

**FIFTH SITTING OF THE FIRST SESSION  
OF THE FIFTH HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**



**TO BE HELD ON  
TUESDAY, 31ST OCTOBER, 2023  
AT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY CHAMBER  
ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA  
AT 10:00 A.M.**

**AMENDED #3**

**ORDER OF THE DAY**

# **ORDER OF THE DAY**

**1) Prayers**

**2) Administration of Oaths**

**3) Confirmation of Minutes**

- Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of Friday, 13th October, 2023.

**4) Announcements by the Speaker**

**5) Statements by Ministers**

**6) Presentation of Papers**

**a) The Premier and Minister of Finance to lay on the table the following documents:**

- i) 2023 – Mid-Year Fiscal Report;
- ii) 2023 Statutory Boards Review – Report from Reviewer for COI Recommendation B24 (Part II) (Review of the Social Security Board) by Mr. Nelson Samuel;
- iii) 2023 Statutory Boards Review – Report from Reviewer for COI Recommendation B24 (Review of Statutory Boards) by Mrs. Antoinette Skelton.

**7) Notices of Motions Given Orally**

- a) The Premier and Minister of Finance to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to move the Motions standing in his name under Item 9(1)(i), (iii), (v) and (vii) through x on the Order of the Day.
- b) The Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, she would seek leave to move the Motions standing in her name under Item 9(1)(ii), (iv) and (vi) the Order of the Day.

- c) The Minister for Communications and Works to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to move the Motion standing in his name under Item 9(1)(x) on the Order of the Day.
- d) The Leader of the Opposition and Territorial Member to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(i) and (ii) on the Order of the Day.
- e) The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(iii) through (vii) on the Order of the Day.
- f) The Member for the Third District to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(viii) through (x) on the Order of the Day.
- g) The Member for the Eighth District to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(xi) through (xv) on the Order of the Day
- h) The Member for the Sixth District to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(xvi) through (xviii) on the Order of the Day
- i) The Member for the Second District to give notice that, at a later stage in the proceedings, he would seek leave to ask the questions standing in his name under Item 8(xix) through (xxiii) on the Order of the Day

## 8) Questions and Answers to Questions

- i) **The Leader of the Opposition and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance provide this Honourable House with how many final judgements, within the past 8 years, have been granted against the Government of the Virgin Islands and their respective amounts. In respect to those judgments, what is the minimum and maximum quantum awarded?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with a detailed report on the status of the construction

of DDM building which includes the status of the construction, the estimated budget costs, the expenditure to date, and the proposed date of completion?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with an update on the status of the Visitors' Centre at Trellis Bay which includes the following:

- a) Estimated cost of the project.
- b) How much funding is available now.
- c) Date for commencement of construction.
- d) Proposed date of completion.

### **Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance, please provide this Honourable House with a detailed report of his government's plans for the tourism industry of this territory for the next 5 to 10 years?

- ii) **The Leader of the Opposition and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following question:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communication and Works please tell this Honourable House, what are the specific issues with water production and delivery on the island of Virgin Gorda and how does he intend to address these issues knowing the significance of Virgin Gorda as a key tourism hub which depends on a consistent supply of water?

- iii) **The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House with the end of the year swiftly approaching, when will all outstanding increment payments be paid to our hard working public servants including those who are not active? How many payments are still outstanding?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please give this Honourable House, based on his responsibility for two budgets the details of how

much revenue was collected and how much was injected for environmental protection. What percentage of this revenue was allocated to the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change? What percentage of the national budget does this figure represent?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House what are his government's plans as high priorities, and give his list in order of priority to:

- a) provide incentives to fishermen and farmers across the territory?
- b) improve environmental protection, sustainability and education?

### **Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House:

- a) What is the status of the resolution gazetted on June 30, 2023 entitled RESOLUTION APPROVING A REFERENDUM ON THE SPECIAL SUBJECT MATTER OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE REFERENDUM ACT?
- b) What is the estimated cost of holding a referendum in the territory?

### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House:

- a) The cumulative amounts of all rent and leases paid for each ministry and department not housed in the Central Administration Complex in January to December 2016?
- b) The cumulative amounts of all rent and leases paid for each ministry and department from January 2022 to December 2022?
- c) How are these expenses forecasted to decrease once the Central Administration Complex is functional?

- iv) **The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade, please give this Honourable House, details of how the government plans to address the increasing of the minimum wage in the territory and a timeline for those actions?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade, please tell this Honourable House if there are any active discussions or initiatives underway to reduce the economic burden of cost of living in the territory in particular with food prices? Please give details and timelines for such initiatives?

