

Item No.: 41
Date: 03 2026 FEB



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Sen. Miriam P. Defensor-Santiago Avenue (formerly Agham Road)
Brgy. Bagong Pag-asa, Diliman, Quezon City 1105

Sangguniang Panlalawigan
Province of Leyte

RECEIVED

Date: JAN 29 2026
By: [Signature]

MESIAS P. AREVALO

Complainant,

- versus -

OMB-V-A-JUN-23-0157

For: Abuse of Authority/Dishonesty/Gross Neglect of Duty/Misconduct/Oppression/Violation of R.A. No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees)/R.A. No. 7160 (Local Government Code)/R.A. No. 9485/R.A. No. 11032 (Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act), as amended

RAMON CHU OÑATE (SG-27)
Municipal Mayor
Municipality of Palompon, Leyte

CHRISTOPHER TOLEDO MONTEBON (SG-24)
Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator-Designate
Municipality of Palompon, Leyte

Respondents.

X-----X

ORDER

This resolves respondent-movant RAMON CHU OÑATE's Verified Motion for Reconsideration¹ (Motion) of the Office's 15 May 2024 Decision, the dispositive portion of which reads:

WHEREFORE, with the Office's finding of substantial evidence of Violation of Section 21(b) of R.A. No. 9485/R.A. No. 11032, as amended, against respondent RAMON CHU OÑATE, the penalty of FINE equivalent to his Six (6) Months Salary is imposed on him.

The administrative case for Abuse of Authority, Dishonesty, Gross Neglect of Duty, Misconduct, Oppression, Violation of R.A. No. 6713, R.A. No. 7160, and R.A. No. 9485/R.A. No. 11032, as amended, against

¹ Records, pp. 631-640.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
CERTIFIED TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL
MARIA CECILIA D. CERDEÑA
Executive Assistant III
OCT 17 2025

respondent CHRISTOPHER TOLEDO MONTEBON is DISMISSED for lack of substantial evidence.

SO ORDERED.² (*emphasis omitted*)

Respondents are accused of requiring complainant, on 6 January 2023, to personally appear before respondent Mayor Oñate as a precondition for complainant's applications to renew business permits, and refusing to receive and act on said applications despite complainant's submission of complete requirements.

In the Motion, respondent-movant questioned the credibility of Teresa P. Olorvida (Olorvida), complainant's authorized representative who visited the Business Permits and Licensing Office (BPLO) to process the renewal of business permits for complainant's businesses. To recall, Olorvida executed Affidavits dated 30 January 2023³ and 1 February 2023.⁴

First, Olorvida's statement in her 1 February 2023 Affidavit that she appeared before respondent-movant on 7 January 2023 should be deemed a lie as such day falls on a Saturday, a non-working day for all government offices and thus, such incident could not have transpired.

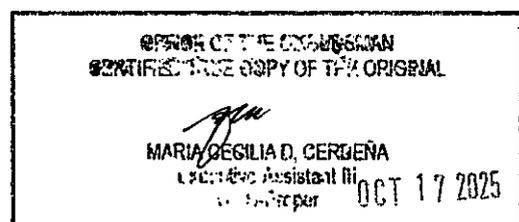
Second, Olorvida stated in both of her Affidavits that she was authorized by complainant through a Special Power of Attorney (SPA). The SPA, however, was dated 10 January 2023 or after Olorvida's initial interaction with Municipal Hall personnel.

Third, Olorvida stated in her 30 January 2023 Affidavit that on 5 January 2023, she returned the documents to complainant as she was set to

² *Id.* at 626, p. 19 of Decision.

³ *Id.* at 369-371.

⁴ *Id.* at 440-442.



travel to Manila. Consequently, Olorvida's meeting with respondent-movant on 7 January 2023 should be deemed impossible.

Respondent-movant argued that the foregoing purported discrepancies if not satisfactorily explained should cast doubt on Olorvida's credibility. He reiterated his previous defense that complainant failed to comply with the requirements for renewal of business permits as purportedly shown by Olorvida's processing of the renewal of complainant's business permit on 12 May 2023 per her signature in the BPLO logbook.⁵ This should allegedly show complainant's failure to comply with the requirements to renew his business permit. Assuming *arguendo* that respondent-movant required complainant to appear before him, there should be nothing irregular in the same, there being no evidence to show that the same was "the only condition or requirement left for the renewal of his business permit."⁶

The issue for resolution is whether the Office should reverse or modify the assailed Decision based on the foregoing arguments.

