



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

**I. Call to Order:** 3:13 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

1. Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero (Excused)
2. Hon. Frank Blas Jr. (Excused)
3. Hon. Sabrina Salas Matanane (Excused)
4. Hon. Brian “BJ” Terlaje
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. Jonah Benavente (Guam Daily Post)

In the absence of Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero, Natasha Suba served as Chairperson for the meeting.

**III. Approval of Minutes** - Regular Monthly Board Meeting - March 4, 2025

- a. Motion made by Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper to approve minutes.
- b. Seconded by Dr. Mary Cruz.
- c. Motion approved by consensus.

**IV. Financial Report**

- a. Account balances

1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported account balances of non-encumbered funds for the taskforces as of June 3, 2025. They are as follows: 1) Statehood Task Force is at \$55,000; 2) Free Association Task Force is at \$53,101; 3) Independence Task Force is at \$26,500.

- b. Task force procurement updates
  - 2. Independence Task Force Procurement
    - a) **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that in May, the Task Force sent a scope of work for their *Maga'taotao* video project. COD is working with the Task Force to draft an RFQ. Additionally in March, the Task Force requested assistance in procuring graphic design services to update their educational material. The RFQ was drafted and is pending review by the Task Force. Requested the Task Force to assign a representative to work with COD directly.
    - b) **Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Requested that COD re-send the drafted RFQ for review.
  - 2. Free Association Task Force Procurement
    - a) **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that COD met with the Task Force regarding their upcoming projects and procurement needs. The Task Force has two RFQs that are ready for direct distribution to potential vendors. Requested the Task Force meet with the COD team to resolve some technical issues with potential procurement.
  - 3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reminded the task forces to submit all invoices for open POs to ensure timely processing of payments. Reminded task forces that the deadline of encumbrance of funds is September 30, 2025.

## V. Old Business

- b. Plebiscite Update & Strategy Discussion
  - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that there have been a number of inquiries from the media and from members of the Guam Legislature regarding a political status plebiscite. Subsequent action can be predicted from the Legislature. Noted that there has been some interest from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). COD has sent these organizations historic and public information for reference. Explained that until an NGO decides to take action, COD remains an educational body.
- c. Task force email accounts
  - 1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reminded all task force chairs to identify 3-5 task force members that they would like to establish GovGuam email accounts for. These GovGuam email accounts will be used to access a shared task force mailbox that can be used to send and receive correspondence for the task force. Noted that activity is needed for email accounts to remain active. Once received, COD will coordinate with the Office of Technology (OTECH) to establish the accounts.
  - 2. **Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero:** Asked about associating the task force email account with a single email.

3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the shared mailbox will have to have separate email accounts linked to it. COD created a shared mailbox that is linked to the individual COD GovGuam email accounts.
- d. FY 2025 Fanhita Conference
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that the 2025 *Fanhita* conference was held on May 6 and 7 at the Hyatt Regency Guam. For the two-day event, COD's initial in-person attendance limit was 150 per day. Due to a high volume of requests, the capacity was increased to 175 per day. This amount includes invited speakers, event organizers, and the audience. Noted that the conference featured two keynote speakers, two panels, six breakout sessions, and three performances. Funding was appropriated to livestream and record the conference. Recordings from the conference are currently being uploaded to the Commission's Youtube Page. Highlighted the pre- and post-conference survey; the data is currently being reviewed and a summary of findings will be shared with the board.

## V. New Business

- a. UN C-24 Updates
  1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported on his attendance at the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization (UN C-24) Pacific Regional Seminar, which was held in Dili, Timor-Leste from May 21 - 23, 2025. Noted that Timor-Leste is a member of the UN C-24 and the last territory to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGT). Explained that he was designated as Governor Leon Guerrero's representative and provided testimony on her behalf. In the Governor's testimony, three main requests were made to the UN C-24 including recommendations for updates in Guam's annual resolution. The Board was previously notified of language that was removed from Guam's annual resolution. The removed language was introduced in 2016 and was removed in last year's resolution. The language referenced addressed the impact of militarization of the island by the United States as Guam's administering Power and its effect on the island's Self-determination and decolonization. This request was well received by the members of the UN C-24, and some members made a commitment to have the language reinstated. The second request in Guam's resolution focused on support for a United Nations visiting mission. Noted that during the regional seminar, a lot of focus was on the outcomes of the most recent UN visiting mission, which was conducted in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Noted that in communications with the C-24 chair, the BVI mission was the priority of the Committee. Asserted that since the visiting mission to BVI is complete, Guam should be the next NSGT considered for a visiting mission. Explained that the challenge is getting approval from Guam's administering Power, which is facilitated through the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN). Unfortunately, acknowledgement and permission was given by the USUN during President Biden's administration. Unfortunately, the USUN agreement was made via verbal

