



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

-----0-----
VIRGIN ISLANDS TAXICAB COMMISSION

3274 Richmond, St. Croix, USVI 00820
8201 Subbase Suite 1, St. Thomas, USVI 00802-5813

Tel: (340)773-1561 Ext. 5235
Tel: (340) 693-4211 Fax: (340) 693-4212

Elizabeth Hansen Watley
Interim Chairperson of the Board

Myrna S. George
Secretary of the Board

Vernice M. Gumbs
Acting Executive Director

**TESTIMONY OF
VERNICE M. GUMBS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
VIRGIN ISLANDS TAXICAB COMMISSION**

**COMMITTEE ON BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE
March 19, 2024**

Good morning, Honorable Chair, Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, Members of the Committee on Budget, Appropriation and Finance, other members, and staff of the 35th Legislature, listening and viewing audience. My name is Vernice M. Gumbs, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission. Appearing with me today are members of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission's Board.

We are here today to support the Taxicab Commission's proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. The budget request supports the agency's strategy. We will highlight some of our goals that will not only demonstrate our commitment to delivering real value but also emphasize our dedication to serving our stakeholders diligently. Our goal is to consistently meet and surpass stakeholders' expectations, and to ensure that our services remain in alignment with their evolving needs.

Strategy

The Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission is established as a semiautonomous agency of the Government of the Virgin Islands and comprised of nine (9) members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Legislature. The Commission is charged with the responsibility for the continuance, further development, and improvement of the automobile for hire industry within the territory and the overall regulation of the automobile for hire industry. Our strategy is to improve the efficiency and productivity of the Commission, enhance the customer experience, and improve communications and collaborations. I will achieve this by transforming our manual pen and paper operations into an electronic management system that allows digital storage, collection, and verification of records. Our strategy envisions a future for the automobile for hire industry that encompasses the following objectives:

- Supporting the development of new ideas and a good and efficient service for passengers.
- Safeguarding and preserving medallion owners and taxi drivers' interest in the industry.
- Implementing the necessary organizational changes to deliver the desired improvements in customer service.
- Introduction of a 24-hour customer service number for compliments and complaints.
- Improved the complaints process for TCC staff to respond to complaints in a timely manner.

Public transportation is an essential activity that creates new jobs through its functioning such as taxicab drivers, office workers, maintenance support, and more! It's a catalyst for

economic growth, attracting development and increasing values. It's an innovation that benefits all Virgin Islanders, whether we use it or not.

Goals

1. The most immediate goal of the Commission is to launch a digital transformation of its paper legacy records into an electronic management system that allows digital storage, collection, and verification of records. To fully automate its internal processes with the implementation of a web-based solution that will provide our employees and stakeholders with the ability to conduct business remotely efficiently and effectively by renewing business licenses, making payments, and interfacing with a website that would provide up-to-date information regarding the automobile for hire industry; however, we would need funding in the amount of \$479,486.35 to make this project a reality
2. Focusing and encouraging our operators to use electronic payment systems for the convenience of their passengers, and more importantly for their safety and well-being. The life they save may be their own.

CHALLENGES

1. The lack of reliable technological infrastructure including but not limited to internet services that would allow our operations to function efficiently and effectively territory wide.
2. **Section 2 of Act No. 7451 removed limousines from under the jurisdiction of the Taxicab Commission and placed them under the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA). In fact, the same act states that "limousines are**

not automobiles for hire”. So, if they are not automobiles for hire, exactly what services are limousines providing.

PLAN OF ACTION

- (a) The Board is currently working on existing TCC rules and regulations and is omitting what is outdated and updating to include what will bring us current to today’s standards. The Board anticipates that it will resume Taxi Training and License Program by early summer.
- (b) Seven Personnel Request Forms have been completed and forwarded to OMB for review and approval to fill the following vacant positions:
 - a. Executive Assistant Director
 - b. Fiscal Officer/Human Resources Coordinator
 - c. Chief Enforcement Officer
 - d. Two (2) Taxi Inspectors – STX
 - e. One (1) Taxi Inspector – STT/STJ
 - f. Administrative Secretary – STT/STJ

Budget Overview

The Commission’s budget recommendation for FY’24 is \$1,506,900.35. The recommendation supports the following:

- Personnel Services at \$627,307.00
- Fringe Benefits at \$277,961.00
- Supplies at \$8,500.00
- Other Services and Charges to include TCC’s digitization project at \$1,488,762.35.

