



COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION
Regular Monthly Meeting Agenda
September 5, 2023 / 3:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order:** 3:03 p.m.
- II. Roll Call**
- a. Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero
 - b. Hon. Therese Terlaje (*excused*)
 - c. Hon. Tina Muña-Barnes (*excused*)
 - d. Hon. Frank Blas Jr.
 - e. Hon. Jesse Alig (*excused*)
 - f. Hon. Eddie Duenas (*excused*)
 - g. Dr. Michael Bevacqua
 - h. Adrian Cruz (*absent*)
 - i. Dr. Mary Cruz
 - j. Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper
 - k. Ty Whitaker
 - l. Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero
 - m. Dewey Huffer
 - n. Other**
 - 1. Alan Cepeda (Office of Vice Speaker Tina Muña-Barnes)
- Motion by: Dr. Mary Cruz to appoint Senator Frank Blas Jr. as Chairperson.*
Second by: Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper.
Motion passed by consensus.
- III. Approval of Minutes - Special Meeting August 22, 2023**
- a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Summarized the special meeting minutes. During the previous meeting, the Board approved a 3-day conference with a budget of \$32,000 with an allowance of a budget increase (up to \$35,000). Since the meeting, the COD team began to obtain venue quotes. The COD team now has an adjusted budget proposal.
Motion by Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper to approve the minutes.
Seconded by Dewey Huffer.
Motion passed by consensus.
- IV. Financial Report**
- a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that the Statehood Task Force has processed a partial invoice for video services. Additionally, COD’s ARP balance is \$40,369. Of these funds, COD will expend approximately \$30,000 for the 2023 Fanhita Conference. The remainder will be used for educational outreach materials, including the school starter packs which will include re-purposed roll-up banners.
 - b. **Dewey Huffer:** Asked if there is a deadline to expend funds in the Task Force accounts.
 - c. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Notified the Board that all funds must be encumbered by the end of the fiscal year (i.e. September 30, 2023). All requisitions must be submitted to DOA by this deadline. Once funds are encumbered, the Task Forces have until November 30, 2023 to expend them.
 - d. **Dewey Huffer:** Inquired if the Task Forces’ unencumbered funds will roll over to COD’s operations for the next fiscal year.
 - e. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Responded that roll over funds that were received from last fiscal year that have lapsed will go into the general fund.



- f. **Hon. Frank Blas Jr.:** Explained that the Guam Legislature encourages agencies/ departments to use funding they receive for the fiscal year. They discourage rollover funds because the accessibility of those funds depends on the cash available after the fiscal year.
- g. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that for the next fiscal year, the COD team will create a budget plan with the task forces to adjust to the timeline and ensure expenditures are complete by the end of the fiscal year.
- h. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Inquired about the current task force funds. Suggested that unspent funds be used for the 2023 Fanhita Conference.
- i. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained how the COD team receives roll over funds from the task forces' lapsed funds and how it is used for office operations. COD has used the funding to generate educational materials and hold the Fanhita Conference series, which is the office's largest annual expense. Reported to the Board the current unencumbered funds for each task force: Statehood (\$40,025), Independence (\$19,004.39), and Free Association (\$55,000).
- j. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Asked to confirm whether task force funding could be used for the Conference.
- k. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that the Task Forces can divert funds to the conference. However, the COD team has planned their remaining budget to minimize lapse for the office. If funds were given from the task forces, this would alter the budget. Explained that each task force has a separate account and COD may be unable to receive funds from the Free Association Task Force because there is no mechanism in place to spend funds without representation. Emphasized the need to find membership and actively engage the task force.
- l. **Dr. Mary Cruz:** Suggested using funds that the task forces have no intent or capacity to encumber before the end of the fiscal year on the conference to increase the number of participants.
- m. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Agreed to review the conference budget. Noted the drastic increase in price since COD held the Fanhita Conference in 2019. Similar to 2019 when COD received contributions from each task force for the office's operations, COD can accept contributions for the Conference. One obstacle is the lack of leadership for the Free Association task force.

V. Old Business

- a. Plebiscite Update & Strategy Discussion (scheduling a special meeting)
 - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that they must schedule a special meeting to discuss the plebiscite strategy. The Attorney General's Office and the Governor's Legal Counsel will be invited to the meeting. The Board must understand the options available within the legal framework. Requested that the Board identify three dates that work best to hold the meeting. Once a date is chosen, a formal request will be sent to the AG and the meeting notices will be posted. The earliest available meeting date is September 25, 2023.
 - 2. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Requested a detailed agenda for the meeting.
 - 3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Encouraged each Board member to prepare the questions they need answered from a legal standpoint. The COD team will create a skeleton agenda with the major issues that have been discussed.
- b. 2023 Fanhita Conference
 - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Briefed the Board on the special meeting that was held on August 22, 2023. Since the meeting, the COD team has sent out an RFQ for potential venue vendors and has received four (4) responses. Currently, the minimum quotation for a two (2) day rental is \$18,150.
 - 2. **Nolan Flores:** Broke down the cost of the hotel venue options for the Board and compared the quotes to the cost of the 2019 Fanhita Conference. Explained that COD lowered the pax count from 300 to 150 per day due to the rise in cost. In 2019 it cost \$13,244.00 to host 200 attendees for two days, this year, COD was quoted a minimum of \$18,150.00 to host 150 attendees for two days. Compared the quotations COD received from the Dusit Thani Guam Resort (\$19,900.00), Hilton Guam Resort & Spa (\$18,150.00), and the Hyatt Regency Guam (\$18,150.00). Highlighted features, such as the availability of an LED screen



rather than an LCD projector, the availability of microphones, podiums, a stage, and a designated drop-off/pick-up area for students. Another consideration is available dates, COD intends to hold Day 2 & 3 at the hotel venue. Therefore, Day 1 cannot land on a Sunday.

3. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Informed the Board that she will be off-island from November 5 to 9.
4. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that Day 1 will be held at the Guam Museum and the fees will be less than the hotel venue. However, the Guam Museum cannot accommodate the size of the conference for Day 2 and 3. Once the venue is confirmed, the dates will be communicated to the Governor's staff.
5. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Inquired if all panelists were confirmed for the dates of the conference.
6. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that most of the panelists were confirmed but the COD team will connect with Governor Leon Guerrero to connect with the DoD representatives.
7. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Agreed that once the dates are locked in, she will assist COD in connecting with the INDOPACOM representatives.
8. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Updated the Board on the costs of the conference. Explained that COD also chose to hold Day 1 at the Guam Museum because students would have the space to conduct their breakout sessions. Commented that the Dusit Thani has some advantages based on availability and access. Outlined COD's current breakdown for venue rental as \$20,000 for the hotel and \$1,500 for the Guam Museum. COD also plans to hire a logistics coordinator to facilitate honoraria, branding, advertisements, venue decorations, etc. Explained that the COD team has adjusted their budget and moved some projects to the next fiscal year so that they may support the conference.
9. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Inquired if the COD team reached out to other venue rental vendors.
10. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that COD sent out the RFQ to more than six hotel vendors but received four quotes. The Board will be updated on the quotes received. Expressed the importance of getting the hotel PO cut in time to lock in the venue. Noted that the vendor selected may not be the lowest price as there are certain specifications that must be met.
11. **Hon. Frank Blas Jr.:** Asked when the fourth quote will be received.
12. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that the quote should be received soon but is not anticipated to change much. Additionally, the COD team will provide a breakdown of the costs to the Board.
Motion by Governor Lourdes Leon Gurrero to increase the 2023 Fanhita Conference Budget to \$47,000.00
Seconded by Dr. Mary Cruz.
Motion passed by consensus.
13. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that the COD team will send out a link to the Google document for them to provide input/ recommendations on the Conference agenda and the list of speakers.

VI. New Business

a. Austronesian Forum

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that he attended the Austronesian Forum as a representative of both COD and the Department of CHamoru Affairs. The event was led by the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan and it focused on empowering indigenous Austronesian tourism. Attendees explored ways to leverage indigenous culture to create unique destinations that promote Austronesian tourism. This was an opportunity to network with other nations who are members of the United Nations, including the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, and New Zealand. Noted that the Council is requesting recommendations for experts/ officials to participate at the Indigenous Tourism Summit in 2024. Welcomed the Board to provide recommendations, which will be relayed to the Council of Indigenous Peoples.



VII. United Nations Updates

a. UN C-4 Regular Session - October 3 - 7, 2023

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that COD will participate in the United Nations Fourth Committee Regular Session. COD has not yet received notice on the date Guam is set to testify. This year, the focus will be on engaging the U.S. State Department on the UN visiting mission. Explained that COD is somewhat behind on engagement because they were unable to attend the Regional Seminar or C-24. However, the office has been in communication with the United States United Nations (USUN) delegation and the Chair of the C-24 to confirm support for the visiting mission. There is still an opportunity to get an amendment to the annual resolution for the visiting mission. Invited the Board members to sign up as petitioners to testify.

VIII. COD Office Updates

a. Educational outreach

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported on the COD team's educational outreach in August. During the month, they presented to youth summer employees at Senator Roy Quinata's Office and had a 2-day outreach table at the UOG Welcome Back event. In September, COD is scheduled to present at the Guam Community College's "Need to Lead" Student Conference. Additionally, COD's Decolonization curriculum is being piloted by GDOE teachers. The team held a professional development training and has given them COD educational material. Notably, there is interest in the curriculum from teachers in several subject areas.

IX. Task Force Updates

a. Statehood

1. **Dewey Huffer:** Reported that the Statehood Task Force continues to work with Shooting Star Productions to create content and get exposure to get people involved in their task force activities. One challenge has been finding talent. He will connect with the COD team to discuss how their remaining funds can be used.
2. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that there is an opportunity for the Statehood Task Force to engage/ partner with an organization and COD will provide more details after the meeting.

b. Independence

1. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Reported that the Independence Task Force is preparing for a concert and art battle on September 23. It will be held at the Tomhom Grill and Bar. They will be featuring poets and musicians who were part of their music video series. The music videos will also be launched and the video links will also be shared with the Board. Information on decolonization and independence will be disseminated. There will also be a live mural challenge. Artists will be given all materials needed on the day of the event. Board members were invited to join.
2. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Inquired about the advertisement for the event.
3. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Informed the Board that they just released a save the date. They also plan to promote via social media, radio ads, and other traditional media outlets.
4. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Suggested using radio spots to promote the event. Noted that art and music will be a big draw and this event will be a good opportunity for educational outreach.
5. **Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero:** Confirmed that the task force will follow-up on their request for radio ads.
6. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Encouraged all the task forces to inform COD of their projects and upcoming events so that they can assist in promoting through social media.
7. **Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero:** Suggested having an aggressive campaign that is focused on supporting decolonization, not a specific political status, and a vote for self-determination. Advertising for events helps to increase interest and involvement from the community.

c. Free Association

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Asked the Board to help identify individuals who may be interested in the Free Association Task Force.



X. Open Floor

- a. No discussion.

XI. Adjournment

- a. Motion by Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero to adjourn.
- b. Seconded by Dewey Huffer.
- c. Adjourned at 4:03 p.m.