



Truth and Reconciliation Commission FINAL Minutes – Public Meeting #7 April 2, 2024

Meeting opened at 4:55 PM by Ann Miller.

Attendance: Melody Mackin, Mia Schultz, Faith Yacubian, Michele Olvera and Ann Miller.

Members of the public included: Abby Paige, Courtney Stathos, Noah L. LaPan, Jr., Lexi Krupp, Charlene Galarneau, Rhonda Besaw, Chauntel LaPan (by phone), and Van Dora Williams.

Commissioner Mackin facilitated the meeting and started by placing the agenda link to the meeting in chat. Language and accessibility was explained, and message to please place name in Chat if you are willing, but it is not necessary. If Press needs to be notified of our meetings in advance, please let us know so that we can make note. We ask that the public please request access to any assistance needed in language translation or ASL via our email at least 72 hours in advance of any public meeting the VTRC holds.

Commissioner Schultz shared our land acknowledgement which is found here on our website: [Land Acknowledgement.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#).

Staff introductions were made, starting with Commissioner Mackin.

Commissioner Mackin reviewed the VTRC's working pledge which is posted here: [About Us | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). The pledge in its entirety was placed in Chat as well. Also reviewed were the protocols of the open meeting. The Executive Director upholds accountability of the pledge.

Previous meeting minutes voted on as approved as final by Commissioners Mackin and Schultz – 3/5/24 public meeting minutes approved as final, and the 4th Emblematic Case study meeting minutes approved as final by Commissioners Mackin and Schultz.

Executive Director Yacubian reviewed the budget and recent expenditures which have been minimal in March and into April. As many are aware, the Commission's budget is used for essential tools, material, and paying consultants, such as office equipment, interview equipment, marketing and branding practitioners, payroll, etc., that allow the Commission to function day-to-day and meet the mandate.

To date, large scale costs (like consultants or equipment) have not accrued in March.

Executive Director Yacubian reviewed **team updates** and what we have been doing this past month. What the TRC has been up-to:

- -Held 4th Emblematic Case
- -Building an educational series that includes a monthly panel of advocates and practitioners whose expertise address identities of ACT 128.
- -Finalizing our Strategic Plan
- -Revising our website with branding specialized for the VTRC.
- -Working with Social Work students at Champlain College to look at the evolution of lack thereof of Place Names in Vermont.
- -Creating an Accessibility Guide/Check-List for In-Person and Virtual Meetings
- -Finalizing Language Accessibility for community members whose preferred language is not English nor verbal communication.
- -Creating a Fundraising Process to supplement state funding.

Old Business - Commissioner Mackin talked about the Committee Applications. Just finished the deadline and sending out next steps shortly.

Legal Council Olvera went over our 4th (last) emblematic case meeting and shared the case list . Commissioner Schultz shared the themes which can be found in our PowerPoint presentation: [2024-03-20 Meeting Minutes and PP](#) Commissioner: “Failing to recognize people as human beings, lack of accountability, lack of protections for individuals and populations, embedded forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, antisemitism, xenophobia, white people, deciding people of colors, fake stigmatizing processes and policies need for better training on bias, not believing black people visibility of certain population populations in Vermont and continuing the historic harms through present day systems.”

“Just to wrap that all up, public input has been really critical to our work and we have been really working hard on this plan and vision which will guide our work for the next few years. An important process. We thank all who attended.

Legal Counsel Olvera thanked the Law School for the wonderful interns we are able to work with.

New Business - Commissioner Schultz talked about the Education Panel and the dates each month for the Panelists to join each session. Taking volunteers with experiences in each section. List was shared.

April 24 – Native Americans and French Indians of Vermont

May 22 – Persons with Disabilities

June 26 – Black People

July 24 – Migrant People

August 28 – Families of People with Disabilities

September – French Canadian

October – Immigrants

November – Intersecting Identities

Commissioner Mackin opened the floor to the public and those that would like to speak.

Courtney Stathos: Unaffiliated with any organization or institution I'm attending as a private individual who was impacted by the Vermont eugenics study. Also have my sister here with me and she's the one who actually would like to speak. I'm going to allow her to introduce herself also.

I am Chauntel LaPan, and I am Courtney's, sister. I am a granddaughter of someone who was listed in the Vermont eugenics files, and I'm also a scholar. My research area is in tourism. My background is the anthropology and I have a lot of research in the area of sociology as well as the indigenous issue. I am here for two reasons, as a representative of my family and as somebody who just has interest in how you're approaching this process. It affects me fairly intimately. My question; is any of the data you are collecting from these truth telling sessions; are they going to be used for anybody's research or publication?

Commissioner Schultz: This is the part of the public comments that we don't really respond to. However, being that it's a question about procedure and confidentiality, I will respond. We are going to have a lot of ways that people can participate in this process. If there is a part where people want to stay confidential, that will certainly be offered to them.

Chauntel LaPan: That's not my question. I'm asking if any of the data collected is going to be used in a publication of any sort?

Commissioner Schultz: I guess the data as a whole, absolutely. We have a report to write at the end of this Commission which will have a consolidation of all of our findings. Since this is the portion of the meeting that we're really not doing a back & forth feedback type of process, I feel like I think that's enough to respond to. Do you have any other input?

Chauntel LaPan: Sure. Yes. who should I reach out to you about meeting privately? If this is not the place.

Commissioner Schultz : You have our emails and you can certainly send an email to speak with us or our Researcher, Adam Kersch.

Chauntel LaPan ; OK, excellent. I think at this time, given the information that I have, I have said what I want to say. I feel like I will have more to say in future meetings as I'm able to get caught up on the public meetings. I was unaware of prior to this.

Abby Paige: I probably will also will reach out separately, but I guess in this public forum. I just wanted to take the opportunity to say that I am a Vermonter of French Canadian descent and I felt moved to speak about who I was and really appreciative of the fact that French Canadian millworkers were discussed in the Emblematic Meeting, and echoing what Michele Olivera said about her own family, my ancestors work here and some of my ancestors migrated with that large migration of French Canadians into New England for labor. As a borderland state, people of French descent have been here since the earliest days of European presence, and I really hope that the Commission will be careful to not frame French Canadians as people from across the border. We've always been here since earliest days of colonization, and that's part of the Commission's mandate. I think it will be really important to make clear that point many peoples have been present here all along and that whiteness is part of what's going on here, but also like Anglo Saxon Heritage, English speaking Protestant, religiosity that all that is related to at my people's experience. That is the heading over some other things that I have to say. I just felt like I wanted that to be the record, so thank you.

Lexi Krupp: I have a question regarding the budget and where that might be made public? I can follow up with you, Faith, but just letting you know, my name is Lexie. I'm a reporter from the public for this meeting.

With no further questions or comments, Commissioner Mackin closed the meeting at 5:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Miller, Administrative Assist
Faith Yacubian, Executive Director

NEXT MEETING is SCHEDULED for Wednesday, April 24th Native Americans and French Indians of Vermont -- Educational Series

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING is SCHEDULED for TUESDAY, May 7, 2024