The Office rules in the negative.

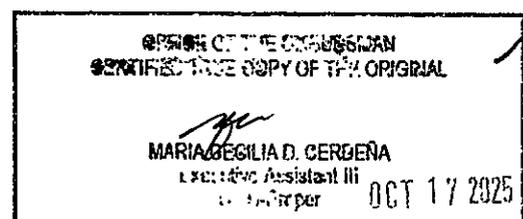
The Motion proffers neither newly-discovered evidence nor grave errors of fact or law or serious irregularities which would materially affect the assailed Decision.⁷

As to the claim that Olorvida should not be deemed a credible witness as she could not have appeared before respondent-movant the next day, or on 7 January 2023 as it fell on a Saturday or a non-working day, the Office finds this specious. Whether such undue act of requiring complainant's

⁵ *Id.* at 641, page of logbook.

⁶ *Id.* at 636, par. 16 of Motion.

⁷ Republic Act No. 6770 (1989), Sec. 27.



personal appearance before respondent-movant was done on a working or non-working day is not the issue in this case. Despite numerous opportunities, respondent-movant has never submitted any evidence to controvert Olorvida's consistent statements in both her Affidavits that respondent-movant required complainant to appear before him in relation to complainant's applications to renew business permits.

Having observed her personal demeanor and attitude, the Office accords weight to the testimony of Olorvida who appeared during the Clarificatory Hearing held on 21 February 2024. She testified that she brought complainant's applications for renewal of business permits together with the complete requirements on 6 January 2023.⁸ A perusal of both her Affidavits dated 30 January 2023⁹ and 1 February 2023¹⁰ shows that she consistently confirmed¹¹ complainant's allegation that respondent-movant required personal appearance in relation to said applications.

In both Affidavits,¹² Olorvida similarly attested that on the day that she went to the BPLO, upon reaching the table manned by Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator (MPDC) staffer Mae Escoton (Escoton), Olorvida handed documents in support of the applications to renew business permit. However, Ms. Escoton, without bothering to check said documents, merely looked at a list of names of business owners and upon finding complainant's name to be among those in her list, Escoton took the documents with her and went up to the Office of the Mayor. When she came back, Escoton then asked Olorvida to go up to the Mayor's Office wherein she was asked by one Gemma Maupo Apuya (Apuya) to come back the following day. Olorvida also confirmed that during her meeting with

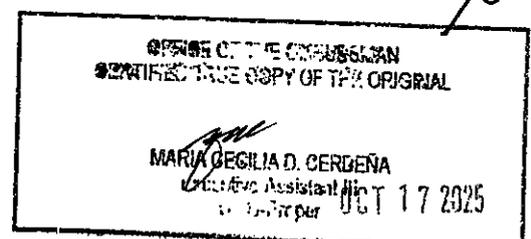
⁸ Records, p. 593. Transcript of Stenographic Notes, p. 14.

⁹ *Id.* at 369-371.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 440-442.

¹¹ *Id.* at 440, 369. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of both affidavits.

¹² *Supra.*



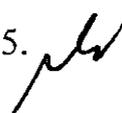
respondent-movant, the latter required complainant to appear before him and did not even bother to examine the documents supporting said applications to renew business permits.

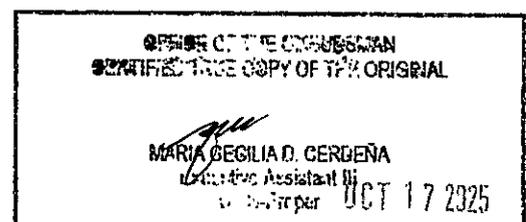
In the same vein, the Office finds no merit to the allegation that Olorvida should not be deemed a credible witness as: (a) the SPA made in favor of Olorvida was dated 10 January 2023 or after her submission of the applications to renew business permits; and (b) in her 30 January 2023 Affidavit, Olorvida stated that she returned the documents to complainant on 5 January 2023 as she was set to travel to Manila and thus, Olorvida's meeting with respondent-movant on 7 January 2023 should be deemed impossible.

These purported inconsistencies do not detract from the fact that Olorvida, in both Affidavits, consistently confirmed complainant's allegation that respondent-movant required business owner complainant to appear before him in relation to complainant's applications to renew business permits. There is also no evidence to show that Olorvida had left for Manila on 7 January 2023.

