



COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2025 | 3:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order:** 3:12 p.m.
- II. Roll Call**
1. **Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero**
 2. **Hon. Frank Blas Jr.** (Represented by Andrew “Andy” Leon Guerrero)
 3. **Hon. Sabrina Salas Matanane** (Represented by Brian San Nicolas)
 4. **Hon. Brian “BJ” Terlaje** (Excused)
 5. **Hon. Eddie Duenas** (Absent)
 6. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper**
 7. **Dr. Michael Bevacqua**
 8. **Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero**
 9. **Dr. Mary Cruz**
 10. **Natasha Suba**
 11. **Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero**
 12. **Anthony Charfauros**
 13. **Other**
 - a. Caden Poblete (35th Guam Youth Congress)
 - b. Nolan Flores (Member, Free Association Task Force)
- III. Approval of Minutes** - Regular Monthly Board Meeting - February 4, 2025
- a. Motion made by Governor Leon Guerrero to approve minutes.
 - b. Seconded by Anthony Charfauros.
 - c. Motion approved by consensus.
- IV. Financial Report**
- a. Account balances
 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported the account balances of non-encumbered funds for the political status taskforces as of February 28, 2025. The Statehood Task Force is at \$55,000. The Free Association Task Force is at \$53,101. And the Independence Task Force is at \$41,000; this amount does not include \$13,500 which is yet to be encumbered for event management services for the Na’lā’la’ concert.

- b. Task force procurement updates
 - 2. Independence Task Force Procurement Requests
 - a) **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** The Independence Task Force requested a BPA for materials and supplies in support of their educational campaign. The POs (Purchase Orders) have been encumbered and shared with the task force for dissemination to the appropriate vendors. The PO for event management services in support of the upcoming Na'lå'la' concert is pending encumbrance. COD received a request from the task force and a scope of work for a graphic designer. COD will prepare the RFQ (Request for Quote).
 - 3. Free Association Task Force-Research Services RFQ
 - b) **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** The task force's RFQ for research and consultation services did not get any quotations from potential vendors. COD will work with the task force on guidance to proceed with the wording on the scope of work.
 - 4. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reminded the task forces to submit all invoices from open POs to COD to ensure timely processing of all payments.

V. Old Business

- b. Plebiscite Update & Strategy Discussion
 - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that discussion has been ongoing and was thoroughly discussed at the last board meeting.
- c. Task force email accounts
 - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that since the last board meeting, OTECH (Office of Technology) informed COD that non-GovGuam email accounts cannot use the "Send As" feature in a shared mailbox. Official GovGuam email accounts cannot be granted for each task force. As an alternative, OTECH has offered to create email accounts for specific task force members and then create a shared mailbox for the task forces. COD is requesting that each taskforce identify three to five task force members that they would like to establish email accounts for to obtain access to a shared mailbox.
- d. FY 2025 Fanhita Conference-Updates
 - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that since the approval of the COD FY25 Fanhita Conference Proposal, COD has begun planning and procurement. Confirmation of a logistics coordinator, live streaming and recording services, and venue are pending. Recent RFQs for services to vendors have been sent as the tentative conference date has been moved to the week of May 5 - 9, 2025.
 - 2. Traditional Media Proposal
 - a) **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** As requested by the Board, COD has prepared a proposal for the use of traditional media to advertise the Fanhita conference. The revised proposal was submitted to the Board on February 13, 2025, for feedback and approval. Board members reviewed and approved the proposal. RFQs for traditional media have since been sent out

and COD is pending responses. An update will be provided to the board prior to the next board meeting.

V. COD Office Updates

a. COD outreach

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported on the continuing activities of COD's Public Information Program (PIP). Highlighted COD's community presentations at the Business and Technology Academy Charter School (BTACS), Tiyan High School, and Guam Community College. In February, COD conducted approximately 10 presentations. In March, COD has community presentations scheduled with several of the senatorial offices. Noted that *Kumision i Fino' CHamoru* is debuting their Self-determination exhibit on Friday, March 7th. COD assisted in providing updates on Guam's engagement at the United Nations through previously delivered testimonies. *I Kumision* was provided educational resources from COD, where they will serve as a distribution site. Noted that COD is continuing to host the *Challenge the Status Quo* talk radio show on WAVE 105.1 FM weekly, every Monday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Highlighted the series of episodes for the political status options with guests from the respective taskforces.