- v) **The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Honourable House:

- a) Given that many residents across the territory have been subjected to inadequate water supply for well over a decade, if there are any considerations being discussed to provide the residents across the territory with a schedule of water interruptions which would better allow them to plan and prepare their daily lives until a more reliable potable water solution is achieved?
- b) Could the Honourable Minister please provide an explanation as to why there continues to be an inadequate regular supply of water and what is being done to improve the distribution to the following communities:
- Virgin Gorda
  - Horse Path and Huntums Ghut
  - Purcell Estate
  - Hannah's Estate/Sea Cows Bay

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Honourable House, what if any are the requirements and/or restrictions

exist for a private entity/citizen to install a water plant (reverse osmosis or similar) for its own use in providing a steady supply of water to its tenants or guests?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Honourable House, the following as it relates to use of jet skis in the BVI:

- a) The legislation that speaks to the restricted use of jet skis in the territory.
- b) Is your government looking into addressing/lifting those restrictions?
- c) What are the challenges if any with removing the restrictions if there is one?

vi) **The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, during the 2023 Elections Campaign, there were some solutions made as follows:

- a) Increased incentives and policies for recycling
- b) Designate and develop more green public spaces; and
- c) Address the territory-wide open air burning with better waste management

Could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House whether his Government identifies with any of these as high priorities, and their plans for implementing these solutions?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House what is the government's commitment to implement an unemployment insurance plan for specific categories of wage earners understanding the financial implications experienced in having to provide assistance to those affected in the Hurricanes and Covid-19?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House given the public outcry for decades what if any progress has been made towards updating the territory's legislation on criminal sexual offenders and the implementation of a sex offenders registry? Please provide

an update on any legislative efforts, plans, or initiatives in this regard, as well as the timeline and resources allocated for its implementation?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House given the uncertainties and difficulties faced by residents of Anegada, Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke to access quality health care, what initiatives has his government taken in the last 6 months to improve this situation? What are the short, and long term plans being considered to bring a better quality of life to our people on these islands?

- vii) **The Deputy Speaker and Territorial Member to ask the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, please tell this Honourable House, how is the data collected from the Key Stage testing conducted in all schools across the territory utilized by the Ministry?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports please tell this Honourable House, what is the status of the Althea Scatliffe Primary School rebuild and when would construction commence?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, please tell this Honourable House, what is the status of the Road Town Public Library and Library services across the territory?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, please tell this Honourable House whether the government provides financial assistance to private schools, and/or assisted schools or denominational schools and if so, please provide the names of each school and the amounts granted to each from 2017 to present?



- viii) **The Member for the Third District to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House whether his government acknowledges spear fishing, commercial or otherwise in the Virgin Islands as legitimate?

- 1) If the answer is yes, can he quote for this Honourable House the section of law under which it is authorized and clearly state which type of fishing it prescribes?
- 2) If the answer is no, can he tell this Honourable House whether any efforts are being made by his administration to accommodate spear fishing, especially commercial in the Virgin Islands?

**Question 2**

Similarly, to question number one Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House whether his government acknowledges spear fishing aided with SCUBA, commercial or otherwise in the Virgin Islands as legitimate?

- a) If the answer is yes, can you quote for this Honourable House the section of law under which it is authorized and clearly state which type of fishing it prescribes?
- b) If the answer is no, can you tell this Honourable House whether any efforts are being made by your administration to accommodate spear fishing aided with SCUBA, especially commercial in the Virgin Islands?

- ix) **The Member for the Third District to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, water is being rationed on a daily basis, to the cries of many residents especially my constituents in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. Could the Minister for Communications and Works:

- a) Please tell this Honourable House why he tolerates this failure in performance by his department to deliver water? and
- b) Could he please tell this Honourable House the reasons for such failure?

## **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, the Government is obligated to pay 7Seas for 2.3 million gallons of water each day, whether government takes the water or not, provided the water is produced, or if there is a failure in production due to a fault of the Government. Could the Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Hon. House:

- a) How much money have we paid to 7Seas for this year 2023 giving the months and the dates, for water we did not take daily, **that is the quantity between what we took and the 2.3 million gallons?** And
- b) Give the reasons on each occasion for not taking the full 2.3 million gallons of water?

## **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, in response to a question submitted to this Honourable House on June 29<sup>th</sup>, at the last Sitting of this Honourable House the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works acknowledged familiarity with the poor conditions of the main road in Sea Cows Bay, especially in the area of De La Santa Bakery, and gave assurance that the poor conditions would be remedied. Madam Speaker, could the Minister please tell this Honourable House why that hasn't happened as yet?

- x) **The Member for the Third District to ask the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, in responding to parents query, and based on my own observations, I've been soliciting the assistance of the Minister for Education Culture Youth Affairs and Sports since before the beginning of the last school year, and more recently, since the opening of school this year, for the repairs / replacement of AC units at Ebenezer Thomas Primary School, so far without success. Madam Speaker, could the Minister please tell this Honourable House:

- a) How her ministry plans to address this issue? and
- b) Could she give timelines for her actions going forward until the matter is resolved?

