
Meeting of the Board

November 16, 2023
5:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Location: Lady Slipper Room – Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street – Saint Paul, MN 55155

OR

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 651-395-7448](tel:+16513957448)

Phone Conference ID: 843 035 145 #

AGENDA

Time	Item	Information/Discussion/Action
5:00 P.M.	Public Comments (2 mins max per person)	Information/Discussion
5:10 P.M.	Board Business – Roll Call – Approval of July 20, 2023 Minutes – Approval of November 16, 2023 Agenda	Information/Discussion/Action
5:15 P.M.	Financial Report (Tracey Sigstad, SmART Director)	Information/Discussion
5:30 P.M.	Executive Director Report*	Information/Discussion
5:45 P.M.	Election of Executive Committee Officers (Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, subd. 3c and 4b)	Information/Discussion/Action
6:00 P.M.	Executive Committee Report	Information/Discussion
6:15 P.M.	Community Updates	Information/Discussion

Next Meeting of the Board: TBD

An agenda item with an * is an item the Council Board will take public comments on during the Public Comments time pursuant to the Council’s Policy on Community Input at Council Meetings.

A quorum exists when forty percent of voting members are present.

Minutes

Council Board Meeting

July 20, 2023

5:00 – 6:30 P.M.

Location: Lady Slipper Room – Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street – Saint Paul, MN 55155

OR

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Chair Singh called the meeting to order at 5:08 P.M.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Bryan Thao Worra

Dave Hoang

Chang Wang

Pia Puentespina

Ma Xiong

Saraswati Singh

Daisy Zan

Ngawang Dolker

Senator Susan Pha

Representative Liz Lee

Khendum Gyabak – Late arrival

Staff: Sia Her, Andrew Morris, Mai Tong Vang

Absent: Representative Jim Nash, Senator Eric Pratt, Elizabeth Eckman

With 10 out of 14 voting members present at the time of roll call, a quorum was present.

Meeting came to quorum at 5:10 pm.

Chair Singh welcomed the new Board member, Ms. Puentespina, and asked her to introduce herself. Ms. Puentespina thanked the Chair and introduced herself as the new Board member representing the Filipino community. The Chair also invited the rest of the Board members and staff to introduce themselves to Ms. Puentespina.

III. APPROVAL OF MARCH 16, 2023, MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the March 16 Board meeting.

BY: Bryan Thao Worra

SECOND: Chang Wang

The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF JULY 20, 2023, AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the July 20, 2023, Agenda

Chair Singh requested a motion to shelve the item of appointment to the Executive Committee until the September 21st meeting of the Board and explained to the Board that since only two legislative Board members are present, her recommendation is to have a full Board present to address this item.

Rep. Lee asked to verify if this was the second time the Chair is shelving the item of appointment to the Executive Committee and stated that she would like to ensure that this item is taken up at the September 21st meeting of the Board.

BY: Saraswati Singh

SECOND: Dave Hoang

ROLL CALL VOTE

All in favor:

Bryan Thao Worra

Dave Hoang

Chang Wang

Pia Puentespina

Ma Xiong

Saraswati Singh

Daisy Zan

Ngawang Dolker

Senator Susan Pha

Representative Liz Lee

Khendum Gyabak

All opposed:

NA

With 11 out of 11 voting members voting in favor of the motion at the time of roll call vote, the motion prevailed.

Chair Singh requested a motion to adopt the agenda as amended.

BY: Saraswati Singh

SECOND: Chang Wang

ROLL CALL VOTE

All in favor:

Bryan Thao Worra
Dave Hoang
Chang Wang
Pia Puentespina
Ma Xiong
Saraswati Singh
Daisy Zan
Ngawang Dolker
Senator Susan Pha
Representative Liz Lee
Khendum Gyabak

All opposed:

NA

With 11 out of 11 voting members voting in favor of the motion at the time of roll call vote, the motion prevailed.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT

Chair Singh and Mr. Hoang referred to Ms. Her to discuss the financial report. Ms. Her directed the Board's attention to the monthly Manager's Financial Report and shared that she had no concerns with the current report. She further explained that a final report will be available to the Board at the September meeting and this final report will reflect any unexpended money, which will then be returned to the state since the last fiscal year was the second year of the previous biennium.

Chair Singh asked Ms. Her to explain to the Board what a biennium means and how much money the Council has for the next two years. Ms. Her explained that each fiscal year starts on July 1st and ends on June 30th and a biennium is two fiscal years. The current fiscal year is 2024 and 2025. Ms. Her added that Mr. Morris will be able to communicate the dollar amount of the Council's budget during his presentation on the legislative session.

VI. 2023 SESSION UPDATES

Chair Singh invited Mr. Morris to present on the legislative session. Mr. Morris stated that due to the number of new Board members, he will provide some background and context for the session, as well as a refresher on how the Council determines the legislative agenda.

Record budget surplus

- \$72 billion state budget passed in total for next biennium.
- Record \$17.5 billion budget surplus available this session, after accounting for inflation.
- Most funds are one-time, carried over from previous biennium.

First unified control of state government in a decade

- House, Senate, and Governor's office controlled by DFL – Governor Walz was re-elected in the November 2022 elections.
- Moved quickly to act on priority bills – the majority party can pursue their agenda if they have the time and the votes. The part-time legislature is mandated by the Constitution to complete their work by mid-May.
- Record-setting pace for bill introductions and hearings.
 - As of the end of the session, 26% more bills have been introduced compared to the previous biennium, which set a previous record.

The Council determines its legislative agenda through community input:

- Community Priorities Survey – The Council conducts a survey of our communities in advance of the start of a new biennium. Last year, staff collected a sample size of around 360 surveys; in the survey, community members can identify three priority issues and select one high-priority issue within those three options and have the option to provide a written response. Mr. Morris further explained that the Research Director would analyze the results and provide a full report; however, with the absence of the Council's Research Director and as she was on maternity leave prior to her departure, the report is in the process of being finalized for publication.
- Community Conversations – Last year, staff held a series of community conversations with targeted groups and leaders within different communities. The findings of these conversations are intended to supplement the findings of the Community Priority Survey.
- Community engagement and attending events – In addition, staff supplement the survey with ongoing outreach and engagement at community events.

