
Meeting of the Board

November 5, 2025
5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Location: 658 Cedar Street – Centennial Office Building (Ladyslipper Room)

OR

[Click here to join the meeting now](#)

Or call in (audio only)

651-395-7448

Phone Conference ID: 857 965 051#

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 June 24, 2025 Minutes – Approval of September 17, 2025 Minutes – Approval of November 5, 2025 Agenda	Information/Discussion/Action
5:25 P.M.	Recognition of Service (Council members)	Information/Discussion
5:55 P.M.	November Financial Report	Information/Discussion
6:00 P.M.	Board Retreat Planning*	Information/Discussion
6:20 P.M.	50 th Anniversary Commemoration/Joint Commemoration*	Information/Discussion
6:30 P.M.	2026 Council Meeting Schedule	Information/Discussion/Action
6:40 P.M.	Executive Committee Report	Information/Discussion
6:45 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

June 24, 2025

5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

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

OR

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

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

I. ROLL CALL

Present:

Ajeet Yadav – In person

Bryan Thao Worra – In person

Pia Puentespina – Virtual

Touachongka Vue Xiong – In person

Shwetha Vijayakumar – In person

Yixiu Chen – In person

Ngawang Dolker – Virtual

Senator Eric Pratt – Virtual

Senator Susan Pha – In person

Representative Patricia Mueller – In person

Representative Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger – In person

Staff: Sia Her, Andrew Morris, Mai Tong Vang, Jessi Evjen

Absent: Chang Wang, Daisy Zan, Elizabeth Eckman, Khendum Gyabak

With 11 out of 15 voting members present at the time of roll call, a quorum was present.

Meeting came to quorum at 5:11 P.M.

II. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 12, 2025 MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the February 12 Board meeting.

BY: Shwetha Vijayakumar

SECOND: Ajeet Yadav

The motion was approved unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 24, 2025 AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the June 24 Board meeting agenda.

BY: Shwetha Vijayakumar

SECOND: Touachongka Vue Xiong

The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. JUNE FINANCIAL REPORT

- Treasurer Dolker stated that any unused funds will go back to the state at the end of the biennium.
- Executive Director Her stated that the 2025 Legislature passed a provision that allows funds to be carried forward to the next biennium. This is in effect through 2030.

V. 2025 SESSION UPDATE

- Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison Andrew Morris presented on key outcomes of the legislative session in priority areas:
 - **Access to healthcare**
 - Establishment of Spoken Language Medical Interpreting Working Group
 - Disability service cuts a major focus for reducing structural imbalance
 - MinnesotaCare eligibility for undocumented adults ended
 - **Jobs and wages**
 - \$1M per year for competitive grants for economic development in Southeast Asian communities
 - \$250k per year to CAAL for women entrepreneurs and Asian owned businesses
 - \$250k per year to AEDA for workforce development
 - Adjustments made to Paid Leave, Earned Safe and Sick Time programs
 - **Housing**
 - Homeownership Education, Counseling, and Training program
 - Community-based First-Generation Homebuyer Assistance program
 - **Funding for commemorative events for smaller SE Asian communities**
 - \$500k in funding for the Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese communities; this would have addressed the fact that these communities received little to no funding from last year's competitive grant process administered by the Historical Society
 - Ultimately not included in conference report, engagement with communities ongoing
 - **Supplemental funding for 50th anniversary joint commemoration**
 - No committee hearings were granted
 - Supplemental funding added during floor debate in Senate, was not adopted in conference committee report
 - **Other ongoing positions**
 - Council continues to support efforts for the Increase Teachers of Color Act alongside the other ethnic councils, prevention of domestic and gender-based violence, and collection of disaggregated data
- Mr. Morris also reviewed the Council's change item request:
 - **2025 change item request and Governor's recommendation**
 - Council requested a 29% increase over base (\$175,000 for FY26 and \$195,000 for FY27)
 - Board approved this request at the November meeting
 - Request was made to Senate and House State Government committees early in session during agency overview presentations

- Governor Walz recommended a 2.2% increase over base (\$9,000 for FY26 and \$19,000 for FY27)
- **Budget request for FY26-27**
 - Increase staff capacity by 1 FTE
 - Ensure competitive salaries for staff team
 - Retain contractors with specific skillsets
 - Provide capacity for ongoing work in greater Minnesota
 - Build on existing body of original research

