

Mapp administration wants house for Potter

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Mapp administration is trying to provide housing for Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, though there is no law or tradition of providing for the lieutenant governor's housing except making available the historic Sion Farm house on St. Croix.

In April, Gov. Kenneth Mapp brought up the topic when he said that he was "going to present a plan to the community and the Legislature that we believe could resolve" the issue of the governor and lieutenant governor's residences once and for all.

The Daily News filed a public records request with the Property and Procurement Department last week for documents related to providing housing or private accommodations for Potter, and on Monday, Property and Procurement Commissioner designee Randolph Bennett responded to the request by email.

"I have been in discussion on getting Lt. Governor Potter a residence, just as other Lt. Governors in the States, but I do not have a contract completed at this time. Once everything is complete and it becomes a public document, I will provide it," he wrote.

Regarding whether he would answer questions about the proposal, Bennett responded — again by email — "I have no comments until a final decision is made on the Lt. Governor's housing. Have you researched that others Governors and Lt. Governors are provided housing?"

Bennett, who retired as a chief warrant officer from the Army, noted that members of the military often are entitled to a basic allowance for housing.

"I am not sure what is the issue here," Bennett wrote. "Generals are provided with living quarters.



The west facade of the historic Sion Farm house on St. Croix, traditionally the residence provided for the lieutenant governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

How can we fix this so that our leaders are treated with the same dignity and respect? As a Warrant Officer, I do not lie cheat or steal. As Commissioner, I am here to uphold the laws as well. I am here to help improve our community."

According to the National Lieutenant Governors Association, headquartered in Florence, Ky., only one state provides housing for its lieutenant governor.

Association spokeswoman Ann Thelan said that only Pennsylvania provides housing for the lieutenant governor — in a historic 2,500-square-foot stone house that sits on a state-owned military installation.

However, Pennsylvania legislators recently have been debating whether to sell the historic home

Mapp on trip but itinerary unknown

Gov. Kenneth Mapp is out of the territory until Friday.

During Mapp's absence, Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter will be acting governor.

Government House on Monday would not provide more information about where Mapp is going, what his itinerary is or what he is doing on the trip.

to save the more than \$200,000 per year the state spends on maintenance.

A majority of 28 states contacted Monday have no provisions for providing housing to their lieutenant governors.

Of those states, 16 said they did not provide housing or budgeted funds for that purpose.

Two states contacted Monday said any housing expense for the lieutenant governor is covered by the same stipend paid to members of their state legislatures when they are in session: \$120 per day in Idaho and \$179 in Virginia.

Representatives in the other 10 executive branches contacted Monday said they didn't think that their lieutenant governor received a housing allowance but said they would need to verify and respond later.

Five states — Arizona, Maine,

New Hampshire, Oregon and Wyoming — do not have the position of lieutenant governor in their executive branch.

Former Virgin Islands Lt. Gov. Gerard James told the Daily News on Monday, "I stayed at the governor's mansion on St. Croix, in the area of Sion Farm. That was my housing" while in office. When he had to stay on St. Thomas he said he was housed at the Marriott Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort.

"There was no housing stipend," James said.

Government House confirmed Monday that former Lt. Gov. Gregory Francis also lived at the Sion Farm house while in office.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

WICO is paying Mapp's rent, but is not providing details

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — An attorney for the West Indian Co. Ltd. confirmed Monday night that WICO is paying the rent and utilities for the St. Thomas home used by Gov. Kenneth Mapp, but she said she needs more time to formally respond to a Daily News public records request asking for documents regarding the lease.

"WICO is, in fact, paying the rent for the governor's temporary residence," said attorney Adriane

Dudley, who WICO hired to respond to the request.

The Revised Organic Act of 1954 specifies the governor must live on St. Thomas and actually identifies Government House as the official residence.

Dudley said WICO is responsible for the governor's housing based on precedence set by Gov. Roy Schneider and Gov. Charles Turnbull, because they lived in the historic Catherineberg estate, which WICO owns.

Mapp and past governors have said Catherineberg is not appropriate

as a home because of deterioration and mold.

WICO, traditionally a shipping and commerce consortium, was bought by the Virgin Islands government in 1993.

Mapp is living in a villa in Estate Nazareth, on the East End of St. Thomas. According to Government House, the rent for the house is \$12,500 per month on a six-month lease, with an option to renew for six months.

In February, Mapp said that taxpayers are covering the bill for the house. The Daily News filed a public

records request on April 22 with the Property and Procurement Department, seeking copies of the lease and any other paperwork pertaining to the lease.

Neither Property and Procurement nor Government House has ever formally responded to that request.

However, on May 4, Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones changed her previous statements to say that WICO is covering the cost for the rental at no expense to the taxpayers.

The revised statement came after

repeated requests to Property and Procurement for details about the property, including copies of the lease and any agreements regarding housing for Mapp.

WICO President and CEO Joseph Boschulte has not returned numerous messages left at his office and on his cell phone.

The response came last week, when Dudley emailed the newspaper to say that she had been asked to handle the request for records.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

George-Counts headed back to work at AG's Office

Assistant Attorney General was suspended in high-profile spat with Terri Griffiths

By **JOY BLACKBURN**
Senior/Investigative Reporter

Assistant Attorney General Denise George-Counts said she will be back on the job at the V.I. Justice Department this morning after her suspension — ordered last week by Terri Griffiths, who was acting attorney general at the time — was lifted.

George-Counts said she got word Wednesday — the day after Griffiths departed the top spot at Justice — that the suspension would be revoked.

"I was told that they would like me

to return," she said.

Griffiths on Tuesday left the acting attorney general post when Gov. Kenneth Mapp appointed former Superior Court Judge James Carroll III to replace her.

Griffiths was only in the post in an "acting" capacity, but her tenure was marked by controversy.

She suspended George-Counts on May 18, after George-Counts offered a plea deal on May 12 in the Jonathan Cohen tax case and Cohen accepted, signing it.

A change of plea hearing — when a judge would have formally

accept the plea deal — had been set for May 22.

However, several days before the hearing, Griffiths filed a notice with the court seeking to withdraw the plea, contending that George-Counts wasn't authorized to make the offer.

George-Counts asserted, though, that she had full authority to do so — and she also contended in court documents that Griffiths deliberately misrepresented to the court the Justice Department's policy and procedures relating to plea bargains.

Friday's hearing — which focused on whether the plea deal should stand — was heated and contentious, and sparks flew.

It is not yet clear what will become



Denise George-Counts



Terri Griffiths

of the plea bargain for Cohen.

George-Counts has filed a motion seeking sanctions against Griffiths, which she said she intends to pursue.

Griffiths has not yet responded to the motion for sanctions.

George-Counts said she first got the news from Mapp on Wednesday

morning that her suspension would be revoked, when Mapp and Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter came to tape a segment on "Good Morning, V.I.," which George-Counts co-hosts.

Carroll later called her and left a message, she said.

She had no information on whether she would be staying on the Cohen case. She said she was just glad to be getting back to work.

George-Counts also said she was grateful for all the kind words and support she received from the community — "every hand shake, every card, every text message."

"It really meant a lot to me," she said.

— *Contact Joy Blackburn at 714-9145 or email jblackburn@dailynews.vi.*

West Indian Co. Ltd. continues to flout V.I. sunshine law

By **JONATHAN AUSTIN**
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — In violation of the territory's open records law, the West Indian Co. Ltd. and a St. Thomas attorney representing the company still are ignoring a request for information regarding housing for Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

The request, filed 17 days ago by The Daily News, asked WICO, a government-owned autonomous entity, to provide copies of any and all contracts, leases, payment schedules, payment records and any documents in connection with the use of a residence on St. Thomas for Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

On Wednesday, The Daily News emailed attorney Adriane Dudley — who is acting as legal counsel in the matter for WICO — and asked her to provide the requested information by the end of the business day.

She declined.

The V.I. Code says "every citizen of this Territory shall have the right to examine all public records and to copy such records, and the news media may publish such records, unless some other provision of the Code expressly limits such right or requires such records to be kept secret or confidential."

"The right to copy records shall

include the right to make photographs or photographic copies while the records are in the possession of the lawful custodian of the records," according to the law.

The law says public records "includes all records and documents of or belonging to this Territory or any branch of government in such Territory or any department, board, council or committee of any branch of government."

The Daily News filed its request on May 11, and asked WICO President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boschulte to respond by May 13.

Boschulte did not return phone messages left on his cell phone or office phone, nor did he reply to messages left for him.

On May 14, Dudley sent an email saying she had been asked by Boschulte

to respond to the records request.

Since that time, Dudley has failed to turn over any of the requested documents or to provide a reason for her refusal to do so.

Dudley did say that WICO was covering the cost for Mapp's \$12,500-a-month villa in Estate Nazareth on St. Thomas, which is what Government House had begun saying in early May.

Prior to the Government House disclosure in May, the governor's office had said that the taxpayers were picking up the tab for the home.

WICO manages cruise ship docks and the Havensight Mall on St. Thomas. The governor's chief of staff, Randy Knight, is chairman of its board of directors.

— *Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.*

Setting the record straight

In an article on page 3 of The Daily News on Wednesday about the governor's Cabinet nominees, Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly's quote about the executive branch operating on "corruption, malfunction and dys-

function" should have indicated that she was referring to previous administrations. Rivera-O'Reilly said she is not yet willing to make the same statement about the administration of Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

The Virgin Islands DAILY NEWS

A Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper

May 11, 2015

TO: Mr. Joseph Boschulte, President and CEO
The West Indian Company Ltd.

RE: REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

Dear Mr. Boschulte,

Under the V.I. Open Records Act (3 V.I.C. § 881), The Virgin Islands Daily News requests copies of any and all contracts, leases, payment schedules, payment records and any documents created to serve the function of a contract, lease or payment instrument related to arrangements to secure or provide use of a residence on St. Thomas for Gov. Kenneth Mapp. The requested information includes but is not limited to any and all correspondence, notes, document markups and emails exchanged with an owner or manager of the property owner or manager regarding the use of the property.

The Daily News will accept the requested documents and information in paper or electronic format, and the newspaper should receive the requested information at or before noon Wednesday, May 13, 2015. A Daily News reporter will pick up the requested material from your office, or it can be e-mailed to jaustin@dailynews.vi.

If you or your staff have any questions about this request or need clarification, please contact Daily News reporter Jonathan Austin at 340-714-9104 or jaustin@dailynews.vi.

Thank you for facilitating access to this public information. Your attention to this matter indicates your commitment to transparency and the public's right to know.

Sincerely,

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DAILY NEWS

Gerry Yandel, Executive Editor

GERRY YANDEL, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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Mapp to 'sacrifice' villa

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — During the press conference that Gov. Kenneth Mapp called just hours before it took place, he made the announcement that he would give up his \$12,500-per-month luxury house on the East End of St. Thomas.

Mapp said he will move out of the leased villa he has been occupying in Estate Nazareth.

"In consideration of the Legislature's concern about the costs of paying these commissioners, I will vacate the residence at Estate Nazareth — you know we're paying some \$12,500 a month — on Saturday," Mapp said. "I have made no decision with respect to where I should reside on the island of St. Thomas, and that is not a priority of mine.

"On Sunday, I will be departing to the Island of Guam by invitation of the Department of Interior, on a collabora-

tion with all of the territorial governors except Puerto Rico. Upon my return I will figure out where I may need to sleep when I am on the island of St. Thomas," he said.

Explaining further, Mapp said his decision to find a new place to live was to demonstrate that he is "prepared to make sacrifices in the furtherance of the Cabinet."

Mapp also acknowledged that the villa rent might create problems for senators when confronted about it by residents.

"The mere fact that I was staying at this villa and doing what needed to be done at the villa — in terms of entertaining and what have you — has been a sticking point for the community," he said.

The governor also addressed the issue of providing a home on St. Thomas for Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, which Mapp said is proper.

"From the time presidents were appointing governors, and governors

were appointing government secretaries — meaning long before 1970 — the Virgin Islands government provided living quarters for the governor and the government secretaries," he said. "This is not new. We are not the only jurisdiction that provides living quarters for the chief executives; for the top of the Executive Branch of government, given the work that they will do."

Mapp said he will provide a plan for the accommodations of residences for governor and lieutenant governor.

"When I was the lieutenant governor of the Virgin Islands, I lived in government housing. I gave up the housing on the island of St. Thomas to the Department of Agriculture for the purposes of their administrative offices," he said.

"This is not a creation of the Mapp-Potter administration. This goes back almost to the 1960s, when we were doing that, and we're not changing that trajectory."

Governor touts his accomplishments

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — During his press conference, Mapp spoke about what he, Potter and the administration have accomplished since January.

The budget

Mapp announced that his administration would deliver the budget on time this year. "Tomorrow we will be releasing the fiscal 2016-2017 budget for the government of the Virgin Islands, which is estimated, and the senators will see, would be at \$1.267 billion.

Income tax refunds

Since Jan. 26, the Department of Finance has paid out more than \$12.5 million in tax refunds, the governor said. "The Department of Finance is processing an additional \$5 million to release to the public over the course of the next 10 days," he said.

GERS annuities

When he took office, 416 employ-

ees of the government of the Virgin Islands had been waiting to receive their retirement annuities, according to Mapp. "The GERS indicated that they could not pay any of those annuities because the government owed them money," he said. "The folks that are before the Legislature waiting for confirmation have been able to pay \$2.1 million to the Government Employees Retirement System, and over 90 percent of those 400-plus government employees are currently receiving their retirement annuity."

Workers compensation

"No payments were being made to injured employees in the territory, private or public sector, under the workmen compensation program and no payments to their medical service providers were being paid because the workers compensation fund had been in arrears," Mapp said. "In the last four months, we have been able to distribute and release, under the workers compensation fund, an additional \$1.2 million to injured employees in the territory and to pay bills to

their medical service providers."

Senior centers

"We are providing senior citizen services five days a week. We are providing lunch to our senior citizens, and beginning June 15, we are going to also give the seniors an option to receive breakfast," he said. "We have been hiring up to 22 additional individuals to work the senior citizen program."

He also said his administration has bought four buses for transportation.

Government pay

Mapp said that in the past, employees were given raises in election years, or given retroactive pay in an election year, then in the following year, the government would lay off 1,800 of them and have the Senate vote to decrease their pay by 8 percent.

"That is not acceptable and it should not be done to our workers. We want to move from that methodology and move from that way of operating," he said.

Cruise Ships

Today-Sunday, May 31

No ships

Monday, June 1

Carnival Liberty (2,974)

7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Havensight

Tuesday, June 2

Norwegian Getaway (3,963)

8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Havensight

Carnival Glory (2,974)

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Havensight

Oasis of the Seas (5,400)

10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Crown Bay

Wednesday, June 3

Freedom of the Seas (3,634)

11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Havensight

Thursday, June 4

Carnival Splendor (3,006)

8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Havensight



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Mapp delivers \$1.27 billion V.I. budget to Legislature

Spending for many departments is frozen or shrinks as spending for Governor's Office explodes Page 2

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Mapp villa rent revealed

And its even more than they said it was

St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802

WHEREAS, under the Contract, GVI agreed to pay rent of Twelve Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$12,000.00) for January and February 2015, and thereafter pay rent in the amount of Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$14,500.00) beginning March 1, 2015. GVI also agreed to pay all expenses incurred in the occupancy of the premises, including but not limited to electricity, cable, television, telephone, internet and other related rental services.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp is residing at Villa Fratelli Cresta since January 10, 2015.

WHEREAS, at the meeting of the Board of Directors on April 14, 2015, the following resolutions were proposed and approved:

RESOLVED, the Board of Directors approves a contract, to not exceed an amount approved periodically by the board to provide temporary residence for Governor

\$14,500+

Page 3

Cup players decided in pair of Game 7s Page 34



Moravian records hold little-known history of slaves Page 20



Famous artist answers V.I. student's letter and comes for a visit Page 8

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WICO resolution reveals villa details

Price thousands higher than previously admitted to;
Governor moved into Villa Fratelli Cresta, rang up bill of more than \$50,000 before
West Indian Co. voted on resolution to pick up tab in exchange for tax credits

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A document released by the West Indian Co., Ltd., on Friday shows that the Mapp Administration has misled the public about the lease of his rented Nazareth villa, misstating the total monthly expenses and failing to reveal that WICO is offsetting past due tax liabilities in return for its involvement.

Despite repeated statements by Mapp that the cost of the house is \$12,500, the monthly lease for the villa has been \$14,500 since March 1, the document states.

That doesn't include expenses.

The document, provided by attorney Adriane Dudley, is identified as a resolution approved by the WICO board of directors that was signed May 14, 2015, by WICO Board Chairman

Randy Knight — who also is Mapp's chief of staff.

It says that the Government of the Virgin Islands entered into a short-term rental contract effective Jan. 10, 2015, with Mr. Jimez Ashby Sr., for the property called Villa Fratelli Cresta.

It says the lease for the villa was \$12,000 for January and February, and thereafter \$14,500 — and it indicates that the V.I. government would have paid more than \$50,000 for Mapp's living arrangements — not including expenses — before the document was ratified and signed by the WICO board.

GVI "also agreed to pay all expenses incurred in the occupancy of the premises, including but not limited to electricity, cable, television, telephone, internet and other related rental services," according to the resolution.

The resolution says it was not until

April 14 that the WICO board considered taking over the expense of housing the governor, and the handwritten date next to Knight's signature on the document is May 14.

The controversy about where Mapp lives — and how much the taxpayers are spending to foot the bill — erupted soon after his inaugural events, when he said he couldn't live in Estate Catherineberg on St. Thomas.

The board resolution notes that the V.I. government leased Estate Catherineberg from WICO beginning Dec. 15, 1993, for \$1 a year — which is automatically renewable from year to year. The lease noted that the V.I. government was responsible for all expenses incurred in the use of the leased premises, including but not limited to security and service bills; water; electricity; telephone; cooking gas;

generator repairs and all other utilities.

However, when WICO took over the Villa Fratelli Cresta lease, it assumed all expenses for the governor's residence.

In February, Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones said that the cost for the governor's rental was \$4,000 a month. However, she corrected that amount shortly thereafter.

In April, Mapp publicly said the rent was \$12,500 per month, on a six-month lease with an option to renew for six months.

However, by that time the cost had risen to \$14,500 a month, according to the WICO document.

And again, that didn't include all the extras.

Also in April, Jones amended her initial statements to say that WICO —

not the V.I. government — was paying for Mapp's villa.

In the last paragraph, the WICO resolution says that the cost incurred in providing a temporary residence for Mapp "shall offset any liability of WICO to GVI for incurred payments-in-lieu of taxes."

By law, the company is required to pay the government \$700,000 a year in lieu of taxes, but WICO has said it has not had the funds to pay in years.

WICO CEO Joseph Boschulte told the Senate Finance Committee last September that WICO owed the government \$4.7 million in back taxes.

An attempt to contact Boschulte Friday night was not successful.

—Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY, LIMITED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE TO THE HONORABLE KENNETH E. MAPP

WHEREAS, The West Indian Company, Limited ("WICO") and the Government of the Virgin Islands, Office of the Governor, ("GVI") are parties to Lease Agreement No. T11-254, for a period of one year, commencing December 15, 1993 and ending December 14, 1994, for the following described premises:

"Denmark Hill"
Remainder of Estate Catherineberg
No. 8 Great Northside Quarter
St. Thomas, USVI
Consisting of 6.23 acres, more or less,
as shown on PWD Map No. D9-3470-T86

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg also includes appliances, furniture, and fixtures listed on an inventory sheet attached to Lease Agreement No. T11-254 as "Exhibit A."

WHEREAS, the annual rent for the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg is One Dollar and No Cents (\$1.00). GVI is responsible for all expenses incurred in the use of the leased premises, including but not limited to security and service bills, water, electricity, telephone, cooking gas, generator repairs and all other utilities.

WHEREAS, Lease Agreement No. T11-254 automatically renewed from year to year and neither party has given written notice to the other of non-renewal.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg has traditionally been used as the official residence of the sitting governor of the Virgin Islands.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg were not used as the official residence of the Honorable John P. deJongh, Jr. during his service as Governor of the Virgin Islands from 2006 to 2014.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg are unsuitable for residential dwelling, as confirmed in an environmental assessment conducted prior to former Governor deJongh's first term in office.

The West Indian Company, Limited
Board of Directors Resolution
Temporary Residence to the Hon. Kenneth E. Mapp
Page 2 of 2

WHEREAS, GVI entered into a short-term rental contract (hereinafter "Contract") effective January 10, 2015 with Mr. Jimez Ashby, Sr., for the following fully-furnished described premises:

"Villa Fratelli Cresta"
Villa Unit # V2
2Y-18 Estate Nazareth
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802

WHEREAS, under the Contract, GVI agreed to pay rent of Twelve Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$12,000.00) for January and February 2015, and thereafter pay rent in the amount of Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$14,500.00) beginning March 1, 2015. GVI also agreed to pay all expenses incurred in the occupancy of the premises, including but not limited to electricity, cable, television, telephone, internet and other related rental services.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp is residing at Villa Fratelli Cresta since January 10, 2015.

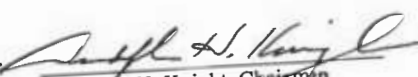
WHEREAS, at the meeting of the Board of Directors on April 14, 2015, the following resolutions were proposed and approved:

RESOLVED, the Board of Directors approves a contract, to not exceed an amount approved periodically by the board, to provide a temporary residence to Governor Kenneth E. Mapp and approves the Contract submitted for the occupancy of Villa Fratelli Cresta beginning January 10, 2015.

