

THE CABINET OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS - POST MEETING STATEMENT

CABINET DECISIONS

2nd, 5th and 10th November, 2021

Cabinet Meeting – 2nd November 2021

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 2nd November, 2021. The Meeting was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration, who was overseas on official business and the Attorney General, who was on annual leave.

The Cabinet:

1. Considered and approved the Draft Recurrent Budget Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and Capital Development Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure in 2022; and decided that the Bill entitled, Appropriation (2022) Act, 2021, to provide servicing of the Recurrent and Capital Budget Expenditure in the 2022 financial year, be introduced for its first reading in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.
2. Noted that:
 - a. the Public Finance Management Act of 2012 mandates that a Medium Term Fiscal Plan for the Territory is to be prepared and updated, as a multi-year document and that the 2022-2024 Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) fulfils the requirement stated in Section 36(B)(2)(b);
 - b. by approving the 2022-2024 Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) of the Government of the Virgin Islands, there will be no breaches in any of the ratios under the Protocols for Effective Financial Management agreed to with the United Kingdom in 2012;

- c. the compliance with the ratios despite stretched resources, not only indicates the Government of the Virgin Islands' continued commitment to its fiscal responsibilities, but also to debt sustainability, while avoiding deficit spending as is the case being currently experienced by most governments worldwide significantly due to Covid-19; and
 - i. reviewed and approved the 2022-2024 Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) of the Government of the Virgin Islands;
 - ii. decided that the 2022-2024 Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP), inclusive of any amendments made by the Cabinet be tabled as the final document at the next convenient Sitting of the House of Assembly; and
 - iii. agreed that the approved 2022-2024 Medium Term Fiscal Plan be submitted to the Minister of the Overseas Territories, as a matter of priority.

Cabinet Meeting – 5th November, 2021

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 5th November, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission's Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration, who was overseas on official business.

The Cabinet:

- 1. Reviewed and approved:
 - a. the amendments to the "Cruise Protocol and Operation Plan" to allow for the following:
 - i. fully vaccinated cruise passengers who embark a cruise vessel with a negative PCR or Antigen test as stated in the Cruise Protocols and Operation Plan to have free movement throughout the Territory;
 - ii. removal of the 24-hour and on arrival testing as stated in the Cruise Protocols and Operation Plan;

- iii. fully vaccinated cruise passengers for whom the BVI is not their first port of call and who have not had an antigen test within 48 hours of arrival in the BVI, should be required to remain in the bubble and if they want to leave their bubble, be required to have an antigen test on arrival, the cost of which would be borne by the Government of the Virgin Islands;
 - iv. removal of the requirement for vaccination dates and other medical records, which are not kept by the Cruise Lines as per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws in the USA that prohibits maintaining or storing of medical records with third parties; and
 - b. decided that persons who interface with Cruise Passengers and Crew be strongly encouraged to become fully vaccinated, and if they are not fully vaccinated, be strongly encouraged to undertake bi-monthly testing; and noted that the amendments in (a)(i)(ii) and (iv) have been included in the revised plan.
- 2. Reviewed and approved the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's Annual Work Plan and Budget for 2021/2022 in accordance with Section 63 (4) of the Telecommunications Act, 2006; and decided that the documents be tabled in the House of Assembly at the next convenient Sitting.
- 3. Decided to allow fully vaccinated persons travelling to the Territory who present a valid antigen test within 48 hours of arrival and valid proof of vaccination to be exempted from entry testing for COVID-19 in the same manner that cruise passengers have been exempted.

Cabinet Meeting – 10th November, 2021

His Excellency, the Governor Mr. John J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the Meeting held on 10th November, 2021, which was held at the Financial Services Commission’s Conference Room.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Natural Resource, Labour and Immigration, who was overseas on official business.

The Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and approved:

- a. the proposal for the management strategy for the commemoration of holidays to set up working groups/committees within the relevant ministries/departments to advise Cabinet on activities to be held to commemorate the holidays and to formulate a communication strategy for the same;
- b. the composition of committees as below:
 - i. **Anniversary of the Birthday of H. Lavity Stoutt** to be chaired by the Premier's Office. The Committee members would include: Permanent Secretary (PS), Premier's Office or designate; PS/Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture or designate; PS/Deputy Governor's Office (DGO) or designate; Director of Culture or designate; Chief Information Officer or designate; Director of Virgin Islands Studies, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College or designate; a Representative from the Virgin Islands Youth Parliament and a Representative, Family of the late H. Lavity Stoutt.
 - ii. **Sovereign's Birthday** to be chaired by the Deputy Governor's Office. The Committee members would include: PS/DGO or designate; PS/Premier's Office or designate; Commissioner of Police or designate; Superintendent of Prisons or Designate; Chief Fire Officer or designate; Head of Governor's Office or designate; Protocol Officer, Governor's Office; Chief of Staff, Governor's Office; a Representative, Virgin Islands Youth Parliament; and Communications Officer/DGO.
 - iii. **Virgin Islands Day** to be chaired by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture. The Committee members would include: PS/Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture or designate; PS/Premier's Office or designate; PS/DGO or designate; Director of Culture or designate; Director of Youth Affairs and Sports or designate; Chief Information Officer or designate; Director of Virgin Islands Studies, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College or designate; and a Representative, Virgin Islands Youth Parliament.
 - iv. **Religious Holidays** (Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, and Christmas Day). Celebrations for Religious Holidays would be led by individual religious organisations.
 - v. **New Year's Day** - Celebrations for New Year's Day would be led by individual religious, cultural and business organisations.

