

**PATA Micronesia Chapter 1<sup>st</sup> Tri-Annual General Membership Hybrid Meeting 2023**

**Friday, March 10 | 9:00 AM**

**Venue: Mings Hall, Palasia Hotel, Palau**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
MINUTES**

*8:00 a.m–9:00 a.m. – Registration with Chapter Members*

**Master of Ceremony:** Mr. Aiyumu Takada, Human Resource Manager, Palau Visitors Authority

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 9:20am by Chairman Kadoi Ruluked

1.1 With the following individuals in attendance:

1. Acer Apis–BRDFRTco clothing company
2. Alessa Aguon–Concierge Palau
3. Bernice Yen–FEA, Inc.
4. Chang Hee Kim–Private/Individual
5. Cynthia McDowell Advance Management, Inc. (AMI)
6. Denise Mendiola Private- Individual
7. Dr. Gena A. Rojas University of Guam
8. Dr. John J. Rivera Citadel Pacific Ltd.
9. Dr. Annette Santos–University of Guam
10. Elaine Fejarang–Private/Individual
11. Eskella Joseph–Office of Commerce, Investment & Tourism
12. Francis C. Domnick–Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism
13. Frederick Granillo–Pacific Islands SBDC Network
14. Gertrude DeBrum–Marshall Islands Resort
15. Grace Abon–Kora In Okrane (KIO)
16. Hirobo Obeketang–Marshall Islands Resort
17. Hubert K Yamada–Resources & Development, Pohnpei State Gov.
18. Jacqueline Edgar–Pohnpei State Legislature
19. KukuLynn Gallen–Pohnpei Tourism STO
20. Loretta Lori de Brum–Office of Commerce, Investment & Tourism
21. Lou Aguon-Schulte–PARADISES
22. Marcellus Akapito Chuuk Visitors Bureau
23. Margaret Alee–Bigler FEA, Inc.
24. Monty McDowell–Advance Management, Inc. (AMI)
25. Paula Monk–United Airlines
26. Rita Pangelinan Nauta–Guampedia Foundation
27. Ruthlynn Lakior–FEA, Inc.
28. Senator Brian Etscheit–Pohnpei State Legislature
29. Senator Hudson Abraham–Pohnpei State Legislature
30. Senator Sendilina Lekka–Pohnpei State Legislature
31. Shamanda Hanerg–Kora in Okrane-KIO
32. Sheri Guavis–Elefa Handicraft Shop

33. Tobel Alfred—Marshall Islands Resort
34. Victoria Blas—Toves—Private, Individual
35. Jennifer Schlehenkamp—Sam's Tours Palau
36. Ella Delos Santos—Palau Pacific Resort

**2.0 MINUTES TAKEN BY:** Ms. Janine Tewid, Marketing Representative, PVA, and Ms. Courtney Tellej, State & Community Representative II

### **3.0 Welcome by Minister of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism & Development**

Minister Tmetuchl gives his opening remarks at 9:21am

- Ways in which the pandemic affected tourism. From Palau's side, there were barriers regarding opening the borders from the Ministry of Health & Human Services (MHHS) and newest vaccination regulations.
- Regarding the Tourism Industry, the "SAFE for you" program was implemented. A certification for tourism related businesses from restaurants to hotels to service visitors during a pandemic.
- Backlash was faced regarding opening the borders but Kadoi and his team worked their hardest against the curveballs.
- Tourism is the bread and butter of Micronesia. But with Covid, everything changed. Micronesia map reference-all the shows like PATA and other forums we are often separated rather than in regions like the map.
- Minister Tmetuchl states he understands not all islands have the resources to attend every show. Shares PVA's strategy "Palau Tourism Ambassadors" at show booths. We can work together to be side by side at booths together. Let's think more regional and more global rather than more individual islands on the map. Consumers will look at this as "How can we hit all the islands?"
- Refers to Lion Travel in Taiwan, how can we utilize them as a way to get consumers to visit the region of Micronesia. Push governments and airlines to work together and push traffic throughout the region. Push all the Ministers and Government leaders to come together in a room and fund regional marketing efforts.

Minister ends his speech 9:29AM

*MC does housekeeping: Wifi/QR code programs/bathrooms/refreshments  
MC introduces Rita Nauta to give minutes of the previous meeting.*

### **4.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING by Rita Nauta, Secretary**

- Rita Nauta begins at 9:30am with her remarks of gratitude to the organizers. Experience the Warmth of Micronesia, Thanks the visitors as well for their voyage to this forum. Acknowledges online visitors and the long time PATA members as well.
- At 9:35AM Minutes of Previous Meeting Begin: Rita Nauta recounts the events. You can view the full meeting on the website. Request to table the minutes. Granted (due to typos as well).