Council's legislative work during the 2023-2024 session and outcomes in priority areas:

- Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse – Council staff focused and advocated on behalf of community mental health and substance abuse and in the context of the impact of anti-Asian hate. This included a focus on youth mental health and substance abuse needs, working with partners such as the Karen Organization of Minnesota, in supporting culturally relevant mental health resources in schools. Additionally, the legislature appropriated resources for adults with serious mental health illnesses and culturally specific mental health counselors. As anti-Asian hate continues to be a concern in our communities, and was cited as a factor impacting community members' mental health, the Council also supported legislation to address malicious conduct in schools and a measure to provide for a greater level of reporting and training for acts of bias among law enforcement individuals.
- Higher Education – In partnership with the other ethnic councils, the Council continued to support the Increase Teachers of Color Act, which includes both E12 and Higher Education components. The Higher Education portion included targeted funds within priority areas at \$3.85 million dollars for unrepresented student teacher grants, as well as \$2 million to the teacher shortage repayment program for aspiring teachers of color.
- Equity – The Council continued to advise and support nonprofit organizations in their workforce development programs. The Council also supported legislation to provide capacity-building grants to smaller nonprofits through Propel Nonprofits, and the Council plans to advise Propel Nonprofits on how to implement this process for organizations in our community. The Council convened meetings and suggested language to improve the bill seeking to establish the Office

of New Americans within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The Council also supported the establishment of ethnic studies curriculums in secondary schools from both equity and achievement gap perspectives, with the goal of promoting civic engagement of students in our communities. In addition, the Council provided technical support and advice for community initiatives, including supporting requests from the Changsha Peace Garden and TAFM that were funded and SEWA's bonding request, which was not included in the final bonding bill.

- **Achievement Gap** – The Council's major effort, as it has been for years now, was supporting the Increase Teachers of Color Act as a means to closing the achievement gap, which as previously mentioned includes Higher Education and an E12 component. For the first time in the state's history, an officially established target for increasing the number of teachers of color was established, which the Council hopes will create an increased sense of urgency and accountability in reaching these goals. The Council also supported increases in funding for English language learners.
- **Access to Healthcare** – The Council communicated with community members to help them understand some of the more complicated legislative proposals, such as the establishment of a paid family and medical leave program and earned sick and safe time. In previous bienniums, the Council supported the goal of establishing paid family and medical leave program without having endorsed a pathway to that goal.
- **API Day at the Capitol** – Mr. Morris reminded the Board that the Council's API Day at the Capitol took place on April 11th. This year, the Council partnered with 15 organizations to elevate the work of state API nonprofits in consideration of the fact that the event program didn't have time for each organization to speak about the great work they do. He added that there were an estimated 250-300 attendees at this year's API Day at the Capitol.

Chair Singh commended the staff for inviting the Governor to speak at the rally. She also thanked Rep. Lee and Sen. Pha for speaking at API Day as the two newly appointed legislative Board members to the Council.

Ms. Her reminded the Board that Ms. Cameron—the research director— and Mr. Morris—the legislative liaison—are two sides of the same coin: Ms. Cameron's research work supports Mr. Morris's legislative work. Due to Ms. Cameron being on maternity leave since November of 2022 and then her recent departure, Mr. Morris was not as active on the legislative front as it relates to health (Ms. Cameron has been the Council's lead staff on health-related efforts). For example, Ms. Her explained, Ms. Cameron led the medical interpreting bill, a significant legislative proposal. Ms. Her looks forward to hiring someone who will be able to continue the great work Ms. Cameron has done. Mr. Morris added that Ms. Cameron departed from the Council for her new role as the new CEO at SEWA.

The Executive Committee asked Mr. Morris to walk the Board through the Council's change item request. He explained that every two years, in advance of the new biennium, every state agency puts together a change item request in which they anticipate what their budgetary needs will be for the new biennium. This request is then submitted to Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) for the Governor's consideration and possible inclusion in his request for funding for state government.

The Council's 2022 change item request and Governor's recommendation

- Council requested 14% increase over base (\$72,000 for FY24 and \$77,000 for FY25).
- Engagement with Committee Chairs began before the 2023 session.
- Governor Walz recommended an 18% increase over base (\$89,000 for FY24 and \$111,000 for FY25).
- The total Council budget in the new biennium will be \$623,000 in the first year and \$645,000 in the second year.

The Council requested an increase over its base budget in FY24-25 to:

- Recruit and retain full-time employees and contractors with specific skill sets.
- Strengthen relationships with Asian Pacific communities in greater Minnesota.
- Build on existing body of original research.
- Account for increased businesses expenses.

Mr. Morris proceeded to explain that between when the proposal was submitted in late 2022, other critical variables that would influence the Governor's recommendation for the Council included the 2022 state and national election. To best position the Council to succeed with its change item request, staff met with the House Chair of State Government and began updating the agency overview presentation in preparation for the beginning of the new legislative session. By the time the session began, staff felt they had done what they could and should to position the Council to succeed given the information available to staff (such as who the Chairs are, what the budget surplus looks like, etc.)

The Council continued engagement with key legislators and the Governor's office throughout session:

- Council staff met with individual members of the State Government Committees in both the House and Senate to discuss the Council's work and change item request.
- Recognizing now that no change item request was too irrational/too large, Council staff met with the Governor's policy staff to discuss the Governor's proposed budgets for the ethnic councils and the resulting disparities between these budgets. At this time, the three councils' original requests and the Governor's recommendations meant the following:
 - 2 additional staff for African Heritage Council = 46% increase over base budget.
 - 1 additional staff for Latino Affairs Council = 24% increase over base budget.
 - Maintain current capacity for Asian Pacific Council = 18% increase over base budget – A 25% gap from the African Heritage Council, which is about \$350,000 over the course of biennium.
- The Council testified in both Senate and House State Government committees.
 - 10 minutes in Senate in February: provided agency overview.
 - 3 minutes in House in March: provided agency overview.

