

DEPARTMENT HEADS SHARE FY 2020 BUDGET FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Date : August 14, 2019

St.

Thomas- Members of the Committee on Finance chaired by Sen. Kurt Vialet, convened in a meeting at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, to receive testimony from the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), UVI Research & Technology Park, Corp., the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission, and the Virgin Islands Elections System.

The Fiscal Year

2019-2020 budget that is recommended for the University of the Virgin Islands general operations is \$25,155,458; according to UVI President David Hall. By provisions of Title 17, Chapters 33 & 35 of the Virgin Islands Code, the amount is inclusive of salaries and benefits for the full-time and temporary employees, and an operating budget comprised of revenues and expenditures.

Furthermore, Hall

stated that the \$3,992,205 for debt service is to continue establishing a state-of-the-art residence hall for the St. Thomas Campus. An additional \$1,000,000 for debt service is required for medical school facilities and there is a request of \$3,000,000 more to assist with the Free Tuition Scholarship Program. UVI is also seeking \$2.9 million to fund other initiatives and programs and \$450,000 for the Data Science Program and salary compression needs.

UVI RTPark Executive

Director Peter Chapman noted that the FY 2020 budget for the UVI Research & Technology Park, Corp. has yet to be determined. Based on the FY 2019 budget, much of the costs stem from client/company commitments to UVI and personnel. "We are still working on our proposed FY 2020 budget for presentation to our Board of Directors, but we project that the operating cost will increase for several reasons." Some of the factors that affect the FY 2020 budget are

managing expenses associated with the West Center, hiring new employees, and launching an Accelerator Program. Chapmen noted that for FY 2019, UVI RTPark achieved significant milestones towards growth and development. Thus far, a cross-disciplinary team was established, eight new companies became RT clients and, over 100 companies were identified to assist with the expansion process.

The Virgin Islands

Casino Commission Vice Chair Usie Richards indicated that the governor's recommended a lumpsum of \$600,000 of the General Fund for FY 2020. However, the Commission is requesting an additional \$223,000 totaling \$823,000 for the upcoming fiscal year. The monies will be allocated for members and staff of the Commission. Currently, personnel services represent 46% of the budget. Presently, there is a total of 13 positions available at the Commission; of which eleven are filled and two are vacancies.

Lastly, the Virgin

Islands Elections System Supervisor of Elections Caroline Fawkes stated that the proposed budget for FY 2020 is \$2,144,000. The budget breakdown is as follows: \$673,000 for personnel services, \$150,000 for capital outlays, \$211,000 for fringe benefits, \$65,000 for supplies, \$91,000 for utilities, and \$954,000 for other services. Fawkes stated that some of the challenges are identifying funding to upgrade the voter registration database, training, acquiring ballots and, the lack of monies for legal counsel.

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