



GUAM REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Government of Guam

Eddie B. Calvo, Governor
Raymond S. Tenorio, Lt. Governor
Enrique Agustin, Executive Manager

P.O. Box 2896
Hagatna, Guam 96932

Phone: (671) 475-4686 or 475-4616
Fax: (671) 475-4600



Guam Regional Transit Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

AGENDA

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 3:00PM

GRTA Conference Room (DPW Compound) Upper Tumon, Guam

- I. **Call to order – Chairwoman**
- II. **Roll Call – Board of Directors**
- III. **Approval of Minutes**
January 16, 2018 Board meeting
- IV. **Executive Manager’s Report (Rick Agustin)**
- V. **For Board Approval**
None
- VI. **Old Business**
\$197,000 SMIR short fall
- VII. **Budget Report (EM R. Agustin)**
- VIII. **Bus Operations Report (Mark Crisostomo)**
 - A. Bus schedule and Routes
 - B. Ridership Report – January, 2018
 - C. On-time performance
- IX. **Chief Planner Report (Rally Pilipina)**
 - A. All Procurement project updates
- X. **New Business**
Focus Group recruitment – For appointment scheduling
- XI. **Public Comments**
- XII. **Executive Session**

February 20, 2018 GRTA Board Agenda



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XIII. Adjournment

APPROVED BY:


LOUISE RIVERA
Chairperson

3/20/18
Date

LR:pg



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Board Officers

FY 2017

Chairman

Louise Rivera
646-5211/8646

mayorlrivera.tatuha@gmail.com

Vice Chairman

Gerard Cruz
487-4248

gerard.cruz71@gmail.com

Secretary

Ginger Porter
(671) 483-6150

ginger.porter47@gmail.com

Members

Frank A. Benavente
T (671) 632-5203

frankbenavente17@gmail.com

Andrew Tydingco
T (671) 472-8903

pokilabot@gmail.com

David Arentz
989-0055

rentadavid@yahoo.com

Vacant

MEETING MINUTES

**Board of Directors scheduled
Regular Board Meeting of Tuesday,
January 16, 2018 at 3:07pm.**

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman Louise Rivera called the meeting to order at 3:07pm, at the GRTA Conference Room, 542 North Marine Corp Drive, Tamuning.

II. Roll Call:

GRTA Board members - Board Chairwoman Louise Rivera, Board of Director David Arentz, Board of Director Secretary Ginger Porter, and Board of Director Frank Benavente were present. Not present were Board of Director Andrew Tydingco, due to training and Board Vice Chair Gerard Cruz due to illness.

Also present were: Executive Manager Rick Agustin, Administrative Officer Myra Soriano, Program Coordinator IV Pilar Carbullido, Program Coordinator II Jackie Taitano, Board Secretary Penelope Gates, Transportation Supervisor Mark Crisostomo, Customer Service Representative Jennifer Badar Cruz and Planning Technician I Michelle Marquez.

A quorum was established.



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III.

Approval of Minutes

December 19, 2017 – Director David Arentz moved to approve the minutes. Subject to corrections to add Ginger Porter was off-island during November and December 2017 board meetings. Seconded and carried.

IV.

Executive Manager’s Report (Rick Agustin)

A. Bus service operations scheduling around

Riders call on Saturday to establish ride scheduling for Tuesday when Monday is a holiday.

B. Clarification from Lynette Little, FTA Region IX re bus operational days

EM R. Agustin will get clarification from Lynette Little, FTA Region IX because bus operations is open six (6) days a week and closed on Sundays as far as scheduling.

C. Ten Year old documents from KEI

GRTA to collect documents and deliver to GSA for proper disposition.

V.

For Board Approvals

A. Transit Business Plan Execution

As per EM R. Agustin, this document cost the federal government \$109,000. In 2009, GRTA became an autonomous agency as Guam Mass Transit based on P.L. 30-05. GMT was supposed to have 20 Million dollars to buy buses and build a transit bus facility. Where is the 20 Million dollars? Why don’t we have enough buses and why are the vehicles not being maintained? The same senators that complained about our poor state of service saying we don’t have sufficient buses, maintenance, etc. were the same senators that were in the public hearing in 2017. These funds were generated in 2009. EM R. Agustin became executive manager in 2014. This source of money came from the liquid fuel tax and the public transit fund.

This plan has been approved in the past by the GRTA Board of Directors to move forward.

GRTA Board Chairwoman Louise C. Rivera asks EM R. Agustin to go over the Plan to see what needs to be amended in order to move forward.