The Council's budget increase request did not acquire the necessary support from DFL legislators. The Board discussed the reasons for this. Director Her shared that because of complex partisan political dynamics, the Board meeting is not the best place for a nuanced discussion about the reasons why there are legislators opposed to supporting the Council. Some members expressed frustration that there is not more transparency regarding the discussion during this meeting of the Council.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Scott Walker and Dave Hoang spoke. They:
 - Expressed frustration with the MAP legislative caucus
 - Shared that the Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese veterans have tried to get recognition and support from the state of Minnesota, but have never been given a hearing and received limited or no funds
 - Expressed appreciation for the support that the Council has provided to them

VII. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

- Due to the outcomes of the 2025 legislative session, the Council is not able to plan the joint commemoration that was originally envisioned because:
 - Supplemental funding was not approved
 - Minnesota Humanities Center was appointed as lead on the project and is not involving the Council in the planning process

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Her said that the report is not finished, but she will send it out as soon as possible.

IX. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Executive Director Her requested that due to time, Board members review the Executive Committee report and follow up with her if they have any questions.

X. COMMUNITY UPDATES

- Board members requested to be more involved in community events and to have more opportunities to connect with other API communities beyond their own.
- Chair Thao Worra requested that in the interest of time, Board members send their community updates to staff for distribution to the Board.

- Touachongka Vue Xiong shared that the Hmong Minnesota community would be hosting the annual Freedom Festival at Como Park; everyone is invited as this is a public event.

Chair Thao Worra adjourned the meeting at 7:16 P.M.

Council Board Meeting
September 17, 2025
5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

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

OR

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Executive Director Her called the meeting to order at 5:15 P.M.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Pia Puentespina – Virtual

Touachongka Vue Xiong – In Person

Yixiu Chen – Virtual

Karn Tintani – In Person

Shayna Karuman – In Person

Eh Tah Khu – Virtual (joined late)

Shwetha Vijayakumar – Virtual (joined late)

Representative Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger – In Person

Staff: Sia Her, Andrew Morris, Mai Tong Vang, Jessi Evjen

Absent: Ajeet Yadav, Bryan Thao Worra, Elizabeth Eckman, Poh Lin Khoo, Senator Eric Pratt, Senator Susan Pha, Representative Patricia Mueller

With 6 out of 15 voting members present at the time of roll call, a quorum was present. However, in the absence of all members of the Executive Committee being present to convene an official meeting of the Council, the members present convened an information session. The notes are as follow.

III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 24, 2025, MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the June 24 Board meeting

BY:

SECOND:

NA

IV. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2025, AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the September 17 Board meeting agenda

BY:

SECOND:

NA

V. SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

Tracy Sigstad, director of the Small Agencies Resource Team (SmART), joined as a guest to discuss the role of SmART. Her presentation included the following:

- The Small Agency Resource Team (SMART) provides essential support to small agencies within the state enterprise, including budgeting and generating reports.
- The state operates on a biennial basis. The budget is set in the second year of the biennium. Money not spent in the first year carries over to the second. Typically, at the end of the second year, unspent money goes back to the state general fund. However, this year new legislation was passed that allows agencies to carry second year funding through to the next biennium. This legislation will expire in 2030.
- The Council's budget, due to the carry forward legislation, money from last fiscal year was carried forward to this fiscal year, giving a total budget of approximately \$820,000.

VI. BOARD RETREAT PLANNING

- Executive Director Her shared that the Chair:
 - Suggests that a subcommittee be formed to help plan the retreat
 - Would like the retreat to take place before the legislative session starts in 2026 (mid-February)
- Executive Director Her would like the Board retreat to include:
 - A review and possibly revision of the Council's current strategic plan
 - To learn more about the makeup and needs of the API community in Minnesota
- Staff will send to Board members a Doodle poll to have them identify the weekend of the retreat

VII. 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Executive Director Her asked that Board members let her know if they are interested in attending community events.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

This report was provided via email with the other documents pertaining to this meeting. Director Her asked the Board to read the report outside of the meeting and let her know if members have any questions.

IX. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

This report was provided via email with the other documents pertaining to this meeting. Director Her asked the Board to read the report outside of the meeting and let her know if members have any questions.

