



Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs 3rd Quarterly Meeting

*Virtual ZOOM
Thursday, July 16, 2026
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.*

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:

Ammar Abdulhamid, Member
Dr. Amal K. Ali, Member
Alissa Deaver, Member
Gunay Evinch Member
Rabbi Dr. Susan Grossman, Member
Dr. Ayesha A. Gulistan, Member
Mohammad Khalil, Member
Mona Kishore, Chair
Ala'a Wafa, Vice Chair

Commissioners Absent:

Dr. Aharona (Roni) Rosenthal

GOCI Staff:

Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director
Cheryl Madigan – Executive Assistant

I. Call to Order, Roll Call and Procedural Reminders:

Mona Kishore, Chair – Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Open Remarks:

Mona Kishore, Chair – She went over meeting procedures and rollcall. Tonight's meeting will consist of going over what the commission accomplished in the last fiscal year. She also welcomed back AD Dr. Antwan Brown.

III. To Amend the Agenda at 6:06 p.m.:

#1 Motion to amend the agenda.

Motion	1st	2nd	Vote
To amend the agenda for Cherie Warehime to provide her updates on MD250.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Ala'a Wafa	9Y-0N-0A by hands

IV. Maryland 250 Planning - Multicultural Celebration with Commissions:

Cherie Warehime provided updates on this event at Bowie State University on October 17th. There will be a parade of nations, 15-minute performance spot on stage, and vendor table.



- V. **Opening Remarks (continued):**
AD Dr. Antwan Brown greeted everyone.

- VI. **Approval of the Minutes at 6:17 p.m.:**
#2 Motion to approve the minutes for 03/26/26 1st Qtr. and 05/07/26 2nd Qtr.
Chair stated the date as 03/07/26 instead of 05/07/26, but she did state it was the 2nd Qtr.

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Approval of the minutes for 03/26/26 1 st Qtr. and 05/07/26 2 nd Qtr.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Ala'a Wafa	9Y-0N-0A by hands

- VII. **Adoption of the Agenda:**
#3 Motion to adopt the revised agenda at 6:19 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To adopt the revised agenda.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Dr. Susan Grossman	9Y-0N-0A by hands

- VIII. **Committees:**

- a) **Education and Health** – Commissioner Ayesha Gulistan provided updates with their collaboration with Howard County Public School on the RSD Methodology (Reflective Structure Dialogue Programming) pilot program. They would like to continue the effort with the Attorney General's Office and collaborate with the other commissions on Hate Crime.
- b) **Local Engagement & Inclusion** – Vice Chair Ala'a Wafa stated they have not met yet. Dr. Susan Grossman will enter her data on the spreadsheet within three weeks.

- IX. **Working Groups:**

- a) **Partnership & Focus Groups** – Chair Kishore stated that this is an ongoing task and should be part of the Local Engagement & Inclusion Committee, therefore, it will need to be sunset/dissolved as a working group.

#4 Motion to sunset/close the Partnership & Focus Group at 6:28 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To sunset/close the Partnership & Focus Groups Working Group.	Ala'a Wafa	Ammar Abdulhamid	9Y-0N-0A by hands

- b) **Event Planning**

- I. **Maryland 250 Planning – International Music Festival** – Commissioner Alissa Deaver stated having promotional items, basket drawings, resource information of the commission at the event at Glen Echo on August 23rd. Chair Kishore will provide the flyer.



- II. **Annapolis Symphony Orchestra** – Commissioner Ammar Abdulhamid stated that the ASO have events planned, maybe January 31st or February 6th of 2027. Waiting to see if we want to partner with them. He stated that since this will not be a part of the MD250 Celebration, it needs to be renamed to just ASO.

#5 Motion to rename the working group from MD250 Annapolis Symphony Orchestra to just the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra at 6:35 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Rename the working group from MD250 Annapolis Symphony Orchestra to just the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Dr. Susan Grossman	Motion Removed

Dr. Antwan Brown wanted this working group dissolved and this task placed under the Local Engagement & Inclusion committee. Commissioner Abdulhamid and Commissioner Dr. Susan Grossman took their motions off the table.

#6 Motion to move the project of the MD250 Annapolis Symphony Orchestra Working Group to be a task under the Local Engagement & Inclusion Committee at 6:40 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To move the project of the MD250 Annapolis Symphony Orchestra Working Group to be a task under the Local Engagement & Inclusion Committee.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Dr. Susan Grossman	9Y-0N-0A by hands

Chair Kishore stated that January 31st would be the best date. The event will take place at Maryland Hall. The performers need to be paid; therefore, sponsorship is needed. We need to schedule a meeting for this. Sponsorship could lead up to \$50,000.00. Commissioner Abdulhamid to find out the exact budget needs.

III. **Muslim & Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration** – No update.

c) **Strategic Planning** – No update.

d) **Communication & Legislation**

#7 Motion to change the working group's name to Legislation at 6:48 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To change the working group's name to Legislation.	Dr. Susan Grossman	Ala'a Wafa	9Y-0N-0A by hands



Commissioner Grossman asked GOCI to let them know if any legislation that comes up for this upcoming session. Commissioner Mohammad Khalil provided guidelines of the upcoming session, which begins January 13th and ends April 12th. Legislators can pre-file legislation in late November and then they can also submit bill requests in the first two weeks of the legislative period. AD Dr. Brown stated that they need to contact Cherie Warehime concerning legislative topics.

- e) **Interfaith Program** – Commissioner Grossman informed that one of their partners is the Christian Jewish Islamic Society, which they finished a program call Sacred Ground. They are looking forward to seeing the impact of the upcoming heritage months in the school systems. Commissioner Amal Ali expressed concerns on immigration and requested someone from the Immigrant Affairs unit speak at their next meeting concerning resources.

X. New Business:

- a) **Discussion on the Annual Report** – Chair Mona Kishore spoke on the successes of their work. She asked the commissioners for their input for this report. AD Dr. Brown asked the commissioners to submit pictures of events they attended.
- b) **Iftar Dinner** – Commissioner Gunay Evinch on February 17th. He would like to do lunch at the mosque in September.
- c) **AD Dr. Brown** – he would like to have the Chair and Vice Chair go to events with him and present citations.

XI. #8 Motion for Adjournment at 7:23 p.m.:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Adjourn the meeting at 7:23 p.m.	Ala'a Wafa	Gunay Evinch	8Y-0N-0A by hands