**Minutes of the Virgin Islands Taxicab**

**September 16, 2021**

**Present were:Chairperson Lloyd, Vice Chair Watley, Secretary Myrna George, Members Georges, Brathwaite and Paris. Member Sweeny was absent. There were 6 Board Members present.**

Chairperson Lloyd opened with a welcome to everyone and requested a prayer from Secretary George. She then called Ms. Linda Smith, the newly appointed Executive Director (ED), to give her first report (findings) of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission as her start date was August 30, 2021.

 **ED Smith** began by giving thanks to the Board for selecting her as the new ED and then told the Members present of the various exterior meetings she has engaged in so far. They are all listed in her attached Report but to name a few here, they include the ST. Croix Taxi Association, Red Hook Taxi Association, Windward Passage Taxi Association, Cruz Bay Taxi Association, St. John Taxi Association, ST. Thomas Taxi Association, Taxi Association at WICO, Cyril E. King Airport Taxi Association, Henry E. Rohlsen Airport Taxi Association. **ED Smith** stated that her purpose for meeting them was to introduce herself to them and hear their concerns. She noted meeting with several individual taxi drivers territorially as well. **ED stated** that she also met with BIT, The National Park Service, UVI Cell, VIPA, Mr. Gleason McIntosh of POST, Mr. Roy Moorehead, Security at WICO dock and Mr. Brian at Red Hook Dock.

 **ED Smith** stated she would reach out to LEPC as she would like to see where she can tap into grants, which will aid in funding the Agency and that she needs to have that meeting prior to the agency before the September 30th deadline. She stated that funding was “one of my number one priorities”.

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 Due to the personnel shortage at the VITCC Office, she could not have any meetings this week, but she will be meeting with POST Counsel, Finance and the VIPD.

**In reference to her Assessment**: Today was her 12th day on the job and she wants to have all personnel report to her and place Officer George Mena as the Acting Enforcement Chief, effective September 10, 2021.

 Chairperson Lloyd asked her for her written report and Smith stated she would send it to her immediately after this meeting, but she was only reading from her notes at this point. She further stated that she would make a comprehensive and full analysis of the Agency. Smith stated she spent time in both Districts, and she realized there is a high absenteeism rate in the St. Thomas Office and as such she would like to see an increase in the administrative staff (Cashier and Administrative Secretary is currently all she has). When those employees are out, there is a major problem in the Office. She noted they would need to be trained and cross trained and thus she recommended two (2) more Administrative Personnel, one per island. She said it was clear to her that we cannot hire any personnel that conflict with the Rules and Regulations of Taxicab Commission and Labor Laws in general. She stated that we are here to regulate and as such cannot hire a licensed taxi owner or their immediate family member. Smith stated, “We have to be of out of the business, we are here to regulate”.

 **ED Smith** added that employees handling funds need to be fonded. On St. Croix, Miss McIntosh is bonded but she was not sure if Ms. Carol Joseph (Cashier) was bonded so she would yield to the Board to give her that information.

 **Secretary George** stated that she was not sure if Carol Joseph was, but she was aware Officer Mena assists in the Office frequently, collecting funds, and she knew he was not bonded. George further stated that all of this can be verified through Finance and encouraged the ED to contact them. She further stated that the Special Assistant Ms. Eulatemae Joseph (known as Claudette) was bonded.

 Chairperson Lloyd asked her to continue with her report and questions would be asked at the end. Executive Director Smith stated that she would like to see the entire staff trained. She noted the staff is in dire need of technical training. Dept. of Personnel has training online during the month of September, in Windows software and she has told all the staff to enroll in these free courses.

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Unfortunately, only Ms. McIntosh on St. Croix enrolled. ED stated that Cashier, Carol Joseph need Intro to Computers (email, word, excel), Officer Mena needs Intro to Computers (excel, drafting of correspondence and budget preparation, Word, email). McIntosh has now requested Intermediate training on the 365 software.

**In the area of Technology**: ED stated she replaced two (2) computers through BIT on St. Croix and as it pertained to St. Thomas, she requires all new computers and a printer. **Smith stated** she would like to see Office paperless by the end of fiscal year 2022 but of course we would have to upgrade all computers to Windows 10. This repository would house documents in a cloud-based concept, make our processes electronic and allow for interactive processes throughout the territory. For example, if St. Thomas Office was working on a document and is unable to finish, St. Croix Office and retrieve it in the system and continue in the same document, Smith stated. She continued to say that BIT has a cost of replacing all equipment needed for the total of $25,809.35, which she shared with Chairperson Lloyd. This would bring the Agency into technological compliance. Currently we are working on Windows 7 and we are obsolete. There is no storage space on our systems and the system itself is obsolete, Smith stated.

 **The ED** stated there are over 100 storage boxes that are very old and documentation removal and shredding is necessary as this is causing a health issue in the Office. “They are accumulating dust and mold and some of the files date back to the 1990s. I am not sure how long files should be held but I don’t think its much longer than 7 years”, Smith said. (Smith waited for a response but Chairperson told her to continue, and questions will be asked at the end of her report). Ed stated she would like the Board to give her the opportunity to secure quotes from vendors to scan and archive the files mentioned. This would be done electronically as a part of the document repository, she stated.