X. COMMUNITY UPDATES

N/A

Executive Director Her adjourned the meeting at 6:37 P.M.

Selection Criteria: Budget Period - 2026, Fund - 1000 to 6000, DeptID - G9N30000 to G9N3ZZZZ, AppropID - G9N0000 to G9NZZZZ

Break On: Budget Period, Fund, DeptID, AppropID

Budget Period: 2026	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): \$371,877.30	Part-Time (41030): \$0.00	Total: \$371,877.30
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Account Class and Description	Current Budget	Pre-Encumbered	Encumbered/Committed	Expended	Unobligated	Unexpended
41000 Full Time - Salary	469,000.00	0.00	380,284.47	88,715.53	0.00	380,284.47
41030 Part-Time-Seasonal-Labor Serv	30,000.00	0.00	30,000.00	0.00	0.00	30,000.00
41050 Overtime and Premium Pay	7,000.00	0.00	6,974.66	25.34	0.00	6,974.66
41070 Other Employee Cost	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
41100 Space Rental And Utilities	23,000.00	0.00	15,176.35	5,067.69	2,755.96	17,932.31
41110 Printing And Advertising	9,500.00	0.00	904.45	0.00	8,595.55	9,500.00
41130 Prof-Tech Serv-Outside Vend	55,000.00	0.00	36,256.50	3,892.50	14,851.00	51,107.50
41155 Communications	1,000.00	0.00	829.19	70.81	100.00	929.19
41160 Trav-Sub-InState-Border Comm	3,500.00	0.00	1,750.00	352.77	1,397.23	3,147.23
41170 Trav/Sub-OutOfState-BorderComm	4,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
41180 Employee Development	2,000.00	0.00	500.00	150.00	1,350.00	1,850.00
41190 State Agcy-Prov Prof-Tech Serv	15,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,500.00	15,500.00
41196 Rate-Based MNIT Services	22,000.00	0.00	16,237.38	2,262.62	3,500.00	19,737.38
41197 Agency-Specific MNIT Services	4,000.00	0.00	3,863.61	136.39	0.00	3,863.61
41300 Supplies	7,000.00	0.00	291.24	145.19	6,563.57	6,854.81
41400 Equipment	4,700.00	0.00	3,848.19	546.81	305.00	4,153.19
41500 Repairs To Equip and Furn	3,000.00	0.00	2,176.57	20.93	802.50	2,979.07
43000 Other Operating Costs	158,045.18	0.00	12,586.00	17,414.00	128,045.18	140,631.18
Total	820,745.18	0.00	514,178.61	118,800.58	187,765.99	701,944.60

Selection Criteria: Budget Period - 2026, Fund - 1000 to 6000, DeptID - G9N30000 to G9N3ZZZZ, AppropID - G9N0000 to G9NZZZZ

Break On: Budget Period, Fund, DeptID, AppropID

Budget Period:	2026	Fund:	2403	DeptID:	G9N31002	AppropID:	G9N1600
			Gift		Asian-Pacific Council - Gifts		CAPM Gifts

Remaining Payroll Projection	Full-Time (41000):	\$0.00	Part-Time (41030):	\$0.00	Total:	\$0.00
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Account Class and Description	Current Budget	Pre-Encumbered	Encumbered/Committed	Expended	Unobligated	Unexpended
41300 Supplies	0.00	0.00	1,677.12	0.00	-1,677.12	0.00
43000 Other Operating Costs	11,553.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,553.75	11,553.75
Total	11,553.75	0.00	1,677.12	0.00	9,876.63	11,553.75
Report Total	832,298.93	0.00	515,855.73	118,800.58	197,642.62	713,498.35

Executive Director's Report
September 17, 2025

I. Administrative/Projects

A. Financial Report: The September 2025 Manager's Financial Report is included in the meeting materials for this meeting of the Board. Also, Tracey Sigstad (director of Small Agency Resource Team/SmART), will be joining us to provide an overview of our financial report. Tracey's presence is intended to help Board members better understand the structure of state government, especially as it relates to the financial side of all state agencies. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #3*

B. Board Appointments: All seats are currently filled.

At this time, Admin has not yet convened the Board members who were appointed in June for the mandatory training pursuant to subd. 4 of the enabling statute.

