CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

African American Advisory Board

Tuesday, July 7th, 2026, 11:00 A.M.

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) Jordan Locke, State of New Mexico Office of African American Affairs Designee (In person)
(2) Karla Causey, Black Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico Designee (In person)
(3) Eric Spurlock, African American Museum and Cultural Center of New Mexico Alternate (In person)
(4) J. Gourdin, University of New Mexico African American Student Services (Zoom)
(5) Nicole Bedford-Jacobs, University of New Mexico Hospital – African American Community Liaison Designee (In person)
(6) Patrick Barrett, Center for New Mexico Black Excellence Designee (Zoom)
(7) Dr. Sonia Gipson Rankin, New Mexico Black Lawyers Association Rotating member (Zoom)

Members Absent

(1) Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission (declined to participate)
(2) Cathryn McGill, New Mexico Black Leadership Council Designee
(3) Officer Rob Duren, Albuquerque Police Department Black Ambassador(s) Designee
(4) Bishop David C. Cooper, Ministers Fellowship Designee
(5) Rev. Darnell Smith, Baptist Ministers Union Designee
(6) Rep. Pamelya Herndon, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Albuquerque Branch Designee
(7) Albuquerque Public Schools African American (AA) Equity & Engagement Coordinator

Other Attendees

- David Kerich, Ambassador of Kenya to the United States (Zoom)
- Ezra Herbert, State of New Mexico Office of African American Affairs Alternate (Zoom)
- Deon Watson, State of New Mexico Office of African American Affairs Staff (Zoom)
- Beverly Gaines, Black Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico Alternate (In person)
- Dr. Lisa Christopherson, Executive Director, New Mexico Stronger Together Coalition (In person)
- Bryan Johnson, Founder, Salad Bowl American Cultural Foundation (In person)
- Ayainna Zahra (In person)

- Whitney Craig (Zoom)
- Fredrick Vandi (Zoom)
- Eugene Pickett (Zoom)
- Jordan Tate (Zoom)
- Larico Treadwill (Zoom)
- Dr. Asonye (Zoom)
- Brenda Marley (Zoom)
- T. Mcowiti (Zoom)
- Abraham Kosgei (Zoom)
- Kerri Cottle (Zoom)
- Diane Cox (Zoom)

City Staff Present

- Nichole Rogers, City Councilor, District 6 (In person)
- Ziarra Kirksey, Policy Analyst to Councilor Rogers, City Council (Zoom)
- Chris Sylvan, ONC Neighborhood Liaison, City Council (In person)
- Vanessa Baca, ONC Manager, City Council (Zoom)
- Chevonne Watson, Administrative Assistant/Project Support, City Council (Zoom)
- Garrett Cornelius, Council Technology & Logistics Specialist, City Council (In person)
- Stephen Chavez, Council Special Projects Analyst, City Council (In person)
- Neema Pickett, African American Community Liaison, Office of Equity and Inclusion (Zoom)
- Nic Derico, City Legal Department (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. Six voting members were present at the meeting.

II. Approval of Agenda

a. Review and Approval of July 7th, 2026 Agenda

The July 7th, 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. Approval of Previous Minutes

a. Review and Approval of June 2, 2026 Meeting Minutes

June 2, 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. Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission (Declined to participate)
   ii. University of New Mexico African American Students Services
      1. Designee is Brandi Stone
      2. Alternate is vacant
   iii. New Mexico Black Lawyers Association
      1. Designee is Felecia Adams
      2. Alternate is vacant

   The New Mexico Black Lawyers Association will have a rotating designee until a permanent member is chosen.
   iv. Albuquerque Public Schools AA Equity & Engagement Coordinator
      1. Designee is vacant
      2. Alternate is vacant

   Albuquerque Public Schools has designated a permanent member and will decide its permanent designee after the summer break.
   v. 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.

b. Several criteria were identified to guide the review process, including:
   i. Expertise in economic mobility
   ii. Missing and murdered Black persons advocacy
   iii. Cultural events and heritage preservation
   iv. Health outcomes and disparities
   v. Civic engagement and public participation
   vi. Residency or employment within Albuquerque
   vii. Lived experience

