

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 18-203

RE: PRESIDENT COMMUNICATION NO. 18-253

SUBJECT: FY 2015 RECOMMENDED BUDGET/EXAFF

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

The Honorable Dohsis Halbert
Speaker, Eighteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Fifth Regular Session, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on External Affairs to which was jointly referred Presidential Communication No. 18-253 transmitting the National Government's proposed Fiscal Year 2015 Budget, begs leave to report as follows:

Presidential Communication No. 18-253 was transmitted to Congress with the *National Government Fiscal Year 2015 Recommended Budget* ("Budget Book"). Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 5(b), of the Official Rules of Procedure of the Eighteenth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, your Committee has limited its review to those portions of the proposed budget relating to matters under its jurisdiction. These are:

1. FSM Consulate Office, Hawaii
2. FSM Consulate Office, Guam
3. FSM Embassy, Tokyo, Japan
4. UN Mission, New York
5. FSM Embassy, Suva, Fiji
6. FSM Embassy, Washington, D.C.
7. FSM Embassy, Beijing, China
8. Department of Foreign Affairs:
 - a. Office of the Secretary;
 - b. Asia Pacific Africa & Multilateral Affairs;
 - c. American and European Affairs.
9. Grants, subsidies and contributions:
 - a. The Forum Secretariat;
 - b. Secretariat for the Pacific Community;
 - c. United Nations Membership fees;

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- d. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP);
- e. East-West Center;
- f. ACP Cotonou Membership;
- g. SPC Office Rental; and
- h. Celebration of FSM and China bilateral relation.

This report and all previous and subsequent reports by your Committee should be treated as policy for this Nation as defined by Congress. It is your Committee's intent that any commentary found in this report should be treated as policy for the guidance of the relevant department, agencies and offices in the obligations and expenditures of their respective budgets and implementation of their programs.

Your Committee conducted a series of public hearings following the convening of the Fourth Regular Session of the Eighteenth Congress on May 12, 2014. The report and recommendations that follow are based upon the information contained in the *Budget Book* and the input provided by the Secretary, Ambassadors, Consuls General, staff of SBOC and staff of the various departments during those hearings.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED FY 2015 BUDGET

The figures shown in the charts below for the Department of Foreign Affairs include the total amount appropriated in FY 2014; the FY 2015 amount requested, and the amount recommended by the EBRC for FY 2015. The last column is the amount recommended by your Committee for FY 2015.

I. DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - OVERALL

	FY 2014 Appropri.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$1,298,833	\$1,298,833	\$1,298,833	\$1,298,833
Travel	\$315,004	\$265,004	\$239,785	\$278,681
Contract.Serv.	\$2,239,565	\$2,484,691	\$2,484,691	\$2,487,246
OCE	\$326,832	\$327,132	\$327,132	\$327,832
Fixed Assets	\$103,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$4,283,234	\$4,375,660	\$4,350,441	\$4,392,592
No. Employees	37	37	37	37

I. FSM Embassy, Suva, Fiji

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY15 EBRC	Committee
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Personnel	\$98,497	\$98,497	\$98,497	\$98,497
Travel	\$21,400	\$21,400	\$21,400	\$33,900
Contract. Serv	\$82,750	\$83,750	\$83,750	\$91,250
OCE	\$32,900	\$32,900	\$32,900	\$32,900
Fixed Assets	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$239,547	\$236,547	\$236,547	\$256,547
No. Employees	2	2	2	2

Personnel - The same amount appropriated last year is being requested for FY 2015. At the hearing, your Committee inquired whether there is a nomination forth coming to fill the DCM position. Secretary Robert stated that the President does not intend to submit one. It appears that the DCM position will be considered by the next administration. Your Committee was informed that the temporary reassignment of a staff at the Home Office to the Embassy is being considered. Your Committee recommends **\$98,497**.

Travel - The Embassy's proposed budget for travel is \$21,400. Your Committee understands that there are other trips that the Ambassador needs to attend on behalf of the Home Office. On this basis, your Committee recommends an additional \$2,500 to cover the associated travel costs of the consular staff that will be detailed to the FSM Embassy in Suva, Fiji and another \$10,000 for travel. Your Committee recommends **\$33,900**.

