

Good afternoon, the Honorable Carla J. Joseph, Chairperson of the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran's Affairs, & Consumer Protection, members of the committee, and other senators present. I am, Raymond J. Williams, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Lottery. In attendance with me today are Mr. Dwayne Benjamin, Deputy Executive Director; Ms. Shalyn Proctor, Chief Financial Officer, Mrs. Alyssa Fredericks, my Confidential Executive Assistant, Mr. Enoch Noel, Director of Information Technology, and Mr. Lamarr Jacobs, Director of Security & Investigations.

Let me start by saying a BIG THANK YOU to my V. I. Lottery family, the Virgin Islands Lottery Commission, and our trusted dealers. I also must recognize our Stellar Superstars of the year 2023, Ms. Verita Carmichael-Human Resources Director and Ms. Cylysce Smith-Accounting Specialist. Ms. Carmichael has been a most valuable member of our family for 14 years and Ms. Smith joined the family just over a year and has shown exceptional qualities, they are both defined as 'par excellence!'

We were invited here today to provide an overview and update of the Virgin Islands Lottery (VIL). The (St. Thomas) Virgin Islands Lottery held its first drawing at 1:00 p.m. on January 25, 1938 at Emancipation Garden here on St. Thomas. Many years later, it was codified under Title 32 VIC, chapter 13 as an instrumentality of the Government of the Virgin Islands. The VIL falls under the auspices of a

commission who has the responsibility to promulgate rules and regulations, set policy and provide guidance to the Executive Director, who manages the day to day affairs of the agency. The VIL is the official lottery of the Virgin Islands. Today, my objective is to share with you, the members of this body, information on our program.

Unlike most other government agencies, the V. I. Lottery receives no funding from the central or federal government. We manage all of our own financial and other resources but are still required to follow the central government procurement processes.

The Commission determines the types of lotteries to be played, to include Video Lottery Terminals (VLT's) in the St. Thomas/St. John district, instant and scratch games, and other games of chance, approves the annual operational and financial budget, prize payments, game frequency, and ticket cost, along with a plethora of other responsibilities.

As the Executive Director I am charged with responsibility of managing the operations of this enterprise, to include but are not limited to the following:

- Making recommendations to the VIL Commission to ensure the successful operation of the program
- Management of the day to day operations and personnel
- Act as the Secretary of the Commission

- License agents (dealers) for both our traditional lottery and VLT retailers
- Represent the VIL as an officer of the various consortiums (MUSL, NASPL, WLA)
- Manage all contractors (Southland Gaming Virgin Islands and Caribbean Lottery Services) of the VIL to ensure compliance based on the contractual agreements

Our vision since my inception continues to be a *“Wave of Opportunity!”* We recently launched a new campaign, *“I am V.I. Lottery. - V.I. Lottery is me!”*

This new campaign is designed to instill a sense of national pride in our organization and community. Our goal is to empower our dealers, customers, residents, and citizens all. It is imperative that our traditional lottery game reign supreme. We want everyone to own it and feel it. We must make this product one that suggests **‘We!’** are a part of this enterprise that not only generates the dollars to pay prizes, but a product that gives opportunities for the improvement of all lives throughout the Virgin Islands community and moreover, to send a message that clearly says “Support your own and leave other people thing alone!”

At the end of 2022, I had an epiphany because of a life changing experience and at the outset of the calendar year I shared it with my staff. I recognized that the

VIL would now be **“Under Reconstruction!”** I decided that we needed to take a fresh look at all parts of this enterprise and refresh, reorganize, reinvigorate, and reaffirm our commitment to our community. Our vision to make *“The Virgin Islands Lottery the preeminent game of choice in the Virgin Islands”* is also very much alive.

Thus far for FY’23, we have made all mandatory required payments to the various government agencies to include the GERS, departments of Human Services and Education utilizing revenues realized from our various games and contractors. It is our intention to continue to make these required payments timely.

In short order, we will be sending to this august body via the Office of the Governor, amendments to crucial legislation that will improve our enforcement capability.

Allow me to highlight a few of our accomplishments:

- ✓ Approval and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding between V. I. Lottery and Tennessee Lottery to host emergency draws if we were to experience a storm event and cannot perform the Powerball and Mega million draws.
- ✓ Approval and implementation of our Alternative lockdown procedure by MUSL.

- ✓ Successfully completed MUSL's review and audit of our multi state games.
This is a requirement to maintain our accreditation to participate in Powerball and Mega Million games.
- ✓ FY'20 financial audit (with no outstanding findings). We are steadfast in our goal to complete the FY '21 financial audit shortly.
- ✓ Salary increases for both unionized and exempt service employees
- ✓ POST certification completion of our newest member of the Division of Security & Investigations.
- ✓ We have purchased new equipment, uniforms, and vehicles for our enforcement team. We also improved their salaries to make and keep them competitive with other agencies both public and private.
- ✓ Continued required POST certification training for our enforcement team.
- ✓ The roll out of 'Caribbean Numbers' games. These are games that will eventually eliminate the illegal games being played in our communities. These games were launched back in February of this year.

What are our challenges?

- ❖ Potential move back to the Franklin building. We are steadfastly working with Acting Commissioner Lisa Alejandro of the department Property & Procurement and Mrs. Adrienne Williams-Octalien at ODR to make this a reality.

- ❖ Full implementation and utilization of the Department of Property & Procurement procedures, thus bringing us in line with the central government.

The V.I. Lottery currently employs 41 individuals at an annual salary of \$2,253,223.00 with 3 vacancies.

These are just a few of the highlights at the VIL. We will continue to ride the “Wave of Opportunity” while maintaining our vision of *“Making the Virgin Islands Lottery the preeminent game of choice.”*

I will now have our Chief Financial Officer present our FY '23 year to date financial report. Thereafter, we would like to share a few videos highlighting our Caribbean Numbers games, one of our sponsorship recipients called ‘YES’ and one on our enforcement initiative.

We stand ready to answer any questions. Thanks again for the opportunity to highlight our enterprise.