**Virgin Islands Taxi Cab Commission**

**Minutes of August 17, 2021**

**9;30a.m.**

**\*\*\*Prior to the beginning of the Meeting, the Board interviewed Ms. Jackson for the position of Executive Director of VITCC. This would be the 3rd person interviewed for this position. Watley suggested a second interview for all applicants.**

**\*Present for the Interview and the entire Meeting were Chairperson Lloyd, Vice Chair Watley, Secretary Myrna George, Members Vincent George and Franklyn Brathwaite**

 Chairperson Lloyd welcomed everyone and asked Secretary George to open with a prayer. She made excuse for Member Sweeney as he was conducting a Hearing due to a complaint with a taxi driver on St. Croix. She then asked Secretary George to report on the status of gaining entry to the ERP. George stated that she was denied because of her position with DLCA, and that Government Employee Wattley would also be denied for the same reason. **Myrna George reported the following**: “In looking at the employees currently there, as we know, Eulatemae Joseph is out for several weeks, her sister and Cashier Carol Joseph has no clue of the ERP and is not interested. Officer Mena was willing to be considered as the employee working in the ERP and if approved, he would authorize me to access the ERP, using his credentials. The understanding was that Myrna George would use his credentials to gain access. He is trusting me to do the right thing and not allow anyone else to gain access using his credentials. This is the way the payroll will now be approved. I appreciate what he is doing so that we can continue to pay the employees without interruption. Please note also that Officer Mena was not paid his full 80 hours this last pay period. I believe he was only paid around 30 hours, so we need to get that cleared up as soon as possible”.

The chairperson stated she does not know why Mena was not properly paid but was comfortable in doing that we were addressing it. She then informed the members that there was to be a Medallion auction by Dudley, Topper, Newman, and Feuerzeig on August 16, 2021,

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and when they learned that the Director and Ms. Joseph were both gone, that Office contacted her. She stated that Secretary George and herself familiarized themselves with the process as was prepared to have the Auction go forward but there were no bids. “It is anticipated to come forward again in December 2021 so by that time, we would have a director and he/she can handle this and not the Board. There would need to be a secretary present and about two (2) Board Members present to witness the process, but we will need to inform everyone who will be in attendance”, Chairperson Lloyd stated. She further said “I worked on this process for four (4) days. It would have been nice for Senator Sarauw to send a drone here to see me working, steadily working, and not stealing the government’s money”. She further stated that it was truly a pleasure to work on preparing everything for the Auction.

Chairperson Lloyd stated that we still do not have a Lease Agreement in place for the St. Thomas Taxi Commission Office at Property and Procurement Building. The last time she spoke on this we were in arrears approximately three (3) years, so we are over three (3) years not paying rent. She stated that this was one of the directives she gave to Director Benjamin which was not completed. Lloyd stated she personally contacted Commissioner Thomas of Property and Procurement asking for a Lease Agreement and to assist the commission by reducing the past due amount owed. She noted that when she looked at the Budget, the Taxi Commission reflect $12,000.00 which she said had to be incorrect. She further stated that Member Sweeney was still owed his stipend for February 6th, February 10th, March 4th, 2020, and the reimbursement for Deputy Chief Laurie Hodge-Brooks. Ms. Eulatemae Joseph was again assigned this task but as we know, she went out sick.

**Member Georges** immediately clarified that Ms. Joseph went off sick the very same day Director Shane Benjamin was terminated and for the record his opinion is that she has no interest in the survival of the Taxicab Commission.

**Chairperson Lloyd** again said that there were 10 files given to the Inspector General’s Office, per Director Benjamin and the Commission still does not know whose files they were. George said she has the keys for the Office, and she can go to Benjamin’s desk and see if he has any files labeled “sent to IG”. She stated that it was the most she could do. Lloyd stated she continues to not be comfortable not knowing what was removed as the Board has oversight of this area and it was unfortunate that Director Benjamin would not release the information to the Board.

