



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
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October 11, 2023

VIA HAND-DELIVERY

Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Senate President
Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802

**Re: Nomination of H. Nathalie Hodge, MSM, CPM –
Virgin Islands Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs**

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 3, § 270 of the Virgin Islands Code, I hereby nominate H. Nathalie Hodge as the Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs.

Accordingly, it is my pleasure to ask the advice and consent of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands on the nomination of Ms. Hodge. A copy of Ms. Hodge's resume is enclosed for your review. I respectfully urge the Legislature to take timely action to advance this nomination to prevent any delays in the official functions of the Department.

Your prompt and favorable confirmation will enhance the Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs' ability to meet its demanding operations and the continued work to serve the people of the United States Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,


Albert Bryan, Jr.
Governor

Enclosure

Cc: Senator Diane T. Capehart
Chair, Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Harriet Nathalie Hodge

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SECTION I: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

11. GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

- **Assistant Commissioner** **01/2015 –Present**
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs
Oversight of the administration, management, budget and personnel matters of the department, including that of the twelve (12) Professional Boards and Commissions housed under the Department. Responsible for the supervisory work involving the accounting, budgeting and personnel matters of the Department.
Duties include:
 - In addition to the following listed duties of the Administrator of Boards and Commissions, I am responsible for the oversight of the business, management and personnel affairs of the Department. Oversee the accounting, budgeting and personnel functions of the Department.
 - Set up financial controls and establish internal audit to ensure efficiency on fiscal and other matters. Participate in the management of the various financial accounts of the department.
 - Manage human resources operations by recruiting, selecting, orienting, training, coaching, counseling, and disciplining staff; planning, monitoring, appraising, and reviewing staff job contributions; determining productivity, quality, and customer-service strategies; resolving problems; and, implementing change. Advise, instruct and train employees in the performance of their duties.
 - Assist in the maintenance of basic network operations including the installation of network hardware, network files, servers, routers, and other computer hardware and software related to networking. Perform and review routine system backups for all applicable systems, install new users, user environments, directories and email addresses, update and maintain the Department's database and computer website to promote interaction and sharing of information. Collaborates with the Network Technician, the Webmaster, VI Powernet and the Office for Information Technology to ensure that the Department is in line with the government's information technology initiatives.
 - Assist in the development and implementation of the agency running a resourceful website in which applicants may be able to use to apply and renew business license(s), run specification reports, and verify the nature of businesses operating within the territory as it may pertain to licensure or better business bureau.
 - Performed routine system backups for all applicable systems, install new users, user environments, directories and email addresses.
 - Perform all the duties of the Commissioner in his absence.

- **Administrator, Boards and Commissions** **04/2008 –Present**
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs
Responsible for the administration, management, budget and direction of the following twelve (12) Professional Boards and Commissions: VI Board of Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors; VI Board of Barbers, Beauticians and Manicurist; VI Joint Board of Electricians, Fiber Optic Installers, HVAC Mechanics, Plumbers; VI Board of General Construction; VI Board of Public Accountancy; VI Board of Real Estate Appraisers; VI Board of Social Workers; and, the VI Real Estate Commission.
Duties include:
 - Work closely with the aforementioned respective Boards in the determination of budgetary needs, hence, supervises and coordinates the collection and preparation of Board's operation and I prepare, justify and submit a budget for each Board to the Commissioner of the

Department of Licensing; prepare and publicize Board agendas and minutes from meetings. Prepare and submit to the Commissioner of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs monthly, annual and reports as it relates to the operation of the Office and Board issues.

- Develop and implement policies and procedures to effectively carry out Board functions. Ensure Board decisions are efficiently and effectively implemented, maintenance of all office records and assure a high level of performance by the Board and quality of service is provided to the public and national counterparts by constant evaluation; and assessing when training is needed where service is found to be inadequate.
- Promulgate Rules and Regulation to effectively enforce practice and title laws governing respective Boards and Commissions not only in the Virgin Islands but to persons in other states, territories and countries.
- Train employees in developing and maintaining good customer relations, and how to effectively resolve customer service problems.
- Ensure that professional qualifications of those entering the practice meet minimum requirements for education, experience and examinations. Responsible for processing of all applications for registration/licensure in the Virgin Islands before forwarding to respective Boards for approval; processing of annual renewals of all registrants and licensees; the processing of all complaints, notices of all legal action making arrangements for hearings, implementing and appropriately filing final Board decisions in a timely manner, guided generally by experience and a complete knowledge and understanding of administrative law. Responsible for arranging the acquisition of test materials, secures test facilities, proctors and then supervises the administration of the examinations. Disseminate notification of results to applicants, and oversees the issuance of certificates, licenses and permit numbers.
- Utilize the ERP system to process and approval of requisitions and purchase orders, scanning of invoices and process the collection and application of monies to the respective accounts.
- Conduct educational workshops and seminars as a means to disseminate information relative to licensure requirements, legislative amendments, regulations, and other issues that Boards are confronted with.
- Protect consumers by preventing violations through effective enforcement of statutes.