RESOLVED, the costs incurred by WICO, as approved by the Board of Directors, in providing a temporary residence for the Governor of the Virgin Islands shall offset any liability of WICO to GVI for incurred payments-in-lieu of taxes.

Dated: 05/14/15

The West Indian Company, Limited
Board of Directors

By: 
Randolph H. Knight, Chairman

WICO resolution reveals villa details

Price thousands higher than previously admitted to;
Governor moved into Villa Fratelli Cresta, rang up bill of more than \$50,000 before
West Indian Co. voted on resolution to pick up tab in exchange for tax credits

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A document released by the West Indian Co., Ltd., on Friday shows that the Mapp Administration has misled the public about the lease of his rented Nazareth villa, misstating the total monthly expenses and failing to reveal that WICO is offsetting past due tax liabilities in return for its involvement.

Despite repeated statements by Mapp that the cost of the house is \$12,500, the monthly lease for the villa has been \$14,500 since March 1, the document states.

That doesn't include expenses.

The document, provided by attorney Adriane Dudley, is identified as a resolution approved by the WICO board of directors that was signed May 14, 2015, by WICO Board Chairman

Randy Knight — who also is Mapp's chief of staff.

It says that the Government of the Virgin Islands entered into a short-term rental contract effective Jan. 10, 2015, with Mr. Jimez Ashby Sr., for the property called Villa Fratelli Cresta.

It says the lease for the villa was \$12,000 for January and February, and thereafter \$14,500 — and it indicates that the V.I. government would have paid more than \$50,000 for Mapp's living arrangements — not including expenses — before the document was ratified and signed by the WICO board.

GVI "also agreed to pay all expenses incurred in the occupancy of the premises, including but not limited to electricity, cable, television, telephone, internet and other related rental services," according to the resolution.

The resolution says it was not until

April 14 that the WICO board considered taking over the expense of housing the governor, and the handwritten date next to Knight's signature on the document is May 14.

The controversy about where Mapp lives — and how much the taxpayers are spending to foot the bill — erupted soon after his inaugural events, when he said he couldn't live in Estate Catherineberg on St. Thomas.

The board resolution notes that the V.I. government leased Estate Catherineberg from WICO beginning Dec. 15, 1993, for \$1 a year — which is automatically renewable from year to year. The lease noted that the V.I. government was responsible for all expenses incurred in the use of the leased premises, including but not limited to security and service bills; water; electricity; telephone; cooking gas;

generator repairs and all other utilities.

However, when WICO took over the Villa Fratelli Cresta lease, it assumed all expenses for the governor's residence.

In February, Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones said that the cost for the governor's rental was \$4,000 a month. However, she corrected that amount shortly thereafter.

In April, Mapp publicly said the rent was \$12,500 per month, on a six-month lease with an option to renew for six months.

However, by that time the cost had risen to \$14,500 a month, according to the WICO document.

And again, that didn't include all the extras.

Also in April, Jones amended her initial statements to say that WICO —

not the V.I. government — was paying for Mapp's villa.

In the last paragraph, the WICO resolution says that the cost incurred in providing a temporary residence for Mapp "shall offset any liability of WICO to GVI for incurred payments-in-lieu of taxes."

By law, the company is required to pay the government \$700,000 a year in lieu of taxes, but WICO has said it has not had the funds to pay in years.

WICO CEO Joseph Boschulte told the Senate Finance Committee last September that WICO owed the government \$4.7 million in back taxes.

An attempt to contact Boschulte Friday night was not successful.

—Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY, LIMITED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE TO THE HONORABLE KENNETH E. MAPP

WHEREAS, The West Indian Company, Limited ("WICO") and the Government of the Virgin Islands, Office of the Governor, ("GVI") are parties to Lease Agreement No. T11-254, for a period of one year, commencing December 15, 1993 and ending December 14, 1994, for the following described premises:

"Denmark Hill"
Remainder of Estate Catherineberg
No. 8 Great Northside Quarter
St. Thomas, USVI
Consisting of 6.23 acres, more or less,
as shown on PWD Map No. D9-3470-T86

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg also includes appliances, furniture, and fixtures listed on an inventory sheet attached to Lease Agreement No. T11-254 as "Exhibit A."

WHEREAS, the annual rent for the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg is One Dollar and No Cents (\$1.00). GVI is responsible for all expenses incurred in the use of the leased premises, including but not limited to security and service bills, water, electricity, telephone, cooking gas, generator repairs and all other utilities.

WHEREAS, Lease Agreement No. T11-254 automatically renewed from year to year and neither party has given written notice to the other of non-renewal.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg has traditionally been used as the official residence of the sitting governor of the Virgin Islands.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg were not used as the official residence of the Honorable John P. deJongh, Jr. during his service as Governor of the Virgin Islands from 2006 to 2014.

WHEREAS, the leased premises at Estate Catherineberg are unsuitable for residential dwelling, as confirmed in an environmental assessment conducted prior to former Governor deJongh's first term in office.

The West Indian Company, Limited
Board of Directors Resolution
Temporary Residence to the Hon. Kenneth E. Mapp
Page 2 of 2

WHEREAS, GVI entered into a short-term rental contract (hereinafter "Contract") effective January 10, 2015 with Mr. Jimez Ashby, Sr., for the following fully-furnished described premises:

"Villa Fratelli Cresta"
Villa Unit # V2
2Y-18 Estate Nazareth
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802

WHEREAS, under the Contract, GVI agreed to pay rent of Twelve Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$12,000.00) for January and February 2015, and thereafter pay rent in the amount of Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$14,500.00) beginning March 1, 2015. GVI also agreed to pay all expenses incurred in the occupancy of the premises, including but not limited to electricity, cable, television, telephone, internet and other related rental services.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp is residing at Villa Fratelli Cresta since January 10, 2015.

WHEREAS, at the meeting of the Board of Directors on April 14, 2015, the following resolutions were proposed and approved:

RESOLVED, the Board of Directors approves a contract, to not exceed an amount approved periodically by the board, to provide a temporary residence to Governor Kenneth E. Mapp and approves the Contract submitted for the occupancy of Villa Fratelli Cresta beginning January 10, 2015.

RESOLVED, the costs incurred by WICO, as approved by the Board of Directors, in providing a temporary residence for the Governor of the Virgin Islands shall offset any liability of WICO to GVI for incurred payments-in-lieu of taxes.

Dated: 05/14/15

The West Indian Company, Limited
Board of Directors

By: 
Randolph H. Knight, Chairman

Mapp's staff floated villa rental idea in January

Newly released documents show it was a Government House plan all along

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Mapp administration has repeatedly tried to distance itself from the lease of a fully furnished seven-bedroom, nine-bath villa with pool, hot tub and fitness center for the governor to live in, but copies of documents provided to The Daily News show that the proposal to rent the villa can be traced right back to Government House.

However, Randolph Bennett, the commissioner designee for Property and Procurement, maintains his department has no documents pertaining to the villa on the East End of St. Thomas and repeatedly has said there are no records on file reflecting any government effort to house Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

The documents became public after weeks of shifting stories from the administration on how much the villa actually cost and who was paying.

The documents show that Government House asked Property and Procurement in January to expedite the lease of the house for Mapp.

They also show that Government House was involved in negotiating a residence on St. Thomas for Mapp as early as Jan. 20, 2015, and that the administration wanted Property and Procurement to expedite the approval of the lease.

The cover letter is on Government House stationery and is addressed to Cecilia Milliner-Emanuel, who was the first acting commissioner of the Property and Procurement Department to be nominated by Mapp.

The letter is from Mapp's deputy chief of staff, Rochelle Corneiro, who said: "We thank you in advance for the expeditious processing of our request," and suggested that Property and Procurement call Government House "should you have any questions or require additional information."

The next page appears to be a standard Property and Procurement form detailing the request, which noted the firm leasing the house is A9 Equipment Leasing LLC.

It notes that while the 4,830-

square-foot Villa Fratelli Cresta had been renting for \$12,500 a month; the proposed payment for the governor of the Virgin Islands would be \$14,500.

The Daily News was unable to reach Corneiro for comment.

Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones did not respond to requests for comment and clarification about the documents.

The copy of the paperwork does not show the lease was executed, and Milliner-Emanuel, who had been named as head of Property and Procurement on Jan. 9, didn't stay in that position long.

On April 8, Mapp announced that Bennett, an Army and State Department veteran, would take the helm of Property and Procurement.

Reached Monday night, Milliner-Emanuel referred all questions about the lease to Bennett.

On April 22, The Daily News asked Bennett for documents regarding the villa, including copies of any and all contracts, leases or other documents pertaining to housing or lodging on St. Thomas for Mapp.

The request also sought copies of negotiation notes and emails with the management and ownership of

the property.

On May 14, Bennett emailed The Daily News, saying, "I do not have any information on what you are asking."

On Monday, The Daily News emailed Bennett again, asking for all documents or contracts prepared for the lease transaction, executed or not. Bennett replied: "I have replied earlier to you that this was not processed through P&P therefore, I do not have the records you are seeking."

Mapp also has tried to distance himself from the villa case, saying last week during a press conference on St. Croix that he has no involvement in the housing efforts.

"I don't get involved in the details of what the lease agreement would be," Mapp said. "Let me say for the record there was never a lease agreement between Property and Procurement and the owner of the property."

Nonetheless, Government House wanted the lease, and it wanted the deal to be completed quickly, according to the paperwork.

For reasons that remain unclear, Government House last month reversed previous comments about the lease being negotiated through

Property and Procurement — saying instead that the West Indian Co. is covering the governor's villa rent.

Mapp and Government House also repeatedly told the public the cost of renting the villa was only \$12,500 a month.

A May 11 public record request to WICO uncovered the fact that the rent was \$14,500 a month, though WICO said in its post-dated resolution that the higher rate was effective March 1.

The WICO documents also showed that the WICO board — chaired by Mapp's chief of staff, Randy Knight — had agreed on April 14 to cover the cost of the villa rental, and it post-dated the deal to cover the expenses back to Jan. 10.

Earlier this month, the WICO board rewrote more resolutions to now not only say that the landlord agreed to only \$12,500 a month, including utilities, but to erase efforts by WICO to get its multi-million dollar debt to the government erased if WICO accepted the responsibility for paying for the villa.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9149 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

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	MORNING Draw #14351	Draw #14222
Prize 1	5 4 3	8 1 0 7
Prize 2	7 9 8	3 4 7 4
Prize 3	0 8 1	1 4 4 9

	MIDDAY Draw #14352	Draw #14223
Prize 1	2 3 8	6 3 3 2
Prize 2	8 9 9	6 8 1 3
Prize 3	7 3 6	8 7 9 2

	SUNSET Draw #14353	Draw #14224
Prize 1	3 4 9	4 1 9 0
Prize 2	1 3 2	4 6 6 1
Prize 3	4 1 3	2 4 6 9

	EVENING Draw #14354	Draw #14225
Prize 1	1 6 7	5 0 8 4
Prize 2	0 9 9	6 0 7 0
Prize 3	7 7 0	1 7 1 6

Duncan will return for 19th season

Back page

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Inside

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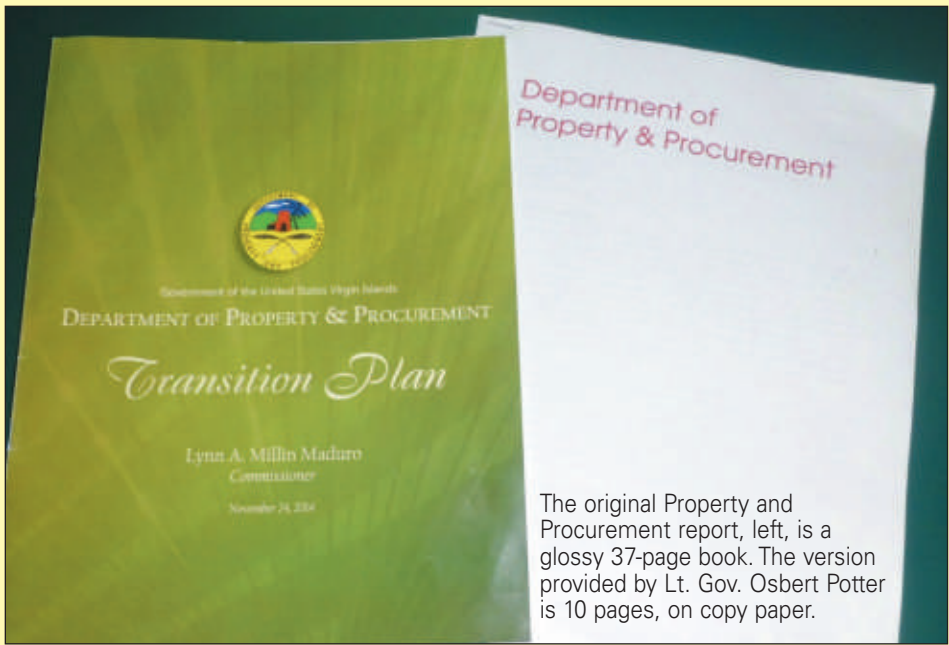
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FIGHT FOR V.I. PUBLIC RECORDS

DECEPTION

Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter provides altered transition reports missing critical data found in originals from agencies

Pages 2 and 3



The original Property and Procurement report, left, is a glossy 37-page book. The version provided by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter is 10 pages, on copy paper.

Among the discrepancies:

- VITEMA report short 27 pages, including information on potential debt of \$500K and overpayment of \$250K to some employees
- Department of Planning and Natural Resources report short 22 pages, with whole categories erased, including on local and federal funding
- DPNR report short 22 pages, including details on 'matters requiring priority attention'

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Fight for V.I. public records

Altered versions of transition reports missing pages of info found in originals

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Mapp administration has provided The Daily News with transition reports from 30 government departments and agencies, but a review of the reports suggests that critical data and information has been removed.

The changes resulted in reports that do not provide an accurate assessment of the situation faced by executive department agencies and departments as they transitioned from the administration of John deJongh Jr. to the administration of Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

The documents were provided to The Daily News by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, who had them delivered to the newspaper's attorney on St. Croix.

They were supposed to be complete copies of the transition reports sought by the newspaper in separate public record requests that were emailed, faxed or delivered to the departments and agencies of the executive branch beginning in late May.

Several agencies and departments responded to the requests in a timely manner, and on their own had provided copies of their transition reports to the newspaper.

The newspaper compared those earlier copies with the versions provided by Potter and identified multiple irregularities, omissions and changes.

A report that differed dramatically was one said to be for the

Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

DPNR had supplied a copy to The Daily News on June 8 after the newspaper had requested the information on June 1.

Missing DPNR information

What was purported to be a complete copy of the report that the lieutenant governor provided this week had 22 fewer pages than the copy provided by the department.

A comparison showed that the following categories had been erased:

- Details on local and federal funding.
- A section that discussed non-personnel costs.
- A category headed "Findings (Program operations, personnel, fiscal management, capital projects, practices, strengths, weaknesses, etc.)."
- A category titled "Matters requiring priority attention."
- A 22-page section headed "Tier II Transition Document" that addressed agency identification.
- Organization and budget.
- Authorizing environment and environmental scan.
- Strategic plan highlights, records management, SWOT analysis and emergent/hot issues.
- Legislative proposals.

Jamal Nielsen, the special assistant to DPNR Commissioner designee Dawn Henry, told The Daily News that "the one we have given you is the comprehensive version."

"I can't comment on something that we didn't put together or submit," he said. "I can't comment on what the lieutenant governor's office submitted. We were not the ones that submitted it."

Missing IT Bureau info

Another report that showed a

Access to records a basic right in U.S.

"Government accountability is the cornerstone of a democracy. The people have a fundamental right to know what their government is doing, what it is spending, and how it goes about the people's business," says Jason Robbins, publisher of The Daily News.

It is important that the public can view government documents because the records of government reveal what is going on in ways many officials don't want to address.

Access to information is a basic right in a democracy.

In the territory, lawmakers understood that when they approved the Open Records Act. The law gives every resident of the territory the right to examine all public records and to copy such records — and the news media may publish such records — unless some other provision of the V.I. Code expressly limits such right, or requires such records to be kept secret.

The law defines public records as all records and documents of or belonging to the territory or any branch of government or any department, board, council or committee of any branch of government.

Access to records of government activity is sacrosanct in the United States, and many states have laws that require quick responses to requests.

In Georgia, agencies are required to respond to a request within three days by providing the records or citing why the records are exempt from being released.

In Florida, many of the records are available online, 24 hours a day.

The V.I. law requires that the government allow inspection of documents, and that it provide true and accurate documents.

Nothing allows the government to arbitrarily alter, shorten or abridge documents before they are released.

wide range of alteration was for the Bureau of Information Technology.

The copy provided to the newspaper by Director Reuben Molloy was 22 pages in length. The copy provided this week by the lieutenant governor was 14 pages.

Missing from the version delivered by the lieutenant

governor were:

- Next generation 911 implementation details.
- A category titled top projects.
- A section titled Agency Initiative Initiation Completion Matrix.
- The SWOT — strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats — analysis.

• A category titled top priorities by relevance.

"I don't know what report was actually submitted by the transition team," Molloy told The Daily News on Thursday. "What I gave you was what I gave the transition team. I never got a copy of the transition report."

Molloy also said he would not mind if his data had been edited or truncated, "if they took out stuff to make the report more concise."

Missing VITEMA info

The report provided to the newspaper by V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director Mona Barnes had 37 pages, while the copy given to the newspaper by Potter was only 10 pages.

Missing from the new VITEMA version was:

- The entire 17-page Tier II report.
- The entire first two text pages of the report.
- The organization chart.
- The budget summary.
- A variety of entries about grant funding.
- References to a potential debt of half a million dollars.
- A section detailing how some 911 staff had been underpaid while others were collectively paid a quarter of a million dollars too much.
- Information about 911 certifications.
- The entry about the VI Alert program.
- A section about the need to repair VITEMA's Hermon Hill facility on St. Croix.
- Sections from the department accomplishments category.

The VITEMA report provided

See **REPORTS**, next page

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Fight for V.I. public records

Salary list coming soon, says Milton Potter

By GERRY YANDEL
Daily News Staff

Responding to inquiries about the status of a public records request for the salaries of government employees, which The Daily News had requested May 29, Personnel Director designee Milton Potter said the list would be forthcoming next week because some names were

being removed from the list.

Potter called The Daily News on Tuesday morning and left a voice-mail, apologizing for the delay, which he said was because some names needed to be removed from the list.

His message did not elaborate why the names needed to be removed.

On Thursday, Potter said the names being removed are of employ-

ees who have not yet completed the termination process and were no longer employed by the government and should not be on the list.

"I didn't want you guys to get a list that might have the names of former commissioners in it, because that would be confusing and create a lot of questions," he said Thursday.

Potter said that about 80 names —

of more than 7,000-plus — fall into the category of employees who are in the separation process and that the IT department is manually reviewing the list to remove those names.

Potter said the list would be released no later than the end of next week.

"If it is ready before that, I will get it to you," he said.



Milton
Potter

“

At this time we are forced to suspect that we cannot trust the documents provided to the public by this government. A boss that can't trust the workers — in this case the government — has to hold that worker accountable, sometimes all the way to terminating employment.

— Jason Robbins, publisher of The Daily News

REPORTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

by the lieutenant governor also ends in mid sentence.

VITEMA spokeswoman Christine Lett said she had to verify her statement before responding.

"What was sent to you was double-checked. The report that I sent to you was exactly what was in her transition brief," Lett said, referring to the transition report kept on file by Barnes.

Striking similarities

Other reports that could be compared include one that had been provided to the newspaper weeks ago by Property and Procurement Commissioner designee Randolph Bennett.

The version provided by Bennett — prepared by former Commissioner Lynn Millin-Maduro — is a glossy, stapled, full-color booklet of 37 pages with a green cover featuring the seal and name of the department and its commissioner.

The version provided by the lieutenant governor is — as are all the reports Potter provided — on copy paper with a plain white cover.

All the reports provided by the lieutenant governor have identical plain covers with the name of the depart-

ment or agency in a red ink.

All the reports provided by the lieutenant governor have identical stapling in the upper left corner, with the staple aligned with the top margin.

The Daily News was able to compare earlier copies of transition reports for the Labor Department; the Finance Department; the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs; and the Department of Agriculture with the versions provided by Potter.

All of the newer copies had portions missing.

More missing info

In the case of the Agriculture Department, the report provided by the lieutenant governor was completely different than that provided by the department.

The Finance Department report provided by the lieutenant governor was missing 35 pages, including spreadsheets and the Tier II report.

The DLCA report provided by the lieutenant governor was missing 31 pages.

The Labor Department report provided by the lieutenant governor was missing a whopping 531 pages as compared with the version that was provided to the newspaper by the department itself.

The lieutenant governor had taken the lead on responding to the newspaper's public record requests, calling Daily News executive editor Gerry Yandel and the newspaper's legal counsel Kevin Rames.

Potter also talked during Tuesday's Government House press conference about his efforts to provide the reports.

However, on Thursday night, he did

not respond to half-a-dozen calls from The Daily News.

