

Meeting Date:**Attendance:**

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|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akiba, Sukia | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson, Xenia | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown, Deidre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bastola, Kashish | <input type="checkbox"/> Lubintus, Gassendina | <input type="checkbox"/> Diana Milkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown, Thabiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Mason, Natassa | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collins, Melissa | <input type="checkbox"/> Wyzard Jones, Cheyenne | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance, Kwame | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Davis, Jeff | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenidge, George | | |

** Arrived after the meeting was called to order*

City AFC Staff

Action Items will be highlighted in yellow

Call to Order:

Chair George Greenidge called this meeting of the American Freedman Commission to order at 6:37.

Agenda and Minutes:**1. Review and Approval of Minutes****a. Questions**

- i. Commissioner Melissa Jackson-Collins asks how the process for approving the minutes would go.
- ii. Commissioner George Greenidge answers that he can approve it after comments are sent to him, or Commissioners can make a comment on it and send it to staff member Diana Milkey for review.
- iii. Commissioner Cheyenne-Wyzard Jones suggests that the commissioners have a moment to look over the minutes and review. The Commission generally agrees.
- iv. GG asks if these should be approved by consent agenda. The commission agrees.

b. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2026 Meeting

- i. GG adds three addenda to the minutes, noting that he would be sending this along in an email to DM and Deidre Travis Brown.
 1. He mentioned that he requested support from the City Manager before Megan Bayer spoke due to errors regarding several meetings being cancelled
 2. He also said that commissioners needed to sign off that

they read and agree with the Attorney General's Handbook guide to Open Meeting Law. He notes that typically the City provides a handbook to Commissioners, but the City of Cambridge does not have one and he believed that it should and had passed that opinion on to the City Solicitor and City Manager.

- ii. XB says that she remembers talking about this and corroborates it.
- c. **Review and Approval of Minutes from March 3, 2026 Meeting**
- d. **Review and Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2026 Meeting**
 - i. 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.
 - e. MJC asks if we could approve the minutes for the last meetings at the next meeting so they can talk more about the agenda items before one of the commissioners needs to leave early.
 - i. GG says this is allowed.
 - ii. GG asks if everyone can give their notes to DM and DTB within the next week and the minutes will be approved in the next meeting.

2. AFC Structure & Working Groups Discussion

- a. GG begins the conversation by introducing the working groups and asking if everyone wants to start with working groups.
- b. Commissioner TB asks if we should start with operations around what rules of order to adopt and how to coordinate meetings.
- c. Commissioner JD says he is more interested in beginning with the discussion around governance, voting, and procedures inside the Commission.
- d. GG asks people who have not spoken individually if they have anything to add.
- e. GG begins with the mission of the American Freedmen Commission.
 - i. GG says their role is to engage the community, research harms, and give recommendations to the City Manager of Cambridge for reparations done against American Freedmen in Cambridge.
 - ii. MJC asks TB to read aloud the details of the Ordinance's charge he put into the chat. TB reads: "The Cambridge American Freedmen Commission shall work with the City Manager and/or their assistants, including the Chief of Equity and Inclusion, and other Departments to implement Transitional Justice for Cambridge Resident American Freedmen. The Commission will

- investigate and report on the historical, systemic and ongoing harms done to American Freedmen by the State (Federal, Massachusetts and Cambridge governments), and identify adequate, effective and prompt reparations.”
- iii. There is a brief pause while the Commissioners reflect on this meaning.
 - iv. MJC states that with this mandate, they should reflect on how they operate as a body.
- f. MJC asks the Commission if they want to continue using Robert’s Rules of Order, as this had been discussed at previous meetings. They are currently following these rules by default.
- i. GG says that because they are not a larger governmental body, operating under Robert’s Rules of Order loosely and adjusting as necessary works well and references a packet he sent.
 - ii. Commissioner Kwame Dance suggests operating under a modified version of RRO and revisiting operations next rollover year in May.
 - iii. JD comments on MJC’s idea and says that success depend on connections to the community. He suggests an opposite model to RRO and instead suggests a consensus vote instead of majority. He acknowledges that this means they need more transparency and that no single person can or should make moves representing the Commission. He states that it is less easy, but worthwhile as they pursue alternative and transformational justice as a group rather than individuals.
 - iv. MJC agrees and notes that waiting until May for the rollover as per KD’s suggestion feels like it’s too far out and there are too many things to do to wait until the next Commissioner rollover. She says moving without order is making it difficult to pursue what the Commission is working on.
 - v. GG put into chat a reason why RRO is not always the best operating procedure for a smaller body such as the Commission, citing the Massachusetts Municipal Association’s suggestions.
 1. Acting Executive Director Deidre Travis Brown notes to all that Cambridge is a part of MMA, but doesn’t follow its suggestions all the time.
 - vi. TB suggests the website “BoardEffect” that has an easy-to-download simple structure for boards and that may be easier to deal with.
 1. CWJ asks to clarify if TB means to use Robert’s Rules instead of something separate.

