



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2015

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

1st Day, 3rd Regular Session

Monday, January 11, 2016

The House of Representatives of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, Third Regular Session on Monday, January 11, 2016, at 3:50 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: I would like to welcome everyone here today in the gallery from on-island and off-island – cabinet members and council members welcome again. Madame Clerk, can you please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and all twenty members were present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: At this time, we will move on to item II of our Order of Business, Public Comments. If anyone wishes to offer any public comments, you may step to the podium to your left in the front and do so. We ask that you state your name for the record and also ask that we give everybody about five minutes to allow other members to be able to speak. It looks like there is no public comments. So let us move on to item III, Reorganization. The Chair will now recognize the Floor Leader for a motion to suspend pertinent rules. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go ahead and make a motion to suspend Rule II, Section 3, the line that reads, “The Vice Speaker shall become Speaker upon the resignation or by death of the Speaker for the purposes of electing a new Speaker and Vice Speaker.” So move, Mr. Speaker.

RULE II. TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

Section 3. Vice Speaker.

The Vice Speaker shall exercise all the duties and powers of the Speaker in the absence of the Speaker from the Commonwealth or in the Speaker's incapacity due to illness, and any other duty which he/she may be assigned by the Speaker of the House. The Vice Speaker shall become Speaker upon the resignation or by death of the Speaker.

[Note: Rule II, Section 3, amended by H. RES. 19-19, HSI]

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader. Motion has been offered to suspend the last sentence of Rule II, Section 3 so we can vote and elect a Speaker and Vice Speaker. Any discussions on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready”.

There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule II, Section 3 was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Floor Leader.

REORGANIZATION***A. Election of Speaker***

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that we can continue with on today's session, I would like to make a motion for the reorganization of the offices of Speaker and Vice Speaker. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader. Motion has been offered for the reorganization it has been seconded. Any discussion on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready”.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Madame Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the Reorganization of the Offices of the Speaker and Vice Speaker with the following results:

Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Anthony T. Benavente	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative George N. Camacho	yes
Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Representative Rafael S. Demapan	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	yes

Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Antonio P. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	yes
Representative Francis S. Taimanao	yes
Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb	<i>abstained</i>
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, 19 members voted “yes.”

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Clerk. With 19 affirmative votes, the motion as offered by the Floor Leader hereby passes. At this time, the Chair is offering a motion. The Chair will be resigning as Speaker of the House, which shall take effect immediately upon election of a new Speaker and at the same time nominate the Vice Speaker, Representative Ralph Demapan to the Office of the Speaker, so move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Motion has been offered and seconded. Any discussion at this time? Recognize Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I move to close nomination.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan. The motion is to close the nomination for the Office of Speaker it has been seconded. Any discussion on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready”.

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Without any other nominations rather than putting it to vote. Are there any objections to the Vice Speaker – the motion to elect the Vice Speaker for Speaker be done by acclamation.

Several members voiced “no objection”.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Madame Clerk, please take note. By acclamation, the Vice Speaker Ralph Demapan is hereby the new Speaker of the House. At this time, I would like to recognize the Sergeant At Arms to escort our new Speaker up to the podium.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Good afternoon everyone. Honestly, I feel like a knight ready to conquer the issue affecting the Commonwealth, but of course that could only be accomplished if all of us would work together. So with that members thank you very much for your confidence,

your trust in bestowing me as your Speaker. Before we move on to the next item on the agenda is there any objection from the members for the Chair to say a few words before we move on?

Several members voiced “no objection”.

