

Virgin Islands Public Broadcasting System  
**FY 2025 BUDGET HEARING PRESENTATION**

*Submitted by: Tanya-Marie Singh, Chief Executive Officer  
July 15, 2024*

GOOD DAY SENATOR NOVELLE FRANCIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE 36<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. I AM TANYA-MARIE SINGH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM. I AM HERE TODAY TO RESPECTFULLY REQUEST YOUR SUPPORT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM'S 2025 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,431,902.

TODAY IN THE WELL, I HAVE WITH ME, NEDRA THOMAS, THE SYSTEM'S CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, MARIE WHITE, SENIOR FINANCIAL OFFICER, KIA-T'NIQUE THOMAS, DISASTER RECOVERY SPECIALIST, ROLDA MASON, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, AND OUR INTERIM DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING, EUNELL MADURO.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM CONTINUES TO BE THE PBS (PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE) MEMBER STATION IN THE TERRITORY. WTJX-TV IS ONE OF 336 INDEPENDENT STATIONS THAT POOL OUR RESOURCES, COMBINE OUR TALENTS, AND ALIGN OUR VISION TO CREATE PROGRAMMING OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY THAT INFORMS, INSPIRES, AND CONNECTS AMERICANS FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE.

WE ARE ALSO THE NPR (NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO) MEMBER STATION SERVING THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. NPR IS A NON-PROFIT MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION THAT PRODUCES, ACQUIRES, AND DISTRIBUTES PROGRAMMING TO APPROXIMATELY 1,100 NONCOMMERCIAL PUBLIC RADIO STATIONS NATIONWIDE – INCLUDING WTJX-FM. NPR MEMBER

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STATIONS ARE DEDICATED TO PROVIDING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES INCLUDING NONCOMMERCIAL NEWS, CULTURAL PROGRAMMING, AND LIFE-SAVING PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY ALERTING.

IN 1972 THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM BEGAN TO TRANSMIT, AND NEXT MONTH WILL MARK 54 YEARS THAT WTJX-TV HAS PROVIDED NON-COMMERCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND ENTERTAINING PROGRAMMING, ALONG WITH INFORMATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. AND, WHILE WTJX-FM, 93.1 PASSED ITS 10 YEAR MILESTONE IN JANUARY, I MARKED MY 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH THE STATION.

THE ORGANIC COVERAGE OF THE TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS EXTEND BEYOND OUR BORDERS TO THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, VIEQUES, CULEBRA, AND THE EASTERNMOST AREAS OF PUERTO RICO. HOWEVER, THE SIGNAL FOR THE RADIO STATION ON ST. CROIX IS STILL LACKING.

THE SYSTEM RECEIVES OVERSIGHT BY AN 11-MEMBER BOARD. PRESENTLY, WE HAVE 10 BOARD MEMBERS AND ONE VACANCY.

SENATORS, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT ONCE AGAIN, OUR AUDIT IS UNMODIFIED AND THERE WERE ZERO AUDIT FINDINGS. PLEASE NOTE THAT A SINGLE AUDIT WAS PERFORMED INSTEAD OF THE REGULAR ANNUAL AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

AT MY LAST BUDGET HEARING, I ADVISED THE COMMITTEE OF THE THREATS TO PUBLIC MEDIA AT THE TIME. THOSE THREATS HAVE SINCE INTENSIFIED. ON JUNE 12, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED

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H.R. 4, "THE RESCISSIONS ACT OF 2025," WHICH WOULD RESCIND THE PREVIOUSLY APPROPRIATED FY 2026 AND FY 2027 FUNDING FOR THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING WHERE WE GET 18% OF OUR OVERALL FUNDING. THIS LEGISLATION PASSED NARROWLY BY A VOTE OF 214-212 IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WITH ALL DEMOCRATS PRESENT VOTING AGAINST THE RESCISSION ALONG WITH FOUR REPUBLICANS. "THE RESCISSIONS ACT OF 2025" IS BEING HEARD IN THE SENATE TODAY. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT PASSAGE OF THE PROCEDURAL VOTE KICKS OFF 10 HOURS OF DEBATE, WHICH WILL LEAD TO "VOTE-A-RAMA" — A SERIES OF VOTES ON AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS. A FINAL VOTE IS EXPECTED TOMORROW.

