



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission

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Tuyet Tran

Interim Executive Director

Meenakshi Bharath

One Ashburton
Place
12th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
aapicommission.org

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 16 · 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM EST

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83421971270>

*Please note this meeting will be recorded and held via zoom & teleconference in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law

Attendees:

Commissioners: Moana Bentin, Rakashi Chand, Marilyn Park, Emma Chen-Banas, Tuyet Tran, Christopher Huang, Bahara Hussaini, Richard Chu, Gary Yu

Staff: Meenakshi Bharath, Leela Ramachandran, Shubhecchha Dhaurali

Guests: Eleanor Liu, Aditi Ahlawat, Rachel TonThat

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Tuyet moved to call the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.
Commissioner Moana seconds.

Yes: Moana Bentin, Rakashi Chand, Marilyn Park, Emma Chen-Banas, Tuyet Tran, Bahara Hussaini, Richard Chu
Abstention: Christopher Huang

Motion approved by roll call vote (7-0-1).

Gary Yu joins at 6:38 PM.

2. Public Comment

No members of the public present for comment.

Philjay Solar joins at 6:40 pm.

New Business:

3. Creating Clarity: Review Current Financial Management System, Q&A (10 minutes)

- Introduction: Eleanor Liu, Commission's CPA
- Interim Executive Director, Meena Bharath, provided an overview of the areas for conversation and decision-making related to Commission finances.
- Eleanor notes, based on her review, that the state's accounting



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format is different from how the Commission breaks down our budget, and this makes it difficult to track spending by activity, export clear spending reports, and ensure Commissioners and staff have clear understanding for financial oversight.

- d. Commissioner Tuyet asked about the time involved in reconciling the budget to translate it between the way the Commission budget and state budget are broken down.

Commissioner Gary Yu leaves 6:57 pm.

4. 2026 Youth Council Members (VOTE) (5 minutes)

- a. Shubhecchha Dhaurali, Ashley Shan
- b. Shubhecchha presents an overview of the selection process for Youth Council members, and shares some high-level demographics about this incoming cohort.
- c. Philjay asks if the Commission voted on this last year, and Shubhecchha said that the vote did happen last time.
- d. Commissioners Moana and Philjay thanked Shubhecchha and Ashley for their hard work and diligence.

Philjay moved to approve the incoming 2025-2026 Youth Council members as presented, Moana seconded the motion.

Yes: Moana, Bahara, Tuyet, Marilyn, Emma, Christopher, Philjay, Rakashi, Richard

Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote (9-0-0).

5. Executive Committee Elections: Interim vs. 1+ Year Term (5 minutes)

- a. Commissioner Moana Bentin's interest to serve
- b. Seeking other Commissioners to apply

6. Afghan Community Crisis: Exception Request to support Federal Bill - Enduring Welcome Act (Potential VOTE)

- a. Commissioner Bahara Hussaini



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- i. Commissioner Bahara shares context for her ask to support a federal policy because resettlement remains challenging for Afghan communities, including language barriers, islamophobia, fear of family/reunion challenges, and cultural barriers.
- ii. Commissioner Tuyet asked who has signed onto this bill.
- iii. Commissioner Moana asked what support from the Commission entails; Summarized supporting individually and researching what next steps can the Commission do.

Commissioner Tuyet moves to support the bill as the AAPI Commission.

Commissioner Moana seconds.

Yes: Moana, Tuyet, Marilyn, Emma, Christopher, Richard, Philjay, Rakashi, Bahara

Motion approved unanimously (9-0-0).

7. Salem Seal Change Support (VOTE) (10 minutes)

- a. Commissioner Christopher Huang
- b. Aditi Ahlawat, Rachel TonThat (Salem City Seal Taskforce)
- c. Commissioner Christopher provides context that Dr. Aditi Ahlawat reached out to him because she and Rachel are part of the Salem City Seal Taskforce which is asking the City Council to change the seal away from one that includes an Asian man. They have presented about the psychological impacts of the seal, and have brought in other experts in different spaces. They are seeking support from community leaders and groups.
- d. Commissioner Rakashi expresses gratitude for the work of Aditi and Rachel, especially given her work in history.
- e. Commissioner Tuyet says she supports eliminating racism of any kind. She asks what steps have been taken in Salem to go to City leadership and what the response has been. Aditi responds,



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sharing various steps that have been taken and the response from community members.

- f. Commissioner Bahara asks how residents of color feel about this seal, and asks if they have suggestions for a replacement. Aditi shares that the Commission is liaising with other communities, and their major ask is simply to remove the caricature.
- g. Commissioner Tuyet asks how the Commission's statement would like to be displayed and Rachel replies saying that this statement would be included in a packet of materials for the Salem City Council.

- i. Seeking a statement of support from the AAPI Commission

Commissioner Christopher moves to approve . Commissioner Philjay seconds the motion.

Yes: Moana, Tuyet, Marilyn, Emma, Christopher, Richard, Philjay, Rakashi, Bahara

Motion approved unanimously (9-0-0).

Old Business:

8. Budget Finalization (VOTE) - **SKIPPED**

- a. Review and Vote skipped as Chair Saatvik Ahluwalia would like to be present
- b. Team Capacity, Current Community Needs, Survey Results, Gaps, Deprioritization Options
- c. Commission's July 2025 Meeting

9. Executive Director Search Updates (10 minutes)

- a. Leela Ramachandran & Shubhecchha Dhaurali
- b. Leela provides updates on outreach to serve as ED consultant, multiple people interested in serving in consultant role.

Commissioners who were interested in serving in hiring committee for permanent ED search. Leela states the timeline is



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ambitious but will work to ensure clear communication.

- c. Leela gives an overview of the job description prepared by Shubhecchha and Leela for the Executive Director consultant search.
- d. Commissioner Tuyet requests a folder of materials of those interested in serving as consultant in the interest of transparency. Leela shares three individuals who are interested, but doesn't want to give privilege to those with prior relationships with the Commission so hopes to make the names publicly and Commissioner accessible.

Reports: (10 Minutes)

10. Interim ED Report

- a. Meena shares about her work on team capacity and collaboration including ownership of administrative tasks, setting up team meetings, and thinking about cross effort alignment.
- b. Commissioner Tuyet thanks Meena, and remarks that it's a lot of work

11. Sub-Committee & Other Updates

- a. Diwali 2025: Commissioner Rakashi Chand
 - i. Commissioner Chand provides summary of the festival of Diwali and Deepavali, that the Commission will be cohosting an event with the Asian Caucus and BAPS, at the State House
- b. Program & Research: Shubhecchha Dhaurali **SKIPPED**

Administrative Items:

- 12. Meeting minutes approval **SKIPPED**
- 13. Suggestions for future agenda items



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The next AAPIC meeting is Tuesday, October 21st at 6:30 pm EST. Hybrid Meeting with space reserved on 12th Floor, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA. It is to be noted that October 21st is Diwali.

14. Meeting Adjournment

Commissioner Tuyet moves to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Moana seconds.

Yes: Tuyet, Moana, Bahara, Marilyn, Christopher, Richard, Philjay

Motion approved unanimously (7-0-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM EST.

Minutes Compiled By: Otter & Shubhecchha Dhaurali

Reviewed By: Meena Bharath



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