

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

### **CABINET DECISIONS**

7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2023

#### **Cabinet Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2023**

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 at the Premier's Conference Room, Cutlass Tower.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Health and Social Development, who was overseas on official business.

Cabinet:

1. Noted and received the Report on Recommendation B31 of the Commission of Inquiry's report prepared by the Internal Audit Department entitled: Crown Land Distribution; and decided that the report be tabled in the House of Assembly at the next convenient sitting.
2. Noted that the Government's commitment regarding publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership has been updated and officially conveyed to the United Kingdom through the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The updated position reflects the Government's ongoing efforts to align with international standards and best practices while upholding individual privacy rights and facilitating legitimate business activities.
3. Noted the Donation Acceptance Policy for the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, and Sports; approved the Donation Acceptance Policy with suggested amendments for the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, and Sports; and decided that the policy be laid in the House of Assembly at the next convenient sitting.

#### **Cabinet Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2023**

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the special meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 at the Premier's Conference Room, Cutlass Tower.

All Members were present.

Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and approved the 2024-2026 Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) of the Government of the Virgin Islands; reviewed the 2022-2024 Macro-Economic Review and Outlook, which is the supporting document for the 2024-2026 MTFP; decided that the 2024-2026 MTFP, subject to Cabinet's approval, be tabled at the next convenient sitting of the House of Assembly; and agreed that the approved 2024-2026 MTFP be submitted to the Minister of the Overseas Territories, as a matter of priority.
2. Decided:
  - a. that the following persons be appointed to serve as members of the Higher Education Licensing Board for a period of three (3) years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2023:
    - i. Dr. Arlene Smith-Thompson – representative of civil society with higher education expertise;
    - ii. Mr. Glen Harrigan - representative of civil society with experience in finance or accounting
    - iii. Mr. Ian Smith - representative of civil society with business or commerce expertise, nominated by the Leader of the Opposition;
    - iv. Ms. Surbhi Williams - representative of civil society with higher education expertise;
    - v. Ms. Jamealya Fahie - a legal practitioner with not less than five (5) years' experience; and
    - vi. Dr. Derry Hodge - representative of civil society with business or commerce expertise.
    - vii. Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports (Ex-Officio)
  - b. that Dr. Arlene Smith-Thompson be appointed as Chairman and Mr. Glenn Harrigan be appointed as Deputy Chairman;
  - c. that Non-Public service members will be paid a monthly stipend for their attendance at meetings as follows: Chairman - \$700 and Members - \$500,;
  - d. that the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to prepare the resolution to be submitted to the House of Assembly at its next convenient sitting.

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## **Cabinet Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2023**

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 at the Premier's Conference Room, Cutlass Tower.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, who was away on private business.

Cabinet:

1. Reviewed and accepted the 2023 General Elections Report; and recommended that the Report be laid on the table at the next convenient sitting of the House of Assembly.
2. Noted the final version of the United Kingdom/Overseas Territories Political Declaration, which was agreed at the recently concluded Joint Ministerial Council Meeting; and approved the text of the Political Declaration so that the Territory's position can be communicated to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.
3. Reviewed the recommendations of the Board of Immigration in respect of applicants for Certificates of Residence; accepted the recommendations of the Board of Immigration to grant Certificates of Residence to sixty-one (61) persons, in accordance with Section 18(1) of the Immigration and Passport Act (as amended); accepted the recommendations of the Board of Immigration for endorsement of a minor child in accordance with Section 18 (2) of the Immigration and Passport Ordinance; and directed that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development instruct the Department of Immigration to communicate Cabinet's decision to the respective applicants in a timely manner.
4. Decided:
  - a. that the existing appointments of the Anegada Lands Development Advisory Committee's (ALDAC) Chairman and Officers be extraordinarily extended from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2024:
    - i. Chairman -Darrell A. Ruan, Jr.
    - ii. Vice Chairman -Gregory Levons, Sr.
    - iii. Treasurer -Michael Vanterpool
    - iv. Vice Treasurer -Wilford Faulkner
    - v. Secretary -Philomena Jno Marie
    - vi. Assistant Secretary -Chekada O'Neal
    - vii. Board Member -Sylvia Faulkner
    - viii. Board Member -Rondel Smith, Sr.

- b. that the stipends for the eight (8) members of the ALDAC continue to be paid on a monthly basis in tandem with the extension of their appointments; noted that a stipend for the Chairman at five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per month, and members at three hundred dollars (\$300.00) per month; and
    - c. that the ALDAC submit a final report of its term's activities to the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change via the Permanent Secretary no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.
5. Decided that permission be granted to the applicant, Little Dix Bay Hotel, L.L.C., to utilise a portion of the seabed and foreshore for installation of intake and discharge pipes to facilitate operation of a Seawater Reverse Osmosis Plant at St. Thomas Bay, Virgin Gorda.
6. Reviewed and accepted the 2017 Auditor General's Report, and the 2017 Annual Financial Statements; agreed that the 2017 Auditor General's Report on the Accounts of the Virgin Islands and the Annual Financial Statements be laid in the House of Assembly at its next convenient sitting.
7. Decided:
  - a. in accordance with Section 3 of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Act, 2016, that Mr. Phillip Fahie, Mrs. Sherri Ortiz-Fahie be appointed as Members of the Board of Directors of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Corporation for a period of three (3) years, effective 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2023; and that David Walker be appointed as Member of the Board of Directors of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Corporation for a period of four (4) years, effective 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2023;
  - b. in accordance with Section 1(1)(c) and 1(3) of the schedule of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Act, 2016, that Mr. Ian Smith be appointed as Member and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Corporation for a period of four (4) years, effective 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2023;
  - c. that the Ministry of Finance instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft the Instruments of Appointment for signature by His Excellency, the Governor and publication in the Virgin Islands Official Gazette; and noted
  - d. that the members of the Board of Directors would be paid the following monthly stipends for their attendance and participation in Board meetings and related matters as follows:
    - i. Chairman \$2,000 per month;
    - ii. External Director \$1,800 per month;
    - iii. Directors \$1,500 per month

