



## Truth and Reconciliation Commission DRAFT Minutes – Public Meeting #8 May 7, 2024

The meeting opened at 5:00 PM by Commissioner Schultz.

**Attendance:** Melody Mackin, Mia Schultz, Faith Yacubian, Michele Olvera, Adam Kersch and Ann Miller. **Members of the public included:** Winnie Wilkinson, Rhonda Besaw, Richard Witting, Mary Gerisch, Michelle, Faye Longo, Rachel | רחל , Dan Coutu, Lydia Diamond, Jules, Rich Holschuh and one by phone.

Commissioner Schultz facilitated the meeting and started by sharing the agenda on her screen and placing the link in the meeting chat. Language and accessibility was explained, and a 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 Mackin shared our land acknowledgement which is found here on our website: [Land Acknowledgement.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#).

Staff introductions were made, starting with Commissioner Mackin, Adam Kersch, Ann Miller, Faith Yacubian, Michelle Olvera, Mia Schultz.

Commissioner Schultz 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 were voted on as approved as final by Commissioners Mackin and Schultz – in error, the March minutes were mentioned, but it was actually the April minutes approved. Correction was vocalized, meeting minutes approved as final by both Commissioners.

Executive Director Yacubian reviewed the budget:

- ACT 128's mandate includes Committee Members who work in tandem with the VTRC Team. Based on state regulations, Committee Members earn \$50 per meeting, which is monthly.
- We are hiring interns to assist Dr. Kersch in research processes.

- We are hiring external consultants whose positions in TRCs will inspire courageous and self-transformative approaches to our work.
- We are offering stipends to Education Series panelists.
- We will purchase banners, t-shirts, pens, fidgets, reusable totes that have our logo on them (like swag). These items will help spread the word about the VTRC and remind community members of their role in our work.
- We are in the process of purchasing secure recording devices and other technology to conduct interviews.
- On the horizon: we will purchase more safety equipment, like an additional HEPA Filter and noise cancellation devices, to prepare for in-person events, hearings/testimonies, and outreach efforts.

Executive Director Yacubian reviewed the VTRC Work

- Besides tasks named in the budget, Commissioners Schultz and Mackin are finalizing the Strategic Plan, and we are preparing to implement.
- We worked with social work seniors at Champlain College to begin a process of examining Place Names in Vermont. Their research illuminated the importance of examining oppressive lineage in signage and institution's names.
- We are creating a fundraising plan.
- We are examining Vermont laws (their history and contemporary concerns that emerged after they were amended).
- Research continues with Dr. Kersch's close examination of familial stories that have generational implications.
- Launched Education Series.
- Launched an Internship Program that complements Michele's law intern program.
- Education Series: Narratives from History to Present Day the Education Series' intends to:
  - Educate the broader community about the history and present-day realities of persons discriminated against by the State.
  - Outreach to communities to broaden VTRC's partnerships and expand community participation.
  - Advocate for issues and evolve knowledge on complex issues involving human rights and social systems that impact them.

**Old Business** - Commissioner Mackin reviewed the past few weeks and what the Commissioners have accomplished with the Strategic Plan and the outline, making sure it is in plain language. Executive Director talked about the Education Series, the first event taking place in April regarding Native American and French Indians, the panelists, and the education piece, as well as outreach.

Legal Counsel Olvera reviewed the work they are doing with the Legal Interns from the Vermont Law School. Daily work will begin with them this week and the VTRC is very appreciative of their expertise and capabilities.

**New Business** - Commissioner Schultz clarified the “other” internships recently announced. Not just for law students, seeking research and marketing interns as well to add to our staffing in a part time manner.

Commissioner Mackin introduced each of the newly formed Committee members with a little background on each. To see the bio of the Members, please go to our website: [Committee Members | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)

Commissioner Schultz introduced the VTRC website as it has evolved for easier use. We have links for those that would like to participate in some manner. Please take a few minutes to look it over: [Home | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)

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

**Melody Mackin** commented as a member of the public with a shout-out to the Winooski students who are doing the anti-racist task force and their own Truth and Reconciliation process. They are doing an excellent job! Thanks in advance for your community.

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

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

**NEXT Public MEETING is SCHEDULED for Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> – first Committee Member Sessin Series**

**NEXT regularly scheduled PUBLIC MEETING is TUESDAY, June 7, 2024**