- ***Assistant Director, Division of Licensing*** ***05/2002–04/2008***
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

Assisted the Director in the development and administration of the Territory's business licensing program and in developing and justifying the division's annual budget. Represented the Department and the Commissioner before the Legislature, courts and other administrative and civic organizations. Designed an in-house accounting program for entering financial data on the computer to reconcile with the Government's former FMS and newly ERP systems. Appointed as the Department's Super-end User of the GVI Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in which I trained employees who utilize the ERP system to process and approval of requisitions and purchase orders, scanning of invoices and process the collection and application of monies to the respective accounts. Assisted in the maintenance of basic network operations including the installation of network hardware, network files, servers, routers, and other computer hardware and software related to networking. Assisted in the management of property inventory, transfers and vendor payments; Maintained division's vehicle management records, assignment of vehicles, gas, repair and maintenance, etc.; and, division's long distance telephone records. Supervised and directed a staff of seven in the affairs of the Licensing division on St. Croix and supervised the division territory-wide in the absence of the supervisor; Assigned and reviewed work for accuracy and completeness.

- ***Executive Secretary to the Commissioner*** ***06/2001– 05/2002***

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

Maintain the Commissioner's calendar, maintain and manage the files in the Office of the Commissioner. Prepare and type all reports, correspondences, and other documents on the activities for the Office of the Commissioner. Serve as the Legal Clerk of the Administrative Court, participate in the Administrative Hearings, assists the Hearing Officer in conducting hearings.

- ***Tobacco Investigations Coordinator***

1998 – 2000

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs/FDA Tobacco Program

Assisted in the development and implemented the Tobacco Investigations Program to enforce federal and local laws regarding the sale of tobacco to minors; Prepared, justified, and monitored the contract as well as the budget for the Tobacco Investigation Program; Reconciled federal accounts through Smart Link, the local account through the V. I. Government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Financial Management System (FMS).

13. QUALIFICATIONS

Since I returned home in 1993 from college, a majority of my professional experience has occurred within the central government, and at one agency, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA).

I've been working with the DLCA for the last 24 years. A devoted public servant, I've been promoted through the ranks and in various positions during my tenure at the DLCA.

I attained my master's in management, specifically human resources and contract management from Florida Institute of Technology in 2006; and recently became certified in the Lean Six Sigma Black Belt program.

I am a leader in business operations and human resources. I am a team player and pride myself in being fair and providing incredible value to the agency, our staff and clients through strategies developed and implemented for them. I am an innovative, multifaceted professional with demonstrated leadership in managing departmental resources. I am a focused producer who utilizes strong communication and organization skills. Exemplify efficiency in handling extreme pressure without compromising the quality of service and delivery. And, most importantly, I maintain confidentiality.

As a fair leader, I have the temperament to enforce the existing DLCA rules and regulations while simultaneously ensuring that due process is granted to all those who may be affected by a DLCA decision. As a team player, I will continue to practice the "Gentle Honest Open Specific Talk" and allow both the employees and the consumers an opportunity to obtain results from DLCA like never before. As a caveat, I don't promise to make everyone happy, but I can guarantee that everyone will be treated fairly and heard.

SECTION II: HONORS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

14. MEMBERSHIP:

- Member** ■ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Member** ■ VI Alumni Certified Public Manager Program
- Member** ■ Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)
- Member** ■ National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAARM)
- Member** ■ Government Finance Officers Association

SECTION V: JOB PERFORMANCE

30. Four (4) specific short-term and long-term goals and objectives

SHORT-TERM GOALS:

1. Improve internal and external customer morale via communication.

Effective communication is an ongoing process. Continuously assessing the impact of our communication strategies on both internal and external stakeholders. By prioritizing communication and fostering a culture of openness and transparency will enhance morale and create a positive work environment for employees while building trust and loyalty among external customers.

To address the DLCA's employees, I believe in keeping the line of communication open and just communicating. I plan to lead by example and be transparent in communicating with staff. To share the organization's goals, challenges, and successes with the staff; to schedule and conduct quarterly staff meetings; and, to require bi-weekly division meetings that allow for open discussion and encourage input from the employees.

Secondly, with a goal of improving staff knowledge by 15% within the next year, I plan to conduct regular training sessions for department staff on the latest consumer protection laws and licensing procedures and cross-train all employees to broaden their skills and promote a collaborative work environment. Partner with UVICELJ. to develop specialized training for each division.

And, lastly, to encourage and/or institute annual refresher training for the existing staff. This will empower the staff with the necessary skills to their job.

To address the external customer, I plan to continue to engage with the community by reinstating the scheduled bi-annual town hall meetings to allow DLCA to hear from the community as well as to update and educate the community. Launch public awareness campaigns to inform consumers about their rights. By launching a bi-annual public awareness campaign to educate consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities, with the goal of increasing awareness by 25% within five years.