Mr. Morris proceeded to explain that on Friday, March 17th the Speaker of the House, the Senate Majority leader, and the Governor reached their global budget targets. Shortly following the announcement of these targets, the House and the Senate State Government Committees adopted the Governor's proposals as is. Therefore, Council staff prepared an amendment to the original request to increase staff capacity by one additional full-time staff. If granted, this request would

also close the disparity between the proposals for the ethnic councils. Ms. Her provided additional information to offer Board members with a more nuanced understanding of the process by which state agencies submit change item requests. She explained that in previous years, during uncertain times, MMB has instructed agencies to provide two budget requests: (1) the minimum amount needed to maintain current operations, and (2) an increase to the base budget to better meet the needs of the state given the agency's role and responsibilities. In previous year, even in an "ideal" request, a 14% increase would have been considered by most to be unrealistic, if not inconsiderate. Ms. Her consulted with SmART, the Council's executive budget officer, and the Council's Executive Committee, and concluded that a request for a 14% increase still had a slim chance of success. Therefore, Ms. Her was taken aback to learn that requests five times the Council's request were being considered. The proposed disparities between the ethnic councils' budgets prompted Council staff to approach the Governor and legislators to ask them to reconsider and minimize the gap between our Council and the other ethnic councils. The Senate finally heard the Council and accepted an amendment in Finance to give the Council an additional \$250,000.00; however, the House refused to adopt the Senate's position, so the \$250,000 failed to progress out of conference committee.

Ms. Her expressed her concern that perhaps this amount of information might be difficult for all Board members to digest at this time, and that she recommends that this presentation be provided to the Board again at a retreat soon. This, she elaborated, would help individual Board members better understand the process by which state agencies put together budget requests and the legislative process. Mr. Morris concluded this segment of the meeting with sharing that staff submitted a letter, which was drafted in close consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer to the House and the Senate floors expressing the Council's disappointment with this outcome.

Rep. Lee asked if staff submitted a letter to the conference committee about the budget request. Mr. Morris answered that a letter was submitted to the committee, but that staff were unable to testify in person because the hearing at which public testimony was scheduled to be heard was rescheduled, and by the time the gavel went from the Senate to the House, a decision had been made to decline spoken testimony.

Mr. Hoang agreed that the Council should carefully analyze the process and the budget at the upcoming Board retreat. He asked Ms. Her about two items: (1) can the Council accept this outcome; and (2) should the Council continue to insist on equitable funding in relations to the other two ethnic councils? Ms. Her thanked Mr. Hoang for his questions and responded: (1) yes; and (2) every legislative year is an opportunity for the Council to continue to advocate for equal treatment. She further explained that if there is a supplemental budget next year, staff can work with the Governor, his team, and members of the legislature on a supplemental budget request.

Mr. Hoang also asked Sen. Pha and Rep. Lee what they think of the Council's legislative work and how we can improve the Council's advocacy work next legislative session. Sen. Pha shared that she was very excited to work with the Council on community issues and as person of Asian ancestry, she is happy that the Council exists. She shared her disappointment with the lack of engagement with staff and stated that she did not know of the budget item until voting day. Sen. Pha also noted that she might have been able to make a difference in committee had she known the background of the Council's request earlier on. She further shared her disappointment with the lack of engagement

with the MAP Caucus; she believes that the MAP Caucus could have positively influenced the Council's change item request. Sen. Pha concluded that she is excited to be on the Council's Board and looks forward to advocating and representing our communities.

Rep. Lee agreed with Sen. Pha that better communication would have been helpful, particularly given the Council's staffing shortage during the 2023 session. Rep. Lee suggested that a staffing plan could better position the Council to fulfill its duties during anticipated staffing shortfalls. Rep. Lee also shared that she is curious about the conversations with the Governor's office regarding the Council's budget request. Rep. Lee shared her experience working in Congress on appropriations, and that she would have expected budget numbers to match between the Council's request and the Governor's proposal. She is hopeful for more work with the Council moving forward.

Chair Singh thanked Mr. Hoang, the two legislative members, members of the Executive Committee, and the Council staff for this discussion.

VII. APPOINTMENTS TO THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSPERSON FOR ASIAN PACIFIC FAMILIES

Next, Chair Singh reminded the Board that the Chair is given the responsibility of appointing members to the Board of the Office of Ombudsperson for Asian Pacific Families. Chair Singh explained that she received materials and recommendations from staff, and these included documents, resumes, and recommendation letters from the staff at the Ombudsperson's office. Chair Singh proceeded to explain that she is choosing to share this information with the Board even though she is not required to and has already vetted the information and made the decision to appoint four applicants to the Board of the Office of Ombudsperson for Asian Pacific Families: Brook Mallak, Derek Kuns, Julie Le, and Yi Li You.

VIII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Singh directed the Board's attention to the Executive Committee Report and opened the floor for any questions before moving to the next item.

IX. COMMUNITY UPDATES

Chair Singh shared that the Indian community is celebrating the annual IndiaFest at the Capitol grounds on August 12th and invited the Board to join the celebration.

Vice Chair Wang shared that the Minnesota History Society approved a project called Chinese in Minnesota and it will be led by a professor from the U of M—Duluth and added that there will be more updates to come.

Mr. Hoang informed the Board that he is committing himself to having continuous conversations with legislators to ensure more equitable treatment of the Council. He explained that this is because community members feel empowered after this legislative session, and they also feel that the Council was left behind.

Ms. Dolker shared that TAFM had a four-day Tibetan event at the end of June in the Twin Cities called "The Midwest Meet," where Tibetan communities attended from Chicago, Wisconsin, and communities all over North America. This event had a sports tournament, a concert, and other entertainment. Ms. Dolker also shared that on July 7th, TAFM held the celebration of the Dalai Lama's 88th birthday in Isanti, MN. She added that TAFM is starting a new preschool program for 3–



4-year-olds to start learning the Tibetan language in addition to Tibetan language school on the weekends for K-8 students. This school will start in September, and September 2nd is Tibetan Democracy Day.

