

## **CABINET OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS - POST MEETING STATEMENT**

### **CABINET DECISIONS**

**24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021**

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present.

The Cabinet:

1. Noted the Resolution No. 29 of 2021 "Reopening of the Seaports to International Ferry Operations" from the BVI Ports Authority made on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 and:
  - a. deferred the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 reopening of the Road Town Jetty to incoming visitors to 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 for the following reasons:
    - i. that islands within the region have reported increased numbers of COVID-19 cases;
    - ii. the increased possibility of the introduction of variant strains from international travelers;
    - iii. due to the demands of the roll-out of the vaccines and the need to ensure a large percent of the local population is vaccinated, the health personnel normally needed to assist in monitoring procedures at the entry portal is significantly stretched and as such the efficiency to monitor the opening is challenged; and
    - iv. to enhance the customer experience through further infrastructural improvements at the Road Town Jetty and other ports of entry in light of COVID-19 health and safety protocols; and
  - b. requested weekly updates on the progress being made in meeting targets and any difficulty in meeting those targets.

2. Agreed to a variation of the major contract with Vilma Rosa Leon-York to provide legal services in support of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Act for the completion of Phase II: the completion of the draft subsidiary legislation for the resolution of failing insured institutions framework and Phase III: the completion of the draft legal reforms to the current legislation, and decided that payment of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) for consultancy services be made.
3. Decided:
  - a. that the BVI Government pledges to contribute seven hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars (\$778,000) over a four-year period, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2024, to the tenth cycle of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Special Development Fund (SDF);
  - b. that the Financial Secretary instruct the Attorney General to vet the draft Resolution;
  - c. that the enabling Resolution be laid on the table in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting; and
  - d. that funding in the amount of one hundred and ninety-four thousand, five hundred dollars (\$194,500) be appropriated annually for the years 2021-2024 in subsequent Budget Estimates.
4. Reviewed and accepted the recommendations of the Board of Immigration to grant Certificates of Belonger Status:
  - a. to six (6) persons who, in accordance with section 16 (6) of the Immigration and Passport Act (revised) are the spouses of Belongers, and who have been living together with their spouses within the Territory for a period not less than five (5) years; and
  - b. to twenty-one (21) applicants, who, in the opinion of the Board, have met each of the legal requirements of Section 16 (3) of the Immigration and Passport Act (revised).
5. Reviewed and accepted the recommendations of the Board of Immigration:
  - a. to grant Certificates of Residence to thirty-six (36) persons, in accordance with Section 18(1) of the Immigration and Passport Act (as amended);
  - b. for endorsements of four (4) minors in accordance with Section 18 (2) of the Immigration and Passport Ordinance; and
  - c. directed that the Immigration Department communicates Cabinet's decision to the respective applicants in a timely manner.

6. Received the Health Emergency Operations Centre: Situation Report #35: Reopening Update and:
  - a. decided that, in principle, allowance will be made to cover the quarantine cost for a five (5) to fourteen (14) day period, if required, for all nationals, belongers and work-permit holders entering the Territory on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021;
  - b. noted its decision of 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 not to continue paying for the cost of quarantine in a government approved property for citizens, Belongers, permanent residents and work permit holders past 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021; and
  - c. decided that Seven Jewels Manor and Hotel Castle Maria be added to the list of government approved quarantine properties, to support community quarantine and other special accommodation requirements, subject to approval of the financial arrangements by the Ministry of Health and Social Development, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, as needed.
7. Approved a number of Non-Belongers land holding licence applications and an increase in an existing bank charge over Crown land leased for commercial purposes.

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**###**

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