V. Governance and Bylaws

a. Review Draft Bylaws

   The Board reviewed the draft bylaws for the African American Advisory Board, including the Board's mission, purpose, focus areas, membership, attendance expectations, officer responsibilities, meeting procedures, working groups, community engagement, policy recommendations, ethics, and annual reporting requirements. Staff explained that the bylaws are based on enabling ordinance and will be finalized following the election of Board officers. Discussion included:

i. Valuing lived experience alongside professional expertise and education credentials.
ii. Separating the operational work plan from the bylaw documents.
iii. Including clear governing and controlling clauses.
iv. Ensuring alignment with applicable ordinances and legal requirements.
vii. Adding Education and Youth Engagement as a formal focus area to align with proposed ordinance amendments.
viii. Creating a secretary officer position to support Board operations and documentation. Members also emphasized developing opportunities to mentor and engage younger generations through internships or youth participation.
ix. Strengthening the ethics and accountability provisions of the bylaws, including procedures for addressing allegations or investigations involving member organizations. Ms. Neema Pickett from the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion offered to provide draft language for consideration.
x. Staff clarified attendance expectations, officer duties, voting procedures, working group responsibilities, and Open Meetings Act requirements.
xi. The importance of community engagement, policy recommendations, data-driven decision making, and presenting the Board's annual report to the City Council.
xii. Staff encouraged members to continue reviewing the draft bylaws and submit additional recommendations prior to formal adoption.

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. Jordan Tate, a public attendee from Creative Duke Media, offered to assist with the development of the branding package for the Board, highlighting design elements to reflect the Board's mission, history and values, including:
   1. Responsive logo for use on letterhead, branding, outreach materials, letterhead, lapel pins and apparel
   2. Marketing materials
   3. Event flyers
   4. Website branding assets
ii. Members were supportive of the concepts and provided feedback, including colors, symbolism, readability, design elements, and discussed incorporating the Zia symbol, simplifying the wagon wheel, Pan-African and local Albuquerque elements into the visuals. Other suggestions included refining the braid and hand elements, adding "Established 2026," and considering alternative symbols in place of the torch.

iii. Observations were made that the initial design could be perceived as resembling imagery associated with extremist groups and suggested design revisions to avoid unintended associations. Mr. Tate agreed to incorporate feedback and present revised concepts at a future meeting.
iv. Plans were also discussed to schedule professional headshots for the Board members at One Albuquerque Studio.
v. The Board also discussed developing member biographies for the Board's website to support outreach and increase public awareness. Members were reminded to submit their biographies, and staff noted there was no required length for biographies. Members may provide their own photographs or request professional headshots through One Albuquerque Media.

VIII. Presentations

a. David Kerich, Ambassador of Kenya to the United States, addressed the Board virtually. He expressed interest in establishing a collaborative relationship between Kenya and New Mexico, highlighting opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges, trade and investment, university partnerships, tourism, and the potential development of a sister-city relationship. Ambassador Kerich also announced plans to visit New Mexico in September to continue discussions with local leaders, community organizations, and the Kenyan diaspora. Board members and the audience welcomed Ambassador Kerich and expressed support for exploring collaborative opportunities with Kenya. Members discussed the possibility of a Kenya-Albuquerque sister-city relationship, educational partnerships with the University of New Mexico, economic development initiatives, cultural preservation, and community engagement. Board members also introduced their respective organizations and described ongoing efforts related to economic mobility, health equity, higher education, small business development, and the proposed African American Museum, expressing interest in future collaboration during the Ambassador's planned September visit.

VII. Public Comment

a. Community Public Comment Period (2 minutes per speaker)
    i. Public attendee Dr. Lisa Christopherson, Executive Director New Mexico Stronger Together Coalition, raised concerns regarding educational equity, due process, and disparities in policing affecting Black community members. Dr. Christopherson encouraged the Board to consider an advocacy role and expressed interest in partnering on these issues.
    ii. Public attendee Dr. Asonye spoke about Humankind Day on August 15, 2026 at Winrock Town Center Park.
    iii. Public attendee Brenda Marley suggested inviting leaders of local African American organizations to provide updates on their work and opportunities for

community involvement. Ms. Marley also expressed concerns about reports from former employees of the Office of African American Affairs.

iv. Public attendee Bryant Johnson, founder of Salad Bowl American Cultural Foundation, also spoke about Humankind Day and events taking place August 14-16, including a gala, community celebration and art event, and encouraged community participation.

VIII. Next Steps

a. Review Assigned Responsibilities

Members agreed to:

i. Review Community Subject Matter Expert applications
ii. Submit feedback and proposed revisions to the bylaws
iii. Continue planning branding and marketing materials
iv. Coordinate participation in upcoming community events

b. Confirm Upcoming Meetings and Locations

The next meeting will be held on August 4, 2026, at City Council Committee Room, One Civic Plaza 9th Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102

IX. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 1:18 P.M.