Contractual Services - The Embassy is requesting \$83,750 for FY 2015 and EBRC recommends this amount. This is an increase of \$1,000, as compared to the FY 2014 appropriation. The increase is for maintenance. Your Committee discussed the engineer survey and assessment of the Embassy's facilities undertaken by the staff of the Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure. Ambassador Jackson stated that there was a report on the properties and the estimate cost of renovation is around \$239,000.

Your Committee was informed that since the assessment report was done after the submittal of the FY15 proposed budget on April 1, 2014, the amount was not included in this year proposed budget request. Ambassador Jackson informed the Committee that there is a need to expedite the renovation project of the Embassy's facilities because the current

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facilities are not safe and sound. Your Committee cannot provide funding at this time because the President has not officially requested funding for the renovation of the Embassy's facilities. However, in due time, if there is a supplemental request for the Embassy's facilities, the Committee will consider at the appropriate time. Your Committee understands the urgent need to repair the current house for the DCM and recommends \$7,500 and recommends **\$91,250**.

Other Current Expenses - The same amount requested last year is being requested again. Your Committee recommends **\$32,900**.

Fixed Assets - For FY 2014, an amount of \$4,000 was appropriated. For FY 2015, there is no amount requested. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

II. FSM Consulate Office, Guam

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$122,260	\$122,260	\$122,260	\$122,260
Travel	\$13,200	\$11,270	\$11,270	\$11,270
Contract.Serv.	\$146,750	\$146,650	\$144,250	\$146,650
OCE	\$31,100	\$31,400	\$31,400	\$31,400
Fixed Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$313,310	\$311,280	\$309,180	\$311,280
No. Employees	4	4	4	4

Personnel - Your Committee was informed that the Personnel issue with Robson Romolow was accommodated. So the amount requested for FY15 is the same as FY14 appropriation. Your Committee recommends **\$122,260**.

Travel - In FY 2014, an amount of \$13,200 was appropriated. For the FY2015 proposed budget, an amount of \$11,270 is requested. The Consul General testified that, although the office may need more funding, he can work with the Home Office should there is need for additional funding. Your Committee recommends **\$11,270**, as recommended by EBRC.

Contractual Services - At the hearing, the housing allowance for Robson was discussed. In Robson's case, his housing allowance was \$1,000, but he moved into a new house, which is \$1,400 a month. Robson had requested the Home Office pay the

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additional \$400. The Department sought guidance from the Division of Personnel and the direction was that as long as there is funding under housing, the department can pay Robson's shortfall. The department made the payment using available funding under housing for the Guam Consulate Office.

Since the Home Office has accommodated housing for a staff at the Guam Consulate office, it should try to accommodate all staff working in the overseas missions who need housing allowance; however, subject to established regulation. At the mark up meeting, your Committee decided to give housing allowance where needed. Based on the testimony provided, your Committee recommends **\$146,650**.

Other Current Expenses - An amount of \$31,100 was appropriated in FY 2014. The FY15 request is \$31,400. Your Committee recommends **\$31,400**.

Fixed Assets - According to the Consul General, there is no request under fixed assets because needed items were already purchased. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

III. FSM Consulate, Hawaii

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$123,653	\$123,653	\$123,653	\$123,653
Travel	\$12,732	\$12,732	\$8,570	\$12,732
Contract.Ser	\$186,600	\$186,900	\$186,900	\$186,900
OCE	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$35,000
Fixed Asset	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$375,985	\$357,285	\$353,123	\$358,285
No. Employee	4	4	4	4

Personnel- The amount in Personnel remains the same with four employees. There is a request to reclassify one of the

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staff (Angie) to a higher level. At the hearing, Consul General was advised to send a request to the Division of Personnel so the office could investigate the merit of the reclassification. For now, your Committee recommends **\$123,653**.

Travel- An amount of \$12,732 was appropriated in fiscal year 2014. For FY 2015, an amount of \$8,570 is requested. The reduction in travel is based on a policy that only one representative from the overseas offices will attend the annual congressional budget hearing. The Consul General requested funding to supplement his mandated responsibilities, which is to do consular services in the outer islands. On this basis, your Committee recommends the same level of fund as FY 2014, which is **\$12,732**.

Contractual Services- Your Committee understands that the FY 2014 appropriated amount is sufficient to cover Robin Fritz's housing allowance. Therefore, our Committee recommends **\$186,900**.

Other Current Expenses- An amount of \$34,000 was appropriated in FY14. EBRC recommended the same amount for fiscal year 2014. At the hearing, it was explained that within the three months, the price of gasoline has gone up so there is a need to increase the funding for POL. Your Committee recommended an additional amount of \$1,000 for POL. Therefore, your Committee recommends **\$35,000**.