WHEREFORE, respondent-movant's Verified Motion for Reconsideration is **DENIED** for lack of merit. The 15 May 2024 Decision finding substantial evidence of Violation of Section 21(b) of R.A. No. 9485/R.A. No. 11032, as amended, and imposing the penalty of **FINE** equivalent to Six (6) Months' Salary against RAMON CHU OÑATE STANDS.

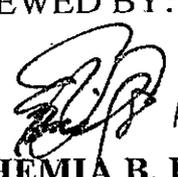
SO ORDERED.

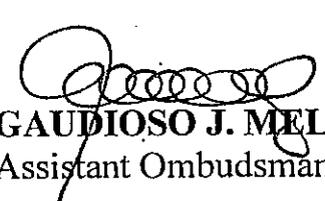
Cebu City, 28 April 2025. 



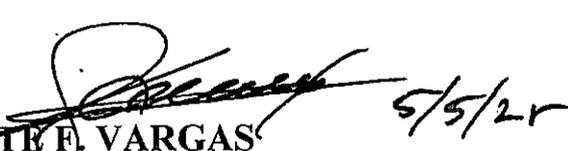

ROGIE L. DELA CUESTA-FERNANDEZ
Graft Investigation & Prosecution Officer II

REVIEWED BY:¹³


APR 28 2025
EUPHEMIA B. BACALSO
Director, Preliminary Investigation, Administrative
Adjudication and Prosecution Bureau – A (PIAAPB-A)


28 APR 2025
GAUDIOSO J. MELENDEZ
Assistant Ombudsman – Visayas

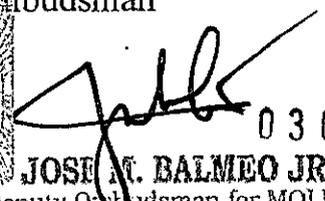
RECOMMENDING APPROVAL:

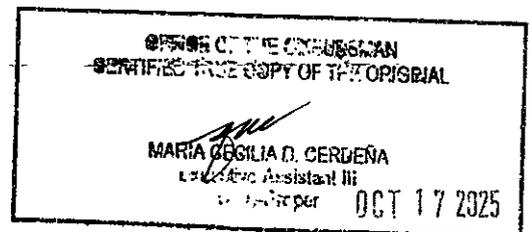

5/5/25
DANTE F. VARGAS
Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas

APPROVED/DISAPPROVED:

SAMUEL R. MARTIRES
Ombudsman




03 OCT 2025
JOSE M. BALMEO JR.
Deputy Ombudsman for MOLEO
Designated as final approving authority
Per office order no. 304
Series of 2025



¹³ The dispositive portion reads:

WHEREFORE, respondent-movant's Verified Motion for Reconsideration is **DENIED** for lack of merit. The 15 May 2024 Decision finding substantial evidence of Violation of Section 21(b) of R.A. No. 9485/R.A. No. 11032, as amended, and imposing the penalty of **FINE** equivalent to Six (6) Months' Salary against **RAMON CHU OÑATE STANDS**.

SO ORDERED.

Copy furnished:

MESIAS P. AREVALO

Complainant
Arellano Street, Central 3,
Palompon, Leyte 6538

RAMON CHU OÑATE

Respondent
Municipal Hall, Rizal Street, Barangay Ipil
III, Palompon, Leyte 6538

CHRISTOPHER TOLEDO MONTEBON

Respondent
Municipal Hall, Rizal Street, Barangay Ipil
III, Palompon, Leyte 6538

JUANITO VICTOR C. REMULLA

Secretary
Department of the Interior and Local
Government
DILG-NAPOLCOM Center, EDSA, corner
Quezon Avenue, West Triangle, Quezon
City 1104

ATTY. FELIX M. BASALLAJE JR.

Regional Director
Commission on Audit Regional Office No.
VIII
Leyte Government Center, Candahug, Palo,
Leyte 6501

ARNEL M. AGABE

Regional Director
DILG Regional Office No. VIII
Kanhuraw Hill, Barangay 25, Tacloban City,
Leyte 6500

THE SANGGUNIANG SECRETARY

Sangguniang Panlalawigan of the Province of
Leyte
Leyte Provincial Government Complex
West Bypass Road, Brgy. Guindapunan, Palo
6501

CANDICE DIANNE B. PAREÑA

Chief Administrative Officer
Anti-Red Tape Authority Regional Office No.
VIII
3/F NFA Building, M. Cuenco Ave., Banilad,
Cebu City 6000

