



| Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance II

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 Thank you very much. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. I love you. Let's go. Let's go. Thank you. Oh, my God. Let's go. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you.

0:16:51 The committee is out of recess, and while we were in recess, we were experiencing some technical difficulties. are still we I think we should be better today because I think we were able to change the box within the past five minutes so we should be up and running and we shouldn't have any issues but let's go back to this let's wrap up this conversation we took a break so we could huddle so we can understand it so of course this is in fact no fault of the Department of Labor it is the discussion that we've been having with our concerns with the information that has been presented in the budget book and the appearance of double counting of the numbers. So you have the general fund and then you have items that are general fund but they are special to that respective department so they carry a different code. Right Mr. Wells. Correct. Okay so break it down for me and then we could have Mr. Malloy because basically we're asking for the justification of the 1.1 I think is like 1.13 it follows on my calculator was 1.13 million dollars so that's a quick justification and then I think once you provide that justification we'll all understand the additional 1 million plus dollars. Director of Business Administration Maurice Wells so the The increase is inclusive of the M2454, formerly known as the GIF operating budget, is embedded in our local monies.

0:18:28 And the categories that were inflated the most are professional services, travel and training. Under the professional services, we have some big, big contracts to include... Just give me a total. We don't need the specifics. You don't need a total. No. Just give me the... It could be a rough number because I know that... The rough number is 870,000. And then, like I said, the other two are training and then travel. That is our account of the increase in other services.

- 0:19:13 Yeah, but in talking to the commissioner, he shared something else. He shared that the... You could go ahead, Mr. Malloy. In terms of the... I'm sorry, Gary Malloy, Commissioner of the Department of Labor. in terms of the training area, we have funding set aside there for, specifically for work-based learning. And what we included there in my testimony when I talk about the customized training, incumbent worker training, those that lead up to registered apprenticeships, we've been having challenges with the business community. Apprenticeship programs are business, are employer-driven. And so we put some funds in there for training to be able to help subsidize those employees or those candidates that would be with those employers. So that's part of the increase there, to help subsidize the apprenticeship side of the house. Okay, so we can put this to bed. I'm going to ask the Department of Labor to provide to this committee the clear breakdown, breakdown your complete breakdown of the proposed other services and charges category for fiscal year 2025 and i want you to also provide us likewise for your your 2024 um other services and charges category and clearly it's ruled up so provide it's fine to provide it to us in a roll-up manner when it comes to the unemployment insurance contributions etc just clearly lay it out as that you don't have to get into the details of the other things that's associated with it so we could be clear on how to lay this out in a 25 budget but we need to clearly understand what is what okay so
- 0:21:06 so why are we paying for work based learning direct from the general fund know what based learning there's there is we get federal dollars to be able to subsidize those programs that are that you have to qualify and they have to lead to our nationally registered certification if they fall out of that or followed in areas that don't fall within those identified categories we cannot utilize the federal funding for that so this is an area where where we had the community development block grant funding we had some flexibility we saw that we were able to address more individuals so with the federal funding for example we're able to address maybe a hundred people with the combined with the combined money from the community development background with the same amount of period we're able to affect close to seven or eight hundred people so we recognize that we needed to find a way to subsidize some of those programs that fall out that's not identified in the federal guideline.
- 0:22:10 And the funding that you previously received from the Casino Control Commission, how do you... So they... Do you still receive those fundings? And if you do, how do you utilize those funds? The funding for the Casino Commission was specific to help the Jobs for America's graduates program, the JAG program. And we received our last check this last, is it maybe March? Our last check, and so that funding is no longer available to us. So we're going to have to be able to subsidise that. So this funding is also based, because it's work-based learning, it will be, it has the flexibility to be able to help fill some of the gaps in that programme as well. Okay, understood. All right, thank you, Senator DeGraff, you recognise your point of information and then we're going to go to Senator Javon James, senior.
- 0:23:02 Thank you, Madam Chair. So in regards to what I mentioned about a 44.5% bump up on the fringe, so the clarification is that it was all rolled up into the aggregate of the 13 million plus. Director Wells, you could just... Yes, Maurice Wells, the overstatement you are referencing is already a part of the 13 million ceiling. Okay. Thank you for the clarification. Thank you, Madam Chair.
- 0:23:35 Thank you. So just to make sure that we're good on that because it is creating some issues. So the numbers that we're seeing in the budget book is actually showing us, I think it's 19 million because there's an additional six that's kind of hovering around, but it's already included in the 13. So the number is 13. All right, Senator Javon James, you recognize for your five minutes.
- 0:24:14 One, two. Greetings to the people of the U.S. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the time. Oh boy. Oh boy, one second. Could you hold the Senator's time? Stop over his time. Let's try it again, Senator James. Greetings to the people of the US Virgin Islands. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the time. My question is to Commissioner Gary Malloy, page 16 of 23 of the post audit report speaks to Workforce 180 LLC Consultant Services. That's the type of service. And it ends March 31st, 2024, funding source, federal. So my question to you, will you be continuing with the consultant services or has it completely ended? Thank you for that question, Senator. This contract is with the Board, the Workforce Development Board, and I would have to think that they would continue it. So I, but right now, as far as we know, that they are planning to continue it. And what they were mandated to do so they provide supportive services whether it's it's consultation to the board for we all workforce and innovation and Opportunity Act consultation in terms of making sure that things are in line with the federal requirements as well as some other specific tasks that are lighten the contract i'll have to default to attorney christian hendrickson the contract ended march 31st march 31st 2024. did that company provide a report the consulting services for the work that they have done uh assistant commissioner legal counsel nisha christian hendrickson yes or no yes or no nisha christian hendrickson assistant commissioner legal counsel
- 0:26:12 yes from my understanding through the chair i would like to request that report to make sure that we're getting the bang for our buck, getting the bang for our buck for the Workforce 180 LLC Consultant Services that is doing business with