Fixed Assets- Your Committee was informed that the Office had already purchased a vehicle. There is no amount requested for this year. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

IV. FSM Embassy, Washington, DC

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$182,920	\$182,920	\$182,920	\$182,920
Travel	\$43,027	\$43,027	\$43,027	\$47,631
Contract.Ser	\$224,520	\$274,520	\$274,520	\$274,520
OCE	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500
Fixed Asset	\$53,500	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$551,467	\$547,967	\$550,967	\$552,571
No. Employee	4	4	4	4

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Personnel - An amount of \$182,920 was appropriated in FY2014. The same amount is requested for FY15. Your Committee recommends **\$182,920**.

Travel - An amount of \$43,027 was appropriated in FY14. The FY15 requested amount is \$35,397. At the hearing, your Committee learned that EBRC inadvertently deleted two JEMCO trips (Mid-year consultation of \$6,022 and Annual JEMCO meeting of \$6,212) in the amount of \$12,234. The representative from SBOC confirmed this inadvertent deletion. Your Committee recommends **\$47,631**.

Contractual Services -In FY 2014 an amount of \$224,520 was appropriated. The request for FY 2015 is 274,520, which was recommended by EBRC. Ambassador Takesy explained that there is a request of \$50,000 for healthcare insurance coverage for FSM diplomats and their eligible dependents.

Currently, MiCare health insurance, in which FSM Government employees are mandated to enroll, is not recognized in the US mainland. With the \$50,000 requested, staff and their dependents can use it to pay for their participation in the recently implemented U.S. Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. According to Ambassador Takasy, the locally hired employees are required to obtain health insurance. Hence, there is a need to clarify how much is needed for staff and their dependents and for the local employees' health insurance. The Ambassador also suggested that the office's longtime serving custodian needs to get a raise to and recommended that \$600 biweekly will be a fair amount. Your Committee recommends that the request should follow the appropriate process before any funding is appropriated. Your Committee recommends **\$274,520**, as recommended by EBRC.

Other Current Expenses - An amount of \$47,500 was appropriated in fiscal year 2014. The same amount is requested for FY 2015 as recommended by EB&C. Your Committee recommends **\$47,500**.

Fixed Assets - In FY 2014, \$53,500 was appropriated. For the FY 2015 request, and there is no amount requested. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

V. UN Mission, New York

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	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$124,165	\$124,165	\$124,165	\$124,165
Travel	\$40,177	\$40,177	\$35,439	\$35,439
Contract.Serv.	\$577,061	\$554,406	\$554,406	\$577,061
OCE	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
Fixed Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$779,403	\$756,748	\$752,010	\$774,665
No. Employees	2	2	2	2

Personnel - The same amount appropriated last fiscal year is being requested for this fiscal year 2015. Your Committee recommends **\$124,165**.

Travel - An amount of \$37,177 was appropriated in FY 2014. For FY 2015, an amount of \$40,177 was requested, but EBRC approved \$35,439. Your Committee was informed that the decrease is based on the policy that only one representative from overseas offices should attend the annual congressional budget hearings. Your Committee recommends **\$35,439**.

Contractual Services - In FY 2014, an amount of \$577,061 was appropriated. For this FY 2015 request, the UN Mission is requesting \$554,406 and EBRC approved this amount. At the Committee's markup meeting, it was decided that funding for housing should be provided for staff overseas. The contract for the legal person may be amended to include housing also.

Ambassador explained that a request of \$50,000 for healthcare insurance coverage for FSM diplomats and their eligible dependents is also there. Since Micare is not recognized in the U.S. mainland, the FSM diplomats and their dependents need to pay to enroll in the recently implemented U.S. Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. This is the similar arrangement for the staff and their dependents at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. Your Committee recommends the \$50,000 for healthcare insurance.

Madame Ambassador thanked the Committee for funding the renovation of New York office. On the estimate of the renovation and upgrade of the UN Mission's facilities, the staff of the Department of TC&I, the President's office and the Home Office may soon produce a report. Your Committee recommends **\$577,061**.

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Other Current Expenses - An amount of \$38,000 was appropriated in FY 2014. This amount is being requested again. Your Committee recommends **\$38,000**.