The Board should note that Rep. Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger won the special primary election for the Senate District 47 seat. If she wins in the special election, scheduled for November 4, 2025, Rep. Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger will no longer be able to serve as the House DFL representative. This means that the Speaker will have to appoint a new House DFL member to the Council.

C. 2025 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 are well on our way to completing this year's report. Staff will be reaching out to Board members as necessary for us to complete this year's report. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #3*

D. 2025 Session Recap: As was shared with the Board via an email sent on July 16, we cancelled the in-person legislative session recap. In lieu of this, we are working on a series of infographics depicting key outcomes of the 2025 session. This project will consist of easy-to-understand visual elements that are distributable/printable, and it will focus on priority issues: healthcare, housing, income, wages, jobs, Legacy, and Veterans. We expect to complete this project any day now, and then we'll disseminate the completed images according to the communications plan designed in tandem.

E. 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War: This year 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. Recall that at the end of the 2024 session, \$150,000.00 was appropriated to the Minnesota Humanities Center for the joint commemoration program in 2025. In the 2025 session, we requested an additional \$150,000.00, but we failed to secure this request due to the opposition of DFL legislators.

After several meetings with our partners—the National Guard, the MN Department of Veterans Affairs, and the MN Humanities Center—we decided that the partisan politics of the time have made it e have continued to convene meetings with our SEA partners, together as a larger group, and at times with just one ancestry group at a time.

While we are unable to deliver on the vision of the 50th Anniversary Joint Commemoration, we continued to provide critical support to our Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese communities with the following efforts:

- Cambodian
 - The Cambodian American Partnership of MN will host its 2nd annual Cambodian Heritage Day this year on September 27, 2025. Our Council was critical to the founding of Cambodian Heritage Day, which launched in 2023 with the help our key partner in this initiative, the MN Humanities Center. This 2nd Cambodian Heritage Day event will include a focus on the Cambodian veterans whose bravery also made a difference on the ground during the Vietnam War.

- Vietnamese:
 - “Making it Home: From Vietnam to Minnesota”—This exhibit is on display at the Landmark Center from August 17 to September 21, 2025. To kick off this exhibit, the community hosted an opening ceremony on Sunday, August 17, 2025. Staff joined community in this robust program featuring a panelist of community leaders and experts on the Vietnam War and the Vietnamese American experience.
 - “Finding the Virgo Merchant Ship”—this was a film screening at Minnesota History Center, hosted by the Vietnamese Heritage Museum (VHM) and Vietnamese Community of Minnesota (VCM). The event included a reception and then the screening of the documentary. Staff joined the community in learning about the “Boat people”—the exodus out of South Vietnam and into different countries of the world in the aftermath of the fall of the country in 1975.

- Lao:
 - We hosted a photoshoot for Lao ethnic veterans of the Secret War this month, at the Capitol war memorials. This photoshoot, a request by the Lao50 Committee, was something that had never been done before. The photos will be printed and used in the upcoming Lao50 Veterans Banquet.
 - Since January of 2025, the Lao50 Committee has been meeting on a regular basis for the purpose of planning a banquet for the Lao ethnic veterans. This event is scheduled for October 17, 2025, for an estimated 300+ attendees from the Lao Minnesota community.

The Council is the stat agency responsible for working within state government for the benefit of its many Asian Pacific ancestry communities. We continue to stand tall in the face of countless and increasingly dangerous circumstances that are oftentimes outside of our ability to manage due to our role as a non-partisan agency.

- F. Cambodian Exhibit @ Mia: We're excited to be called upon by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts to help them engage one of our communities in an amazing project: an exhibit featuring over 217 objects, including the monumental reclining Vishnu. This exhibition provides an unprecedented look into Khmer bronze craftsmanship, illuminated by recent archaeological discoveries, featuring bronze art from the 9th century to the present. There is a lot to be said for this coming exhibit, and I can't say enough about how excited I am that our partnership with Mia is opening opportunities such as this one, which will significantly help to bridge our different Minnesotan communities.
- G. Assessment of API-led Community-based Organizations: We are in the early stage of assessing a key constituent group: nonprofits led by API ancestry leaders, serving our API ancestry communities in Minnesota. Jessi Evjen is leading this project. Our objectives are:
- Maintain or develop meaningful relationships with the current leaders
 - Attain a substantive understanding of API-led organizations in Minnesota (who they serve, challenges, and strengths, needs, etc.)
 - Identify opportunities for collaboration where Council and organizations' needs align

If all else goes according to plan, Jessi will have a report completed and sent to the Board by the end of November this year.

