



City of Albuquerque

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

African American Advisory Board

Tuesday, August 4, 2026, 11:00 am

City Council Committee Room, One Civic Plaza, 9th Floor Suite S9300, Albuquerque, NM 87102

To join virtually: [Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 880 2314 2446

Voting Members Present

- (1) Nicole Bedford-Jacobs, University of New Mexico Hospital – African American Community Liaison Designee (In person)
- (2) Officer Rob Duren, Albuquerque Police Department Black Ambassador(s) Designee (In person)
- (3) Jordan Locke, State of New Mexico Office of African American Affairs Designee (Zoom)
- (4) Brandi Stone, University of New Mexico African American Student Services Designee (Zoom)
- (5) Patrick Barrett, The New Mexico Center of Black Excellence Designee (Zoom)
- (6) Dr. Sonia Gipson Rankin, New Mexico Black Lawyers Association Rotating Member (Zoom)
- (7) Rachel Wadi, New Mexico Black Leadership Council Alternate (Zoom)
- (8) Bishop David C. Cooper, Ministers Fellowship Designee (Zoom)

Members Absent

- (1) Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission (declined to participate)
- (2) Rev. Darnell Smith, Baptist Ministers Union Designee
- (3) Rep. Pamela Herndon, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Albuquerque Branch Designee
- (4) Karla Causey, Black Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico Designee
- (5) Eric Spurlock, African American Museum and Cultural Center of New Mexico Alternate
- (6) Albuquerque Public Schools African American (AA) Equity & Engagement Coordinator

Other Attendees

- Gene Grant, State of New Mexico Office of African American Affairs (Zoom)
- Dr. Lisa Christopherson (In person)
- Ayanna Zahra (In person)

- PK Hemmons (Zoom)
- Tonya Covington (Zoom)
- Jordan Tate (Zoom)
- Rachel Mwadi (Zoom)
- Eugene Pickett (Zoom)
- Pete Garcia (Zoom)
- Deon Watson (Zoom)
- Andrea Tammy Watson (Zoom)
- Emma Asonye (Zoom)
- Sunny Sampson (Zoom)
- T. Mcowiti (Zoom)

City Staff Present

- Nichole Rogers, City Councilor, District 6 (In person)
- Ziarra Kirksey, Policy Analyst to Councilor Rogers, City Council (In Person)
- Chris Sylvan, ONC Neighborhood Liaison, City Council (In person)
- Vince Higgins, Public Information Officer, City Council (In person)
- Julia Coulloudon, Deputy Director/General Counsel, City Council (In person)
- Victor Hall, Associate Counsel, City Council (In person)
- Chevonne Watson, Administrative Assistant/Project Support, City Council (In person)
- Garrett Cornelius, Council Technology & Logistics Specialist, City Council (In person)
- Markela Clinton, Field Representative, Office of the Mayor (In person)
- Rada Moss, Financial Empowerment Manager, Health, Housing, Homelessness Dept. (Zoom)

Minutes

I. Call to Order

a. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Nichole Rogers in the City Council Committee Room, City Council Offices.

b. Roll Call

Members and guests introduced themselves. Representatives from participating organizations and other public attendees were present.

c. Confirmation of Quorum

There was no quorum. Eight voting members were present at the meeting.

II. Review of Agenda

a. Review of August 4, 2026 Agenda

The August 4, 2026 agenda was reviewed and accepted by consensus. Due to the current

organizational structure and pending officer elections and lack of a quorum, no formal vote was taken.

III. Review of Previous Minutes

a. Review of July 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2026 meeting minutes were reviewed. Due to the current organizational structure and pending officer elections and lack of a quorum, no formal vote was taken.

IV. Board Membership and Representation

a. Updates on Designees and Alternates

i. Albuquerque Public Schools AA Equity & Engagement Coordinator

1. Designee is vacant

2. Alternate is vacant

Albuquerque Public Schools has not selected a permanent member and will decide its permanent designee after the summer break.

ii. Updates on Community Subject Matter Experts

The Board discussed the selection process for Community Subject Matter Experts. The applicant pool remains open and is being managed on a rolling basis. One application arrived the day before the meeting. Members emphasized selecting applicants to cover missing subject-matter expertise and intergenerational representation, proposed inviting additional applicants to serve on subcommittees, and requested reviewers add subcommittee recommendations in the application comment fields. The Board intends to prioritize filling subject-matter expertise gaps and intergenerational representation when selecting community members. The Board plans to use subcommittees to involve additional qualified applicants who are not selected as the three community members. The Board received 12 applications for three community subject matter expert voting positions. Two additional applications arrived late via email, bringing the total to 13 strong candidates. Per the African American Advisory Board (AAAB) ordinance, one voting seat must be filled by someone with healthcare background.

iii. Board members were provided scoring rubrics based on established criteria: exceptional, extensive, strong, moderate, and limited experience. Members scored applicants during the meeting and emailed completed sheets to staff for tallying.

iv. Board Consensus: Submit 3–5 qualified candidates per subject matter area to Mayor's Office for review and interview. All 13 candidates will be made public record and documented as willing to serve on subcommittees regardless of voting seat outcomes. This approach aims to ensure transparency, vets qualified talent, and creates pathways for community participation beyond voting membership.