Daily News position

Jason Robbins, the publisher of The Daily News, issued the following statement in light of what appears to the Mapp administration's efforts to falsify government documents it supplied in response to the 30 individual public record requests for the transition reports:

"Government accountability is the cornerstone of a democracy. The people have a fundamental right to know what their government is doing, what it is spending and how it goes about the people's business. The people of the Virgin Islands are the boss of the Virgin Islands government. This newspaper — just as any individual, any company or any other organization has the right — made a simple request: Please give us copies of these documents.

"It appears that, instead of getting copies, we received abridged, truncated, edited and possibly even re-written versions that selectively left out information, for reasons unknown.

"At this time we are forced to suspect that we cannot trust the documents provided to the public by this government. A boss that can't trust the workers — in this case the government — has to hold that worker accountable, sometimes all the way to terminating employment.

"We don't know enough yet to know what actions are appropriate, but in order to restore trust, we must see change."

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

Here's what we know is missing

DPNR — 22 fewer pages than document initially released.

What's missing?

- Details on local and federal funding.
- Report on non-personnel costs.
- Report on department strengths, weaknesses.
- Category titled "Matters requiring priority attention."
- Strategic plan highlights.

Bureau of Information Technology — eight fewer pages.

What's missing?

- Category about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Top priorities by relevance.

VITEMA — 27 fewer pages.

What's missing?

- The entire first two pages of the report, including the executive summary.
- The budget summary.
- References to a potential debt of half a million dollars.
- Details of how staff were overpaid a quarter-million dollars.
- The "new" version ends in mid sentence.

Property and Procurement — 27 fewer pages

What's missing?

- Organization report.
- Critical notes on all department operations.
- Transition plan.
- List of hot issues.
- Strengths and weaknesses.
- Report on public auctions.
- Reports on leases.

Finance Department — 35 fewer pages

What's missing?

- Spreadsheets.
- Tier II report of organization, budget.
- Strengths and weaknesses.

DLCA — 31 fewer pages.

Labor Department — 531 fewer pages.



Randolph
Bennett

Fight for V.I. public records

One report, two vastly different versions

VITEMA transition record provided by Lt. Gov. missing chunks of information

Editor's note: This is the first of a series of articles detailing the alteration of public records provided to The Daily News by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter.

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A transition report for the V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency offers a wide-ranging look inside an agency that is responsible for coordinating emergency management responses in the territory.

However, what was supposed to be a complete copy of the report provided to The Daily News by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter has large gaps in the information, with numerous topics — including discussion of funding issues and the possible misuse of funds — erased.

The Daily News had asked 30 government departments for copies of transition guides that had been created by the outgoing deJongh administration to help guide the incoming administration of Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

Some departments and agencies responded quickly in providing copies of their transition reports. After several weeks, Potter announced he was going to personally oversee the fulfillment of the public records request.

The newspaper compared the copies of the reports sent by the agencies with the versions provided by Potter.

Irregularities were evident in every version for which there was a comparison copy.

On Friday, Potter denied that he or anyone in his office changed any text in the reports.

A page-by-page comparison of the VITEMA report provides answers to what was removed and what was different.

Missing pages

VITEMA provided its report in three different sections totaling 64 pages.

The version provided by Potter is only 10 pages.

Right off the bat, page 2 — which outlines agency responsibilities, including operations, administration and finance, grant management and preparedness — is missing from the version Potter provided.

In the Potter version, pages 4 and 5 — which provide the VITEMA organizational chart —

VITEMA's version

3. 911 Back-pay

The issue at hand is that the VITEMA Emergency Communication Centers (ECC) employees were not appropriately compensated for hours worked. This issue arose due to several factors outlined as follows:

- Upon the transferred of dispatchers from VIPD to VITEMA, Emergency Communication Centers (ECC), the dispatchers lost coverage under the United Steel Workers Collective Bargaining Agreement which governed their compensation. Therefore the VI Code became the regulatory governance for the VITEMA ECC Operators.
- The operators initially worked two scheduled rotating shifts. The VI Code for the most part do not address rotating shift employee, however, reference to regular shift employee can be found. VITEMA over a four year period sort guidance from the Division of Personnel, Department of Finance, Office of Collective Bargaining, Attorney General Office and the Legislature as to the interpretation and application of the law relative to rotating shift employees. The interpretation of the laws varied within these government authorities and the application of the laws is executed differently within the government departments/agencies. This resulted in VITEMA overpayment to the operators due to the various changes in guidance as to the application of the laws as it pertained to night

Potter's version

3. 911 Back-pay

Governor, the Office of Collective Bargaining, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Justice, the Division of Personnel, the Department of Finance and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) was held. The following items were agreed upon:

VITEMA drafted the letters to be sent to employees informing them of the determination made based on the back-pay calculations.

Action – Awaiting review from the Attorney General..

Individual meetings will be held to discuss the findings with each affected employee.

Action – Upon receipt of final amendments to the letter, individual meetings will be scheduled.

A payment plan will be created for those employees who have to make repayments to the

also are missing.

Page 7 in the Potter version is missing. That page in the document sent directly from VITEMA offered the fiscal year budget summary, with details about the general, miscellaneous, non-appropriated and federal funds.

Page 9 in the Potter version is missing. That page begins with a continuation of a list that had begun on page 8, detailing information about public assistance disaster grants. Also missing is a list of haz-

ard mitigation grants and earthquake grants.

Bigger omissions

Page 10 is where the big omissions begin in the Potter version.

In the version sent directly by VITEMA, this section, titled Major Issues, has sections numbered one through seven.

The version supplied by Potter is also numbered: 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

Section two was a detailed explanation of how the Federal

Emergency Management Agency thought grant money had been misspent and steps VITEMA was taking in response to the allegations.

However, that text was replaced with what appears to be a copied-and-pasted part of the Inspector General report about the grant.

\$568,000 misspent

What is missing is FEMA's argument that \$568,069 provided to the Virgin Islands in Homeland

Security grant funds was misspent on payroll because VITEMA couldn't verify that the staffers paid from the grant actually had done any work related to the grant.

The report sent by VITEMA notes that the territory initially asked to have the debt forgiven.

"We would like to note that prior to July 2009, the Office of the Adjutant General was the executive head of VITEMA and V.I. Office of Homeland Security. The Director of VITEMA and the V.I. Office of Homeland Security coordinated activities through the Adjutant General," VITEMA spokeswoman Christine Lett said Monday regarding the FEMA allegations.

During the period in question, Mel Vanterpool headed the V.I. Office of Homeland Security, and in July 2009, the Emergency Management Act of 2009 took effect, reorganizing VITEMA into a stand-alone agency, according to Lett. The law dissolved the V.I. Office of Homeland Security and instead created a homeland security function within VITEMA.

"Based on the audit findings, in August 2014, FEMA initiated three notices of 'Potential Debt' in attempt to recoup \$1,179,895 in costs it determined was unallowable. The audit findings cited the USVI for sole source procurement without prior approval from FEMA, and for failure to properly maintain records such as personnel timesheets," Lett said. "In a letter dated Jan. 26, 2015, Gov. Mapp notified FEMA of the Government of the Virgin Islands' intent to pay for the unallowed costs utilizing a three-year payment plan."

The three-year payment plan called for a down payment of \$150,000 in March 2015, followed by quarterly payments in the amount of \$76,300, until the debt is fully liquidated, according to Lett.

FEMA approved the governor's request on March 4, she said.

"In March, the V.I. government made a \$150,000 down payment and has since made an additional payment of \$150,000 toward the debt, for a total of \$300,000," Lett said.

911 back pay

Page 6 of the Potter version ends with the section header "911 Back-pay," but that section isn't in VITEMA's version until page 12.

See **RECORDS**, next page

Fight for V.I. public records

RECORDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Page 7 of the Potter version starts in mid-sentence.

The "911 Back Pay" issue involved an analysis of VITEMA departments from Oct. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2013. It concluded that 11 employees were underpaid a total of \$47,111.02 for hours they worked and that 47 employees received too much pay, totaling \$224,133.29.

The VITEMA version said the pay issue arose when "dispatchers lost coverage under the United Steel Workers Collective Bargaining Agreement which governed their compensation" and because operators initially worked two scheduled rotating shifts, though "V.I. Code for the most part does not address rotating shift employees."

The VITEMA version says that employees were contacted and that "a payment plan will be created for those employees who have to make repayments to the government."

The Potter version is missing the statement that VITEMA had not paid its "outstanding obligation in the amount of \$71,950 to a certification vendor." Potter's version also does not have the sentence: "As a result of these vendor issues, the dispatchers' certifications have lapsed."

None of those details were in the version of the report provided by Potter.

On Monday, Lett, the VITEMA spokeswoman, said, "Employees who owe back pay and who are owed back pay have been notified in writing. (This was done prior to Director Barnes' arrival at VITEMA)," Lett said, referring to VITEMA Director Mona Barnes. "United Steelworkers Union, which represents the 911 operators, requested copies of the back pay documentation to conduct their own review. VITEMA has submitted back pay documentation to United Steelworkers, and we understand the documents are currently under review."

911 certification

The VITEMA version also includes a section on 911 operator certification.

The Potter version is missing the statement that VITEMA had not paid its "outstanding obligation in the amount of \$71,950 to a certification vendor."

Potter's version also does not have the sentence: "As a result of these vendor issues, the dispatchers' certifications have lapsed."

"VITEMA is currently working to execute a contract for services rendered to pay the vendor, Priority Dispatch, the \$71,950 it is owed," Lett said.

VI Alert

Further on in the Potter version, an entire entry regarding VI Alert, the territory's emergency alert system for the public, is missing.

The original VITEMA report noted that the Virgin Islands and New York had entered a partnership in 2010 to replicate New York's mass alert and notification system. The system was implemented in the territory and training took place.

However, the VITEMA's version notes that New York was exploring other options for its system, and it states: "Preparing for the possibility that an agreement may not be reached, VITEMA has explored other options for mass alerting in the USVI."

Lett said the VI Alert mass alert and notification system remains intact.

VI Alert is a replication of NY Alert, and the system originally was designed by Buffalo Computer Graphics for the New York State Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, according to Lett. NY Alert was replicated for the USVI; however, the hardware and technical support remains at the New York State Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, she said.

"The initial discussions on use of the VI Alert system called for VITEMA to utilize the system free of charge for two years and then pay approximately \$20,000. However, other jurisdictions have requested that the mass alerting system be rep-

Some highlights

The copy of the report provided to The Daily News by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter has a number of omissions and discrepancies from the report provided directly by VITEMA, including:

- Page 2 is missing from the Potter version.
- Pages 4 and 5 also are missing.
- FEMA's allegation that \$568,069 was misspent is missing.
- Page 7 — which offered the fiscal year budget summary in the VITEMA version — is missing from the Potter version.
- Page 9 of the Potter version is missing.
- The section titled 'Major Issues' should be numbered 1-7. It is numbered 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7.
- An entry about 47 employees being overpaid by \$224,133.29 is missing.
- The entire VI Alert entry is missing.

licated for their use," Lett said. "This agreement is on hold until New York state determines how other jurisdictions should be charged for replication and use of the mass alerting system. In the meantime, there will be no disruption to the VI Alert service."

VITEMA's St. Croix facility

In the section titled "Revitalization of the Hermon Hill Facility," the Potter version is two paragraphs long, while the report that came directly from VITEMA has nine paragraphs.

Removed from the version Potter provided is any mention of \$350,000 received to rehabilitate the building.

Also removed were details about how the Hermon Hill VITEMA facility had been vandalized.

"The vandals removed copper tubing and wires from the building resulting in extensive interior damage, and the generator and its housing were also damaged," the VITEMA version states. "Despite our best maintenance efforts, the building remains in a deplorable con-

dition in addition to being overrun by weeds and brush."

Lett said the agency was able to clean up the facility and grounds so the outside can be used for first-responder training and other events. VITEMA donated the generator attached to the facility to the V.I. Agriculture Department, she said.

"The facility remains uninhabitable, but it's the director's goal to return VITEMA to Hermon Hill within the next four years," Lett said. "This would allow us to house all of our components under one roof and eliminate the need for us to pay rent to two landlords. Currently we are renting the DeChabert Building in Christiansted for general staff and space at a Kingshill complex for our 911 operations."

Finally, numerous entries in the agency's 'Accomplishments' category have been removed from the version Potter provided, and the section entitled "Forward to 2015" was reduced from five paragraphs to two.

It ends in mid-sentence.
— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9149 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

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JACKPOT Games

MEGA MILLIONS

Winning Numbers: For Draw # 496 on Friday, 03rd July, 2015

33 50 64 71 72

MEGA BALL (09)

Jackpot for the next draw

\$ 96,000,000

LUCKY PICK

Winning Numbers: For Draw # 493 Sunday July 05th, 2015

01 04 05 12 17

Jackpot for the next draw

\$31,500

VI LOTTO

Winning Numbers: For Draw # 600 on Friday, 03rd July 2015

13 20 22 27 33

SUPER BALL (07)

Jackpot for the next draw

\$1,620,000

VI POWERBALL

Winning Numbers: For Draw # 1319 on Saturday July 04th, 2015

03 06 14 18 24

POWER BALL (21)

Jackpot for the next draw

\$40,000,000

PICK 3

MORNING	Draw #14407	Draw #14278
Prize 1	9 6 9	1 2 4 8
Prize 2	4 3 4	5 0 5 6
Prize 3	0 5 9	1 0 2 3

MIDDAY

Draw #14408	Draw #14279
Prize 1	7 8 1
Prize 2	2 1 2
Prize 3	9 1 4

SUNSET

Draw #14409	Draw #14280
Prize 1	1 9 9
Prize 2	5 8 7
Prize 3	4 8 4

EVENING

Draw #14410	Draw #14281
Prize 1	8 0 6
Prize 2	9 9 8
Prize 3	2 2 7

Fight for V.I. public records

Mapp: Records coming, after I clean up errors

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Gov. Kenneth Mapp said Tuesday that his administration’s delays in releasing public records are because of antiquated record keeping and inaccuracies in data, and he described how he told a department head to not release information because he felt it contained too many errors.

The comments came during a one-on-one discussion with The Daily News on Tuesday.

Mapp was addressing the fact that it frequently takes the government of the Virgin Islands weeks or even months to respond to requests for public records.

“Our issue of transmitting information to the media is still going to remain difficult until we fix this system,” Mapp said. “There’s a problem we have that’s systemic. We don’t have automated systems in the government, we have paper systems.”

Mapp described his observations of a records request The Daily News filed with the V.I. Personnel Division on May 29, seeking a list of government employees, their job titles, and their salaries.

“You’re going to get the personnel listing from the government, classified and unclassified, from the Division of Personnel,” Mapp said.

He said Personnel Director designee Milton Potter had prepared



Kenneth Mapp

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

the report for the newspaper and was ready to have it delivered.

“When they were ready to transmit, I said to them, ‘Well, before you do, just send it to me. I want to see it.’” Mapp said.

The governor did not say whether he is informed of every record request filed with any executive branch office.

Mapp said the Personnel report was forwarded to him and he opened it up.

“I have a way, it’s called test the veracity, so I just went in. I said, ‘Let me see if I can find an old commissioner — the commissioner of Education. And then I saw the old commissioner of Education,’ Mapp told The Daily News. “So then I said, ‘OK, let me see if I can find the new commissioner,’ and there she was. And then I found the old commissioner of Sports, Parks and Recreation, and I found the new commissioner,” he said.

“I changed the salaries of the commissioners, with the compromise we’re working out with the Legislature, so let me check their salaries,” Mapp said. “So I pulled two of them up and they had the old salaries.

“So I said to Milton Potter, I said, ‘You can’t send this, this thing’s not clean. It’s not done.’ And then this is what I learned. That if a person leaves the government, whether they retire or resign, until they’re closed out they won’t get off the list,” Mapp said.

“They have annual leave that

Public documents being withheld illegally

Date requested	Sent to	Regarding	Response
October.	Luis Hospital	Staff and salary list	“Too busy”; ignored
April 22	Property and Procurement ..	Lease for Villa Mapp	No records provided
April 22	Property and Procurement ..	DeJongh property case	No records provided
May 8	Gov. Kenneth Mapp	Employee status	No records provided
May 11	Joseph Boschulte/Wico	Lease for Villa Mapp	Delayed and incomplete
May 14	Wayne Biggs/VIEDA	List of delinquent loans ..	Denial
May 15	Legislature	Employee status	Denial
May 15	Property and Procurement..	Housing for Lt. Gov.	“I am redacting it.”
May 22	Wayne Biggs/VIEDA	List of delinquent loans ...	“Too much work.”
May 26	Wayne Biggs/VIEDA	Seeking reason for denial	No response
May 26	Senate President	Employee list	Incomplete records provided
May 27	Gov. Kenneth Mapp	Travel receipts.....	No response
May 29	Milton Potter/Personnel.	Government salary list....	“Names being removed.”

“
The point I’m making is the system that we’re using is terribly old. That’s the issue in our government that we have to fix, notwithstanding the politics.

— Gov. Kenneth Mapp

they’re requesting, or some other leave that needs to be processed, or they’re in the GERS system but they haven’t been closed out for retirement, so their time — their vacation and sick time — hasn’t been audited and transmitted until they’ve closed the document. Their name is going to be on the

list, so you’ll get two commissioners or two people in the same position,” he said.

States have varying laws dictating how quickly the government must respond to record requests.

Mississippi law says responses generally must occur in one day of receipt of a request, and according to the website Ballotpedia.com, 35 states specify a time within which public documents must either be furnished, denied or an extension requested. The other 15 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands have no time requirement.

The territory of Guam updates an online government employee list maintained by the Pacific Daily News newspaper.

“The point I’m making is the system that we’re using is terribly old,” Mapp said. “That’s the issue in our government that we have to fix, notwithstanding the politics. We have to get the systemic pieces from a paper system to an auto-

mated system that people can go in and pick up information and say, ‘Here it is.’ And you know that that information is clean and it’s accurate.

“If I said that day to the director of Personnel, put a summary block on the bottom of all the salaries and tell me how much the payroll is, that would be if you have the whole list, it would be inaccurate,” Mapp said.

This is not the first time the governor has said he wants a transparent government.

In December, as governor-elect, Mapp went on television and promised that his administration would be very open and transparent. He said all government contracts would be posted online for anyone to see, along with all government salaries and positions.

“The days of hiding information is over,” he said.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9149 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

Salary list request still not fulfilled after 30-plus days

By GERRY YANDEL
Daily News Staff

Despite assurances last week that he would do so, V.I. Personnel Director designee Milton Potter still has not fulfilled a public records request that was submitted to his office on May 29.

Potter called The Daily News on June 30 and apologized for the delay in fulfilling the request for the salaries of government employees.

That same day, his brother, Lt.

Gov. Osbert Potter announced during a press conference that he would personally take charge of fulfilling that public records request, as well as another that also had been languishing for weeks.

Osbert Potter ultimately delivered documents that appeared to be altered in response to the other public documents request; however, there has been no indication since Milton Potter called that the request for government salaries is being fulfilled.



Milton Potter

had been provided twice under the deJongh Administration and was completed in about a week

Milton Potter did not return phone calls to The Daily News on Wednesday.

When he called last week, Milton Potter said the delay in providing the government salary list — which

both times — was because some names were being removed from the list.

Two days later, Milton Potter offered a clarification about the process, saying the names being removed are of employees who have not yet completed the termination process and were no longer employed by the government and should not be on the list.

“I didn’t want you guys to get a list that might have the names of former commissioners in it, because that would be confusing

and create a lot of questions,” he said.

Potter said that about 80 names — of more than 7,000-plus — fall into the category of employees who are in the separation process and that the IT department is manually reviewing the list to remove those names.

At the time, Milton Potter said the complete list would be released no later than the end of this week.

— Contact Gerry Yandel at 714-9106 or email gyan@dailynews.vi.

Neville James refuses to sign gay marriage order

With lieutenant governor off-island, Mapp executive order requires Senate president's signature Page 7

ONE DOLLAR

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The Virgin Islands

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FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2015

84th year, No. 23370

VILLA MAPP HEARING

Subpoenaed

Senate wants to hear from Knight
on how housing Mapp
became WICO's responsibility

Page 3

Senators: Testifiers show disrespect Page 2

**Lieutenant governor's residence
costing taxpayers \$33,600 a year**

Page 4



**New V.I. Olympic
leader takes part
in first major event**

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issue order to
rum makers**

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**Joint task force
hunts child predators
in Virgin Islands**

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As I sit here, what comes to mind is I'm truly embarrassed as a Virgin Islander. I want you all to know, if you're not thinking it, that the world is watching us today. Historical and traditional practices like this one, if it were any place else would have landed somebody's behind in jail.

— Sen. Kenneth Gittens

Senate drills for answers on Villa Mapp lease

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The Senate's Committee in the Whole, voted Thursday to subpoena Randy Knight, the governor's chief of staff and the chairman of the board of the West Indian Co., to answer questions about how WICO came to pay to house Gov. Kenneth Mapp.

The action came at the end of Thursday's hearing that delved into the entire saga surrounding the rental of a seven-bedroom, nine-bath villa for Mapp in Estate Nazareth on the East End of St. Thomas for \$14,500 month.

Knight and others had been invited to testify under oath before the committee, comprising all 15 senators.