- xi) **The Member for the Eighth District to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under his entire ministry and departments for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House if he intends to provide the just over 30k needed to fix the showers at the Long Bay Beach?

- a) If the answer is yes please say when as we're currently at the end of October?
- b) If the answer is no why not?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House if he intends to provide the just over 25k needed to make the rest room facility at Josiahs Bay beach operational, ahead of what is anticipated according to the Minister for Communications and Works to be a busy season?

- a) If the answer is yes please say when as we're at end of October?
- b) If the answer is no please advise why not?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House when the pensioners living in this Territory, who have through their blood, sweat and tears contributed significantly to making BVI what it is today and; whose modest pension emoluments have been significantly and adversely impacted by inflation; when can they expect some increase in their pensions?

- a) Would the Minister agree this is a dire situation that needs to be rectified urgently?

b) If his answer is yes, when will it be addressed?

xii) **The Member for the Eighth District to ask the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable House what her Ministry is doing to address the growing concern within the territory of insurance companies removing natural disaster and climate change coverage from policies?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable House what her Ministry is doing to address the growing concern within the territory of insurance companies doubling and in some cases tripling the cost of homeowner policies?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, I am of the opinion that the time has come for a national conversation on the issue of insurance in this country to brainstorm on the way forward. Madam speaker is the Minister and her Ministry open to such a discussion?

- a) If the answer is yes when do we expect this to take place?
- b) If the answer is no why not?

xiii) **The Member for the Eighth District to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communication and Works, please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item for the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under his entire ministry for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item for the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under Public Works Department for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item for the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under the Water and Sewage Department for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please provide this Honourable House what works were executed since the floods of October to clean the ghuts and roadways in District 8 despite the constant requests of the district representative before and after?

**Question 5**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please provide this Honourable House what works were executed prior to the floods of October to clean the ghuts and roadways in District 8 despite the constant requests of the district representative verbally, in the house and in writing?

**Question 6**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please provide this house with the designs to fix both the lower and upper Shepard Hill undermine roads?

**Question 7**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works, please tell this house if the upper Shepard Hill undermine road is barricaded and closed off until it is repaired?

- xiv) **The Member for the Eighth District to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under his entire ministry and departments for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please give this Honourable House:

- a) A detailed breakdown of the monies spent to purchase property by the social security board for similar housing initiatives like the Joe Hill Manor project and other land purchases?
- b) Give the cumulative amount spent property purchase plus the amount spent on the Joes Manor Project to date?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House:

- a) If the 10 million dollars approved in the SAP in 2022 by the HOA was ever forwarded to Social Security and NHI to clear the areas from central Government?
- b) If the answer in no, why not? Please give the explanation giving to this Honourable House?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House:

- a) How much does NHI currently owe providers for services rendered?
- b) What NHI's current receivables and the source of receivables?

### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable if there is a provider agreement in place between the providers and NHI?

- a) If the answer is no, why not?
- b) What is being done to address this?

### **Question 6**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable if a provider agreement ever been in place since the inception of NHI?

- a) If the answer is no, why not?
- b) If the answer is yes please provide the details of same and when did it expire?

### **Question 7**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable the following?

- a) Give a breakdown of all the services NHI pay for and the cost it pays for each?
- b) Give a breakdown of what is charged by the local service providers for each service where it is beyond what NHI pays who covers the excess amount?

### **Question 8**

Madam Speaker the BVI has benefited from the services of the Cuban Doctors provided to the HAS since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic. The Dialysis Unit at the HSA was able to have access to a resident Nephrologist providing specialist care to the ever increasing number of Dialysis patients. Will the Honourable Minister of Health please tell this Honourable house what efforts if any, he has made to address the growing concerns of the territories dialysis patients over the loss of this specialist medical care later this month and what is being done to prevent a deterioration of the level of car patients are grown accustomed to?

- xv) **The Member for the Eighth District to ask the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports please provide this Honourable House with the following information?

- a) All amounts budgeted and spent per each line item the projects and or initiatives for 2023 under his entire ministry and departments for capital or recurrent?
- b) Provide the cumulative amount budgeted and the amount unspent to date?

- xvi) **The Member for the Sixth District to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister for Finance, please tell this Honourable House how much money in total was distributed in grants (educational, Covid 19, farmers and fisherfolk etc.) by his government from February 2019 to present and provide the breakdown for each category for the same period?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House how much money will be paid in total to Legislators from the Fourth House of Assembly who were not returned to the Fifth House of Assembly under section 3 (2a) of the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service)(Amendment) Act, 2021?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House how much revenue was budgeted for the 2022-2023 financial year and how much has the Territory collected to date?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House what new revenue raising initiatives were provided for in the annual budget for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 by his government and how much money was collected under each of those initiatives on the respective years?



### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker could the Premier and Minister of Finance, please tell this Honourable House the total number of overnight tourists, cruise passengers and day trippers that visited the Territory for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 to date?

### **Question 6**

Madam Speaker could the Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with a copy of the Territory's tourism plan for the 2023-2024 tourist season.

- (a) Could he specifically provide the full details of the marketing plan and how much has been or will be provided to execute this marketing plan?
- (b) Could he also state how much money he will asking the House of Assembly to approve for the BVI Tourist Board in the 2023-2024 budget exercises?
- (c) Could he state when the Tourist Board will have a permanent office from which to carry out its mandate?

### **Question 7**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with a copy of the Business Plan that informed the design, size and cost of the proposed new West End Ferry Terminal? Could he also advise of the cost for construction of this facility and how long will it take the government to realize its return on the investment?

### **Question 8**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance, please advise this Honourable House if he intends to provide a hospitality center at Trellis Bay to accommodate the residents of Virgin Gorda and the tourist who use Trellis Bay as a means to get to Virgin Gorda for their vacation? Could he make a commitment to ensure that provisions for this is made in the 2023-2024 budget?

### **Question 9**

Madam Speaker, local businesses continue to have a difficult time financially as result of a number of recent events that have affected them significantly including the Hurricanes of 2017, Covid-19 Pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the sluggish local economy, the increase in food prices and other costs of doing business etc., could the Premier and Minister of Finance state categorically whether he will or will not make

provisions for soft loans and grants in this 2023-2024 Budget exercises so that local businesses could get financial assistance through the National Business Bureau?

- (a) Could he also support the undertaking given by the Minister of Trade that a National Business Bureau with the provisions and finances to provide financial assistance to businesses will be up and running and ready to serve in January 2024?

### **Question 10**

Madam Speaker, we have been experiencing a strong crime wave in the Territory recently with gun violence, burglaries etc. The intervention of the police is reactionary in nature following the occurrence of the criminal events. Could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House if his government has sought to find out the root causes for this increase in crime? Could he state the root causes that they have identified and what are their plans to address them?

- (a) Could he state whether he thinks the sluggish economy may be a factor in the rise in criminal activity and if he thinks not, why is he of that view?
- (b) Could he state whether he is concerned that if the criminal activity is not brought under control that it could affect the country's tourism product and if so, how does he intends to spare the country from the negative publicity associated with high crime?

### **Question 11**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please provide a full account of any plans that his government has to address the issue of homelessness and the increasing difficulties that ordinary citizens are facing each month to pay for house rent in the Territory?

### **Question 12**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House how much money has been spent on overseas Travel, accommodations and other associated expenses by his government from February 2019 to date? Could he also provide a breakdown by Ministry for the same period?

### **Question 13**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House how many government employees will be eligible for retirement at 25 years and 33 1/3 years respectively within the next 5 years and 10 years' marks? Could he also advise on the pension costs to government at the two intervals and what plans the

government, with the requisite timelines for each to address the growing pensions cost on the government?

**Question 14**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please advise this Honourable House of the current situation with the Ellis Thomas Downs and when was the last time that he met with the landowners to resolve the present dispute? Could he also advise when the people of the Territory could expect to see horse racing back at that location?

**Question 15**

Madam Speaker, U.S. Health Officials have recommended to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration that marijuana be classified as a lower-risk drug (removing it from Schedule one to a Schedule three drug), could the Premier and Minister of Finance advise if his government has any plans to decriminalize the use of small quantities of marijuana for recreational use with the appropriate safeguards in place? Could he advise if his government since taking office in 2019 ever attempted to decriminalize small quantities of marijuana for recreational use and what impediments if any did, they faced in achieving this?

**Question 16**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please advise this Honourable House of the conditions for denial of entry for BVI Passport Holders through the USVI-BVI Waiver Initiative to access the U.S. Mainland?

- (a) Could he provide a copy of the policy document and other communications between the two governments which state the conditions under which BVI Passport Holders cannot avail themselves of the travel benefits contained in the waiver program?

**Question 17**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please advise this Honourable House if he is aware that persons who may have been fined by the Courts for possessing small quantities of Marijuana for recreational use are being denied the opportunity to enter the U.S through the USVI-BVI waiver Initiative? Could he advise whether the denial for this reason is being enforced by the USVI authorities or the BVI authorities?

- (a) Could he also advise whether he is aware of the complaints being made by citizens with spent convictions (anywhere from 5-7 years for most offences) that they are being denied the opportunity to avail themselves of the benefits

of the waiver program? Also, could he state whether this purported denial is being imposed by the USVI authorities and provide documentary proof of the same?

