

NYS COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON REPARATIONS REMEDIES JULY 30, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION:

NYS Capitol, Albany, NY 12224

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Linda Brown-Robinson; Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq.; Dr. Darrick Hamilton; Dr. Seanelle Hawkins; Timothy Hogues; Dr. Deborah Jenkins; Jennifer Jones Austin; Linda Tarrant-Reid

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Dr. Ron Daniels

BILL SPONSORS:

Assembly Member Michaelle Solages and Senator James Sanders

I. WELCOME

Shirley Paul, of the New York State Executive Chamber, called the meeting to order at 2:40pm and welcomed everyone to the first public convening of the **New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies**. Shirley welcomed bill sponsors, Senator James Sanders, Jr., and Assembly Member Michaelle C. Solages, and thanked them for their ongoing commitment and support. The Commission is comprised of nine members. For this meeting, eight of the nine members were present at the New York State Capitol. A quorum for the meeting was confirmed.

II. OATH OF OFFICE & REMARKS

At 2:43pm, the **New York State Commission on Reparation Remedies** Commission members were sworn in.

Senator James Sanders, Jr. provided welcome remarks, stating that this momentous event is 400 years in the making. Senator Sanders, Jr. asked everyone to take a moment to reflect on that statement and to think about how this Commission has the ability to make a difference by creating a just and equitable future for generations to come. He stated that it is the Commissioners' job to determine if there is a case for reparations in New York State, and if so, what does it look like? Senator Sanders Jr. closed by asking Commission members to

remember to “do justice, love mercy, work humbly with your God and with one another”.

Assembly Member Michaelle C. Solages began her opening remarks by thanking legislative leaders, Commission members, Governor Kathy Hochul, and New York State Executive Chamber staff for making this possible. Assembly Member Solages stated that there is a lot of hope that the Commission will examine the injustices and propose appropriate remedies to create a better New York, a state that is unified as one in solidarity.

III. MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioners provided brief introductions and remarks.

- Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO and Executive Director at FPWA
- Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq., Executive Director for the Center for Law & Social Justice at Medgar Evers College
- Dr. Darrick Hamilton, Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy, and University Professor at the Institute on Race, Power and Political Economy at The New School
- Linda Tarrant-Reid, Author, historian, freelance journalist, photographer, and community activist
- Linda Brown-Robinson, Western Regional Director, NYS NAACP
- Dr. Seanelle Hawkins, President and CEO, at the Urban League of Rochester
- Reverend Dr. Deborah Jenkins, Founding Pastor of Faith at Work Christian Church, Coop City
- Timothy Hogue, Commissioner for the New York State Department of Civil Service

Excused:

- Dr. Ron Daniels, Founder and President at the Institute of the Black World 21st Century (IBW)

IV. APPOINTMENTS – COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Commissioner Jones Austin stated that the next order of business is for the Commission to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair. She recommended reviewing the expectations of these positions prior to holding elections. She also mentioned the need for a communications plan and that all members are aware of the expectations regarding how communications are handled within the public.

Commissioner Daniel Favors recommended that the Commission have an organizational structure, Executive Director, and additional staff.

Commissioners proposed qualifications necessary for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioners stated that responsibility for establishing the cadence,

scheduling and public communication of future meetings will reside with these positions.

Commissioners asked that the Chair and Vice Chair be confident in the spirit and vision of the Commission and recommended that they have experience understanding how New York State government works and how to navigate the system.

Commissioners were in agreement regarding the need for various staffing positions to be created and for a budget to be determined. Commissioners suggested the following positions for consideration:

- Executive Director
- Legal Counsel
- Communications Director
- Policy/Resident Historian
- Analyst
- Community Engagement Officer
- Scribe/Secretary
- Project Manager
- Researcher
- Parliamentarian

MOTION: Commissioner Hamilton raised a motion for Commissioner Hawkins to serve as Chair of the Commission. Commissioner Brown-Robinson seconded the motion; and all approved.

Nominations for Vice Chair were raised for Commissioner Jenkins and Commissioner Daniels. It was recommended that a special meeting will be called within 30-days, for Commissioners to discuss and vote. It was also recommended that an Alternate be elected.

MOTION: Commissioner Hogues raised a motion to table to election of a Vice Chair since Commissioner Daniels was nominated and not present to confirm or decline interest in the nomination. Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion; and all approved.

ACTION ITEM: Commission Chair Hawkins will work with Commissioners to determine a Special meeting date. The meeting will be announced to the public (per guidelines, the public must be made aware of meetings 1-week in advance of the meeting).

ACTION ITEM: Commission Chair Hawkins will work on drafting job descriptions for the Commissions' input at the next meeting.

Lastly, Commissioners discussed the importance of engaging the public. The Commission has a website, but additional outreach methods will need to be discussed.

<https://www.ny.gov/new-york-state-community-commission-reparations-remedies/new-york-state-community-commission>

Having no other items to discuss, the Commission welcomed questions from the audience.

V. OPEN FLOOR - PUBLIC COMMENTS

The floor was turned over to the public for questions.

- A member of the public raised a question regarding the transparency of the Commission's work; specifically, how will meetings be announced and where future meetings will be held?
 - Commissioner Hogues stated that meetings will be held across New York State to encourage participation from all New Yorkers. Commissioner Hawkins stated that the Commission has a website and will provide the public with advanced notice, per the guidelines of the Commission.
- A member of the public stated that there needs to be a way for the public to provide comments and ask questions. There needs to be a clearly defined process.
- A member of the public stated that the public wants better communication and a way for public to call-in to provide comments.
- A member of the public asked what was the mission of today's meeting? He asked if it was to elect a Chair and Vice Chair, then unfortunately, the Commission was not successful. He stated that it is important for the Commissioners to fulfill the Commission's mission. Everyone is here equally; contribution needs to be valued in the same way. He also stated that he hopes the next meeting will be more organized so that we can move forward more effectively.
 - Commissioner Daniel Favors agreed and stated that this first meeting was not set up/communicated in the best way. Commissioner Daniel Favors discussed the need to teach the public how to submit input. She also mentioned the need to know the limitations of the Commission and the need to make the best of these meetings.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Hogues raised a motion to close the first public meeting of the **New York State Commission on Reparation Remedies**; Commissioner Brown-Robinson seconded the motion; and all approved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:26pm.