UNTIL WE KNOW IF OUR FEDERAL FUNDING THROUGH CPB WILL BE CLAWED BACK AND WHAT THE IMPACT WOULD BE IF IT IS, WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED A HIRING FREEZE.

OUR HURRICANE RECOVERY PROJECTS HAVE MAINLY BEEN ADMINISTRATIVE SINCE I WAS LAST HERE. THE REPAIRS TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP MAIN BUILDING ARE SET TO BEGIN THIS WEEK. WE HAVE FINALIZED THE DESIGN FOR THE REBUILD OF THE SMALL OFFICE BUILDING AT THE SAME PROPERTY. WORK FOR THAT WILL BEGIN SHORTLY, PENDING A BUILDING PERMIT AND FEMA EHP REVIEW. WE HAVE SELECTED A VENDOR FOR THE DIGITIZATION OF OUR TAPE ARCHIVES AND THEY HAVE HAD SOME SUCCESS WITH DIGITIZING THE SAMPLES THEY WERE SENT. THE HAYPIECE HILL REBUILD PROJECT IS DEPRESSING. WE RECEIVED ONE BID THAT WAS BEYOND OUR FEMA FUNDING. WE ARE WORKING WITH OUR ARCHITECTS AND THE OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY TO MODIFY THE RFP IN THE COMING WEEKS.

UPON SIGNING THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING ACT ON 1967, PRESIDENT

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LYNDON B. JOHNSON DELIVERED REMARKS STATING IN PART THAT THE LAW “ANNOUNCES TO THE WORLD THAT OUR NATION WANTS MORE THAN JUST MATERIAL WEALTH; OUR NATION WANTS MORE THAN A ‘CHICKEN IN EVERY POT. WE IN AMERICA HAVE AN APPETITE FOR EXCELLENCE, TOO. WHILE WE WORK EVERY DAY TO PRODUCE NEW GOODS AND TO CREATE NEW WEALTH, WE WANT MOST TO ENRICH MAN’S SPIRIT. THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACT.”

DURING A TIME WHERE FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS THREATENS OUR LIVELIHOOD AND UNBIASED INFORMATION, WTJX STAYS TRUE TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON’S INTENTION. AS SUCH, I WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT OUR NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROGRAMMING.

WTJX AIRED A NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED PROGRAM THAT THIS BODY CONTRIBUTED TO – ***DION PARSON & THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BAND IN CONCERT AT MARYLAND PUBLIC TELEVISION*** – WHICH DELIVERED A HIGH ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF SOPHISTICATED CARIBBEAN JAZZ – OR “JAZZRIBBEAN” – TO A LIVE STUDIO AUDIENCE GATHERED IN THE IRENE AND EDWARD H. KAPLAN PRODUCTION STUDIO AT MARYLAND PUBLIC TELEVISION IN OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND. WE BROADCASTED ***AGING IN AMERICA: SURVIVE OR THRIVE*** WHICH EXAMINES THE KEY ISSUES CONFRONTING THE NATION AS IT AGES – AN INADEQUATE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND GROWING ECONOMIC INSECURITY. THE FILM CELEBRATES THE PROMISE OF INCREASED LONGEVITY WHILE CONFRONTING URGENT AND UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGES. WE AIRED ***NOVA: CRITICAL CONDITION: HEALTH IN BLACK AMERICA*** WHICH INVESTIGATES THE DRAMATIC HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE U.S., EVEN AS SCIENTISTS CONFIRM THAT THERE ARE NO MEANINGFUL GENETIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RACES. FROM THE DEEP HISTORY OF PSEUDOSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ABOUT RACE THAT

