

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026, from 6:30-8:30 PM**

**Attendance:**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akiba, Sukia                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Johnson, Xenia |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bastola, Kashish             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lubintus,      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown, Deidre |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown, Thabiti    | Gassendina   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diana Milkey  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collins, Melissa  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mason, Natassa            |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dance, Kwame      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wyzard Jones,  | * Arrived after the meeting                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Davis, Jeff       | Cheyenne   | was called to order                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenidge, George |  |   |

**City AFC Staff**

Action Items will be highlighted in yellow

**Agenda and Minutes:**

- 1. Call to Order & Quorum - Chair George Greenidge**
  - a. George Greenidge called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.
- 2. Opening Statements by Chair & Acting Executive Director (*George Greenidge and Deidre Brown*)**
  - a. Chair Statement**
  - b. AED Statement**
  - c. Commissioner Statements**
    - i. Commissioner Jeff Davis notes that without a formal agreement on structure and governance, the budget deliberations were quite difficult.
    - ii. Commissioner Kwame Dance agreed with JD and notes that there is a "middle ground" that can be reached at this meeting.
    - iii. Commissioner Xenia Bhembé asks if the budget they will be voting on concerns both the rest of FY26 and FY27.
      1. Commissioner George Greenidge confirms this. Acting Executive Director Deidre Travis Brown confirms this as well.
    - iv. GG asks what the budget for Fy26 is
      1. DTB: \$300k
      2. How much was used?
      3. ~\$1800
    - v. XB says that minutes sent out had wrong information. Staff Diana Milkey says she will check on this.
    - vi. Commissioner Cheyenne Wyzard-Jones notes she will not be available for the full meeting, and she suggests keeping a broad focus for budget.

- vii. JD suggests going by deadline priority, starting with FY26 and going into FY27.
  - 1. Endorsed by Thabiti Brown.

### **3. Budget**

#### **a. AFC Projected Yearly Budgets**

- i. Staff Diana Milkey shared a prepared form offering ranked choice voting for proposal ideas for everyone to discuss and fill out.
- ii. JD made a motion to take five minutes to fill out and read the form.
  - 1. XB seconded
- iii. Commissioner Thabiti Brown notes that there is no mention on the list of administrative or staff office supplies.
  - 1. DM says that there will be a separate budget item for Office Supplies, as well as conferences or other event attendance. DTB confirms and notes that there is currently a ban on out-of-state travel for conferences and the like.
  - 2. Jeff asks if this applies to events attended by the commission out of state. DTB clarifies that usually there is generally one annual conference that covers expenses for one commissioner.
  - 3. GG offers a suggestion that they make a note of what they need for money as a new commission and “work from there”
  - 4. CWJ says she is confused as to why the budget items don’t all have numbers attached on the form and says that in some way, she could agree with the proposal but not with the amount.
- iv. DTB asks for clarification on the budget proposal from GG budgeting for computers and technology, saying that the city does not typically budget for these things.
- v. XB makes a motion that the Commission use monies for FY26 to focus on research and Community Engagement.
  - 1. CWJ asks to amend this motion to include community grant disbursement.
    - a. So amended.
  - 2. GG asks for a vote to pass, TB asks for clarification that this is just the idea being voted on with no attached number. GG confirms.
  - 3. TB says that the priority for the rest of FY26 should be focused on one item and that the focus of the

- commission should be discussed first.
- a. JD agrees, noting that the Commission is not able to give grants, especially within the amount of time. He notes that agreeing to grants might be premature and that the group should be more cautious. He suggests a decision-making process in place as a Commission before dispersing money to various organizations.
  - b. Commissioner Melissa Jackson-Collins agrees with JD and notes that before the Commission engages with other organizations, government and checks and balances be established in the Commission first. She suggests tabling grant allocation until FY27.
  - c. TB asks if a vote is a simple majority vote or a consensus. GG says it is a majority.
  - d. DTB adds that grant funding would have to be approved through the City Manager's office and that they would have to present it.
4. XB's original motion to limit funding for the remainder of FY26 on community engagement and research funding.
- a. GG- Y
  - b. JD- Y
  - c. MJC- Y
  - d. TB - N
  - e. GL - Y
  - f. CWJ - N
  - g. KD - Y
  - h. XB - Y
  - i. 7 Yeas, 2 Nays
5. With this motion passed, JD suggests voting on the form's ranked choice voting to focus the conversation and how to deliberate priorities. GG says we cannot rely on a poll.
6. TB notes that the form does not link up to "Community Engagement" as a topic.
7. XB asks if they could go through which proposals for Community Engagement have been addressed already.
8. CWJ asks if we're going to sort each line item to determine which are for Community Engagement and which are for research.
- a. KD says he'd like to remove the Youth Summer

Corps before beginning this process. GG says he will clear up what it is first.