Ms. Puentespina shared that she is planning to attend Philippine Day on Sunday, July 23 from 12:00 to 5:00 PM in Woodbury with Ms. Her, and she invited the rest of the Board to join the festival.

Mr. Thao Worra shared that on August 15th celebrations and observations marking the 50th Anniversary since the end of U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia will take place. He added that the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota will celebrate their 40th anniversary on October 14th and he looks forward to seeing everyone there.

Ms. Zan stated that she is excited to see the priority issues for the legislative agenda, however, she does not see housing included, and shared that the Karen community raised this as a priority issue. She proceeded to share that Karen Martyr's Day will be on August 12th in Austin and the Karen Organization of Minnesota will extend an invitation to Council staff, and this invitation is open to the Board as well.

Chair Singh adjourned the meeting at 6:38 P.M.

Selection Criteria: Budget Period - 2024, Fund - 1000 to 6000, DeptID - G9N30000 to G9N3ZZZZ, AppropID - G9N0000 to G9NZZZZ

Break On: Budget Period, Fund, DeptID, AppropID

Budget Period: 2024	Fund: 1000 General	DeptID: G9N31000 Asian-Pacific Council	AppropID: G9N1100 Council on Asian Pacific MN
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Remaining Payroll Projection	Full-Time (41000): \$225,479.76	Part-Time (41030): \$0.00	Total: \$225,479.76
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Account Class and Description	Current Budget	Pre-Encumbered	Encumbered/Committed	Expended	Unobligated	Unexpended
41000 Full Time - Salary	410,000.00	0.00	322,076.83	87,923.17	0.00	322,076.83
41050 Overtime and Premium Pay	14,000.00	0.00	12,106.70	1,893.30	0.00	12,106.70
41070 Other Employee Cost	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
41100 Space Rental And Utilities	23,000.00	0.00	16,487.74	5,626.26	886.00	17,373.74
41110 Printing And Advertising	9,500.00	0.00	163.31	0.00	9,336.69	9,500.00
41130 Prof-Tech Serv-Outside Vend	55,000.00	0.00	34,949.00	8,375.00	11,676.00	46,625.00
41155 Communications	1,000.00	0.00	750.36	199.64	50.00	800.36
41160 Trav-Sub-InState-Border Comm	3,500.00	0.00	1,450.00	479.72	1,570.28	3,020.28
41170 Trav/Sub-OutOfState-BorderComm	4,000.00	0.00	50.00	3,941.69	8.31	58.31
41180 Employee Development	2,000.00	0.00	1,005.00	0.00	995.00	2,000.00
41190 State Agcy-Prov Prof-Tech Serv	500.00	0.00	4,999.00	0.00	-4,499.00	500.00
41196 Rate-Based MNIT Services	19,000.00	0.00	15,505.82	2,994.18	500.00	16,005.82
41197 Agency-Specific MNIT Services	5,000.00	0.00	1,590.92	1,634.08	1,775.00	3,365.92
41300 Supplies	8,000.00	0.00	422.62	21.60	7,555.78	7,978.40
41400 Equipment	4,000.00	0.00	3,810.63	0.00	189.37	4,000.00
41500 Repairs To Equip and Furn	3,000.00	0.00	1,088.75	0.00	1,911.25	3,000.00
43000 Other Operating Costs	60,500.00	0.00	5,492.58	2,455.55	52,551.87	58,044.45
Total	623,000.00	0.00	422,949.26	115,544.19	84,506.55	507,455.81
Report Total	623,000.00	0.00	422,949.26	115,544.19	84,506.55	507,455.81

Executive Director's Report

November 16, 2023

I. Administrative/Projects

- A. Financial Report: The November 2023 Manager's Financial Report is included in the meeting materials for this meeting of the Board. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #3*
- B. Board Appointments: Of the eleven seats reserved for the Governor's appointees, one is vacant and three have incumbents whose terms will end as of January 2023 – the Asian Indian, Hmong, and Vietnamese. We have informed these members of their respective situation; the Secretary of State's Office has published these vacancies. Conversations with the Governor's staff indicate that the Governor will appoint to these seats in May, 2024. At this time, all four legislative seats are filled – Sen. Eric Pratt, Rep. Jim Nash, Rep. Liz Lee, and Sen. Susan Pha. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #4*
- C. Asian Pacific Minnesotans Leadership Awards Dinner: We are in the very early stages of the planning process for this event in 2024. At this time, I expect that the Dinner will take place in September, 2024. This upcoming Dinner should be even more memorable than the last, even though the last was quite an achievement. One of the reasons why this Dinner should and will require a great deal of investment from the Council is because 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the Council (created in 1985). Since we will not be hosting a Dinner in 2025, we should capitalize on the 2024 Dinner as appropriate. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*
- D. 2023 Report: Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, subd. 8, we must submit a report by January 15 of each year to the chairs of the committees in the House and the Senate with primary jurisdiction over state government finance and operations. We have completed a first draft of the report and expect to finish it on time. The 2024 legislative session will begin February 12; as such, we will plan to send out hardcopies of this report to all legislators, cabinet agencies, and local government and nonprofits partners by end of February. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #3*
- E. Change Item Request: MMB released instructions for agencies that may wish to request funding through the Governor's 2024 Supplemental Budget. As discussed by the Executive Committee at the end of the 2023 legislative session, I have submitted to MMB the requested regarding our ask of an additional \$260,000.00 over the course of the biennium. This supplemental budget request—if we are successful—will allow us to add one FTE to our current team of four FTEs. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #1-#4*
- F. Mapping Asian Pacific Minnesota: We are still in the very early stages of this project. However, I have had preliminary discussions with potential key partners such as Minnesota Tourism, Office of New Americans, and the Minnesota Humanities Center about the Mapping Asian Pacific Minnesota Project. At this time, with this project we seek to identify and map cultural, religious/faith, and economic destinations pertaining to or established by Asian Pacific Minnesotans that have increasingly become attractions for all Minnesotans and draw visitors

from out of the state and country. These places have also become essential indicators of an increasingly diverse and culturally dynamic Minnesota that, as perceived by Asian Americans elsewhere in the country, makes Minnesota an increasingly likely place to call home. If all goes as planned, we hope to begin more robust conversations with other potential partners in the spring of 2024.

