



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GUAM

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GUAM REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, December 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. Cenzon
Member

★★★★

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 12:11 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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

Also present via Zoom:

Mr. Dean Manglona, Guam Bar Association
Judge Elyze M. Iriarte
Judge Dana A. Gutierrez
Ms. Alicia Limtiaco, Regulation Counsel
Mr. Kelly Fitzpatrick

Present in the Monessa G. Lujan Appellate Courtroom:

Ms. Danielle T. Rosete, Administrator of the Courts
Ms. Sophia Santos Diaz, Deputy Administrator of the Courts
Ms. Hannah Gutierrez Arroyo, Clerk of Court, Supreme Court
Ms. Janice Camacho-Perez, Clerk of Court, Superior Court
Ms. Sarah Elmore-Hernandez, Director of Policy, Planning, and Community Relations
Ms. Dianne O. Gudmalin, Finance Administrator
Ms. Barbara Jean Perez, Human Resources Administrator
Ms. Geraldine Cepeda, Compiler of Laws/GLL Executive Director
Mr. Leo S. Diaz, Marshal of the Court
Ms. Rossanna Villagomez-Aguon, Chief Probation Officer
Ms. Trisha T. Suzuki, Deputy Chief Probation Officer
Ms. Grace Lapid Rosadino, Court Programs Administrator
Ms. Maria Erica Eschbach, Staff Attorney, Supreme Court
Ms. Suzane Santiago-Hinkle, Staff Attorney
Mr. Nathan Tennyson, Staff Attorney
Mr. Carl V. Dominguez, Procurement & Facilities Maintenance Administrator
Ms. Lisa V. Baza, Judicial Educator
Ms. Melissa M. Casil, Client Services & Family Counseling Administrator

ROLL CALL (cont.):

Mr. Robert Rabago, Management Information Systems Administrator
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 Katherine A. Maraman, and Judge Maria T. Cenzone identified themselves. Presiding Judge Alberto C. Lamorena III was excused and Justice F. Philip Carbullido entered the session a few minutes later at 12:05 p.m. A quorum was established, with three (3) of the five (5) members present. Judicial Council members present during roll call.

IV. READING AND DISPOSAL OF MINUTES: November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes.

Chief Justice Torres asked for a motion to approve the November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Judge Cenzone moved to approve the minutes, Justice Maraman 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.

With the Council's consent, old business was deferred and the Council proceeded directly to new business, Item A. Resolution JC25 – Relative to Memorializing the Passing of the Honorable Maria G. Fitzpatrick. There being no objection, the Council took up the resolution, and Ms. Fitzpatrick's husband, Mr. Kelly Fitzpatrick, joined the meeting via Zoom.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Judiciary FY 2026 Remittances Pursuant to Applicable Law

Under the FY2026 budget update, Ms. Dianne Gudmalin reported on the Judiciary's FY 2026 allotments. She shared that the Judiciary continues to receive its scheduled bi-weekly allotment of \$1,683,000 for general operations and to date, approximately 19% of the total appropriated amount has been received, totaling about \$8.4 million. She added that the most recent allotment was deposited on December 9, 2025, and the next allotment is expected on December 23, 2025. There were no questions from the Council.

B. eCourt and eSupervision Transition

Deputy Administrator of the Courts, Sophia Santos Diaz, reported that training has begun in smaller units across various sections and has already been conducted for clerks of court and ministerial staff, with additional training scheduled for finance and marshals. Ms. Santos Diaz noted that online training

for judicial officers and their chamber staff is scheduled for December 23, 2025, consisting of a three-hour session. The training agenda will be disseminated in advance. She added that the initial training is intended as a familiarization session, including system access, login procedures, dashboard navigation, and an overview of platform features and a specific segment tailored to the judicial officers' view and functions will be included. Ms. Santos Diaz shared that the project continues to target a January go-live date and the vendor will be on site for go-live and for several days thereafter to provide additional training and support. She added that the training sessions will be recorded and made available for those unable to attend, and chamber staff are encouraged to participate. No questions were raised by the Council.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution JC25 – Relative to Memorializing the Passing of the Honorable Maria G. Fitzpatrick

The Council expressed its condolences to Mr. Fitzpatrick and his family and recognized the Honorable Maria G. Fitzpatrick's decades of dedicated public service to the people of Guam, including her work with the Office of the Attorney General, the Public Defender Services Corporation, and her continued service after retirement as a referee, administrative hearings officer, Judge Pro Tem of the Superior Court of Guam, and Justice Pro Tem of the Supreme Court of Guam. Justice Maraman summarized and read the resolution into the record.