the Workforce Development Board. And I see here we're on page 15 of the post-addy report Arbor E and T LLC 1.6 million dollars type of service one-stop operator and is ending June 30th, 2024. Do you plan to renew that as well? Again that's another contract with the Senator with the the board that is the Equus Workforce Solutions that is currently working with our partner with us within the Department of Labor so that is the contracted services yeah but but is it it's gonna end June 30th 2024 are you going to renew it the board has a responsibility to be able that it has to be put out via RFP based on the federal requirement and who within your group or department who oversees these federal grants which position is that the director Milligan is our director of federal grants but this is one of those areas where with the we are funding how it's set up the vital Department of Labor is the recipient of the funding and the board has oversight of the funding for adult youth and dislocated workers. So this contract is designed for the adult and dislocated worker services side of the house. Three things I'm trying to accomplish here. Transparency so we can know exactly what's going on here. Number two to know who to hold accountable and number three to make sure that we as we roll over into FY 2024 to see which contracts even though it's federal or local will be renewed

0:28:06 because once once we done with these budget hearings and this contract finishes June 3rd of 2024 we need to be in the know to know if it's going to be renewed hence why I asked those questions and then I see here for the lease properties the term ends September 3rd of 2024 I know this body passed legislation to to provide a permanent housing which is the same facility if I'm not mistaken, right? That you use it right now? Or is it something differently? The Castle Cokie Leasing Inc. is different from where you're at right now, right? Yes, Castle Cokie is in St. Croix and I think you're talking about St.

0:28:45 Thomas location. No, no, no. Okay, the St. Thomas location is one you're trying to buy out, right? Yes, Senator. Okay, stand corrected. One minute. And then I see September 30, okay, All right I'll move right along. All right apprenticeship and training division as on page nine of the post early report I see is funded at two hundred approximately two hundred and eight thousand and it had an increase in personal and fringe benefits and I saw where you have two positions funded. Can you speak to those two positions? What are those two positions? The position is the director and and then there is a workforce development professional I believe.