- b. GG says they would give money to an outside vendor, the name of which he cannot recall, that would be charged with running a summer program for youth outside the responsibility of the Commission.
- c. KD reiterates that he doesn't think this is as viable for a line item for FY26 as it would be for FY27.

#### **vi. Community Engagement**

1. CWJ asks what they mean by Community Engagement and agrees the Youth Summer Corps should be removed in favor of not spending money on programs not helmed by the Commission.
  - a. CWJ clarifies that she doesn't want to prevent the commission from giving money to outside organizations, but instead was clarifying strategy for the budget. She encourages the Commission to educate themselves on transitional justice before vetting potential vendors to donate to.
  - b. XB defines Community Engagement as "an introduction of the objectives of the AFC to the Community, engaging Community members around that definition," and then building from there.
  - c. CWJ emphasizes the importance of learning transitional justice on the Commissioners' behalf as well as learning for the Community.
2. TB notes that establishing this definition may be hard to reach before the end of the FY. He says that holding off on having any kind of event might be in everyone's interest, as it would allow the Commission to establish communication between itself before presenting itself to the community.
3. JD suggests all monies for the rest of FY26 be focused on direct needs for the Commissioners and that money should be saved for events in the future.
4. Juneteenth Celebration
  - a. MJC agrees with TB and JD, but says that it might be better to have a Juneteenth event as this is their first year and that they should be focusing on American Freedmen-centric events. MJC says

that JD's idea of saving money instead of outsourcing research or engagement would be better.

- i. XB asks MJC how we could implement the Juneteenth work could be done in three months.
- ii. MJC says that it's an interactive lunch that highlights American Freedmen culture. She gives more details about the location and proposal that are detailed in the proposal packet, noting that the point is to engage the community with historical installations to educate about the AFC and the group they represent.
- iii. CWJ says that this feels like an excellent event, but expresses concerns that the time frame of three months to put this event out and that there may be more value in setting up a lunch or brunch without the museum that can promote conversation and still be plannable within the timeframe.
  1. She also suggests a zine or art piece discussing the AFC sites and figured that MJC suggested to continue to prioritize education.
  2. She also suggests a presence at other, established Juneteenth events in the community.
- iv. JD suggests a few smaller events to lead into a large event for FY27 like a brunch or a table at the Juneteenth parade so the community can feel the AFC's presence without having to risk an unfinished event.
- v. MJC is concerned that the Juneteenth celebration, if not helmed by the AFC, might not be authentic enough. She agrees that micro events might still work, but stresses that it be festive and undiluted.
- vi. XB asks MJC if the AFC has the capacity right now to plan the Juneteenth event.

1. MJC says that she is fully vested in it and plans to ask around in the City to leverage what they can and possibly hiring an event designer (Ayesha James) to work with and get it done. She acknowledges that this should have been started before but believes this can be done.
  2. DTB mentions that the LGBTQ+ commission's Pride event is in similar size to the proposed event and that this event would be treated similarly, partnering with many different departments in the City to plan it. Resources are available, but planning is the key.
- vii. KD says that, knowing the process of planning in the City, he is not sure this could happen within the year, knowing that many people plan a year in advance for events this size.
  - viii. MJC says she is okay with waiting until FY27, but requests that this remain focused on American Freedmen and that they are not diluted in the process of partnering with other organizations.
  - ix. CWJ proposes that funding will be set aside for a Juneteenth celebration.
- b. Ancestry/Family Tree/Freedmen, or 10,000,000 Names Project with American Ancestors
    - i. GG proposes \$25,000 be given to American Ancestors for DNA kits and distribution for people in the Cambridge community
    - ii. MJC asks if there is a rule within the City for brand processes, such as 23andMe or Ancestry.com. DTB does not know at the moment but will verify.
    - iii. MJC suggests connecting people who take DNA kits with a group of people like at Harvard to the library to support further exploration.