### **Question 18**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance, please tell this Honourable House whether the assigned timelines for the various recommendations from the COI Report were imposed by the UK government officials or was it the BVI government headed by the Honourable Premier that presented those deadlines to the UK officials?

- (a) If the deadlines were made by the BVI Government, could he advise how he decided on the various deadlines for the implementation of the recommendations and whether there was consultation with the public before acceptance and presentation of the deadlines? If there was no consultation with the public, then could he state why not and with whom did he consult to arrive at the various deadlines?
- (b) Clearly, some of the accepted recommendations have significantly slowed down the government's ability to effectively deliver services to its people such as the procurement process, the social assistance programs and just government's general ability to assist in stimulating the economy. Could the Premier indicate whether these matters are a concern for him and his plans to improve upon them?

### **Question 19**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House what in his view were the main reasons why the UK decided not to immediately partially suspend the Constitution of the Virgin Islands as recommended in the COI report?

- (a) Could he state what technical support if any has the BVI received from the UK since the COI Report to address the many deficiencies that were highlighted?
- (b) Could he provide a breakdown of the cost to the BVI taxpayers to date as a result of the COI Report?

### **Question 20**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House how many consultants are currently retained by each government ministry and the total annual contracted cost for all consultants? Could he also advise how many of these consultants are political consultants and state the salary being paid to each one by job title?

**Question 21**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House at what stage is the process of salary reviews for Government employees and when does he expect to have this new salary review payment in effect?

- (a) Could he state whether all outstanding increments have been paid to civil servants and if not, when will they be paid?

**Question 22**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please provide details of the government's plans to increase the minimum wage in the Territory? Could he specifically explain what factors have the government considered in their decision to raise the minimum wage?

**Question 23**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House what his government is currently doing to reduce the cost of living in the Territory and what steps will they put in place, with timelines for each, to ensure that cost of living does not continue to arbitrarily increase in the BVI thereby causing the expected salary increases for civil servants and the expected increase in the minimum wage to be of no effect in improving the lives of the people?

**Question 24**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance, please explain to this Honourable House why is it necessary to employ a consultant to boost the government's RATED program?

- (a) Could he state whether this consultant is expected to be a local person?
- (b) How much will this consultant be paid?
- (c) Is it that he has no confidence in his own Ministry to fix whatever challenges the program may be experiencing?

**Question 25**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance, please tell this Honourable House what is the rationale for making what appears to be a blanket policy that citizens from age 65, who are unemployed or under-employed, regardless of health and ability, cannot participate in certain job exercises under the RATED

program and state if he doesn't see this policy as discrimination on the basis of age? If he doesn't think that this practice is discriminatory then state, why he is of that view?

### **Question 26**

Madam Speaker, could the Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House when the Bill to establish the Human Rights Commission provided for in the Virgin Islands Constitutional order 2007 will be brought to this Honourable House for consideration?

- (a) Could he state why the Bill has not been brought? What is his government's apprehension?
- (b) Also, could he state what he suggests persons whose rights have been abrogated for example, as recent as during the Covid 19 Pandemic with people being threatened with their livelihood to take the vaccine, but do not have the financial ability to access the courts ought to do?

xvii) **The Member for the Sixth District to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Honourable House if his ministry has a schedule for road works by districts in place since the commissioning of the new asphalt plant? Could he provide this Honourable House with a copy of that schedule if it exists?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister of Communication and Works, please tell this Honourable House when repair works to the road in the Baughers Bay above the Millicent Mercer Recreation Field will begin?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Communication and Works, please tell this Honourable House what is his government's plan to address the electricity supply situation that forces the water plant to go off the electrical grid and thereby affect the availability of potable water to the residents of the BVI?

- (a) Could the Minister advise whether Seven Seas still must be paid for water that was not produced during the period when they are taken off the electrical grid?

- xviii) **The Member for the Sixth District to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House if his Ministry intends to conduct a study into the high rate and possible causes for the increase in cancer cases in the BVI?

- (a) If his Ministry intends to carry out a study could he state when it will commence?
- (b) Given the numerous deaths that have been caused by this dreadful disease could the Minister state why a study was not done already into this?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House when the derelict boats and barges that currently litter the shoreline of parts of District 6 will be removed?

- (a) State what steps if any has, he already taken to address this problem in District 6.

- xix) **The Member for the Second District to ask the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, from the sitting of the house where questions should have been asked on June 23, 2023 but weren't until some three months later, I asked the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance the following question: It has been recorded and echoed throughout the Virgin Islands and by extension the world, how important Tourism is as the second pillar of the Economy to the Territory of the Virgin Islands, by the current Minister of Tourism and his government. Could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance and Tourism please tell this Honourable House the following:

- 1. The total dollar amount and percentage of revenue received for 2021 and 2022 from tourism in:
  - a) In Tortola
  - b) In Anegada
  - c) In Jost Van Dyke

- d) In Virgin Gorda to which he stated that he was not sure how to answer the question and thought that I should clarify the question for him. I have done my best to do so and now bring back the question.

