

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

### **CABINET DECISIONS**

18<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

#### **Cabinet Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2021**

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present.

The Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and accepted the 2018 British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation's Annual Report and decided that it be laid on the table in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting in accordance with Section 22 of the British Virgin Islands Electricity Ordinance, Cap 277.
2. Approved the renewal of Mr. Cherno S. Jallow, QC as Deputy Chairman and Ms. Felice Swapp as member to the Board of the BVI International Arbitration Centre for a period of three (3) years from 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, in accordance with section 95 (1) of the BVI International Arbitration Act, 2013.
3. Decided that the Government of the Virgin Islands enter into an additional sublease agreement with the BVI International Arbitration Centre for the rental of premises located at Ritter House, Wickham's Cay II, for the establishment of the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC), a unit under the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR), and noted that the establishment of the RCC is to further assist the VISR in becoming fully compliant and to strengthen its capacity to become a major revenue earner for the Government of the Virgin Islands.
4. Approved a variation to the Cane Garden Bay Sewage Treatment Plant Project to include a temporary sewage treatment system in the amount of two hundred eight thousand five hundred sixty-nine dollars and fifty-six cents (\$208,569.56).

5. Decided that:

- a. the existing Work Permit Exemption Policy be revoked to better reflect the Government's ever-evolving strategy on Immigration and Labour reform in the Territory, and to streamline and reduce the illegal trends associated with Work Permit Exemption holders, relating to illegal work and movement throughout the Territory;
- b. the revised Policy on Work Permit Exemption be approved and take effect on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2021;
- c. all applications for Work Permit Exemptions are to be received and processed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration only, and approved by the Minister for Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration, unless otherwise instructed by the Cabinet;
- d. the revised categories of Work Permit Exemption are as follows:
  - i. Exemption by Marriage;
  - ii. Exemption by Education; and
  - iii. Exemption by Minister's Discretion.
- e. persons applying within the category of Marriage should follow the below guidelines:
  - i. an application can be made immediately following marriage to a BVI Islander or Belonger;
  - ii. an approved person will receive a fixed period of six (6) years, maximum. (At year five (5) an application for Belonger by Marriage should be made with the Immigration Department);
  - iii. stipulate the need for a letter of intent from a local employer for an applicant, who is currently unemployed and living in the Territory as a dependent of the spouse;
  - iv. applications from spouses residing outside of the Territory will be denied;
  - v. this category of exemption will be linked to a specific employer. Any change in employer/employment, prior to the expiration of the exemption, will result in the exemption being automatically cancelled; and

- vi. the awarded exemption is to be considered revoked if divorced, legally separated or residing outside of the Territory, as per Section 16(9) of the Immigration and Passport Act, for over 90 days without previous permission, provided that a work permit exemption will not be revoked if the holder has, at any time obtained a protection order against their spouse under the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act, 2011;
- f. persons applying within the category of Minister's Discretion should follow the below guidelines:
  - i. the Minister can grant an exemption of work permit to any person he/she sees as deserving, at his/her discretion;
  - ii. a person falling into this category would not be eligible for exemption by marriage;
  - iii. this category of exemption will be linked to a specific employer. Any change in employment prior to the expiration of the exemption will nullify the exemption previously awarded;
  - iv. a person is only eligible to reapply after a period of one (1) year has passed from the date of the originally denied application;
  - v. the option to apply for a renewal of an expired work permit exemption; and
  - vi. to be revoked if residing outside of the Territory, as per Section 16(9) of the Immigration and Passport Act, for over 90 days without prior permission.
- g. all outstanding applications submitted in 2020, and January to June 2021 are to be processed (approval or denial) by 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2021, under the previous policy;
- h. the following non-refundable fees for all categories of exemption will remain:
  - i. New Work Permit Exemption application fee - one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per application;

- ii. Renewal Work Permit Exemption application fee - one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per application;
  - iii. New Work Permit Exemption and Card fee - four hundred dollars (\$400.00) per application; and
  - iv. Renewal Work Permit Exemption and Card fee - four hundred dollars (\$400.00) per application.
- i. the revised Work Permit Exemption form be approved.
6. Approved a number of Non-Belonger Land Holding Licence applications and one request for permission to transfer leasehold interest in the East End Registration Section.

**Published by the Cabinet Office on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.**

**###**

**Guidelines:**

1. Cabinet decisions will be published by the Cabinet Office following confirmation of the Minutes.
2. Only a summary of the decisions will be published.
3. Cabinet discussions will not be disclosed.
4. Cabinet decisions of a sensitive nature, matters of national security, those where publication breaches regional or international conventions and those relating to personal privacy will not be disclosed.
5. Cabinet decisions will be published in the weekly issues of the Virgin Islands Official Gazette at [www.eservices.gov.vg/gazette](http://www.eservices.gov.vg/gazette).
6. Cabinet decisions will be also available on [bvi.gov.vg](http://bvi.gov.vg) and on Twitter.