- c. TB expresses that finding out how to do research with the community is important and that he has enough questions that he wants to spend the time figuring out how things get implemented. He expresses concern that the commission doesn't have enough direction to spend the money on this yet.
  - i. CWJ agrees and hopes more for internal research funding before giving any money to outside organizations
- d. Community Storytelling
  - i. GG suggests a TEDTalk-like scenario and giving money to a vendor to organize this to help people tell their stories
- e. Community-Based Research Conference
  - i. GG suggests that \$35,000 be allotted to commission people from the community to create research-based pieces to present at one event.
- f. KD makes a motion to vote on something, but GG interrupts and says that there should be \$15,000 allotted to each commissioner for micro-events.
- g. KD moves to vote on broader categories instead of the individual proposal items.
  - i. Seconded
- h. Other commissioners draw attention to the chat and say that some deliberation has gone on there.

**b. Budget Allocations & Discussions**

- i. KD suggests each budget section is split into subcategories
  - 1. Internal Learning, History, Research
  - 2. Engagement and Outreach
  - 3. Evaluation and Event Planning
- ii. CWJ asks where the remaining \$298k from the FY26 will go and clarifies that the specifics will be established later and that the subcategories should each get their own allocation.
- iii. GG says that DTB is in charge of deciding funding amounts and expresses concern that City Council won't like the "broad strokes" approach
- iv. DTB asks what should be in play as a priority, as that will be presented, but the focus should be on FY27.
- v. MJC asks if they have to let the funding go for FY26

1. JD says that seems to be the most responsible idea, as he would rather not spend \$298k in a rush
  2. DTB asks for a request for research that money can be allocated for.
- vi. XB makes a motion that says \$145k will be earmarked for Research and Development and that a subcommittee will be named to complete this work and that \$145k be earmarked for events and community engagement.
1. Seconded
    - a. KD- Y
    - b. MJC - Y
    - c. CWJ - Y
    - d. JD - Y
    - e. XB - Y
    - f. TB - N
    - g. GL - Y
    - h. GG - Y
- vii. KD moves to extend the meeting,
1. Seconded
    - a. GG- Y
    - b. JD- Y
    - c. KD- Y
    - d. MJC- Y
    - e. TB- Y
    - f. GL- Y
    - g. CWJ- Y
- viii. GG makes a motion that the remainder of the budget be supplied for administrative costs
- a. GG- Y
  - b. JD- N
  - c. KD- Y
  - d. MJC- Y
  - e. TB- N
  - f. GL- Y
  - g. CWJ- Y
- ix. GG asks if we should ask for more money next year or keep it at the same level. He believes they should ask for \$425,000 for FY27.
1. JD asks how he came up with the number. GG says that it was what he allotted on his proposal sheet- \$200,000 for research, \$125,000 for community engagement, and \$150,000 to administration.

- x. MJC suggests earmarking the funds first in broad strokes and then circling back for specific line items. She also mentions that infrastructure decisions and subcommittee assignments should be discussed at the next meeting.
- xi. GG proposes to set aside the following:
  - 1. \$200,000 for Research
  - 2. \$125,000 for Community Engagement
  - 3. \$150,000 for Administration and Supplies
- xii. MJC makes a motion for next meeting to discuss infrastructure and subcommittees.
  - 1. Seconded
    - a. XB- Y
    - b. JD - Y
    - c. TB - Y
    - d. MJC - Y
    - e. GL - Y
    - f. KD - Y
- xiii. MJC makes a motion to vote on the \$425k proposed budget by GG.
  - 1. Seconded
    - a. TB - N
    - b. MJC - N
    - c. XB - N
    - d. JD - N
    - e. KD - N
    - f. GG - Y
  - 2. JD suggests making Research and Community Engagement be of the same value, being \$162,500 for each.
  - 3. Seconded
    - a. MJC - Y
    - b. KD - Y
    - c. XB - Y
    - d. JD - Y
    - e. TB - Y
    - f. GL - Y
    - g. GG - N
  - 4. The motion is passed.

#### **4. Next Meeting and Announcements**

- <sup>a.</sup> Next meeting: Tuesday, March 17, 2026

#### **5. Adjourn**

**This meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.**

