



Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
10:30am-12:00pm  
Government Center South Conference Room 15  
302 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**Call to order:** A meeting of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (ICSSBM) was held on Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in person at the Government Center South Conference Room 15, and virtually via Teams for Government. The meeting was called to order at 10:36am.

**Roll Call- Commissioners in attendance:** Commissioner Ursery, Vice-Chair Neal, Commissioner Jones, Commissioners Kari Jones, Commissioner Rich, Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner McGuire, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Rozzell, Commissioner Durham

**Commissioners via Teams:** Commissioner Ervin, Commissioner Skyes

**Commissioners Absent:** Commissioner Becker

**Others in attendance:** Dr. Howard Simms (New Proxy for Div. of Mental Health and Addiction), J. Philip Clay (ICRC Executive Director), Lucy Travis (ICRC Executive Assistant),

**Welcome Remarks and Chair Update:** ICRC New Director, Phil Clay, introduced himself to the Commission. Questions were asked about previous ICRC Executive Director, Mr. Evans, but ICRC Director Phil Clay is unable to comment on staff issues and remained committed to supporting the commission and following ICRC's Statutory responsibilities.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Vice-Chair Neal made a motion to move forward with the adoption of May 21, 2025, meeting minutes. The roll call goes has follows: Commissioner Ursery (N), Vice-Chair Neal (Y), Commissioner Damien Jones (Y), Commissioners Kari Jones (Y), Commissioner Rich (Y), Commissioner Allen (Y), Commissioner Taylor (Y), Commissioner McGuire (Y), Commissioner Smith (Y), Commissioner Rozzell (Y), Commissioner Durham (Y)

**Review and Approval of the Financial Report:** Vice-Chair Neal called for a motion to approve the financial reports for August 2025. Roll Call goes has follows: Commissioner Ursery (N), Vice-Chair Neal (Y), Commissioner Damien Jones (Y), Commissioners Kari Jones (Y),

Commissioner Rich (Y), Commissioner Allen (Y), Commissioner Taylor (Y), Commissioner McGuire (Y), Commissioner Smith (Y), Commissioner Rozzell (Y), Commissioner Durham (Y)

Commissioner Dave Rozzell asked a question about the reserve amount and salary expenses that were being taken out. ICRC Director, Phil Clay, explained that any work being done by ICRC staff to support the commission will be taken out of each of the commissions has the work is being done. This is to offset the work that ICRC staff is doing and to ensure that they are being paid for the work they are doing. Commissioner Kesha Rich asked for clarification on the payment status of Esther Lewis. ICRC staff was not aware of any payment needing to go to Ms. Lewis but will investigate the matter further. Commissioner Greg Taylor made a comment about the commission needing to spend the money it is being allocated by the General Assembly. The Indiana Women's Commission has already been zeroed out, and to ensure this does not happen to ICSSBM they need to figure out ways to use the money. A question was asked about MLK Days of Service and if we can use that funding. We clarified that we will only use money from a commission if the Commissioners vote on the matter.

Officer Elections: The ICSSBM held a special election to vote for a new Chairman. Previous Director, Mr. Evans, dismissed Richard Okello from his duties as ICRC Proxy, thereby eliminating him as Chair of the Commission. Based on this action, Vice-Chair Neal opened the floor up to any Commissioners interested in serving as Chair. Commissioner Vernon Smith nominated Commissioner Kenneth Allen, and he accepted the nomination. There were no additional nominations. Vice-Chair Neal moved to approve the nomination and was accepted by Commission affirmation.

Director's Report: Director Clay provided an update on the Director of African American Male and Civic Engagement position. Due to leadership changes and underlying reasons, Director Clay made the decision to discontinue interviewing for the positions. Director Clay also provided clarification on the Conference that was being spoken about by previous ICRC leadership. This was not a Governor's Directive but a past ICRC leadership's directive. Each Cultural Commission can decide not to continue talks of a conference by voting. ICRC has the responsibility of accepting what the Commission decides to do and will not force any decision. Director Clay also clarified that even though the Commission does not have a director they will still have ICRC Administrative Support.

Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business discussed

New Business: Commissioner Vernon Smith wants to put together a Planning Committee to they can look at how the commission is able to spend their funding. Chair Allen will head this committee and bring a report to the next Commissioner meeting scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 10:30am.

Announcement for the Good of the Order: There were no announcements

There being no further business, the September 2025, ICSSBM Commission meeting concluded at 12:00pm.