Fixed Assets - There was no amount requested for FY 2014. Also no amount requested for FY 2015 Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

VI. FSM Embassy, Tokyo, Japan

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$195,997	\$195,997	\$195,997	\$195,997
Travel	\$18,900	\$18,900	\$15,956	\$15,956
Contract.Ser	\$694,369	\$698,869	\$698,869	\$698,869
OCE	\$74,675	\$74,675	\$74,675	\$74,675
Fixed Asset	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$993,941	\$988,441	\$985,497	\$985,497
No. Employee	2	2	2	2

Personnel- The amount requested for FY 2015 is \$195,997. This is the same amount appropriated last fiscal year (FY 2014). Your Committee recommends **\$195,997**.

Travel- The proposed travel request is \$15,956. This is less than the amount appropriated last fiscal year (FY2014) Your Committee recommends **\$15,956**.

Contractual Services- The Embassy is requesting \$698,869 for FY2015, which is an increase of \$4,500, as compared to the FY2014 appropriation. The detailed breakdown of the Office lease and staff housing of \$367,374 includes: \$176,274 for office lease; \$102,000 for Ambassador's housing; \$67,500 for DCM's housing; and \$21,600 for the new staff housing. Your Committee recommends **\$698,869**.

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Other Current Expenses- An amount of \$74,675 was appropriated in FY 2014. The same amount is requested for FY2015. Your Committee recommends **\$74,675**.

Fixed Assets- The FY 2014 appropriation was \$10,000. No amount requested for this fiscal year. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

VII. FSM Embassy, Beijing, China

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$161,346	\$161,346	\$161,346	\$161,346
Travel	\$27,198	\$27,198	\$23,383	\$23,383
Contract.Ser	\$298,115	\$511,996	\$511,996	\$481,996
OCE	\$23,657	\$23,657	\$23,657	\$23,657
Fixed Asset	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$510,316	\$724,197	\$720,382	\$690,382
No. Employee				

Personnel- An amount of \$161,346 was appropriated in FY 2014. The same amount is requested again for FY 2015. Your Committee recommends **\$161,346**.

Travel- The Embassy's proposed budget for travel is \$27,198, but EBRC decreased it to \$23,383 based on the policy that only one representative should attend annual congressional budget hearings. Your Committee recommends **\$23,383**.

Contractual Services- In FY 2014, an amount of \$298,115 was appropriated. The Embassy is requesting \$511,996 for FY 2015. Your Committee considers that this is a significant increase of \$213,881, as compared to the FY 2014 appropriation. The FY15 requests are listed below with EBRC's recommendation:

	FY-15 propo	FY15 EBRC
1. Educational allowance	\$195,855	\$195,855
2. Health insurance	\$29,000	\$29,000

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3. Insurance (Office & Auto)	\$1,151	\$1,151
4. Office Equip/Auto maint.	\$2,078	\$2,078
5. Office lease	\$52,318	\$52,318
6. Official Rep./COAP	\$50,000	\$50,000
7. Special contract	\$35,708	\$35,708
8. Staff housing	\$145,886	\$145,886
Total -----	\$511,996	\$511,996

On the education allowance your Committee was informed that the FY 2014 appropriation of \$106,636 was insufficient to cover the education allowance because of the need to enroll the children in the Beijing BISS International School. Enrolling them in the local Chinese schools is very hard because of language barrier. Currently, there are six children to be considered. The Ambassador has two, the retained Deputy Chief of Mission has three, and First Secretary has one. On average, it costs \$32,000 annually for a child.

After further follow up by your Committee, there is a question whether the children of the retained DCM should be fully covered, as the retained DCM is a temporary arrangement. This is a question that needs to be determined by the Home Office.

On the representation fund, the FY 2014 amount is \$20,000. There is a \$30,000 increase in the representation fund. The increase of \$30,000 is to cover the costs relating to the upcoming celebration of FSM and China bilateral relation sometimes in November 2014. Since your Committee recommends \$25,000 under the Department's "Grants, Contributions and Subsidies" to fund the upcoming celebration of the two nations bilateral relation, your Committee decides to maintain the representation fund at \$20,000. Your Committee recommends \$20,000 for the official representation fund of the Ambassador.

