

THE NOMINATIONS OF COMMISSIONER NOMINEES MOVE

Date : March 15, 2019



ST. THOMAS- Members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary chaired by Sen. Alicia Barnes, convened in a meeting at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, and voted favorably for three nominations sent to the Legislature by Governor Albert Bryan; set forth from Section (16) of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, and Title 3, Section 65a of the Virgin Islands Code. All items approved will be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

The approved nominations are Kirk Callwood, Commissioner Nominee of the V.I. Department of Finance, Gary Malloy, Commissioner Nominee of the V.I. Department of Labor (VIDOL) and Joseph Boschulte, Commissioner Nominee of the V.I. Department of Tourism. Sen. Barnes noted that it is the responsibility of the Legislature to conduct a detailed vetting process before approving each nominee.

Under a line of questioning, Sen. Barnes requested that Nominee Callwood expounds on the strategies to improve operations in the St. Croix District as it relates to vendors and tracking

payments. Callwood stated that he intends on filling vacancies such as the Director of Treasury on St. Croix to oversee and streamline operations. Currently, the Core Leadership Team comprises of seven members; with one from the St. Croix District and six from the St. Thomas-St. John District. Sen. Athneil Thomas inquired about GVI cash at hand. Nominee Callwood mentioned that there are ten days cash at hand totaling \$26 million with expenditures of \$2 million per day. The balance is divided by the remaining allotments for the rest of FY 2019.

Overall, Nominee Callwood has over twenty-two years of experience in leadership, policymaking, and strategic planning. Some of his short-term goals are to collaborate with government agencies to conduct quarterly training with fiscal officers, to reimburse the General Fund through the verification of the biweekly payroll, and to pursue draw-downs on Federal and Disaster Funds and reimbursement to the General Fund. Some of his long-term goals are inclusive of integrating the Tyler Munis Modules to promote work efficiency Territory-wide, to re-establish a healthy relationship with the capital markets for investment and to develop a ten-year strategic plan to pay off the structural deficit of GVI.

Separately, Nominee Malloy has thirty years of experience, specifically twenty-seven years of leadership positions at the Department of Education and in the private sector. To improve operations of VIDOL, he intends on eliminating the high-risk status of federal requirements, implementing training for employees, hiring employees to fill critical vacancies and to continue assessing and implementing VIDOL's statutory responsibilities. Sen. Janelle Sarauw inquired whether employees working beyond their job capacities receive compensation. Nominee Malloy stated that some of them are while others aren't. Directors are responsible for assessing their employee's tasks and submitting the documents to payroll.

Lastly, Nominee Boschulte stated that one of the significant challenges of the Department of Tourism is the shortage of hotel inventory and occupancy of available rooms because of the damages sustained post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Any available hotel rooms are currently occupied by disaster recovery workers who are there until the restoration of the Territory. Additionally, there was a shortage of new inventory for over twenty years. Another challenge is maintaining and increasing airlift capacity. Sen. Barnes inquired of restoring the availability of air travel to and from St. Croix. Nominee Boschulte stated that within the next ninety days there would be negotiations with major airlines to restore service and frequency of trips to the St. Croix District.

The strategic plan to propel the Department of Tourism forward mirrors the goals shared by previous Commissioner Beverly Nicholson Doty's transition report. Raising revenues from expenditures of domestic and international visitors, improving the overall tourism product, and promoting the beauty of each island are some of the strategies to enhance the overall tourism product.

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