- In the December 2022 Meeting, Board members were elected. Kadoi was elected as Board Chairman, Dr. John Rivera was elected as Treasurer of the Board of Directors (Rita Nauta lets Dr. John Rivera to introduce himself), Dr. Annette Santos (Virtual Guest) was elected as well (Dr. Annette Santos gives her well wishes. Gives her support as elected member of PATA and to its members). New Vice Chairman Mark Manglona.
- Former Chairwoman, Paula Monk, begins her remarks at 9:42am. Gives acknowledgement to PATA members, the Board of Directors, Kadoi's team for welcoming us, Vice Chairman Mark Manglona who has helped PATA, and how we all have brought PATA Micronesia to where it is and elevating it.
- Rita Nauta hands over to Mark Manglona as the Newly Elected Vice Chairman- as a leading navigator. He begins his remarks at 9:46am. Highlights promotions of our cultures and how he is excited to work with everyone.

*Rita Nauta introduces Chairman Kadoi Ruluked*

## **5.0 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN by Kadoi Ruluked, Chairman**

- Chairman begins his remarks at 9:48am. Greets Minister Tmetuchl properly.
- Kadoi Ruluked gives his acknowledgements to Rita Nauta and Dr. Annette Santos. Recognizes special guests and all visitors for making the journey.
  - PATA Micronesia Chapter. Reconnecting, sharing, and learning together through weather storms of the 21st century.
  - PATA Micronesia Chapter. Through the Programs we deepen our understanding of Micronesia Warmth with Emphasis on ONE (Micronesia).
  - PATA Micronesia Chapter as a Regional Network.
  - PATA Micronesia Chapter as INCLUSIVE- One represent.

Chairman Kadoi Ruluked closes his remarks 9:53am

*MC moves on to the report of the PATA Micronesia Chapter Board of Director Treasurer, Dr. John Rivera*

## **6.0 REPORT OF THE TREASURER by Dr. John Rivera, Treasurer**

- Dr. John Rivera reports the Financial Reports as of December 31st, 2022 acknowledging the help from previous PATA Micronesia Treasurer.

## **7.0 NEW BUSINESS**

### **7.1 Introduction by New Members**

*MC introduces new business members of PATA amidst pandemic.*

- 7.1.1 Palau- Jennifer Schlehenkamp from Sam's Tours Palau.
- 7.1.2 Palau-Ella Delos Santos from Palau Pacific Resort

- 7.1.2 Marshall Islands-Grace Abon and Shamantha Hanerg from Kora In Okrane-KIO.
- 7.1.3 Palau- Alessa Aguon from Concierge Palau

Rita Nauta thanks Pohnpei for joining us- Hubert Yamada introduces the Pohnpei Delegation.

Hirobo Obeketang gives his remarks about “Melei Tobl” and introduces the Marshall Island Delegation. Francis Domnick introduces himself and the rest of the Marshall Island Delegation.

Rita Nauta introduces Chuuk. Marcellus Akapito pays his respects to Palau and introduces himself.

### **PATA Committee Introduction**

Rita Nauta remarks the multiple generations present in this meeting. Proceeds to let the committee members introduce themselves at 10:12am.

Committee Chairs:

Alessa Aguon: Public Relations, Vice Chairwoman

Lori Debrum: Marketing, Vice Chairwoman

KukuLynn Gallen: Membership, Vice Chairwoman

Dr.Gena Rohas: Culture, Heritage, & Environment, Vice Chairwoman

Chloe Yano: Marketing, Chairwoman

Denise Mendiola: Education, Chairwoman

Sharrise Ngiraked: Culture, Heritage, & Environment, Chairwoman

Committee Introduction concludes at 10:14am

*MC moves on to the next session with the NTO/STO Reviews. Membership is the Heart of PATA.*

### **7.2 NTO/STO Reviews**

Each Island Representative presented a brief report on their destination.

#### **7.2.1 Pohnpei/FSMChuuk**

**Pohnpei**—Reported by KukuLynn Gallen. At 10:23am, Ms. Gallen reports on Local/ Regional Events 2023 including the 25th Micronesia Island Forum with the Regional Tourism Committee and the Private Sectors. As well as their upcoming Pohnpei Cultural Day. Shares latest news and visitor arrivals in Pohnpei and announces that the Nan Madol Visitors Center was completed as of the last meeting update. Moreover, Ms. Gallen emphasizes the challenges including high cost airfare and the capacity for

promotion/marketing and closes with the successes including the completion of the Visitor Center and their promotional video clip of Pohnpei from the Micronesia Expo 2022.