**The chairperson** then asked Secretary George to speak to the cleaning of the Office. **Secretary George** stated that last week while working at Taxicab Office, she saw a young lady cleaning, so she asked her if she was employed there. She said she was employed with A Clean Environment owned by Mr. Benjamin Hendricks. The Secretary then called Henricks to understand the

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relationship and he told her it was courtesy cleaning. There was a leak from DLCA’s restroom into TCC downstairs that his business was called in to fix and from then he has been cleaning to keep the mold build up at bay. **Vice Chair Wattley** said that the relationship is not something that should continue because at any given time he may request payment for his services. **Lloyd stated, “**that’s why I am asking this Board what we intend to do about the cleaning of the space”. George asked Wattley if she had ever been to the St. Thomas Office, and she said No. To describe the space, George said it looked like a warehouse. There are boxes on the desks and all over the place. She said the employees are not encouraged in that environment to wear Office attire. “Currently they are wearing jeans and leggings to the Office and that’s not good, but we can understand why; the space is not encouraging them to dress any differently. When this young lady cleans, she cleans around the boxes. The space is not being properly cleaned”, George said. Wattley asked if we knew what was in the boxes. George said she did not but can assume they were files.

Member Georges wanted to be sure that Wattley understood that “warehouse” was Secretary George’s opinion of the Office and that none of the Employees have ever complained to the Board. He further elaborated that each time he went into the Office, he saw employee Carol Joseph dressed in leggings. He does not believe anyone should be wearing that at work in an Office. Secretary George agreed with him and said that the Board needed to address that through policy and Wattley agreed and stated that maybe the Board can implement Uniforms for the employees. Georges continued by telling the Board that he has always heard employee Carol Joseph answering the phone at the Office as “The Taxi Commission” and he told her she needs to identify herself. He said she told him that no other Agency does it so why does she and his response was he is not concerned about what other agencies are doing but henceforth you need to identify yourself. He stated that when he visited the next day, she told him she felt he was hostile in how he spoke to her, and he told her he was being firm in what he was telling her. She needs to identify herself. Wattley said to Georges he should not have stated that but should have brought it to the Board and let the Board put such policy in writing. Wattley began to break up in communication.

Lloyd stated that the Director was also directed to look for Taxi Commission space for St. Croix. The current space is too small on St. Croix. Wattley continued to communicate as best she could that rather than verbally telling her, to protect ourselves from any harassment or sexual harassment charges which Director Sarauw went through, we need to safeguard ourselves by documenting in writing. Georges said the situation was present and that he responded so employee Carol can immediately change the way she answers the phone. Lloyd said in the

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absence of a Director, the Board must handle the day-to-day affairs and guide the employees accordingly. Lloyd also said that Mena’s needed to be investigated as she is suspicious, he may have been docked time because employee Carol Joseph’s went in without a problem. Georges said Officer Mena reported to the Board that he was being docked so he is wondering if that caused the issue in Mena’s pay. Lloyd stated that she cannot understand why Mena’s was wrong other than it being docked as was rumored. Carol told Lloyd she would call BIT for assistance with the Punch Clock, just in the event there was a glitch. Wattley was still not able to rejoin the Zoom due to connectivity issues.

Lloyd then turned to the violation by Tanya Paul as it pertains to Section 23:574, employee Tanya Paul has an attorney who stated he is representing her. His name is Sean Joseph. Sean Joseph stated he does not want his client to be prosecuted. He also noted in his letter to the Board that Tanya Paul stated that it was not her fault that this occurred. Secretary George said from discussion she does not believe the Board wants to prosecute but wants the money back. If she does not give the money back, then we will prosecute. All agreed with that. As it pertains to whether Eulatemae Joseph knew or not, I have my own opinion on that, Secretary George said. Member Georges said he also believed that Tanya Paul was given documentation as to how payments would have been made, how she should have been paid and she should have given that document to the VITCC Office. He has his suspicions as well but was willing to give her the opportunity to pay it back rather than going the criminal way.

Watley got back and asked if employee Eulatemae Joseph is classified or exempt. Lloyd stated she is exempt. Watley then stated that she believes it is time for the Board to decide what will be done with Ms. Joseph in terms of her employment with VITCC. She further stated that the Board also needs to implement a uniform for the employees and write a script as to what should be said when the phones are answered. This will be policy from the Board. All other members present (5) agreed. Lloyd noted that a spreadsheet reflecting payments to Tanya Paul was requested of Special Assistant Eulatemae Joseph, but she has not done it. Secretary George asked if we should implement the recommendations of Watley now or should we wait for the new Executive Director to join the team. Watley recommended we do it now to avoid any hostile environment for the new Director because he/she just got there and begun to implement changes. With these items in place, Watley said it would help with disciplinary charges being brought against employees as we have been hearing of some very difficult employee interactions with the Director.

