



Truth and Reconciliation Commission

FINAL Minutes – Committee Member Public Meeting #5

September 12, 2024

The meeting opened at 3:05 PM by Commissioner Mackin.

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

Members of the Committee included: Chief Brenda Gagne, Aurora Berger, Margaret (Peg) Powers, Lydia Diamond, Mary Gerisch, Krista Coombs, Dan Coutu, Winnie Wilkinson and Matthew LeFluer. Members of the public included: Christine Hughes and Virginie Ladisch.

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

The meeting agenda was shared in the chat for all to have access. The Working Pledge was shared on the screen by Commissioner Schultz and read by Commissioner Mackin: [Mission Statement and Pledge | Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

Commissioner Mackin shared a [Ted Talk by Mark Charles](#) and after watching the 8-minute video on screen, used that as the prompt to think about the feelings that come up. Chief Brenda Gagne expressed her emotions and stated she would be using that in her first meeting with her clan. Hopes for better for her great-grandchildren since her own grandchildren have already endured some of what she has endured in her own lifetime. Winnie Wilkinson discussed the Constitution and being a foreigner in this country, not being included in the Constitution. Mary Gerisch expressed the tragedies that had befallen her grandmother's family. Agreed with Chief Gagne, hopes for better for her great-grandchildren. Dan Coutu was reflecting upon the schools and what goes on. The Vermont Commission and Native American Affairs as well as the Educational Justice Consortium seems to be focused on erasing the Native Americans.

Administrative Update by Ann Miller: Reminded all to forward invoices for stipend. Also, will be looking for input from the Committee regarding places around the state to use for meetings.

Old Business reviewed by Commissioners Mackin and Schultz: Geographical areas for statement taking. The 5 areas of the state were discussed in detail for the Truth-telling sessions. The events will be recorded and hybrid for those unable to be there in person. The planned events were explained regarding what the VTRC has for plans. Safety, security, de-escalation, and all protocols will be used. Committee Members highlighted the importance of providing emotional and physical safety during truth telling sessions. Concern for where, specifically, these selected places will be in the state. Committee members that expressed concerns understood and supported the reasons for the locations related to our population centers and the strategy of reaching the most Community Members.

Outreach reviewed by Commissioner Schultz as ongoing throughout our Commission and we welcome all the sharing that the Committee has done. Some of the Committee Members discussed the people they have been talking to and events they have attended.

10-minute break

New Business: Commissioner Schultz reviewed the Committee Members plan and future committees. We are currently in the Building and Planning Phase but will soon be moving into the next Phase. The VTRC Mandates for not more than 30 Committee Members. Potential structure for each of the 3 Commissioners to take on one Committee per, or have all three Committees just one at a time taking place. Commissioner Schultz thanked the Committee for their input. Committee Member L. Diamond will speak further with Commissioner Schultz in detail.

Commissioner Mackin shared a series of short clips of events that took place before us. The first was a clip of the Truth Telling Session in Canada with the Native Americans. The idea was to see how care was given and how people were seated. A few of their truths were shared. [The Black Woman's Truth & Reconciliation Commission](#). [Canada's TRC footage of the National Event](#). A clip from [Dawnland](#).

October 11, 2024 Event on the State House Lawn: **Truth & Healing: In Search of a Common Memory**. This catered event will take place 1-4 PM in Montpelier. We hope the Committee can join, it will be hybrid and all VTRC protocols will be in place for safety and inclusion. Speakers and events still being worked on.

Commissioner Schultz opened the floor to the public and those that would like to speak. With no questions or comments, Commissioner Schultz closed the meeting at 5:05 PM.

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

NEXT Public Educational Series Meeting: French Canadians is SCHEDULED for Wednesday, September 25th at 5PM

NEXT regularly scheduled PUBLIC MEETING is Tuesday, October 1st at 5PM