- H. Board Retreat: The Executive Committee has discussed the importance of having a Board retreat before the next legislative session. To this end, I have been communicating with Admin for the purpose of identifying and bringing on board an expert to assist a committee of the Board with designing and implementation of a meaningful retreat in early 2026.
- I. 2025 Policy Fellows Program: Due to our limited capacity, we were unable to launch our policy fellowship program in time for the 2025 legislative session. We are, however, on the cusp of finally launching this program. I have dedicated funds to this program, so what we have in mind is a team of 2 to 3 fellows who will be classified as PT permanent staff. The ideal candidates for this fellowship are individuals with at least an undergraduate degree and a demonstrated commitment to careers in public policy and government. Our Legislative and Public Affairs staff, Andy, will supervise the fellows during the legislative session as we advocate on legislative initiatives aligned with the priorities identified in our biennial legislative agenda.
- J. 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. Community Concerns/Issues

- A. Teachers from the Philippines: Across the country and in our state, teacher shortage is a problem. As a response, school districts are bringing in highly qualified teachers from countries

such as the Philippines to help fill these vacancies. Currently, we know of five school districts and several charter schools that are now home to an estimated 200 or so teachers from the Philippines. As I have shared in previous reports, our office continues to convene conversations and facilitate the sharing of critical information between different stakeholder groups on this issue. Our role in this matter is consistent with our duties as they are spelled out in our enabling statute and with our position on the Teachers of Color Act.

Currently, we are planning to meet with a small group of teachers to discuss how we might help them adapt to life in Minnesota and deliver on the important responsibilities they have as educators in our state. It is likely the case that we will be hosting an event with these teachers, and we might also invite to this event our partners such as MDE. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #1-#4*

- B. Cambodia and Thailand Border Dispute: At the request of Cambodian Minnesotan leaders, we helped to choreograph a meeting between them and Senators Eric Pratt and Bill Lieske on August 29, 2025. These community members desired to help these legislators understand their desire for peace for Cambodia. As Americans, they understand that they do not have a say in matters of another sovereign nation; however, they know that America plays an important role in the world; with this in mind, they wished to express their desire for the U.S. to ensure that Cambodia and Thailand continue to move toward sustainable peace. With our office’s statutory responsibilities in mind, we assisted these legislators with understanding the nature of the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand and Minnesota’s Cambodian and Thai ancestry communities. After this meeting and at the request of these very same community leaders, our staff have followed up with offices such as that of U.S. Representative Tom Emmer. We are awaiting further requests from these community leaders because they have said they would like to continue meeting with state legislators and Minnesota’s congressional delegation.
- C. Nepal: Recently, Minnesota’s Nepali community hosted a vigil on the Capitol steps because of what happened in Nepal in the last few weeks of August. Protests of the Nepali government led to the deaths of 19 young Nepalis who, many feel, represent the hopes and dreams of the people in Nepal. What most Nepalis want, and this seems to be consistent with the Nepali ancestry diaspora, is a Nepali government that is less corrupt and better equipped to create conditions that will result in better opportunities for the younger generations. Community leaders, including the MN Nepali Association, requested that the Council supports them as they are finding their own voice and joining in the growing conversation here and around the world about good governance and lives of dignity. The MN Nepali Association is an active Council partner, so we will continue to engage as appropriate given our statutory role. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #1-#4*
- D. Immigration/DEI: Community members continue to share their concerns, mainly as these relate to immigration. Many have questions about the intentions of the federal government, as well as those of state and local governments where deportation is concerned. While social media is playing a huge role in helping Americans become more informed about what’s happening in their neighborhoods and across the country, social media has also served as a source of confusion on complex policies and practices such as the deportation of certain eligible Southeast Asian ancestry Americans. In response, our staff have been in conversations with key government officials and community leadership groups, helping them to better understand the

issues at hand and support each other. Our support includes reviewing advocacy letters as requested by community leaders, identifying government offices that our community leaders should engage with, etc. – *Strategic Plan, Goal #1-#4*

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

- Sia Her – Executive Director (FTE)
- Jessi Evjen – Research Director (FTE)
- 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 who have been with us for many years:

- Kim Jackson – Our graphic designer; she’s been with us since 2013.
- Liz Star – Our communications expert; she’s been with us since 2019.
- Andrew Xiong – our photographer; he’s been with us since 2013.