B. Election of Vice Speaker

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: *Hafa adai, tirow*, greetings to our visitors, distinguished guests – Speaker Won Pat and your team thank you so much for coming over, Governor and everyone in the gallery families and friends for making time to be here on another milestone on our democracy. *Si Yu’us Ma’ase ni tiempon miyu guini na etnon hu gof agradesi este ginen guahu yan i familia-ku.* Though I feel very grateful and honor to be your Speaker. I am also sadden by the heavy heartfelt by the untimely passing of a great man and a mentor our Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos. I ask our people to join me in extending our felt condolences to his family and his children’s family in this most difficult time. Let us please remember his lifelong legacy of leadership and selfless public services for our people he so loved and cared for very much. I would also like to take this moment to express and that I will be remised not to acknowledge and recognize former Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero for his strong leadership in the 18th House of Representative up to last year. I am proud to say that Speaker Deleon Guerrero played a significant role in simulating, revitalizing and sustaining economic development we all are witnessing today. Speaker Deleon Guerrero is also a man of his words and I am forever grateful for that thank you Speaker. If it is not much to ask can we have a round of applause for Speaker Deleon Guerrero. As we move forward in 2016, let me be the first to extend my hand to each of you. As a testament of my pledge of full cooperation between and amongst all of us in this chamber. There will be some issues that would be politically difficult because of party affiliation, but I am sure if we work together good results will happen. Again members, I ask for your full cooperation. Cooperation means we must insure we pass a timely and balanced annual appropriation budget because it is a sensible public policy and our obligation. Cooperation means also we will and must ensure we protect our retirees and find innovative solutions in preserving our NMI Retirement system. Cooperation also means we will and must acknowledge that judgments against the government is a public debt and a growing liability in fact and that we must deal with them through innovative solutions to reduce if not wipe out the ballooning outstanding obligations or they will soon be an emergency government crisis and expense of our critical public service due to inaction. There are also other critical issues affecting the Commonwealth and let me also remind the members about our situation with the CW dilemma and our position with our military affairs. I ask that we focus on those critical issues because right now that is affecting the Commonwealth. We all need to work together and come up with a solution in addressing those issues. As your Speaker, I do understand and recognize that there are expectation from each member and the public in general this means we must work together as well. It is not a one-man show, we must build that bridge together and move this Commonwealth forward. The House will continue to stand ready to work with our new leadership in the Senate and especially with the new Governor Ralph Torres and Lieutenant Governor Victor Hocog. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to keep it very simple so that we can move on with our business, but before that allow me to close by taking this moment to acknowledge and recognize my parents, my children, my lifelong mentors every day of my life – together with my children and personal friends – they are the reasons why I am who I am today and I am forever grateful for their love, wisdom and caring advice to me to ensure that I am a simple and humble person. *Este*

ha si Yu'us ma'ase yan tirow. So having said that I will now go ahead and make a motion that I nominate former Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero to be the Vice Speaker. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Motion has been seconded. Discussion on that motion?

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Mr. Speaker, discussion on that motion.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Recognize Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: I do not mean to bother the process, but unless I am mistaken I want to make sure that we are within the confines of our House Rules on the process for the reorganization. I know, we nor I allowed under discussion when the presiding officer nominated you to the Speakership and now it looks like it maybe the vice versa of. I was hoping that perhaps somebody from the floor being on the panel or on the Speaker's podium where you preside and that is my understanding and I would hope that perhaps in this case we can move on that one. Perhaps somebody on the floor – the Speaker's seat is suppose to preside, now unless you ask or the presiding officer asks for exception, suspensions of rules or what have we. I want to make sure we are in order. Thank you.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Representative Tebuteb. We did discuss that during our leadership and perhaps maybe I will allow the Legal Counsel to further clarify that should there be any legal matter. Counsel, you may proceed.

Legal Counsel John Cool: Could you state your question a little more specificity because it appears that what we are doing is just electing now to fill the vacancy that was made by the former Vice Speaker being elected to the position of Speaker, which would be appropriate.

Vice Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Speaker just to clarify.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Recognize Representative Deleon Guerrero.

Vice Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Just to make sure I understand this. I think the concern raised by the Minority Leader is whether somebody else could nominate myself other than you who is presiding up there. If I may, Minority Leader just to sort of clarify the issue, I think the Chair as I have been presiding has always been able to offer a motion just like any other member. I think the question is you are raising is should it be him. And the reason it is him, I nominated him, he is nominating me symbolic of this agreement and to honor what we agreed to that is why it is not someone from Precinct 1 to nominate me and not someone from Precinct 2 to nominate him. It is a gesture if you will. So the question is whether the Chair can offer a motion? I think the Chair has always been able to offer motions. John that is specific as I can get it is that within our rules and is it legal.

Legal Counsel John Cool: Anybody can make the motion in the nomination within our rules.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you Legal Counsel for that clarification. Any other concerns Representative Tebuteb? So the nomination has been seconded. Go ahead Representative Deleon Guerrero.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a motion to close the nomination. Thank you.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: To close the nomination it was seconded.