- G. 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War: In the eyes of many in our Southeast Asian refugee experienced communities, 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon/the end of the Southeast Asian conflict known as the Vietnam War. The fall of Saigon can be seen as the impetus for the movement of four of our communities out of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Understanding the significance of this historical anniversary, the Council has been in conversations with community members for more than a year now about how a commemoration program might look like in 2025. Having arrived at a better understanding of where affected communities are, the Council seeks to have a series of four highly preliminary conversations with the four communities involved: the Vietnamese, Lao, Cambodian, and Hmong ancestry communities. These conversations will shed light on what potential next steps the Council could take as we march closer to the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.
- A. Communications: We continue to implement and edit our communications plan by paying attention to how we communicate with our diverse communities. In a coordinated effort between staff and our communications contractor, we continue to create original content that is shared via GovDelivery, our website, and social media. Since the last meeting of the Board, staff has made significant changes to our Council website, such as sunsetting the Afghanistan Evacuees landing page and unpublishing information on the Special Projects Committee. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1-#4.*

II. Staff – Our current staff roster is as follows:

- Sia Her – Executive Director (FTE)
- Vacant – Research Director (FTE) – Anjuli’s last day was 6/16/23; *position posted since 10/20/23*
- Mai Tong Vang – Office Manager (FTE)
- Andrew Morris – Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison (FTE)

In addition to our FTE staff team, we also have three contractors:

- Kim Jackson – Our graphic designer; she’s been with us since I started at the Council.
- Liz Star – Our communications expert; she’s been with us since 2019.
- Chou Moua – Our data expert; he’s been with us off and on over the years, but joined us again in 2022 to help us out during Anjuli’s absence. Since then, he’s continued with us as a contractor, serving as our lead data expert while we seek to fill the research director position here at the Council.

III. Our work with the legislative branch – During the interim, the nature and frequency of our work with legislators varies depending on the needs of legislators and our communities. In the last few

months, we have called legislators when community leaders have requested their presence at events.

- IV. Our work with the executive branch** – To deliver on our statutory duties, we partner with the cabinet agencies. Depending on the nature of the work at hand, our partnerships with each of the cabinet agencies vary in breadth and depth. We provide input on grant-making processes, participate as members of task forces/working groups/etc., and facilitate relationships between representatives of the cabinet agencies and our communities. Below, I provide an update on key initiatives we are assisting the cabinet agencies with. This is not an exhaustive list, but it provides the Board with an understanding of the work we are doing as we strive to assist state government with its responsibilities on behalf of Minnesotans.
- A. Department of Public Safety (DPS): We have a robust relationship with this department because of our long standing shared effort to end gender-based violence and because of ongoing community concerns about Asian hate. We remain in active communication with Commissioner Jacobson and his staff because of some dynamics unique to our communities and some current events that require our Council’s presence in conversations. At the moment, our work with the department is focused on the following issues:
- **Office of Justice Program/Gender-based Violence**: In the last six months, several heartbreaking instances of intimate partner violence have occurred in our largest Asian Pacific Minnesotan community. While violence against women increased across all communities throughout the pandemic, we at the Council know that in our community, this violence encapsulates so many underlying issues: gender equality and equity, public safety, public health, mental health, and more. Having taken on gender-based violence as a priority issue in the last seven years, we have consistently followed developments on this issue in our communities. We communicate often with the DPS to ensure that we are sharing our knowledge and understanding of this issue as it is playing in our communities. IN the last few months, staff have met with key staff from the department to discuss how we can support each other in this work to minimize gender-based violence. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*
 - **Introducing Commissioner Jacobson to Communities**: Continuing the strong relationship Commissioner Harrington had with our communities, Commissioner Jacobson has committed to being present in our communities. Since coming into office, Commissioner Jacobson has sought our advice and support on issues such as the Saint Paul Police-involved killing of a Hmong elder and translation of DPS materials in order to foster greater understanding of the work of DPS. Commissioner Jacobson has also spoken at several events in our community, including Songkran at the Capitol, Cambodian Heritage Day Celebration, and MinnesoThai. When tragedies involving our communities have occurred, Commissioner Jacobson has made it his priority to inform me and when appropriate, sought my advice on how we might engage with relevant stakeholders. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1-#4*
- B. Department of Education (MDE): Commissioner Jett has made it a priority to meet with our office on a quarterly basis to discuss his department’s ledigslative and community-engagement priorities. Since the last meeting of the Board, Andy and I have met with Commissioner Jett and

his team twice, for conversations about MDE's community engagement work, what we know about the education-related challenges our youth are facing, and MDE's 2024 legislative priorities. Commissioner Jett has also been accessible to our communities and made it his priority to also be present, especially in our communities whose children may be the most vulnerable to falling behind in their education. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*

- C. Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED): Council staff continue to communicate with the Office of New Americans. Since the last meeting of the Board, we have not had an opportunity to meet with this office; however, we have extended invitations to Assistant Commissioner Mohamed to join us at community events so that he may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of our communities. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #3 and #4*
- D. Department of Health (MDH): We have not been as active with MDH since our last meeting of the Board. As necessary, Andy does follow up with MDH staff on the issue of gender-based violence. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1- #4*
- E. Governor's Office: Since the end of the 2023 legislative session, we have communicated with the Governor's office on issues such as our 2023 budget request, community requests for the Governor's presence, and the Governor's appointees to our Board. Also, since Dr. Stephanie Burrage came on as the Chief Equity Officer, I have met with her twice now; we have quarterly meetings in place to ensure continual communication. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1- #4*
- F. Department of Human Services (DHS): We continue to engage with the department as it relates to our statutory role on the CECL and the resettlement of Afghan refugees in Minnesota. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*

In addition to the commitments identified under this section of the report, we also provide support to or we are mandated to serve on several statewide taskforces, advisory boards, and councils.