IV. 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. For example, we recently convened several conversations about the Cambodia/Thailand border dispute, the needs of the Minnesota Afghan evacuee community, and recovery efforts within some of our communities. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1-#4*

V. Our work with the executive branch – To deliver on our statutory duties, we have developed strong partnerships with 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. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1-#4*

A. Department of Public Safety (DPS): We have a robust relationship with this department because of our long-standing shared effort to meaningfully address gender-based violence and because of ongoing community concerns about Asian hate, Hinduphobia, and crimes on the grounds of our places of worship. Currently, our work with the department is focused on the following issues:

- **Office of Justice Program/Gender-based Violence**: 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 of this issue as it is playing out in our communities. We have and will continue to meet with key staff from the department to discuss how we can support each other in our work on gender-based violence. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*

- **Introducing Commissioner Jacobson to Communities:** Commissioner Jacobson frequently seeks our advice and technical support on issues such as safety in our Hindu and Buddhist temples and Asian hate. In this ongoing and very close partnership, we staff Commissioner Jacobson at community celebrations and meetings, including Songkran at the Capitol, IndiaFest, and Hinduphobia. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1-#4*
- B. **Minnesota National Guard:** The NG is our most active and consistent partner in the work we do to advance the interests of Minnesota’s Asian Pacific ancestry communities. Minnesota’s Adjutant General and Commissioner of Military Affairs, Major General Manke, and members of his leadership team are very active in our Asian Pacific ancestry communities. Asian ancestry members of the Guard – Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Nacionales and Technical Staff Sergeant Daisy Johnson – appointed to work with us are second to none public servants. The NG – as expected in many ways – is experiencing changes, but we’re confident this relationship will remain strong.
- Most recently, we brought a team of community leaders to the Leadership Summit during which General Manke, General Sharkey, Colonel Carlson, and other NG members engaged with us in conversations about their engagement in communities and how this advances the shared interests of all Minnesotans. Our community leaders shared were humbled to have this opportunity to engage with Minnesota’s military leaders. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*
- C. **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 legislative and community-engagement priorities. Since the last meeting of the Board, Andy and I have met several times with Commissioner Jett for ongoing conversations about MDE’s community engagement work, what we know about the education-related challenges facing Asian Pacific Minnesotan youth, and MDE’s 2025 legislative priorities. Commissioner Jett has also consistently been accessible to our communities, including being present in our many communities. I add that Assistant Commissioner, Dr. M. Traynham and her community engagement team have been amazing to work with. We look forward to our next meeting with MDE as we are now eyeing the 2026 session. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*
- D. **Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED):** Council staff continue to communicate with the Office of New Americans and the DEED community engagement team. As DEED is preparing for the 2026 session, they are developing their legislative agenda. At their request, we cohosted on August 22nd a conversation with leaders from our API-led nonprofits; the focus of the conversation was on what DEED could and should bring to the Legislature as policy proposals. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #3 and #4*
- E. **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*
- F. **Governor’s Office:** Since the end of the 2025 legislative session, we have had minimal interactions with the Governor’s office. When we have, however, I believe it’s important to note that the Governor’s staff have been responsive and helpful. We have extended invitations to

them to join us at community events, and they've responded positively. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1- #4*

- G. Department of Human Services (DHS): We continue to engage with the department as it relates to our statutory role on the CECL. – *Strategic Plan, Goals #1 and #2*

In addition to the commitments identified in this section of the report, we are involved in numerous other efforts within state government, such as several statewide advisory boards and councils. But most importantly, we are engaged in many community-driven efforts, such as the India Chamber of Commerce and the relaunching of the Bhutanese Community of MN (a nonprofit).