- vi. **The Commemoration of the 1949 Great March and the Restoration of the Legislative Council holiday** to be chaired by the House of Assembly. The Committee members would include: Clerk, House of Assembly or designate; PS/Premier's Office or designate; PS/Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture or designate; Director of Culture or designate; Director of Virgin Islands Studies Unit, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College or designate; Chief Information Officer or designate; Chief Records Management Officer, Archives Unit or designate; three Sister Islands Representatives; and a Representative, Virgin Islands Youth Parliament; and
 - c. decided that the Office of the Deputy Governor commission the establishment of the committees.
- 2. Decided that the Hotel Aid Licence for Bitter End Yacht Club Limited be amended to include the additional items presented for duty-free importation in accordance with the Hotel Aid Ordinance (Cap 290).
- 3. Amended the decision taken on 5th November and:
 - a. noted the strict COVID-19 protocols that cruise ships have put in place to ensure the safest possible environment for their passengers throughout the duration of the cruise;
 - b. reviewed and approved the amendments to the "Cruise Protocol and Operation Plan" to allow for the following:
 - i. fully vaccinated cruise passengers who embark on a cruise vessel with a negative PCR or Antigen test as stated in the Cruise Protocols and Operation Plan to have free movement throughout the Territory;
 - ii. removal of the 24-hour and on arrival testing as stated in the Cruise Protocols and Operation Plan; and
 - iii. removal of the requirement for vaccination dates and other medical records, which are not kept by the Cruise Lines as per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws in the USA that prohibits maintaining or storing of medical records with third parties; and
 - c. decided that persons who interface with Cruise Passengers and Crew be strongly encouraged to become fully vaccinated, and if they are not fully vaccinated, be strongly encouraged to undertake bi-monthly testing.

4. Reviewed and accepted the Evaluation Report submitted by the Central Tenders Board (CTB) technical evaluation committee, which was approved by the CTB on 28th September, 2021; accepted the recommendation of the CTB to award E&K Trucking & Construction Services Ltd. Corporation the contract for Construction of New Social Home, Purcell Estate in the amount of two hundred and two thousand, nine hundred and thirty-nine dollars and seventy-nine cents (\$202,939.79).
5. Agreed to the following four (4) priority areas of the Public Service, which are crucial in the further development and transformation of the Public Service: Good Governance; Digital Transformation of Government; Customer Service Improvement; and Public Administration/Human Resource Management. Approved the sum of seven million dollars (\$7M) to transform the Public Service in the four (4) priority areas over a two-year period with three point nine million dollars (\$3.9M) provided in the first year, subject to funding availability, and noted:
 - a. that funding sources to ensure execution of the priority transformation areas will be considered in the 2022 budget estimates, subsequent budget estimates and if required, supplementary funding; and decided that the Deputy Governor's Office instruct the responsible Ministries/Departments to take action on the initiatives outlined.
6. Reviewed and approved:
 - a. the Maritime Law Revision Project and an estimated budget of eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000.00) to support the project, subject to budgetary approval in the 2022 budget process and identifying additional funding of four hundred thousand (\$400,000) in grant and in-kind services from local and regional partners; and decided that:
 - i. the Premier's Office instruct that a comprehensive plan, inclusive of a detailed budget, outlining the cost per phase to complete the project be prepared by the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry (VISR) and submitted to Cabinet by 31st December, 2021;
 - ii. the Attorney General's Chambers advise VISR on the most effective process for recruitment and engagement of the legal drafting team and that the Chambers assist in managing the recruitment process; and
 - iii. the VISR engage local industry partners and regional partners to assist with supporting the project in an effort to reduce the cost.

7. Noted:

- a. the availability of scholarships with Asian Universities for BVI Islanders and that the BVI Hong Kong Office is the direct contact for all partner institutions, while the Ministry of Education recommends participants for the programme through a local Asia Abroad Scholarship Committee; and
 - b. that any reciprocal activity, which might develop will be managed by a tripartite of the BVI Hong Kong Office, Ministry of Education, and H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, and that student relations on the ground will be administered by the BVI Hong Kong Office.
8. Agreed that the current COVID-19 Control and Suppression (Entry of Persons) (No.3) (Amendment) (No.5) Regulations, 2021 should be amended, as necessary, in light of the amended decision to Memo No. 422/2021 - Cruise Protocols and Operation Plan (Amendment No. 2) and noted that the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Development would liaise with the Permanent Secretary in the Premier's Office with respect to the amended decision.
9. Reviewed and accepted the Cabinet Office's Monitoring Report of the Implementation of Cabinet decisions across Ministries covering the period of 1st March to 31st December, 2019. Noted that for the reported period there was a total of three hundred and thirteen (313) Cabinet decisions of which eighty-four (84) percent was reportedly implemented by the respective Ministries; seven (7) percent was reported with an ongoing status or in the process of being implemented; seven (7) percent was reported as pending/incomplete; and two (2) percent of the decisions were either not actioned for reasons such as later withdrawn or no implementation status stated.

Published by the Cabinet Office on 18th November, 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.
6. Cabinet decisions will be also available on bvi.gov.vg and on Twitter.

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