Appearing to testify were Joseph Boschulte, the president and CEO of WICO; Michael Watson, a member of the WICO board of directors; Randolph Bennett, the commissioner nominee of the Department of Property and Procurement; James Carroll III, the acting V.I. attorney general; Adriane Dudley, legal counsel for WICO; and William Taylor, an architect and advisor on government property. Accompanying Carroll was Assistant Attorney General Renee Gumbs-Carty.

However, absent from the hearing was Knight and Jimez Ashby, the owner of Villa Fratelli Cresta. Ashby's attorney sent a note saying her client was out of the territory on a previously scheduled trip.

But senators said Knight didn't even acknowledge his invitation or bother to send his regards.

That didn't go over well, and at one point Senate Vice President Janette Millin Young wondered aloud whether Knight was sitting back, watching the hearing on TV and laughing.

Millin Young's response to Knight's indifference came shortly before she made the motion, seconded by Sen. Myron Jackson, to subpoena Knight to appear at a later, unscheduled hearing before the Committee of the Whole.

The Senators said they are anxious to hear from Knight because other



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM

Property and Procurement Commissioner nominee Randolph Bennett, left, prosecutor Renee Gumbs-Carty, Acting Attorney General James Carroll III, West Indian Co. Ltd. President Joseph Boschulte, WICO attorney Adriane Dudley, WICO board member Michael Watson and architect William Taylor are sworn in before the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas.

testifiers suggested Thursday that Knight was the catalyst for bringing the lease agreement for the villa before the WICO board.

The senators also were concerned because WICO would not turn over minutes from the meetings during which the lease was discussed, citing a current lawsuit in which WICO's public or private status is being determined.

Watson told the committee that WICO never actually signed a lease for the villa.

WICO paperwork also shows that the government — as the governor has said — did not sign a lease for the villa. Mapp moved in only with a verbal agreement, and no one in the government paid the rent until WICO took over that responsibility.

In fact, no one at WICO other than Knight apparently knew that the lease was going to be presented at the April 14 meeting. The lease was not on the meeting agenda and there had been no prior discussion, senators were told.

Sen. Tregenza Roach pressed Watson on the board's willingness to agree to pay the governor's overdue housing bill and take over payments through the end of June.

"At the time that you had this meeting, this was the first contact that you had with this lease,"

Roach asked.

"That is correct, senator," Watson replied.

"So the lease was presented to you by Mr. Knight, and the board decided to act, and to decide to make payments consistent with its terms, even though it was not executed, and even though this was the first time that you had seen," Roach asked.

Watson paused, and Roach continued.

"In the absence of minutes that show how you deliberated this, you're basically saying to us that you convened a meeting April 14, 2015, Mr. Randolph Knight came, with a proposal, really a lease totally drawn up — nobody has testified yet as to who drew it up — and that you voted to pursue this agreement, to implement essentially the terms of that lease, that this had been the first contact that you had with it," Roach asked.

"Can the attorney answer for that," Watson responded.

"No, no, no," Roach replied. "I appreciate your deferring to your counsel, but I don't think your counsel advises you each time you vote."

In the end, Watson said the board unanimously approved the lease, but then the board asked Boschulte and legal counsel to make sure it was appropriate.

Time and time again, senators challenged Watson, Dudley and even the acting attorney general about whether the whole activity was legal and appropriate.

Carroll declined to answer, at times saying it was impossible to supply a correct answer without research.

Time and time again, senators spoke of how upset they were that no one from Government House had bothered to attend the hearing.

"The real question that needs to be asked," said James, "and I'm certain that none of you will answer it, but I'm going to ask it anyway, was there Government House influence in the decision-making of the WICO board, as it relates to the the governor staying at Villa Fratelli Cresta?"

Dudley replied that the board came to an independent decision to take over the responsibility for the governor's lease that initially was set to cost more than \$136,900, excluding some charges.

Invoices billed by the villa owner to WICO included daily \$232 charges for housekeeping and regular \$245 charges for the use of a chef for special events, even though Government House had hired a chef for \$65,000 a year who is responsible, according to her job description, for preparing meals and to ensure that the day-to-day operations of the governor's resi-

dence runs smoothly.

At one point, James read through the invoices listing the costs the villa wanted WICO to pay.

Asked whether he had looked over the charges, Boschulte responded: "I have looked over these invoices, and from my perspective it's trivial because the true payment for the governor's estate was \$12,500," he said.

Boschulte said WICO negotiated the total charges down to \$12,500 a month.

"That's what the books show. That's what was finalized, and that's what West Indian Co. paid," he said. "Now, what they billed and they wanted to receive, if the bill did not get renegotiated by WICO, would be different. But what was paid, and what the final cost was, \$62,500; \$12,500 a month, all in."

But few senators seemed satisfied, though several said the government must resolve the issue of where the governor lives.

Some suggested that the third floor of Government House be remodeled back to a residence, while others suggested that a committee be set up to explore the options.

Many continued to argue that nothing can be done until the requirement in the Revised Organic Act that the governor live in Government House is changed.

Through it all, questions about the Mapp administration's lack of transparency drove the discussion.

"It is the inconsistency that created this problem, among other things," James said. "The governor's office needs to place something on the record. We would have killed two birds with one stone, had Mr. Knight showed up as invited."

Sen. Kenneth Gittens was blunt.

"As I sit here, what comes to mind is I'm truly embarrassed as a Virgin Islander. I want you all to know, if you're not thinking it, that the world is watching us today," he said. "Historical and traditional practices like this one, if it were any place else, would have landed somebody's behind in jail."

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

Sanes: 'I'm like, damn. Something was wrong ...'

Senators 'disappointed' with villa testimony by Mapp administration and West Indian Co. officials

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — When it was all over, the Senate Committee of the Whole had talked or listened to testimony for 5 hours and 47 minutes on Thursday regarding housing the governor and the lieutenant governor and the condition of Government House and Catherineberg.

That doesn't count the unscheduled hearing to come, when the subpoenaed testimony of Gov. Kenneth Mapp's chief of staff, Randy Knight, will be demanded.

During the hearing, senators uttered the word "disappointed" frequently. Others questioned whether Knight's involvement as chairman of the board of the West Indian Co. — while serving in the Mapp administration — is a conflict of interest.

"There are questions that need to be posed to Government House," Senate Vice President Janette Millin Young said.

Without Knight's testimony, several senators said they felt cheated.

They also said some testifiers waited until the last minute to turn in their documents or their statements.

Representatives from WICO were chastised for waiting until the end of the day Wednesday to supply their paperwork. The time stamp on the copies supplied by WICO President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boschulte shows that it arrived in the office of Senate President Neville James at exactly 4:34 p.m. the day before the hearing.

The requests for information went out in June, Sen. Sammuell Sanes said.

"It took you this long?" he asked, saying such laxity "is disrespect for this branch of government."

Sanes also joked that he'd read it all before. "I could have gone to my stack of Daily News," he said.

"The first word that came out of my mouth; I cannot repeat it," he said.

Moments later Sanes didn't mince words.

"I'm like, damn. Something was wrong with this picture," Sanes said.

Sen. Marvin Blyden quizzed the testifiers about one fact.

"Where is the governor staying at this moment? Anyone?"

There was no response.

"So, on the record, no one knows where the governor is staying?" Blyden asked.

Again, no one responded.

Sen. Clifford Graham seemed equally upset, even if he kept his tone quiet.

"I'm not happy with the facts," he said.

Despite the lack of answers and lack of testifiers, at least one — Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly — said she had seen worse, and she communicated her concern with a humorous barb.

She said it was odd that some people seemed upset about the current situation, yet she suggested it is not in the same league as when the Legislature reprogrammed nearly \$500,000 in funding from a capital project to pay for security gates and improvements at the home of Gov. John deJongh Jr.

"A mistake was made. A horrible mistake was made when monies were reprogrammed from capital projects to enhance the former governor's house, rather than asking WICO to pay for that," she said. "Obviously, WICO has said here that it feels it has the responsibility to provide for temporary housing" in the absence of Catherineberg being available for use.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM

V.I. Senate President Neville James and Sen. Clifford Graham confer during Thursday's hearing of the Committee of the Whole on St. Thomas.

Plaskett has no plans to ask for revision of Organic Act

By GERRY YANDEL
Daily News Staff

Although she said she is aware of the high emotions and controversy swirling around the housing issues of Gov. Kenneth Mapp and Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett said Thursday she is focused on other things at this time.

Sen. Kenneth Gittens has put forth a resolution asking Congress to

amend the Revised Organic Act of 1954 to remove any ambiguities about where the territory's chief executive must reside.

However, Congress will not undertake such an effort unless Plaskett puts forth legislation asking them to do so.



Stacey Plaskett

"I know a motion has been made. We were made aware of that," she told The Daily News on Thursday. "We are monitoring that and our office is reviewing it."

Plaskett said she has no plan at this time to put forth legislation asking for a change to the Organic Act.

"I'm putting a lot of my energies into some other areas, things I believe are important to the territory, like how to grow the economy," she said.

Gittens' staff said Thursday that two other senators — Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly and Novelle Francis Jr. — say they will sign on to his resolution, though the Legislature has not taken any action on it at this point.

Even if the Senate passes such a resolution, it is not binding on Plaskett.

"It's a request of the Legislature to me," Plaskett said. "At this point, it is a suggestion by one senator. If the

Senate passes it, it would be a suggestion of the Legislature to me."

Plaskett said she has met with the senators and will meet again with them to sit down and talk about legislation she is working on and legislation they are working on.

"My focus is related to creating economic opportunity and improving our quality of life in the territory," she reiterated.

— Contact Gerry Yandel at 714-9106 or email

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Potter says he'll pay for his own pad

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter will personally take over the payment for the Mahogany Run condo rented for him, and he said he has not stayed a single day in the condo while it has been rented at taxpayer expense.

"This is a matter that has been basically causing a lot of distraction, and I want to make sure we get certain information clearer to the public, because in the midst of the distraction I don't think all of the information surrounding the lieutenant governor's residence has actually been placed out there, and since it was placed out there, it hasn't been received as intended to be," Potter said Monday.

Potter was speaking at a press conference called while he is acting governor to introduce the new Corrections Department director. He was out of the territory when articles about the condo were published.

The debate over renting a condo for Potter came on the heels of a saga in which Government House and Gov. Kenneth Mapp repeatedly misstated how much was being spent to provide him with a seven-bedroom, nine-bath villa.

The Property and Procurement Department secured the Mahogany Run condo for Potter, and Monday he said several options had been presented to him.

"There were a few locations that were brought to the table that I basically rejected because of the costs," he said.

During a special hearing, called by the Senate on July 9, to address housing the governor, questions also arose about why taxpayers are housing the lieutenant governor.

Using government funds to house the lieutenant governor shocked some senators, many of whom said they knew of no legal justification for the action.

"As I sit here, what comes to mind is I'm truly embarrassed as a Virgin Islander," Sen. Kenneth Gittens said during the hearing on July 9. "Historical and traditional practices like this one, if it were any place else, would have landed somebody's behind in jail," he added.

On Monday, Potter repeated what Property and Procurement Commissioner nominee Randolph Bennett told the Senate: that "a residence for the lieutenant governors of the Virgin Islands is nothing new. This is not an invention of the Mapp-Potter administration. Residences have been provided for lieutenant governors from way back, before the title of the position was lieutenant governor. Back then the title for the position was government secretary."

The Government Hill building that now houses the offices of the Public

Lt. Gov. headed to Toronto

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter announced Monday that he will be traveling out of the territory to Canada on Wednesday to attend the Pan American Games.

As Gov. Kenneth Mapp will also be out of the territory, Potter said Finance Department Commissioner nominee Valdamier Collens will be acting governor in their absence.

"On Wednesday, I will be attending as head of the delegation with our athletes that are participating as a part of the Pan American Games in Toronto. We have, I think, 18 athletes that are participating in the Pan American Games events."

Potter recently returned from a trip to Montana where he attended an insurance forum with insurance department representatives from other states.

Mapp's current trip includes a meeting with U.S. Energy Department Secretary Ernest Moniz, in Washington, D.C.; touring the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colo., at Moniz's invitation; meetings and several media promotional events in Atlanta with Tourism Commissioner nominee Beverly Nicholson-Doty; and the summer meeting of the National Governors Association, scheduled for Thursday through Saturday in West Virginia.

Mapp is expected back in the territory Sunday. Potter said he will return to the territory Monday.

Finance Authority was once the government-provided home of the governor's secretary, Potter said, and sites on St. Croix and St. John had been provided to past lieutenant governors as residences while in office. Potter said the housing was provided "not for the individual but for the office."

He said he stays in the St. Croix residence when he is there, but the St. John residence needs repairs to make it habitable.

Potter didn't identify where he has been living, but he said the structure didn't satisfy security needs.

"As a result, a location was sought that would provide a little bit more



The ocean view from Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter's Mahogany Run condominium rental on St. Thomas.



The lieutenant governor's condo features finishes such as custom cabinets and granite countertops.

safety and security for the holder of the office of the lieutenant governor," he said.

"Not that I, Osbert Potter, feel personally threatened" anywhere on the islands. "I feel comfortable wherever I am," he said. "But for the office, and the office of the lieutenant governor," security personnel felt it was best that a residence be found that was secure and safe.

Potter said Mapp is putting together a plan to present to the Legislature to provide housing for governors and lieutenant governors.

"This has to be something that we must resolve permanently," Potter said.

"I'm not going to be the last lieutenant governor. There are going to be many following. We don't need to have the governor and the lieutenant governor, whoever they might be in the future, go through this, like rolling the dice to determine if what we are doing is good or what we are doing is bad," he said.

"Something on a more permanent basis I think must be done, and ought to be done, and must be done in short order," he said, "so we can put this entire debacle behind us."

Tax refunds

Potter also announced that the Internal Revenue Bureau and the

Finance Department will issue \$5 million in tax refunds this week.

"Four million dollars of that will be for the 2014 tax year, and \$1 million will be for prior years," he said. "We made the determination that for this fiscal year we will issue \$50 million in tax refunds. We have been doing that on a regular and consistent basis," and are on track with that promise, he said.

"We know how important it is to have tax refund dollars circulating in this economy," Potter said.

"It makes a big difference in the lives of Virgin Islanders who, for the most part, sit and wait patiently for their tax returns."

HOVENSA, buyer seek concessions from V.I.

Sale of port, tank farm contingent on unconditional release from liability Page 2

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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Mapp drops \$5,381.58 on sheets and towels at Miami Macy's

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These Tommy Hilfiger Novelty Print Sheets were among the items purchased by Gov. Kenneth Mapp on May 19 at the Macy's department store at Miami's Dadeland Mall.



Poison expert disputes DPNR claims

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Julio Brady, judge and V.I. leader, dies at 73

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KEMP'S CALLS



Goodell's problem

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Find out who beat Kemp Back Page



Whitaker joins Roots cast

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GOVERNOR’S SPENDING

Mapp’s trip to Miami included buying more than \$5,000 in linens for territory

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Gov. Kenneth Mapp’s private trip out of the territory in May included a shopping trip at Macy’s Department Store at Dadeland in Miami, where Mapp bought more than \$5,000 worth of towels and bed linens made by Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger.

According to documents provided to The Daily News by Government House, the governor used his V.I. government credit card to purchase 800-thread count sheets, shams, bed sets, towels and pillow supports at the department store.

Those purchases later were approved as official expenditures by Nellie Varlack, the director of business and administration at Government House.

Handwritten notes on the side of the Macy’s receipts say that the purchases were for use at Government House on St. Croix.

“Those are the furnishing for Government House Christiansted. He does stay there occasionally,” said Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones. “Most recently he stayed there for several days during Tropical Storm Erika.”

Jones couldn’t explain why the purchase of \$5,381.58 in linens and towels for a government facility hadn’t been processed through the Department of Property and Procurement, the agency tasked with managing properties owned by the government.

“I don’t have an answer for that,” she said.

The linens and pillows were shipped to the Virgin Islands by Paradise Freight, which Jones said is a shipping service that consolidates small shipments into a container “and brings it down

Gov. Kenneth Mapp purchased this Hotel Collection 525 thread count 100 percent Egyptian cotton twin sheet set while in Miami. Cost, \$110.49.



This Tommy Hilfiger Boston Plaid Comforter was among Gov. Kenneth Mapp’s picks when he stopped at the Macy’s at Miami’s Dadeland Mall on May 19.

for a much less rate.”

Jones said she didn’t have an answer for why the governor did the shopping for Government House himself.

According to receipts from Macy’s that were emailed to Carmen Potter in Government House, Mapp used his government Visa card to pay for one transaction of \$4,724.39 on May 19 and another the same day of \$657.19.

The larger receipt is for 43 items comprising pillow pads; bath rugs; mattress covers; bedding; and sheets.

Editor’s note: This is one of a series of reports The Daily News is publishing about how the V.I. government is spending taxpayer money.

Research of the inventory numbers shows that Mapp purchased:

- A Ralph Lauren Costa Azzura paisley comforter for \$280.49.
- A Tommy Hilfiger Boston plaid comforter set for \$84.99.
- A Ralph Lauren Wyatt quilted coverlet or shams for \$76.49.
- A Tommy Hilfiger Ithaca stripe sheet set for a twin bed for \$84.99.

Jones said Government House on St. Croix has a king-size bed, a queen-size bed and twin beds.

“They’re beautiful, antique Danish beds,” she said. “They’re stunning.”

The smaller purchase was for 33 towels and two pillow pads. Representative of the style of items Mapp bought was a Hotel Collection MicroCotton 30-inch by 54-inch bath towel.

Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett said Wednesday that “people don’t have to come to Property and Procurement if they’re buying items” costing \$5,000 or less and can choose what they want in their department.

“They can come to us for approval, but it’s still their department money,” he said. “Things like towels and linens, those are expendable items.”

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

“

Excerpts from Gov. Kenneth Mapp’s “State of the Territory” speech talking about the territory’s precarious financial situation.

“Our government is teetering on the brink of financial collapse. Our ability to deliver basic essential services to our communities is diminishing more and more each day.”

“Clearly, even meeting the Government’s payroll will continue to be a challenge. So my friends, the state of the territory is critical, and its financial condition is worsening.”

“So, financially, we are not in a good place. In fact, our territory has never been in such a state in our history.

“To survive and recover, which we have the fortitude and ability to do, will require great courage. Courage to make some difficult decisions, courage to work with some folks you may not have gotten along with in the past, courage to be transparent and courage to embrace the reality in which we find ourselves.”

“It is important that we all understand that recovering from this financial crisis will require every citizen to do his or her part — no matter how small, how incremental. Lt. Governor Potter and I are committed to working with you to accomplish this.”



'Lolo' Willis defiant at his sentencing

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Louis "Lolo" Willis was sentenced Thursday by V.I. Superior Court Presiding Judge Michael Dunston to at least two years in prison.

Willis had been convicted Aug. 21 for helping a local construction company avoid paying taxes. The jury convicted Willis, 56, of conspiracy to evade or defeat tax and aiding and abetting willful failure to collect or pay over tax.

Willis spoke in his own behalf at his sentencing, seeking to explain that the charges against him had been improperly filed and that his case was all part of a federal investigation hanging over the territory.

"There's a lot coming down, your honor," he said.

Speaking forcefully, Willis went through documents he said came from the investigation against him, arguing that the statute of limitations had passed and that he only did something to help an employer whose company was working repairing schools.

He lectured and gestured, at times pointing out his family and friends seated in the gallery.

At one point, the stenographer asked the judge to make Willis slow down so his words could be accurately taken down.

Willis' attorney, Treston Moore, earlier had argued the point about the statute of limitations to no avail.

Willis, a former director of the Internal Revenue Bureau and former executive director of the V.I. Legislature, was arrested Feb. 14, 2014, along with Gerard Castor Sr., the president of Balbo Construction, the company that benefited from Willis' help.

Castor pleaded guilty to one count of willful failure to collect or pay over tax as part of a plea deal reached with the government, and he later testified against Willis.

The jury found Willis not guilty of assisting in the preparation of false or fraudulent monthly Gross Receipt Tax returns from 2004 through 2007 for Balbo Construction.

Dunston noted Thursday that the state and the defense made "impassioned and persuasive arguments with regards to the sentence this court should impose."

He rejected the prosecution's request that Willis pay restitution of \$19,804.18 — the amount of unpaid taxes remaining after Castor paid \$100,000 at his sentencing.

Prosecutor Denise George Counts asked the court to impose four years in prison for each of the counts against Willis, while Moore asked Dunston to start his deliberation at zero time in prison and move up from there.

Willis faced up to five years for each count.

Under territorial law, Dunston is required to determine whether the two counts should be merged for sentencing purposes.

He said he did "find merger" and sentenced Willis to two years on count one, plus a \$5,000 fine. For count two, "were I to sentence it separately I would sentence you to two years" plus another \$5,000 fine, Dunston said.

Willis currently is serving a federal sentence for bribery and extortion, after being sentenced to five years on May 14.

Dunston said Willis' territorial sentence will begin at the end of the federal sentence.



Louis "Lolo" Willis

GOVERNOR'S SPENDING Taxpayers buy Mapp groceries Also pay overdraft and late fees on his chef's credit card

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Gov. Kenneth Mapp's chef has spent as much as \$1,611.44 a month in groceries for the governor and his staff, but the V.I. government failed to pay her credit card bill for two months in a row.

Marlene Henderson — the mother of the governor's chief legal counsel, Emile Henderson III — was hired in January at a salary of \$65,000 a year to cook Mapp's meals and to maintain his house.