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STILL PERMEATE MODERN MEDICINE, TO THE LATEST RESEARCH ON HOW EXPERIENCING DISCRIMINATION CAN DIRECTLY DAMAGE THE BODY'S DNA AND BIOLOGY. WE PREMIERED **CARL THE COLLECTOR**, AN ANIMATED SERIES FOR AGES FOUR TO EIGHT AND PBS'S FIRST SHOW FEATURING AN AUTISTIC LEAD CHARACTER. NOT ONLY DID WE AIR **ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA: A LEGACY OF SERVICE**, WHICH DOCUMENTS THE 115-YEAR HISTORY OF ONE OF THE NATION'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, WE ALSO HELD WATCH PARTIES WITH LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THE SORORITY AT OUR OFFICES BOTH ON ST. THOMAS AND ST. CROIX. WE ALSO PREMIERED THE SERIES **MY MONEY MENTORS** WHICH IS DEDICATED TO MAKING FINANCIAL LITERACY ENJOYABLE AND EMPOWERING FOR YOUNG ADULTS. THE HOSTS GUIDE PEOPLE THROUGH VARIOUS MONETARY CHALLENGES AND EQUIP THEM WITH ACTIONABLE STEPS TO MAKE SMART MONEY CHOICES WHILE HELPING THEM BUILD A STRONGER FINANCIAL FUTURE. IN 1995, ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS OF SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NEWT GINGRICH WAS TO LEAD THE CHARGE IN DEFUNDING PBS. THREE DECADES LATER, HE CALLED PBS WANTING TO DO A PROGRAM THAT HONORED IMMIGRANTS WHO SHAPED THIS NATION AND STATED THAT HE COULD NOT IMAGINE ANY OTHER PLACE THAN PBS FOR THIS PROJECT. AS SUCH, WE AIRED **JOURNEY TO AMERICA: WITH NEWT AND CALISTA GINGRICH**.

WTJX CONTINUED TO PROVIDE QUALITY LOCAL PROGRAMS SINCE THE LAST TIME I APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE. WE PRODUCED 17 EPISODES OF THE ELECTION SERIES, **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS: MEET THE CANDIDATES 2024**, FEATURING CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR SEATS FOR THE 36<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, THE SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND ELECTIONS. WE PROVIDED LIVE COVERAGE OF ELECTION RESULTS WITH **DECISION**

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**2024: LIVE COVERAGE OF THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION.** WE AIRED A HISTORIC MOMENT – ***THE INVESTITURE CEREMONY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS: JUSTICE HAROLD W.L. WILLOCKS*** – WHO BECAME THE FIRST JUSTICE APPOINTED IN 18 YEARS. OUR STAFF SAT DOWN WITH GRAMMY-AWARD WINNING MUSICIAN AND PRODUCER WYCLEF JEAN WHILE HE WAS IN THE TERRITORY TO PERFORM AT THE 2024 ST. JOHN CELEBRATION VILLAGE AND PRODUCED, ***WYCLEF JEAN: A LEGACY IN MUSIC***. HE OPENED UP ABOUT HIS 20 PLUS YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT STILL DRIVES HIM IN AN EVOLVING INDUSTRY, AND HIS VIEWS ON WHAT THE YOUTH CAN DO TO BLAZE THEIR OWN PATH.

WE STREAMED THE VIRGIN ISLANDS SOCCER FEDERATION PREMIER LEAGUE “BIG 4” SEMI-FINALS AND CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES LIVE FROM THE BETHLEHEM SOCCER COMPLEX ON ST. CROIX.