There was no further discussion and the motion to close nomination was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Clerk for the Vice Speaker. Roll Call.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to elect Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero as Vice Speaker for the 19th House of Representatives with the following results:

Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Anthony T. Benavente	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative George N. Camacho	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Speaker Rafael S. Demapan	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Antonio P. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	yes
Representative Francis S. Taimanao	yes
Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb	<i>abstained</i>
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, 19 members voting for Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Clerk. With a vote of 19 “yes” and 1 “abstain,” I now recognize Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero to be the Vice Speaker. Thank you. If there is no objection just a very short brief recess perhaps maybe one or two minutes for an official photo if it is not much to ask. Short recess.

The House recessed at 4:15 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:20 p.m.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Members. Back from our recess. It appears that there is no information from item IV up to item XVII, so if there is no objection we will go ahead and skip those items and proceed over to item XVIII, Miscellaneous Business.

Several members voiced “no objection”.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills: None

House Local Bills: None

House Legislative Initiatives: None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions: None

House Joint Resolutions: None

House Commemorative Resolutions: None

House Concurrent Resolutions: None

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

None

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

None

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

None

BILL CALENDAR

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Under miscellaneous does any member want to say a few words or is there anything? Recognize Representative Roman Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Si Yu'us ma'ase para todos hamyo kontodu i Vice Speaker ni nuebu na ma ilih.* Maybe I will speak in English, I would just like to say congratulations to both of you most especially the previous Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero in the 18th Legislature. I was here on the 18th and you lead us to a very challenging years in the past two years and we give you thanks in that effort and everything that you have done to hold that leadership. And to our new Speaker, I would just like to say this that yes I agree all along and I agree with you and I have talked to you and I will support you and your speakership, but I would like to caution also at the same time because there is a lot of challenge in this 2016 that we are facing. We have the retirements and all other issues that is coming upon our face so we have to be vigilant into how we try to work together, both within the minority block and the majority. I know sometimes we feel awkward, but brush all the unnecessary feelings aside and let us move forward and let us try to tackle our issue ahead of us. We understood that it is going to be very hard but again let us not forget that the people put us in this post and they are entitled in our service. So let us work together, help each other and make sure

that all these challenges are faced and we hope to resolve it. Mr. Speaker, congratulations *ta'lo si Yu'us ma'ase ya ta kontinua ha mo'na*. Thank you.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Representative Benavente. Any other member? Recognize Representative Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it to heart that when you stated earlier that we have a new direction. It is no secret that this House is pretty much broken or split. We stand divided in many issues and in moving forward we have the additional obligation such as the over \$9 Million Dollar shortfall, the government obligation to CUC and other obligations that we owe to our people. So I look forward in moving forward with you Mr. Speaker and leading us with the Administration and hopefully we can solve more issue or problems that we face currently. So with that Mr. Speaker thank you and congratulations.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Representative Yumul. Any other member? Recognize Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero.

Vice Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, congratulations on speakership and I also want to take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues in the GOP for the coalition that created this leadership. I want to say that today this is unprecedented what happened with sharing of leadership. Some may agree, some may not regardless I see it as the same a bunch of elected and working together, regardless of who is at the helm. I want to thank you and the leadership for the past year for being able to work together. I also want to thank the members in the minority also for working together and despite the disagreements, I understand I have been here a while enough to know that you cannot please everybody and there is always different sides to the story. As Representative Yumul stated in the paper that that is a part of it that is a healthy part of it that does justice to our work. We are here to review to scrutinize, to deliberate on the bills and we have done that. Although I may have been accused of many things, I do not think I can be accused of not allowing deliberations, I feel strongly about that and I guess that is my message to you Mr. Speaker is to consider that and continue that to allow for deliberations from not just about the minority, anyone. A well scrutinized bill is a good product, we end up with a good product rather than just going through the motion and passing bills without scrutiny. So that is my message to you Mr. Speaker again congratulations. Thank you to all the members on both sides of the aisle. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero. Any other? If there is none, let me just – very brief – and based on the comments mentioned earlier by some of the Representatives. Believe me I am very excited to work with each member, not just from the left but from the right. At the same time also, I hope that we can all build that bridge together so we can address the pressing issues affecting the Commonwealth. If we do that we can overcome those challenges and perhaps a lot easier to produce good results. In addition to that my priority here also is of course the people. We have to make sure that we do what is best for the interest of the Commonwealth, the people. In addition to that let me also make sure that the economy is still going to be my priority while the tourism and the casino industry on Saipan has helped grow our economy. We cannot rely on it alone as we experienced from our past during the government time when the government got shutdown – close the operation it was so difficult even to the point when the government had to reduce the annual appropriation therefore, I will encourage