VI. Task Force Updates

a. Statehood

1. **No updates.**

b. Independence

1. **Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Reported that the task force is working to engage the community in different types of conversations around issues that impact the community and how these issues connect to decolonization and the idea of independence as a solution. The *Fanachu* podcast continues to produce episodes, led by Dr. Bevacqua and his team. The taskforce recently hosted an art talk, where they engaged with different artists. The taskforce is working to revamp and refresh their educational materials to be more responsive to current events as well as planning for their annual concert this summer. The taskforce is also working to strategically think about what different events can be produced to engage the community.

c. Free Association

1. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Reported that the taskforce is continuing to work on the RFQ for research and consultation services. The goal for the taskforce is to establish a foundation for research to be utilized for educational materials. The taskforce is doing independent research in acquiring primary documents from the Trust Territories and to grow a list of scholars in Micronesia. Once resources are grown, the taskforce will engage in outreach.

VII. Open Floor

- a. **Governor Leon Guerrero:** Brought up comments from Dr. Underwood regarding the possibility of the U.S. federal government declaring Guam and the CNMI as one state. Shared that her position on the matter is that whatever the federal government is trying to do must have the input of the people through a plebiscite for Self-determination. Reported that she discussed the issue with Dr. Underwood and Leland Bettis to find out more information. Noted that Dr. Underwood and Mr. Bettis met with some think tank organizations who recommended combining Guam and the CNMI into one state. Explained that the reason behind this is to have hard line demarcation between the United States and Asia by putting Guam and the CNMI together as a state. She met with Governor Palacios to ask for his thoughts, he said it was a good idea and colloquially stated that if it happens, Guam is going to be the capitol.
- b. **Dr. Kuper:** Added to Governor Leon Guerrero's comments and explained that the reasoning for these discussions would be to make it easier to bolster America's hold in the region. If Guam was a state, there would be no more ambiguity, especially if it was reunified with the CNMI.
- c. **Governor Leon Guerrero:** Asserted the need for unity on the issue.
- d. **Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Noted that engagement with the other territories would be beneficial. Recognized that discussions regarding a plebiscite and local opinions are at a standstill. Suggested reaching out to the other territories to discuss their plans for decolonization and understand the issues that they are faced with.
- e. **Governor Leon Guerrero:** Noted that the National Governors Association (NGA) passed a bipartisan resolution to protect Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, housing, education, etc. NGA has asked for more certainty and predictability from the current administration and to respect the rights of peoples in the states. Suggested that Guam could work with the NGA on a resolution stating that the people of Guam and the CNMI have the right to vote for their desired political status. This can be passed around for discussion through the NGA.
- f. **Brian San Nicolas:** Asked about the previous vote for reunification, where Guam voted down reunification. Asserted that if the people of Guam voted for reunification at one point in time, it may be utilized as a point for Guam's case.
- g. **Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Emphasized that discussions with the CNMI are integral. This decision is up to the people of Guam and the CNMI.
- h. **Governor Leon Guerrero:** Acknowledged that reunification of the Marianas is possible; the question is of what political status a reunified Marianas needs to be explored.
- i. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** COD will lead in drafting a statement/resolution with the assistance of Adelup's Policy and Legal teams. Shifted to highlight COD's recent discussions with some of Guam's partners in the other U.S. territories to invite them to participate in the upcoming Fanhita conference. Engagement can be done virtually. Noted that Dr. Corbin has tentatively scheduled participation.

Called on the board members to share contacts from the other territories. A list will be looked at from the previous Fanhita conference in 2019.

- j. Governor Leon Guerrero:** Asked about the Legislature's associations, possibly with the other U.S. territories.
- k. Brian San Nicolas:** Will look into associations.
- l. Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Confirmed that Guam has membership in the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCLS) along with the other U.S. territories.
- m. Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Highlighted the Special Envoy for the British Virgin Islands, Mr. Benito Wheatley, who has been contacted. Noted that Mr. Wheatley led the most recent U.N. visiting mission to the British Virgin Islands. Asserted that it would be beneficial to get their perspective on visiting missions. Ended the meeting by highlighting COD's upcoming outreach table at the University of Guam's Charter Day on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Motion made by Governor Leon Guerrero.**
- b. Seconded by Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero.**
- c. Adjourned meeting at 3:52 p.m.**