

**NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON REPARATIONS  
REMEDIES - Business Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, October 1, 2024**

**Location 1: Onondaga Community College**

- 4585 West Seneca Turnpike
- Sidney B. Coulter Library
- Syracuse, NY 13215

**Members Present: Commissioner Dr. Seanelle Hawkins, Commissioner Linda Brown-Robinson, Commissioner Timothy Hogue**

**Location 2: Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle**

- Remington Clubhouse
- 1 Remington Place
- New Rochelle, NY 10801

**Members Present: Commissioner Dr. Ron Daniels, Commissioner Linda Tarrant Reid, Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq. Commissioner Dr. Deborah Jenkins and Commissioner Jennifer Jones Austin** attended via Zoom

**Member Excused: Commissioner Dr. Darrick Hamilton**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Dr. Seanelle Hawkins called the third business meeting of the New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies (NYSCCRR) to order at 11:49 a.m.

Chair Hawkins expressed gratitude to Governor Hochul, Senator James Sanders, Jr., Assembly Member Michaelle Solages, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie for their continued support of the Commission. She also thanked Bradley Allen, Tunisia Wright, and the entire NYS Office for Government Services (OGS) Team for their invaluable support.

To provide access to both Downstate and Upstate regions, today's business meeting was held in two locations. Dr. Hawkins thanked the Remington Boys & Girls Club in New Rochelle and Onondaga Community College in Syracuse for hosting the Commission meetings. She also thanked Commissioners Linda Tarrant-Reid and Linda Brown-Robinson for helping to secure the venues and facilitate logistics.

The Chair welcomed the public attending in-person and virtually. The Chair requested a roll call, conducted by Secretary Linda Tarrant-Reid, and confirmed that a quorum of at least five Commissioners was established with three Commissioners present at each location.

**II. Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda included:

- Approval of the minutes from the July 30<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup> Commission meetings
- Updates on the Video Conferencing Policy
- Updates on the Public Comment Policy

Chair Hawkins reminded the Commissioners that, under Robert's Rules of Order, any item on the Consent Agenda could be pulled for separate discussion. There being no further discussion, she moved to accept the Consent Agenda.

**Motion:** Commissioner Timothy Hogues moved to accept the Consent Agenda.

**Second:** Commissioner Linda Brown-Robinson seconded the motion.

**Vote:** The motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Point of Order:** Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors raised a point of order, inquiring if any items should be reserved for Executive Session.

- **Response:** Chair Hawkins confirmed that only a general status would be provided, to which Commissioner Favors agreed. (Unclear, what does this mean? General status of what?)

The Consent Agenda was confirmed as approved.

## **II. Introduction of Interim Operations Manager**

Chair Hawkins introduced Pier Duncan, Interim Operations Manager for the Commission. Ms. Duncan introduced herself, noting her background as a Chief of Staff in nonprofit settings and five years of experience in New York City Government, including serving in the Department of Education. She expressed her excitement to work with the Commission.

## **IV. Executive Director Position**

Chair Hawkins announced that the Executive Director position had been posted on the Commission's website ([ny.gov/reparations](http://ny.gov/reparations)). Questions regarding the RFQ are due today, October 1st, with proposals due October 17th, and interviews tentatively scheduled for the week of October 28th-31st.

**Comment:** Commissioner Dr. Ron Daniels pointed out that the Executive Director was listed as the spokesperson for the Commission, contrary to previous discussion and agreement that the Chairperson serves as the spokesperson for the Commission.

- **Response:** Chair Hawkins assured Commissioner Daniels that the posting would be corrected to clarify that the Executive Director will report to the Chair align with the Commission's vision and not take on the role as spokesperson.

## **V. Expert Engagement Strategy**

Commissioner Dr. Deborah Jenkins is compiling a list of subject matter experts to testify at public meetings which will be held throughout New York State. The subject matter expert list will include subject matter areas based on a preliminary list created and distributed to all Commissioners by Commissioner Linda Tarrant-Reid. Commissioner Linda Tarrant-Reid suggested that the preliminary subject matter areas list be expanded and include input from each of the Commissioners with the draft of the list shared with the public.

Chair Hawkins proposed that a call for subject matter experts be posted on the website, with a section for individuals to submit for consideration. She set a deadline of October 7th for Commissioners to submit their recommendations for subject matter experts to Commissioner Jenkins.

## **subject Matter Experts**

Chair Dr. Hawkins proposed creating a subcommittee of subject matter experts chaired by Commissioner Jenkins. Chair Hawkins asked for volunteers to work on the subcommittee and Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors and Commissioner Ron Daniels agreed to work with Commissioner Jenkins on the subcommittee. Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors suggested a rubric be created to evaluate candidates. The Commissioners on the subcommittee agreed to collaborate with Interim Operations Manager Pier Duncan to expand the list and develop the evaluative process.

At 12:32 p.m., Chair Dr. Hawkins called for a five-minute recess. The meeting reconvened at 12:37 p.m.

## **VII. Introduction to the Community Commission for the Study of Reparations Remedies – PowerPoint Presentation**

Chair Hawkins gave an Overview of the PowerPoint presentation introducing the Community Commission for the Study of Reparations Remedies and the mission as described in NYS [bill S.1163-A/A.7691](#). [The presentation started with a brief description of slavery in New York City, continued with a survey of Reparations initiatives in states and cities in the U.S, the establishment of NYS Reparations Commission and the mandates of the Commission. Types of Commission meetings, Public Comment Policy and Videoconferencing Policy are also included in the presentation.](#) Ways for the public and stakeholders to communicate with the Commission is also included. Definitions of the two types of meetings that the Commission will hold were reviewed: **Business Meetings:** Focus on internal Commission business, such as decision-making and planning. The meetings are open to the public, but public comment may be limited. A quorum of at least five Commissioners is required for votes.

- **Public Hearings:** The hearings are for gathering community input and testimony on topics related to the Commission's mission. A quorum is not required, but at least two or three Commissioners will be present at the hearings which will be held at locations throughout NYS.

The PowerPoint Presentation will be posted on the Commission's website ([ny.gov/reparations](http://ny.gov/reparations)), along with other Commission resources. Chair Hawkins invited feedback.

Chair Hawkins asked if the Commissioners who volunteered for the expert engagement strategy would be willing to consider how the Commission will establish work groups.

**Motion:** Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors moved that the Commission not establish formal work groups.

**Second:** Commissioner Linda Tarrant-Reid seconded the motion.

**Vote:** The motion carried; the Commission will not establish formal work groups.

## **VIII. New Business**

Chair Hawkins suggested that discussion on missing meetings and communication protocol could be conducted in Executive Session.

**Comment:** Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors noted that Agenda Item No. 8 had been skipped and inquired about the public calendar.

- **Response:** Chair Hawkins confirmed that the public calendar had been removed from the agenda.

The Chair also noted that the Commission is still developing a public schedule. Commissioner Timothy Hogues reminded the group that the Executive Committee had been tasked with developing a policy for Commissioner absenteeism, which Chair Hawkins confirmed.

Commissioner Jennifer Jones Austin requested that her attendance be recorded before her departure, as she joined the meeting already in progress. Interim Operations Manager Pier Duncan also thanked the Commissioners before leaving the meeting.

**Point of Order:** Commissioner Lurie Daniel Favors expressed concerns about the interpretation of the Executive Session provision and suggested that the Commission handle Executive Sessions as other state commissions do.

Commissioner Linda Brown-Robinson was in agreement. She also expressed uncertainty surrounding responsibility of notification of public hearings. She remarked on the lack of local government presence at the meeting in Syracuse.

- **Response:** Chair Hawkins agreed to move into Executive Session and reiterated that the NYSCCRR is an independent commission, responsible for its own marketing and staffing decisions.

## **IX. Public Comments**

Chair Hawkins opened the floor for public comments, allowing thirty minutes.

- **Dr. Jackie Cody**, New Yorkers 4 Reparations, emphasized the need to set a calendar and post it on the website to provide New Yorkers with opportunities to meet the Commissioners.

- **Devine Prince**, President of the U.S. Freedman Project, stressed the importance of differentiating between racial justice and reparations.
- **Angela Davis Farrish**, Chair of the African American Advisory Committee of New Rochelle, highlighted the need for outreach to communities without access to technology.
- **Ralph Dawson**, a supporter of the reparations movement, reminded the Commission of the importance of grassroots efforts.

Chair Hawkins thanked the attendees, the support staff, the host sites, Dream Labs for AV support, and RozeNotes for taking the minutes.

**(It was acknowledged that Dr. Deborah Jenkins had to excuse herself during the public comment period.)**

## **X. Adjournment**

Chair Hawkins adjourned the business meeting at 1:31 p.m. to prepare for executive session.