Your Committee discussed the \$600,000 funding initially donated by the Government of the People's Republic of China for the leasing of a home and other funding purposed for the Federated States of Micronesia in the amount of \$4,000,000 RMB. This is labeled as the "Third Account" of the Embassy. The Ambassador explained that the Embassy is forced to withdraw from the "Third Account" to meet its contractual obligations. The Embassy has to tackle the problems of the weakening U.S. Dollar against the RMB. With the delay of

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the assistance from the Home Office, it triggers the Embassy to withdraw from the Third Account, although the Embassy must communicate to the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of the Government of the People's Republic of China and also seek permission from the Home Office before touching the Third Account. Your Committee recommends **\$481,996**.

Other Current Expenses - An amount of \$23,657 was appropriated in FY 2014. The same amount is requested for FY 2015. Your Committee recommends **\$23,657**.

Fixed Assets - There was no funding appropriated in FY 2014. For FY 2015, the Embassy did not request any. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

VIII(a). OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

	FY 2014 Appro.	FY 2015 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
Personnel	\$100,235	\$100,235	\$100,235	\$100,235
Travel	\$138,370	\$88,370	\$88,370	\$98,370
Contract.Ser	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
OCE	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Fixed Asset	\$16,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$329,605	\$263,605	\$263,605	\$273,605
No. Employee	5	5	5	5

Personnel - There is no change under the Personnel category. Your Committee recommends **\$100,235**.

Travel - The Office's FY 2014 budget for travel was \$88,370. The same amount is being requested. Your Committee understands that the amount requested under the Office of the Secretary for travel, contractual services, other current expenses and fixed assets is also for the two other Divisions within the department (the Division of Asia Pacific Africa & Multilateral Affairs and the Division of American & European Affairs). With the slight increase in airline tickets and to accommodate the travel needs under the two divisions, your Committee recommends and increase of \$10,000. Your Committee recommends **\$98,370**.

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Contractual Services - An amount of \$30,000 was appropriated in FY 2014. The same amount is requested for this year and approved by EBRC. Your Committee recommends **\$30,000**.

Other Current Expenses - An amount of \$45,000 was appropriated in FY 2014. For FY15, the same amount is being requested. Your Committee recommends **\$45,000**.

Fixed Assets - In FY 2014 an amount of \$16,000 was appropriated to purchase a copier machine for the office. Your Committee assumes that the copier has been purchased. Your Committee recommends **\$0**.

VIII(b). ASIA PACIFIC AFRICA & MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Personnel - For the FY 2014 proposed budget, an amount of \$104,656 was appropriated. The same amount is being requested for this year. Your Committee recommends **\$104,656**.

VIII(c). AMERICAN & EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Personnel - An amount of \$85,104 was appropriated in FY 2014. The same amount is being requested for FY 2015. Your Committee recommends \$85,104.

Grants, Subsidies and Contributions

In addition to the operations budget, your Committee recommends the following Grants, Contributions and Subsidies for the department. Basically some of these requests are membership dues for international organizations:

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Organization	FY14 Appropri.	FY15 Proposed	FY15 EBRC	Committee Recommends
The Forum Secretariat	\$46,000	\$46,000	46,000	\$46,000
Secretariat for Pacific Community	\$56,000	\$56,000	56,000	\$56,000
UN Membership fees	\$70,000	\$70,000	70,000	\$70,000
ESCAP	\$5,000	\$5,000	5,000	\$5,000
East-West Center	\$5,000	\$5,000	5,000	\$5,000
ACP Cotonou Membership fees	\$12,000	\$15,000	15,000	\$15,000
SPC Office Rental	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Diplomatic Relations between FSM and China (PRC)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
Total	\$239,000	\$242,000	\$242,000	\$242,000

At the mark up meeting, your Committee decided to fund the Celebration on the Diplomatic Relations between the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Government of the People's Republic of China. The amount is \$25,000.

Your Committee on External Affairs has carefully reviewed the President's Recommended FY 2015 Budget and all information provided by the Executive and the entities under your Committee's jurisdiction. The recommended sums set forth above reflect your Committee's recommendations on the level of funding for the designated activity, program or project for FY 2015.

Subject to the conditions and limitations set forth herein and the availability of funds as determined by your Committee on Ways and Means, your Committee on External Affairs recommends approval of the amounts listed above.

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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Yosiwo P. George
Yosiwo P. George, chairman

Berney Martin, vice chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, member

Peter M. Christian, member

/s/ Isaac V. Figir
Isaac V. Figir, member

Victor Gouland, member

/s/ Bonsiano F. Nethon
Bonsiano F. Nethon, member