Chairperson Lloyd stated that she received an email dated July 26th from Special Assistant Eulatemae Joseph stating that the Board Member stipends now require Vendor #s. Lloyd is not in agreement with that and will investigate it.

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The chairperson also said she wants to set up various committees such as HR, Enforcement, Budget, Taxi Training, Rules and Regulations, Bylaws, Fines, Schedules, and Hearings, etc. Georges noted it would be difficult with only seven (7) members at this time. Georges recommended Lloyd contact the Governor to ask him to fill the remaining two (2) seats on the Board.

Secretary George stated that while she was in the Office on St. John in this meeting, Mr. Claxton came to the window. He is again asking for a decision on his Safari. I sent this information to the Board in writing, and I heard nothing. I am bringing it up now, verbally. We need to give him a decision on his request. He has a 14 pax and Meade a 20-seat passenger. They are requesting a 27 passenger Safari to upgrade their business. The safari is a used taxi from Kenneth Liburd which they have purchased for this use. George then read into the record the Automobile for Hire Safari Policy that the BMV and VITCC. After reading the policy, all stated I needed to respond disapproving and attaching what I have read into the record. Georges said we needed to disapprove because Director McIntosh of BMV will not approve him. We already have this signed agreement for guidance. We cannot go outside of this agreement. This agreement is firm.

Concerning Eulatemae Joseph, Chairperson Lloyd spoke to what Watley said concerning our need to assess her. She feels we need to determine her status at VITCC as in her opinion, she is not bringing anything to the Office. If anything, there seems to be sabotaging the Agency time after time, according to Member Georges. Georges was one of the people along with former Board Member Francis that as we terminated Shane Benjamin, she immediately told them she starts vacation tomorrow. Also, undone Directives which Benjamin did not do, was given to Eulatemae Joseph to do. Instead, she went home due to a bad stomach and on Monday, we received a doctor’s note that took her out until August 23, 2021. He said she is of no use to us, Georges stated. Secretary George reminded the Members that Eulatemae Joseph did not attend the Budget Hearing. Watley stated that after the new Director comes in, we need to allow the Director to come in and analyze how she works with her and will recommend her replacement if he/she is not happy with her.

Secretary George noted that another situation that Eulatemae Joseph did was the hiring of her sister Carol. Director Sarauw hired her I am sure on the recommendation of Ms. Joseph. He probably had no choice because Eulatemae has all the institutional knowledge and she shares with no one, she trains no one, not her sister and not any of the former Directors. This was a conversation to bring everyone up to speed on observations concerning Ms. Eulatemae Joseph.

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Vice Chair Watley noted that she has been told that the female employee in the ST. Croix VITCC Office is frequently out of the Office to the point that Property and Procurement

She recommended that we try to get that female employee on the P and P punch clock for accountability and uniformity with her counterparts on St. Thomas. All agreed on that. Watley also want to but on record that we need to look for an Office for the VITCC Office on St. Croix. The space is too small. She asked that we check with P and P to see if the government has any other areas we can use. Members recommended putting this in writing to Commissioner Thomas, requesting space for St. Croix Office.

George noted that Sweeney is conducting Hearings at this time and going forward Member Vincent Georges is the Hearing Officer. We can conduct these Hearings via Zoom to remain safe. All Members would be able to attend via Zoom if they choose to.

Secretary George reminded everyone that the Board has an Interview with Ms. Linda Smith at 3pm on Friday, August 20th. Watley reminded Members that we still need a Chief of Enforcement, and that person cannot be used in the Covid Task Force. She recommended the Board advise the Governor so that this person, if hired, cannot be used in this way. VITCC, without Enforcement Officers, are not able to make any money. We only have three (3) Enforcement Officers, two (2) in the St. Thomas-St. John District and one (1) on St. Croix.

Secretary George asked if the Director were to be hired out of St. Croix, will the Budget be able to sustain travel between the two Districts? Additionally, she said the Board will need an adequate Office for St. Croix. If the Director were to come from the St. Croix District, we would need additional space immediately. The chairperson received a call from Mr. Toya Malone therefore the Board ended its meeting after a 2-hour meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrna George

Secretary, VITCC