**Chuuk**—Reported by Marcellus Akapito. At 10:43am, Mr. Akapito reports on Synergizing Chuuk Tourism amidst pandemic focusing on Oceanscape: The Ocean is for interconnecting space-our identity and way of life. To enhance sustainable ocean-based activities in order to capitalize on the significance of the ocean in our way of life and derive cultural, social, economical, and health benefits for community members and others. Activities will include Sailing Race, Outrigger Triangle, Island Man, and Fish Derby. Moreover, bringing focus to other activities such as Arts and Crafts, Traditional, Evolving, and other musical forms, Cultural Heritage Sites (both marine-based and terrestrial areas), Ecological Sites, and War Relic Sites. Shares plans with Faichuk Focus. Concludes with their upcoming plans with the 4th Annual Chuuk Island Fair May 18-19, 2023. Invites PATA to attend.

7.2.2 **Marshall Islands**—Reported by Francis Domnick. At 10:59am, Mr. Domnick begins his remarks by proposing Miss Micronesia. With the recent success of Miss Marshall Islands. From the pageant alone, they garnered 400,000 views. Eskella Joseph continues reporting the Local Events 2023 including One island One product and Local Atolls Float Parade. As well as Latest News and Updates such as the newly established Glamping Dome along with their visitor arrivals and upcoming events (Remembrance Day, RMI Constitution Day, MIMA Conference, Micro Games) and regional meetings (Pacific Festival ; South Pacific Tourism Exchange).

7.2.3 **Kosrae**—No Representative

7.2.4 **Yap**—No Representative

7.2.5 **CNMI**—No Representative

7.2.6 **Guam**—Reported by Mark Manglona. At 11:28am, Mr. Manglona reports the local events 2022-2023 including the Koko Kids Fun Run/Koko Race, Guam Micronesia Island Fair Ypao, Agot Mango Festival Event, Electronic Island Festival (heavily promoted in Korea and Taiwan), and Guam Liberation Day. Along with their plans for a Local Influencer Collab as part of the reopening of tourism. Additionally, Mr. Manglona covers the scope of overseas events (ITB Asia Trade Fair, PTAA Travel Tour Expo, Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show, Seoul International Travel Fair KOFTA...) and the latest news (Recovery of Japan market promising with support from JATA; Guam celebrates 50th anniversary of sister city agreement with Taipei City) and lastly visitor arrivals.

- 7.2.7 **Palau**—Reported by Chloe Yano. At 11:45pm, Ms. Yano reports on the visitor arrivals and Palau's road to recovery from the pandemic, which covered the Pandemic Re-employment Program (PREP) and Safe for you program (for safety measures) and the latest travel restrictions (vaccination regulations). Shares recent events including the Our Ocean Conference and overseas travel exhibitions in which they would also utilize Palauans residing in the United States to become Palau Tourism Ambassadors at Travel Shows (started early 2022). Additionally, flights to Palau updates: United Airlines, Air Niugini, China Airlines. Challenges in tourism include destination competition with more diverse tourism products, innovation, and local human resource. In terms of tourism products, the Alii Pass Program Initiative was created with the implementation and success of Experience Airai, PATA awarded (from 2019-2022, \$80,000 in revenue to Airai). More local product highlights include Bubeu drinks made from coconut, Odody Woven Products Shop, and Solid Waste Management: Belau Eco Glass Center. Latest event will be the Belau Omal Marathon taking place on June 4, 2023.

*MC Closes for lunch break at 11:53AM*

*AFTERNOON SESSION BEGIN at 1:52PM*

## **8.0 VISIONING SESSION by Dr. Annette Santos, Board Director**

*Housekeeping by Denise Mendiola. Checking with Virtual Guests*

At 1:57pm, Dr. Annette Santos begins recapping this morning's session. Gives acknowledgement before beginning the presentation.

- Review Current State of PATAMIC (mission and purpose)
  - Non-profit purpose

*Monty McDowell comments 2:08PM: An ongoing issue with PATA Micro is we tend to follow elected members/chairs. Once we get synergy, they are out of office. We need everyone to get on board, especially people from the private sector.*

*Dr. Annette Santos replies 2:13PM: There are opportunities where we can serve as an instrument for this type of collaboration.*

*Back to the slides:*

- Reflection & Discuss: Are we aligned? Do our Mission Statement and Purpose remain relevant?
- SWOT Analysis: Future Trends and Challenges. Determining how missions and purposes are affected by our outside environment.