The Daily News received copies of her government credit card statements and reimbursements as part of a public records request, and those documents show that Henderson has bought groceries and kitchen supplies routinely, but she also has paid cash on shopping trips for which she was reimbursed.

The credit card issued to her was over its limit for three billing cycles from April through August, and payment was past due at least twice. Payments for the credit card were not noted on the May or June statements. The May statement for the Banco Popular Visa card, which listed a closing date of May 10, included the message from the bank that "we have not received your payment of \$70" on a balance of \$2,668.13.

Finance charges of \$24.41 were added as part of the balance. The billing noted that the account was over its credit limit by \$168.13.

The June statement, with a closing date of June 10, noted a balance of \$2,703.27, with a payment past due and the card \$203.27 over the limit. Finance charges of \$35.14 were listed on the June statement.

The May statement detailed 17 charges at grocery stores, while no purchases were noted on the June statement, which is when the card was over its limit and past due two months.

However, groceries still were being bought. Henderson's business expense report noted that she used a credit card — apparently a different one — to buy \$115.08 in groceries on May 12; \$93.40 worth of groceries on May 27, when she

Editor's note: This is one of a series of reports The Daily News is publishing about how the V.I. government is spending taxpayer money.

paid with cash; and \$118.73 on June 16, which was paid for with a debit card.

An expenditure authorization dated June 10 notes that Henderson was reimbursed for the May 27 shopping expenses. She did not seek reimbursement for the May 12 or June 16 purchases.

The \$118.73 purchase from June 16 apparently was covered in an expenditure authorization request made by the "Office of the Governor" on June 18.

Other purchases Henderson made with her government credit card include \$445.24 worth of kitchenware at KLR Services on St. Thomas. Two invoices show she purchased stock pots, ladles, basting spoons, fry pans, a bamboo steamer and utensils.

Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones said Thursday that Henderson "cooks at Government House, both St. Thomas and St. Croix. She serves daily food to the governor, his guests and some of the staff."

Jones said she is "not familiar with the practices of the business office" and couldn't answer for the credit card payment situation.

Regarding whether the V.I. government is having trouble paying its credit card bills, she replied: "Not to my knowledge. I'm sure it was just an oversight."

The reimbursements for the shopping trips are noted on expenditure authorizations as being for "groceries for governor's business meals" and "food supplies for office of the governor."

None of the financial

records note who ate the meals; the purpose of any meeting at which food was served; or where the cookware was to be used or where it is kept.

Brian Wampler, a Fulbright scholar and chairman of the Political Science Department at Boise State University, said the regular use of public funds to provide meals for government staffers and elected officials can undermine the public trust.

"In many places, they are successful in making sure that mayors, governors or city councils are required to pay for their own meals," he told the Daily News.

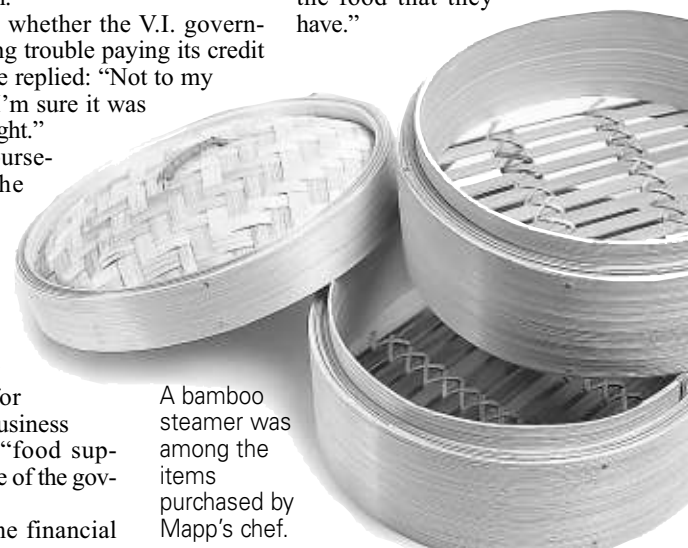
Successful efforts to build trust promote the idea that leaders are "being elected; not entitled to a resort lifestyle," he said.

However, Wampler, whose work addresses efforts to ensure governmental accountability, said "there's no question that elected officials abuse the public trust."

He cited the successful prosecution of a former Virginia governor "convicted of using public resources to enrich his own lifestyle."

Others do bend the rules, he said. "The way a lot of elected officials play with this is, they'll claim that the dinner is for 'state good,'" Wampler said.

He pointed out, though, that "even at the level of the president, when it is just him and his family, they have to pay for the food that they have."



A bamboo steamer was among the items purchased by Mapp's chef.

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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Mapp has no receipts for thousands charged to government card

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Governor spends more than
\$12,000 on V.I. luxury hotels Page 4

Did Gov. Kenneth Mapp buy a spoonful of the Golden Opulence Sundae at Serendipity 3 in New York? Taxpayers may never know as the receipt for his visit to the Manhattan cafe has been lost.



Fire Service stretched thin

Firefighters at short-staffed stations
told to wait for help to arrive

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Sailors race back to school

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birthright citizenship
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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Mapp uses government card for beer, hotels, tickets

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

Gov. Kenneth Mapp relies heavily on his government issued credit card, and Government House records suggest that nearly everything charged to plastic gets paid for by the people.

Likewise, the statement history of the governor's government-issued Visa card shows spiraling spending habits in the first seven months of Mapp's administration, with charges outpacing payments; balances carried forward from one statement period to another; and the imposition of finance charges.

Mapp's credit limit has been raised at least once, from \$45,000 to \$55,000 a month.

According to copies of credit card statements provided to The Daily News in response to public record requests, Government House received the first statement for Mapp's credit card in February.

It noted no purchases but included a \$45 annual fee.

The statement received in March noted \$8,097.96 in purchases and that Government House had paid the \$45 due on the previous statement.

The statement received in April noted the March total of \$8,097.96 as its beginning balance, and \$2,724.24 in new purchases.

It noted that Government House had paid \$5,882.98, and incurred a finance charge of \$103.34.

The statement received in May noted a beginning balance of \$5,042.56, and \$3,932.41 in purchases.

It noted that Government House had paid \$2,218.44, and incurred a finance charge of \$97.08.

June: \$33,109 spent

The statement received in June noted a beginning balance of \$6,853.51, and \$33,109.45 in new purchases.

The month's purchases included seven charges to airlines totalling more than \$18,000; purchases of sheets and bedclothes and other linens from Macy's totalling about \$5,300; and a charge to the Marriott for \$2,400.

The remaining purchases totalling about \$7,300 came primarily from primarily for meals and included shipping fees (for the Macy's purchases) and online purchases of home networking equipment that was explained as being for Government House.

The June statement shows that Government House had paid \$12,371.45 in two different installments — one for \$6,365.88 posted on May 28, and one for \$6,005.58 posted on May 29.



Daily News Photo by NOELLE OLIVE

Gov. Kenneth Mapp has been a frequent visitor to Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook while staying at Villa Fratelli Cresta and The Ritz-Carlton St. Thomas. The governor has repeatedly used his government credit card at the store.

The statement showed no new finance charges, and it reflected a credit limit of \$45,000.

July: \$26,762 spent

The July 10 statement showed an increase in the credit limit to \$55,000, and a beginning balance of \$27,592.10.

Purchases for that period were \$26,726.22, with three payments — on three consecutive days — of \$4,549.95 on July 7; \$17,733.98 posted on July 8; and \$10,228.45 posted on July 9.

The purchases for that month included about \$7,800 for limo and car services; \$3,000 for the Marriott, \$4,000 for different Ritz properties; and \$1,700 for American Airlines.

The payments reflected on the July statement totaled \$32,612.38, and there were no finance charges.

August: \$23,331 spent

The Aug. 10 statement for the governor's credit card show a beginning balance of \$21,705.94, and \$23,331.64 in purchases.

That month, Mapp spent about \$4,400 for limo and car services; \$6,100 at The Ritz-Carlton St. Thomas; and \$1,600 at a Denver Marriott.

Two payments were noted: \$5,122.50 posted on July 17 and \$2,553.20 posted on July 23. Finance charges of \$382.19 were added, bringing the new balance to \$37,700.07.

The governor's groceries

The credit card statements show that Mapp has frequently paid for groceries with his gov-

ernment credit card, and that his grocery shopping trips most often occur on a weekend.

Taxpayers paid \$1,029.46 for shopping at territory grocery stores in March, April and May that was charged to the governor's government-issued credit card. Records reflect that the expenses were approved as for government business and paid for by taxpayers.

There were a number of charges at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook, which is close to Villa Fratelli Cresta, the villa where Mapp was living on the East End of St. Thomas, and The Ritz-Carlton St. Thomas.

- On Saturday, March 7, his credit card was charged \$355.19 for purchases at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

- On Monday, March 9, his credit card was charged \$66.37 for purchases at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

- On Saturday, March 28, his credit card was charged \$24.48 for purchases at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

- On Saturday, April 11, his credit card was charged \$46.04 for purchases at Gourmet Gallery in Havensight.

- On Monday, April 13, his credit card was charged \$39.96 for purchases at Plaza Extra St. Thomas.

- On Saturday, April 25, his credit card was charged \$43.22 for purchases at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

- On Sunday, May 3, his credit card was used at three St. Thomas grocery stores. It was charged \$278.29 for purchases at PriceSmart; \$85.03 at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook and

\$58.85 at Gourmet Gallery in Havensight.

- On Thursday, May 7, his credit card was charged \$32.03 at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

These grocery expenses do not include food purchases made by Marlene Henderson, Mapp's executive chef.

Mapp did not turn in itemized receipts for most of the purchases at territory grocery stores.

Most receipts provided to support his shopping were receipts that only listed the total spent and merchant information.

One complete receipt was provided in the records released by Government House, for the March 7 expenditures at Moe's Fresh Market.

The receipt recorded purchases of Coors Light, Haagen Das ice cream, vegetables, bacon, queen snapper fillet, orange juice, nuts, cider, a bag of sweet potatoes, lemons, wine, bread, pasta, beef broth, blue cheese, ham, beef gravy, bananas, eggs, Milk Duds and Nilla Wafers, and an \$88 beef rib roast, among other grocery items.

No grocery allowance

There appears to be no law or executive order authorizing a governor to buy groceries in the territory at taxpayer's expense.

According to an executive order signed in 2008 by Gov. John deJongh Jr., governor's are entitled to reimbursement for actual expenses while traveling.

While noting that governor's have a justification for unusually high expenses while traveling, the executive order also notes that government personnel traveling on official business "shall exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise in traveling on personal business."

The executive order — No. 4392008 — notes that government personnel are allowed a per diem for the cost of meals during the course of authorized travel, excluding the cost of alcoholic beverages.

Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones did not respond to requests for comment about this article.



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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Governor spends thousands on trust alone

Missing receipts range from \$24.28 spent at Red Hook grocer to \$1,223.32 spent at New York steak house

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

Gov. Kenneth Mapp has received reimbursement or approval for numerous expenses for which he could not provide receipts, including a \$1,223.32 restaurant bill in New York City.

The expenses were charged to Mapp's government issued credit card and were approved as "legitimate government expenses" by Nellie Varlack, the director of the Government House business and administration office.

Some of the expenditures were further approved by Valdamier Collens, the Finance Department commissioner, while an affidavit for lost/missing receipts for another batch of purchases was notarized by Emile Henderson III, who is a government employee working as the governor's chief legal counsel.

The affidavits are signed by Mapp, and involve purchases in and out of the territory.

In his affidavits, Mapp said the expenses were incurred on behalf of the government or "are legitimate government expenses."

Copies of the lost receipt affidavits were included in documents Government House provided to The Daily News as response to a number of public records requests.

No itemization

The affidavits include several credit card charges at No Bones Cafe in Christiansted; groceries purchased at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook; a charge at Cheeseburgers in Paradise on St. Croix; a charge at Chris Hideaway in Christiansted; and a purchase at Home Depot on St. Croix.

One request for approval of expenditures is dated March 30, and addressed to Collens in the Department of Finance. In it, Varlack asked for Collens' "approval to have the below payments processed by the Department of Finance, Accounting Division."

That request was approved by Collens on April 20, with the added note: "Per Section 17, Executive Order No. 4392008."

That executive order, signed in 2008 by Gov. John deJongh Jr., says that receipts for purchases that are to be paid for by taxpayers must be provided to claim those expenses. "The failure to do so must be fully explained" if the expenses are to be considered legitimate, the order reads.

By way of explanation, Government House provided a copy



Daily News Photo by LINDA MORLAND

In a March 30 affidavit, Gov. Kenneth Mapp asked for the approval of \$828.50 spent at No Bones Cafe in Gallows Bay, Christiansted, St. Croix, despite not having receipts for purchases.



Gov. Kenneth Mapp has no receipt for the \$1,223.32 meal he charged at Sparks Steak House in New York.

Taxpayers may never know what Gov. Kenneth Mapp spent just more than \$100 on at Serendipity 3 in New York. The restaurant is setting a Guinness World Record in 2007 for the world's most expensive Sundae.

of the governor's credit card statement noting the total charge.

The governor was apparently not asked to provide an itemized breakdown of what was purchased; how the purchases benefited the government; or who ate at meals paid for by Mapp.

Finance charges

The letter notes that the request "should be processed as soon as possible in order to avoid the assessing of finance charges."

However, finance charges were being assessed on the credit card account because the government was not paying off the balance on the governor's card.

March 30 affidavit

The lost receipt charges detailed in the March 30 letter include:

- A charge of \$471 on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at No Bones Cafe in

Christiansted;

- A charge of \$220 on Saturday, Feb. 14, at No Bones Cafe in Christiansted;

- A charge of \$137.50 on Friday, Feb. 27, at No Bones Cafe in Christiansted;

- The \$1,223.32 charge on Tuesday, March 3, at Sparks Steak House in New York City;

- A charge of \$100.25 on Tuesday, March 3, at Serendipity 3 in New York City;

- A charge of \$312 on Wednesday, March 4, at Cheeseburger in Paradise in Christiansted;

- A charge of \$66.37 on Monday, March 9, at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

May 12 affidavit

A lost/missing receipt affidavit dated May 12, signed by Mapp and Varlack, authorizes the government

to accept:

- A charge of \$154 on Saturday, March 14, at Chris Hideaway at Christiansted;

- A charge of \$128 on Wednesday, March 25, at Savant in Christiansted;

- A charge of \$24.48 on Saturday, March 28, at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

May 20 affidavit

A lost/missing receipt affidavit dated May 20, signed by Mapp and Varlack and notarized by Henderson, authorizes:

- A charge of \$350 on Sunday, April 12, at Home Depot St. Croix;

- A charge of \$39.96 on Monday, April 13, at Plaza Extra in Tutu;

- A charge of \$25.98 on Friday, April 17, at Office Max St. Thomas;
- A charge of \$32.03 on Thursday, May 7, at Moe's Fresh Market in Red Hook.

Unanswered questions

At question regarding the receipts and expenditures is whether government employees other than the governor were fed at the taxpayers' expense.

The deJongh executive order says that "per diem expenses shall be allowed for the cost of meals purchased during the course of authorized travel."

Any government employees who received their per diem yet ate when the governor put the tab on his government issued credit card may have improperly collected the per diem or improperly eaten at the peoples' expense while also collecting per diem.

Likewise, any government employee who may have eaten in the territory at meals charged to the governor's credit card may have violated the executive order because it indicates that meal expenses are not authorized when they are on the island defined as their official duty station.

Likewise, the executive order says that government employees on travel that does not require an overnight stay "shall be limited to the traveler's transportation expenses."

This indicates that they are not entitled to meals that are paid for by taxpayers.

Executive order

The executive order also says that claims and vouchers "will be submitted to the Department of Finance not later than 10 working days after the termination of official travel status."

If the governor was traveling when the lost receipt events occurred, he may have waited too long to file his claims for the expenses.

The executive order notes that "actual travel expenses may also be authorized for government personnel who accompany the governor or lieutenant governor on travel inside and outside the territorial limits of the Virgin Islands, in instances in which the governor or lieutenant governor specifically approve, in writing, the application of this subsection to such personnel based on the circumstances of such travel."

Government House provided no copies of any written approvals in the case of restaurant or dining expenditures within the territory.

Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones did not reply to messages asking for comment for this article.

A message left with Collens' office was not returned.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.



The Virgin Islands

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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Mapp leads the charge:

\$16,500 for chauffeured cars

\$10,000 dining locally

Pages 3 and 4



A favorite hangout of Gov. Kenneth Mapp is No Bones Cafe in Christiansted, where his government credit card receipts show he has spent \$3,295 in 21 visits since early February. On St. Thomas, Mapp charged \$896.40 in a single visit to The Cellar in Red Hook.

Daily News Photo by LINDA MORLAND



Pope tours Cuba

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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Mapp, party run up \$16,000 in limo, car service charges

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — In two months — June and July — Gov. Kenneth Mapp charged more than \$16,000 worth of limousine and car services on trips to Washington, D.C., New York City and Denver.

According to copies of Mapp's government credit card statements provided to The Daily News by Government House, cars and drivers were hired to drive Mapp and others to and from the airport.

Additionally, thousands of dollars in billings were run up when cars were kept for 10 or more hours at hourly rates of \$50 or \$60 an hour.



Kenneth Mapp

In total, Mapp's credit card was charged \$16,681.41 for limo service provided during the governor's official trips to Washington, D.C., to visit members of Congress to discuss highway funding and to New York City to meet with police officials.

The charges also occurred when Mapp visited the Energy Secretary in Washington, D.C., and visited an Energy Department site in Colorado.

Cars — sport utility vehicles or sedans — and drivers were hired from Rim Limo Inc. and Sunny's Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation in the Washington area, in New York and later on a trip to Denver.

The services were hired for Mapp; his security guard, David Petersen; Public Works Commissioner Gustav James; Mapp's security officer Gregory Bennerson; and Government House

In total, Mapp's credit card was charged \$16,681.41 for limo service provided during the governor's official trips to Washington, D.C., to visit members of Congress to discuss highway funding and to New York City to meet with police officials.

spokeswoman Kim Jones.

The use of car services came despite an executive order signed in 2008 by Gov. John deJongh Jr. that limits car rentals for government employees to subcompact size vehicles, "unless due to the number of travelers a bigger size automobile is needed."

The executive order also addresses the hire of special conveyances, such as a car and driver, with the guidance that it "will be allowed only in cases of emergency and when no public or regular means of transportation is available or when such regular means of transportation cannot be used advantageously in the interest of the government."

Sharing the ride

On Monday evening, Jones sounded surprised when asked why a car service was hired for her benefit.

Regarding the overall practice, she said it is her understanding that all of the expenditures were approved by the business office.

"A car was never reserved for

me exclusively," Jones said. "I believe that may have been a partial listing."

Records show that car service was provided to Petersen from June 21-24 when the governor was visiting Washington, D.C.

Petersen's car service cost \$60 the first day when he was driven in a sedan from Reagan Washington National Airport to the Ritz-Carlton on South Hayes Street in Arlington, Va.

The next day, Petersen had SUV service for 15 hours at a cost of \$900; he had an SUV for 16 hours on June 23 at a cost of \$960; and he had an SUV for 10 hours on June 24 at a cost of \$600.

Cars on-call

An SUV tasked with driving Mapp picked him up at Reagan National Airport and drove him to the Ritz-Carlton at 4:40 p.m. on June 22.

The car was kept on the clock for 10 hours at a charge of \$500.

A vehicle also was available for Mapp on June 23 at a cost of \$600; and on June 24 at a cost of \$500.

James' sedan and driver cost \$60 to drive the Public Works commissioner to the Rayburn House Office Building.

Sunny's Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation provided SUVs and sedans in New York City for Petersen, Mapp and Jones, and for car service for Mapp's July trip.

Specific details about car service on the trip to Washington and Colorado were not available, other than the charges listed on the credit card statements.

In all, Sunny's Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation billed Mapp's credit card for \$9,881.41 for service in June and July. Rim billed a total of \$6,800.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

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VILLA MAPP SENATE HEARING



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM
Shirley Ashby, left, Jimenez Ashby, owner of the St. Thomas villa that WICO rented for Gov. Kenneth Mapp, Randy Knight, WICO board chairman and Mapp's chief of staff, Adriane Dudley, WICO's attorney, and Joseph Boschulte, WICO CEO, testify about their roles in the villa rental on Thursday at the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas.

Villa hearing focuses on Mapp's lavish lifestyle

Senators tell chief of staff Randy Knight he needs to keep governor in check

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Arturo Sandoval at Reichhold
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Julio Felix

V.I. jockey eyeing 3,000 wins

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Senate condemns Mapp's use of public funds

Senators blast Knight for failure to rein in governor's 'lavish' spending

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — What was to be a hearing by the Senate on how and why the West Indian Co. came to pay for Gov. Kenneth Mapp's housing on St. Thomas expanded Thursday as one senator after another weighed in on the governor's use of public funds for what Sen. Terrence Nelson called "his rich tastes" and lavish spending of public funds.

It ended with Nelson saying that the people — and the Senate — have the authority to recall a governor, if they can move the masses to act.

"What this really speaks to is the demeanor of our chief executive right now," Nelson said more than an hour into the hearing. "The spending is really the big issue here, the spending trends of this administration."

