

## **DEPARTMENT HEADS SHARE FY 2020 EXECUTIVE BUDGET**

**Date :** September 6, 2019

St. Thomas- Members of the Committee on Finance, chaired by Sen. Kurt Vialet, convened in a meeting at the Capitol Building on Friday, to receive testimony on the proposed FY 2020 Executive Budget for the Office of the Inspector General, the V.I. Department of Property and Procurement, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), the Virgin Islands Council of the Arts (VICA), the V.I. State Historic Preservation Commission (SHPO), and the Office of the Adjutant General. Lawmakers also voted and approved one bill and two Request for Transfers. All items approved will be forwarded to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration.

Steven van Beverhoudt, the Virgin Islands Inspector General for the Office of the Inspector General stated that the FY 2020 budget totals \$3,003,576. The breakdown is as follows: \$50,000 for utilities, \$1,793,599 for personnel services, \$50,000 for capital outlays, \$637,686 for fringe benefits, \$50,000 for supplies, and \$422,921 for other services and charges. According to the Post Audit Report, as of March 31, 2019, actual expenses are \$951,316. The budgetary reserve is \$750,907, as of June 7, 2019.

The Virgin Islands Property and Procurement Commissioner Anthony Thomas mentioned that the governor's recommended FY 2020 budget is \$17,134,156. Defending the proposed budget, Thomas stated that the Department's request covers 69 salaries for employees and 14 vacancies. The funds are also needed to meet the demands of the Department. "For FY 2020, our strategy is to concentrate on core activities aimed at fulfilling mandates, improving efficiency and increasing revenue streams," said Thomas. Additionally, the Department is requesting \$185,310 for the Indirect Cost Fund, \$4,212,250 for the Business and Commercial Properties Professional Fund, and \$1,131,500 for the local Non-Appropriated Fund.

The Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol indicated that the FY 2020 budget request is

\$33,421,303. The budget consists of \$8,948,589 for the General Fund, \$3,899,947 for Non-Appropriated Local Funds, and \$20,572,767 for Federal assistance grantor agencies. In comparison to the FY 2019 appropriations totaling \$8,748,107; there is a two percent increase in the General Fund for FY 2020. Moreover, the Virgin Islands Council of the Arts Executive Director Tashida Kelch mentioned that the FY 2020 budget totals \$294,260 for the General Fund and \$375,000 for the Federal Fund. Oriol added that the VICA Board reviewed 133 grants with requests for funding totaling \$683,220. Thus far, \$387,380 was awarded to 133 grantees Territory-wide. The Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office Chairman Felipe Ayala, Jr. stated that a total of \$152,248 is for the General Fund and \$417,300 is for the Federal Fund. "We anticipate being able to provide \$200,000 towards the Contentment Village Restoration Project on St. Croix," said Ayala regarding one of the biggest FY 2020 initiatives for SHPO.

The Office of

Adjutant General Designee Colonel Knox Limbacker stated that governor's recommended budget for FY 2020 totals \$2,258,494 from the General Fund. The overall FY 2020 projected operating budget is \$8,322,174. The budget comprises of \$5,846,800 for Federal Funds, \$216,880 for miscellaneous, and \$2,258,494 for the VI Government Recommendation.

Separately, lawmakers voted and approved the following:

- **NO. 001-19 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & NATURAL RESOURCES** "To utilize projected savings in Capital Outlay to cover projected deficits in Personnel Services, Fringe Benefits and Other Services & Charge." This appropriation transfer will allow payment of outstanding compensation for PERB-GSA-01-09 Sec. 530 "Remand" Cooke vs Government of the Virgin Islands.
- **NO. 002-19 BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE** "To request the transfer of vacancy savings from both personnel and fringe benefits to operating expenses in order to facilitate the following

housekeeping initiatives: the purchase of equipment (2 – 20 ton A/C units, 9 vehicles, 30 desktops, 2 industrial shredders, and 145 ergonomic chairs), repair and maintenance services for the removal of carpet and the installation of tiles (22 office spaces, 1 conference room and adjoining corridors), air quality cleaning and subsequent testing, painting of the Bureau's lobby areas and the purchase of the requisite supplies to facilitate these projects as well as to create a reserve with the necessities needed for day to day operations.”

- **NO. 003-19 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-**

“To request the transfer of vacancy savings from both personnel and fringe benefits to operating expenses in order to meet the needs of schools by purchasing kitchen equipment, furniture for classrooms and other necessities needed for day to day operations

- **Bill No. 33-0087**-An Act amending title 33, subtitle 1, part 1, chapter 3, section 45 of the Virgin Islands Code by prohibiting the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue from assessing penalties and fees for unpaid gross receipts taxes during the time when a business' gross receipts has not yet exceeded \$225,000. The bill was proposed by Sen. Alicia Barnes.