WE AIRED THE FOLLOWING CHRISTMAS SEASON PROGRAMS: ***AH GLOW IN DE PARK: DEH VILLAGE OF LIGHTS*** WHICH WAS ALSO STREAMED LIVE FROM LIMPRICHT PARK ON ST. CROIX, ***CRUCIAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL: 2025 PRINCE & PRINCESS, DUKE, DUCHESS, JR MISS AND TINY TARTS PAGEANT, CRUCIAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL: 2025 CALYPSO MONARCH, SUPERIOR COURT RISING STARS YOUTH STEEL ORCHESTRA: SOUNDS OF FREEDOM, THE REBIRTH, AND THE CRUCIAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL CHILDREN’S AND ADULTS’ PARADES.***

WE BROADCASTED LIVE ***SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF THE 36<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND THE ORGANIZING SESSION, GOVERNOR ALBERT BRYAN’S SEVENTH STATE OF THE TERRITORY ADDRESS, AND ST. THOMAS CARNIVAL CHILDREN’S AND ADULTS’ PARADES.*** WE ALSO AIRED ***THE ST. THOMAS CARNIVAL: 2025 PRINCE &***

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**PRINCESS, DUKE, DUCHESS, JR MISS AND TINY TARTS PAGEANT, AND  
 BUOY AH BUOY CALYPSO COMPETITION: ONLY IN THE VI.**

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT I DID NOT MENTION THAT WE AIRED THE 2025 ST. JOHN PARADE. IN A LETTER TO TOURISM COMMISSIONER JOSEPH BOSCHULTE, I ADVISED HIM THAT WTJX CAN NO LONGER FUND THE COST OF THE PARADES AND AS A CONSEQUENCE WE WOULD NO LONGER BROADCAST ANY OF THE PARADES. I ADVISED HIM THAT OUR ATTEMPTS TO SOLICIT FUNDING FROM TOURISM WENT UNANSWERED. AND JUST LIKE MY TEAM'S SOLICITATION ATTEMPTS, MY LETTER WENT UNANSWERED. BUT IT WAS CLEARLY RECEIVED AS IT IS MY DISTINCT UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT PAID AN ENTITY TO STREAM THE PARADE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT WTJX HAS BEEN BROADCASTING THE ST. THOMAS CARNIVAL PARADES LIVE SINCE 1975. AND, WE WERE THE FIRST TO STREAM THE PARADES LIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO AN HUGE ONLINE AUDIENCE.

FIRELIGHT MEDIA, PARTNERED WITH WTJX IN DISCOVERING ASPIRING CREATORS IN THE TERRITORY AND SELECTED EMMANUEL PHILLIPS AS THEIR GRANT RECIPIENT FOR THE SECOND SEASON OF HOMEGROWN: A PART OF/APART FROM. THE SERIES IS COMPRISED OF EIGHT DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMS MADE BY EMERGING FILMMAKERS LIVING IN THE U.S. TERRITORIES, HAWAI'I AND THEIR DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES WHO IDENTIFY AS BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND/OR PEOPLE OF COLOR. THE COLLECTION FOCUSES ON STORIES GRAPPLING WITH ISSUES OF SOVEREIGNTY, AGENCY, AND THE VARIETY OF WAYS COMMUNITIES NEGOTIATE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AT ONCE "A PART OF AND APART FROM" THE UNITED STATES. EMMANUEL RECEIVED GUIDANCE FROM

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BOTH ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP BRING HIS VISION TO LIFE WITH THE SHORT FILM, **WE ARE TAINO**. WTJX PROVIDED FREE PUBLIC SCREENINGS OF THE FILM WHICH EXPLORES THE JOURNEY OF NATIVE ST. THOMIAN MAEKIAPHAN PHILLIPS, AS SHE STRIVES TO BECOME THE FIRST FEMALE KASIKE (CHIEF) OF HER TAÍNO TRIBE. THE SCREENINGS, WHICH WERE WELL ATTENDED – STANDING ROOM ONLY – TOOK PLACE ON ST. CROIX AND ST. THOMAS AND FEATURED A BEADMAKING DEMONSTRATION AND A Q&A SESSION WITH THE FILMMAKER AND OTHER PANELISTS. WE ARE PROUD TO NOTE THAT THIS FILM WAS THE BEST PERFORMING SHORT FILM TO DATE FOR HOMEGROWN AND ANOTHER PBS DIGITAL SHORTS SERIES "IN THE MAKING," WHICH IS IN ITS THIRD SEASON.