 In terms of the Office on St. Croix, **ED stated** it needed to be relocated. It is too small and with the challenge of Covid, it is not safe for customers or employees. The St. Thomas Office needs to be re-keyed due to alleged possible security breech that is on-going. ED sent an estimate to the chair so employees as to the cost. She stated: “this would prohibit employees from accessing the property during off time and stop them and their friends from coming into the

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Office at off time and at night. The metal door should also be re-keyed and locked. I am considering the badge swipe method for all employees as the Punch Clock consistently works for some employees but not for all. This would put a stop to that. In terms of cameras, security cameras need to be fully operational and be able to capture the parameter as well. We need a space for St. John as well’. (Any questions? Again, Chairperson Lloyd told her to continue).

 **ED stated** that she found no Audits for the past 5 to 7 years, which would have helped her in understanding where the strengths and stretches are, where the weaknesses are in processes. Madam Chair, this ends my report, and I will email this report to you.

**The chairperson** opened the meeting for questions. **Member Georges** stated that the main door to VITCC is operated by Property and Procurement so we cannot control the locks on that. He stated we have no control over that. Lloyd stated that she agrees that security measures needed to be beefed up. Secretary George stated she was very pleased with all she heard in the report and commended ED Smith. George said she concurred with Smith, especially with the security swipe. “Keys are a thing of the past and we need to have accountability as to who is accessing the Office and at what times and days”. George stated. **Chairperson Lloyd** to ED Smith that he report was very detailed.

**Smith stated** that she was remiss in not mentioning that Members Brathwaite and Georges helped her to conduct inventory in the Safes. The Enforcement Officers documented the second safe which housed inventory of firearms. The first Safe housed medallions for the three (3) islands. Member Watley congratulated ED Smith and asked if she was able to get a list of available properties on the St. Croix District and Smith’s answer was “No”. Smith further stated there is a long waitlist for government properties on St. Croix. The VITCC ST. Croix Office is only 200 square feet for 2 employees and customers and that’s not good. “We cannot even install the Covid safety Plexiglas as other Agencies have done”, stated ED Smith.

Chairperson Lloyd told her to speak with Commissioner Thomas of Property and Procurement and ask for a reduction in the Agency’s rent and forgiveness of the outstanding rent owed. Lloyd stated, “we have a small budget, we must push

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forward with the training of our employees and the onboarding of the two employees you recommended”.

**Chairperson Lloyd** then asked ED Smith why she did not want a person holding a taxi license to be employed with VITCC. **Watley** stated, “she said it was a conflict of interest”. However, before continuing, ED Smith stated that what she is about to say is highly confidential and must remain with this body entire Board. (**this was redated by removal of the information as ED Smith stated it was confidential. On the recording, the discussion took place at 53:50 and ended at 55:16)**

**Lloyd** then spoke to the Punch Clock and asked who are the employees that continue to have issues with the Punch Clock. ED Smith said Acting Chief Mena and Cashier Carol Joseph. “They are currently unable to punch”.

Madam Chair if I may, I would like to return to what my investigation has also revealed, ED Smith stated and was permitted to do so. (**Ed Smith’s testimony was redated due to the highly confidential nature of her report. This redated testimony was captured on tape at 57:11 through 1:00:20).**

**Member Georges** stated that the information shared was of such a highly confidential nature, people could get hurt if this information were to get out. He stated he was in law enforcement, and he cannot stress enough that this was serious business, “we cannot afford to discuss this with anyone. Executive Director Smith’s life could very well be in danger if this information were to be released”.

**Secretary George** stated she supported and welcomed an Audit and that this was mentioned to and by Chairperson Lloyd to have done”. She further mentioned that while working at VITCC, she was nervous about signing documents because she was not very familiar with what was required, and she was not comfortable trusting anyone with what she was signing. **Ed Smith** stated she understood Secretary George’s sentiments and she too felt the same way. **ED Smith** noted that she has now implemented a check list that requires the employees to initialize that the documents are ready for her signature.

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**ED Smith** stated that the FBI has files of that name and other files and names as well. She has not discussed this with anyone else, not even the staff.

**Chairperson Lloyd** stated that for the next half hour, she wanted to address a few things, but **Member Georges** asked her to contact Director McIntosh of BMV as she was expected to be in the meeting today. He said we needed to straighten out the issue with Claxton’s Safari. **Secretary George** said, “we can straighten it out, but I hope you all know that McIntosh registered Sean Claxton’s Safari”. **ED Smith** also confirmed that the Safari was in fact registered and stated he also has an email from McIntosh stating he is authorized to operate. **Secretary George** stated, “yes, McIntosh gave him the authorization, but she does not have the authority to do so”. **Chairperson Lloyd** stated she does not have the authority to do so and that she is violating her own agreement of 9.3 and we worked on it collectively. **Secretary George** said McIntosh is trying to get in now, until then ED Smith asked to continue.

