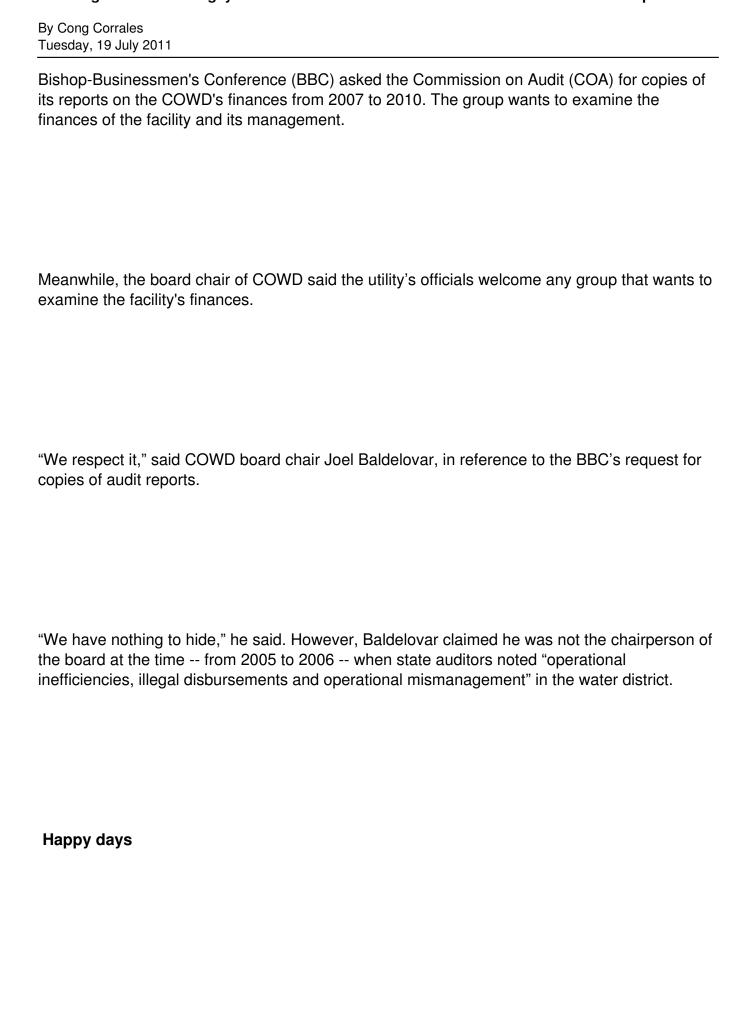


The proposed 30 percent water rate increase—pending at the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA)—proposed by the Cagayan de Oro Water District (COWD) on June 1, 2011 has revived calls to turn the facility into a cooperative.

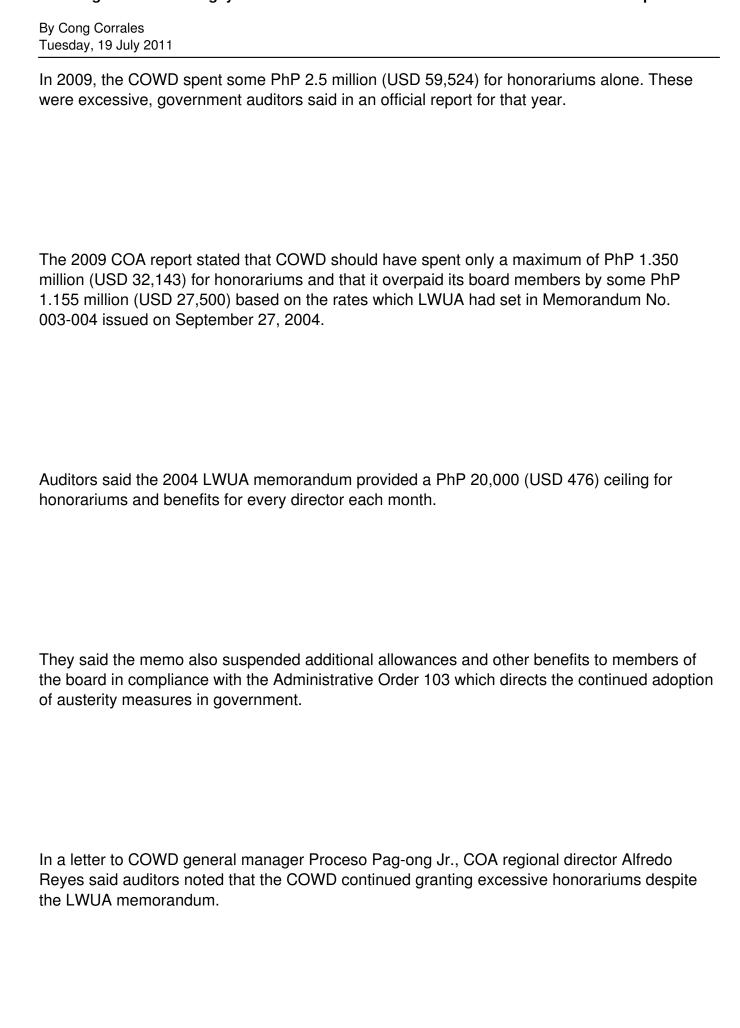
"We will fight this increase. We will be forced to intervene since water is a very basic service. I'm not against turning the water district into a cooperative," said city councilor Alden Bacal -- present chair of the committee on public utilities -- while past committee chair Ian Mark Nacaya said discussion on the proposal to turn the COWD into a consumers' cooperative should be made and studied again in view of the planned increase in water rates.

