewang Ngodup

Senator Carolyn Laine

Representative Kaohly Her

***Staff:*** Sia Her, Andrew Morris, Virakcheath Hing, and Daniel Yang

***Absent:***

Senator Eric Pratt, Representative Rod Hamilton, Hafiz Munir, Anil Hurkadli, and Bryan Thao Worra

*With 5 out of 12 voting members present, there was a quorum.*

III. APPROVAL OF November 21, 2019 MINUTES

Chair Hoang presented to the Board the meeting minutes of November 21, 2019.

There were no comments.

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of November 21, 2019 with amended changes.

BY: Vice Chair Maeda and seconded by Ms. Lee. *The motion was unanimously passed.*

IV. APPROVAL OF January 16, 2020 AGENDA

Chair Hoang presented to the Board the meeting agenda of January 16, 2020.

MOTION: To approve the January 16, 2020 agenda.

BY: Sen. Laine and seconded by Ms. Lee. *The motion was unanimously passed.*

V. NEW COUNCIL STAFF INTRODUCTION

Chair Hoang introduced the new Council staff members, Andrew Morris (Public Affairs and Legislative Liaison) and Daniel Yang (Research Assistant).

Chair Hoang asked that Ms. Her introduce Mr. Bai Vue, a co-chair of the API Complete Count Committee (CCC).

Ms. Her stated that at each meeting of the Board, one of the API CCC co-chairs will present on the API CCC's activities and take questions from the Board.

VI. JANUARY 16, 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

Chair Hoang asked Ms. Her to present on the Financial Report. Ms. Her called attention to the part-time/seasonal labor item, explaining that while Mr. Yang works 40 hours a week as Council staff, due to his position being classified as temporary his salary is categorized as part-time.

Ms. Her directed attention to the \$39,000 expected as the remaining balance by the end of the fiscal year, assuming that no accounts are overspent. This balance would be carried over into the second year of the biennium.

Ms. Her explained that the \$928.19 listed as a negative number in the report is the result of Ms. Anjuli Cameron's position being audited and promoted, moving her from non-exempt to exempt staff. This change was not initially noticed and resulted in \$928.19 expended on overtime before it was caught and corrected. Ms. Cameron will reimburse the Council for the overpaid amount through paycheck deductions.

Rep. Her asked about "Other Items" under employee costs. Ms. Her explained that this is most commonly related to staff leaving and being compensated for unused sick and vacation time.

Ms. Lee asked what "Other Operating Costs" is used for. Ms. Her explained that this is used for leftover, unallocated. Rep. Her asked if these funds are carried over if left unspent. Ms. Her explained that unused money is carried over from the first to the second year in a biennium but is returned to the State's treasury at the end of the biennium.

Ms. Lee asked if there is a budget item for the Leadership Awards Dinner. Ms. Her explained that this is considered as a "gift account," with most expenses covered by sponsorships and some remaining minor expenses coming out of the Council's general funds account. Vice Chair Maeda asked if not having the dinner every year is because of staff capacity, which was confirmed by Ms. Her.

Chair Hoang asked if there would be a dedicated section in the agenda to discuss the Leadership Awards Dinner. Ms. Her answered that the Dinner is covered in the Executive Director's report under Administrative Item F and that she would be willing to take questions on this topic later.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Her introduced the Executive Director's Report. Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Day at the Capitol is scheduled for April 14 and will differ from previous years by replacing the legislative trainings with a breakfast "meet and greet" with legislators and the governor, followed by a rally and legislative meetings. Vice Chair Maeda suggested inviting Constitutional officers to participate in the program. Ms. Her answered that there is nothing barring their participation, and that it would make sense to include the Secretary of State within the time allowed. Invitations will be sent out soon.

Ms. Her introduced the item of the Leadership Awards Dinner. The last Dinner was held in 2017. Planning the Dinner consumes significant staff capacity, but the community has been vocal during the last two years during which the Dinner has not been held. Community members have expressed that creating a space to empower the pan-Asian community is particularly needed in the current political environment. Ms. Her has asked Mr. Hing, the office manager to work with the Dept. of Administration to activate the bidding process, with a planned cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000 for space to accommodate up to 500 individuals. The Dinner is tentatively scheduled for October. At the last Executive Committee meeting, Ms. Her asked if it would be appropriate to establish a Planning Committee for the Leadership Awards Dinner among the Board members. Ms. Her would focus on fundraising, with the Planning Committee being responsible for planning the Dinner in coordination with Council Staff. The question of the establishment of a Planning Committee will be discussed as an agenda item later in the meeting. Ms. Her has decided that the Dinner should be held in the second year of each biennium going forward, and used as a platform to lift up and celebrate the Council's accomplishments in that biennium.

