



**Truth and Reconciliation commission**  
**Minutes - Public Meeting #4**  
**December 5, 2023**

Meeting opened and started at 5:00 PM by Ann Miller

**Attendance:** Melody Mackin, Mia Schultz, Faith Yacubian, Michele Olvera, Adam Kersch and Ann Miller with Eric Darius as the ASL Interpreter.

**Members of the Public included:** David Savoie – Radio Canada, Maria Reba Pratt, Michelle Gawerc, Tom, Charlene Galarneau, Kheya Ganguly, Jerome Lafayette Narramore and Rep. Elizabeth Burrows.

Commissioner Mia Schultz is presiding over this meeting. Introductions and descriptions were shared. Language accessibility explained. We have an interpreter here and in terms of other language pieces, please let us know via email if there is anyone that needs other language services. If you speak another language and would like us to get an interpreter, please let us know by email. Email address placed in chat. If there are any members of the press here that would like us to send advanced meeting notice or minutes, please contact us. Both are on our website. Also noted, please put yourself on mute in Teams when you come into the meeting. Commissioner Schultz also shared instructions on how to bring in the speech- to- text on Teams.

Agenda shared on the screen by Commissioner Schultz. Commissioner Mackin suggested an agenda adjust to add vote acceptance of the Emblematic Session Meeting Minutes for the November emblematic case study along with the November Public Meeting. Commissioner Schultz and Commissioner Mackin voted “yes” to both meeting minutes as final.

Commissioner Schultz reviewed our Land Acknowledgements, which can be found on our website: [VTRC Land Acknowledgement](#)

Commissioner Schultz shared the Meeting Agreements, which are also found on our website: [VTRC Working Agreement | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)

Executive Director Yacubian discussed the VTRC budget which is complex. At the beginning of the VTRC Commission, we used the budget for needs such as computers, cell phones, etc. Our budget includes services such as ASL. We are now in the midst of making decisions regarding consultant and research services. If anyone needs further details, please reach out.

Executive Director Yacubian then reviewed staff updates. Since our last meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>, we have held two full days of team working sessions, one of which included intercommunication, awareness raising and developing team communication norms. We have continued to build on a strategic plan that the commissioners have shepherded and created, which includes phases and reports and a project managing structure. Thank you to Commissioner Schultz for guiding and making the project management system as thoughtful and thorough as it is. We've developed a rationale and a how- to guide for the ship plan and the project management format. A nod to Adam for the work that they did on that, which codified and does designated tasks with the project management platform. There was formal communication with an advocacy organization as well as some individuals. We have attended personal events, guest speaking engagements and local educational events. We are also gardening accessibility best-practices from advocates, those with personal experiences around accessibility to look at protocols and tools for in-person and online meetings and communication.

We held our first emblematic case meeting, which was three hours.

We have another one coming up on Thursday which invites the public and we all appreciate the public participation which is instrumental in these meetings as we are tracking and identifying specific discriminatory actions by the state, municipalities, and service providers.

Ann Miller explained that the logo contest failed, unfortunately. We simply did not get submissions. That being said, we will now take a different route. We have been in contact with a consultant who has a very impressive background. We are excited to invite them into our circle to help with branding, colors, newsletters and a logo. Please stay tuned for that.

Researcher Kersch updated all regarding our first emblematic case meeting where cases from three general topics were reviewed: criminal justice, education and the eugenics movement in Vermont. We received some really fantastic feedback from the public, who at every step let us know what themes they saw in each individual emblematic case. In order to really make sure that our work is community centered, it's important that we have that public participation and for us to hear what the public thinks is happening in these cases. Some of the themes that we heard from the public was in response to various cases of embedded racism and position of powers, lack of accountability for those in power, chronic stress that people of color in Vermont face. The public wanted a list of the main perpetrators of the eugenics movement. Violation of bodily autonomy and intergenerational harm and trauma, and this is really just a few from the many, many comments we got. These themes help us to get an understanding of where we should focus our efforts.

Once we start to move into the implementation phase of the TRC, this is specifically what Legal Counsel Olvera and Researcher Kersch will be researching, what we'll be seeking testimony about and ultimately making recommendations to the legislature.

Thursday, December 7th from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, will be the second emblematic case meeting.

This will include cases that we've received from the Vermont Center for Independent Living, All Brains Belong Outright Vermont and individual members of the public, and we hope that you're able to join us. If anyone has more cases that are emblematic of discrimination and oppression in Vermont, that state policies or laws have caused, please don't hesitate to message us. We have received quite a few and from individuals of the public, from organizations, and we're incorporating them into these special meetings. It is quite a profound experience to be in these cases in this process.

Commissioner Schultz stated that the cases don't need to be legal cases, they should be something that is emblematic of the State of Vermont and discrimination. As stated, we are in the building and planning stage and our scope is pretty broad. It includes discrimination as a whole, and many identities that are listed in legislation. We want to be sure the VTRC is being thoughtful and intentional with this work. We realize that a lot of discrimination has happened to people of different identities.

Commissioner Mackin discussed the first report due to the Legislature in January. The Commission will start working on that report soon. It doesn't need to be anything long, but it's everything we've done up to this point. It will be public record once we send it out to the Governor.

The meeting was opened for public comment, of which there were comments.

Commissioner Schultz reminded everyone of the Emblematic Meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 1 to 4pm. We hope to see you all then. The agenda can be found on our website.

Meeting closed at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Miller, Admin Assist  
Faith Yacubian, Executive Director

**NEXT PUBLIC MEETING is SCHEDULED for TUESDAY, JANUARY 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 PM**