0:29:28 Director Allen if you can those positions. No no no need to say any more. This apprenticeship and training division is a legislative mandate and I would like to ask you since it's a legislative mandate do you have the adequate amount of resources to carry out the apprenticeship and training mandates in the VI code? Yes or no? No. Okay so do you have an assessment of what you really need to carry out the program? Yes or no? Yes we do. And through the chair I'd like to request that assessment to make sure I mean not this fiscal year but eventually in phases we can be able to beef up that section or that division to make sure that our young men and women do have the opportunity to be trained and certify and to transition into the workforce my time was called thank you madam chair for the time thank you uh james you had something you wanted to add no i just wanted to say that uh it is legislative but it's also tied to our federal uh guidelines we do have uh an office what we did is we combined youth and apprenticeship because at the time we did not have enough traffic to be able to have a separate office of apprenticeship but really and truly the US Department of Labor would love for us to have a separate office of apprenticeship thank you for your response let me take this opportunity to recognize noncommittee member who's here with us today senator

0:31:14 Kenneth L. Gittins. Thank you for being here, Senator, and good morning. Senator Carrion, you recognize your point of information. Thank you, Madam Chair. Commissioner, hearing the previous colleague a question about some of the vendors that you clearly stated that fall under responsibility of the board, is there any measure in place for accountability purposes? Because I just didn't fit right with me hearing your response delegating I should say that the responsibility falls only on the board but you your office your department receives a fund what is that work relationship like and what accountability measures are in place in order to ensure that these funds are used timely and appropriately thank you for that question said based on the the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act of 2014, WIOA, there is, it's heavily focused on the workforce development boards and making sure that work-based learning initiatives are there. So there's a mandate to have a workforce development board in place that has 27 members, 51% must come from the private sector, and that board has regular meetings, and I'm a member of the board and it has regular meetings and decisions are made based on what how oversight over the funding that the Department of Labor receives those federal funding so it's part of the mandate so you can't have access to the we all funding without having the board in place okay so you're

0:32:58 a member of the board yes I hope so you understand so you are aware what's happening when the funding if they're being used or not properly and so forth is that your response seemed like I have no idea the board is the one that is responsible we just the money just comes through us so it was no I didn't want to give that I'm sorry for giving that impression because the board does have a financial committee that also is responsible for putting forward their quarterly reports reports a budget spending plan that we are the the they have to utilize our business office because we are the ones see

they're They're coming through our procurement process.

- 0:33:35 They're coming through everything. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Senator. Carry on. We'll now recognize Senator Maurice James for your five minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Virgin Islands, good morning, colleagues, testifiers, and everyone in the room. I want to, first of all, while we recognize the Department of Labor is a service-based regulatory agency. It's actually the agency that plays a critical factor in the economic growth of the territory and as you stated Commissioner, the federal grants are an important funding source. So I wanted to focus on the federal grants specifically with regard to the youth activities and adult programs under the WIA which is page 17 of the post added report. I wanted to ask you why most of the ones that I'm focusing on are expiring on June 30th, 2024 and what is the reason for those funds not being utilized by June 30th which is in a few days. Okay thank you for that question Senator. I'll start and ask Director Milligan to kick in. Most of these funding are multi-year funding so under it's on a program year and so the program year is different from our fiscal year so the program year for these federal funds starts in July and and I'll let director Milligan continue good morning Kenneth Milligan director
- 0:35:35 federal grants so you say specifically specifically for the we we are adult you yes okay so some of the old funds may be obligated right now but we have until like September 30th to liquidate so the balances is of I think we when we turn these numbers in was probably March so those are not necessarily it like I said is probably obligated and we have until September 30th to to liquidate the funds so there's there's no assurance that the the or are you saying that the funds will in fact be utilized by September 30th 2024. Yes, yes. And there will be, I want to ask you this too, what challenges do you have that does the Department or specifically this in this area, do you have in terms of utilization of federal funds? And I say that because I have noticed that a lot departments and agencies have a tendency to say well you know we got an extension or you know some other reason for the non-utilization of federal funds and it just seems as if we are not making effective use of federal funds and I'd just like you to comment on that or provide some clarification on what the issues or challenges are with regard to your department commissioner okay thank you for that question senator and generally the the issue is not on the on the fiscal the fiscal side it's the programmatic side because the program is who initiates the expenses that the fiscal has to pay out so based on the different programs uh that that are here um director sebastian and her team might have challenges with with finding a qualified youth provider to be able to execute the 14 program
- 0:37:54 elements um so they might be able or they might have uh situations where only x amount of students or would qualify a minute for these funding so it so it ranged from that but those are programmatic issues and so the funding can't be expended unless it's expended in the allowable manner Right, so sometimes we're getting federal funds that we can in fact not utilize. That's basically what you're saying, that we don't have the requirements, let's put it that way, or we don't fulfill those requirements. But I want to move on to one point quickly because I hear my time is... 30 seconds.
- 0:38:37 Excuse me, time up? Go ahead Senator. Thank you Madam Chair. I saw recently where the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs granted, funded, let me make sure that I'm reading the release correctly, the future job skills of tomorrow. \$400,000 for the Workforce Development Project to create an apprenticeship collaborative with Gold Coast Yachts in St. Croix and they will offer training and certification in carpentry, masonry, electrical skills, upholstery and joinery.
- 0:39:21 Did you participate in getting this funding and is there any role that the Department of Labor plays with regard to the participants, the monitoring, the Not in this specific case, Senator, Gold Coast Yachts took it upon them, was able to apply for this funding on their own, but I just let you know that Gold Coast Yachts is one of the apprenticeship programs. Mr. De Fidi is very knowledgeable about the entire process, and he definitely has been working closely with us in other measures. So in some way, shape or form, our project is going to be a part of the process. way shape or form our paths are gonna cross to make sure that we're not you know duplicating our efforts because if he has funding he's gonna need candidates and he has done a very good job in being able to navigate the workforce system right that's that's why I asked because there has to be some alignment with the Department of Labor if people and I agree with you that well Coaseyat has done quite a quite quite a number of projects apprenticeship apprenticeships I should say but at the same time there needs to be some alignment in terms of where what employers are are going to hire participants some type of interface I would think with the Department of labor when federal funds flow in like this which is wonderful and will be utilized and that's why i asked the question um thank you madam chair thank you uh senator james
- 0:41:17 santa carrion you recognize for your five minutes Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning to the team from the Department of Labor and to my colleagues in viewing and listening audience. I do, let's go right into some of the budget questions. We know that we've been seeing some of the departments and agencies that have been coming by here, and we've been seeing a decrease within their budget. We're trying to look for ways that where we can save, right? Um, currently with the budget that you have, um, do you feel that you can fulfill the mandates that you have according to the law? Yes, Senator.