Ms. Her brought her report to a close by stating that she intends for her role to be much more public facing in 2020, with the goal of being in communities to (re)establish and maintain relationships.

#### VIII. BOARD RETREAT UPDATE

Chair Hoang brought the Board's attention to the Executive Committee's decision to make the Board Retreat a standing item. Ms. Her recalled that the last retreat was held in October 2019, where the 2019 Chair expressed a desire for the Board continue to act on the ideas and activities identified during the retreat. At the most recent Executive Committee meeting, the members unanimously requested that Ms. Her move the process forward. As a result of this request from the Executive Committee, Ms. Her followed up with Propel Nonprofits, the contractor who facilitated the Board retreat; together, they are developing a workplan consisting of the priorities (as identified by Board members) organized with corresponding activities, strategies, and tactics. An example of tactics could include members attending two community events in two communities per year outside their own community. The idea here is that once the workplan is developed, it will likely be presented to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may then return it to the full Board as an item of discussion. Ms. Lee asked if a report was provided. Ms. Her answered that a report was sent out as part of the November Board Meeting materials. Ms. Her is planning to present this draft workplan to the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

#### IX. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Hoang introduced the Executive Committee Report. The first Executive Committee meeting of the year was held two weeks ago and standing items included a discussion on the next steps regarding the Board retreat. Another item included planning for activities throughout 2020. Now that the Council is fully staffed, Ms. Her will focus on more public-facing tasks, with the other staff focusing on operations of the Council. Ms. Her added that the 2020 Executive Committee schedule is different from the 2019 schedule; the Committee will meet on the fourth Thursday of every other month beginning in February.

Ms. Her asked members to refer to page 2 of the Executive Committee Report under Executive Director updates, to the second bullet point containing a simple acknowledgement of the 45<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the Southeast Asian diaspora. Community members have asked for assistance with commemorating this anniversary. Ms. Lee asked what kind of assistance has been requested. Ms. Her answered that the Humanities Center could assist by hosting a conversation to explain the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Events could include a panel discussion on what it means to be a second generation descendent of veterans of the Vietnam War. Chair Hoang asked if assisting these communities requires an answer from the Board immediately. Ms. Her answered that she is in the exploratory phase – working with other organizations, such as the Minnesota Humanities Center – to determine what may be appropriate ways to lift up these communities and their experiences. Ms. Her does not need permission from the Board; she is asking for input from the Board members.

Dr. Ngodup asked what groups would be involved in these events. Ms. Her answered that the event she described was hypothetical, and not a currently planned event, but that it is her impression that the communities would lead the planning and execution of events, with the Council providing support with financing for space and food. Dr. Ngodup asked about the narrow focus on two communities within the “Southeast Asian diaspora.” Ms. Her said that the term refers to the four groups that became refugees at the end of the Vietnam war; specifically, the Hmong, Vietnamese, Cambodia, and Lao communities. This effort would focus on helping for the smaller two groups that lack the resources and organizational capacity to plan and hold events on their own, unlike the larger communities which have the capacity to execute events on their own. Dr. Ngodup expressed concern over the title of the initiative being overly broad.

Rep. Her stated her concern regarding hearing that the Council is perceived as picking and choosing what communities it supports, and that the Council will need to be deliberate about participating and providing support to all groups, even if not in a financial way, to avoid this perception. Sen. Laine stated that she does not believe that the Council has showed financial favoritism towards certain groups. Ms. Lee added that the Council has supported a wide range of communities that have approached the Council for assistance. Ms. Her acknowledged Rep. Her’s concern over perceptions of favoritism, adding that the Council supports communities in many ways, including through attendance by the Executive Director at community events in response to invitations. Ms. Her committed to attending as many events as possible and to approaching financial support in an equitable manner. Ms. Her also added that one narrative the Council must contend with is the perception that most of its attention is given to the larger, more politically powerful communities. Given that, Ms. Her is comfortable with an effort to lift up smaller communities to counter a perception that they are overlooked by the State, especially in this time of an important anniversary. Any situation will likely lead to healthy pushback, but Ms. Her committed to being communicative and intentional about the Council’s actions. Rep. Her stated that she did not mention this perception out of her personal concern, but that she has heard this concern about this perception, which is also directed at the MAP Caucus. Ms. Her thanked Rep. Her and described the gap between intention and perception as an ongoing challenge for the Council.

