



**Virgin Islands Legislature
Committee on Finance
Budget Hearing
July 19, 2016**

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Good afternoon Senator Graham and other members of the Finance Committee:

At this time, I would like to introduce the other members of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee (VIOC) Executive Board who are present.

On May 4, 2016 the VIOC office submitted to the Virgin Islands Legislature Post Audit Division a statement of our activities for the fiscal year from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 and October 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016. The following attachments were also included, Attachment #1: VIOC Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2015, Attachment #2: The VIOC Financial Report for October 1 2015 to April 30, 2016, and Attachment #3: The Projected Budget for Fiscal Year 2017.

In addition, at the request of the Post Audit Office, I submitted a list of Financial Assistance given to Federations for FY 2016 on July 11, 2015.

The VIOC thanks the Virgin Islands Government for the annual appropriation. Funds received from Government are used to assist Federations in qualifying athletes and teams to participate in upcoming Games and also for the development of young athletes. We are also grateful for the funds from the RACINO Bill. These two Government sources are channeled to our athletes as Training Grants and to our Federations for training and competition. To date we have received \$93,100.00 of the appropriated \$ 186,200.00, which we greatly need in our preparation for the Rio Olympics and we have not received \$15,000.00 from the Casino Revenue Fund which was approved in December 2015.

This past year our elite athletes have been attending competitions in hopes of qualifying for the Rio Olympic Games in individual sports. To date we have seven athletes that have met the minimum qualifying standards to participate in the Rio Olympic Games: Cy Thompson in Sailing (laser class); Clayton Laurent in Boxing (super heavyweight); In Track we have Laverne Jones (200m), Eddie Lovett (110m hurdles), and



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Muhammad Halim (triple jump); and in Swimming Caylee Watson (100m backstroke) and Rex Tullius (200m backstroke). These seven athletes along with their coaches and VIOC support staff will constitute our Olympic delegation to Rio.

We have also given financial support our junior athletes in track & field, swimming, sailing, baseball, volleyball, and basketball as well as our senior athletes in individual and team sports in their quest to qualify for future Games. Our next Games after the Olympics is the 2018 Central American & Caribbean (CAC) Games and the men and women basketball teams have already qualified for them and I expect the baseball team to also qualify. With the addition of the team sports our delegation size should be around 110. The VIOC is responsible for airfare, team uniforms and accommodations to attend these Games as well as assist our Federations in training. We therefore request an appropriation of \$300,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2017 from the Virgin Islands Government for the VIOC to continue to support our 24 member Federations to provide funds for training and competition opportunities for all our athletes as well as have funds to take the entire delegation of athletes to the CAC Games in Columbia.

On the administrative side we were audited by Price Waterhouse Cooper for the International Olympic Committee (IOC). We are still working on revising our Constitution. We are also continuously submitting proposals for IOC funds and Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) funds. Receiving these funds allows us to assist the Federations in their Junior development program and athletes preparing and attempting to qualify to represent the Virgin Islands in international competitions. IOC funds are also available for Coaches Technical Courses, Team Support Grants, Development of Sports Structure, Athlete Preparation, Administrative Grants, and Special Projects.

We have stepped up our fundraising efforts. It began with the launching of a new VIOC Logo on April 12. The VIOC and MLB Creative entered in to a partnership and together created the new logo as well as receive marketing advice. We have also partnered with McDonald's and a VIOC Golf Tournament fund raiser was held July 17th. We have conducted a beach clean-up and held events during Olympic Month (June) that promote a healthy lifestyle in building a healthier more active society with events in 3x3 basketball, beach volleyball, a cycling race and running events. A Poster Contest for school aged children was held as well as a Sport Photography contest open to amateur photographers in the Virgin Islands. The VIOC also circulates a newsletter as well as host a weekly radio program in our efforts to be better recognized and promote our



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“Sport for Life” message in our community. The VIOC is presently collaborating with the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation in organizing the V.I. Youth Sports Festival.

The VIOC and our member Federations, can play a major role in the economic development of the Virgin Islands. This fiscal year our Federations held the following events:

- December 4-6, 2015 the Sailing Federation held the Carlos Aguilar Match Racing in the St. Thomas harbor.
- January 10, 2016 the Swimming Federation conducted the Open Beach Mile Swim in St. Croix.
- March 24-28, 2016 the Chess Federation hosted the CARIFTA JR. Chess Championship in St. Croix.
- March 25-27, 2016 the Sailing Federation hosted the St. Thomas International Regatta.
- March 26, 2016 the Soccer Federation hosted a team from Grenada in a FIFA Qualifier Home and Away Match.
- June 4, 2016 the Soccer Federation held a Qualifier game against Guyana in St. Thomas.
- June 17-20, 2016 the Sailing Federation held the International Optimist Regatta in St. Thomas.
- July 15-19, 2016 the Soccer Federation is hosting the Caribbean Football Union Boy’s U-17 Tournament in St. Thomas.
- August 5-8, 2016 the Volleyball Federation will hold a FIVB World Championship Qualification Tournament in St. Croix.

Additionally, Federation members have held competition against neighboring islands as well as interisland competitions. Sport tourism is a resource we need to invest in. The need to complete Government projects as they pertain to sports is very important for the development of our economy. Our member Federations can submit proposals to bring events to our islands, but to bid for these events we must have facilities that meet International Federation standards. Events associated to sports can bring in much needed financial resources.

This year we are celebrating 50 years of service to our athletes on September 17, 2016. We will be honoring our founding fathers and honorary members as well as the athletes who represented the Virgin Islands at our first Games in 1966 and our lone Olympic medalist, Peter Holmberg, who won a silver medal at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea.



Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Angel L. Morales
President, Virgin Islands Olympic Committee

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