"All we wanted to find out really here is was it illegal; was it within your authority to do so. Then the rest of it is really upon the people. Is this what we want? Is this the type of chief executive we want to expend government money carelessly and reckless to live like you want because you have rich, expensive tastes? That's what it comes down to," the St. Croix senator said.

Nelson also made a motion to ask the Inspector General to investigate the question of the governor's housing, though no one else offered a second and the motion died.

Why a luxury villa?

The first hour of the session focused on why the WICO board of directors chose to pay thousands of dollars to house the governor in a seven-bedroom luxury villa on the East End of St. Thomas.

WICO board Chairman Randy Knight, who is also the governor's chief of staff, told the Senate Committee of the Whole that he and others had been seeking appropriate housing on St. Thomas for Mapp after he won the election and that the pending winter season meant the options were limited.

Knight said he and the governor



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM

Randy Knight, WICO board chairman and Gov. Kenneth Mapp's chief of staff, testifies Thursday at the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas about WICO's involvement in leasing a luxury villa for Mapp.

looked at several options, and chose the villa owned by Jimenez Ashby of St. Thomas because it fit the requirements, it satisfied security needs, it satisfied Mapp and it was available.

Sen. Novelle Francis Jr. asked whether the cost was excessive.

"That's why it was a six-month contract," Knight responded.

The villa's owner

Knight spoke at length about what he called miscommunication regarding his invitation to speak to the com-

mittee on July 9, and then spoke of how the media in the territory is falsely reporting facts about the lease. He also complained about what he said was a personal attack on him regarding his travel expenses while on government business.

Appearing to testify alongside Knight were Joseph Boschulte, the WICO president and CEO; Adriane Dudley, the WICO legal counsel; and Ashby, the owner of the rental villa.

Ashby said that he didn't under-

stand why he was called and that he was involved only because he had a rental property and the government offered to lease it.

Senators commiserated, though several told Ashby he had become embroiled in a controversy involving government spending and questions can arise when government funds are being spent.

WICO's housing 'obligation'

Boschulte, Dudley and Knight all told the committee that WICO felt it

is the company's responsibility to provide housing for the governor on St. Thomas because WICO and the government had a signed agreement that the company would provide the Catherineberg mansion as the governor's home, yet that historic structure has suffered structural issues and was beset with mold.

"We have an obligation," Dudley said.

The senators turned the topic to how Government House had handled the controversy that arose over the leasing of the villa, and the constantly changing message from the executive branch about how much was being spent, and by whom.

From there the conversation shifted into a near-indictment of Mapp's spending habits.

"I think we're here today because of — just that — being able to provide full disclosure from the very beginning," said Sen. Kurt Vialet.

He said it was a problem when Government House kept changing its story about who was paying for the villa, and how much it cost.

"People began to speculate about what was going on, and then it eventually blew out of control," he said.

A lack of disclosure

Knight had complained in his opening statement about when Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones said something about the villa renting "for thousands" and he claimed it was heard as "for \$4,000," but Vialet didn't accept Knight's complaint.

"All Kimberly Jones had to do was come out the next day with a press release clarifying the issue," Vialet said. "For the life of me, I couldn't understand why the public relations arm of Government House didn't just come out and clarify the issue."

Government House fed public doubt because no one was stepping up to truthfully explain how much the villa truly cost and who was paying for it, according to Vialet.

See **HEARING**, next page

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HEARING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

“That is where the real crux of the problem came up. Every time the number went up a little bit, the public got really, really alarmed,” he said.

Violet said the public also was wary about the villa because Knight was the WICO board chairman while serving as the governor’s chief of staff, and Ashby’s real estate representative in negotiations with the government is the husband of Beverly Nicholson-Doty, the Tourism commissioner and a member of the WICO board of directors.

“People had a lot of issues with everything they were seeing, and what caused it to go so far is there just wasn’t full disclosure,” Violet said.

Other issues dogging Mapp

Sen. Rocky Liburd said Government House kept changing its tune as news about the villa filtered out.

“There are too many issues surrounding the governor that’s not cleared up from the outset,” he said. “There’s always something here, some story, somebody gives half of the story, then the press has to go and find another story, and then you’ve got to come back. Something is wrong with how we’re operating.”

Liburd and others then began to bring up the other issues that have dogged Mapp, such as the failure of his administration to respond to requests for public records and the attitude that the executive branch can spend thousands on food, drink and other extravagances.

A failure to communicate

As they bore in, senators aimed their questions more at Knight and less at the WICO representatives.

“The truth is, things I see the press is asking for, just give it,” Liburd said. “It’s not yours. Somebody’s going to find it anyhow. If you tell the truth one time, you don’t have to keep going back over and over and over. Because the truth is only one shot. You don’t have to change the story. So from the outset, let’s do it right.”

“There’s some things that we can avoid,” Liburd said. “Why say some-



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM

Shirley Ashby, left, Jimenez Ashby, owner of the St. Thomas villa that WICO rented for Gov. Kenneth Mapp, Randy Knight, WICO board chairman and Mapp’s chief of staff, Adriane Dudley, WICO’s attorney, and Joseph Boschulte, WICO CEO, testify about their roles in the villa rental on Thursday at the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas.

thing that somebody can go and check and know it’s not there?”

‘Is it the truth?’

Speaking softly, Liburd said the year began on a positive note but the actions of the administration have created problems.

“I believe the people came into the administration of Kenneth Mapp as a new beginning, with a lot of high hopes,” he said. “You know, they had a lot of issues with the past administration, some of the same things we’re dealing with here now.”

His advice was pointed: Tell the truth.

“The media can say what they want, and you say sometimes they’re going to fix it up their way. But there’s one thing that they can’t refute. Is it the truth? Is it documented?”

Liburd implored Knight to do things right in Government House, even if it challenges the governor’s wishes. He said Knight needs to step up and change the direction the executive branch is going.

The public was misled

Sen. Neville James said things work differently in his branch of government, where senators can remove him

as president if they are dissatisfied.

“That can’t happen with the governor,” he said.

What James said Mapp need right now is “people who are telling the governor, from time to time, ‘I can’t support that.’”

James said the governor needs to pay attention.

“This isn’t a joking matter. The public believes that they were misled, and they believe that the Legislature, with our oversight authority, needs to rein in — R-E-I-N — that’s the spelling, in that context, not R-E-I-G-N — which is what the governor has — to rein in the spending,” he said.

“I know the governor is entitled to perks; it comes with the position. We’re all benefiting from perks,” James said. “But there’s a belief that the spending is excessive, and we need to address that.”

An atmosphere of doubt

Sen. Nereida Rivera-O’Reilly echoed a word Mapp used frequently in his campaign and since — transparency.

“At the end of the day, transparency has only one definition, and that is that the actions that you take should be done openly, in plain view, and the decisions that you made should be

shared with those who you represent. Because at the end of the day, the constituents need to know what direction you’re taking,” she said.

“I think if I were to sit on the sidelines and watch this drama play itself out, I would say that you failed miserably. You, as in you, Mr. Knight, and the people in Government House,” she said. “You failed miserably in communicating with the people. You create an atmosphere of doubt.”

The administration has made a series of poor choices, and “what the people of this territory want to see is good choices,” Rivera-O’Reilly said.

She asked Knight whether he ever considered it a conflict of interest to be chief of staff and to be pushing through the lease for the villa.

“Actually, no,” Knight replied, explaining that legal counsel didn’t see a problem, nor did any members of the board.

“But you, you as an individual,” Rivera-O’Reilly countered. “As the chief of staff, I would have stepped aside and said, to protect my boss; to protect the integrity in the office of the governor.”

The people’s power to recall

Nelson went further, though, and

suggested that the people of the Virgin Islands have the power to remove the governor if they are dissatisfied.

“If the people are apparently not in agreement, as head of state you want to appease them in some kind of way,” Nelson said. “You don’t want to say ‘To hell with what they think’ and keep spending at the same time. And ultimately, the people have a recourse as well.”

“The Senate can vote to impeach, and the people can do it as well,” he said.

Public funds for private joys

He said anyone can do anything they want to with their own money at their own home, but problems arise when officials spend public funds for private joys.

“Your private residence is your private residence; how you want it, the color you want it, that’s on you,” Nelson said, speaking directly to Knight. “Even though you weren’t elected, you have to remind him that you’ve got to serve the people. That’s what this is about.”

After the meeting, Nelson expanded on his talk of impeachment, or recall.

“There’s public sentiment, that they’re waiting for the one year to attempt an impeachment of this governor,” he said. “The people do have that right, and I just wanted to declare that it’s within their authority and discretion to make that attempt. And I put it out there because the Senate is being asked to behave like some type of enforcement authority and we’re not.”

Nelson also raised the issue of possible criminal charges.

“I made a motion to send it to the Inspector General’s office as well, because we need to know clearly if there’s been an illegal act, and I think that’s the place to do it,” he said. “So I put it out there because I want the public to know it’s in their hands. If this matter is not illegal, then it’s upon them to express their discontent with the spending trends of this administration.”

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

People have power to recall Mapp under V.I. Code

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Sen. Terrence Nelson stood up on the Senate floor Thursday and spoke a word that’s been percolating in the territory in recent weeks regarding Gov. Kenneth Mapp and what senators called his “lavish” spending habits.

The word was “impeach.” The action of removing an elected official is actually referred to as a recall election, according to V.I. Code.

“Ultimately, the people have a recourse as well, and it’s whether or not they’re serious enough to do

something about it,” Nelson said. “The Senate can vote to impeach, and the people can do it as well.”

However, according to the law, a recall election regarding a sitting governor in the Virgin Islands cannot take place during the elected official’s first year in office.

The Revised Organic Act of 1954, subsection 12, specifies that:

(1) An elected public official of the Virgin Islands may be removed from office by a recall election carried out under this subsection. The grounds for recall are any of the following: lack of fitness, incompetence, neglect of duty, or corruption.

(2) A recall election may be initi-

ated by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Legislature or by a petition under this subsection.

(3) Prior to circulation, a recall petition which identifies by name and office the official being recalled and which states the grounds for recall shall be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections.

The sponsors of the recall petition shall be allowed a period of 60 days after such submission for filing with the Supervisor of Elections a list of signatures equal in number to at least 50 percent of the whole number of votes cast for that office in the last General Election during which that office was filled.

The Supervisor of Elections shall have 15 days in which to determine whether the minimum number of valid signatures are contained in the recall petition.

(4) A special recall election shall be held with respect to an elected public official not earlier than 30 days after a vote of the legislature under paragraph 2 or a determination of the board of elections under paragraph 3, as the case may be, and not later than 60 days after such vote or determination.

(5) An official shall be removed from office upon approval of the recall in an election in which at least

two-thirds of the number of persons voting for such official in the last preceding General Election at which such official was elected vote in favor of recall and in which those so voting constitute a majority of all those participating in such recall election.

(6) No recall election shall be held with respect to an elected public official —

• During the first year of the first term of office of the official.

• Less than 3 months before a General Election for the office.

— Contact Jonathan Austin at 714-9104 or email jaustin@dailynews.vi.

WICO releases transcript, minus dozens of pages

Dudley claims details of Villa Mapp meeting protected by 'attorney-client privilege'

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The attorney for the West Indian Co. on Friday released a copy of the transcript for the WICO board of directors April 14 meeting, but the document has about 60 pages missing and entire sections removed.

"These gaps represent attorney-client privileged discussions," attorney Adriane Dudley told The Daily News on Friday.

The Daily News had filed a public records request in May for records pertaining to WICO's decision to pay tens of thousands of dollars for housing Gov. Kenneth Mapp, and the transcript was one section in a packet of documents Dudley emailed Friday afternoon.

The remainder of the packet included documents that already have come to light as WICO officials have been called twice to appear before the Senate to explain the plan to house the governor.

The packet delivered Friday did not include the minutes for a WICO board meeting in June, during which the board reversed earlier decisions regarding the luxury villa leased for the governor on the East End of St. Thomas.

3rd Circuit ruling

The Senate repeatedly had asked WICO to provide copies of the minutes, and WICO had refused, citing a federal court ruling that said the company was a private business despite being owned in its entirety by the V.I. government.

That ruling was superseded when the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August that WICO is a wholly owned government entity.

On Thursday, Dudley and WICO President and CEO Joseph Boschulte again told the Senate, meeting as the



V.I. Legislature Photo by BARRY LEERDAM

WICO attorney Adriane Dudley appears before the Senate Committee of the Whole on Thursday at the V.I. Legislature on St. Thomas. Dudley on Friday released a transcript of WICO's April 14 board of directors meeting that senators had requested, but with dozens of pages missing or redacted.

Committee of the Whole, that WICO could not provide meeting minutes because the appeals court ruling was narrowly written and did not address whether board meeting minutes are public record.

Senators pointed out that the V.I. Code says WICO must provide the government with transcripts of meetings.

One day later, the company sent the heavily redacted minutes of the April 14 meeting.

WICO claims responsibility

The unredacted sections of the minutes indicate that the board discussed how it is WICO's responsibility to house the governor.

"I think the onus is on us to be paying for Gov. Mapp's residence

until we can provide him a permanent place. And I'll be saying that about whatever governor was in office," WICO board Chairman Randy Knight, who also is Mapp's chief of staff, is quoted as saying.

The minutes show that Knight felt he didn't need the board to vote on whether WICO would pay for the governor's villa.

"I don't think I have to have a vote on this," he is quoted as saying.

That line in the text is followed by a 3-inch block of white space where dialogue was redacted.

It picks up again with Knight quoted as saying: "Okay. Well, anyway, I would propose that the present residence or whatever residence until we can provide permanent accommodations for this



Randy Knight



Beverly Nicholson-Doty



Joseph Boschulte

the board discusses how the motion is for WICO to pay for a residence for the governor "that he chooses to live at upon our approval."

Later, Knight is quoted as saying that WICO would provide the rental until "such time as we provide a permanent residence."

"Whether it's this governor or another governor says, no, I don't want to live there, it doesn't work that way," Knight says. "This is what we're providing."

That is followed by 8 inches of

governor or any governor, I would think that I would like to have a motion that we accept this agreement."

That is followed by a space where dialogue is redacted.

Board member and V.I. Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty is quoted as saying she would like to be recused from the vote.

"My husband manages the villa. So I just want full disclosure," she said.

Knight is quoted as replying, "Of course. Anyway, so here is — yes, this is the villa for the first four months of January through April."

That is followed by a 4-inch blank space, and then

white space where dialogue was removed.

Phantom motions

The board then said it would vote on three resolutions.

One was to vote on approving a contract to provide a temporary residence to the governor and approving the contract for the villa in which the governor was living.

In the second motion, Dudley is quoted as saying that WICO "recognizes its obligation and tradition to provide a permanent residence for the governor of the Virgin Islands, whomever that individual may be, and that that residence will be the sole residence in the St. Thomas-St. John District on the island of St. Thomas hereafter. And to the extent that there is any contradictory language in law, be resolved to authorize counsel to address the issue with the delegate to Congress."

It isn't clear from the redacted minutes what the third resolution was, and the board also made reference to a fourth resolution to authorize Dudley, as board member Edward Thomas said, "to work with the delegate to accomplish the deletion."

Voting in favor of the first resolution were Knight; Vice-chairwoman Joyce Dore-Griffin; Boschulte; and board members Roberto Cintron, Michael Daswani, Rinaldo Lettsome, Michael Watson and Thomas.

Nicholson-Doty recused herself.

Moments later, the board went back to approve an amendment to the first resolution to say that the cost of the housing could not exceed an amount approved periodically by the board.

All nine members voted in favor of the amendment.

The votes for other resolutions were not included in the transcript, and no

See **MINUTES**, next page

Senators: People have lost hope in government

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Three senators who took part in Thursday's Committee of the Whole hearing about the governor's housing and spending decisions said Friday that many of the territory's residents feel despair and hopelessness in the current political and economic climate.

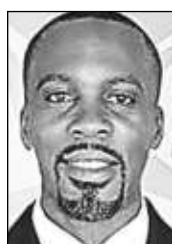
"People want answers. People want to know what's going to happen," said Senate Majority Leader Sammuell Sanes.



Sammuell Sanes



Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly



Marvin Blyden

"When I go out and I mingle with people, you can see that people are desperate. You can see the despair in

Sen. Marvin Blyden said he, too, senses the mood of the community. "The people want us to work in the

their eyes," he said. "They want to know when — when is it going to get better. We can tell them about the bills we are passing, but that's little comfort. I understand. I can feel their frustration."

best interest for them," he said. "The people have lost hope. I don't think the people are asking for more. They are asking for basic necessities: food, water, a place to live."

Sen. Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly and Sanes both said St. Croix is suffering badly in the wake of the HOVENSA refinery closure.

"We have nothing happening on St. Croix. We have nothing," Rivera-O'Reilly said.

Sanes said it's hard to build for the future if the different branches of government don't communicate,

though he was quick to point out that he thinks the governor's financial team is top-notch.

"Here in St. Croix, people want to know when are we going to see some kind of economic development? We do see some of the roads being fixed. That's always a good sign, but we need jobs," he said. "We need some type of hope. It's hard when there is no communication. Communication is essential, and I truly believe that's not happening at this time."

See **HOPE**, next page

Lawyer: WICO documents are not minutes

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — The material provided to The Daily News by an attorney representing the West Indian Co., was apparently not minutes of the April 14 board of directors meeting, according to a law professor who teaches business and corporate law in Silicone Valley.

At the same time, WICO board members contacted on Monday would not discuss their reasons for their votes or comment about WICO's failure to provide comprehensive public documents.

The document provided by WICO, which was heavily redacted and included only one of four votes the board is said to have been discussing, is just a transcript of selected conversation from the board meeting, suggested Stephen Diamond, a law professor at Santa Clara University School of Law.

Diamond said a copy of the minutes, no matter how heavily redacted, still would include a written record of the board being called to order; would include the true count of all votes taken by the board; and would include the motion for adjournment.



Randy Knight



Joseph Boschulte



Beverly Nicholson-Doty



Joyce Dore-Griffin



Adriane Dudley

None of those basic protocol items are included in the document sent to The Daily News on Friday by attorney Adriane Dudley, legal counsel for WICO.

Diamond said there is no legal basis for redacting simple actions, such as a call to order or the motion for adjournment.

The transcript provided by Dudley has a cover sheet that purports to be from the board of directors meeting, and it notes the date and time of the meeting; where the meeting occurred; and who was present, and it contains a notation that it was prepared by Porter's Court Reporting, Inc.

However, the cover sheet doesn't claim to be the meeting minutes, and the first page of meeting content is on

page 60. The last page is page 74, and several pages and sections are missing between the two.

Diamond said the report can't be considered either minutes or a transcript, because it doesn't begin at the beginning or end at the ending. "It means you don't have the minutes, and you don't have the transcript," he said. "Minutes are not a transcript. Minutes are a record of actions taken, not a record of the discussion. If you were after the minutes, I don't think you were given the minutes."

Dudley told The Daily News that the gaps represent "attorney-client privileged discussions."

Diamond said it is not uncommon for boards to hear privileged informa-

tion during meetings.

"The secretary is typically required to maintain minutes," he said. "The board might be discussing a topic and the lawyer interrupts, saying, 'Let's have a conversation

about this,'" Diamond said.

He said the validity as to whether it is proper to remove those discussions from the transcript depends on the strength of the territory's public records laws.

"Overly broad deletions of material can be challenged," he said.

The Daily News had filed a public records request in May for records pertaining to WICO's decision to pay tens of thousands of dollars for housing Gov. Kenneth Mapp in a luxury villa on St. Thomas.

The transcript was one section in a packet of documents Dudley emailed Friday afternoon with the comment: "Attached are the docs in response to your request."

In a series of following emails, Dudley didn't challenge the impression that the text was minutes of the meeting.

By way of explanation as to why pages and sections were missing from the minutes and whether those sections would be provided, Dudley replied by email: "No, those are redacted as privileged."

She offered further explanation.

"These gaps represent attorney-client privileged discussions. While all of these documents, except the minutes, have been in the public domain for some time, the minutes of the board meeting discussion concerning payment for the temporary residence of our highest elected official have not, before now, been provided," she wrote in a follow-up email.

The transcript shed little light on the board's actions because so much dialogue had been removed.

However, it does indicate that the board voted to approve a contract to provide a temporary residence to the governor and approve the contract for the villa in which the governor was living.

That vote was eight in favor, with one abstention by Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, who said her husband worked with the villa management on getting the unit rented.

Voting in favor of the resolution were board Chairman Randy Knight; Vice-chairwoman Joyce Dore-Griffin; WICO President and CEO Joseph Boschulte; and board members Roberto Cintron, Michael Daswani, Rinaldo Lettsome, Michael Watson and Thomas.

The board members, who are refusing to comment on why they voted the way they did, are:

- Knight, who also is the governor's chief of staff, is the former owner of St. Thomas-St. John Cable TV and the former owner of WVWI, WVJZ and WWKS radio stations.

- Dore-Griffin is an assistant Travel and Tourism commissioner who was the director of sales and marketing at Marriott's Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort until this year. The Tourism Board office said she is traveling and is not available for comment.

- Thomas was the first CEO at WICO after the Virgin Islands government acquired it. He confirmed that he was chairman of the WICO board of directors for 18 years. He said Monday he did not want to comment other than to verify his biographical information.