VI. **Community Outreach/Engagement**

- A. Newly established organizations: Our community is growing and changing. In response to these facts, sometimes, new organizations are established, or they go through serious leadership revamping. At this time, I would point to one organization that has experienced what I would call a “rebirth,” and that would be:

- Bhutanese Organization of MN (re-established)

Another organization that I haven't pointed out in previous reports is the Karen Wrist-tying Ceremony organization. This is a 501C3 organization, and it is mostly responsible for hosting the annual Karen wrist-tying ceremony out in Harris, MN.

- B. 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 Council meeting in February:

- Ramsey County Correctional Facility: API Minnesotans Cultural Celebration – May 2, 2025
- India Chamber of Commerce of MN: Sunset Social – August 15, 2025
- Pan Asian Center: Asian Arts & Culture Social – August 22, 2025
- Bhutanese Community of MN: Teej 2025 – August 23, 2025
- MN Nepali Association: Vigil @ the Capitol – September 10, 2025
- Philippines Center of MN: Open House – September 13, 2025

We are invited to speak at many events, but since I can't make it to every event, these mentioned just above are those invitations I accepted and delivered on.

- C. 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 last meeting of the Council, we have attended the following community events:

- Hmong American Partnership: Cultivating Connections – March 5, 2025

- Hindu Society of Minnesota: Holi – March 22, 2025
- India Chamber of Commerce of MN: Grand Opening – March 27, 2025
- Philippines Center of MN: Coffeehouse – March 28, 2025
- MN Timberwolves: AAPI Night Pre-game – March 30, 2025
- India Association of MN: Connect India – March 30, 2025
- XK Lao/Lao Assistance Center: Lao New Year – April 6, 2025
- Hindu Society of MN: Cornerstone Event – April 6, 2025
- MN Nepali Association: Nepali New Year – April 12, 2025
- Hmong National Development: Opening Reception – April 16, 2025
- Hmong National Development: Leadership Awards Gala – April 16, 2025
- ACEL-Minneapolis/St. Paul Official Launch: Connect, Lead, and Grow – April 24, 2025
- Mayo Clinic: Thai Delegation Visit – May 9, 2025
- Thai Cultural Council: Songkran – May 10, 2025
- United Cambodian Association of MN: Cambodian New Year – May 15, 2025
- Twin Cities Asian Fair – May 31, 2025
- South Vietnam Veterans Armed Forces Day – June 14, 2025
- Philippines Center of MN: Filipino Teachers Meet and Greet Event – June 14, 2025
- TAFM: Dalai Lama’s 90th Birthday Celebration – July 6, 2025
- Koom Hmong Recovery: Pho-Coverly Cafe – July 7, 2025
- Pan Asian Center: Tour – July 8, 2025
- CPT Ananh "Lee" Saenviley Funeral – July 12, 2025
- Cultural Society of Filipino Americans: Philippine Day – July 19, 2025
- Hindu Society of MN: Cultural Heritage – August 3, 2025
- Wat Munisotaram: Inaugural Ceremony – August 9, 2025
- India Chamber of Commerce: First-Annual Sunset Social – August 15, 2025
- India Association of MN: IndiaFest – August 16, 2025
- Vietnamese Minnesota Museum: Finding The Virgo – August 16, 2025
- VCM: “Making it Home: From Vietnam to Minnesota” – August 17, 2025
- Karen Wrist-Tying: Wrist-tying Ceremony – August 17, 2025
- Asian Arts & Culture Changemaker Social – August 22, 2025
- Bhutanese Community of MN: Teej (Women Empowerment) – August 23, 2025
- Center for Hmong Arts & Talent: Hmong50 – August 23, 2025
- MN National Guard: Leadership Summit – August 10, 2025
- Nepali Association of MN: Vigil @ the Capitol – September 10, 2025
- Philippines Center of MN: Open House/Donors List – September 13, 2025

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

Committee Report to the Board

Executive CommitteeSeptember 17, 2025

Committee MembersBryan Thao Worra, *Chair*VACANT, *Vice Chair*VACANT, *Treasurer*Sen. E. Pratt, *Legislative Member*Sia Her, *Executive Director***July 23, 2025 – 5:00 p.m. – Hybrid****In Attendance**

Bryan Thao Worra

Sen. E. Pratt

Sia Her

Absent**Narrative**

In 2025, the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on the 4th Thursday of every other month beginning in January. 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 July meeting, the Committee took up an update from the executive director about projects and Board-related business, the Board retreat in early 2026, and the September Board meeting agenda. The September agenda is not a heavy agenda compared with previous meetings’ agendas as the Executive Committee recognizes that half of the Board was recently appointed.

