

CABINET OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS - POST MEETING STATEMENT

CABINET DECISIONS **3rd February, 2021**

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG chaired the Meeting held on 3rd February, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room, Jones Building, Pasea Estate.

All Members were present.

The Cabinet

1. Reviewed and noted:
 - a. the Bill entitled, Whistleblower Act, 2021 (the "Bill"), which seeks:
 - i. to make provisions for the manner in which individuals, may in the public interest, disclose information that relates to unlawful or other illegal conduct or corrupt practices of others;
 - ii. to provide for the protection against victimisation of persons who make these disclosures; and
 - iii. to provide for a fund to reward individuals who make the disclosures; and
 - b. decided that the Premier's Office instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to vet and finalise the Bill to be resubmitted to Cabinet for approval before being introduced in the House of Assembly.
2. Reviewed the application received on behalf of White Bay Development Project Ltd. and endorsed that the company be granted a Hotel Aid Licence by the Minister for a period of ten (10) years with effect from 1st January, 2021, pursuant to Section 3 of the Hotel Aid Ordinance (Cap. 290).

3. Reviewed the Bid Evaluation Report submitted by the Technical Sub-Committee, which was approved by the Central Tenders Board (CTB); accepted the CTB's recommendation and agreed that a contract be awarded to Zane Potter for repairs to the East End/Long Look Community Centre in the amount of two hundred, ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three dollars and thirty-seven cents (\$299,853.37) and decided that the Ministry of Health and Social Development instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft the contract.
4. Considered the Bill entitled, Criminal Justice (International Cooperation) (Amendment) Act, 2021, which seeks to solidify the jurisdiction's compliance with the requirements of Recommendation 2 of the Recommendations on National Cooperation and Coordination and address an erroneous amendment made in the 2013 revision of the Act, and decided that the Bill be introduced for its first reading in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.
5. Decided that, subject to the approval of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, that the Peace Dollar be minted by Pobjoy Mint Ltd, in accordance with the five (5) year agreement between Pobjoy Mint Ltd. and the Government of the Virgin Islands.
6. Considered and approved the Bill entitled, Proliferation Financing (Prohibition) Act, 2021, which seeks to establish the necessary legal reform by repealing and replacing the Proliferation Financing (Prohibition) Act, 2009 and implementing legislative provisions needed to comply with the requirements of Recommendation 7 of the Recommendations, and decided that the Bill be introduced in the House of Assembly for its first reading at the next convenient Sitting.
7. Considered and approved the Bill entitled, Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2021, which seeks to amend the Criminal Code Act, 1997 to criminalise tax crimes as a predicate offence for money laundering required to achieve technical compliance with the requirements of Recommendation 3 of the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations, which is centred on the offence of money laundering, along its predicate offences, and decided that the Bill be introduced in the House of Assembly for its first reading at the next convenient Sitting.
8. Considered and approved the Bill entitled, "Counter-Terrorism Act, 2021, which is the creation of the Territory's domestic legislation regarding terrorist related matters, and a means of strengthening the current counter terrorism legislative regime in a manner that satisfies the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force standards for combating terrorist financing, and decided that the Bill be introduced for its first reading at the next convenient Sitting of the House of Assembly.

9. Considered and approved the Bill entitled, Drug Trafficking Offences (Amendment) Act, and decided that the Bill be introduced for its first reading in the House of Assembly at its next convenient Sitting.
10. Considered and approved the Bill entitled, Customs Management and Duties (Amendment) Act, 2021, which seeks to amend the Customs Management and Duties Act, 2010 ("the Act") in relation to matters concerning monetary declarations and decided that the Bill be introduced for its first reading in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.
11. Approved the Unemployment/Underemployment Benefit Programme Policy via the COVID-19 Phase II Economic Response Stimulus Package in the amount of ten million dollars (\$10M) by way of the \$40M grant donated by the Social Security Board and:
 - a. noted that the four million, one hundred and eight thousand, two hundred and fifty-six dollars and fifty-six cents (\$4,108,256.56) be remitted to Central Government, subject to a Resolution by the Social Security Board of Directors;
 - b. noted the one hundred ninety-seven thousand, eight hundred and twenty-six dollars and ninety-seven cents (\$197,826.97) would remain with Social Security Board for the payment of any further qualified claims until 30th June, 2021;
 - c. approved that the remitted balance of the four million, one hundred and eight thousand two hundred and fifty-six dollars and fifty-six cents (\$4,108,256.56) would be allocated to the following programme as stipulated under the 2021 Budget:
 - i. Coronavirus Prevention Expenses 26524161 - Housing Assistance, Subhead 52866202
 - d. decided that the Programme be audited by the Internal Audit Department and that the report be forwarded to the Cabinet by the Minister of Finance within one (1) month after receipt.
12. Decided:
 - a. that a period of amnesty of interests accrued on property tax be granted through 31st August, 2021;
 - b. that decision (a) be made available to property owners to pay the outstanding principal tax forthwith or agree to a payment plan with the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to liquidate the principal tax within the amnesty period;

- c. that the Ministry of Finance provide the Cabinet with an update of the outcome of this amnesty on accrued interest by 30th November, 2021; and
 - d. noted that the Financial Secretary will work with the Department of Information and Public Relations to collaborate with the Inland Revenue Department to initiate a promotional campaign ensuring that Cabinet's decision is widely circulated in an effort to inform all property owners.
13. Approved the execution of the project collaboration agreement between the Marine Conservation Society, Association of Reef Keepers, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration and the University of Exeter Centre for Ecology and Conservation, for the Darwin Plus funded project entitled, "Building Resilient, Participatory Management of Marine Biodiversity in Hurricane-prone BVI" and decided that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to vet the project collaboration agreement.
14. Decided that Ms. Barbara O'Neal be reappointed as Chairman and Ms. Leslie Ann Faulkner as a Member of the Social Security Board Appeals Tribunal representing employers and employee, respectively, for a period of two (2) years, with effect from 1st January, 2021 until 31st December, 2022.
15. Decided:
- a. that Section 2 of the Labour Code (Extension of Severance Pay Period) Order, 2020, be further amended by Order to extend the period ending on 31st January, 2021 to 28th February, 2021 and that after that date, the three-month period currently provided under the Labour Code, 2010 would be reinstated; and
 - b. that the Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft the necessary Order to be published in the Official Virgin Islands Gazette.

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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.
6. Cabinet decisions will be also available on bvi.gov.vg and on Twitter.