- Boschulte has been president and CEO at WICO since 2012. Previously he was chief financial officer at the V.I. Water and Power Authority.

- Cintron is president of his family's land development business, Jay-Ro-Mar Inc., and a co-owner of New Wave Development. He is a civil engineer who was assistant commissioner of the Public Works Department and the St. Croix District engineer for Public Works.

- Nicholson-Doty serves as the V.I. Tourism commissioner.

- Watson is owner of the Petite Pump Room Bar & Restaurant on St. Thomas. He said Monday he did not want to comment about the board's vote.

- Daswani is associated with Royal Caribbean, a retail business in St. Thomas.

- Lettsome is a taxicab operator.

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Attorney sues Mapp over spending records fallout

Suit claims she was demoted for refusing to alter details about governor's public credit card use

By JONATHAN AUSTIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — A government employee who filed a civil suit claiming Gov. Kenneth Mapp and some of his top staff members violated the V.I. Whistleblowers Protection Act was put on administrative leave on Thursday, according to her lawyer.

LaVerne Mills-Williams, who was a deputy legal counsel in Government House until Sept. 30, filed a civil suit Thursday against Mapp, his chief of staff, Randy Knight, and her supervisor, Mapp's legal counsel Emile Henderson III, who also was Mills-Williams' supervisor.

Mills-Williams' lawsuit claims that they told her to stonewall releasing documents in response to public record requests filed by the news media, and she was punished for releasing files that showed "there had been improper spending" of taxpayer funds.

"Today, they gave her a letter putting her on leave, signed by Claude Walker, in which they admit that when she was transferred there was no source of



Randy Knight



Emile Henderson III



Lee Rohn

Department.

Mills-Williams contends that she lost her job because she had released the travel and credit card records to the news media but the governor and Knight wanted to alter records to remove

unfavorable details.

"It was also made clear to the plaintiff that she was to stonewall any additional Freedom of Information requests and not produce any more documents," the suit says.

The suit also names the Office of the Governor as a defendant.

Neither Knight, Henderson, nor Government House spokeswoman Kim Jones responded to repeated requests from The Daily News for comment about the civil suit.

Walker had no comment when reached.

'A reputable administration'

The suit says that Mills-Williams took the job in the legal counsel's office because Henderson told her that "this administration was going to be unlike other administrations and that it was going to be ethical, do all actions by the books, and be a reputable administration."

Prior to taking the position, Mills-Williams had worked doing contract work for various attorneys, Rohn said.

When she was assigned to respond to record requests from the media, Mills-Williams "walled off" Mapp, Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter, Knight and Henderson from her work, "as all were the subject of the request," according to her lawsuit.

The suit says she later learned that Mapp "wanted to review the documents before submission."

Mills-Williams claims in her filing that the legal staff held a meeting to discuss that request and that the outcome was that Henderson was to counsel Mapp "as to how inappropriate such an action on the governor's part would be."

The suit says Mills-Williams continued doing her job and released the results to the media on Sept. 14.

"The documents verified that there had been improper spending of funds without the approval of the Legislature, as well as improper credit card charges and the like," the suit says.

"Their illegal actions are having the rent paid for his villa without legislative approval; charging alcohol beverages to his government credit card; and charging non-government-related items to his government credit card," Rohn said Thursday, adding that Mapp can't arbitrarily declare that "drinks at the bar at midnight are a business meeting."

V.I. law protects whistleblowers

The Virgin Islands Whistleblowers Protection Act says that an employer shall not discharge, threaten, or otherwise discriminate against an employee regarding the employee's compensation, terms, conditions, location, or privileges of employment because the employee, or a person acting on behalf of the employee, reports or is about to report, verbally or in writing, a violation or a suspected violation of a law or regulation or rule promulgated pursuant to law of this territory or the United States to a public body unless the employee knows that the report is false, or because an employee is requested by a public body to participate in an investigation, hearing or inquiry held by that public body, or a court action.

(a) A person who alleges a violation of this chapter may bring a civil action for appropriate injunctive relief, or actual damages, or both, within ninety days after the occurrence of the alleged violation of the provisions of this chapter.

(b) An action commenced pursuant to subsection (a) of this section may be brought in the Superior Court division where the alleged violation occurred, the Superior Court division where the complainant resides, or the division where the person against whom the civil complaint is filed resides or has his principal place of business.

(c) As used in subsection (a) of this section, "damages" means damages for injury or loss caused by each individual violation of the provisions of this chapter, including reasonable attorney fees.

(d) An employee shall show by a preponderance of the evidence that he or a person acting on his behalf was about to report or did report, verbally or in writing, a violation or a suspected violation of a law of this territory, or the United States, to a public body.

Court awards

A court rendering a judgment in an action brought pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, shall order, as the court considers appropriate, reinstatement of the employee, the payment of back wages, full reinstatement of fringe benefits and seniority rights, actual damages, or any combination of these remedies. A court may also award complainant all or a portion of the costs of litigation, including reasonable attorney fees and witness fees, if the court determines that the award is appropriate.

Penalties and fines

A person who violates the provisions of this chapter shall be liable for a civil fine of not more than \$500.00 payable to the Department of Finance.

'Illegal directive'

After the records were released, according to the lawsuit, Henderson told Mills-Williams "that the governor and Randolph Knight were very upset that plaintiff had released the documents without affording them the opportunity to review them and redact documents."

The suit also says that Mills-Williams told Henderson that "the directive to not produce any more documents was illegal and that the governor should be told that counsels could not follow illegal directives."

The suit says that Henderson agreed, but on Sept. 30, he told Mills-Williams that she would be changing jobs and going to work in the V.I. Justice Department.

The suit says Henderson claimed the transfer "was for budgetary reasons," but Mills-Williams contends she confronted him and "told him that he knew that was not true."

The suit says Henderson admitted that it wasn't true and that she was transferred because she had responded to the record requests "and produced docu-

ments detrimental to the governor."

The suit says that Henderson said Mills-Williams had done the right thing and that he had supported her to Mapp.

"But it had done no good, and as such he was forced to go along with the decision of the governor and Knight," the lawsuit states.

The suit says the decision to punish Mills-Williams "came directly from the governor" and she had to be out of the office by Oct. 2.

The suit says the governor signed a letter of termination that was delivered to her at the Justice Department.

Mills-Williams contends in her lawsuit that Government House refused to provide a notice of personnel action with the transfer, and she has not been paid for work performed since Oct. 2.

The suit also claims that Mapp, Knight, Henderson and the office of the governor, "in order to attempt to cover up for their illegal actions," defamed Mills-Williams "by falsely claiming she was transferred for failure to know what she was doing."

Rohn is a plaintiff or a plaintiff's counsel in litigation against The Daily News.

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USVI needs leaders who set good example

This is an Open Letter to the V.I. Legislature:

We read in the V.I. Daily News that Gov. Kenneth Mapp and his entourage lodged at The Ritz in New York City. This is on the heels of learning that the V.I. government has been paying \$14,500 per month plus operating expenses for a villa.

Yet, the V.I. Waste Management Authority reports it "cannot afford to carry out comprehensive recycling."

That is despite the fact that most of the rest of the civilized world accepts recycling as a basic means of keeping down costs associated with responsible solid waste management. And WMA makes its assertion despite the dire need for conservation and re-use of materials such as pulverized glass (for a wide range of important uses), and composted organics to restore carbon and other important amendments to our soils to make them more productive.

Further, amid the recent administrative expenditures, DPNR reports its inability to staff sufficiently to uphold reasonable environmental and public health and safety enforcement standards because it is understaffed due to budget constraints.

These are but two examples, in a sea of other examples, of fiscal irresponsibility. At what point will the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands and our legislators say, "Enough is enough?"

When chief executive officers of governments and their programs don't set the right example, the wrong trends perpetuate themselves into the broader community.

The attitude becomes: "The Government shows no interest in taking care of us, so why should we hesitate to take care of ourselves, even when it means shady or inappropriate uses of public monies?"

That becomes the norm rather than the attitude of "If we all look out for others as we would for ourselves, we

Sue Parten

When chief executive officers of governments and their programs don't set the right example, the wrong trends perpetuate themselves into the broader community. The attitude becomes: "The Government shows no interest in taking care of us, so why should we hesitate to take care of ourselves, even when it means shady or inappropriate uses of public monies?" That becomes the norm rather than the attitude of "If we all look out for others as we would for ourselves, we will figure a way forward that takes care of all of us."

will figure a way forward that takes care of all of us."

It's vital that leaders emerge in the V.I. territory who lead by example, and lead in ways that show the interests of the people of the Virgin Islands — all the people — are foremost in their hearts and thinking.

— Sue Parten, P.E., St. Thomas

V.I. and entire region must reassure tourists about safety in aftermath of attacks in Tunisia

Recently, at least 38 holidaymakers died on a beach in Tunisia, and many more were injured in an appalling terrorist attack aimed at killing visitors and damaging terminally that country's tourism industry. It was the second such event this year, and followed another in March on tourists visiting a museum that left 17 dead.

In the Caribbean, there have been expressions of sympathy and solidarity with Tunisia and with those whose lives have been irreparably altered by the attack.

However, the reasoning behind the terrible events in that Mediterranean country should cause every government in the Caribbean with an economy dependent on tourism to think more deeply about the implications.

That is to say, to understand that this is not only about attacking western tourists and all that tourism stands for, but is also about a belief that by inducing fear among those who might have considered a vacation in Tunisia, it will collapse the tourism economy and bring instability that can be used to the long-term global advantage of the perpetrators.

In addressing the issue of tourism and security there is always the danger that by drawing attention, to the issues it may dissuade visitors from travelling.

For this reason it cannot be stressed enough that the Caribbean is among the world's safest locations for a happy and peaceful vacation.

That said, it is clear that the subject now has to become an issue globally that Governments and industry professionals, including those in the Caribbean, need to consider closely on a regional and international basis.

What happened in Tunisia, and before in Mumbai, in Kenya and Egypt, provides a clear indication of the economic threat that terrorism poses when tourism is its target.

As the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) pointed out, the industry in Tunisia's case plays a pivotal role in the country's economy, generating in 2014 over 15 per cent of the country's GDP, or at around \$7.4 billion, supporting directly nearly 14 per cent of overall employment.

It is therefore easy to understand why the country's Tourism Minister, Salma Loumi, said after the attack that the damage to the Tunisian economy would be great. The country had expected to receive about 6.5m visitors in 2015, but the two terrorist events have had the effect of not only causing visitors quite literally to flee, but the industry and



David Jessop

It cannot be stressed enough that the Caribbean is among the world's safest locations for a happy and peaceful vacation.

government to forecast the loss of millions of holidaymakers as tour operators pull out of the country, cruise ship arrivals cease, and airlift is significantly reduced. Latest figures suggest that Tunisia expects to lose at the very least US\$515m in tourism earnings this year out of anticipated direct revenues of over the US\$1.95 billion recorded in 2014.

Although the Tunisian government is considering ending its visitors' tax, reviewing debt relief for hotel operators, making loans to the industry, and introducing new security and other measures all to support the industry's economic recovery this is likely to be years away.

The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world; it is located at the heart of the Americas, where travel and tourism's total contribution to GDP is the highest in the world in percentage terms, so the implications should be apparent to all and worthy of detailed consideration.

According to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation in 2014, 26.3m tourists visited the region principally from North America and Europe contributing a record \$29.2 billion, with the industry, the WTTC says, supporting directly or indirectly 11.3 per cent of all Caribbean employment, and very high levels of investment.

Tourism's continuing ability to prosper is therefore a key element in the economic security of every Caribbean nation and that of the region as a whole.

For this reason, it is an issue on which self-interest should drive Caribbean thinking and actions rather than, as is sometimes the case, it be seen as a matter for others to fund or act on when, for example, it comes to travel related measures at airports or seaports.

What events in Tunisia also suggest is that tourism as an industry needs a more joined up global approach, a deeper understanding of how security issues relate to tourism, and a better awareness of the impact and timescales over which events can touch the industry.

It also demonstrates the need for knowledge of whether there is more that might be done in the event of any kind of major crisis to achieve a form of joint response, and have in place arrangements for crisis management and planned recovery.

Sadly in recent months there has been news that in the region and beyond there are young men and possibly women of Caribbean parentage who are now fighting for the self-styled Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria or Iraq.

While this requires governments, the media, religious groups and others to act carefully and responsibly and for everyone to consider the implications, these are also developments that require all Caribbean states to consider whether they have in place the necessary legislation outlawing terrorism and enabling legally the real-time exchange of information about the nihilistic young men who are now travelling to the Middle East.

Understandably, this raises concern about the impact on civil liberties, the cost of policing and security, and the exchange of information with states outside the region. However, these are matters that before long, in one or another way, every Caribbean nation will have to become more heavily engaged in if they are to defend their own and the region's long term economic interests.

This may be regrettable, but it is unavoidable.

In nations where the rule of law, freedom of speech and personal freedoms are highly regarded, developing laws and regulations that respond to threats of the kind that may emerge are challenging, and result quite rightly in such legislation being legally tested.

But the likelihood of what may be a war without end is why much more needs to be done to explain to a sometimes sceptical public why new measures are necessary and assurances given that any new powers will not be used capriciously.

Recent events in Tunisia, though far away, should have greater resonance with governments and the industry, albeit in a low key way, in a region as is well known is the most tourism dependent in the world

— David Jessop is a consultant to the Caribbean Council and can be contacted at david.jessop@caribbean-council.org

letters@dailynews.vi

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—HALOS & PITCHFORKS—

The Daily News Editorial Board is inspired by recent events in the Virgin Islands to dish out some halos and pitchforks. And the winners and sinners are ...

Halo to all 2015 graduates in the U.S. and British Virgin Islands — from university, from public and private high schools and from GED and specialized training programs. Your achievement is the foundation on which your future and the Virgin Islands' future will be built.

Pitchfork — yet again! — to Gov. Kenneth Mapp for treating himself and his confidants to extravagances in New York City while, according to Government House press releases, doing things to improve the bleak economy of the V.I. It seems that only Government House and the Governor fail to see the irony in that.

If the governor thinks that he needs to look rich and act rich and live rich in order to lure riches to the territory, he should take a moment and recall the mistakes that brought a storm of shame and blame upon the CEOs of the big automakers when they went to Washington a few years back to tell Congress their companies were dead broke and urgently needed a bailout. They each took a chartered plane to Washington. They each took a limo to the Capitol building. They each stayed in posh hotels. Congress was not amused. So far Governor Mapp's travels seem to have boosted the economy of New York City, Guam, Washington, Florida and other locations as yet unrevealed. Based on the pace at which the governor is obeying the V.I. Open Records Law, those locations and the cost of all the governor's travel will not become known to the public any time soon.

Halo to V.I. Police Department brass, specifically St. Croix Chief

Arthur Hector, St. Thomas Chief Darren Foy and Deputy Police Commissioner Curtis Griffin for going up to New York for advanced training at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Our Police Department has shown improvement, and the top cops' desire to gain more knowledge sets an admirable example.

Halo to the Cleveland Cavaliers for making a trade that adds Virgin Islands basketball phenom Rakeem Christmas to the roster. Christmas was a star last season at Syracuse, now he's ready to show the NBA what he can do to help the Cavs' win that elusive NBA championship. A fact to savor: At 6-foot-9, Christmas is an inch taller than teammate LeBron James and three inches taller than Michael Jordan.

Halo to the V.I. Junior Achievement team that formed a publishing company, Bookery, from scratch. They established executives, created a successful business plan and a marketable product. Check it out on Facebook — VI Melee Soup — and get a copy to see good things coming from V.I. Youth. Halo also to former Labor Commissioner Albert Bryan, who revived the youth entrepreneurship program in the territory.

Pitchfork to the V.I. Public Works Department for failing to properly deal with abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the territory. The department no doubt needs at least twice as much money and manpower as it gets just to do its basic work, but these places are deathtraps, as became clear a few days ago when one collapsed on a man. Buildings reach such a state for many reasons, but no reason is good enough to allow a building to become dangerous.



Photo by THE RITZ-CARLTON

Many of the rooms at The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park include telescopes to allow guests a better view of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. Governor Kenneth Mapp stayed at the hotel recently while in New York.

His luxury in NYC; our pain in the V.I.

When we were hit with the news that it would cost us \$12,500 a month, we grew faint. When we got the bill it was for a whopping \$14,500 instead, we got sick with fever. Now that we are to be handed the bill for the Ritz in New York City, we feel like we have been shot dead. Take the body to the cemetery one time and done.

We asked our governor to show respect and lead the broke government by the example of restraint. He seemed to have made noises to the effect that he would make a change, and we the people felt we had an antidote to our terrible fever. Now we find that while we are trying to recover here at home, our governor is haunted by the need to spend very big regardless; he and his entourage have checked into the Ritz in New York City, where he enjoys such amenities as a Jacuzzi, telescope, and room service that delivers food for three times the price it is sold in stores.

Truly, we are not only sick again, we feel like we have kicked the bucket since our wallets have been fatally. As for me, the poor writer with the weak pen, just put me in a pine box, skip the funeral ceremony and let me be reincarnated as a playful ghost in Government House.

I want to haunt the haunted ones with a specific job spec: My job will be to flash all the lights on and off, every time our expense-unconscious governor makes a bad spending decision.

As it stands, it seems I have my full-time work cut out for me; for it seems that as I write, our governor is busy frittering away our taxpayers' dollars to support an extravagant taste for the best

Cathy DeCatrel-Powell

“

We thought we might have made a miraculous recovery. We thought the people could at least hope for honesty and integrity. Instead, the leadership continues to murder the half-dead patient, and the poor patient comes to the bank this very payday—to find that his paycheck has not been deposited.

accommodations while he is away in the Big Apple. Not only does he live this way at home and abroad, but his advisers get the same bennies.

To add poison to the sickly wound, when persons or entities that have the right to ask about this do ask, they are rudely told Good Day and are hung up on.

We thought we might have made a miraculous recovery. We thought the people could at least hope for honesty and integrity. Instead, the leadership continues to murder the half-dead patient, and the poor patient

comes to the bank this very payday — to find that his paycheck has not been deposited.

Can you believe that this is America's Paradise, not a developing country and that things like this happen? Can you really kill a dead person a second time?

Enter the glitch, no one gets paid, and everyone keels over — again. Meanwhile, when the man who claims we are “Broke...broke,” is haunted in the middle of the night, he can ease out of the whirlpool, send down to room service for a \$24 pint of Haagen Dazs, and sit at the telescope to enjoy the sunset over New York City. The lights at Government House are blinking furiously, as one playful ghost works overtime.

Epilogue: We still have some faith in Governor Mapp

We do not know which room the Governor stays in while in New York. We either get a hang up or we are told by Mapp's chief of staff, the go-to person when we need information, that it is not known which room Governor Mapp has chosen to stay in.

Regardless, we will reiterate with all due respect to Governor Mapp that we eagerly await your decision to prove yourself a good and reasonable man we believe you to be when you do something for the people who elected you: Choose something more modest while you are here in the Virgin Islands.

After all, you summed up the state of the government finances yourself: “Broke!”

— *Cathy DeCatrel-Powell, St. Thomas*

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V.I. Police doing their job; why aren't prosecutors and judges doing theirs?

My wife and I were victims of a jewelry robbery that occurred more than a week ago. We had gone out for a nice dinner and then stopped at a local establishment for a drink before heading home.

While she was sitting down, my wife sensed someone behind her and as she turned to see who was there, a young man stole her necklace. The V.I. Police responded and were very professional and took witness statements. The next evening, the young man, 18, was caught while attempting another robbery. He confessed to both robberies and told the police whom he sold the necklace to.

With all this information in hand, the VIPD detective requested a search warrant for the location the jewelry was sold. It has now been more than a week and no warrant has been issued.

Even with all the hard work the Police Department and the detective performed, the Justice Department has dragged its feet, thus preventing a search of the premises where stolen property is being purchased.

Larry J. Sloan

So, who are the criminals now? A merchant who buys stolen property or V.I. Justice Department officials?

After all the frustration we have been through, we have learned that the location to be searched belongs to a well-known merchant who has a reputation for purchasing stolen gold and other merchandise.

So, who are the criminals now? A merchant who buys stolen property or V.I. Justice Department officials?

The V.I. Police have a tough enough job without having to be bogged down by judges and prosecutors.

— Larry J. Sloan, St. Croix

Why the governor's behavior and spending matters

I cannot recall the last time I purchased a Virgin Islands newspaper that there wasn't some disparaging article about our governor and his staff. First, the housing situation and the failure to disclose information that is supposed to be accessible to the public, followed by the travel notes, most recently the stay at the Ritz, and in between, the news that the governor and his office have unsubscribed because they don't appreciate the articles.

Then on Friday, I saw an open letter addressed to him and his people about the retirement funds still unpaid. What's the point, when they have made it clear they aren't interested in the people's perceptions of its government?

Personally, I understand how one could get tired of reading the same things. On the other hand, if the governor and his people would stop repeating the same behaviors, we wouldn't have to keep reading about them.

When I read the article about the stay at the Ritz in New York, I initially thought, is this really worth reporting? But then I read that letter to the governor on behalf of all the retirees who still aren't getting their monies and yes, it does matter that monies are being spent in stupid ways rather than in areas that are important to the people.