- 0:41:57 We can. You do? Okay. Um, on page six in exhibit three, um, and I know the chair was, um, asking in this regard, regards to some of the increases that we're seeing, uh, let me just go right to it. And professional services, we've been seeing some increases and, um, I'm having a hard of time trying to understand, looking at the differences of what you receive in FY23, your actuals in FY24, and what you're requesting in FY25. So I really would appreciate if you could kind of justify some of it and maybe provide some of your actuals currently. So for, let's go to office supplies. You're asking in FY25, \$70,000. What are your actuals? Director Wells?
- 0:42:47 I'm looking at post-audit report. Which category? Supplies and office supplies. Actuals right now are only 3,297. And what are you projecting in a close? Do you have things in encumbrance? What are you projecting in a close in FY24? As far as encumbrances, I'll have to get that to you. I just have the actual. Okay. So that's your actual currently. You have one quarter left, and you're requesting \$70,000.
- 0:43:18 Operating supplies, what are your actuals in that area? \$26,531. \$26,000. You're requesting \$86,000 for FY25. Do you have a breakdown for all others in that section? Because we're seeing approximately close to \$200,000 increase. What's your actual there? actual in all others in that same category two million eight one seven four seventy nine under supplies I'm looking at exhibit three post audit report an fy 22 an fy 23 was 76 000 you're requesting 248 000 for fy 25. excuse me what page is that page Okay, what's your question?
- 0:44:26 The justification for the request for 248,302. And what's your actuals? Our supplies actuals is \$197,514. You said supplies, right? The section that says all others... Oh, that's why, okay.
- 0:44:56 So the all others is \$2,817,479. I thought you were asking about supplies. Well, there's a subcategory under supplies, but we'll continue on, because I think we're looking at different things. And then there's an increase in professional services. Why is an increase in professional services? The increase in professional services is to account for several contracts that we anticipate executing in FY25. One minute.
- 0:45:29 Contracts you don't have in FY24. Correct. And you didn't have an FY23. Correct. Are you engaging into another type of program services? What's the need for this? I could give you the description, and then Commissioner Malloy could expand as the need. Please do. So one was for work-based learning. Another one was for Nexus. 30 seconds.
- 0:45:59 Another one is for the description was to provide a fee schedule for workers' compensation. and then another one was for investigating injured workers. Commissioner? So, Gary Malloy, Commissioner of Department of Labor. The professional services for work-based learning is what I described to be able to support the work-based learning activities, to assist with apprenticeship program, to assist with the Jobs for America's graduates. The nexus is...
- 0:46:31 And that's not duplication, right? No duplication. No. The funding that was coming from the casino is no longer there, and there's been no funding, no general funds for any apprenticeship or work-based learning prior to this. The nexus is for the medical review for workers' compensation. The investigators is for... We have to do outside investigating with workers' compensation. And the other one, Mr. Wells, was... The fee schedule is for workers' compensation to be able to get all of the providers under one fee schedule so we can budget.
- 0:47:13 So those are contracts that we anticipate in 2025. That we didn't have before. Yes. Yes, sir. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you Senator Carrion, Senator Gittins, you recognize for your five minutes. Thank you well you know as we are discussing these agency budgets I'm I'm noticing with the current projected fiscal year 24 budget deficit or revenue shortfall of 90 million that I haven't heard much talks of austerity measures. Can you tell me, Commissioner, of any austerity measures within your department? Thank you for that question, Senator.
- 0:48:33 We have been very frugal in terms of making sure that when we can, we minimize our travel. We've also minimized our supplies. We're making sure that everything that we need is tied to our KPIs and to our federal mandates. And so all departments and agencies, we have regular meetings with my senior leadership team to make sure that they are on target and if they're not then we do some reductions in-house in addition what about access to government vehicles after hours there's only a few of our vehicles that i use after hours and also if i do have have any of my senior leadership team that's in the other district that doesn't have any transportation, we ensure that they have transportation. So there's very limited use of our vehicles after hours.
- 0:49:36 Good. And how are you progressing with getting employers to utilize the SIDES website to provide electronic responses to unemployment insurance claims to reduce the lapse time between employee separation and receiving an employment check and the sides being the the sides being the state information data exchange system i thank you for that and that was a part of the the recent law legislation that was passed that we but in what we've been doing we've been utilizing and we were previously encouraging uh our employers to do it but now that the the law is there there's a lot more effort for us to make sure that they understand when they register for unemployment this is a part of the registration process but i can have either director halyard or uh assistant commissioner legal council give you some more information if you need it no