Chair Hoang asked if these planned events are still hypothetical or if there has been a formal request for financial assistance. Ms. Her confirmed that they are still hypothetical, and that we are still just exploring the possibilities.

X. ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE (API CCC) REPORT

Chair Hoang introduced Mr. Bai Vue, one of the three API CCC co-chairs to present on the activities of the API CCC. Mr. Vue described coming to the API CCC through his work with the Hmong Outreach Network and his desire to reach API community members through the API CCC. He shared that the CCC meetings have been held monthly since late November, with the next meeting planned for Friday, January 24.

Mr. Vue explained that the first meeting was focused on establishing sub-CCC's and electing co-chairs. Mr. Vue was the only co-chair available to attend today, but the others may attend future meetings.

Mr. Vue described the December API CCC meeting as focused on educating its members about the other API communities and the challenges they may face. Mr. Vue explained that there was also a procedural error that needed to be corrected at this meeting to renominate and elect the three co-chairs. Where the agenda was concerned, the Asian American Organizing Project presented on their Census Communication and Mobilization Plan and their efforts to identify key themes for barriers to outreach.

Mr. Vue noted that the co-chairs have also held separate meetings to work on a strategic outreach plan with Council staff to share with API CCC members, in order to focus their energy on the most helpful tasks. Feedback sheets have been provided at each meeting to solicit member feedback and focus future speakers and trainings. One element that will receive greater attention in future meetings is providing the CCC members with opportunities to share their successes and challenges and provide further information on Census jobs.

Mr. Vue asked if there were any questions. Ms. Lee asked about a flyer she had seen regarding an upcoming Hmong American Partnership (HAP) event. Ms. Her explained that any group can create and hold their own events. Mr. Vue explained that HAP is not connected to the API CCC and they have not sent a representative to the meetings. Ms. Her added that HAP will act on its own, doing what it feels is needed in the community. Also, HAP leadership has actively communicated with the Council, and they have expressed a willingness to provide support. Mr. Vue shared that other groups have also been open to collaboration.

Ms. Lee offered to help arrange space if any of the API CCC members need the assistance.

Rep. Her asked what communities and organizations have been involved in the API CCC and if there is an opportunity to make connections with others. Ms. Her referred Rep. Her to contact Ms. Anjuli Cameron and the API CCC co-chairs, who have more expertise on this question, to maximize synergy between various efforts. Ms. Her explained that mainstream organizations have participated in meetings in addition to local and community-centric groups. The API CCC actively supports smaller communities in setting up sub-CCCs. Rep. Her noted that certain groups are comfortable working directly with municipal officials. Ms. Her added that some groups, such as KOM, have collaborated with the city of Saint Paul' some groups are more comfortable working directly with Census officials; and some have asked the Council to assist them with interacting with the Census.

Dr. Ngodup asked if the Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota (TAFM) is engaged with the API CCC. Ms. Her answered that while there has been direct communication, TAFM has not actively attended. Community organizations such as TAFM are encouraged to reach out to professional organizations, such as the Tibetan Nurses Association, within their own communities when establishing sub-CCCs.

Dr. Ngodup asked if Mr. Vue is familiar with the Census form, if there is a difference between how race and ethnicity are handled. Ms. Her answered that there will be space provided for respondents to write in their response if their self-identified race or ethnicity is not listed. Mr. Morris added that Census officials have indicated that individuals are encouraged to respond in as many ways as they self-identify regarding race and ethnicity. Mr. Vue emphasized that Census officials focused on the possibility of multiple identities in responses. Dr. Ngodup followed up by saying he had heard confusion over how race and ethnicity are handled. Ms. Her committed to having Ms. Cameron follow up with Dr. Tsewang upon her return to the office.

Rep. Her asked Chair Hoang about potential data sharing between the Census and ICE and concerns that legislators in the House have been hearing. Ms. Her asked that the co-chairs and Ms. Cameron follow up with Rep. Her to provide clarity on this question.