Issues

The July meeting agenda:

- I. Executive Director Updates
- II. Staff Work Plan
- III. Board Retreat
- IV. August Board Meeting Agenda (draft)

Of these agenda items, we accomplished the following:

- I. **July Financial Report**—The executive director pointed out that Admin hasn’t closed out all purchase orders, so the “unobligated” dollar amount at the bottom of the report is larger than it should be. The 2025 Legislature decided to allow state agencies to carry over from last biennium into this current biennium what we would have returned to the state’s treasury in previous bienniums. This amount, for us, is about \$140,000.00; a contributing variable is due to cost savings in the FTE

account. Director Her shared that SmART will be at the September meeting of the Board to provide a high-level overview of our financial standing and address any questions the Board may have. Also, the Director expects that by September, we will have a budget report that reflects the carryover into this current biennium.

- II. **Board Appointments**— The latest round of appointments by the Governor filled the following seats: the Chinese, and three seats set aside for other smaller API ancestry communities. In this case, the Governor appointed four individuals: a Chinese, Thai, Malaysian, and Karen. The members discussed when it might be appropriate to fill the Vice Chair and the Treasurer seats; again, Chair Thao Worra and Sen. Pratt decided it would be best to leave the election of the Vice Chair to the November meeting.
- III. **Board Retreat**—The last Council retreat was in 2017. The Committee agreed that considering when the 2025 session is scheduled to begin and the staff schedule, a retreat in early 2026 makes the most sense. Chair Thao Worra emphasized the importance of having a committee of the Board work with the executive director to design a retreat that takes into consideration the needs of the Board right from the start. The Board will take up this item at the next meeting.

IV. Special Projects — Director Her shared the following:

- Meetings with legislative leaders: Staff are scheduling meetings with leaders in both the Senate and the House. These conversations are more important than ever before because while the Council is a non-partisan office, it exists in an environment in which powerful leaders won't allow the Council to engage in a non-partisan manner. Most legislative offices have responded to our meeting requests, and most legislators have said they would meet later in the year or early in the new year.
- Veterans of the Secret War legislation: At the conclusion of the 2025 legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Veterans and Military Affairs Omnibus bill. Included in Minn. Laws 2025, Chapter 30 is a new section of state statute relating to the Veterans of the Secret War in Laos who served with secret guerilla units (SGU) or other irregular forces. The new sections of law establish the definition of a Veteran of the Secret War in Laos and makes these Veterans eligible for specific State Veterans benefits. Staff are working with MDVA staff on a simple 1-page document that addresses questions Hmong Minnesotans might have.
- 50th Anniversary panel discussion: Director Her shared that staff are planning to host a panel discussion featuring veterans, community leaders, and experts as a closing-out 2025 event. Council staff have already identified who would make up the planning committee and that this panel discussion would take place in early October.

The Committee was provided a work plan to follow during the executive director's update. In conclusion, the Committee strongly suggested to Director Her that she focuses on the health of the staff, and several of the projects but not all. Believing the work plan is too ambitious as it is, the Committee recommended that staff prioritize the following: the Board retreat, the Lao and Vietnamese 50th anniversary events, the Cambodian exhibit at Mia, and then, if possible, the 50th anniversary panel discussion.

- V. **August Meeting Agenda (draft)**—The members reviewed the draft agenda provided by the Chair; members agreed that the Council should take public comments on the Board retreat.

The Committee also discussed at length the upcoming Board meetings. Members decided that with six new Board members, the Council will reschedule the August 13 and October 15 meetings. Doing so will allow us sufficient time to onboard the new members and possibly maximize the chances that every Board member can accommodate the last two meetings for calendar year 2025.

Members asked that Director Her communicates to the Board its request to reschedule the August 13 meeting for some time in early September, and the October 15 for some time in early November. The members also requested that these meetings be scheduled for at least two hours long so that Board members do not find themselves having to stay for meetings long after they were scheduled to have ended.

Chair Thao Worra adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.