

THE CABINET OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS - POST MEETING STATEMENT

CABINET DECISIONS

15th and 21st September, 2021

Cabinet Meeting – 15th September, 2021

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 15th September, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present.

The Cabinet:

1. Decided:

- a. on the appointments of Mrs. Arona Forbes-Fahie as Chairman and Mrs. Janice Stoutt as member of the BVI Honours Committee from 1st September, 2021 to 31st August, 2023;
- b. that Ms. Julia Dawson, Dr. Harlan Vanterpool, Mr. Ulric Scatliffe and Mrs. Iciss Malone be re-appointed to serve as members of the BVI Honours Committee with effect from 1st July, 2020 to 30th June, 2022, and that Mr. Bennet Smith and Ms. Janice Blyden be re-appointed as members with effect from 1st January, 2020 to 31st December, 2022.

2. Noted the Situation Report #38 presented informally by the Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) - Unified Command on 6th August and the Situation Report #39 presented by the HEOC - Unified Command; and

- a. decided that persons who are to be lawfully detained be required to undergo a Covid-19 rapid test prior to being detained, unless the Attorney General advises otherwise;
- b. decided that where an unaccompanied minor who is unvaccinated or partially vaccinated arrives at a port of entry, they along with a parent or guardian must be subject to quarantine and exit testing at the same time as the unaccompanied minor;

- c. endorsed the HEOC's recommendation for the Public Health (COVID-19 Control and Suppression Measures) (No. 4) (Amendment) (No. 7) Order, 2021 to be extended to 30th September, 2021;
- d. accepted that the HEOC's recommendation for the Imposition of a Curfew Order (No. 13) Order, 2021 be extended for a further two (2) week period ending 1st October, 2021 and that the National Security Council be advised that the Order be amended that the Curfew apply between 1:00am and 5:00am;
- e. decided that following representation by night club owners and further consultation with the Environmental Health Division, agreed on the re-opening of night clubs under the following conditions:
 - i. that all staff working at night clubs are fully vaccinated; and
 - ii. that all patrons attending the night clubs are fully vaccinated and provide proof thereof.

Cabinet Meeting – 21st September, 2021

His Excellency, the Acting Governor Mr. David D. Archer, Jr., chaired the Meeting held on 21st September, 2021, in the absence of Governor John J. Rankin, CMG, who was overseas on official business. The Meeting was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present.

The Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and approved the 2019 Office of the House of Assembly's Annual Report and decided that it be laid on the table in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.
2. Decided:
 - a. to defer approving the Task Force's Draft Cruise Ship Bubble Operational Plan that sets the Territory's guidelines by which vaccinated cruise passengers can disembark the cruise ship and participate in shore excursions in a safe and organised manner for the safety of guests and residents during this COVID-19 era so that it can be further defined to provide for:

- i. enhanced standards for cruise tourism certified businesses;
and
 - ii. additional options for a more defined bubble.
- b. that since all cruise passengers and crew are fully vaccinated, they would be exempted from having to apply to enter the Territory using the BVI Gateway Portal;
- c. that as per the implications of decision (b), all fully vaccinated travellers entering the Virgin Islands would also be exempted from applying to enter using the BVI Gateway Portal provided:
 - i. that their second COVID-19 vaccine was received no less than two (2) weeks before entry to the Territory;
 - ii. that the vaccine must be a World Health Organisation approved vaccine;
 - iii. that upon entry to the Territory each vaccinated traveller must provide the results of a negative PCR test or antigen rapid test no older than five (5) days and furnish the following:
 - 1. the results of the test, which must be negative;
 - 2. provide valid proof of vaccination (card or otherwise);
and
 - 3. visitors must provide proof of medical insurance.
 - iv. must be subjected to an antigen rapid test upon arrival, and if the results of the test is negative, will not be subjected to quarantine protocols.
 - v. that each passenger carrier must verify that each vaccinated traveller, before embarkation, must provide the results of a negative PCR test or antigen rapid test no older than five (5) days and furnish the following:
 - 1. the results of the test, which must be negative;
 - 2. provide valid proof of vaccination (card or otherwise);
and
 - 3. visitors must provide proof of medical insurance.