what what what uh was the investment on the system uh it is it is free uh based on our our we have a membership that we pay to naswa um uh national association of state workforce uh association so it is it's a free cost to us but again we do pay a annual membership fee okay all right thank you for that uh thank you madam chair Thank you, Senator Gittins.

0:51:18 Do you anticipate any salary increases in this fiscal year, 24, for your unionized employees? Are you having any negotiations? No, the negotiations is scheduled for September. So... Okay. what about other salary increases I normally what I try to do I look at what's happening and I try to make some adjustments based on the senior leadership team and any of the the members so I made those for 2024 were already done okay earlier so all right let me ask you about the your summer program the numbers this our program is funded by general fund correct yes senator so where is that in here is under your personnel huh what's the total amount that you utilize the fund this summer program so else some of employment for FY 24 and 25 it was 535 thousand 924 and we don't use any other funding no so this 535 924 is inclusive of all of the categories let me just say there is some of there's some federal funding that can be used depending on if the individuals qualify so and that's very minimal very well so how many students young people are you able to hire with this 500 and this half a

0:53:17 million dollars normally is about 700 and we were able to get 800 by adding an additional hundred by utilizing some of the money from the casino to be able to offset from the at-risk so we're able to offset to get 800 the if you look at the addendum in the my testimony that there's a breakdown of how much from youth page the addendum the last page from we gave a breakdown for the last six years based on the numbers so 2024 with 531 that was budgeted for 16 to 25 14 to 15 year olds 150 the lift program was 30 this year so subtotal 711 and then from the federal funding 114 to come up with 825 that's projected for FY But the previous year, 23, you see that we were able to service 1,036 because we had some additional funding to be able to fund the lift program. So you see that we had 99 lift students last fiscal as opposed to 30 this year.