Chief Justice Torres moved to adopt the resolution with an amendment providing that it reflect the signatures of all judicial officers, not solely Judicial Council members, and that the resolution and accompanying Certificate of Condolence be formally presented to the family at the celebration of life scheduled for March 1, 2026. Judge Cenzone seconded the motion which was approved unanimously, with no objections.

Mr. Fitzpatrick thanked the Council for the resolution, and the Council noted it would formally present the resolution and certificate at the March 1, 2026 commemoration of life. He stated that he looked forward to seeing the Council upon his return to Guam and then exited the meeting. The Chair thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick.

The record was further noted to reflect that Associate Justice F. Philip Carbullido joined the meeting virtually, as did Dean Magnolonia, advisory member, who also appeared online.

B. Certificate of Condolences to the Family of the Honorable Maria G. Fitzpatrick

As stated in Chief Justice Torres' motion in the previous item A., the resolution and accompanying Certificate of Condolence be formally presented to the family at the celebration of life scheduled for March 1, 2026.

The Council moved back to Old Business.

C. Resolution, JC 25-023 Relative to Revising Fiscal Management Roles and Creating the Position of Chief Financial Officer

Administrator of the Courts (AOC) Rosete presented a petition to the Council which proposes revising fiscal management roles within the Judiciary and creating a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position within the Court Administrative Services Division. Ms. Rosete presented the petition and explained that the recommendations followed a comprehensive classification and organizational review using the Hay Guide Chart method, incorporated audit recommendations, and examined comparable structures in other court jurisdictions and Government of Guam entities.

AOC Rosete reported that the Judiciary's financial responsibilities have expanded significantly, including management of a larger budget, grants, fiduciary funds, and increasingly complex audit and reporting requirements. She explained that the creation of a CFO position was recommended to provide strategic fiscal oversight, improve compliance, and enhance operational efficiency, and under the proposed structure, the CFO would assume strategic oversight, while the Finance Administrator would focus on operational fiscal management and day-to-day functions.

Assuming approval of the CFO position, the AOC recommended revising the Finance Administrator job standard to reflect reduced complexity and accountability, with a corresponding reassignment from executive pay grade T to S. Council discussion included questions regarding classification status. It was explained that consistent with previously adopted Judicial Council standards, the Finance Administrator position would remain unclassified, comparable to other court management positions.

Chief Justice Torres provided a recap to the Council of the three resolutions presented to them today and asked the Council if they had any questions. Justice Carbullido commended the Administrator of the Courts and the HR Administrator for recognizing the significance and expanded responsibilities of the Judiciary's financial leadership. He raised questions regarding whether certain fiscal positions—particularly the Finance Administrator—should be classified rather than unclassified, noting the importance of providing appropriate civil service protections given the role's responsibility over public funds, compliance with legislative mandates, and audit scrutiny.

In response, Ms. Perez explained that the classification determinations were based on previously adopted Judicial Council standards outlining criteria for unclassified positions and under those standards, the Finance Administrator position, even with revised duties following creation of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position, remains comparable to other court management positions in the unclassified service. It was further noted that the Council retains authority to revisit those standards.

The Council discussed the possibility of reevaluating the classification status of the Finance Administrator position after the CFO position is created and filled. It was agreed that the current resolution would proceed as proposed, with the understanding that the Council may revisit and reconsider its classification policy and the Finance Administrator position at a future meeting.

Justice Carbullido stated his agreement with this approach and requested that the deliberation be noted for the record.

Judge Cenzon moved to approve the Resolution Revising Fiscal Management Roles and Creating the Position of Chief Financial Officer; Justice Maraman seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved to adopt the resolution and revising the Finance Administrator job standard, with no objections.