- What's happening? It can have a direct or indirect impact on our ideas esp regarding tourism in Micronesia.
- Where do we get information?
  - PATA
  - Local research and studies
  - Technical reports
  - News sources

**INFORMATION GATHERING: Question to the members**

- KukuLynn Gallen: Word of Mouth( as well as people from PATA Micronesia) and Online Research
- Francis Domnick: See how we can make data more accessible.  
Atoll Profiling: through stories, legends, skills (handicrafts). Using culture as a way to get more tourists. Make yourself more involved with the community, the government, so you can be more knowledgeable about your country, which helps you be more knowledgeable to give information.
- Marcellus Akapito: In Chuuk, the Chuuk Visitors Bureau, we are at the point of weaving through information and ways of communication as social media is scattered. We have more technical resources (recent ADB assistance). A lot of information out there we need to work better together to pull in information through levels of government. Refers to Monty McDowell's comment, how we deal with turnover rates of government elected officials. We have to work together with the government through this undeniable reality. Work on strengths. Pay attention to resources as well.
- Mark Manglona: Using third party researches as well as PATA (international) for relevant information as they work with many specialists. Research Department that goes out and does surveys such as exit surveys from our visitors, so we can figure out our budgets.
- Kadoi Ruluked: Look through PATA, WTO, as well as personnel of PVA (do personal research), subscribed to other research, trade show details and data, good relationships with different Ministries (partnerships), pre-covid we had a company relationship with Sojitz who do market research, consultations with tour companies and hotels (who also have their relationships outside with wholesalers) as well as being member of the Chamber of Commerce and finally networking with PATA members as well.

**Brainstorming Activity-Envision the Future**

Using information gleaned from the SWOT matrix, generate some strategic initiatives or priorities to those. That also support the PATA mission

- Potential Scenarios that could influence future PATAMIC
- Identify aspirations, goals, objectives
- Discuss desired impact and outcomes

*Breaking up into committees to brainstorm/tackle Strength Opportunities and Weakness Opportunities*

*Brainstorming portion of Envision the Future is done at 2:57PM*

*Moves to Individual Committee reporting*

**Marketing Committee**

- S: Rich history and Cultural heritage
- W: One product, People are unfamiliar with the region
- OStrategy: Educational Tourism: Target College Students. Showcase One Micronesia

**Public Relations Committee:**

Be the leading source of information in Micronesia

- S: Make sure we make use of deliverables on timely and quick manner through social media, newsletters
- W: Platforms. We are new to the committee. We are studying platforms we currently have and see how we can provide the information and resources in a timely manner especially through breakdown of information in various islands but will work towards getting everyone informed.

**Membership Committee:**

- We lost a lot of members. We want to enhance and bring them back through public relations and work on communication. Enhance more. Clean up the website. Attract members. Keep up with the site with up to date information on the website.

**Culture Committee:**

- The fact that we are one Micronesia, We have similarities and understand each other culturally. We have a uniqueness. The way we present our culture is very attractive.
- However the lack of entrepreneurship in island culture. The perception. It is only a perception. We can create value out of products. We have so much layering of decision making-who do you have to talk to, how will you get there?
- We want to develop a two starfish system to develop partnerships for decision making and partner sharing. Keep it inclusive rather than exclusive.

**Education Committee**

- We have a lot of Micronesians capable of certifying people in all sectors.
- Weakness: Venues and trainers collaborations. What do we lack? Hospitality Training? Food Safety Training? Housekeeping Training? How can hotels/airlines be more accommodating to trainers who will come train members/people. Visitors Bureaus will have to invite them in. How do we get members outside of PATA to take their time to come to these places? How do we convince them, what incentives could we provide?



*Brainstorming Activity-Envision the Future ends at 3:13pm.*

*Pause for Reflections: feedback and comments at 3:21pm*

*Members enter sharing discussion*

- Francis C. Domnick: I would like to commend you for this exercise. Allowing us to share our issues. In the Marshall Islands, for example, as the NTO. We always have to go before our Parliament and defend our budget every year.
  - Arrival Tax in Palau: How can we bring that to Marshall Islands. That is one area I wanted to see get addressed. We want to learn from each other. Mentions Palau cleanliness model. Hopefully we can work with Palau- see how we can learn from each other.
- Senator Sendilina Lekka: There is so much we can relate and learn more on how other states are doing it. Back in Pohnpei there are different stages of levels of how to meet. How can we work with the Director and Tourism and how can we see we move forward. We want to bridge the gap but how?
- Lou Aguon: The next two PATA venues. The venues are dependent on who was invited to the PATA. We have to decide here in Palau who will host next so they can prepare their budgets, plan what they want to present. As it takes time.
- Marcellus Akapito: I am aware that some forums ago they made a directive for this chapter to be the marketing arm of the region. I would like to urge that we respond or direct the directive-in regards to the strategy that we can work with. Example: the Micronesia Challenge. Pulling together efforts of multiple leaders and pulling in together for aligned goals.