VI.

Old Business

None

VII.

Budget Report (Myra Abaya)

Local Funds – Guam Highway Funds – (GHF) - \$3,211,082
Public Transit Fund (PTF) - \$455,481
(Total - \$3,663,958)
Total available budget - \$3,116,579
Less 15% Reserve - **\$549,984**



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Total FY17 Budget - \$3,666,563

Please see January 16, 2018 budget report attached.

VIII.

Bus Operations (Mark Crisostomo)

A. Bus schedules and routes

Please see January 16, 2018 Budget and Ridership Report

B. Ridership Report – December, 2017

November, 2017 - December, 2017 Report

Rider numbers increased

November, 2017 - Fixed Route – 5689 riders and Paratransit – 3871 riders

November total ridership – 9660 riders.

December, 2017 – Fixed Route – 7887 and Paratransit – 4057 riders.

December total Ridership – 11,944 riders.

An increase of over 2000 riders.

IX.

Chief Planner Report (Rally Pilipina) –Absent

A. All Procurement project updates.

EM R. Agustin reports - Finalizing TMS contract during this time.

Focus is on an M1 property in upper Tumon within the DPW compound behind GPA and GWA. This requires a bill. Documents are being collected from Land Management. GRTA is corresponding with Senator Thomas Ada. Once documents are in place Senator Ada will implement a bill.

X.

New Business

A. Letter to Senator Ada – land for transit bus maintenance building

Waiting for documents from Department of Land Management.

B. Presentation of Certificates to GRTA Fare Focus Group

Fare Focus Group members Lisa Ogo and Lou Mendiola were present and received their Certificate of Appreciation for their research, report and information gathering of fare increase rates. We will issue the rest of the certificates to the other group members at a later time. Group pictures of the Board members, GRTA Executive Manager and the two members of the Fare Focus Group were taken.

C. “Read Only” draft copy of DISID resource center

Passed out a copy of a “Buy America” draft to the Board members. GRTA will have a teleconference with FTA regarding this item.

D. “Director Arentz” NEMT research/findings and report



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Director Arentz reports he is performing research and will have more information by the end of the first quarter of 2018 to discuss federal and local funding for transportation to assist dialysis patient to and from home and destinations. Department of Public Health and Social Services has established this program but has not implemented it until it is executed through the Guam Legislature.

XI.

Public Comment

Lisa Ogo, Paratransit Rider

Suggestion 1 - Go back to two weeks advance scheduling for paratransit riders.
Suggestion 2 - Do away with the phone system the vendor utilizes because the system does not work. Go back to the old scheduling system, which is to receive the schedule from the paratransit subscribers on the spot.

Work with FTA to present local rules and holiday scheduling.

Vendor Brad Kloppenburg of Kloppenburg Enterprises, Inc. and Eming Borja Operations Manager were present to answer comments. Other matters were also brought up.

Lou Mendiola, Paratransit PC for her son

For public transportation to have access to military installations on Island.

Pilar Carbullido, GRTA Program Coordinator IV reported she is still in the beginning process of communication through Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo's Office with the Deputy Chief of Staff on avenues to assist with transit services and military base accessing for riders.

XII.

Executive Session

GRTA Board Chairwoman called recess at 4:38pm. Board members agreed.

XIII.

Adjournment

GRTA Board member David Arentz moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:32pm. Seconded and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Penni Gates

GRTA Board Secretary



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SIGN IN SHEET

GRTA Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2018 3:00pm
GRTA OFFICE (DPW Compound)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS		
Name	Sign In	Email Address / Phone Number
Louise C. Rivera Chairwoman		weezierivera@hotmail.com
Gerard A. Cruz Vice Chairman.		gerard.cruz71@gmail.com
Frank A. Benavente Board Member		frankabenavente17@gmail.com
Andrew S. Tydingco Board Member		pokilabot@gmail.com
David Arentz Board Member		rentadavid@yahoo.com
Vacant Board Member		
Vacant Board Member		
GRTA STAFF		
Name	Sign In	Email Address / Phone Number
Rick Agustin Executive Manager		rick.agustin@grta.guam.gov 475-4616
Myra Soriano Administrative Officer		myra.soriano@grta.guam.gov 300-0703
Rally Pilipina Chief Planner		rally.pilipina@grta.guam.gov 300-7261
Penni Gates Board Secretary		penelope.gates@grta.guam.gov 475-4616
Michelle Marquez Planning Technician I		michelle.marquez@grta.guam.gov 475-4603
Brenda Ann Atalig Planner II		brenda.atalig@grta.guam.gov 300-7262
Jennifer Badar Customer Service Representative		jennifer.badar@grta.guam.gov 475-4686
Mark Crisostomo Transportation Supervisor		mark.crisostomo@grta.guam.gov 300-7255
Pilar C. Carbullido Program Coordinator IV		pilar.carbullido@grta.guam.gov 475-4620
Jacqueline Taitano Program Coordinator II		jacqueline.taitano@grta.guam.gov 300-7255