Madam Speaker, it has been recorded and echoed through the Virgin Islands and by extension the world, how important Tourism is as the second pillar of the economy to the Territory by the Premier and his government. Could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please give this Honourable house the total amount of revenue earned for the tourism industry for the years ending Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 and 2022 respectively? And could he please give a breakdown of the of the same amount for the four main islands namely;

Tortola?  
Anegada?  
Virgin Gorda?  
Jost Van Dyke?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance and Tourism please tell this Honourable House from the two budgets his administration has been responsible for, and now approaching a third budget, what is the marketing and development plan for Tourism in the Territory as a whole? and

- a) Provide specific marketing strategies for the four main islands listed in question one?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please give this this Honourable House the status of the Brewer's Bay Restroom and Waste Water Facility?

- a) If it is opened and functioning?  
b) If not, why not?  
c) Give the details and cost of what is needed to have the facility opened and functional to serve the community and visitors alike as we embark on another tourist season?

### **Question 4**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance tell this Honourable House when he intends to address the issues of the Jost Van Dyke



Restroom facility in Great Harbour to cater to visitors in what is expected to be a very busy tourism season?

- a) What is the expected date for works to be completed?

### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance tell this Honourable House when he intends to address the issues at the Cane Garden Bay Beach Restroom facility to cater to visitors in what is expected to be a very busy tourism season?

- a) What is the expected date for works to be completed?

### **Question 6**

Madam Speaker, when visiting the beautiful island of Jost Van Dyke, the first thing that you encounter is a bunch of tents that have been placed there since the hurricanes of 2017, which is unsightly and unpleasant for tourist to be under as they have to wait to clear immigration and customs. On the last sitting, I noted to the Premier the bottle neck that is created when the USVI Ferry meets the JVD Ferry and the Cruise passengers together with day trippers and sometimes persons having to stand in the sun and or get wet in the rain because there is not enough room for them to be placed under these tents. Could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance and Tourism please tell this Honourable House the plan to address this problem?

- a) When will the people see action taken place?
- b) How much longer will they have to endure this discomfort in a pristine tourist destination?

### **Question 7**

Madam Speaker, since the Hurricanes of 2017 and the increased evidence of climate change, the war in Ukraine, the effects of the shut downs from covid 19; we know how important it is for us to have some form of food security as a Territory. Would the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please provide this Honourable House with his plan to create a sustainable food production system?

- a) What is currently being provided to assist farmers to grow crops?
- b) What is currently being provided to assist farmers with the production of livestock?

- c) What is currently being provided to assist commercial fisher folk to provide food and implement measures to help with the bio diversification of the blue economy?

### **Question 8**

Madam Speaker, I believe that we in the BVI understand as the rest of the world does that we have a very narrow window to act to limit global climate change to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, which has been identified as critical for small islands to survive and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. There is at least a greater than 50% likelihood that global warming will reach or exceed 1.5°C in the near-term, even for the very low greenhouse gas emissions scenario. Evidence shows that global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate. Could the Premier and Minister of Finance Please provide this Honourable House with the detailed plan for the Territory to mitigate against the effects of climate change and the risk of irreversible loss of many marine and coastal ecosystems increases with global warming, especially at 2°C or more?

- a) What is the plan to educate the public on the role they could play to achieve this plan?

### **Question 9**

I again echo tourism being the second pillar of our economy and as a tourist destination, we should make it as inviting as possible for persons to visit our shores and contribute towards our economy; Madam Speaker could the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance please tell this Honourable House what he plans to do to address the provocative cost for persons traveling to and leaving the Territory by:

- a) Sea? and
- b) By Air?

- xx) **The Member for the Second District to ask the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade tell this Honourable house if the digital platform for the processing of work permits has been implemented?

- a) If not, why not?
- b) When will it be implemented?

- c) What is the cost of the platform?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, it has been stated that the processing of work permits usually should take 4-6 weeks for processing. Could the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable house if that is her experience since taken office as minister?