- d. that minors 17 years and under, travelling with vaccinated parents/guardians, entering the Virgin Islands will also be exempted from applying to enter the Virgin Islands using the BVI Gateway Portal provided that:
- e. that upon entry to the Territory each minor must provide the results of a negative PCR test or antigen rapid test no older than five (5) days and furnish the following:
 - i. the results of the test, which must be negative; and in doing so the minor accompanied by the vaccinated parent/guardian will be allowed to:
 - 1. embark any carrier destined for the Virgin Islands without penalty; and
 - 2. enter the Territory without penalty.
- f. that all passengers identified in decision items (c) and (d) all applicable fees upon entry to the Territory still apply;
- g. that the Premier's Office instruct the Attorney General to make recommendations on the appropriate legislation to ensure fines for carriers of vaccinated passengers and minors accompanied by fully vaccinated parents/guardians who violate the fully vaccinated portal exemption entry protocols, whereby carriers would be fined \$10,000 for each passenger in violation of the entry protocols and separately the passenger who violates the entry protocols will be fined \$5000 or imprisonment not to exceed six (6) months, where applicable;
- h. that the following categories of persons will still be required to use the BVI Gateway Portal:
 - i. partially vaccinated;
 - ii. unvaccinated;
 - iii. unaccompanied minors who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated; and
 - iv. any other persons not covered by the fully vaccinated portal exemption entry protocols.
- i. to approve the amended Cruise COVID-19 Management Plan that sets out the protocols for the safe acceptance of passenger cruise calls during a pandemic, which replaces all normal operating procedures until the Health Emergency Operations Centre advises otherwise and the return to normal operating procedures is re-established;

- j. that decision items (b), (c) and (d) will take effect on 1st October, 2021 and noted that the BVI Tourist Board, in collaboration with the BVI Ports Authority, Director of Communications, the Environmental Health Department and Taxi Livery Commission will develop a vigorous public relations campaign to heighten the vigilance of the public and to keep them informed.

3. Decided:

- a. that all businesses and individuals who enter into a contract with Government is required to request a Good Standing Certificate and be subject to an assessment by the Inland Revenue Department and where it has been determined that taxes are outstanding, such sum owing or a portion thereof agreed to by both parties, would be deducted in accordance with Chapter 206 - Income Tax, Clause 65A;
- b. on a one (1) year grace period for businesses to produce Certificates of Good Standing and Certificates of Earnings on application to the Inland Revenue Department and requirements for Social Security and National Health Insurance in relation to work permit applications and entry permit processes; and
- c. that the Inland Revenue Department, Social Security Board and National Health Insurance present to the Cabinet within 30 days, a Joint Implementation Plan to enable the production of Good Standing Certificates within an efficient and timely manner.

4. Decided:

- a. that exceptional approval be granted to waive the tender process for the continuous engagement of Mr. Eliezer Benito Wheatley to provide consultancy diplomatic services to the Premier's Office; and
- b. to approve the renewal of the consultancy contract of Mr. Eliezer Benito Wheatley, as the Special Envoy to the Government of the Virgin Islands, for the period of two (2) years, commencing on 1st January, 2021 to 31st December, 2022, due to the outstanding performance on an international stage in previous years;
- c. that Mr. Eliezer Benito Wheatley be compensated at a rate of ten thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents (10,833.33) per month;
- d. that the Premier's Office instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to vet the contract document before signing; and

- e. that the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture Dr. the Honourable Natalio Wheatley be excused from the room from participating in the discussion of this paper after he declared a non-pecuniary (family) interest.

5. Decided:

- a. that the principal Regulations, the Road Traffic (Taxi and Livery Commission) Regulations, 1997, as amended, be incorporated into a Bill to make provisions for the Taxi and Livery Commission to be a body corporate with the powers and characteristics as follows:
 - i. the power to sue in the name of Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) as its corporate name;
 - ii. to make the Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) liable to be sued in its corporate name;
 - iii. the power for the Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) to enter into contracts in its corporate name;
 - iv. the right for the Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) to have a common seal;
 - v. the right for the Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) to acquire and hold any real or personal property for the purpose for which the Commission is constituted;
 - vi. the right to regulate Taxi and Livery Commission's procedures and business; and
 - vii. the right for the Taxi and Livery Commission to employ such staff as are necessary;
- b. that the Ministry of Transportation, Works and Utilities instruct the Attorney General's Chambers, with proper and adequate drafting instructions, to prepare the Bill to make provisions for the Taxi and Livery Commission (TLC) to be a body corporate.

- 6. Reviewed and approved the 2019 and 2020 Water and Sewerage Department's Annual Reports and decided that both be laid on the table of the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.

Published by the Cabinet Office on 30th September, 2021.

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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.
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