V. Community Outreach/Engagement

- A. Speaking Events: Speaking engagements are important for several reasons, one of which is that they contribute to building awareness and understanding of the Council, and allow us to either begin to establish, or continue to reaffirm our Council's credibility as a government agency with its unique role and responsibilities. Since the last Board meeting, our Council staff or Board members have served as a speaker at the following events:
 - Meeting Between Governor Walz & Thailand's Ambassador Tanee Sangrat – May 26, 2023
 - 190th Anniversary of Thailand and U.S Diplomacy – May 26, 2023*
 - 2023 Songkran Gala – May 26, 2023*
 - Xiong Clan New Year's Celebration – October 21, 2023
 - Filipino Cultural Society of MN Induction Ceremony – October 28, 2023
- B. Community Events: Community events during which our Council is just another participant are some of the most informative and effective community/relationship building spaces to be in. It

is during these times that we have more personalized conversations, meet, and get to know new people, build awareness of our Council, and learn from community members on their own turf. I thank our legislative members, Sen. Pratt, Speaker Hortman, and Rep. Nash for their strong commitment to building relationships with and learning from our diverse Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. Since the meeting of the Board in May, we have attended the following community events:

- Asian Fair (Plymouth) – June 3, 2023
- Hmong Qeej Festival – June 4, 2023
- Tibetan Midwest Meet in MN – July 1, 2023
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Birthday Celebration – July 6, 2023
- Meet & Greet for Dr. Stephanie Burrage – July 14, 2023
- Phillipine Day – July 23, 2023*
- Nepali Community's Summer Picnic Event – July 29, 2023
- MN Hmong Educators Coalition Retreat – July 29, 2023
- IndiaFest – August 12, 2023*
- Governor Walz’s Visit with Watt Munisotaram – August 19, 2023
- Karen Wrist-Tying Ceremony – August 20, 2023
- Japanese Lantern Festival – August 20, 2023
- Sip, Savor & Support: HAP-enings with HAP CEO – August 23, 2023
- Meeting with Royal Thai Consulate of Chicago – September 14, 2023
- MinnesoThai – September 16, 2023
- VIP Dinner (Cambodian Heritage Celebration) – September 22, 2023
- Cambodian Heritage Celebration – September 23, 2023
- Hmong Chamber of Commerce Fundraiser – October 1, 2023
- Chinese Social Services 20th Anniversary Celebration – October 7, 2023
- Watt Munisotaram Ancestral Ceremony – October 17, 2023
- Moon Festival (Mall of America) – October 17, 2023
- Minnesota State Chancellor Inaugural Address – October 16, 2023
- Diwali at the Capitol – October 18, 2023
- 16th Anniversary Conferment of HHTDL Congressional Gold Medal Award – October 21, 2023
- Hmong National Development Symposium – October 26-28, 2023
- Thao Clan New Year’s Celebration – October 28, 2023
- 71st Fil-MN Annual Ball & Election of Officers Gala – November 4, 2023
- Passports to the Humanities (VIP Reception) – November 10, 2023

Speaking at key gatherings and attending community events/meetings address all four goals of the Council’s Strategic Plan.

15.0145 ETHNIC COUNCILS.

Subdivision 1. **Three ethnic councils; creation.** (a) The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs includes public members with an ethnic heritage from Mexico, any of the countries in Central or South America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Puerto Rico.

(b) The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage includes public members of black African ancestry.

(c) The Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans includes public members with an ethnic heritage from any of the countries east of, and including, Afghanistan or the Pacific Islands.

Subd. 2. **Membership.** (a) Each council has 15 voting members. Eleven members of each council are public members appointed by the governor. Four members of each council are legislators.

(b) The governor shall appoint 11 members of each council as follows:

(1) the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs must include one member representing each of the state's congressional districts and three members appointed at large. The council must include at least five women. The governor must attempt to ensure that the demographic composition of council members accurately reflects the demographic composition of Minnesota's Latino community, including recent immigrants, as determined by the state demographer;

(2) the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage must include members who are broadly representative of the African heritage community of the state. The council must include at least five women. At least three members must be first or second generation African immigrants, who generally reflect the demographic composition of these African immigrants, as determined by the state demographer; and

(3) the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans must include one member from each of the five ancestries with the state's highest percentages of Asian-Pacific populations, as determined by the state demographer. The other six members must be broadly representative of the rest of the Asian-Pacific population, with no more than one council member from any one ancestry. The council must include at least five women. For purposes of this clause, ancestry refers to heritage that is commonly accepted in Minnesota as a unique population.

(c) Four legislators are voting members of each council. The speaker of the house and the house minority leader shall each appoint one member to each council. The Subcommittee on Committees of the senate Committee on Rules and Administration shall appoint one member of the majority caucus and one member of the minority caucus to each council.

(d) The governor may appoint a commissioner of a state agency or a designee of that commissioner to serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of a council.

Subd. 3. **Appointments; terms; removal.** (a) In making appointments to a council, the governor shall consider an appointee's proven dedication and commitment to the council's community and any expertise possessed by the appointee that might be beneficial to the council, such as experience in public policy, legal affairs, social work, business, or management. The executive director of a council and legislative members may offer advice to the governor on applicants seeking appointment.

(b) Terms, compensation, and filling of vacancies for members appointed by the governor are as provided in section 15.059. Removal of members appointed by the governor is governed by section 15.059, except that: (1) a member who missed more than half of the council meetings convened during a 12-month period automatically is removed from the council; and (2) a member appointed by the governor may be removed

by a vote of three of the four legislative members of the council. The chair of a council shall inform the governor of the need for the governor to fill a vacancy on the council. Legislative members serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

(c) A member appointed by the governor may serve no more than a total of eight years on a council. A legislator may serve no more than eight consecutive years or 12 nonconsecutive years on any one council.