- a) If not, what why not?  
b) What is she doing to address the issue?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, a vision cast by the late Honourable H.L. Stoutt dictated the need for the people of the Virgin Islands to be educated and be developed to take on the leadership roles in the different industries in this Territory some 30+ years ago and it was realized for a period of time. Now we see more and more educated Virgin Islanders but fewer of us in leadership roles. Could the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services and Trade please tell this Honourable House what she plans to do to ensure this once again becomes our reality in the workforce of the Territory?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker. Financial Services has been proven to be the main economic pillar that drives the revenue of the BVI and provides employment for hundreds if not thousands within that sector. At the leadership level however, there is a huge disparity in the number of expatriate workers as compared to BVI Islanders which have not just the education and the experience to be in the positions but are somehow over looked and placed in mid-level positions. Madam Speaker, could the Deputy Premier please tell this Honourable house if she;

- a) Knows this to be the case in this industry?  
b) Has she had and discussions regarding how we could address this situation?  
And  
c) How soon can we expect to see action taken to have more qualified Virgin Islanders in leadership and management roles?

**Question 5**

Madam Speaker, the BVI is identified as the sailing capital of the world. We have led and continue to lead in sailing industry for decades. There however seems to be a shift

in the amount of local captains, chefs and crew being employed or given an opportunity to be on charter as compared to persons who may be on work permit or contracted. Would the Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable House how she plans to address this growing problem and bring balance to an already unbalanced situation?

### **Question 6**

Madam Speaker could the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable House the status of the Labour Tribunal?

- a) Who is the Chair of the Tribunal and when were they appointed?
- b) How many cases have been dealt with since she was appointed minister?
- c) How many cases are before the tribunal?
- d) Is there adequate staff for the tribunal to function in accordance to the Virgin Islands Labour Code 2010?

### **Question 7**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade please tell this Honourable House when was the last comprehensive policy on international migration for employment completed?

- a) When does she expect to have the review completed?

xxi) **The Member for the Second District to ask the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works the following questions:**

### **Question 1**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works please state for this Honourable House the Amount of funding that he is requesting in the upcoming 2024 budget cycle to address the issues regarding persons not being able to get a regular supply of portable water in the areas of Challwell, Great Mountain, Brewer's Bay, Meyers, Luck Hill, New Bush, Cane Garden Bay, Mayaba, Mt. Healthy and Jost Van Dyke?

### **Question 2**

Madam Speaker, there has been numerous pictures and videos circulating especially over the last two years with the urgent attention needed to fix the Jost Van Dyke Ferry Dock which is an official port of entry for the Virgin

Islands. Would the Minister for Communications and Works please tell this Honourable House if;

- 1) He has taken any steps to assess the gravity of the situation?
- 2) If not, why not?
- 3) If he has, could he please share the plans and costing associated with fixing the dock?
- 4) Could he provide a timeline of when these works are expected to commence? And
- 5) What is the proposed alternative entry point for residents and visitors to the Island of JVD once works have commenced?

### **Question 3**

Madam Speaker, on the occasion of the last sitting where questions were posed to the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works by myself, the Minister stated that residents of the Second District specifically in the areas of Great Mountain to Enis Adams Primary, Brewer's Bay and Mt. Healthy, Jost Van Dyke and Cane Garden Bay should see roads completed after the new asphalt plant had been committed by PWD. Madam Speaker, it has been over a month now; would the Minister please give this Honourable House and the people of my community a timeline of when works would be completed?

### **Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works tell this Honourable House when he intends to provide the incredible team of Water & Sewerage and the incredible team from Public Works Jost Van Dyke Crews with a permanent and suitable environment to work from since both buildings were completely destroyed since the hurricanes of 2017 some six years ago, who have shown unwavering resilience and dedication to their jobs through these challenging times?

### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Minister for Communications and Works tell this Honourable House when he intends to have street lights installed on the ridge road that leads from Chalwell Estate to Stoutt's Lookout?

- xxii) **The Member for the Second District to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please provide this Honourable House with detailed and comprehensive list of staffing positions necessary to make the BVIHSA function at full capacity?

- a) How many posts of doctors are unfilled?
- b) How many posts of nurses are unfilled?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House if the brigade Cuban Doctors are still serving at the BVI HSA?

- a) If not when did leave? and
- b) Have their posts been filled by new Doctors?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Development please tell this Honourable House the reason so many doctors and nurses are leaving the HSA? and,

- a) provide a report of how many doctors have left from 2021 to present
- b) provide a report of how many nurses have left from 2021 to present
- c) state how many from (a) and (b) above have been replaced over the two-year period?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, it was reported that a private practice physician recorded seeing over 300 patients struck by cancer in three years; Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Health and Social Development tell this Honourable House what is the total number of Cancer patients in the Territory for the last three years?

- a) What is causing this increase?

- b) What is being done to educate the populous about it?
- c) What is being done to address this increase?

xxiii) **The Member for the Second District to ask the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports the following questions:**

**Question 1**

Madam Speaker, would the Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports provide this Honourable House with a copy of the Sports Policy that governs how we support our professional athletes who represent the Territory and excel in their different areas of sports?