0:54:41 So what was that additional funding? It went away? and it went away or yeah the additional funding was uh governor brian made an allocation for us from the arbor funding to be able to expand the lift program and so we received an additional 500 000 and we we did we did a summer fall and spring uh lift program so okay um Senator Francis Jr, you recognize your point of information.

0:55:17 Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Commissioner Molloy, what's your vendor's payment in aggregate? How much do you owe in vendor's payment? Director Wells. And the age of the oldest pending payment? We'd have to get that information for you. All right. And while I have you, Commissioner, in respect to your technology work, are you in touch or there's any symbiosis or synergy with BIT in regards to the work that's being done with the technology and upgrades? We do nothing without consulting BIT. BIT is a major consultant for us and we run everything through BIT.

0:56:02 Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, your utilities, your utilities for FY24 reflected 222 for 18, so we've seen like an \$18,000 increase is that based on the true of your bills yes okay and there was how much money how much funding in capital projects did you get in FY24, what did I do with that document, Maurice Wells for FY24, 472,275, 472,275.

0:57:12 Yeah, based on what appropriation? That was in regards to the appropriation transfer that we came before the Senate for FY23 to assist with the build out of the St. Thomas office. So in FY2023, you had additional resources and we gave you an appropriation transfer to do some build-out work.

0:57:45 Have you expended all those dollars? Speaking of mic, the stenographer is asking for you to come closer to the mic. Yes. Say that again? Have you expended the dollars? Yes. So the build-out is completed and the funding is exhausted? The build-out is currently in progress, but we have multiple funding sources. but the fund- Speaking specifically to the general fund dollars.

0:58:16 Okay, so that was expended and the portion that the general fund is tied to, those were completed. That was for the order of the supplies. All right. And so FY25, there's no request for capital funds. funds I know that we move legislation for the purchase of a building and I heard you speaking about that so what's the status I know you talked something about probate and yes in a sense one of the the owners mr. Kenneth Srini passed away right right after the everything was passed and so the attorney for the family is going through probate they're at the final stages where they're going to be making the announcements we have been in touch with the attorney we are also in touch with property and procurement to make sure that everything on our side is already there are all appeals to purchase orders are in place and everything is in place awaiting this process to finalize the expectation is that it will be completed within this fiscal year so when the transaction is completed is there a need for capital funding the right after no because right now the the funding that we the money that we're saving from being the rent will be able to to utilize for any immediate that we need in terms of any immediate repairs but we are working on the next phase of the the build-out to