D. Resolution, JC 25-024 Relative to Revising the Senior Systems Programmer Job Standard

Ms. Rosete also asked the Council to consider a resolution to revise the job standard for the Senior Systems Programmer position in the Management Information Systems Division. Ms. Rosete explained that the position had not been updated since 1999 and no longer reflected current information technology needs, contributing to recruitment difficulties and a long-standing vacancy. According to AOC Rosete, the proposed revision would retitle the position as a Systems Specialist, with duties focused on systems administration, virtualization, networking, security, data center operations, and enterprise systems support.

Justice Maraman had a question about pay grade, to which Ms. Barabra Jean Perez explained that the existing pay grade would remain unchanged, with flexibility within the range and the revision is presented as an interim measure, with the possibility of a broader future evaluation of IT positions.

Judge Cenzon moved to approve the Resolution Revising the Senior Systems Programmer Job Standard; Justice Maraman seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved to adopt the resolution with no objections.

E. Resolution, JC 25-025 Relative to Appointments of Members on the Committee on Judicial Discipline

The Council considered a resolution regarding the reappointment of members to the Committee on Judicial Discipline whose terms were set to expire. Chief Justice Torres reported that the terms of three members were expiring: Judge Camacho of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Attorney Michael Ernest of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Ms. Nadine Leon Guerrero, lay member. Chief Justice Torres advised that all three members are eligible for reappointment and have expressed their willingness to continue serving and that the proposed reappointments are for new four-year terms commencing in December 2025 and expiring in December 2029.

Justice Merriman made a motion to approve the resolution reappointing the three members to the Committee on Judicial Discipline; it was seconded by Judge Cenzon. The Council unanimously approved to adopt the resolution with no objections.

- F. **Notice of the Next Meeting (Thursday, January 15, 2026)** Chief Justice Torres announced that the next Council meeting was tentatively scheduled for January 15, subject to confirmation due to scheduling considerations, and that a revised notice would be issued.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

- Chief Justice Torres also noted receipt of a memorandum reappointing Judge Cenzone to the Judicial Council and offered congratulations.
- Justice Maramba announced for the record the following:

The rules governing admission to the practice of law have been revised. A major change includes Guam's adoption of the NextGen Bar Examination beginning with the July 2026 administration, with Guam participating as one of the first jurisdictions to implement it. Other revisions were made to expand eligibility and increase the pool of potential practitioners, including provisions for military spouse temporary admission, eligibility for graduates of any ABA-accredited law school to sit for the bar examination, and enhanced score portability, including recognition of both legacy and NextGen examination scores.

Administrator of the Courts Rosete made the following announcements:

- A time capsule project is scheduled for December 31, 2025. Judicial Council members are invited to contribute a small item of memorabilia representing the judiciary, Guam, or the law, to be preserved in the time capsule.
- The Judiciary's staff holiday celebration will be held on Friday, with festivities beginning at 3:00 p.m., including a visit from Santa for employees' children and a caroling contest among divisions. The Northern Court satellite will close at 2:00 p.m., while operations will continue as usual at the Agaña locations.
- The Office of Public Accountability audited the Judiciary, noting that the report found no fraud and that the Judiciary had the lowest percentage of questioned costs among audited agencies. The AOC stated that the Judiciary continues to use the audit findings to improve internal workflows and has already implemented corrective measures, particularly regarding clerical and procedural issues such as travel reporting. Ms. Rosete commended Judiciary staff, particularly the finance and procurement divisions, for their professionalism and cooperation during the audit. The possibility of reviewing and revising certain procurement rules to allow greater flexibility while maintaining accountability was also noted.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

GBA Secretary Janice Camacho Perez provided a brief report:

- The Guam Bar Association will hold a holiday event in the form of a New Year's Eve-themed party on January 9, the day before the court's holiday event. The location and guest obligations

are to be determined. While the event will not be a foundation dinner, attendees will have an opportunity to make donations. Additional details will be forthcoming.

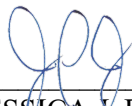
B. Court Employees Association

The Chair noted that no Court Employees Association report was presented due to the excused absence of the designated representative who is under the weather.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Judge Cenzone moved to adjourn until Thursday, January 15, 2026, and with no objections the meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 14th day of January 2026.



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

As set out above, the Minutes of the December 18, 2025 Regular Meeting were approved by the Judicial Council at the January 14, 2026 Regular Meeting.



ROBERT J. TORRES
Chair