Subd. 4. Training; executive committee; meetings; support. (a) A member appointed by the governor must attend orientation training within the first six months of service for the member's initial term. The commissioner of administration must arrange for the training to include but not be limited to the legislative process, government data practices, open meeting law, Robert's Rules of Order, fiscal management, and human resources. The governor must remove a member who does not complete the training.

(b) Each council shall annually elect from among the members appointed by the governor a chair and other officers it deems necessary. These officers and one legislative member selected by the council shall serve as the executive committee of the council.

(c) Forty percent of voting members of a council constitutes a quorum. A quorum is required to conduct council business. A council member may not vote on any action if the member has a conflict of interest under section 10A.07.

(d) Each council shall receive administrative support from the commissioner of administration under section 16B.371. The council may contract in its own name but may not accept or receive a loan or incur indebtedness except as otherwise provided by law. Contracts must be approved by a majority of the members of the council and executed by the chair and the executive director. The council may apply for, receive, and expend in its own name grants and gifts of money consistent with the powers and duties specified in this section.

(e) The attorney general shall provide legal services to the councils on behalf of the state on all matters relating to the councils, including matters relating to the state as the employer of the executive directors of the council, and other council staff.

Subd. 5. Executive director; staff. (a) The Legislative Coordinating Commission must appoint an executive director for each council. The executive director must be experienced in administrative activities and familiar with the challenges and needs of the ethnic council's larger community. The executive director serves in the unclassified service at the pleasure of the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

(b) The Legislative Coordinating Commission must establish a process for recruiting and selecting applicants for the executive director positions. This process must include consultation and collaboration with the applicable council.

(c) The executive director and applicable council members must work together in fulfilling council duties. The executive director must consult with the commissioner of administration to ensure appropriate financial, purchasing, human resources, and other services for operation of the council.

(d) Once appointed, each council is responsible for supervising the work of its director. The council chair must report to the chair of the Legislative Coordinating Commission regarding the performance of the executive director, including any recommendations regarding disciplinary actions. The executive director must appoint and supervise the work of other staff necessary to carry out the duties of the council. The executive director must consult with the council chair prior to taking the following disciplinary actions with council staff: written reprimand, suspension, demotion, or discharge. The executive director and other council staff are executive branch employees.

(e) The executive director must submit the council's biennial budget request to the commissioner of management and budget as provided under chapter 16A.

(f) The Legislative Coordinating Commission may delegate its responsibilities under this section to a subcommittee or subgroup of the commission or the chair of the council.

Subd. 6. Duties of council. (a) A council must work for the implementation of economic, social, legal, and political equality for its constituency. The council shall work with the legislature and governor to carry out this work by performing the duties in this section.

(b) A council shall advise the governor and the legislature on issues confronting the constituency of the council. This may include, but is not limited to, presenting the results of surveys, studies, and community forums to the appropriate executive departments and legislative committees.

(c) A council shall advise the governor and the legislature of administrative and legislative changes needed to improve the economic and social condition of the constituency of the council. This may include but is not limited to working with legislators to develop legislation to address these issues and to work for passage of the legislation. This may also include making recommendations regarding the state's affirmative action program and the state's targeted group small business program, or working with state agencies and organizations to develop business opportunities and promote economic development for the constituency of the council.

(d) A council shall advise the governor and the legislature of the implications and effect of proposed administrative and legislative changes on the constituency of the council. This may include but is not limited to tracking legislation, testifying as appropriate, and meeting with executive departments and legislators.

(e) A council shall serve as a liaison between state government and organizations that serve the constituency of the council. This may include but is not limited to working with these organizations to carry out the duties in paragraphs (a) to (d), and working with these organizations to develop informational programs or publications to involve and empower the constituency in seeking improvement in their economic and social conditions.

(f) A council shall perform or contract for the performance of studies designed to suggest solutions to the problems of the constituency of the council in the areas of education, employment, human rights, health, housing, social welfare, and other related areas.

(g) In carrying out duties under this subdivision, councils may act to advise on issues that affect the shared constituencies of more than one council.

Subd. 7. Duties of council members. A council member shall:

(1) attend and participate in scheduled meetings and be prepared by reviewing meeting notes;

(2) maintain and build communication with the community represented;

(3) collaborate with the council and executive director in carrying out the council's duties; and

(4) participate in activities the council or executive director deem appropriate and necessary to facilitate the goals and duties of the council.

Subd. 8. Reports. A council must report on the measurable outcomes achieved in the council's current strategic plan to meet its statutory duties, along with the specific objectives and outcome measures proposed for the following year. The council must submit the report by January 15 each year to the chairs of the

committees in the house of representatives and the senate with primary jurisdiction over state government operations. Each report must cover the calendar year of the year before the report is submitted. The specific objectives and outcome measures for the following current year must focus on three or four achievable objectives, action steps, and measurable outcomes for which the council will be held accountable. The strategic plan may include other items that support the statutory purposes of the council but should not distract from the primary statutory proposals presented. The biennial budget of each council must be submitted to the Legislative Coordinating Commission by February 1 in each odd-numbered year.

History: *2015 c 77 art 2 s 5; 2016 c 130 s 6-8; 1Sp2017 c 4 art 2 s 15*

15.0575 ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS AND AGENCIES.

Subdivision 1. **Procedure.** The membership terms, compensation, and removal of members and the filling of membership vacancies of boards shall be governed by this section whenever specifically provided by law. As used in this section, "boards" shall refer to all boards, commissions, agencies, committees, councils, authorities and courts whose provisions are governed by this section.