- a) Track & Field?
- b) Swimming?
- c) Sailing?
- d) Basketball?
- e) Soccer?
- f) Tennis?
- g) Baseball?

**Question 2**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports tell this Honourable House what she plans to do to address the increasing number of fights and violence in our schools?

**Question 3**

Madam Speaker, the report a few weeks ago regarding someone entering the campus with a firearm and causing mayhem at the ESHS is something none of us would want to ever have happen again in the future; Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports please tell this Honourable House what measures have been put in place to ensure another incident like this does not occur?

**Question 4**

Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports please explain to this Honourable House the protocol for the evacuation of students in a situation like number 3 above?

### **Question 5**

Madam Speaker, would the Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports please tell this Honourable House when the students of the Jost Van Dyke Primary School are expected to occupy their new campus?

- a) How many rooms are in the new school?
- b) Will all rooms be fully functional and furnished by then?
- c) If not, why not?

### **Question 6**

Madam Speaker, could the Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports tell this Honourable House if the All rooms at the New JVD Primary School are air conditioned?

- a) If not, could she please state which rooms are and which rooms are not?

## **9) Public Business**

### **1) Government Business**

#### **Introduction and First Reading**

- i) The Premier and Minister of Finance to move a motion for the Introduction and First Reading of the Bill entitled, “**Jury (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2023**”;
- ii) The Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade to move a motion for the Introduction and First Reading of the Bill entitled, “**Virgin Islands Trade Commission Act (Suspensory) Act, 2023**”;

#### **Suspension of Standing Order 52(2)**

- iii) The Premier and Minister of Finance to move a motion for the Suspension of Standing Order 52(2) to allow for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Jury (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2023**”;
- iv) The Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade to move a motion for the Suspension of Standing Order 52(2) to allow for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Virgin Islands Trade Commission Act (Suspensory) Act, 2023**”;



## **Second and Third Readings**

- v) The Premier and Minister of Finance to move a motion for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Jury (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2023**”;
- vi) The Deputy Premier and Minister for Financial Services, Labour and Trade to move a motion for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Virgin Islands Trade Commission Act (Suspensory) Act, 2023**”;
- vii) The Premier and Minister of Finance to move a motion for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Magistrate’s Code of Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2023**”;
- viii) The Premier and Minister of Finance to move a motion for the Second and Third Readings of the Bill entitled, “**Jury (Amendment) Bill, 2023**”.
- ix) **The Premier and Minister of Finance to move the following motion:**

**WHEREAS** it is provided under Standing Order 72(1)(a) that there shall be a Standing Select Committee known as the Public Accounts Committee;

**WHEREAS** it is also provided under Standing Order 72 that the Standing Select Committees shall be nominated by the Speaker as soon as may be practicable after the beginning of each House of Assembly and the Speaker has done so;

**WHEREAS** it is further provided under Standing Order 72 as read with Standing Order 73 that the Public Accounts Committee shall consist of not more than seven (7) and not less than three (3) Members, inclusive of the Member who is Chairman thereof;

**WHEREAS** it is provided in Standing Order 73(2) that the Chairman of the Committee shall be the Leader of the Opposition;

**WHEREAS** the functions of the Committee are to consider, report and make proposals on matters relating to public accounts in accordance with all the powers thereunto enabling;

**WHEREAS** it is provided in Standing Order 80(6) that subject to any order of the House or resolution of the Committee, the sittings of a Select Committee shall be held in private;

**AND WHEREAS** sittings of the Public Accounts Committees may be held in public in accordance with Standing Order 80(6);

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands that the following shall be members of the Public Accounts Committee and perform the functions thereof:

Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton (Chairman)  
Hon. Stacy Mather, MBE  
Hon. Julian Fraser  
Hon. Marlon A. Penn  
Hon. Myron W. Walwyn  
Hon. Melvin M. Turnbull

- x) **The Minister for Communications and Works to move the following motion:**

**WHEREAS** section 7(1) and (2) of the Telecommunications Act, 2006 (No. 10 of 2006) provides for the establishment of a Board of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (“the Commission”), comprising a minimum of three and a maximum of five Commissioners;

**WHEREAS** section 7(3) of the said Act provides that the Minister with responsibility for telecommunications shall, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, recommend to the Cabinet the appointment of one of the Commissioners as Chairman and another as Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Commission and that such appointment shall be subject to the approval of the House of Assembly by resolution;

**AND WHEREAS** the Minister with responsibility for telecommunications has, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, recommended to the Cabinet the following appointment:

Mr. Vance Lewis (Chairman);

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands approves the appointment of Mr. Vance Lewis as Chairman of the Board of the Commission for a period of two (2) years with effect from the 1st day of February, 2023.

2) **Private Members Business**

10) **Other Business**

11) **Adjournment**