After all the uproar over the ridiculous housing expenses, the automatic salary increases our governor handed out, etc., it's difficult to believe it didn't occur to even one official that maybe a medium-priced accommodation in New York might be a wiser choice than the upscale Ritz. Kind of makes you wonder if one of the qualifications to becoming one of our leaders shouldn't be an IQ test.

The governor is traveling to secure funds for our roads, to secure our favored position in tourism, etc. You

Capt. Teresa A. Frevert

Just for once, put your people first. Prioritize. And then follow up to make sure the monies you spend time procuring actually get to where they were intended to go — and in a timely manner.

have to wonder if any of it matters when grants have been given to us intended for organizations like GERS and the Family Resource Center — and none of those funds end up where they were intended.

Are we to believe that funds we might receive for roads will go where they are supposed to go? And even though we would all appreciate better roads, don't we have to ask: Are the roads really more important than our retired people and the many people who need the services of the Family Resource Center or Luis Hospital on St. Croix, all of which desperately needs help?

Again, personally, I don't think so. Take care of getting your people's needs met first, and then start your campaign for infrastructure funds.

And if there's only a small window of opportunity to get some things done, then assign one of your many staff members to it.

Just for once, put your people first. Prioritize. And then follow up to make sure the monies you spend time

procuring actually get to where they were intended to go — and in a timely manner.

There was a recent report stating that more than 30 percent of V.I. people live below the poverty level. Above that, many are at poverty level and above that a sizeable percentage of the community is barely able to qualify as middle class.

Those are bleak figures for a population that's barely 110,000 people. With that reality looming in the background, why would our governor be able to anticipate the outrage his lavish choices in housing and spending would evoke? This does not appear to be the behavior of someone who cares about the people.

So far, it seems that as a people, we made a bad choice on Election Day and we're paying for it now.

Still, there could be redemption. Make it right, Governor Mapp: Answer the people's cries. Get our retirees paid. Get the funds to the Family Resource Center. Get the tax refunds paid that have been stagnant, for years in some cases. Stop acting wounded by the criticisms and whining that you're "homeless." Restart the government's subscription to the local papers so we can at least assume someone in Government House might be interested in hearing us.

Listen to us, act like you give a darn and admit that you might be guilty of poor judgement.

Put us first, and I think you could discover that we are a forgiving people when you make an effort to make things right.

But right now, the only ones who seem to be feel embarrassed and having to admit to poor judgement are those of us who voted you in as our new governor.

— Capt. Teresa A. Frevert, St. Thomas

Some thoughts on an extraordinary week: Do we dare hope?

I find myself experiencing a renewed sense of hope for our nation these days.

After years of gridlock and partisan obstructionism, President Barack Obama's legacy is finally being sealed. I am happy not only for him but also for our country.

First, although there remains work to be done with the affordable Care Act on expanding the territories' participation as well as the full adoption

of Medicaid expansion by the remaining states, the Supreme Court of the United States decision upholding the subsidies in the state exchange was a great victory.

And I am humbled but euphoric when I think that I was a part of creating this landmark law that will go down in history as the greatest advance-

ment for the wellbeing of the people of the United States since the creation of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and the Civil Rights Laws. We never viewed the ACA as perfect or the endgame in providing universal access to health care, and neither were those other major laws when first passed. They were all perfected over the years, and I am hopeful that the ACA/ Obamacare will be too.

And then, I took a lot of heat over my position on same-sex marriage last year, but as I said then, it comes down to what is a sacred principle in our Constitution: "equal protection under the law."

Given separation of church and state, no church should/would be forced to do anything that is against their religious beliefs, but we should all celebrate when any form of discrimination is struck down, especially given our history as African descendants in the "new world", as

Americans who rely on the promise of our constitution of everyone's inalienable right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", and as God-fearing people who believe that we are all His children.

As an American citizen residing in one of the United States' offshore possessions, until and unless a more independent status is chosen, I hope and will work for the day when we too achieve all of the rights and privileges under our nation's Constitution.

But my greatest hope comes from this time of unprecedented potential to turn the page on our nation's racist past and move to the reconciliation that can heal our country — to realize the glimpse that the Mother Emanuel Congregation has given us of the "more perfect union."

I don't expect those who harbor long-held racist ideologies and prejudices to change overnight, but I want to believe — I so want to believe —

that the same way persistent non-violence overcame Jim Crow, a pervasive and persistent spirit of forgiveness, emanating from the love for our fellow man as we are commanded, will overcome even the worst of our historical memory and the deepest of our pain.

I know it can be that powerful force that can finally move the mountains of hate that have divided us. And it is up to the "good people" not to remain silent and on the sidelines but to practice and live forgiveness and love of neighbor.

I am still waiting to have the same renewed hope, though, that we in the Virgin Islands will abandon our differences — real and created — to heal our territory too, and begin to work earnestly together for its economic, social and political revival. That it will soon come is my prayer.

— Donna Christensen is a former V.I. delegate to Congress

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-EDITORIAL OBSERVER-

Governor's spending and WICO Board's secrecy go beyond arrogance and we the people are fed up

Thank you to Sen. Terrence Nelson for finally saying out loud what everyone is thinking. There is a way out of this debacle: Recall the governor.

From stolen public funds to switching out license plates to hiding public records, the public is totally fed up with this clueless administration.

While we tighten our belts and pay our taxes, they illegally spend our money on designer linens and extravagant travel and entertainment for their cronies.

We've had enough of this breath-

Catherine Fahy

taking arrogance.

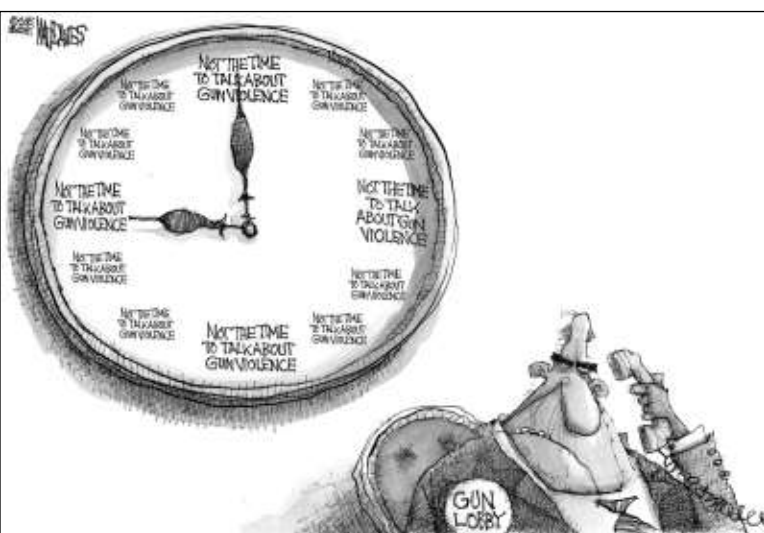
In the meantime, two things come to mind.

First, someone please confiscate their credit cards.

Second, what in the world is in those minutes that the WICO Board is desperate that we not see?

I really don't think anything could shock us at this point.

— Catherine Fahy, St. John



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What happens when you report a problem to VIWMA?

I was happy to see a Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority ad in the paper recently asking the general public to "Report a Problem."

But then on Tuesday, Sept. 29, I was driving by the trash bins that are above Havensite, just past the intersection where you turn toward Frenchman's Bay and Bolongo, and I noticed two metal 55-gallon drums on the ground, next to the bins. One was blue and one black. Obviously, they contained oil and someone had illegally dropped them off.

The next day, Wednesday, Sept. 30, I was driving by that location in the afternoon and I noticed the bins had been emptied and changed and the blue drum was gone. However, all the oil it had contained was on the ground under the trash bin and was flowing down the side of the road.

The black drum had been punctured, and oil was visibly leaking from the hole.

I remembered the Waste Management Authority ad and thought this was a perfect time to "report a problem."

I called the Waste Management Authority and a lady answered. I told her of the ad I had read and said I was calling there was a 55 to 110-gallon oil spill at a trash bin.

Her immediate response was that I should not be calling her.

She then said I needed to call the



Photo by LARRY DAHL

Oil from a 55-gallon drum runs into the dirt under a trash bin in Estate Bakkerio.

Larry Dahl

Fire Department, because they have sand. I told her the black drum was still leaking oil at the bins, she said, "Oh, that. I will call enforcement."

So I asked her if I still needed to call the Fire Department? She responded, "No," and said that she would call enforcement.

However, no action had taken place by the weekend, and when the

rains came on Saturday, Oct. 3, Mother Nature cleaned up most of the oil — unfortunately by allowing the oil to flow down the hill away from the bins toward the ocean. There is still oil saturated in the dirt and now mud at the bin site.

I suppose the moral of the story here is: "Don't report a problem to Waste Management Authority when the problem involves the Waste Management Authority."

— Larry Dahl, St. Thomas

The law does not permit use of public funds for lodging or property improvements for a governor

Thanks to the media for exposing our governor's wild spending to support a grandiose lifestyle that neither he nor any other public official is lawfully entitled to spend.

To justify the unjustifiable, Governor Mapp would have to overcome five legal hurdles:

1. The governor must show the statute that authorizes any other residence than Government House on St. Thomas.

The Revised Organic Act of 1954 provides in pertinent part: "The Governor shall maintain his official residence in the Government House on Saint Thomas during his incumbency." This law does not permit a governor to have any other "official" residence on St. Thomas. V.I. governors may have a personal residence, but that is their personal business and at their personal expense.

2. The governor must show the statute that authorizes expenditure and compensation for anything other than his salary and travel.

Title 3 V.I.C. provides in pertinent part: "The Governor shall receive a salary of \$150,000 per annum, payable in equal bi-weekly installments." This

Andreas Tietje

statute does not provide that a V.I. governor's compensation may include the expenditure of money from the V.I. treasury for any form of compensation other than a salary. Personal living expenses, such as housing or personal property improvements are not provided for in this statute.

3. The governor must show the statute that authorizes rent payments or funding allocations outside of his salary and travel and he must show that such rates are prescribed by the laws of the Virgin Islands.

The Revised Organic Act of 1954 provides: "The salaries and travel allowances of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the heads of the executive departments, other officers and employees of the government of the Virgin Islands, and the members of the Legislature shall be paid by the Government of the Virgin Islands at rates prescribed by the laws of the Virgin Islands."

4. The governor must show that payments of public money for his personal lodging or per-

sonal property improvements received prior, properly vetted legislative approval.

Revised Organic Act of 1954 provides in part: "No money shall be paid out of the Virgin Islands treasury except in accordance with an Act of Congress or money bill of the Legislature and on warrant drawn by the proper officer."

5. The governor must show that the authorization of rent payments by WICO, under the auspices of the Public Finance Authority, is not a conflict of interest, considering Governor Mapp's Chief of Staff Randy Knight signed the document as Chairman of WICO with subsequent approval of Governor Mapp, who is simultaneously serving as Chairman of the PFA.

We the public must witness each and every of these five legal hurdles presented by the Legislature and then overcome by any testifier. If not, then another opportunity for the Legislature and the Governor's Office to bring transparency and accountability has been deliberately squandered.

— Andreas Tietje, St. Thomas

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Teenager arrest reflects broader Islamophobia

Rampant Islamophobia marks the lives of Muslim Americans today.

You must have heard about Ahmed Mohamed, the 14-year-old Muslim American kid from Texas who built a clock at home and brought it to school to show to his teacher, only to be arrested on the ridiculous suspicion that his invention was a bomb. Young Ahmed was handcuffed, taken to police headquarters, fingerprinted and questioned without his parents present. During his interrogation, as The Washington Post reports, the officers repeatedly brought up his last name.

The story is infuriating. Here is an inventive Sudanese-American teenager in a NASA T-shirt whose curiosity and ingenuity are rewarded with handcuffs and punishment. Things turned out well for Mohamed in the end — President Barack Obama tweeted “Cool clock Ahmed. Want to bring it to the White House?” and Mohamed is fielding invitations to visit MIT and Harvard — but that’s because his absurd arrest has garnered national media attention.

Most of the time, bigotry against Muslims goes unremarked upon or even gets rewarded. The same week that Mohamed brought his clock to school, vandals spray-painted hate-filled messages on a mosque in Kentucky. Days earlier in a Chicago suburb, Inderjit Singh Mukker, a Sikh American father of two, was repeatedly punched in the face while his attacker yelled, “Terrorist, go back to your country, bin Laden.” (Sikhs are often the victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes because of their beards, turbans and skin color.) On this year’s anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, a Florida gun shop owner offered \$25 off any gun purchased online with the coupon code “Muslim.”

In case you think anti-Muslim sentiment is limited to the fringes, consider a University of Connecticut study. Researchers there last year found that job applicants with identifiable Muslim names received “32 percent fewer emails and 48 percent fewer phone calls than applicants

Moustafa Bayoumi

from the control group, far outweighing measurable bias against the other faith groups.”

Official agencies reflect these attitudes, too. The New York Police Department was caught spying a few years ago on every facet of Muslim life around the region. This was massive, expensive surveillance performed without even the hint of any criminal activity. And federal policies such as the Countering Violent Extremism initiative stigmatize Muslim Americans as terrorists, even though the number of terrorist attacks that Muslim Americans have committed are miniscule and far fewer than those that right-wing extremists have perpetrated.

Islamophobia infests our politics and our society. Republican presidential contender South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham supports the surveillance of mosques, while former Democratic presidential candidate Wesley Clark recently proposed the reintroduction of internment camps for “radicalized Americans.” Muslims across the country regularly face opposition in constructing their houses of worship and are routinely demonized in the media.

What most Americans don’t realize is how exhausting it is to live as a Muslim American in this environment, where many see anti-Muslim attitudes not as bigoted but as common sense. Ordinary things that Muslims do, such as cleverly making a clock at home to show off at school, can be interpreted as suspicious and threatening.

Islamophobia in the United States today is real and it’s growing. It’s time we start facing this dilemma squarely. Like Ahmed Mohamed, we need to be inventive, and find solutions that will help our country live up to its ideals.

— Moustafa Bayoumi, a professor of English at Brooklyn College, is author of the just-published “This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror.”

Senators, we need answers — not silence

This is an edited Open Letter to Senate President Neville A. James and Senate Majority Leader Samuel Sanes:

In our quest for holding our elected officials accountable and encouraging them to do what’s right in the interest of the people, we are concerned about the following issues that you have initiated an investigation on or have taken actions thereof.

Therefore, in view of this, we humbly and earnestly ask that you give a status report or explanation of the apparent silence on these issues of paramount importance to the welfare of the entire V.I. community and its taxpayers:

1. Villagate. When are the people going to get all the facts and final disposition of this matter? What is the status of this investigation? The people have a right to know.

2. Salaries. Increased compensation for commissioners and top government officials approved by the governor but no action taken to override: This is unconscionable and fiscally and morally irresponsible at this time when no consider-



Cecil Benjamin

ation is given to hardworking government employees who are owed millions in raises and retroactive pay for years, and who are asked to do more with less, and who cannot retire because the government fails to pay its contribution to the GERS fund. This illegal action needs to cease. What are you going to do about this? We strongly implore you to seek an override.

3. Limousines. What is the status of your opposition, outlined in your August 22, 2015, letter to the governor’s request for highly equipped and specially designed limousines/ceremonial vehicles for himself and the Lt. Governor costing approximately \$350,000 at a time when there is little or limited resources? The people deserve to know.

4. Charter flights. Where is the investigation, if any, concerning the questionable cost of the Governor’s chartered inter-island transportation in the territory? The people deserve to know.

5. Spending spree. Where is the investigation on the apparent spending spree pattern of the current administration in the face of scarce resources and fiscal and economic dilemma?

Where is prudence and demonstration of concern or compassion for the plight of the working people? The people have a right to know and deserve better.

These issues are important to the economic and retirement security of the working families and taxpayers.

The time has come for action and not silence, for deeds and not words. There is no time for campaign slogans and rhetoric. It is time for a plan, solutions, and getting the job done. It’s time to govern.

— V.I. Democratic Party State Chairman Cecil Benjamin, St. Croix

—PITCHFORK—

Somebody, please seize the governor’s credit card!

Governor Mapp deserves a 5,000-thread-count Pitchfork for using taxpayer money to purchase designer bed linens — enough to furnish an entire island, it seems.

And an equal pitchforks to Nellie Varlack for approving this outrageous

purchase.

Someone should confiscate Mr. Mapp’s credit card. He is a financial disaster for the long-suffering people of the Virgin Islands.

And as far as we know, this could be the tip of the iceberg. Just wait till

he is eventually forced to produce the records of his other shopping excursions — unless he continues to hide them from us.

Aren’t we the people angry enough yet?

— Catherine Fahy, St. John



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GOVERNOR'S SPENDING

Governor, your spending has emptied your public trust account

I was furious about the \$5,300 in designer linens. Then the very next day, we were informed that we are buying Governor Mapp's groceries. And groceries for his entourage! And that we are paying the overdraft fee and late fees when he can't remember to pay this credit card bill.

We really need to recall all those credit cards that this administration is having such a blast with at our expense.

A Fulbright Scholar, Brian

Governor, what are you paying for on your own?

I wonder what Governor Mapp is spending his generous salary on.

I find out that we taxpayers are covering his homes, his ferry/sea-plane/charter tickets, and his sheets and pillow covers. And the straw that broke this camel's back is that we are buying his food — and food for who knows how many staffers and others.

Despite the stupidity of paying interest and penalties on his credit cards — how typical is that for the V.I. Government? — what is he spending his salary on? I don't know, but neither do you since it is all kept secret from us.

I think this government has rotted from the top and there is no wonder

Catherine Fahy

Wampler, says that regular use of public funds to provide meals for government staffers and elected officials can undermine public trust.

Mr. Mapp, according to my surveys, please know that the public trust is undermined. And we realize that we don't know the full story yet.

— Catherine Fahy, St. John

John Fuller

If a Governor can loot and pillage, what's to keep all ah we from it?

that those at the bottom feel that it is alright for them to get theirs too. If a Governor can loot and pillage, what's to keep all ah we from it? Heaven help us all.

— John Fuller, St. John

◆ See Your Views In Print ◆

The Daily News is always interested in publishing local views on topics of general interest, and we especially welcome commentary on issues affecting the Virgin Islands and its people, culture, businesses and government.

Send Letters, Essays, Halos and Pitchforks, Cartoons or other original material about local issues of general interest to

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Elected officials shamefully neglecting St. Croix, where people are desperate for their tax refunds

Coretta S. Louis

How many more years are you going to play this delayed tax refund game? Are you going to wait until the very feds that you are calling in to help with the criminals turn around and clean up our government offices of corrupt leaders who are forcing their own people to live in poverty and disdain?

ment workers.

I can see that you in the government are truly looking out for your own. The bad news is: not all of us on the island of St. Croix are government workers.

Are we who aren't working for the government going to suffer more than others because we didn't have a friend to help us get a job with the rest of the government workers?

This is hard to understand.

Next, we have our current pothole issues. Nothing is worse than falling into a pothole and getting a flat tire or a broken rim. Can you imagine having a low income and this happens while you are still waiting for your refund checks? The money that we already think isn't enough become even less than we can imagine while we pay for the repairs our government has caused.

Another troubling issue is in our public school system. Do you really care about our children at all? Not all of us have children in private schools, dear leaders. The worst part is the ill-maintained bathroom stalls, with no toilet paper. And then there are no napkins to wipe their mouths in the lunchroom.

There are not enough good textbooks for our children to use. Those who have missing pages in their textbooks just have to wait till the next day to get their homework done.

Our teachers aren't being properly compensated or treated in a humane manner when they are forced to teach in schools that are in dire need of repair. More and more of our schools are shutting down. We as a people suffer.

Yet I see a handful of our leaders in a plane, smiling, going to lend a

helping hand to Dominica. There's absolutely nothing wrong flying out to help those in need, but why not take a walk and look around your own island and help us who were in a state of emergency even before the disaster of the storms?

Was the trip of so many even necessary? Not everyone needed to go just to help out. Fewer people going would have saved more money to send for the service of those people in need. I believe it was a field trip to remember.

How about those same leaders take a field trip to our elementary and junior high schools? Please begin in the west, where it seems everyone is running from that part of the island.

Take a little drive on the airport road, then on Carlton road and then fall in a few potholes as you leave there. Don't forget to take pictures as well — smiling so we can see that you people really care.

How about taking a trip to the projects, everywhere and around the low-income communities to see what your lack of the tax refund payouts are doing to your people who voted you into your seats.

Please don't forget to notice the elderly who have back and knee problems and need to have people take them to vote. I can't begin to understand how you can abandon those people who are the very reason you have been given jobs.

How many more years are you going to play this delayed tax refund game? Are you going to wait until the very feds that you are calling in to help with the criminals turn around and clean up our government offices of corrupt leaders who are forcing their own people to live in poverty and disdain?

It took some time to write this letter. It's something I avoided because it's a note that hits very close to home. I'm not working for the government, nor am I a senator or a local leader. Yet the hurt of our people is something that destroys me, and I can't understand how you elected officials can stand there in all your spotlights, with your big checks and your glam and watch your people suffer.

On behalf of all the silent voices in the Virgin Islands and the ones who haven't reached you, I'm here to say: "Thanks for the worst" because I can't say thanks when I've gotten nothing.

As for deJongh, I would let him have his fence all over again if we could at least have a little relief. At least he made sure a lot of us received our refunds. A lot of you in office now declare to be better than him. Really? Look at what you've done.

— Coretta S. Louis, St. Croix