



Truth and Reconciliation Commission FINAL Minutes – Public Meeting #6 March 5, 2024

Meeting opened at 5:00 PM by Commissioner Mackin

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

Members of the public included: Chief Gagne, Rhonda Besaw, Mercedes de Guardiola, Rachel, Vera, Matthew LeFluer, Jordan Hepburn, Rich Holschuh.

Commissioner Mackin facilitated the meeting and started by explaining our language accessibility. 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. If there are any issues accessing the captions, please let us know and we will troubleshoot.

We were told by a member of the public that access to chat was denied. After troubleshooting, we seemed to have remedied that.

Commissioner Mackin shared our land acknowledgement which is found here on our website: [Land Acknowledgement.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#) and in addition, mentioned gardening the comfort the thought brings; considering what will be planted in the garden.

Staff introductions were made. The VTRC Agenda for the meeting was shared on the screen.

Commissioner Mackin reviewed the VTRC's working pledge which is posted here: [About Us | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). Also reviewed were the protocols of the open meeting.

Previous meeting minutes voted on as approved as final by Commissioners Mackin and Schultz – 2/6/24 public meeting minutes approved as final.

Executive Director Yacubian reviewed the budget and recent expenditures. Namely, a hired consultant for Marketing purposes, branding, logo, etc. Professional educational seminar attended by the Commissioner – reconciliatory paradigm. 3-day Retreat with ICTJ in Vermont. Their guidance to our Commission is valuable.

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

- For three days, including today, VTRC is engaging in deep Strategic Planning work with guidance by international experts in truth and reconciliation initiatives. The staff have worked a wide-range of commissions from Canada to South Africa and more domestic, like Maine.
- Connecting with college partners at Champlain and UVM to discuss resources sharing, including student participation. Ex: Place Names Project
- Initial meeting with survivors from St. Joseph Orphanage (Voice of St. Joseph Orphanage)
- Ice cream Social for Senators to build relationships and advance rapport.
- Activated research software call NVivo
- Acquired guidance through an intern's research work on psychosocial support of victims
- Visited the Poor Farm (welfare system) Cemetery in Sheldon, VT

New Business - Commissioner Schultz shared the link in chat to the new application for committee members. The VTRC seeks out 10 candidates to assist in our work. More information will follow as we go along. We require assistance from the public. Link to the form found here: <https://forms.microsoft.com/g/PtfMr6nAtc>

Also mentioned was the 3rd Commissioner, which is part of the work, but replacement is not part of the original legislation. Since we are lacking a commissioner, steps taken to change that in Legislature. Also mentioned is the mechanism for other things, such as additional safety for public meetings.

Legal Counsel Olvera reviewed the 4th emblematic case meeting set for Wednesday, March 20th at 1pm. Some items include housing issues and criminal justice issues. Migrant Justice. Researcher Kersch added that there would be some discussion on French Canadians experience moving to Vermont.

Commissioner Schultz shared the digital Committee Membership forms via chat and asked the public to please share out to interested parties. Starting with 10 Committee Members at this time in the building and planning phase.

Ann Miller shared the new logo and explained the selected colors and the meaning of the olive branch. A symbol of peace and offering of apology or reconciliation. Thea Heck is also working on branding for the VTRC.

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

Matthew LeFluer shared congratulations on the new logo. Purple means royalty in some ways. Has inclusiveness to it and I like the logo, very well done. Proud of the VTRC for moving forward. Vt is vulnerable to our communities across the state. Thank you very much.

Phone caller Jordan Hepburn from Dallas, Vt commented. Honoring this landing, docking off and original Wabanaki peoples and maternal lineage. Here because of perceived systematic discrimination of Native American identification and mental defect resulting. I feel misled and authentic traditional teachings by the State of Vermont and neglect towards healing mental and emotional damages and justice. Jordan read a poem called dissolved. *"I welcome you into my presence here in the present moment, I honor your presence here in the present moment, May you perceive what I am in you to share truth in what you are in me, here in the present moment, the sun sets. The past rise is the future and never sees the Dawn.. Yet Twilight exists here in the present moment. You allow me to be dissolved here in the presence of our present moment."* Thank you.

New Tribal Center (6 of them) wanted to announce that they have been with us. Chief Gagne said thank you for the work that you are putting in and getting things out to the public.

With no further questions or comments, Commissioner Mackin closed the meeting at 5:42 PM.

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

NEXT PUBLIC EMBLEMATIC MEETING is SCHEDULED for Wednesday, March 20th at 1:00 PM

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING is SCHEDULED for TUESDAY, April 2, 2024