



Truth and Reconciliation Commission

FINAL Minutes – Committee Member Public Meeting #3

July 3, 2024

The meeting opened at 3:06 PM by Commissioner Schultz.

Attendance: Melody Mackin, Mia Schultz, Faith Yacubian and Ann Miller. **Members of the public included:** Chief Brenda Gagne, Aurora Berger, Lydia Diamond, Krista Coombs, Dan Coutu, Sister Sankofa, Mary Gerisch, Rhonda Besaw, Matthew LeFluer and Van Dora Williams.

Commissioner Schultz opened the meeting and started by discussing accessibility and various aspects of how we can provide accessibility to anyone that needs it as well as closed captioning on Zoom. If we can get an email to vtrc@vermont.gov, we will do our very best to accommodate needs. If press wants to be in attendance, they can always be notified of our meetings in advance, please let us know of press needs. 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 Mackin shared our land acknowledgement which is found here on our website: [Land Acknowledgement.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#). A personal prompt was shared with those in attendance. The meeting agenda was shared on the screen by Commissioner Schultz.

Working Pledge was shared: [Mission Statement and Pledge | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). Committee and staff introductions were made, starting with Commissioner Mackin and Commissioner Schultz. The working pledge was explained in more detail for all shared working experiences. Prompt to the group from Commissioner Mackin: talk about the work each individual is doing in the greater public and what are you most proud of. **Commissioner Mackin:** shared first, working with those talking about justice and what it means, as well as the Abenaki Heritage celebration and the pride in the elders, kids and community families.

Commissioner Schultz: keeping traditions and honor each other the best we are able. The pride in the Juneteenth celebrations and events, the family graduations and the community we are working with.

Lydia Diamond wears many hats and is involved in many things. Most recently the Juneteenth celebrations. Proud of the camaraderie of others.

Sister Sankofa: Love and abundance and unity in Montpelier and Burlington.

Dan Coutu: Proud of the work done with the boy scouts. What they have learned, their learning self-sufficiency and adaptation. The boy scouts provide valuable and living-object lessons. Dan has worked with these young men for 16 years.

Krista Coombs: Proud of her 17-year-old who is at the Governor's Institute and flourishing. Also, proud of having been a presenter at the Science Research Symposium in LA, California. Wonderful experience.

Aurora Berger: Biggest achievement this month is signed lease on an apartment. Also community art program for local children Great art. Impactful.

Mary Gerisch: Proud of the work with Juneteenth and Pride. Wonderful festivals and parades. Standing together.

Faith Yacubian: Canadian Heritage events and pride events attended and enjoyed the collaboration of folk when viewing celebrations has been really spirited and heart giving. The Outright and LGBTQ organizations have been uplifting.

Chief Brenda Gagne: Proud of the collaboration with the 4 tribes as this is so important for us. Performed an ash saving process at Lake Carmie State Park – 15 ash trees cut into logs. Also, applied for a grant through the state for sacred tobacco. Circle of Courage received this grant for the teachings.

Ann Miller: Attended the French Heritage event in Winooski on Sunday. Spoke with many people that are truly committed to their heritage. Also proud of the VTRC Team and all that have been doing day after day towards a goal.

Administrative Update: We try to cover the Committee Members with as many details they might need in as few emails as possible. We ask that they each let the Administrator know if they plan to collect stipends for these meetings and how they need to receive the forms.

Survey results came in and produced varying results for dates and times of each Committee Member Meeting going forward. Those meetings have now been shared to each calendar through November.

Executive Director Faith Yacubian offered 5-10 minutes for the committee members and staff to quickly review the shared Accessibility Protocol Document (Part II- Attached at the end of these meeting minutes). Resources borrowed and adapted from other Vermont Sources.

15 minute break

Continued with Accessibility Protocol Part II: Kristin Coombs asked about remote accessibility to in person events. Mary Gerisch asked about a care team in attendance of in person events.

Dan Coutu commented about the VTRC QR Codes being used on printed paper events. Perhaps add in print exactly where the QR link will be taking you on the web page.