2. He confirms, and says that it's probably easier to adopt in a larger group and it's better to have some rules of order than to not or to come up with their own.
- vii. KD asks for some kind of parliamentary role for someone to be watching a document to make sure they're in order in the future.
- viii. MJC says she agrees with TB, but doesn't want to table how they operate until later, as they are working from a very "ambiguous" version of RRO and is concerned about the specific rules that keep getting cited. She cites that the Chair often quotes rules and regulations from municipalities and the state, and it's not clear what rules apply to the City and which ones apply to the State. She requests the presence of the City Solicitor Megan Bayer to set up guidance and a framework so it's more clear when rules are being used from what organization.
 1. DTB says this is available.
- ix. CWJ says that this is going to be a lot of work to create a consensus and a good proposal model. It will likely require more than one meeting, and agrees that a subcommittee should be established to set this up. She states her opinion that they set up a temporary rule of order until a deeper decision can be made after researching, and that this task should be given to a subcommittee.
- x. GG says he will send a document from MMA again detailing 12 rules for parliamentary procedure.
- xi. TB says he will also send a "cheat sheet" of rules for order by email.
 1. GG asks if TB would be the Chair of the subcommittee for rules of order. TB says he doesn't think he can take that appointment until it is established.
- xii. JD suggests that the first established subcommittee should be regarding
- xiii. KD makes a motion to use the format of the modified version of Robert's Rules of Order they've been using for this meeting and revisiting the rules of operation at next month's meeting.
 1. Seconded
 2. CWJ speaks up to ask if there are other voices who want to be heard with regards to this motion.
- xiv. Commissioner SA and Xenia Bhembe says she has nothing to add and that they are looking to get the process in place.
 1. XB says she is fine with holding this meeting under

Robert's Rules and that a future change to the rules of order would be good but revisiting it later would be worthwhile.

- xv. Commissioner Natassa Mason agrees and says she is working on reading through Robert's Rules so she can better understand what that means.
- xvi. GG says again that he sent out the shorter version of RRO.
- xvii. XB asks the Commission how they are governed outside the meeting if they are using RRO during the meetings.
- xviii. CWJ would like to acknowledge that the rules that TB put into chat as a "cheat sheet" for Robert's Rules of Order would be the best mode of operation. She asks GG to put his version of the booklet in the chat, but there is no ability to send documents in the Chat. DTB sends a link in the chat for the Commissioners to review.
- xix. GG specifically cites chapter 2 regarding parliamentary procedure, saying that he has been using this as a guide.
- xx. JD says that the Commission should vote on the motion previously stated, and that another motion for a decision-making Committee would be worthwhile to create in order to review and understand the documents GG sends out. He states that he is not currently prepared to decide on one or the other before the end of the meeting.
- xxi. Voting on item 2.xiii:
 1. DTB says that Commissioners need to be on camera to vote.
 2. Votes
 - a. KD - Y
 - b. XB - N
 - c. JD - Y
 - d. GL - Y
 - e. MJC - Abstain
 - f. GG - Abstain
 - g. TB - Y
 - h. SA - Abstain
 - i. CWJ - Abstain
 - j. NM - Abstain
- xxii. XB moves that this meeting use Robert's Rules of Order for this meeting and next meeting to form a decision-making committee be established at this meeting to research further rules of order. This would be guided by the document that TB sent out. She amends this to select a parliamentarian for this

meeting and next.

1. Seconded
 2. Votes
 - a. XB- Y
 - b. KD – Y
 - c. JD – Y
 - d. TB – Y
 - e. CWJ – Y
 - f. GL – Y
 - g. NM – Y
 - h. MJC – Y
 - i. GG – Y
 - j. SA - Abstain
 3. Passed
- xxiii. XB moves to nominate KD as parliamentarian for this meeting.
1. KD declines for this meeting, as he may need to leave.
- xxiv. CWJ moves to nominate XB as parliamentarian
1. Votes
 - a. GG – Y
 - b. KD – Y
 - c. KD – Y
 - d. NM – Y
 - e. GL – Y
 - f. MJC – Y
 - g. XB – Abstain
 - h. SA – Y
 - i. JD – Y
 - j. TB – Y
- xxv. JD makes a motion to officially establish a Decision-Making Subcommittee for the AFC.
1. Seconded
 2. CWJ asks how he would define this.
 - a. JD says he is suggesting a subcommittee to make suggestions on how to model the rules of order, either RRO or the parliamentary model. He suggests transferring this motion to a committee.
 3. TB asks how people will be appointed to this committee. He suggests under five people.
 - a. JD volunteers
 - b. GG volunteers
 - c. XB nominates MJC. MJC accepts.
 - d. JD nominates CWJ. CWJ will send research but