The pronouncements came after Roman Catholic Archbishop Antonio Ledesma and his group

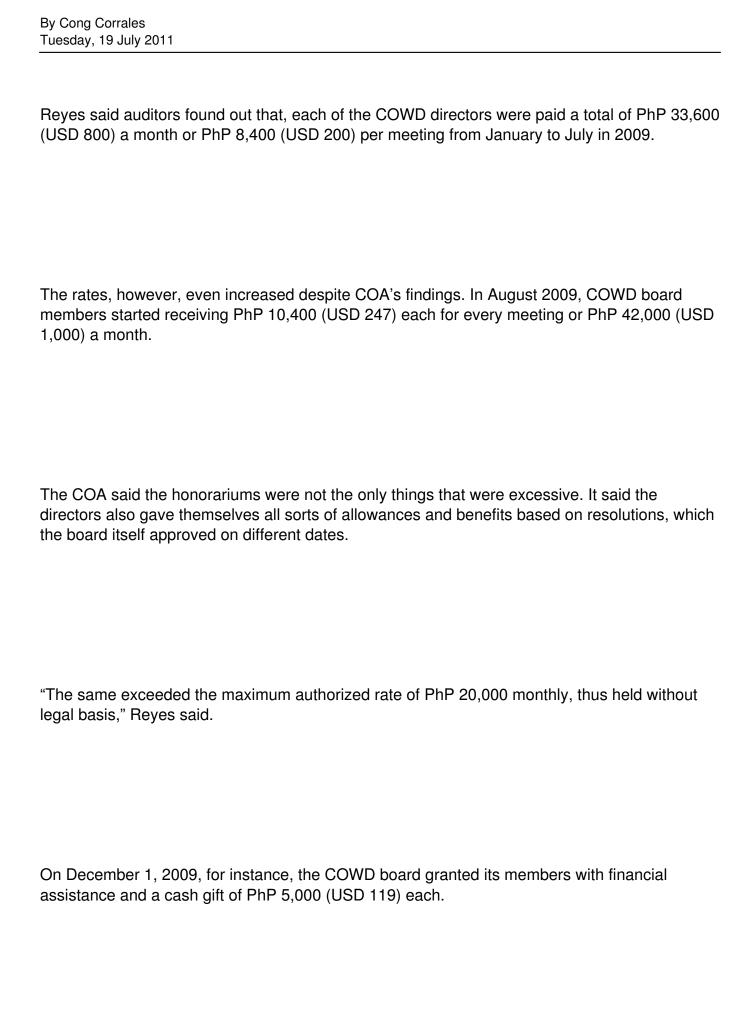
## Extravagances at the Cagayan de Oro Water Board Lead to Moves to Turn it into a Cooperative