**Ed Smith** stated that we have an issue with employee Eulatemae Joseph. She stated that Joseph comes into the Office and inputs the payroll information in the System for her and her direct sibling, Cashier Carol Joseph and then leaves. The next day, rather than coming to work, she brings or sends in a doctor’s note. She has been abusing the system, hiding behind the Doctor’s note, Smith stated. **Smith** stated she verified the doctor’s note to be legitimate, and the doctor also became concerned with her activity and has referred Eulatemae to another doctor. Eulatemae has since gone to another doctor and now she is out again until September 20, 2021. ED stated, “I have yet to meet my Special Assistant”.

This employee debacle and anomaly is very disturbing to me, and I am not going to spend much time on this, ED Smith said. **Smith** stated that she is here and is asking the Board to consider termination, though she may be protected federally. However, Smith questioned how both Eulatemae and Carol, two blood sisters, were hired in the first place. ‘They are in very strategic positions, one as a Cashier, which is Carol Joseph and her Supervisor is the Special Assistant, her sister Eulatemae Joseph. This should never have happened, and this office is too small

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for this, and it is very worrying to me”. **Smith** stated that she asked Secretary George several pointed questions and George answered her in real time, which aided her investigation. Smith found that Eulatemae illegally tried to pay Carol Joseph for time that she did not work. She stated that Eulatemae also input time for next week, up to September 20th as well. All these are unscrupulous acts. She continued by stating that she has BIT on standby to remove Eulatemae Joseph from the system as the Board acts. Smith said, “this is nepotism, and we must use the triangulation approach for Ms. Eulatemae Joseph”.

**Secretary George** made the motion to have Eulatemae Joseph terminated, and she was seconded by Member Georges. The floor was open for discussion and concurred by stating she must go. She further stated that Eulatemae has held the VITCC hostage for many years and this last episode has caused Secretary George to physically go into the Taxi Commission office and process paperwork and handle the payroll, something Eulatemae is hired to do.

Additionally, **ED Smith** stated that her investigation has also revealed that every single one of these lead employees have benefited from VITCC by giving themselves and their family members, taxi licenses, whether it is a brother or sister or a daughter, they all have Class C licenses. She stated there is a “ring” in the Office.

Any further discussion before voting: **Member Brathwaite** congratulated Smith for her thorough reporting to the Body and then asked if it would be legal to terminate Eulatemae Joseph while she is covered under a Doctors Slip. **ED Smith** stated the Board had nothing to lose as this is nepotism and one of the siblings must go. After much discussion and the return of both Paris and Watley after they dropped off, Chairperson Lloyd requested a vote, and it was as followed:

Secretary George- yes to terminate

Member Georges – yes to terminate

Chairperson Lloyd – yes to terminate

Member Brathewaite – not voting (Abstain)

Vice Chair Watley – Abstain

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Member Paris – Abstain

Member Sweeney – Absent.

Madam Chair, you have three votes for yes to terminate, three members abstained and one absent. **Motion failed.** **Secretary George** said this is the third attempt to have Ms. Eulatemae Joseph terminated and she will not be bringing it again.

**Chairperson Lloyd** said that persons must vote their conscience, but we all know what Eulatemae has done to this Office. She stated that “Eulatemae comes in and does what she wants. It’s time that the Board Members stand behind the Director. The Director is asking for her termination. The Director found out all this stuff on her own, through her own investigation”. Lloyd stated she did not tell Smith anything; “George did not tell her. We must support her. I am really upset about this vote”.

**Smith** has requested this body to temporarily grant her the authority to have all employees report directly to her. She would rescind her memo of September 13th and have all employees report to her. Member Georges stated that Eulatemae Joseph is no use to us, and he cannot understand how and why the body voted the way they did.

**Vice Chair Watley** stated that ED Smith does not need to be in this area of the meeting and thus we need to go into Executive Session. Watley then asked why she wanted Eulatemae to report to her. Smith said she is requesting this because her memo of September 13th stated that Eulatemae would be reporting to Acting Chief of Enforcement George Mena. **Watley** wanted the information on the illegal input of time as she was not in the Zoom Meeting at that point. **Secretary George** told her that Eulatemae entered 40 hours for Carol Joseph as if she worked but Carol was out on unapproved leave. **Secretary George** said she removed it from the system. **Secretary George** said she also noticed the time in the System for Eulatemae through September 20th which is next week, and she had to remove that as well. George stated she is currently the approving Supervisor in the System through Mena’s code as reported some time back.

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**Vice Chair Watley** stated she wanted the payroll documents to show where Ms. Joseph went into the system. Secretary George told her she will provide all the payroll information to all Members. Members confirmed receiving the documents from Secretary George.

**Member Brathwaite** again asked about termination while on sick leave. The Board was not planning to do so. The recommendation was to terminate her on Monday when she returns from sick leave. **Secretary George** stated that Smith was to handle the termination as strategic as possible for she does not even think Eulatemae will return on Monday. **Vice Chair** **Watley** was unable to communicate with us as her phone connectivity was bad. Because of this Chairperson Lloyd said she would reconvene the meeting on Monday and that she would send the time of the Zoom meeting in the What’s App Chat.

The meeting concluded after 2 hours and 22 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrna S. George

Secretary, VITCC

