

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CARNIVAL COMMITTEE SHARES AN UPDATE

Date : June 27, 2018

ST. THOMAS- Members of the Committee on Workforce Development, Consumer Affairs and Culture chaired by Sen. Janelle Sarauw, held a meeting at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, to receive testimony on the status updates of the Virgin Islands Carnival Committee (VICC). Sen. Sarauw expressed disappointment of the absence of VICC'S board members.

"We have rescheduled this meeting, and yet the carnival chair, vice chair, and treasurer are absent. It saddens me that we are holding this meeting and only the Executive Chair is present," said Sen. Sarauw. Sen. Nereida O'Reilly stated that the Executive Director was sent as a sacrificial lamb.

Separately, Executive Director of VICC Halvor Hart shared the update. "After being hit with two category five hurricanes, our focus was to provide entertainment for the enjoyment of our residents of the V.I. to help relieve, and I believe that was achieved," said Director Hart. He added that with the absence of hotel rooms and limited flights, there was a significant reduction in carnival tourism from people who regularly attend carnival festivities.

VICC's revenues and expenses ending June 30, 2018, of the St. Thomas Carnival totaled \$898,170. The financial breakdown is as follows: \$139,670 for operations, \$213,500 for sponsorships, and \$545,000 from the Government of the Virgin Islands. However, the total expenses totaled \$928,250. The expenditures included construction, ground transportation, hospitality, electricity, freight, hotel, office supplies, prizes, printing, professional services, rental, salary, security, security, and shipping.

In a line of questioning, Sen. Sarauw inquired about the revenues and expenses of VICC.

"Do you have a copy of all financial contracts present at this meeting?" In response, Executive Director of VICC Halvor Hart stated that he does not. "Can you share the breakdown of the accounting of VICC?" asked Sen. Sarauw. Director Hart stated that the budget would be ready by the budget hearing held by the Committee on Finance. Sen. Janette Millin Young stated that it is essential for VICC to remain updated with their finances because the public is concerned with the allocation of funds and its expenditures. People are not happy when they are not informed.

"Who is responsible for record or bookkeeping for VICC?" asked Sen. Millin Young. Director Hart said, "The treasurer oversees record keeping. However, post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria the VICC office were destroyed, and the offices relocated. The cabinets holding all financial records were compromised and are currently being restructured."

Sen. Sarauw said, "VICC could inhibit corporate donors if all monies are accounted. Legislation will be drafted for VICC to fall under the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism."

Senators present are Janelle Sarauw, Janette Millin Young, Myron Jackson, and Nereida Rivera O'Reilly. Photos: <http://www.legvi.org/committeemeetings/Media> ###