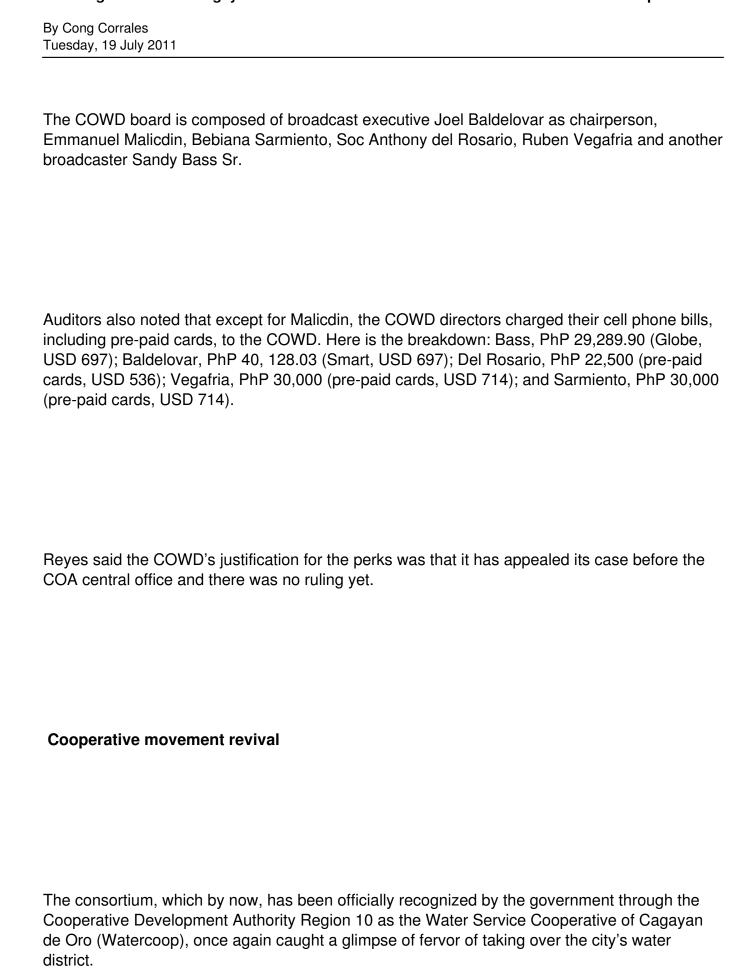


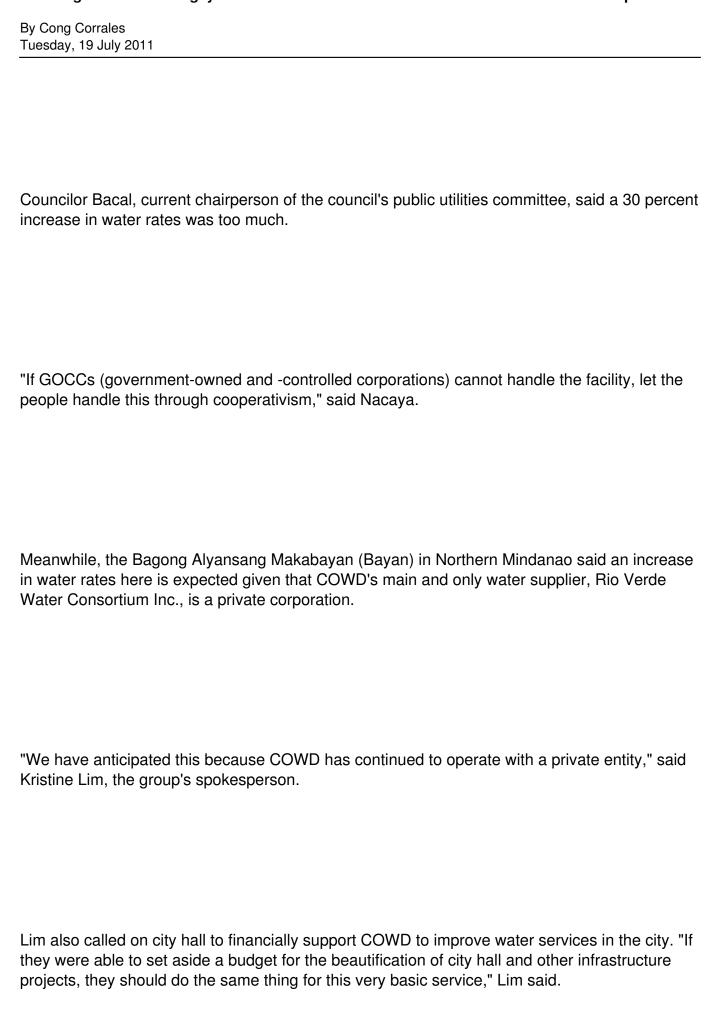
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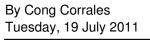
By Cong Corrales Tuesday, 19 July 2011