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Tuesday, February 20, 2018 3:00pm
GRTA OFFICE (DPW Compound)

PUBLIC	Name	Sign	Phone No.	Topic of Discussion
	L I O C O O O	Lisa Oja	734-3465	
	Rodney Colindum		929-4995	Phone System / Reservation
	Lou Ann Mesa	Mea	482-1987	
	LOURDES BASCON MENDIOLA	by Mendiolita	649-2761	
	AIFORD BASCON WOOTEN	by Mendiolita	649-2761	
	EPINE Ruyt	SR	648-3252	
	James Savino	JS	487-3502	Sen. Regine Biscoe Lee
	Thomas Mangona		739-9920	Phone
	James Savino			
	Gina S. Pires	GP	472-6156	

GRTA STAFF AND MANAGEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

as of: February 19, 2018

1. Pilot Program with Dept. of Labor (1 MV1)
 2. Saving funds for passengers by GRTA providing ID Pictures
 3. Bus Pilot Program Executed
 4. Unfroze FTA funds
 5. Purchased 12 off shelves ADA compliant, Buy America Vans
 6. Purchased 11 seventeen-Passenger, low-floor ADA compliant buses
 7. GRTA website thoroughly revamped. Now ADA compliant with OTEC assistance.
 8. Spent nearly \$15,000 to make the office bathroom ADA compliant
 9. We had a 71% attrition rate, 5 people left for other employment
 10. Repaired and relocated 13 bus shelters. All shelters now ADA compliant
 11. Awarded Ground Maintenance Contract – to clean bus shelters and bus stops.
 12. Purchased and installed 2 solar lighting system for the Hagatna Bus Terminal
 13. Purchased 5 new concrete bus benches and installed them at key locations
 14. Awarded the long awaited Competitive Bus Service Contract on November 23, 2016.
 15. GRTA finally purchased 23 new buses and vans – GRTA was using older buses.
 16. Relocated Bus Terminal from Paseo to Hagatna Tennis Court parking lot
 17. Board authorized training. Staff and Board commence training program
 18. Installed 18 Bus Stop Signs (None in 37 years)
 19. GRTA budget presented to the Legislature first time in 15 years
 20. Bus fare structure underwent public outreach and focus group formed and approved after 37 years
 21. Awarded DOI Grants for Solar Lighting for Bus Shelters
 22. One-Call/One-Click Transportation Management System – contract currently in review with Office of the Attorney General.
-



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December 2017 On-Time Performance Summary

	Day	No. of PICK-UP On-Time	Percentage	No. of DROP-OFF On-Time	Percentage	Total No. of Rides Served
1	1	73	50%	140	95%	147
2	2	90	76%	98	83%	118
3	4	108	68%	126	79%	160
4	5	92	70%	129	98%	131
5	6	94	58%	139	86%	161
6	7	70	48%	121	83%	0
7	8	64	67%	84	88%	95
8	9	59	69%	86	101%	85
9	11	82	59%	111	80%	138
10	12	72	52%	123	89%	138
11	13	107	70%	122	80%	153
12	14	71	49%	122	84%	146
13	15	97	62%	130	83%	156
14	16	104	69%	126	84%	150
15	18	49	31%	135	85%	159
16	19	72	65%	111	100%	111
17	20	92	62%	120	81%	149
18	21	97	64%	122	80%	152
19	22	97	66%	122	82%	148
20	23	67	66%	87	86%	101
21	26	86	62%	121	87%	139
22	27	99	76%	111	85%	131
23	28	106	67%	130	82%	159
24	29	101	66%	131	86%	153
25	30	58	48%	89	74%	120
Sub-Total	25	2107	1540%	2936	2143%	3300
Average Grand Total	25 Days	84.28	62%	117.44	86%	132
		On-Time PICK UPS	On-Time PICK UPS	On-Time DROP OFFS	On-Time DROP OFFS	No. of rides average per day

