**Minutes of the Virgin Islands Taxicab**

**July 16, 2021**

Chairperson Lloyd welcomed everyone and asked Secretary George to open with a Prayer. She then requested Roll Call:

Present were: Chairperson Lloyd

Vice – Chair Elizabeth Hansen-Watley

Secretary – Myrna S. George

Member Vincent Georges

Member Sweeny Toussaint, Jr.

Member Franklyn Brathwaite

Member Camille Paris, Jr., - Absent

**Secretary George**: Madam Chair, there are 6 Members present with 1 absent.

**Chairperson Lloyd:** She thanked the Secretary and then stated that she sent a letter to all Board Members concerning the shortcomings of Director Shane Benjamin as she is at her wits end. She stated that this is a vital meeting, and his shortcomings need to be discussed. She further stated that Benjamin’s performance was very concerning as it was poor and that she saw no improvements though several recommendations were made to him. The letter to the Board Members is dated July 11, 2021. She then asked for a discussion of the letter by the Members.

**Secretary George**: Asked if any of the requested documents of Director Benjamin was received and Lloyd said no, nothing was received.

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**Chairperson Lloyd**: Spoke to the statement made on the Senate floor that the Board was milking the Taxicab Commission. She mentioned the amount of time she has spent writing various Government Agencies on behalf of VITCC because they were not doing their job and for there to be progress, she needed to deal with non-Board transactions. She stated that no one is milking the VITCC.

**Georges:** Has the Director asked for any extensions since he did not meet his deadline? Lloyd responded, no he did not.

**Georges**: Instead of bringing the error concerning the double billing to the Board, it is obvious that either the Director or a VITCC Employee made the decision to take the information to the Senators instead. He noted that Senator Sarauw is still insisting that the Director can hire and fire as if the law is still not clear to her. Georges further stated that he reminded Director too many times that he is directed by 274 and is obviously not doing it. Because of this, he continues to fail and not operate and function as he should.

**Lloyd:** Chairperson Lloyd noted that at the Budget hearing, Director Benjamin listed his goals but she reminded the board that the new vehicles that he mentioned came under former Director Sarauw, the communication with Tourism and the UVI cell has been ongoing and not a goal of his and as to the Limousines, Senator Gittens has his figure on that pulse in terms of removing it from DLCA and bringing it in to VITCC.

**Vice Chair Wattley**: We were caught off guard b the comments of Director Benjamin on the Senate floor and these comments were inflated by the Legislators and printed by VI Consortium. She does not think the Board needs to put out a statement at this time but thinks that all Board Members should voice opinion in this meeting before preparing a sound and official response from the Board.

**Lloyd**: Asked all Board Members their opinion on Wattley’s comments and **Brathwaite** said yes, the Board needs to clear their name. **Sweeney** recommended we not respond at this time as it is a political and we don’t what to go down that rabbit hole. He noted that this type of political play has been going on for many

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years in VITCC and this is no different. He recommended we seek the Governor’s intervention to remove Benjamin and maybe place him in another Agency.

**Wattley:** She believed that time has passed for that. At this point, she considered Benjamin’s actions wilful and blatant as the Board Members were basically called thieves and she does not take that lightly, especially knowing that neither Secretary George or herself receive a dime for our service to the VITCC. In our statement to the public, it needs to be clear that the Board has been following the law.

**Sweeney:** He believed disciplinary action should be taken against Director Benjamin. Yes, we must be careful in how we proceed when going to the Consortium. Be sure to have the law that governs us and make a strong point that the Board has followed the Law.

**Secretary George**: Stated that she fully supports the statement Wattley made.

**Georges**: What action do we recommend now? We have suspended him in the past.

**Sweeney:** We would have to terminate but be ready for the backlash.

**Wattley:** The Senate said they would have the Board come before the Legislature and she looks forward to this to educate the lawmakers.

**Georges**: There’s a lot of stuff happening at VITCC that we have not been able to share and that’s because when we suspended the Director, he already knew from

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someone on the Board and that was not right. When Francis and I went to serve him his letter, he had his personal car parked their as he knew he was leaving and would have to leave the government vehicle. I don’t take that action lightly. Those types of things can get people hurt. Yes, there are things happening that truly should be shared with everyone, and it has been on my mind as you all have a right to the information, but we would not what to know that it will be discussed outside of this meeting again.

**Wattley:** Tell us.

**Georges:** There are people selling Badges. Ms. George can you explain.

**Secretary George**: To all the Board Members, the Office is under investigation. Documents were picked up by the IG Office and this was previously mentioned in one of our meetings. We do not have any further information. Pertaining to the communication with the Consortium, I will prepare a draft and have it ready for your opinions on Monday.

**Georges**: Are we going to suspend or terminate? Who is in favour of suspension? Loretta, George, Sweeney and Wattley all said they were not in favour. Georges then asked who was in favour of termination?

**Brathwaite:** Recommended we send the letter to clear our names to the Consortium before anything else is done.

**Lloyd:** Noted that she spoke with the Governor very candidly. She told him about her disappointment in Benjamin and that the Board has tried with him, and she said she even asked him to find another job for him, maybe one where he drives him around.

**Sweeny:** Made a motion to go to the Governor again and tell him we are frustrated. We are seeking another department for him, please tell him this again.

(After much discussion, the Motion failed).

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**Wattley:** After we have suspended and warned Benjamin, we are still here trying to save this man’s job? I am trying not to flip the script right now.

**Georges**: Made a Motion for Termination of Director Benjamin and was seconded by Loretta Lloyd. His reasons included incompetency, failure to meet deadlines, insubordination, lack of communication with the Board. Sweeney noted that if the Motion carries, please list reasons in the termination letter.

Votes: Lloyd – Yes, Georges – Yes, George – Yes, Sweeney – Yes, Brathwaite – No, Wattley – Abstain, Paris – Absent.

Madam Chair, we have 4 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain and 1 absent. Motion carries by majority vote.

Georges: recommended Chairperson Lloyd connect with the Governor before the letter is released so that he would have a head’s up as to Board’s decision.

Lloyd: Said she is tired and hurt as she was called a thief. Let’s give ourselves a break for two days or so. I will upload the effective termination date in the Chat after I have spoken with Vice Chair Wattley and Secretary George.

The meeting ended after 1 hour 35 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrna George

Secretary, VITCC