everyone that we should work together and find other innovative solutions, not just with the current industry that we have and I say this because when we want to make sure that our government programs are funded we need a vibrant economy so that those funds could really help on those agencies to ensure that services is rendered accordingly. So with that if there is no other – recognize Representative Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know and I understand that the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor who were present here during the election and as well as members of the Senate and I am just wondering about Rule I, Section 3 of our Rules of the House of Representatives in advising the Governor and the Senate as to the reorganization and to whom those elected officials are so I just wanted to clarify. Thank you.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you for that clarification. Immediately after this session, I am going to notify the Senate and the Administration of this new leadership. Recognize Representative Deleon Guerrero.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Section 3, I took it that you are to appoint two members of the House to advice the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and the Senate body of this reorganization. So I stand to be corrected. Counsel.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Counsel you may.

Legal Counsel John Cool: That provision only applies to the first organizational meeting before there is an organized House. In this case the House has already been previously organized and the only difference is the change in the leadership.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Counsel. I yield for now.

Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Representative Deleon Guerrero. If there is none, I would like to go ahead and move down to item XIX for the announcement. If none, I would like to recognize the Floor Leader for adjournment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I make a motion for adjournment, I too would like to briefly congratulate former Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero our Vice Speaker now for your new position, but also thank you for your leadership in this first half of this legislature and on that same sentence Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you and look forward to working with you so that we may continue to do the work for our people. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a motion that we adjourn subject to your call.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

The House adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Venetia A. Sanchez
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:

H. L. B. NO. 19-45: To appropriate Two Million US Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) specifically allotted to the Second Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. EDWIN P. ALDAN of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on December 21, 2015

H. L. B. NO. 19-46: To name public land, specifically Lot Number 005/486 located in Koblerville, Saipan, to “Koblerville Community Park”. Introduced by REP. ANTONIO P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, and Francis S. Taimanao) on December 21, 2015.

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:

H. L. B. NO. 19-43: To appropriate up to \$288,312.34 from the Third Senatorial District Developers Infrastructure Tax Fund under Business Unit 3730; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO, of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Anthony T. Benavente, George N. Camacho, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, John Paul P. Sablan, Vinson F. Sablan, Frances S. Taimanao, Ramon A. Tebuteb, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on December 16, 2015.

H. L. B. NO. 19-44: To appropriate Two Million US Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. GLENN L. MARATITA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on December 16, 2015.

*Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session
12/21/15:*

H. B. NO. 19-122: To establish a provision to provide an immediate designation of existing public lands for homestead lots within the CNMI; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. ANTHONY T. BENAVENTE of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Edwin K. Propst, Francis S. Taimanao, and Ralph N. Yumul) on December 21, 2015; referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

H. L. B. NO. 19-45: To appropriate Two Million US Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) specifically allotted to the Second Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. EDWIN P. ALDAN of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on December 21, 2015

H. L. B. NO. 19-46: To name public land, specifically Lot Number 005/486 located in Koblerville, Saipan, to “Koblerville Community Park”. Introduced by REP. ANTONIO P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, and Francis S. Taimanao) on December 21, 2015.

House information on deadlines for override:

GOV. COMM. 19-89: (12/7/15) Informing the House that he disapproved H. B. No. 19-37, HD2, SD1 (To transfer the Administration of the Government's Group Health and Life Insurance Programs to the Department of Finance, and to amend 1 CMC § 8364; and for other purposes.) [**Deadline 2/5/16**]

GOV. COMM. 19-93: (12/4/15 received 12/7/15) Informing the House that he signed into law and line item vetoed in parts, H. B. 19-95, HD1, HS1, SS1 (Casino Act Amendment). Became **Public Law 19-24, item vetoed** [**Deadline 2/5/16**]