**Virgin Islands Taxi Cab Commission**

**Minutes of October 5, 2021 – Safari meeting**

Chairperson Lloyd welcomed all and opened with a prayer by Secretary Myrna George.

As this meeting was designated for Taxi Safari business, Barbara McIntosh, BMV Director, was invited but had not yet appeared in the Room. Lloyd asked Secretary George to bring the particulars on the Sean Claxton/Novelle Meade Safari on St. John. George stated that Claxton wrote to Executive Director Shane Benjamin on August 5, 2021, requesting to register a used F-450, 27-seat Safari they purchased from Mr. Kenneth Liburd. Claxton stated that the new owners would be Sean Claxton and Novelle Meade and that he currently owned a 14-seater and Meade a 20-seater Safari. The Board Members referenced their policy 9.3 Automobile for Hire. Member Paris asked for clarity on the policy and Secretary George read the policy into record. The policy was agreed to and signed by Director McIntosh on July 5, 2021, and by Chairperson Lloyd on July 10, 2021. Paris asked if there was information as to when Claxton and Meade purchased the vehicle. Secretary George stated no but the policy requires that they make their desires known to the VITCC, in writing, for the vehicle to be considered, approved, and allowed to be registered.

Member Paris stated that the Director for BMV has approved the Safari and if she signed off on this document with us, why did this happen. The Board needs to get ahold of her. Both Meade and Claxton were told in writing that we could not approve it and they took it to McIntosh and apparently, she told him it can be done so she had the St. John BMV Office register it. He also took it to the Senate (Potter and Blyden) and then he took it to Kevin Rodriguez. We told them we were trying to meet with McIntosh, and we had a schedule, but she was not able to get in and we are still seeking to meet with her.

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Lloyd said she received a call on this same Safari ownership and told the individual that it cannot be done for greater than 20 seats. Lloyd stated that this policy does not allow this request to be grandfathered in. They should not have received the 27-seater Safari. Lloyd stated that McIntosh circumvented our agreed policy.

Paris said his concern was when the vehicle was purchased. Georges stated that any taxi going to be registered, must go through VITCC. He cannot understand how she did that. Forget 9.3 but the procedure has always been to go to VITCC before going to BMV, so Georges stated he found this suspicious.

Member Brathwaite said he did not understand how this could have happened as this has been the policy, so he does not understand how McIntosh was able to do this. Member Paris stated he understood all that had happened.

Member Brathwaite wanted to know if he was the owner of the plates. Secretary George stated that plates are owned by the Taxicab Commission. Brathwaite then wanted to know if Claxton had a Medallion, but this was unknown.

Member Georges made a motion to have the plates removed. Hearing no discussion, the Vote was taken Georges, George, Lloyd, Brathwaite voted yes to remove the plates by VITCC Enforcement Officer, Paris abstained, and both Watley and Sweeny were absent. The Secretary stated, Madam Chair, 4 yes and 1 abstained, and 2 absent therefore the motion passed.

Mr. Darnell Luke (ST. Croix) also requested a 27-seater Safari because of Covid. The board stated it was the same scenario as Claxton. Secretary George moved that Luke be allowed not to register any more than a 20 seat Safari. Paris seconded. Discussion: Hearing none, please Vote: George, Georges, Lloyd, Paris, Brathwaite, all voted yes. Madam Chair 5 yes and 2 absent in Sweeny and Watley. Motion passed.

Mr. Evans Wallace of Starfish Tours (St. John) currently has a 20 and an 18 Safari and was now requesting permission to purchase a 25 seat Safari. Mr. Wallace was told to request it before he purchased it when he initially asked George about it in person. Lloyd moved to allow him to purchase and register a 20 seat Safari. He cannot have a capacity for more than 20 seats; Vote: George, Georges, Brathwaite, Paris, Lloyd all voted yes with 2 Members (Sweeny and Watley) absent. Secretary George stated, Madam Chair there are 5 yes and

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Two (2) absent, thus the Motion passed. Lloyd asked that a letter be sent to each applicant and to Director McIntosh as I copy each Board Member.

Member Paris stated that his opinion was, if a Safari owner needs to downsize to 20 seats, the driver must remove the seat, the piping, the brackets and then be inspected to validate that it is in fact a 20-seat vehicle and no longer a 25 or 27 seat vehicle. Paris made a motion on that and was seconded by Georges (all brackets, the seating, the piping for the seats, must be removed from the vehicle and that area would be empty and thus can be used for luggage and the vehicle must be inspected by our enforcement officers for approval after removals). Votes: Paris, George, Georges, Lloyd, Brathwaite all voted yes to the motion with Watley and Sweeny closed. Secretary George stated, Madam Chair, we have 5 yes votes and 2 absent, motion passed.

Concerning all inclusive services for Taxicab, Member Brathwaite stated that Senator Gittens is very interested in having all services for Taxicab, all under the Taxicab Commission.

Hearing no further business, the meeting ended after 1 hour and 9 minutes.

Respectfully submitted.

Myrna S. George

Secretary, VITCC

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Myrna George

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