The proposed budget considers the overall needs and goals of the agency ensuring further development and improvement of the automobile for hire industry.

TAXI LICENSE FUND

The Commission requests \$627,307.00 in Personnel Services and \$277,961.00 in Fringe Benefits to fund seven (7) positions. Seven (7) positions were filled (1 Exempt and 6 Classified Non-Union). Five (5) positions were vacant (3 Exempt, 2 Classified Non-Union) and one (1) new exempt position added.

TCC's vacancies include Assistant Executive Director, Fiscal Officer/Human Resources Coordinator (new), Chief Enforcement Officer, Administrative Enforcement Officer, and two (2) Taxi Inspectors.

EXHIBIT 1

PERSONNEL SERVICES AND FRINGE BENEFITS – TASI LICENSE FUND

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE SALARIES	\$291,640.00
UNCLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE SALARIES	\$205,500.00
OVERTIME SALARIES	\$0.00
TOTAL PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$627,307.00
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RETIRE	\$110,953.00
F.I.C.A	\$37,157.00
MEDICARE	\$8,835.00
HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM	\$119,508.00
WORKERS COMP PREMIUMS	\$1,508.00
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	\$277,961.00

TCC requests \$8,500.00 for supplies, plus an additional \$479,486.35 to support the digitization transformation of the Commission and the purchase of other related supplies in support of the ongoing operations of the Commission.

EXHIBIT 2

SUPPLIES

OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$1,500.00
OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$1,500.00
SMALL TOOLS/MINOR EQUIPMENT	\$2,000.00
ALL OTHER	\$3,500.00
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$8,500.00
OTHER SERVICES AND CHARGES	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$60,000.00
COMMUNICATIONS	\$500.00
TRAVEL	\$2,000.00
TRANSPORTATION – NOT TRAVEL	\$1,657.00
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION	\$1,000.00
PRINTING & BINDING	\$500.00
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	\$1,000.00
RENTAL OF LAND/BUILDINGS	\$12,000.00
AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	\$1,000.00
ALL OTHER	\$15,000.00
ADVERTISING & PROMOTION	
TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	\$104,008.00
TCC DIGITIZATION PROJECT	\$479,486.35

COMBINED TOTAL	\$583,494.35
-----------------------	---------------------

EXHIBIT 3

TOTAL REVENUES COLLECTED – St. Croix

OCTOBER 1, 2023 – FEBRUARY 2024

CATEGORY	QUANTITY	AMOUNT	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
Badges	11	\$1,100.00	Penalty/Fines	26	\$5,795.00
Business License	108	\$14,040.00	Medallion Sale	0	\$0.00
Co-Ownership	1	\$330.00	Med. Transfer	1	\$125.00
Various Forms	29	\$532.00	Plate Replace	0	\$0.00
Citations	0	\$0.00	Cert of Entitle	0	\$0.00
Leases	15	\$540.00	Copies	0	\$0.00
Liens	2	\$60.00	Vet. Auction	0	\$0.00
Tariffs	1	\$20.00			
Doc Review	18	\$540.00			
TOTAL Revenues Collected	185	\$17,162.00			\$5,920.00

EXHIBIT 4

Total Revenues Collected by Island

St. Croix	\$23,082.00
St. Thomas & St. John	
TOTAL REVENUES COLLECTED	

EXHIBIT 5

TOTAL MEDALLIONS IN CIRCULATION

St. Croix	518
St. Thomas	1279
St. John	167

FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND BEYOND

TCC continues to emphasize the importance of transforming its paper legacy records into an electronic management system. An electronic management system will also improve TCC's effectiveness in serving the public by providing digital storage, collection, and verification of records. My goal is to fully automate the internal processes with the implementation of a web-based solution which will provide our employees and stakeholders with the ability to efficiently and effectively conduct business remotely. Users of the system will be able to renew business licenses, make payments, and interface with a website that would provide up-to-date information regarding the automobile for hire industry.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I would like to thank TCC's staff, the Office of the Governor, the Department of Finance who has been and continues to assist us, our OMB Budget Analyst, TCC Board members and our taxi industry operators, for ensuring that we are here today working on behalf of the automobile industry.

#####