



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GUAM

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**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GUAM
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, September 18, 2025
Justice Monessa G. Lujan Appellate Courtroom
Guam Judicial Center**

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Hon. Robert J. Torres
Chairman

Hon. Katherine A. Maraman
Member

Hon. F. Philip Carbullido
Member

Hon. Alberto C. Lamorena, III.
Member

Hon. Maria T. Cenzone
Member

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Advisory Committee Members:

Hon. Arthur R. Barcinas

Hon. Vernon P. Perez

Hon. Elyze M. Iriarte

Hon. Dana A. Gutierrez

Hon. Alberto E. Tolentino

Hon. John C. Terlaje

Atty. Jacqueline T. Terlaje

Atty. Dean A. Manglona

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Administrator of the Courts:
Danielle T. Rosete

Judicial Council Secretary:
Jessica J. Perez-Jackson

Judicial Council Asst. Secretary:
Petrina M. Ula

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Judicial Council was called to order by the Chairman, Chief Justice Robert J. Torres, at the hour of 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Chief Justice Robert J. Torres (via Zoom)
Justice F. Philip Carbullido (via Zoom)
Justice Katherine A. Maraman (via Zoom)
Presiding Judge Alberto C. Lamorena III (via Zoom)
Judge Maria T. Cenzone

Also present via Zoom:

Judge John C. Terlaje
Mr. Dean Manglona, Guam Bar Association
Ms. Danielle T. Rosete, Administrator of the Courts
Ms. Barbara Jean Perez, Human Resources Administrator
Ms. Alicia Limtiaco, Office of Regulation Counsel
Mr. Phillip Tydingco, Guam Legal Services Corporation, GBA

Present in the Monessa G. Lujan Appellate Courtroom:

Ms. Dianne Gudmalin, Finance Administrator
Ms. Hannah Gutierrez Arroyo, Clerk of the Court, Supreme Court
Ms. Sarah Elmore-Hernandez, Director of Policy, Planning, and Community Relations
Ms. Erica Eschbach, Staff Attorney
Mr. Leo S. Diaz, Marshal of the Court
Ms. Grace Lapid Rosadino, Court Programs Administrator
Ms. Rossanna Villagomez-Aguon, Chief Probation Officer
Ms. Trish Suzuki, Deputy Chief Probation Officer
Ms. Suzane Santiago-Hinkle, Staff Attorney
Mr. Nathan Tennyson, Staff Attorney
Mr. Jesse Franquez, IFIK President
Mr. Carl V. Dominguez, Procurement & Facilities Maintenance Administrator
Mr. Andrew Perez, Public Guardian
Ms. Shelterihna Alokoa, Judicial Assistant & Supreme Court Technical Bailiff
Ms. Jessica Perez-Jackson, Judicial Council Executive Secretary

II. PROOF OF DUE NOTICE OF MEETING

Due publication of the five-day Notices of Meeting of the Judicial Council, as required under the Open Government Law, was published in the Guam Daily Post. Acknowledgments are on file.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chief Justice Torres began the roll call. Chief Justice Robert J. Torres, Justice F. Philip Carbullido, Justice Katherine A. Maraman, Presiding Judge Lamorena III, and Judge Maria T. Cenon identified themselves. This meeting determined a quorum with all five (5) Judicial Council members present during roll call.

IV. READING AND DISPOSAL OF MINUTES: August 21, 2025 Executive Session minutes and August 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes.

Chief Justice Torres asked for a motion to approve the August 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Presiding Judge Lamorena moved to approve the minutes, Judge Cenon seconded the motion. Chief Justice Torres called for an oral vote. With no discussion, the Judicial Council members voted to approve the Regular Meeting minutes, subject to correction. Chief Justice Torres then asked for a motion to approve the August 21, 2025 Executive Session minutes. Presiding Judge Lamorena made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes, Judge Cenon seconded the motion. Chief Justice Torres called for an oral vote. With no discussion, the Judicial Council members voted to approve the Executive Session minutes, subject to correction.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Judiciary FY25 Remittances Pursuant to Applicable Law

Ms. Dianne Gudmalin, Finance Administrator, reported that the Judiciary has received the full appropriated amount for general operations under the FY2025. According to Ms. Gudmalin, the final allotment was deposited on Monday, September 15, marking 100% receipt of the total appropriated funds.

B. eCourt and eSupervision Transition

Administrator of the Courts, Danielle T. Rosete, reported continued progress on the e-Court and e-Supervision projects. According to Ms. Rosete, the first data conversion iteration is scheduled to begin on September 29, followed by a second iteration and staff training sessions planned for December. She continued that the target go-live date for both systems is January 2026, with sufficient time allotted for judicial officer training. Chief Justice Torres added that during meetings with Journal Technologies representatives at the Court Technology Conference, the company committed to providing the necessary resources to support the transition. He announced that the tentative schedule sets January 9 as the cutoff date for JustWare and January 12 as the go-live date for e-Courts and e-Supervision, pending successful data conversion.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on Judicial Building Fund (For Informational Purposes Only)

Chief Justice Torres noted that Justice Maraman requested an updated report on the Judicial Building Fund (JBF). Ms. Gudmalin presented the latest financial statement reflecting the fund's status as of August 31, 2025. According to the report, the current balance stands at \$2.693 million, though it is expected to decrease due to encumbered and pending projects. Ms. Gumalin explained that these include the remaining costs for the Guam Historic Courthouse renovation, September lease payments, and pending maintenance payments to the Guam Police Department Forensic Lab. Ms. Gudmalin added that additional expenditures are anticipated for the emergency repair and replacement of the Guam Judicial Center's condenser and chiller units, as well as potential elevator maintenance or replacement.

Ms. Gudmalin also reported on the \$12 million JBF loan obtained in 2020:

- The first interest rate adjustment is scheduled for January 16, 2026, as per the loan covenant requiring review every five years.
- The current rate is 3.6%, with an annual debt obligation of approximately \$660,000 and a remaining principal of \$11.3 million.
- If the maximum ceiling rate of 9% were applied, annual payments could rise to \$1.1 million.

Chief Justice Torres noted that some rate increase is expected, though not as low as the original 3.6%, given current market conditions.

Ms. Rosete raised a question regarding the availability of funds for anticipated expenditures and whether reserves would be sufficient to cover future repairs. Chief Justice Torres responded that the Judiciary typically maintains a reserve balance between \$750,000 and \$1 million within the Judicial Building Fund to address unplanned expenses such as facility repairs or damage recovery. He noted recent unexpected costs related to condensers, air-conditioning units, and aging elevators, emphasizing the need to preserve reserve funds for such contingencies.

Ms. Gudmalin confirmed that each fiscal year budget includes a provision for unplanned scenarios to ensure financial readiness. Justice Carbullido added that because the Judicial Building Fund serves as collateral for the Bank of Guam loan, maintaining a minimum balance is prudent to avoid concern from the lender. He recommended reserving at least two quarterly loan payments to ensure timely debt servicing and financial stability, particularly given anticipated increases in principal and interest payments after the upcoming rate adjustment in 2026.

Chief Justice Torres agreed, noting that while the fund remains capable of meeting current obligations, it is not as robust as in prior years, when collections exceeded \$2 million annually.

B. Report on FY 2026 Budget (For Informational Purposes Only)

Chief Justice Torres reported that Bill 4438 (FY 2026 Budget Bill) was vetoed by the Governor on September 5, 2025. He shared that the Legislature is expected to consider an override vote on

September 29, leaving the fiscal outlook uncertain until the vote determines whether an override, compromise, or continuing budget will be adopted.

C. FY 2025 Health Insurance Rates (For Informational Purposes Only)

Ms. Gudmalin provided a detailed report on the Judiciary's employee health insurance plans and rate comparisons. She explained that the Retiree and Family Health Plan Committee recommended continuing with the two current providers—TakeCare and SelectCare—for the new fiscal year.

The details are as follows:

- The open enrollment period is scheduled for September 9–24, with both providers offering in-person and online presentations to educate employees on their plan options.
- For FY 2026, the Judiciary successfully negotiated favorable rates, maintaining TakeCare's HSA2000 plan at no cost to employees, and keeping PPO1000 and Dental 2000 employee shares unchanged.
- Only minor increases (between \$0.57 and \$1.72 per pay period) were reported for the Dental 1000 plan.
- Under SelectCare, employees will face significant premium increases—an 88% increase for HSA2000 plans and 39–41% for PPO plans—due to higher utilization and claim costs, as 77% of Judiciary subscribers are enrolled in SelectCare.
- Dental plan rates under SelectCare have slightly decreased.

Ms. Gudmalin also reported that the Judiciary continues to offer lower overall rates than GovGuam:

- The comparison of rates shows the Judiciary's TakeCare medical plans are 38–104% less expensive than comparable GovGuam plans
- SelectCare medical plans are 12–48% less expensive.
- Dental plans under both TakeCare and SelectCare remain more expensive than GovGuam's dental options.
- GovGuam absorbed increases through employer share, while the Judiciary's structure passes cost differences to employees enrolled in the higher-cost SelectCare plan.
- Judiciary projects FY 2026 savings of approximately \$772,000, following two years of average annual savings of \$637,000 under self-procured plans.

Justice Carbullido requested a detailed table comparing Judiciary and GovGuam health insurance rates for all plan categories to aid in future planning. Chief Justice Torres agreed, noting that while the gap between Judiciary and GovGuam rates is narrowing, the Judiciary continues to offer lower overall premium costs. Ms. Gudmalin will prepare and distribute a full comparative report at the next meeting.

D. Resolution, JC 25- Relative to Creating the Position of Security Support Clerk

Ms. Rosete presented a resolution to establish a new classified position of Security Support Clerk under the Marshals Services Division to provide administrative and technical support for the Judiciary's security access control, camera, and duress button systems, and to assist with ongoing modernization efforts.

Barbara Jean Perez, Human Resources Administrator stated that the position is classified under Pay Grade J in the general pay plan, with a salary range of \$37,912.72–\$66,820.62, comparable to Deputy Clerk II or Deputy Marshal I (non-law enforcement). She continued that the classification was modeled after other jurisdictions, including Alaska.

In response to Presiding Judge Lamorena, Ms. Perez outlined the entry qualifications:

- A. Associate's degree in criminal justice, public administration, or a related field plus 1.5 years of progressively responsible experience, including 6 months in security support; or
- B. High school diploma or GED with equivalent training and experience.

Judge Cenzone asked how the duties are currently performed. Ms. Rosete explained that the Judiciary's aging system has required both a deputy marshal and administrative staff to share these responsibilities; the new position would centralize these functions and allow marshals to focus on law enforcement duties.

Justice Carbullido questioned the degree requirement and its local availability. Ms. Perez and Chief Justice Torres clarified that associate's degrees are two-year programs offered locally, including at Guam Community College, and that the dual qualification options (A and B) ensure flexibility and opportunities for in-house applicants. Ms. Perez added that the position, though under the general pay plan, could serve as a promotional opportunity for administrative staff.

Chief Justice Torres reviewed the statutory process under 7 GCA §6303, noting that Council approval satisfies posting and publication requirements, allowing the Administrator to proceed.

Justice Maraman moved to adopt the resolution creating the Security Support Clerk position; the motion a seconded by Justice Carbullido. The Judicial Council unanimously approved the resolution.

E. Report on Request to Expand Special Deputy Marshals' Duties (For Informational Purposes Only)

Chief Justice Torres introduced the informational item on expanding Special Deputy Marshal duties. Marshal of the Court Leo Diaz presented a report, prepared at the Council's request, following discussion in July about addressing the marshal shortage through expanded roles for DRT and GDOE Special Deputies.

The report, developed with the Deputy Chief Marshal, Program Coordinator, and Legal Division, concluded that expanding duties beyond their statutory scope would violate 7 GCA §8108 and require legislative amendment. According to Chief Diaz, the report identified major operational, safety, financial, legal, and community risks, including divided loyalties, inadequate training, unclear accountability, compensation and equipment issues, and potential liability and public trust concerns.

Chief Diaz concluded that expanding the Special Deputy program's scope would create legal and operational exposure and strain the missions of both the Judiciary and participating agencies.

Chief Justice Torres thanked the Chief Marshal and noted that Council members would review the report in detail and revisit it at the next meeting for further discussion. Presiding Judge Lamorena agreed with the recommendation to table the item until the next meeting. There were no objections, and the matter was deferred for further review.

F. Notice of the Next Meeting (Thursday, October 16, 2025)

Chief Justice Torres noted that the Council's next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 16, 2025.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

No communications.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Guam Bar Association Board (GBA) – President's Report

Chief Justice Torres noted for the record that Advisory Member Dean Manglona was present. Phillip Tydingco, representing the Guam Bar Association, reported that on Constitution Day, the Articles of Incorporation for the newly formed Guam Bar Justice Foundation were filed.

The Foundation's goals include:

- Promoting legal education, research, and publication;
- Supporting free or low-cost legal services for underserved Pacific communities;
- Securing grants and providing scholarships, fellowships, and financial aid—especially for Guam bar exam candidates;
- Enhancing diversity in the legal profession through mentorship, networking, and pipeline programs.

According to Mr. Tydingco, the Foundation, a nonprofit under the Guam Business Corporation Act, will manage related funds, maintain tax-exempt status, and may offer student loans consistent with IOLTA rules.

In response to Justice Carbullido's inquiry, Mr. Tydingco explained that the initial Board of Directors consists of the Guam Bar Board of Governors officers—President Jacque Terlaje, Vice President John Morrison, Secretary Janice Camacho-Perez, and Treasurer Phillip Tydingco—who will serve until successor directors are elected under forthcoming bylaws. He shared that the long-term goal is to transition governance once the nonprofit is fully established.

B. Court Employees Association

IFIK President Jesse Franquez reported the following:

- Bake sales will resume next Friday.
- The Judiciary's holiday party is scheduled for Saturday, January 10, from 6:00 to 11:00 p.m. An RSVP survey will be circulated to gauge attendance.

- The Association has also selected a board to oversee the 2026 board election and invites management volunteers to assist with election planning.

Chief Justice Torres thanked Mr. Franquez and the Association for the updates and reminder about the party.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Presiding Judge Lamorena moved to adjourn until Thursday, October 16, 2025; Justice Maraman seconded the motion, and with no objections the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of October 2025.



JESSICA V. PEREZ-JACKSON
Executive Secretary
Judicial Council of Guam

As set out above, the Minutes of the September 18, 2025 Regular Meeting were approved by the Judicial Council at the October 16, 2025 Regular Meeting.



ROBERT J. TORRES
Chair