



SIXTH REGULAR SESSION
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
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HEADQUARTERS MATTERS

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Introduction

1. This paper discusses a number of issues related to its secretariat operations in Pohnpei as well as the staff housing situation and details the bank accounts set up in 2009.
2. The Secretariat has occupied the Commission's permanent Pohnpei headquarters building for 18 months. The facilities are a great improvement on the initial arrangements and operations are proceeding well. The Monitoring Control and Surveillance staff are now co-located in a large secure office which also houses the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) terminals, VMS Manager the VMS Operations Officers. Landscaping has proceeded well, a multipurpose facility has been completed and security services appear to be operating better after some early minor incidents. Telecommunications by internet, phone and fax remains problematic, however fibre optic cable has recently been laid to Pohnpei and service benefits are, according FSM Telecommunications Corporation managers, expected to become evident in the second quarter of 2010. Unfortunately problems persist with the air-conditioning system, stand-by power, fire protection systems and the plumbing; however these are being systematically addressed and hopefully will be resolved in 2010, subject to WCPFC6 budget decisions.
3. As reported last year, the Commission is still unable to take sole possession of all its leased land. The prerequisite events remain the completion of a new State Administration Office building, relocation of Pohnpei State staff from their existing offices adjacent to the Commission's headquarters building and demolition and removal of nearby derelict buildings, however their timing remains unknown.
4. There has been little general improvement in the standard and availability of residential housing in Pohnpei. While all current staff are relatively satisfied with their individual arrangements, housing will continue to be an issue of concern that will require management as existing lease arrangements expire, there is staff turnover and if staff numbers increase.
5. Five new bank accounts were opened during the year; one in Pt. Vila Vanuatu to service the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Committee, one in Papeete to service the Commission's Sixth Regular Session, and three with the ANZ/CSB Bank in Guam to

access improved interest rates and to provide practical diversity from services already provided by the Bank of Guam. These accounts are detailed at paragraph 13.

Lease and Grant Arrangement

6. As reported last year and provided for in the Commission's headquarters property lease the Commission is to assume land currently used as a temporary access road (to the Early Childhood Education Programme office, the State of Pohnpei Treasury and Administration offices and the Peace Corps) as well as a portion of land occupied by the State of Pohnpei Treasury and Administration offices. This is all subject to the completion of a new Pohnpei State Executive Office Building and demolition and removal of old structures. The construction of the Pohnpei State Executive Office Building in the centre of Kolonia is proceeding but progress is short of what was anticipated this time last year when a July 2009 completion was forecast. It appears that material supply problems, including restricted availability of construction grade sand, have delayed completion. The Secretariat continues to liaise with Pohnpei State and FSM Government officials to monitor the situation.

Satellite Communications

7. A satellite communications capability has been established with the aim of providing cost effective, secure communication links as well as a good level of redundancy vis-à-vis the FSM Telecommunications Corporation facilities. Unfortunately the link has proved to be vulnerable to service provider technical faults and limited band width. In order to improve reliability increased band width has been recommended, at least until fibre optic cable based services are introduced in Pohnpei. Accordingly funds have been included in the proposed 2010 budget for this purpose. Reports that the existing landline connections are in a seriously degraded state serve to emphasise the importance of the Commission maintaining and improving its satellite communications capability.

Multipurpose Building

8. A relatively small but highly utilitarian structure was completed in 2009 to enable the Commission to conduct training, host diplomatic gatherings and meeting related functions, provide secure storage for maintenance materials and equipment as well as provide a venue for small group gatherings and staff recreation. The building enables these styles of events to be conducted without compromising the integrity of the headquarters building security arrangements and is a far more suitable venue for these than the main building. It will prove to be an ongoing, cost effective asset for the Commission.

Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Accommodation

9. Staff and equipment directly related to MCS operations have recently been relocated to a single secure area in the headquarters building. This required the redesign of several existing rooms to make one large area with restricted entry that features combination lock access. The MCS staff numbers have grown to five and as it is proposed to recruit to the Compliance Officer and ROP Data Quality Officer positions in 2010 the provision of this accommodation has enabled co-location of the MCS functions in a secure but sufficiently sized environment.

Gift of boats

10. In late 2009 the Commission received a donation from Australia of two moderately used 21 foot open Yamaha dinghies together with two trailers and four 40 hp motors. It is proposed that at no operational cost to the Commission and with suitable safety measures in place, they be used for staff recreation purposes as there is limited scope for recreational activities on Pohnpei.

Air-conditioning and other building services

11. The Commission headquarters building's central air-conditioning system stopped functioning early in the year as a result of major failures of the compressors. Subsequent investigations also revealed that a number of the duct installations had various serious faults. Although the system had only been in a fully operational mode for less than 12 months it had been installed since 2005 and was idle without maintenance for over two years while the Commission sought to finalise a lease. In addition the installation has been subject to multiple power surges and power failures from the town grid as well as being subject to other abnormal voltage flows as a result of the incorrect installation of the standby power circuits.

12. Tenders were called for suitable experts to identify appropriate solutions and the quotes for a replacement central air conditioning system ranged from USD160,000 for partial air-conditioning to over USD310,000 for new compressors utilising as much of the existing cooling system infrastructure as possible. The installation periods for these quotes were indefinite as the work could not be contracted locally. In the context of the approved 2009 budget, even at the lower range, it was not financially feasible to proceed, but the working conditions in Pohnpei demand air-conditioning. After extensive consultation and a period where working conditions were particularly difficult for staff the Secretariat took the approach of progressively installing split system units, utilising the existing ducting channels to the greatest extent practicable and bulk buying tubing and compressors where possible. The factors influencing that approach were cost/value for money, availability of technical support and spare parts, inherent redundancy in the modular configuration, relative robustness, and timing. Approximately USD50,000 has been spent to establish satisfactory working conditions in all the occupied offices, the computer servers' room and the PNG sponsored ground floor meeting room. A further USD50,000 has been included in the proposed 2010 budget to complete the air-conditioning of the building areas that would have been serviced by the original central cooling system and to protect the external compressors. Without uniform temperature and moisture control there will be additional structural and maintenance problems, depreciation of assets and in all probability higher electricity costs than otherwise as thermostat efficiencies would be difficult to achieve. Pohnpei continues to experience power spikes and power outages.

New bank accounts.

13. The following new accounts were opened during 2009:

- *ANZ Bank, Port Vila, Vanuatu*

- Business Cheque Account 1342262, titled WCPFC Operating Account. This account was opened in conjunction with the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Committee to service the meeting;
- *ANZ Bank Guam / Citizens Security Bank*
 - Money Market Account #4120-000476: WCPFC/Western Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project to help manage and obtain optimum interest returns for the project in the title;
 - Business Savings Account #300048014: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission;
 - Interest Plus Business Account 200103852: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission;
 - Money Market Savings Account 4120000328: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

These three accounts have been opened to diversify bank holdings from the Bank of Guam and to seek higher interest rates without additional risk.
 - Bank de Tahiti, Papeete
 - Chequing account 12239 00001 90720501001 48: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. This account was opened in conjunction with the Sixth Annual Session of the Commission to service the meeting.

Recommendation

14. The Committee is invited to:
- (i) Note the status of the Commission's headquarters facility including the progress made in 2009; and
 - (ii) Support the proposed 2010 budget items targeted at improving the Commission's communications capacity and air-conditioning systems.