BUT EMMANUEL WASN'T THE ONLY VIRGIN ISLANDER CHOSEN FOR THE HOMEGROWN PROGRAM. JOHN WHEATLEY WAS AWARDED A GRANT THROUGH WABE IN GEORGIA. HIS SHORT FILM, **WHAT THE STORMS TAUGHT US**, EXAMINES THE STATE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS SEVEN YEARS AFTER HURRICANES IRMA AND MARIE, WHERE, DESPITE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FEDERAL AID, MANY STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE.

BOTH PROGRAMS AIRED ON WTJX-TV.

BEYOND THE BROADCAST, WE CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH STANLEY AND THE TEN SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS TO BRING THE CRUCIAN COMMUNITY, THE CHRISTMAS FOREDAY SERENADE. THIS DECEMBER WILL BE OUR 20<sup>TH</sup> YEAR AND EDGIE WILL BE DEEPLY MISSED. WE WANT TO MAKE THIS SERENADE A MEMORABLE ONE SO I AM ASKING THE PUBLIC TO REACH OUT TO ME IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST.



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ADDITIONALLY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT, WTJX HELD TWO TOWN HALL MEETINGS ON CRIME ON THE ISLAND OF ST. CROIX IN MARCH. IN ADDITION TO COMMISSIONER MARIO BROOKS, ATTORNEY GENERAL GORDON RHEA, DLCA COMMISSIONER NATHALIE HODGE, AND HEALTH COMMISSIONER JUSTA ENCARNACION PARTICIPATED. WE HELD A SUCCESSFUL TASTE OF TWO ISLANDS AT THE SCENIC HARBOR 360 AT YACHT HAVEN GRANDE. IN OBSERVANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH, FOR THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR, WE PARTNERED WITH UVI LIBRARIES TO SCREEN THE FOLLOWING PBS DOCUMENTARIES ON BOTH THE ST. THOMAS AND ST. CROIX CAMPUSES: ***AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: THE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT, AMERICAN MASTERS: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MISS SCOTT, AND AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: THE FORGOTTEN HERO: WALTER WHITE AND THE NAACP.***

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, I AM BEYOND EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE YET ANOTHER WAY TO WATCH WTJX-TV, CHANNEL 12. NOT ONLY CAN YOU VIEW CHANNEL 12 ON DISH, CABLE TV, WITH AN ANTENNA, USING YOUR FREE WTJX APP FOR YOUR SMART PHONE, BY USING THE FREE PBS APP ON YOUR SMART TV, AND ON OUR WEBSITE – YOU CAN NOW WATCH CHANNEL 12 ON YOUR AMAZON PRIME VIDEO ACCOUNT IN THE TERRITORY. WE CONTINUE TO MEET OUR AUDIENCE WHERE THEY ARE.

AS WTJX LOOKS AHEAD AT WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON, IT IS UNCLEAR EXACTLY WHAT WE WILL BE CHALLENGED WITH IN THIS NEXT FISCAL YEAR, BUT I AM ENCOURAGED THAT WORKING ALONGSIDE THE MEMBERS OF THIS BODY, THE ADMINISTRATION, OUR BOARD MEMBERS, THE STATIONS' STAFF, VIEWERS, LISTENERS, DONORS, MEMBERS, AND PARTNERS, EACH STEP OF THE WAY, WE WILL SUCCEED AND CONTINUE

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TO OCCUPY A SPACE THAT BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITY.

SENATORS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. MY TEAM AND I LOOK  
FORWARD TO ADDRESSING YOUR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS.