



Meeting Minutes
Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males
Government Center South
Conference Room D
302 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Call to Order: A meeting of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (ICSSBM) was held on Wednesday, August 21, 2024, in person at the Government South Building Conference Room D, and virtually via Zoom for Government. The meeting was called to order at 10:38am.

Roll Call - Commissioners in attendance: Commissioner Damein Jones (Proxy FSSA), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Proxy Div. of Mental Health and Addiction), Commissioner (Vice Chair) Richard Okello (Proxy ICRC), Commissioner Lamar Sykes (Speaker Huston), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Proxy Dept. of Correction).

Via Conference: Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Speaker Huston), Commissioner Elijah Neal (Senator Bray), and Commissioner Dave Rozzell (Senator Bray).

Commissioners absent: Commissioner Vaneta Becker (Senator), Commissioner William Durham (Proxy Dept. of Education), Commissioner Larry Ervin (Proxy Dept. of Health), Commissioner Shanel Poole (Speaker Huston), Commissioner Kesha Rich (Proxy IDOA), Commissioner Dwayne Sawyer (Senator Bray), Commissioner Vernon Smith (State Representative), and Commissioner Greg Taylor (Senator).

Others in attendance: LeVelle Harris, Indiana Department of Child Services

Chair's Report: Chair Jones informed everyone regarding the Commission's purpose and five areas of focus. In addition, the Chair updated the Commission on the financial status of the Commission. She continued by stating the Commission will have to seek sponsorships to do programming and a big portion of what Director Virgil Giles will be doing this year is reaching out to organizations to request funding. The Chair stated that the Commission will have to step it up and help obtain funding. She asked for commitment from the Commissioners to ask their partners for a \$1000 sponsorship to support programming.

Chair Jones announced that since the May meeting the strategic planning committee has met to create a framework of future projects. She provided an opportunity for LeVelle Harris, from Indiana Department of Child Services to introduce himself as a participant on the committee. Chair Jones also informed the group that the strategic planning committee consist of herself, Commissioner Dave Rozzell, Commission Kesha Rich, Commission (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello, and Director Virgil Giles. Chair

Jones stated that the strategic plan will operate from 2025 - 2029 and it's almost completed. The committee is currently working on the metrics for each objective and goal. Chair Jones followed with a detailed overview of the strategic plan in its draft form.

Chair Jones provided an update on the Indiana Black Barbershop Health Initiative (IBBHI) informing Commissioners that there was low participation from communities during the April event. Following discussions with longtime communities who participated in the IBBHI regarding the barriers they encountered, the Chair met with Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello and Director Virgil Giles about growing and developing the program.

As a result, to establish community leaders in Lake and Marion Counties and sustain growth in the program it is necessary to hire a project manager to address the programs many needs across the state. For this to occur, Esther Lewis, CEO, Holistic Evolution Inc. will serve as project manager to enhance the IBBHI. The Chair emphasized that the Commission does not have the funding, but everyone will work together to get the funds to hire Ms. Lewis as the project manager.

Under the Chair's Report, Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello provided an update on the grant program citing two areas of improvement in the 2024 Request for Proposals, improving marketing and providing clear instructions on how to register as a vendor with the state and verifying their tax status with the state to ensure the eligibility to receive grant funding. In addition, Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Okello presented information that a complementary grant writing program was added by Purdue University Global at no cost to those who want to register. Director Virgil Giles introduced Gabriel Kramer as the new Cultural Commission Coordinator, and he created content for the grant program that Commissioners can post on their personal social media pages. Director Giles further explained that the content was in everyone's meeting packet to post on their pages, no extra work is needed.

Chair Jones announced that a legislative recommendation workgroup has been created and will be led by Commissioner Kenneth Allen. The workgroup will develop recommendations for this year's annual report. In addition, the workgroup will collect data and information on the Commission's five focus areas and provide content for ICSSBM's legislative recommendations. The first draft of the annual report is due December 6. Commissioner Tori Williams, Commissioner Dave Rozzell, Commissioner Elijah O'Neal will serve on the workgroup. An invitation has been extended to Commissioner Greg Taylor to be a participant on the legislative recommendation workgroup.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Vice Chair Okello moved forward with the adoption of the minutes from the May 15, 2024. Commissioner Kenneth Allen approved the May 15, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tori Williams. Rollcall vote as follows: Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Y), Commissioner Damein Jones (Y), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Y), Commissioner Elijah Neal (Y), Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello (Y), Commissioner Dave Rozzell (Y), Commissioner Lamar Sykes (Y), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Y). The vote passed unanimously.

Review and Approval of the Financial Report: Commissioner Elijah Neal motioned to approve the July financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Damein Jones. Rollcall vote as follows: Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Y), Commissioner Damein Jones (Y), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Y), Commissioner Elijah Neal (Y), Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello (Y), Commissioner Dave Rozzell (Y), Commissioner Lamar Sykes (Y), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Y). The vote passed unanimously.

Following the financial report, Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello presented a request to Commission members regarding the Director's use of discretionary funding for select items without requiring an additional vote from the Commission prior to the expenditure. The total expenditures by the Director may not exceed \$1000 for each state fiscal year. Commissioner Damein Jones motioned to approve the Director's use of discretionary funds as presented by Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tori Williams. Before Rollcall vote, Commissioner Kenneth Allen

asked for clarification on Item C., was it \$1000 per item or \$1000 for the budget year. Director Virgil Giles informed Commissioner Kenneth Allen that the amount is \$1000 total for the budget year and a \$500 max per expenditure.

Rollcall vote as follows: Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Y), Commissioner Damein Jones (Y), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Y), Commissioner Elijah Neal (Y), Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Richard Okello (Y), Commissioner Dave Rozzell (Y), Commissioner Lamar Sykes (Y), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Y). The vote passed unanimously.

IBBHI Presentation: Esther Lewis, CEO of Holistic Evolution presented an overview of her organization and staff responsibilities as well as her previous work and what is outlined for the IBBHI. Following Ms. Lewis' report, she addressed questions from the Commission.

Director's Report: Director Virgil Giles provided a recap of his experience attending the BEAM (Re)Imagined Masculinity Training. Director Giles also updated the Commission on Per Diem content that was added to the Commission's Bylaws from HB 1026. There were no questions following Director Giles' report.

Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business discussed.

New Business: There was no new business addressed.

Announcement for the Good of the Order: Director Virgil Giles announced that the next Commission meeting on Wednesday, September 18, will be held at the Indiana Civil Rights Commission. Commissioner Dave Rozzell informed Commission members that he is involved in an organization that is forming called the Indianapolis Coalition on Educational Equity led by Diana Daniels.

There being no further business, the August ICSSBM Commission meeting concluded at 12:17pm.