- does not wish to be a part of it.
- e. KD volunteered, but removed himself.
 - f. MJC nominates NM and XB. XB declines. NM accepts.
4. MJC suggests using the Sharepoint to put in documents for discussions. DM confirms and says she can upload it. She offers to write out a guide for people to use.
 5. JD says there should be a deadline for information uploading.
 6. DM asks when the next meeting is. KD says the week of the 20th is school vacation, and it would have to be on either April 14th or April 28th. Majority rules that April 14th will be the next meeting.
 7. The subcommittee would be as follows:
 - a. Jeff Davis
 - b. George Greenidge
 - c. Melissa Jackson-Collins
 - d. Natassa Mason
 8. Votes
 - a. JD – Y
 - b. GG- Y
 - c. MJC – Y
 - d. NM – Y
 - e. XB – Y
 - f. TB – Y
 - g. GL – Y
 - h. CWJ – Abstain
 - i. SA – Y
 - g. GG asks if there are any further discussions about governance.
 - i. CWJ asks about the budget, but TB brings focus back to item number 2.
 - h. MJC suggests a brainstorming session of different subcommittees, and which would be applicable to the Commission.
 - i. MJC asks GG to read off some of the ideas from a document he shared back in November talking about different initiatives. GG says he does not remember it. MJC says it was a part of his “initial roadmap,” or before it.
 - ii. CWJ suggests that the larger categories of operation for the budget lines relate to the subcommittees, like “Research and Harm Reporting”
 - iii. GG cites other cities’ studies about harm reporting and asks the group which harms they plan on exploring. He also mentions a
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- commission in Vermont that uses a model where each Commissioner is responsible for one “harm” that they report on, suggesting this as a possible structure for the Cambridge AFC. He suggests a “Harms Committee”
- iv. GG suggests an Engagement Subcommittee as well. He said he will provide supplemental information in the Sharepoint.
 - v. DTB reminds the commission that “research, community engagement, and administration” were amounts earmarked for budget lines. She suggests that identifying harms would be part of research.
 - vi. TB asks if the Commission is establishing “long term” committees, or if it would be just for FY26 until FY27.
 - vii. GG suggests a Public Relations/Administrative/Executive Committee, a Genealogy/Public Memory/Ancestry Committee, and Community Outreach Committee.
 - viii. TB makes a motion to establish three subcommittees:
 1. JD suggests a fourth, adding “Public Relations”
 2. MJC suggests an “Ad Hoc” Committee to follow different reparative justice initiatives across the country.
 3. Seconded.
 - ix. The motion is now that five subcommittees will be established: Public Relations, Governance, Research, Community Engagement, and Ad Hoc for Reparations and Transitional Programming.
 1. TB suggests cutting the number down to three subcommittees.
 2. JD notes that the “Decision-Making” subcommittee already established is temporary. He suggests combining the Ad Hoc for Reparations subcommittee become a part of the Research subcommittee.
 3. DTB asks the Commission if it would be a good idea to start with three and then create more subcommittees based on further research.
 4. JD says the “ad hoc” committee for now should be the decision-making committee and that its role will change as other things arise and as other matters need work.
 5. MJC suggests that the governance of the Commission be assigned to the full body instead of subcommittees. JD agrees and says that the current ad hoc committee is just focusing on the rules of order temporarily before moving on.
 6. JD amends his motion.

7. GG suggests having another subcommittee unofficially regarding governance that consists of himself and Deidre.
 - x. The motion is now that four subcommittees will be established: Public Relations, Research, Community Engagement, and Ad Hoc defined as necessary.
 1. Seconded
 2. Votes
 - a. GG – Y
 - b. XB – Y
 - c. JD – Y
 - d. TB – N
 - e. MJC – Y
 - f. GL – Y
 - g. NM – Y
 - h. Passed
 - i. JD makes a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes.
 - i. Not seconded
 - j. XB suggests forming the subcommittees at the next meeting instead of tonight.
 - k. GG requests that the Commission send an email to DTB, DM, CWJ, and himself about which committee they would like to be on.
 - l. MJC says that it should be deliberated at the meeting.
 - m. XB agrees and says it should be added to the next agenda.
 - n. CWJ says that before establishing the committees they need to define what each of them do. TB agrees and says leadership should be established.
3. **Review of Budget - Final**
- a. DTB reminded everyone of the votes from last week.
 - b. TB asks if the budget for FY27 has been approved yet. DTB says it has not.
 - c. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.
4. **Potential AFC Community Hearing at City Hall on *Understanding Harms & American Freedmen Definition in June 2026***
- a. CWJ asks what this is before GG closes the meeting.
 - b. GG says it was just an idea, nothing has been planned, and it can be talked about at the next meeting.
 - c. CWJ notes that it should probably not be an item for next meeting, and instead should be folded into a discussion about public engagement.
 - d. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.
 - e. MJC asks GG if he and CWJ have created an agenda for the following meeting. GG says there is not yet. MJC asks when the next meetings
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will be and if they should review the minutes for the next meeting.

f. XB asks when the deadline is for posting documents on the Sharepoint.

JD suggests April 1, as it will give 2 weeks.

5. Next Meeting Establishment

a. The next meeting will be on April 14, 2026.

Meeting Adjourned

Chair George Greenidge deemed this meeting of the American Freedman Commission adjourned at 8:30 PM.