JAN 2018 - RIDERSHIP REPORT
FIXED ROUTE - 10,015
PARATRANSIT - 4,013
TOTAL RIDERSHIP (JAN 2018) - 14,028
TOTAL BUS OP HRS - 4154 HRS
TOTAL BUS OP COST - \$242,519.69
TOTAL # OF DAYS (OPERATION) - 25 DAYS
PARATRANSIT APPLICANTS (JAN) - 10
GAS: Total \$ 19,238.95, Volume 4,819.34

FY18 APPROVED GRTA BUDGET
P.L. 34-42

GUAM REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
(Budget Report)

LOCAL FUNDS - GUAM HIGHWAY FUND (GHF) - \$3,211,082
(TOTAL: \$3,663,958) PUBLIC TRANSIT FUND (PTF) - \$455,481

	Object Class	FY17 Budget	Less 15% Reserve	Total Available Budget
111	Salaries	445,304	(66,796)	378,508
113	Benefits	164,523	(24,678)	139,845
220	Travel	-	-	-
230	Contractual (GHF)	2,283,355	(342,503)	1,940,852
230	Contractual (PTF)	455,481	(68,322)	387,159
233	Office Rental	-	-	-
240	Supplies (Incl. Fuel)	300,000	(45,000)	255,000
290	Misc.	11,400	(1,710)	9,690
361	Power	-	-	-
362	Water	-	-	-
363	Telephone	6,500	(975)	5,525
450	Capital Outlay	-	-	-
TOTAL		3,666,563	(549,984)	3,116,579

TOTAL 230:
\$ 2,328,011

Fiscal Restraint

Other Misc. Contractual (230):	
Legal Services	75,000
Xerox Copier/Printer	10,000
Internet	1,000
Drinking Water Delivery	500
Print Advertisement Svcs.	5,000
Office AC Repairs Maint. Svcs.	5,000
Printing Services (Bus Fares, Brochures, Schedules, etc.)	2,000
Website Maintenance Services	7,200
Trash Collection (GRTA office)	2,500
Grounds Maint. Svcs	12,000
Preventive & Repairs Maintenance, DPW	100,000
Wrecker Services	2,000
New Tires Replacement/MV1	6,000
New Tires Replacement/ARBOC	6,000
Tire Repair Services	3,000
VEHICLE REPAIRS AND MAINT. (QUICK FIX)	24,999
Misc. Subscription & Other Services	9,552
TOTAL MISC. 230:	271,751

MOU

TOTAL APPROP. FOR BUS OPERATION, LOCAL:	2,328,011	GHF/PTF
Less: Misc. Contractual	(271,751)	
Total funding for Bus Op.	2,056,260	Local
Less: FY18 Est. Bus Operation	(3,500,000)	
Shortfall from Local Funds	(1,443,740)	
Less: Current Avail Fed. Funds	812,633	
Projected Shortfall, FY18 \$	(631,107)	This Amount Excludes Contractor's Owned Vehicles & Undetermined Fuel Cost. Projection was based on Govt. Owned Veh. Only.

AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDS FOR BUS OPERATION, FY18	
FY13 Cont. Grant	0
FY14 Cont. Grant	0
FY16 Cont. Grant	36
FY17-001 Cont. Grant	36,860
FY17-002 Cont. Grant	775,737
Total	812,633
MISC. GRANTS:	
Partial Design GRTA Maint.	237,500 (A & E)
One Call/One Click Grant	1,271,087
Solar Lighting System (DOI Grant)	40,000
Bus Renovation (FEMA/Typh. Dolphin)	18,790
FTA FY17 Bus Procurement	1,083,562 (\$583,562 + \$500k)
Total (Other Misc. Grant)	2,650,939

FTA FEDERAL FUNDS AVAILABLE CARRIED OVER FOR FY18:	PROPOSED OPTION TO ADDRESS SHORTFALL:
FY16 - FTA	36
FY17 - 001 FTA	36,860
FY17 - 002 FTA	775,737
TOTAL	812,633
	FY18 Projected Shortfall: (631,107)
	To Request Release of Reserve 549,984
	PROJECTED OVERALL SHORTFALL = (\$ 81,123)