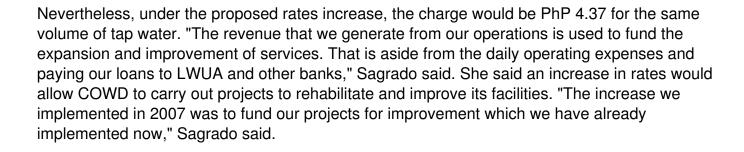
## Nothing to hide



Ladele Sagrado, COWD's acting public relations division manager defended the facility's proposed 30 percent water rate increase: "It is long overdue and is not exorbitant." She said the water district here has relatively lower rates compared to other tap water providers in Mindanao.

The table of water rates which LWUA approved in Mindanao showed that the Gingoog City Water District is charging more than the COWD. The Gingoog facility's minimum charge for households is PhP 208 (USD 5) while COWD charges PhP 168 (USD 4) only. Nasipit Water District charges slightly higher than the Gingoog water district at PhP 209. COWD's current minimum charge for households is PhP 168 for 10 cubic meters, roughly equivalent to 50 drums of tap water. This means that for every drum of water, COWD charges PhP 3.36 (less than a dollar).

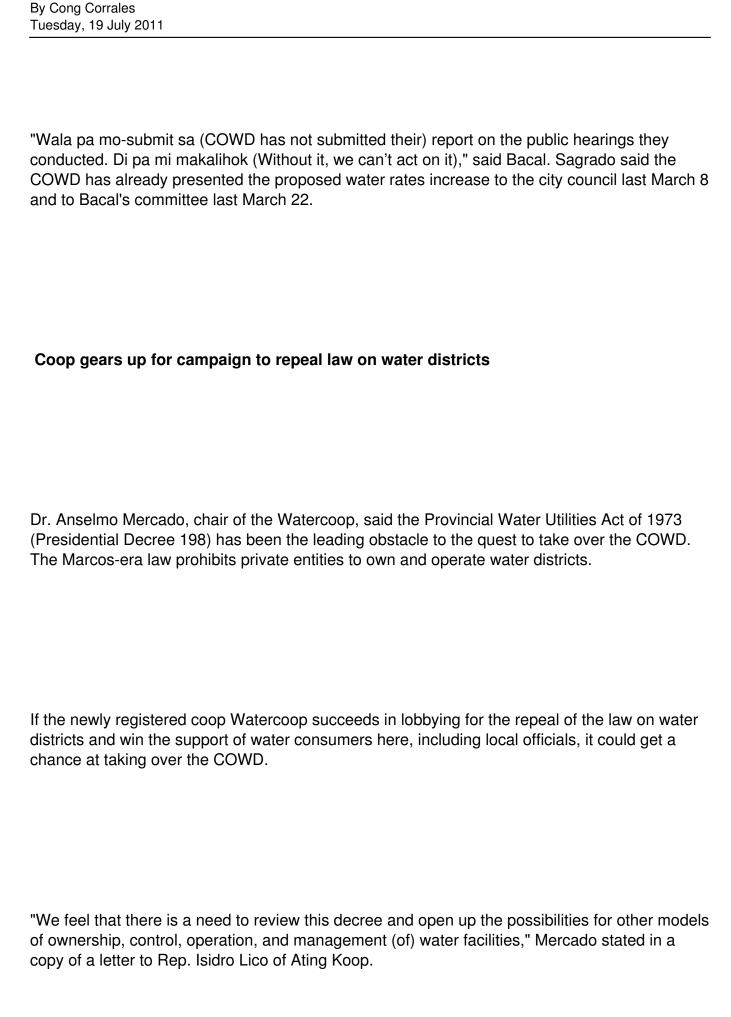


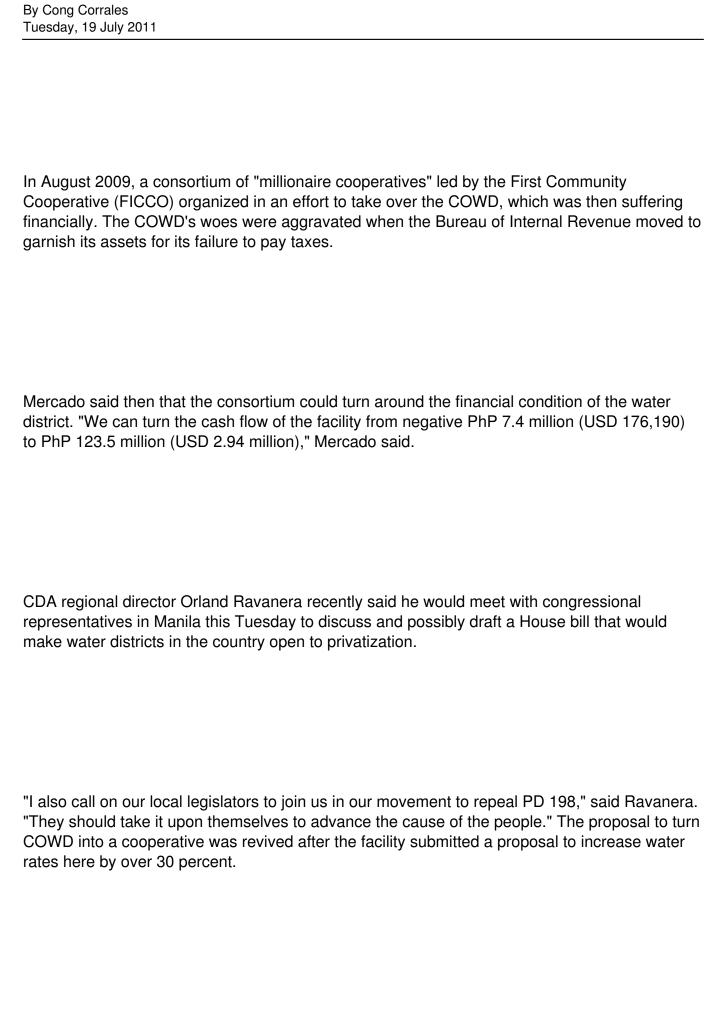


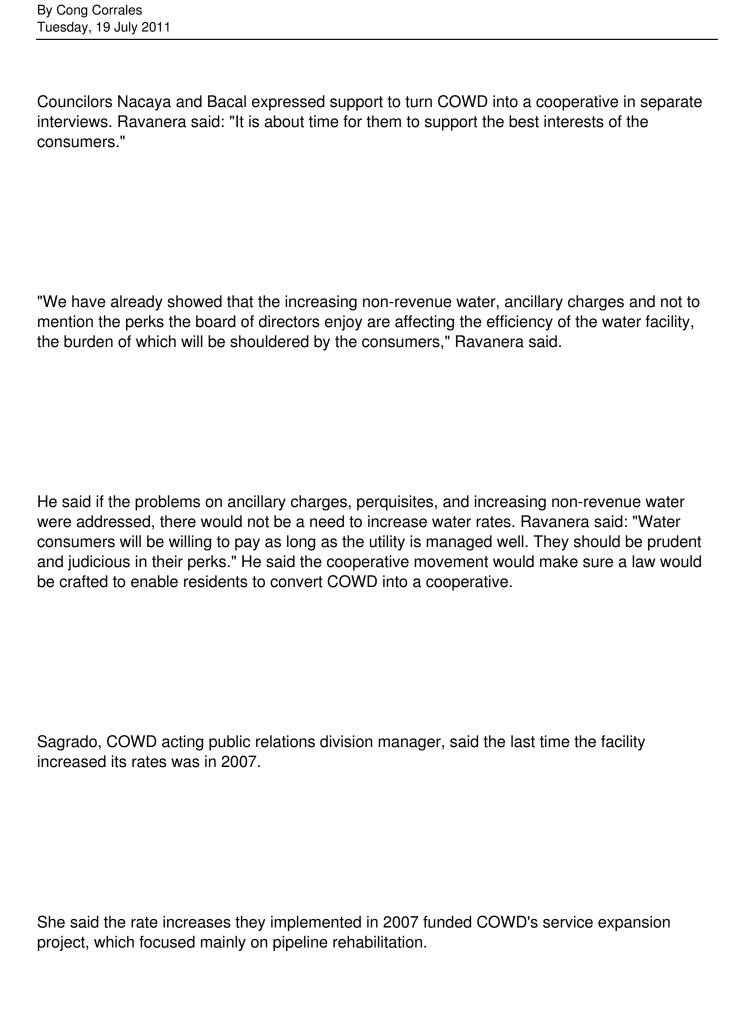
"We have to increase our water rates because all of the [costs of] consumables (e.g. fuel, pipes, etc.) we use to sustain our operations have all increased as well. Supposed to be, last year pa 'yan kaya lang (it was for last year but) we reconsidered because [prices of] commodities and all other bills have increased also," Sagrado said.