Explained that some of the links to documents are in the State of Vermont's Share Point site, thus the public is unable to access. The VTRC Team will look into obtaining access in another form.

Other discussions include wearing masks in public events, who and what will be the protocol. The document formatting was also discussed. The form may be broken down to show hybrid vs. in-person events and separate protocols.

Amendment to Protocol Accessibility Part I will be discussed in next public meeting and put to a Commissioner vote.

Commissioner Mackin commented on Outreach further and Phase II. Looking to the Committee Members to engage in the Outreach process. Sharing our brochures is one piece of that. Talking in your circles about our mission. Our biggest push right now is getting people involved in our work. We need volunteers for many things.

Matthew LeFleur discussed the Special Olympics and their goal.

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

With no further questions or comments, Commissioner Mackin closed the meeting at 4:36 PM.

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

NEXT Public Educational Series Meeting is SCHEDULED for July 31, 2024 at 5PM

NEXT regularly scheduled PUBLIC MEETING is Tuesday, August 6th at 5PM

Virtual Safety Checklist

Important Numbers

Ann Miller, Executive Assistant	802-261-7387
Faith Yacubian, Executive Director	802-261-7386

Before Event

“x” Actions

	Zoom Registration – Require registration for documentation purposes
	Breakout Rooms – Create breakout rooms to offer healing space. Assign invitees a room but do not open rooms until it is needed
	Accessibility – If applicable, check ASL and other interpretation contacts are invited
	Private Chat – Remind the public that “private chat” is recorded on transcripts
	Care Team – Determine if a Care Team is needed and Protocol of Care Team (include a document with brief details about who they are)
	Victim Services Directory – One-sheet of services
	Apply Individual Personal Safety Plan and Follow-Up – If possible, send an email in advance that requests safety needs. See Appendix 1. Draft – Individual Safety Plan Purpose (Michele Olvera, Esq.)

At Event

“x” Actions

	Pledge and/or Agreement – State VTRC standards of conduct and culture of humility
	Breach of Civility – Share actions that will be taken to reduce harm, including warnings and removal
	Introduce Care Team Members and Role – Explain their function and how you can reach them during the event.
	Breakout Rooms – Explain use of breakout rooms and when they will be used, such as when a violation of our agreement has occurred and assessing harm and creating healing space are important

	Accessibility – If applicable, discuss how to access ASL and other interpreters on Zoom
	<p>Communication – Use plain language to reduce confusion/misunderstanding. Avoid command statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex: “Keep both feet on the floor while doing this breathing exercise,” can be written, “If it’s more comfortable, you can keep both feet on the floor while doing this breathing exercise.”) - National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health - Writing Guide • Ex: “FAILURE to respond by ...” feels intimidating, but “You have the right to request or disagree with the determination....”” Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) - Tip Sheet

After Event

“x” Actions

	Debrief (if applicable) – Check-in with Presenters, Interpreters and Impacted Communities
	Send Survey – Ask participants to fill-out survey (make available in hardcopy and electronical formats) to assist with improving events.

Helpful Resource

- [Outright VT LGBTQ+ Youth Support and Empowerment — Outright Vermont \(outrightvt.org\)](#)
- Kristen Cameron, MPA, Vermont Department of Health; [HealthVermont.gov](#)
- [Trauma-informed Design Resources](#)
- [Vermont Victim Service Directory](#)

In-Person Safety Checklist

Important Numbers:

Ann Miller, Executive Assistant	802-261-7387
Faith Yacubian, Executive Director	802-261-7386

