

THE CABINET OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS - POST MEETING STATEMENT

CABINET DECISIONS **13th, 20th and 27th September, 2023**

Cabinet Meeting – 13th September, 2023

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 13th September, 2023, which was held at the Premier's Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of Minister for Communications and Works; Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and the Attorney General, who were overseas on official business. The Solicitor General Mrs. Jo-Ann Williams-Roberts attended as the acting Attorney General.

Cabinet:

1. Reviewed the document entitled "2023 Statutory Boards Review" pursuant to Recommendation B24 of the Commissioner of Inquiry Report; and decided that it be tabled at the next convenient Sitting of the House of Assembly.
2. Decided:
 - a. that Mr. Vance Lewis be re-appointed as chairman for a period of two (2) years effective 1st February, 2023, in accordance with the Telecommunications Act, 2006; noted that Mr. Lewis will be remunerated at one thousand and eight hundred dollars (\$1,800.00) per month, to be funded by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission;
 - b. that the Ministry of Communications and Works instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft a resolution to appoint the Chairman in accordance with decision (a); and that the draft resolution be tabled in the next convenient Sitting of the House of Assembly.

Cabinet Meeting – 20th September, 2023

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 20th September, 2023, which was held at the Premier's Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of Minister for Communications and Works, who was on personal leave.

Cabinet:

1. Decided that a Public Service Management Bill be drafted to provide a robust legislative framework for the effective and efficient functioning of the Public Service; and that the Deputy Governor's Office provide drafting instructions to the Attorney General to draft the Public Service Management Bill.
2. Approved the Action Plan developed in relation to the investigation of the Statutory Boards review - Recommendation B29 of the Framework for Implementation of the Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry (Col) Report and Other Reforms; and decided that Recommendations 2, 5, 6, 8 and 10 should be advanced for inclusion in the development of statutory board policy in implementation of B25 of the Framework for the Implementation of the Col recommendations for submission to Cabinet.
3. Noted that the Public Finance Management Act, 2004 as amended in Section 36C mandates that the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) for the Territory be updated semi-annually, and that the 2023 Mid-Year MTFP Update fulfils the requirement as stated in Section 36C(3); approved the 2023 Mid-Year MTFP Update of the Government of the Virgin Islands and decided:
 - a. to send the 2023 Mid-Year MTFP Update to be tabled at the next convenient Sitting of the House of Assembly; and that the approved 2023 Mid-Year MTFP Update be submitted to the Minister of the Overseas Territories.
4. Decided:
 - a. that Memo No. 46 of 2022 be amended to include the following:
 - i. agreed that permission be granted to Columbus Centre Development Limited to surrender Instrument No. 165 of 2018 over parcel 129/1, Block 2937B, Road Town Registration Section, to allow Parcel 156, of Block 2937B, Road Town Registration Section to be amalgamated to Parcel 129, Block 2937B, Road Town Registration Section, as demarcated on Cadastral Plan 2938B, of Road Town Registration Section (see Appendix L), to form one (1) parcel;

- b. that the Ministry of Communications and Works instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft a revised Lease with similar terms and conditions as outlined in Lease No. 165/2018; and noted
 - c. that the Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade recused herself from the meeting for discussion of this paper due to a family interest in the matter.
5. Approved an application for permission to execute a payment plan with Bar Bay Estate Holdings Limited to continue to dredge the seabed and nourish/improve the beach at Bar Bay, Tortola.
 6. Approved eight (8) Non-Belongers Land Holding Licence applications.

Cabinet Meeting – 27th September, 2023

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 27th September, 2023, which was held at the Premier's Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Premier and Minister of Finance; Minister for Health and Social Development and the Attorney General, who were overseas on official business. The Solicitor General Mrs. Jo-Ann Williams-Roberts attended as the acting Attorney General.

Cabinet:

1. Noted:
 - a. that Authorised Officers continue to provide positive feedback on the Devolution Programme, having received their 2022 Devolution Reports; and
 - b. the 2023 Assessment Report supports the expansion of the HR Devolution Programme to Grade 12; and that His Excellency the Governor has agreed, in principle, to devolve authority from Grade 1 to Grade 12.
2. Reviewed and accepted the 2021 Virgin Islands Recovery and Development Agency Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements; and decided that the Report be laid on the table in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.

3. Approved publication of a Notice in the Gazette by the Minister of Finance to retroactively bring the Environmental Protection and Tourism Improvement Fund Act, 2017 into force as of 1st September, 2017; and decided that the Ministry of Finance provide drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Chambers to draft a Validation Bill to validate monies collected pursuant to the Environmental and Tourism Levy to date.
4. Reviewed the recommendations of the Board of Immigration in respect of applicants for Certificates of Belonger Status; and accepted
 - a. the recommendations of the Board of Immigration to grant Certificates of Belonger Status to twenty-two (22) 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; noted the recommendation of the Board of Immigration to not grant status on the basis of marriage, in accordance with section 16(6) of the Immigration and Passport Act (as amended) to one applicant but decided to refer the application back to the Board for further information, including whether the person and spouse lived together as husband and wife for a period of five (5) years;
 - b. the recommendations of the Board of Immigration to grant Certificates of Belonger Status to nineteen (19) applicants, who, in the opinion of the Board, have met the legal requirements of Section 16(3) of the Immigration and Passport Act (revised); and
 - c. directed that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development instruct the Immigration Department to communicate Cabinet's decision to the respective applicants in a timely manner.
5. Received the updated version of the Independent Reviewer's Report on Recommendation B33 of the Commission of Inquiry's report, inclusive of its appendices, prepared by Mr. Kedrick Malone entitled: Review of Policy and Process for Granting Residency and Belongership; and decided that the updated version of the Report be tabled in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.

6. Considered and approved, in accordance with section 95(1) of the Arbitration Act, 2013:
- a. the renewal of appointments of the following members of the BVI International Arbitration Centre Board for a term of three (3) years each, with effect from 7th September, 2023:
 - i. Messrs. John Beechey, CBE (as Chairman);
 - ii. Murray Smith, KC; and
 - iii. Mark Forte
 - b. noted that all three (3) members of the Board of the BVI IAC have expressed a willingness to continue to serve as members of the Board.

Published by the Cabinet Office on 10th October, 2023.

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

###