

## **RESIDENTIAL LOTS FOR THE LANDLESS**

By Anonymous, March 14, 2011

This is my reaction to the 14,000 square meter reclaimed tideland reported by the Commission on Audit (COA) Special Audit posted on the website.

By virtue of a Sanguniang Bayan Resolution it became a policy of the Municipality to develop and subdivide a 14,000 square feet of reclaimed tideland and sell the lots exclusively to the landless residents of Orion with capacity to pay. Furthermore, the Chief Executive was authorized to deposit the money in a special saving account with the Land Bank of the Philippines, and the proceeds from the sale of the lots shall be used to finance the further development/improvement of the area into a residential community.

The Special COA Report did not state how many lots were parceled out of the subdivision, how many lots were sold, terms of payment and whether the lots were totally sold out. However, the Report listed fourteen (14) names as having made payments on different dates, of varying amount. Payments started with P100M, P150M, P285M, P805M, less one (1) (trucking contractor), whose name appeared on the list, but denied having bought a lot. There were purchases with no money are involved.

### **The Report listed two (2) persons (elected officials?) as having paid PhP100, 000.00 each.**

A certain Imelda Roe (fictitious name?) as having paid for lots 7, 8,9,10, a total of PhP1, 647,384.40. The amount of PhP569, 870.00 and PhP272, 253.00 were paid directly to the former Mayor and were not deposited in the special savings account opened for the purpose.

Additionally, the audit disclosed that:

- a. The special account deposit has reached P1, 108,583.78 as of June 8, 2009, but on June 16, 2009 it was withdrawn and the account was closed. The cash in bank balance from the savings account that was withdrawn cannot be traced and accounted for. A checkbook was purchased at an earlier date from the same bank but the initial deposit was not known.
- b. A total collections as of May 17, 2010 of P5, 785, 675.53 were not recorded in the books of the Municipality. The audit also disclosed that an estimated of P2 million from the sale of the subdivided lots were unaccounted for.

ANALYSIS. Had it not for the Commission on Audit (COA) undertake a special audit based on the complaints filed by the current Chief Executive, malversation and conversion of public funds and corrupt practices of certain public officials could not have been uncovered and that the Municipality on its own resource could not have done the same result has the COA did.

The distribution of the parceled lots to the landless citizens was discriminatory. The elected officials who have enacted the policies were the once who violated the policy by having bought a parcel lot each. Eligible purchaser should be allowed one lot only but instead several persons were able to buy more than one lot. One was able to purchase four (4) lots with two payments went directly to the former Mayor and not deposited on the special bank account, according to the COA Report.

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With the unaccounted collections amounting to an estimated of P2 million from the subdivided lots how is the present Administration be able get the money to backfill of the low portion area of lot 1 per agreement between the Bataan School of Fisheries and the Municipality, development of the area and the construction of Municipal Multi-Purpose Center on the site.

According to the Affidavit of the Cashier (Collection Officer): "I am now aware that the money received as payment for the lots... did not go to the coffers of the Municipality officially." Furthermore, she stated: "None of the money paid went to the Municipal Treasurer of Orion."

Items 27 thru 29 of the Special Report cited certain violations under the Local Government Code and Anti-Graft and Practices Act.

While this is going on, where are the movers and shakers of this town, sleeping or didn't know anything about it? What about the Municipal Budget Officer, Accountant, Treasurer and the Planner during all these transactions, were they afraid to talk or complaint; they are duty bound under the Special Municipal Ordinance and the law to bring the matter to their superior; where they out of the loop? Are they secondarily liable?

YOU BE THE JUDGE.