Before Event

“x” **Actions**

	Zoom Registration – Require registration for documentation purposes
	Accessibility – If applicable, check that ASL and other interpretation contacts are invited.
	Private Chat – Remind the public that “private chat” is recorded on transcripts.
	Hire Chocolate Thunder as Safety Personnel – Follow contracts/agreements
	Care Team – Determine if a Care Team is needed and Protocol of Care Team (if needed, create a document that describes some details about them and make it available at event).
	Victim Services Directory – One-sheet of services
	Head-Sets – Purchase heads-sets for <u>Event Team</u> and provide protocol/use one-sheet
	Protocol for Imminent Threat – Apply Protocol, for example: moving to virtual platform.
	Check First Aid Kits – Purchase more supplies if inventory is low.
	Extreme Weather Conditions – Assess safety and, if necessary, implement Protocol for Imminent Threat.
	Apply Individual Personal Safety Plan and Follow-Up – If possible, send an email in advance that requests safety needs. See Appendix 1. Draft – Individual Safety Plan Purpose (Michele Olvera, Esq.)

At Event

“x”

Actions

	Pledge and/or Agreement – State VTRC standards of conduct and culture of humility
	Breach of Civility – Share actions that will be taken to reduce harm, including warnings and removal
	Introduce Care Team Members and Role – Explain their function and how you can reach them during the event
	Lock Doors (if appropriate and does not limit egress) - To reduce non-invitees from causing safety threats
	Position Safety Personnel at Entrances/Exits and Inside Main Room
	Accessibility – If applicable, discuss how to access ASL and other interpreters on Zoom
	<p>Communication – Use plain language to reduce confusion/misunderstanding. Avoid command statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex: “Keep both feet on the floor while doing this breathing exercise,” can be written, “If it’s more comfortable, you can keep both feet on the floor while doing this breathing exercise.”) - National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health - Writing Guide • Ex: “FAILURE to respond by ...” feels intimidating, but “You have the right to request or disagree with the determination....”” Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) - Tip Sheet

After Event

“x”

Actions

	Debrief (if applicable) – Check-in with Presenters, Interpreters and Impacted Communities
	Send Survey – Ask participants to fill-out survey (make available in hardcopy and electronic formats) to assist with improving events.

Helpful Resource

- [Outright VT LGBTQ+ Youth Support and Empowerment – Outright Vermont \(outrightvt.org\)](#)
- Kristen Cameron, MPA, Vermont Department of Health; [HealthVermont.gov](#)
- [Trauma-informed Design Resources](#)
- [Vermont Victim Service Directory](#)

Appendix 1. Draft – Individual Safety Plan Purpose (Michele, Olvera, Esq.)

An individualized safety plan for our purposes is a unique plan that addresses whatever that individual is contending with or might need to contend with if they participate in any public forum or other event with the Commission. The first step is for the person to identify the risk and also what they have as a goal related to their participation in the event. It's important for them to guide the plan. For example, if there is an individual that may attend the event that they do not want to have any opportunity to speak to them perhaps pre-planned seating will work or perhaps they need a dedicated person to watch the individual's location at all times. It is also possible we could prearrange with the individual who is the threat to follow a certain protocol. In other words, we can all brainstorm a solution but the person whose plan it is must be comfortable with it or else it is not a safety plan. There are many different reasons for a person to feel unsafe and we cannot name them or judge them. Too many for us to even try to name them all here. Our goal is for everyone to feel safe and free to participate in the Commission's event fully, peacefully, and freely.

Accessibility Part II

Plain Language Checklist

“x” Actions

	Grade Level – Use everyday words; 6 th – 8 th grade level
	Pronouns – Use you and other pronouns
	Active Voice – Use an Active voice, not passive (ex: “Wash fruit. Then, cut and peel them.” Passive voice = “Fruits should be washed before they are cut and peeled.”)
	Direct Speech - Avoid metaphors, imagery, and acronyms
	Tone – Use positive tone; inflection
	Pace and Patience - Take the time necessary to ensure clear understanding and give time to put the thoughts into words, especially when responding to a question
	Concise - Keep it concise, simple, and main point at the start. Repeat when necessary
	Directions – Avoid directional terms, like east-west
	Sentences - Short sentences and paragraphs; avoid sentences with comas or semicolons
	Questions - When asking questions, phrase them to get accurate information. Verify responses by repeating each question in a different way
	Design - Easy-to-follow design features (lists, headers, tables)
	Visuals – Offer visuals to accompany directions, procedures, or learning
	Limit Text – Reduce wordiness; consider bullet-points with only necessary details
	Write “Decorative” - If an image does not have substantive information
	Electronic Versions – Send to participants prior to event (PDF & PowerPoint)
	Instruction – Give direct instruction. Ex: "Be back from lunch at 12:30," not "Be back in 30 minutes". Avoid giving multiple instructions at one time