V. Governance and Bylaws

a. Councilor Rogers read aloud written recommendations submitted in advance by African American Community Liaison Neema Pickett for bylaw additions regarding complaint procedures. Board clarified its scope: The Board is not a complaint clearinghouse for all Black organizations or external entities and has no jurisdiction over state agencies (State

Office of African American Affairs), UNM Hospital, nonprofits, or individual businesses. Board will address complaints related to city departments, city programs, and city-specific policies affecting community access.

- b. Concerns were raised about creating obligations (data storage, analysis, redaction) if the Board accepts complaints; suggestion was made to delay full complaint-handling for up to a year until capacity is clear.

VI. Board Priorities and Action Items

a. Civic Engagement and Public Participation

The Board discussed strategies to support civic engagement, economic empowerment, and community visibility.

- i. Graphic designer Jordan Tate presented third iteration of branding package incorporating Board feedback from previous meeting. Three logo concepts were presented with multiple color experiments.
- ii. Discussion and feedback
 - 1. Pan-African colors preferred: red, green, yellow, and black
 - 2. Replace Zia symbol with African Adinkra symbol representing community, unity, leadership, or endurance
 - 3. Consider native New Mexico tree: piñon recommended for familiarity and symbolism of deep roots, resilience
 - 4. Simplify design elements; increase text weight/boldness for "City of Albuquerque" and Board name
 - 5. Remove or minimize torch imagery; explore hands weaving, tree roots, or other symbols representing community building
 - 6. Include established date: Board established 2026

VII. Presentations

- a. There were no presentations to the Board

VIII. Public Comment

a. Community Public Comment Period (2 minutes per speaker)

- i. Public attendee Sunny Sampson, Board President Diasporic Talent Collective, spoke about his nonprofit launched on August 1, 2026. Its mission is to create a centralized database of African diaspora artists: actors, hairstylists, production crew, etc., in New Mexico to serve entertainment/media industries seeking diverse talent. Contact: dtcnonprofit@gmail.com.
- ii. Board Members Patrick Barrett & Dr. Sonia Gipson Rankin spoke about Modernized Bar Exam Pathway. The New Mexico Supreme Court approved modernized pathway to bar licensure addressing gaps in traditional bar exam. Key

features: law school graduates with strong grades enter apprenticeship model immediately upon graduation vs. waiting 3–4 months for bar results; limited license to practice under supervision; all applicants must still pass character and fitness evaluation. The Pathway reflects modernization efforts across several states to better predict practice readiness. Next initiative from Supreme Court: train community advocates (no law degree required) to represent people in specific legal matters such as landlord-tenant disputes, domestic relations, light legal topics. Includes character/fitness vetting, oversight, and professional training. Particularly valuable for rural counties and underserved communities. Supports economic mobility by helping families navigate probate, inheritance, and property matters.

- iii. Public attendee Rada Moss spoke about New Homeless Court launching Fridays at the Second Judicial District, which aims to divert unhoused individuals from incarceration and connect to resources instead of criminalizing homelessness. Rada also provided information about Young Adult Court for individuals 18–25. This Court connects young people to jobs, resources, training, and education to prevent system involvement, and is successfully decreasing recidivism.
- iv. US Ambassador to Kenya Visit September 14–21, 2026. Ambassador Makwiti scheduled to visit Albuquerque. The Board is exploring hosting a formal welcome reception/event to introduce Ambassador to community, to discuss possible sister-city partnership with Kenya, and to potentially launch delegation trip to Africa.

IX. Next Steps

a. Review Assigned Responsibilities

- i. Board members – online and in person – to complete and email their applicant scoring sheets to staff as soon as possible for tallying.
- ii. Staff to tally scores, prepare slate of recommended candidates: 3–5 per subject area, ensuring at least three healthcare candidates, and send recommendations to the Mayor's Office.
- iii. Staff to schedule Board headshots in two-hour studio blocks and collect bios from current Board members and community members for the website.
- iv. Schedule mandatory ADA and Board/Ethics training for the full Board once membership, Chair, and Vice-Chair are finalized.

b. Confirm Upcoming Meetings and Locations

The next meeting will be held on September 1st, 2026, at City Council Committee Room, One Civic Plaza 9th Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

X. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 1:11 P.M.