*Final Comment at 3:30pm. Back to Dr. Annette Santos:*

Wrapping up: Committees and Co-chairs give few words to wrap this session up

What is the next step?

- Marketing Committee: Chloe Yano comments on getting started on drafting the strategies.
- Public Relations Committee: Alessa Aguon comments we can start housekeeping and cleaning up our platforms. Not saying that it is in an inactive state, we want to get to a place that is aligned with technological advancements.
- Membership Committee: Kukulynn Gallen comments the next step will be to increase membership and do profile updates. By getting contact with Brenda/Brandon as soon as possible.
- Culture, Heritage, & Environment Committee: Sharrise comments we are new so we would need a lot of items from the past chairwomen. We would need to

- gather all the creation stories for all the islands. Gather something that is unique in all the islands. Something we can showcase. This is our idea.
- Education Committee: Focus on training credentials. Something that is accessible to everyone for ONE Micronesia

*Wrapping up ends at 3:36pm.*

Dr. Annette Santos ends her session with a Palauan proverb sharing: “A rengud me chodab”. May our hearts always complement our intellect in the work that we do for our magnificent Micronesia.

*Denise Mendiola invites Dr. John Rivera to begin his session.*

Dr. John Rivera

- When the pandemic happened: no one thought the world would shut down. We learned that we were by ourselves. But did we have to be alone or could we be together as a region?
- In ten minutes, I would like you to come up with one thing that could help us from a PATA perspective. Examples: have a policy committee in each respective island. Bring up to the PATA board for feedback and gain support, update on what is the legislation and update for each island. PATA can offer support saying PATA represents all these folks. We have due diligence. Eg: Pohnpei is doing it, Palau is doing it, Chuuk is doing it. We are not complying with them but adapting them. Providing additional support to local governments.

Feedback:

- Alessa Aguon: Being a first time individual member for the PATAMIC chapter I see a lot of benefits, values, and networking. A positive thing. PATAMIC can help someone like me with air access. Nice discounts when signing up to be a member have set discounts for airfare to travel to such forums.
- Hubert Yamada: Addressing membership. We want to believe that there are more people interested in joining us. Addressing the need for membership-How can we encourage more membership? Ask state entities to promote and increase membership for PATA. Most of us are new. We can work collectively.
- Dr. John Rivera to Francis Domnick: For Marshall Islands, selling tourism for your people hasn't really clicked yet. Such as us going to Parliament and defending the budget. Create a template highlighting the importance of tourism. Something we can show to leaders that shows what tourism can bring to our country not only economically but culturally as well as it uplifts the culture. Something we can bring with us back. Template presentation material to make a case for tourism.
- Dr. John Rivera to Hubert Yamada: I would also like to add that at the end of the day the question is: What do I get out of it? What can PATA do for us but what can we do as PATA members? Take the question back home to think about it more seriously. This is not a destination, this is a journey. We evolve and grow

with the times. Please do not feel at all that you cannot go back home, think of inspiration and not feel like you can't share with us.

Dr. John Rivera closes his session with the following remark: We can go home with confidence. Really establish a working document, a strategy.

## **9.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **9.1 2nd TriAnnual Meeting for 2023**

Chairman Kadoi Ruluked acknowledges all speakers of the day and members.

- We heard a lot of really good stories and challenges. Going back with something to think about. Give time to committees and co-chairs to work together to consolidate their budgets.
- Together we can set the course and sail the canoe. We want to focus on inclusivity. If our canoe passes you I will make sure you can hold on and get in our canoe. We can offer assistance though trade shows, offer space and let you send materials or QR Codes to save costs as well.
- Regarding the 2nd Tri-Annual Meeting, we don't want to put anyone on the spot. We have three months. We will let you go home and think about it. And let you let the committee and board know.

## **10.0 ADJOURNMENT by Kadoi Ruluked, Chairman**

To close, let us take the group photo which was supposed to be done before lunch so everyone could go to the stairs by the poolside. We also have our farewell dinner tonight.

Upon no further business, a motion made by Chairman Kadoi Ruluked to adjourn the PATA Micronesia Chapter 1<sup>st</sup> Tri-Annual General Membership Hybrid Meeting 2023 meeting at 4:18pm. All in favor. Motion passed.