Chair Hoang asked if it would be possible to share a slide deck from the State Demographer's office, which he found very helpful. Ms. Her answered that this would be possible, and that presentation materials from the API CCC meetings could be provided to the Board.

XI. LEADERSHIP AWARDS DINNER PLANNING COMMITTEE

Chair Hoang introduced the Leadership Awards Dinner Planning Committee for discussion.

Ms. Winey expressed relief at Ms. Her's focus on fundraising, lifting that burden off the Board members. This opens capacity for the Board to focus on planning.

Vice Chair Maeda nominated Ms. Winey to be Chair of the Planning Committee. Ms. Winey accepted the nomination.

Chair Hoang asked if a vote was necessary. The Board decided the Chair is empowered to appoint the Committee chair.

Chair Hoang appointed Ms. Winey as Chair of the Planning Committee.

Ms. Her asked the Board how they would proceed with adding members to the Committee. Board members decided that members will be able to join the committee by expressing a desire to join to Ms. Winey. The Committee will probably not begin meetings for another 2-3 months, once administrative tasks have progressed further. Vice Chair Maeda suggested an email be sent informing the full board of a summary of the discussion on the Dinner and inviting members to join the Committee. Ms. Her committed to sending such an email.

XII. API DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Ms. Her opened the conversation on API Day at the Capitol, referring to the entry in the Executive Director's Report.

Ms. Lee asked if a theme has been decided yet. Mr. Yang answered that the theme under consideration is celebrating a decade of success in the community and looking forward to building on these successes.

Ms. Lee asked if Board members and staff have seen an episode by comedian Hasan Minhaj about the Asian vote.

Rep. Her asked if we anticipate if any communities may undermine the Council's agenda at API Day. Ms. Her answered that she is paying attention to communities and does not at this time have any indication of that, but that we should be prepared in case this occurs.

Rep. Her shared that she will be heavily committed in committees and unfortunately will be unlikely to be able to participate. Ms. Her thanked Rep. Her and explained the decision-making process for selecting the date, and offered to work with community members to connect with Rep. Her. Chair Hoang thanked Rep. Her for her engagement.

XIII. COMMUNITY UPDATES

Chair Hoang asked Rep. Her to start the community updates segment of the meeting. Rep. Her said that the MAP Caucus is working with community members in Rochester, with Rep. Vang particularly involved, for the purpose of scheduling a meeting there. They are still waiting to hear about the progress of this request Rep. Vang made to the Rochester community members. Rep. Her added that she would ask her Legislative Assistant to reach out to the Council if it remains difficult to connect with the Rochester community members. Ms. Her directed her response to Greg Hubinger who was also present: how does a request from the MAP Caucus considering that the Council is a nonpartisan agency and the MAP Caucus is currently made up of only DFL members.

Rep. Her recognized the challenge of the MAP Caucus being composed entirely of DFL members, and the challenge of a perception that it is a partisan organization.

Dr. Ngodup shared that Tibetan New Year will be on February 25, based on the lunar calendar. Another main event is National Uprising Day. Rep. Her asked for information so that the MAP Caucus can attend.

Ms. Lee shared that the Korean New Year is February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Hoang shared that he joined Council staff at the Vietnamese New Year's celebration on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Maeda shared that the Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM) is planning its New Year's celebration for January 26<sup>th</sup>. The History Center is also planning an event on February 18<sup>th</sup> on the Japanese American experience in World War II in Minnesota.

Sen. Laine shared that she is retiring at the end of 2020 and that Rep. Kunes-Podein is running for the Senate seat she is vacating, so there will be an opening for that House seat. Sen. Laine said she made her decision over the holidays and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Council over the course of 8 years.

Ms. Winey shared that the Polynesian New Year/family day took place, but she was out of state and could not attend; she will attend the upcoming API CCC meeting.

Rep. Her asked if there was a running list of community events that could be shared with the Board. Ms. Winey said that they usually share with Ms. Her or at the Board meetings. Ms. Her added that the Council frequently does not receive much advance notice for events. Rep. Her shared that that has been her experience as well but added that even on short notice it would be helpful to be aware of events. Chair Hoang noted that the Council's invitation to the Vietnamese New Year only went out two weeks before the event. Ms. Her committed to discussing the issue with Council Staff to develop a procedure to share events.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.