Work Cited

- Kirsten Murphy (VT Developmental Disability Council)
- [document-accessibility-basics.pptx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Word & PDF Checklist

“x” Actions

	Plain Language – Limit the use of jargon, abbreviations, acronyms, and technical language when possible.
	Contractions – Avoid break words, like “can’t”. Write-out the word, like “cannot”
	Color as an Indicator - Color cannot be the only indication of information. Ex: "The red text identifies tasks that have not been completed.
	High Contrast - Use <u>high color contrast</u> text colors like dark grey on white
	Font – Use Sans Pro or Arial and Size 12+ (update your default settings)
	Columns and Margins – Reduce use of columns, unless in tables. Use wide or normal margins.
	Charts and Graphs - Describe charts or graphs in one or two sentences; add trends or relevant information in the visual
	Content – Avoid cramming information into a single page
	Subject Line - Add a descriptive subject (ex: “Welcome Email to Committee Members”)
	Background - Don't use background patterns. (Adjust windows view settings to adjust color display.)
	Font Emphasis – Avoid all Caps, Italics, Bolded small text, and underlining
	Text-to-Speech – When possible, use text-to-speech
	Visuals – Limit emojis and always use Alt Text or detailed captions
	Images – Place images in line with text. Shapes must have alternate text or detailed photo captions. Mark images as “decorative” if they don’t offer substantive information or if the information is already conveyed in the body of the document
	Lists – Use lists or bullet-points to organize information
	Tables – If you use tables, use styles, headers, and alternate text. Use built-in headers
	Descriptive Links – Links should be the title/descriptive of the link. Avoid “click here”. www.examplelink.com . Example of descriptive link: Microsoft Create Accessible Links Video here”
	Styles – Use headings and subheadings
	Use the Microsoft and PDF Accessibility Checker
	Files - File names should reflect the document <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use lower-case letters and dashes, such as “document-accessibility-checklist”

	2. Avoid dates in the file name or “draft” unless it’s the title of a report, such as 2020 Report on Health Differences
	PDF Conversion – for Adobe Acrobat Pro DC use “Create PDF” 1. For Adobe Reader use “Save as Adobe PDF” 2. Avoid “Print to PDF” and “Save As” by using PDF extension

Work Cited

- [SOV – Inclusion and Accessibility](#)

Resource

- [Video: Check the accessibility of your document - Microsoft Support](#)

Social Media Checklist

“x” Actions

	Plain Language - Use Plain Language Protocol from Green Mountain Advocates. Adjustment for readability, write numbers between zero and nine (Ex: Five, not 5)
	Capitalization – Only capitalize first word in a sentence and titles
	Contractions – Avoid break words, like “can’t”. Write-out the word, like “cannot”
	Camel Case – Use multiword hashtags, such as iPhone or #BlackLivesMatter
	Descriptive Links – avoid vague terms like “click here”, “this”, “link”, etc.
	Visuals – limit emojis and always use Alt Text or detailed captions
	Contact Information – make phone number and email available on the account page for the public to access VTRC
	QR Codes – Create QR Codes that direct the public to events, sign-ups, website, etc.
	Charts and Graphs – Describe them in one or two sentences with trends or relevant information
	Videos – Add descriptions and provide descriptive audios
	Write “Decorative” - If an image does not have substantive information
	Interpretation or Translation – use ASL and other translated versions to increase reach
	Multi-Channels – Create easy access threads, daily email digests, or social media widgets to website
	Support Services – Add contact of supportive staff and post accommodations

Helpful Links

- [Minimum Accessibility Requirements \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Accessibility by Disability](#)