FY18 BUS MONTHLY OPERATION EXPENSES		COST	FUEL EXPENSES	TOTAL MONTHLY COST (Bus Svcs + Fuel)	BREAKDOWN:			BUS FARES COLLECTION:		Grand Total Bus Fares
					GOV. OWNED VEH.	CONT. OWNED VEH.	TOTAL	KEI	TOG & Others	
October	15 hrs/day, 6 (Fixed), 6 (Para)	272,412.25	12,554.43	284,966.68	100,034.32	172,377.93	272,412.25	8,310.50	390.20	8,700.70
November	15 hrs/day, 6 (Fixed), 6 (Para)	192,574.69	7,673.61	200,248.30	68,013.69	124,561.00	192,574.69	3,788.60	463.75	4,252.35
December	15 hrs/day, 6 (Fixed), 6 (Para)	223,322.26	12,946.54	236,268.80	104,400.58	118,921.68	223,322.26	5,011.74	556.25	5,567.99
January										
February										
March										
April										
May										
June										
July										
August										
September										
	CURRENT TOTAL:	688,309.20								
	PLUS: FUEL COST	33,174.58								
	(OCT - DEC COST) SUB-TOTAL:	721,483.78								
	PROJECTED COST FOR BUS OP, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER	2,700,000.00								
	PROJECTED COST FOR FUEL, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER:	270,000.00								
	TOTAL PROJ. BUS OPERATION COST, FY18	\$ 3,691,483.78	\$ 33,174.58	\$ 721,483.78	\$ 272,448.59	\$ 415,860.61	\$ 688,309.20	17,110.84	1,410.20	18,521.04

BREAKDOWN OF HOURLY RATE:

GOVERNMENT OWNED VEHICLE:

(EXCLUDING FUEL/MAINTENANCE)

FIXED ROUTE: \$50.93

PARATRANSIT: \$51.42

CONTRACTOR'S OWNED VEHICLE:

(INCLUSIVE OF FUEL/MAINTENANCE)

\$ 73.33

\$ 73.74

PROJECTED MONTHLY BUS OPERATION COST:

PROJECTED MONTHLY OP COST = \$270,000 (Average)

PROJECTED MONTHLY FUEL COST = \$ 30,000

PROJECTED MONTHLY TOTAL COST = \$300,000

(if full blast operation)

GUAM REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

CURRENT AVAIL. FEDERAL FUNDS: AS OF 01/16/18

Description	Grant Award No.	AS400 A/C No. & Object Class	Balance	230: Funding for Bus Op.	Expiration Date
FY16 FTA Continuing Grant Orig. Approp.	GU18X03100 \$1,136,189	5101E169977PT101-230 111/113/220/240/250	2,446	36	11/30/2018
FY17 FTA Continuing Grant Orig. Approp.	GU-2017-001-00 (First Batch) \$1,615,066	5101E179977PT101-230 111/113/220/240/250	87,716	36,860	9/30/2019
FY17 FTA Continuing Grant Orig. Approp.	GU-2017-002-00 (Second Batch) \$1,417,486	5101H179977PT102-230 Addn'l for TMS - OCOC - 250 111/113	104,247 37,502 Total 141,749	775,737	9/30/2020
Grand Total Current Balance:			231,910	812,633	

SPECIAL FEDERAL GRANTS:

FOR IFB - PROCUREMENT OF BUSES:		Orig. Approp. :	Current Balance:		
From FY17 FTA Continuing Grant (Additional)	GU-2017-001-00	5101E179977PT101-450 \$583,562	583,562.00		9/30/2019
From FY17 FTA Continuing Grant (Additional)	GU-2017-002-00	5101H179977PT102-450 <u>\$500,000</u>	500,000.00		9/30/2019
TOTAL: \$1,083,562 For Bus Proc.			1,083,562.00		

Partial Design GRTA Maint. Facility	GU-04-0003-00	5101H139977PA104-230	237,500.00		9/30/2018
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One-Call/One-Click Federal Grant	GU-04-0004-00	5101H129977PT106: Funding for Construction of DISID Bldg.	1,000,000.00		6/30/2018 (Grant soon to expire)
		5101H129977PT105: (Orig. Approp. - \$305,000) Funding for proposed GRTA's One-Call/One-Click Center and Software	271,086.43		
		Total Current Balance:	1,271,086.43		

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

The deadline for submission for this free service is noon two business days prior to publication.

Today

► The Kumišion i Fimo' Chamoru yan i Fina' na' guen i Hestio'ria yan i Lina' la' i Taotao Tano' will hold its Regular Monthly Meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. Feb. 5 at the Fasilitad Edukasionat Chamoru, Guma' Fa'inadahan Kosas Guahan Sinadot Antonio M. Palomo, Board Conference Room in Hagåtña, Guahan. Contact Hope Alvarez Cristóbal at 483-0097 or Rosa Spías Palomo at 727-5522.