Subd. 2. **Membership terms.** An appointment to an administrative board or agency must be made in the manner provided in section 15.0597. The terms of the members shall be four years with the terms ending on the first Monday in January. The appointing authority shall appoint as nearly as possible one-fourth of the members to terms expiring each year. If the number of members is not evenly divisible by four, the greater number of members, as necessary, shall be appointed to terms expiring in the year of commencement of the governor's term and the year or years immediately thereafter. If the number of terms which can be served by a member of a board or agency is limited by law, a partial term must be counted for this purpose if the time served by a member is greater than one-half of the duration of the regular term. If the membership is composed of categories of members from occupations, industries, political subdivisions, the public or other groupings of persons, and if the categories have two or more members each, the appointing authority shall appoint as nearly as possible one-fourth of the members in each category at each appointment date. **Members may serve until their successors are appointed and qualify but in no case later than July 1 in a year in which a term expires unless reappointed.**

Subd. 3. **Compensation.** (a) Members of the boards may be compensated at the rate of \$55 a day spent on board activities, when authorized by the board, plus expenses in the same manner and amount as authorized by the commissioner's plan adopted under section 43A.18, subdivision 2. Members who, as a result of time spent attending board meetings, incur child care expenses that would not otherwise have been incurred, may be reimbursed for those expenses upon board authorization.

(b) Members who are state employees or employees of the political subdivisions of the state must not receive the daily payment for activities that occur during working hours for which they are compensated by the state or political subdivision. However, a state or political subdivision employee may receive the daily payment if the employee uses vacation time or compensatory time accumulated in accordance with a collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan for board activities. Members who are state employees or employees of the political subdivisions of the state may receive the expenses provided for in this subdivision unless the expenses are reimbursed by another source. Members who are state employees or employees of political subdivisions of the state may be reimbursed for child care expenses only for time spent on board activities that are outside their working hours.

(c) Each board must adopt internal standards prescribing what constitutes a day spent on board activities for purposes of making daily payments under this subdivision.

Subd. 4. **Removal; vacancies.** A member may be removed by the appointing authority at any time (1) for cause, after notice and hearing, or (2) after missing three consecutive meetings. The chair of the board shall inform the appointing authority of a member missing the three consecutive meetings. After the second consecutive missed meeting and before the next meeting, the secretary of the board shall notify the member in writing that the member may be removed for missing the next meeting. In the case of a vacancy on the board, the appointing authority shall appoint, subject to the advice and consent of the senate if the member is appointed by the governor, a person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Subd. 5. **Membership vacancies within three months of appointment.** When a membership on a board becomes vacant within three months after being filled through the open appointments process, the

appointing authority may, upon notification to the office of secretary of state, choose a new member from the applications on hand and need not repeat the process.

History: *1976 c 134 s 1; 1982 c 560 s 5; 1983 c 305 s 6; 1984 c 531 s 2; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 354 s 1; 1989 c 343 s 2; 1990 c 506 art 2 s 1; 1993 c 80 s 1; 2001 c 61 s 1; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 2 s 16*

Committee Report to the Board

Executive CommitteeNovember 16, 2023

Committee MembersSaraswati Singh, *Chair*Chang Wang, *Vice Chair*Dave Hoang, *Treasurer*Vacant, *Legislative Member*Sia Her, *Executive Director***October 25, 2023 – 5:00 p.m. – via Teams****In Attendance**

Saraswati Singh

Chang Wang

Dave Hoang

Sia Her

Absent**Narrative**

In 2023, the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on the 4th Thursday of every other month beginning in February. The members of this committee include the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, a legislative member, and the executive director. The Committee's standard meeting items are:

- Monthly Financial Report
- Executive Director Updates
- Upcoming Board Meeting Agenda

At the October meeting, the Committee agenda was mostly dedicated to an update from the executive director about the Council's priority projects in 2023, changes to the staff team and how this might impact the Council's ability to move on these projects, and the Council's 2024 supplemental budget request. The other agenda items were the October financial report, Board retreat, and the draft of the Council's November meeting agenda.

Issues

The October meeting agenda:

- I. October Financial Report
- II. Executive Director Updates (2023 projects, staff changes, supplemental budget request)
- III. 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War – Commemoration
- IV. November Board Meeting Agenda

Of these agenda items, we accomplished the following:

- I. **October Financial Report**—The executive director shared that while the Council can expect some cost savings due to the research director position vacancy, the Council's state of finances remains in good standing. Members did not have any questions.

- II. **Executive Director Update re Staff Changes** — The research director position has been vacant since June 19 due to Ms. Anjuli Cameron’s recent departure. Ms. Her shared that she has had to use up her vacation hours (at the request of MMB), so her ability to address all her responsibilities has been severely limited for much of the summer into the fall. At this time, the research director position has been posted for about ten days now; she expects to have this position posted for 5-7 weeks, to allow for a potentially larger pool of qualified applicants.
- III. **Executive Director Update re Priority Projects** – One of the documents provided to the members at this meeting was a description of the projects the staff are working on in this current calendar year. This is a draft document so Ms. Her is not prepared to share it with anyone else, yet. Her intention, however, is to finalize this document and make it available to Board members so that they may have a better understanding of the work the staff outside of the legislative session.
- IV. **Executive Director Update re Supplemental Budget Request**— Ms. Her shared that while the Council received an 18% increase over its base budget in the FY24-25 biennium, the Council still has the smallest of the three ethnic councils’ budgets. In early September, MMB requested that agencies wishing to submit a supplemental budget request provide MMB with preliminary information. The staff provided MMB with this information on September 20, 2023. The request is for an additional \$260,000.00 over the course of the biennium, which would allow the Council to add one more FTE to its staff team.
- V. **50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War** – Ms. Her shared that she and others have begun preliminary conversations on the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Over the summer, Ms. Her was invited by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) and the Air National Guard for a conversation on this topic. She understands that MDVA will proceed with a hosting a 50th anniversary commemoration program in the summer of 2024. She has committed the Council to supporting the MDVA and its partners in this endeavor, while also making it clear to these state leaders that Minnesota’s four Southeast Asian, refugee-experienced communities will be focused on commemorating this anniversary in 2025. Given the size of these communities in Minnesota, the sense of urgency these communities added that prompted the creation of our Council in 1985, Ms. Her is engaged in several conversations about 2025.
- VI. **November Draft Meeting Agenda**—The members reviewed the draft agenda provided by Chair Singh. Members agreed that the only item the Council should take public comments on is that of the Executive Director’s Report. Also, depending on a few additional facts, the item “Outgoing Board Members” may be deleted or left as is.

Chair Singh adjourned the meeting at 6:00p.m.