To engage the external customer to assist the DLCA in fulfilling its enforcement mandate. "See Something Report Something". DLCA cannot be in all places 24/7. Empower the community to capture the alleged violation via a photograph if possible and/or submit a report to DLCA to follow up.

To establish partnerships with relevant industry associations and organizations to facilitate better communication and collaboration in addressing consumer and licensing issues within the next six months.

To identify licensed professionals who are interested in serving on one of the twelve statutorily created boards overseen by DLCA.

2. Reorganize divisions within the agency:

Collaborate with the Division of Personnel to reorganize DLCA's divisions. I will start by conducting a thorough assessment of each division and its current functions. Identify critical vacant positions and assess the skills and qualifications required for each role.

Also, to update or create clear and detailed job descriptions for the vacant positions. Ensure that these descriptions include specific responsibilities, qualifications, and key performance indicators. This will allow the agency to attract and hire qualified persons to fill critical vacant positions and commensurate education with salaries.

Lastly, to permit interim solutions that will allow for the hire of temporary staff, or possibly redistributing responsibilities to existing employees to ensure critical functions are not neglected.

3. Update Website Page

Within the next six months, redesign the department's website page. Updating DLCA's website to look more attractive and make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. This will improve user experience and engagement and provide a better overall experience for visitors. The DLCA website should also serve as a platform for public outreach and education, helping consumers better understand their rights and responsibilities in areas related to licensing and consumer protection.

Additionally, I aim to reduce licensing application processing times by 20% over the next year. My intention is to have automatic renewal of business licenses. This can be done through process optimization and technology upgrades.

4. Increase Enforcement Presence

Within the year, have the enforcement division compliance checks on brick-and-mortar businesses across the territory within this upcoming calendar year. Increase regular monitoring and adjustments throughout the year to track compliance. Additionally, to increase random compliance checks to ensure businesses are operating within the scope of their license categories.

LONG TERM GOALS

1. Update Website and Online Services to Streamline Licensing Processes, and Enhance Data Security:

To create a structured plan that increases the likelihood of conducting compliance checks on all brick-and-mortar businesses within the year. Regular monitoring and adjustments throughout the year will be essential to track progress and address any challenges that may arise.

Issue a request for proposal to hire a firm to update the DLCA's Website and Online Services, to develop or upgrade the current system into a comprehensive case management system that each division is not working in silos. The system should also reduce in-person requests and answer common questions. This will reduce the number of inquiries and support requests, saving time and resources.

Develop a mobile application ensuring that DLCA'S website is mobile-responsive. Users should be able to access information on various devices, including smartphones and tablets. This is increasingly important in today's digital landscape.

Invest in cybersecurity measures to ensure the protection of sensitive consumer and business data over the next decade. Additionally, implement multi-factor authentication (MFA) to enhance user authentication and protect against unauthorized access.

2. Digitizing and Convert to Paperless:

In the interest of information security, and preservation of records, implementing a robust document management system (DMS) that allows for secure storage, retrieval, and sharing of digital documents would benefit our current employees along with future department

staff. Converting all currently held records into a digital format like a searchable PDF, will free up storage space and help keep the office clean.

Understanding that transitioning to a paperless environment is an endeavor that requires careful planning, resource allocation, and ongoing commitment, I suspect it will take 2-3 years to complete due to the fact we will have to prioritize departments or processes that will benefit the most from digitization or have the highest paper usage.

3. Enhance Consumer Protection:

Have a clear process in place for resolving customer complaints. Ensure that customers are informed about this process and that their issues are addressed in a timely and fair manner. Develop and implement policies and regulations to strengthen consumer rights and protections over the next five years.

Push hard to hire the required staff to reinstate monthly food basket surveys and scanner surveys throughout the United States Virgin Islands and publish the results. Educate the consumer to use the information gathered by DLCA to shop where they can get the best value. If consumers only shop at the stores with the most affordable prices, the other stores will decrease their prices to become marketable. Reinitiate random store inspections and weekly food expiration inspections.

4. Increase Compliance:

Strengthen inspection and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that businesses comply with regulations and consumer protection laws. Have the DLCA system generate random audits and regular compliance checks. Monitor social media platforms and online marketplaces for advertisements and promotions by unlicensed businesses.

Work towards achieving a 15% increase in business compliance with licensing and consumer protection regulations over the next five years through education and enforcement. Create an online platform or mobile app for consumers to easily report unlicensed businesses. Additionally, offer clear guidelines for obtaining licenses in the territory. Also, simplify and expedite the process of obtaining licenses to make it more accessible and attractive to businesses.

Launch a public awareness campaign to inform consumers about the risks associated with unlicensed businesses. Use social media, local newspapers, and community events to spread the message about the importance of exchange to utilize licensed businesses.