8. Noted the salary progression for the period 2020-2022, as decided in Cabinet, will conclude at the end of December 2023; decided that the salary progression includes an additional year to capture the 2023 work year; agreed that the Government will meet all outstanding obligations related to increment payments by 2027, subject to availability of funding and barring any unforeseen circumstances; endorsed the Deputy Governor's Office (DGO) and Ministry of Finance's recommendation to the Governor to cease the current policy of paying increments and agreed that the DGO presents to Cabinet, in four (4) weeks, a policy with options to introduce a bonus scheme based on meeting expectations, exceeding expectations and providing distinguished performance; and agreed that Public Service Compensation will be reviewed every two or three years and where evidence supports an increase in salary, this is done based on affordability.
9. Decided:
  - a. that Ms. Kerrell Wilson be appointed as the member of the Taxi and Livery Commission representing Livery Operators in accordance with Section 3(1)(l) of the Road Traffic (Taxi and Livery Commission) Regulations, 1997 as amended from 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2026;
  - b. that the Ministry of Communications and Works instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to prepare the Instrument of Appointment; and noted that the Member representing the Livery Operators of the Taxi and Livery Commission will be paid a monthly stipend of seven hundred dollars (\$700.00).
10. Reviewed and accepted the 2020 British Virgin Islands Diabetes Association's Awareness and Activity Report and Audited Financial Statements; and noted that government makes an annual contribution of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to the association.
11. Reviewed and approved the Social Development Department's 2018, 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports; and decided that the reports be laid on the table of the House of Assembly at its next convenient sitting.
12. Approved two (2) Non-Belongers Land Holding Licence applications.

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## **Cabinet Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2023**

His Excellency, the Governor John, J. Rankin, CMG, chaired the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2023 at the Premier's Conference Room, Cutlass Tower.

All Members were present, with the exception of the Minister for Communications and Works and the Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, who were away on private business.

Cabinet:

1. Noted:

- a. the final report titled, "Final Compensation Review Report" to include information requested by the Cabinet related to: percent increase of salaries for the House of Assembly members; comparator data from countries without their names; comparator data for SOEs; and narrative around the cost of living in the other Overseas Territories that were used as comparators and how this can impact on the data, considering the cost of living differences;
- b. the Final Project Close report that provides a summary of the consultations held with ministries and departments, to present and describe the new salary structure and the outcomes of the project; and decided
- c. that noting the conclusion of the consultative phase with the Public Service, that the Report now be laid on the table of the House of Assembly.

2. Decided:

- a. that the Integrity in Public Life Act (No. 43 of 2021) be amended to:
  1. expand the powers of the Integrity Commission in accordance with recommendations emanating from the Independent Review of Mr. Denniston Fraser, namely:
    - i. to make inquiries and carry out investigations as necessary in order to verify and determine the accuracy of any declaration or statement of registrable interest;
    - ii. to examine the practices and procedures of public bodies in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices, except where there is a statutory duty on any person to perform that function;
    - iii. to allow for the imposition of fines for non-compliance under the Integrity in Public Life Act; and

- iv. to allow the Chairperson of the Integrity Commission to be authorised to levy such fines.
    2. allow the Integrity Commission to receive the report from the Registrar of Interests with respect to members, who are liable to suspension or to have his/her salary withheld;
    3. to change the definition of “family” to:
      - i. include parents and siblings;
      - ii. expand the meaning of “spouse” in keeping with PART IV of the Criminal Code of the Virgin Islands, which will include persons of the opposite sex living together in the circumstances of husband and wife; and
      - iii. allow child to include adopted child, stepchild and child of the family as outlined under Part IV of the Criminal Code; and
    4. to include penalties for breaches/non-compliance under the Act.
  - b. that the Deputy Governor's Office instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft the Bill.
3. Received the 2023 Report of the Constitutional Review Commission and noted the recommendations made; and decided that the Report be laid on the table at the next convenient sitting of the House of Assembly.
  4. Decided that the Hotel Aid Licence for Cotereh Corporation, be granted to include the appended list of items, in accordance with the Hotel Aid Ordinance (CAP 290).
  5. Approved the application for permission to use the seabed for the Installation of an Over-the-water Spa and Yoga Pavilion at Oil Nut Bay, Virgin Gorda.
  6. Considered and approved the Post Office (Amendment) Rules, 2023, which seeks to amend Rule 19 (3)(a) and (b) of the Post Office Rules, Cap 169; and decide:
    - a. that the Post Office (Amendment) Rules, 2023 be published in the Virgin Islands Official Gazette and thereafter laid on the table in the next sitting of the House of Assembly;
    - b. that the Ministry of Finance instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to vet the draft Statutory Rates and Changes (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Order 2023 to effect the fee increase; and

- c. that the Statutory Rates and Changes (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Order 2023 be published in the Official Gazette of the Virgin Islands and thereafter forwarded to the House of Assembly to be laid on the table at the next convenient sitting.
7. Decided that the Government of the Virgin Islands renew the lease agreement pursuant to Section 8(3)(c)(ii) of the Public Procurement Act (2021) for an initial period of five (5) years as well as the surrounding yard to house the Safe Haven Transitional, and that the Deputy Governor's Office instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to vet the lease prepared by the landlord.
8. Approved 17 Non-Belongers Land Holding Licence applications.

**Published by the Cabinet Office on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024.**

**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.

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