Power-Point Checklist

*In addition to Social Media recommendations

“x” Actions

	Color as an Indicator - Color cannot be the only indication of information. Ex: "The red text identifies tasks that have not been completed.
	Contractions – Avoid break words, like “can’t”. Write-out the word, like “cannot”
	Slides and Written Word Color - Use high contrast color schemes. <u>Link: WebAIM Contrast Checker</u> . Avoid white writing when possible. It causes fuzziness, or halation. It’s difficult to read for folx with astigmatism.
	Font Size – Use a large (size 24 or greater), clear, Sans Serif font such as Sans Pro, Arial, or Calibri.
	Font Emphasis – Avoid all Caps, Italics, Bolded small text, and underlining
	Animation - Avoid excess animation. Avoid use of it if you can.
	Use the Accessibility Checker and Immersive Reader in PowerPoint
	Limit Text – reduce wordiness; consider bullet-points with only necessary details
	Write “Decorative” - If an image does not have substantive information
	Electronic Versions – Send to participants prior to event (PDF & PowerPoint)

Resources

- Department of Health - [document-accessibility-basics.pptx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Accessibility Checklist - [Document Accessibility Checklist \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Work Cited

- Video for Accessible PDFs: <https://youtu.be/DUPHWF2ZPPg>
- [Accessibility tools for PowerPoint - Microsoft Support](#)

Email Checklist

*In addition to Social Media recommendations

“x” Actions

	Plain Language – Limit the use of jargon, abbreviations, acronyms, and technical language when possible.
	HTML – Use HTML when possible (see “Email Messaging Using”)
	Color as an Indicator - Color cannot be the only indication of information. Ex: "The red text identifies tasks that have not been completed.
	Contractions – Avoid break words, like “can’t”. Write-out the word, like “cannot”
	High Contrast - Use high color contrast text colors like dark grey on white
	Font – Use Sans Pro or Arial and Size 12+ (update your default settings)
	Text – Avoid all caps, italics, and underlines (except links)
	Subject Line - Add a descriptive subject (ex: “Welcome Email to Committee Members”)
	Background – Avoid using background patterns. (Adjust windows view settings to adjust color display)
	Font Emphasis – Avoid all Caps, Italics, Bolded small text, and underlining
	Text Walls - Avoid large text/wordiness, use bullet points or lists, and headings
	Visuals – limit emojis and always use Alt Text or detailed captions
	Images – Place images in line with text. Shapes must have alternate text or detailed photo captions
	Tables – If you use tables, use styles, headers, and alternate text
	Descriptive Links – Links should be the title/descriptive of the link
	Styles – Use headings in Word
	Accessibility Checker – Test accessibility with Immersive Reader and Microsoft Accessibility Checker

Work Cited

- [SOV – Inclusion and Accessibility](#)

Spreadsheet and Tables Checklist

*In addition to Social Media recommendations

“x” Actions

	Plain Language – Limit the use of jargon, abbreviations, acronyms, and technical language when possible.
	Contractions – Avoid break words, like “can’t”. Write-out the word, like “cannot”
	Color as an Indicator - Color cannot be the only indication of information. Ex: "The red text identifies tasks that have not been completed.
	High Contrast - Use high color contrast text colors like dark grey on white
	Font – Use Sans Pro or Arial and Size 12+
	Text – Avoid all caps, italics, bolding small text, and underlines (except links)
	Images – Use Alternate Text or detailed photo captions
	Visuals – limit emojis and always use Alt Text or detailed captions
	Images – Place images in line with text. Shapes must have alternate text or detailed photo captions.
	Tables – If you use tables, use styles, headers, and alternat text. Insert tables, avoid drawing tables. Headers should repeat if the table exceeds the first page. Minimize merging or splitting cells.
	Descriptive Links – Links should be the title/descriptive of the link.
	Styles – Use Headings in Word
	Accessibility Checker – Test accessibility with Immersive Reader and Microsoft Accessibility Checker

Work Cited

- [SOV – Inclusion and Accessibility](#)