February

► The Committee on Education, Finance, and Taxation will

convene a public hearing beginning at 1 p.m. Feb. 12 in I Lihes-laturan Guåhan's Public Hearing Room (Guam Congress Building.

► Guam Land Use Commission meeting at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 8 in the Land Management Conference Room, 3rd Floor, ITC Building, Tamuning. For special accommodations contact Cristina Gutierrez at 649-5263 x375 or email Cristina.gutierrez@land.guam.gov.

► The Commission on Decolonization will conduct its regular meeting 3 p.m. Feb. 8 in the Cabinet large Conference Room at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex. For special accommodations contact Amanda Elias at 475-9545.

► Guam Visitors Bureau will hold a regular meeting of the

Board of Directors at 3:30 p.m. Feb. 8 in GVB's main conference room. For special accommodations contact GVB at 646-5278.

► The Guam Public Library System has scheduled a regular board meeting for 4 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Guam Public Library System's Hagåtña Library study room. Those with disabilities requiring special accommodations are asked to call 475-47534.

► Civil Service Commission Board meeting at 5:45 p.m. Feb. 8 in their conference room located in Bell Tower, Suite 201, 710 West Marine Corps Drive, Hagåtña. For special accommodations call 647-1855, fax 647-1867 or TTY 649-7002.

► Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Meeting will be held at 5

p.m. Feb. 14 at 1240 Army Drive Route 16 Barrigada, Department of Revenue and Taxation Director's Conference Room.

► The Guam Regional Transit Authority announces there will be a regular board meeting scheduled for 3 p.m. Feb. 20 at the GRTA Office located at Department of Public Works compound, Marine Corps Drive, Tamuning. For special accommodations contact Mark Crisostomo at 688-7105.

► Guam Parole Board regular monthly meeting for the 9 a.m. Feb. 22 at #1 Paseo De Susana (Paseo Stadium) Hagåtña, Guam. For special accommodations call the Parole Office at 735-4133/34.

► Guam Pardon Review

Board regular schedule meeting for the month of February will be at 3 p.m. Feb. 22 at 1 Paseo De Susana (Paseo Stadium) Hagåtña, Guam. For special accommodations call the Parole Office at 735-4133/34. Requested Release Dates: Any available date is fine (minimum 2days if possible). Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at 735-4133/34.

Submissions

Government Meetings are published on a space-available basis as a public service to the community. Send government meeting notices to life@guampdn.com.

Pre-election, Italian films frame Mussolini's return

NICOLE WINFIELD AND MARIA GRAZIA MURRU

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME — A new film that comically imagines dictator Benito Mussolini returning to present-day Italy and trying to stage a comeback opened Thursday, in the middle of an election campaign that has been dominated by populist and neo-fascist sentiments.

"I'm Back" is an Italian spin on the popular 2015 German film "Look Who's Back," which hypothesized a modern-day resurrection of Adolf Hitler.

The comedy has gotten near-unanimous rave reviews from Italian critics, who have applauded its implicit warning that the Italy of 2018 is susceptible to the same populist messages that brought Mussolini to power nearly a century ago. Its opening coincided with the 80th anniversary of the introduction of Fascist-era



Actor Massimo Popolizio plays Benito Mussolini in "I'm Back." — CLAUDIO IANNOIE VIA AP

neighborhoods, and from there embarking on a cross-country road trip with a willing documentary-maker to determine if he can stage a political comeback.

In one scene, Mussolini — still in his military garb — asks a kitchen chef if he'd accept a dictatorship again. The chef responds affirmatively before adding: "but a free dictatorship, not one that's too dictatorial."

Writing in the newspaper Il Fatto Quotidiano, critic Davide Turrini said the film finally confronted the Mussolini taboo by using comedy and political incorrect-

ness, "putting on center stage the surreal and grotesque return of Il Duce mixed in with today's political humors."

At the press screening of the film earlier this week — staged at Mussolini's Roman residence at Villa Torlonia — director Miniello said the film should in no way be seen as an apology for Fascism or an ideological judgment of Mussolini, but rather a warning shot.

"Unlike the Germans, Italians haven't completely come to terms with their dictator," he was quoted as saying by La Repubblica.

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Buzz

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Kaylee Miles, senior, Guam High School, is a volunteer at organizations such as The Salvation Army and Gain.

so, I was asked to participate in a number of activities such as feeding the homeless and promoting the adoption of animals in need. I have also donated toys and books to children and act as an altar server at Santa Teresita on weekends." Kireon Rios, senior, Father Duenas Memorial School