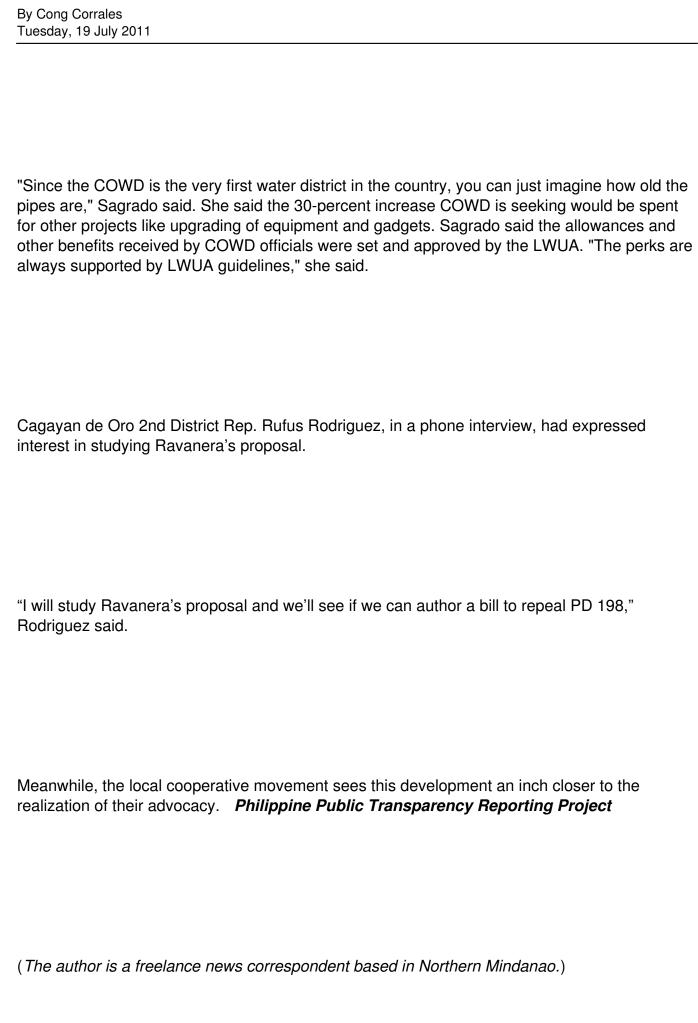
"We presented these accomplished projects in all of our public hearings," said Sagrado.

She said the COWD was required to submit a board resolution justifying the request for increase, financial statements, financial projections, and documentation of the public hearings. "Of course, representatives from LWUA attend these public hearings. They check if the proposed increase is properly explained to the consumers and more importantly if they understand the need for an increase," Sagrado said. Councilor Bacal, chair of the city council's committee on public utilities, said he has yet to get hold of a copy of COWD's report.









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