- commitment in our engagements and an email record of their approval, which is not official communique. It is unsure how Guam will engage with a Trump-led USUN. Engagement will continue in hopes of a renewed commitment. Explained that the UN C-24 Chair expressed concerns regarding funding for the facilitation of the visiting mission. When communicating with the Special Envoy to the BVI, they experienced funding concerns as well. Explained that the BVI government made a commitment to fund the on-the-ground costs of the visiting mission so long as the UN could fund the air travel. Suggested that Guam could follow suit in regards to getting a funding commitment from the Guam Legislature and the Governor's office for a visiting mission. Noted that the first, it will be important to get authorization and approval from the United States. The last item of the request was for support to establish an external engagement training for all NSGTs. Highlighted that this request was made during last year's proceedings. Notably, during this year's seminar, the representative from Venezuela intervened and voiced their support for external engagement training and the reinstatement of language removed in Guam's annual resolution. Other NSGTs expressed their support and interest for external engagement training. This request is in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Asked if work can be done in conjunction with the other NSGTs moving forward with the possibility of external engagement training.
  3. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that there is a running list of contacts of NSGTs that Guam has engaged with regularly at the UN. There is interest in continued engagement in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which is a regionally based committee. BVI was successful in utilizing a counterpart to ESCAP that is based in Latin America and the Caribbean. Noted that Guam is an associate member of ESCAP. COD will assist in facilitating communication with the other NSGTs, with BVI and USVI being a priority.
- b. COD-Decolonization Exhibit Proposal
1. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Requested a motion to move up discussion on the agenda item regarding the COD Decolonization Exhibit Proposal.
    - a) Motion made by Victoria "Lola" Leon Guerrero to move item on exhibit proposal for discussion and voting.
    - b) Seconded by Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper
    - c) Motion approved by consensus.
  2. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Reported that the Guam Museum offered to collaborate with COD to host a rotating exhibit on decolonization. The exhibit is tentatively scheduled to run in the beginning of 2026. COD met with Dr. Bevacqua, who is the curator for the Guam Museum. In preparation for the exhibit, the COD team sent an updated proposal identifying the services the Commission would like to procure to start building out the exhibit. The updated proposal includes services and items to procure only in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. A separate proposal will likely be

submitted in FY 2026 for the remaining items/ services for procurement. The goal is to create a public space to continue engagement in outreach and education. COD is interested in partnering with the task forces and we will be providing access to the exhibit as a gathering space.

3. **Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Asked about the different intentions and outcomes between the *Fanhoge* exhibit and the *Decolonization* exhibit.
4. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the *Decolonization* exhibit will be a Guam-led exhibit, whereas the *Fanhoge* exhibit was a product done in collaboration. What will be delivered will be direct and strategic.
5. **Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero:** Shared that the decolonization portion of the permanent exhibit in the Guam Museum feels like an afterthought. Museums typically update aspects of their permanent exhibits. Asked if this project can serve to update aspects of the permanent exhibit. Asked about writing and research, and scope of services for the graphic designer.
6. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that COD may not be able to afford to produce interactive elements produced for the exhibit, only basic services will be rendered for graphic design. In terms of the permanent exhibit, action will be required from the Department of CHamoru Affairs’ Board of Trustees.
7. **Natasha Suba:** Asked to clarify if the motion being made is to vote for funds being encumbered in FY 2025.
8. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed and explained that another funding proposal will be made in 2026 to seek approval for procurement related to printing and installation. Funding in the current proposal will be for the costs of the exhibit coordinator and graphic designer.
9. **Dr. Mary Cruz** motioned to approve the proposal for the COD Decolonization exhibit.
  - a) Seconded by Mayor Brian Jess Terlaje.
  - b) Motion approved by consensus.
- c. Quorum was lost on 3:58 pm
- d. Meeting was formally adjourned at 3:58 pm

**VI. COD Office Updates**

- a. N/A

**VII. Task Force Updates**

- a. N/A

**VIII. Open Floor**

- a. N/A

**IX. Adjournment**

- a. **Note:** Due to quorum being lost, the meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m. Informal updates were given by COD and several board members, no further action was taken by the Board.