



OFFICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY
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November 25, 2014

32-14-2282

Office of the Speaker
Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D

Speaker Judith Won Pat
Vice Speaker Benjamin Cruz
Majority Leader Rory Respicio
156 Hesler Place
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Date: 11-25-14
Time: 9:30am
Received By: [Signature]

Re: Checkbook Access

Hafa Adai Speaker Won Pat and Majority Leader Respicio:

This is a follow up of our discussion of Friday, November 21, 2014, and for the information of Vice Speaker Cruz.

Among some of the initiatives discussed was legislative access to government expenditures. The Office of Finance and Budget and OPA already have "read only" access to the Department of Administration's AS 400 where revenues and expenditure can be viewed. The "checkbook access" concept would take several steps further beyond read only information.

At an AICPA conference I attended several years ago, "checkbook access" was already available in more than half of the 50 states. Based on the latest report "Following the Money 2014, How the 50 States Rate in Providing Online Access to Government Spending Data", all 50 states now operate websites to make information on state spending accessible not only to the Legislature but also to the public.

Eight states Indiana, Oregon, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont and Wisconsin, who all received A- scores from 90 to 94, have created user-friendly websites that provide visitors with accessible information on vendor payments, even the ability to download the entire checkbook dataset to conduct offline analyses.

In today's online transparent world, OPA advocates checkbook access of all Government of Guam expenditures to be made available not only to the Legislature but also to the people of Guam.

GovGuam is a billion dollar entity. Policymakers need regular, current and reliable financial information. While monthly cash flow information is provided and posted on the government's website, a statement of net position (balance sheet) and statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances (income statement) has not ever been provided publicly. The cash flow statement is not

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sufficient for policy makers to assess the financial health of this government on a regular basis.

Over the years, OPA has requested the balance sheet and income statement but DOA has not provided this information with any regularity.

What is needed is a significant investment in technology to include new financial management systems at the Department of Administration and the Department of Revenue and Taxation to bring our government into the 21st century.

With a new FMIS, implementation of initiatives like checkbook access would be just the beginning of making our government more transparent and accountable to the people of Guam.

May I suggest a round table discussion with DOA, DR&T, the Legislature and OPA to begin the dialogue of how to provide more transparent information of government revenues and expenditures on a regular basis?

Senseramente



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