- 1:00:04 make sure we complete that that's exactly why I asked you the question because I'm trying to figure out under the other services and charges category there is an amount for rent currently correct Okay, so we got two things going on. We made a commitment to purchase this building from these folks, are we still paying them rent? What are we doing? We should have, there should have been some arrangement by now that we cut that off. We can't continue to fund this rent in your budget. didn't budget for the st thomas rent in fy25 the rent that you're seeing is solely for st croix so if you didn't budget for the rented fy25 then your commissioner is does not have the funding for capital improvement all right so that's why we need a breakout before you go that's why we need a breakout because Because there's a lot of missing parts of this conversation around your other services category.
- 1:01:24 That's why it's very important that you all provide us with a breakdown of your other services. If I may, Senator, so the rent that I'm talking about is, again, that there's only rent in the 25 for St. Croix. still continuing to pay rent in 24 until the purchase is finalized for the building yeah but remember you have an increase you still have an increase in your in your other services and charges category i have to take a recess um the stenographers well we have an issue with media again so we have to take our recess the committee stands in recess We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go. We'll be right back. Let's go. We'll be right back. Let's go. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.
- 1:10:34 We'll be right back. Thank you.
- 1:11:34 We'll be right back. We'll be right back.
- 1:12:34 Thank you. We'll be right back. I'll see you next time. The committee is back on the record, Mr. Malloy, I know you are wrapping up. Yes. Can you please?
- 1:14:21 Yes. Go ahead. Go ahead. I just wanted to say, Senator, that with the other services, everything, every while went up rent actually went down because we're not forecasting the rent for the st. Thomas building in 25 how much was it how much is the rent for the st. Thomas building mr. director will let me let me look it up for you um senator all right in the interim committee sense of lighting you're recognized for your point of information thank thank you madam chair Commissioner Malloy back to workforce development I also want to amend that request in respect to individual that qualified and completed those program and different the different training institution how many of those individuals are nationally certified number one number two for the 23 fiscal year and 24 how many individuals how many funds were allotted and how much had been expended, and for 24, how much haven't been expended to date in terms of how much funds we have used for those programs. Okay. You got it? And that primarily is federal funding. Yes. The only other outside funding we had was from the Community Development Block Grant. Correct. Okay. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Madam Chair. Thank you, Senator Blayden. Senator Kenneth Gittens, you're recognized for your point information. Thank you. Commissioner, being a service-based regulatory organization, I'm looking at, I mean that's very important to all of us across the territory. I'm looking at your personnel listing where you have some
- 1:16:20 109 employees territory-wide and then you break it down with between the two districts but I wanted to ask specifically again because of the importance of your department being service-based and regulatory do we have an actual presence on the island of St. John? Yes we do Senator we have one one staff member. One staff member, where are they located? They're located in the battery.
- 1:17:01 And to your knowledge that one staff member for the island of St. John is sufficient for all the programs that you have oversight for or responsibilities? Yes Senator she's very very full-service one-stop operation and and again everything works very well. Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you Senator Gittens. You have point of information as well you may proceed senator fonseca with your point of information yes thank you um commissioner malloy um going back to purchasing the building right i know um every time it rain it seemed like there's a pool of water down there what are the plans when you purchase this building or is it incorporated already in design for public works how are you going to alleviate the flooding in that area thank you for that question senator and i i wish assistant commissioner ford was here he will give you the breakdown because we've been working with um waste management and public works and there is a plan in place that because that is uh it's a major issue that needs to be they need to either do something on our side or or cut and so now that we're moving forward on the property it's going to be a lot easier okay good um one one thing i you know there was a bureau of labor statistics report i think maybe that's the other gary gary highlight but you know that report was very important you could see the unemployment statistics um labor rates and all that how can
- 1:18:55 you get access to that thank you director halyard gary halyard uh as mentioned before we have sort of incorporated that with our workforce investment case management system for the public. So all that data is embedded in the case management system for the employers and the job seekers and anyone else that wants to do research on a particular statistic that we gather and capture within the Virgin Islands. So that's in the VIEWS system? Yes, that's a VIEWS.org,

right?

- 1:19:31 Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Senator Fonseca. I think we've exhausted all of our questions. Mr. Malloy, I'm going to allow you a 30-second close. Thank you, Senator.
- 1:19:57 Just one second before you go. I believe that Mr. Wells had a, I believe Senator James asked a question. Can you put the information on the record? We didn't get it. Maurice Wells, Director of Business Administration. So earlier Senator James asked about the WUO funding. So as of May 31st month end, for the youth program we have expended 87.7% of the funds For adult, we have expended 96.9%, and then for desiccated worker, we have expended 100%. And this is all related to the funds with a period expiring 6-30-2024. That's it. And then the other thing in regards to your question, the St. Thomas rent is \$250,435 annually.
- 1:20:57 250 435 annually all right all right um and before i go to you mr malloy there were some through the chair requests senator senator gittins you have a point of information you may proceed yes a quick Thank you. Commissioner, do you have any plans to relocate back into a government-owned building on St. Croix? Any plans to refurbish the old Department of Labor? None at this time, Senator. We have a lease until 2030 with the current inquiry location. All right, let's have a conversation about this please. I really think that we need to start investing in our government-owned buildings. Thank you.
- 1:22:05 Thank you, Senator Gittins. The true to chair requests. So we are going to send the correspondence but just to give you a quick reminder of the items that were requested so you can begin working on them uh one of the asks was tell a report of the targeted industries to include all qualified employees and persons who were denied and why denied um what program is that for i'm not clear on this true that's gonna be workforce so this is workforce development okay all right And then the complete breakdown of the other services and charges category for FY24 and 25, the copy and report of the contract for the Workforce 180 Consulting Group, and the list of all outstanding vendor payments to date. And that brings me to what is a total aggregate of outstanding vendor payments you have against the general fund outstanding vendor payments against the general fund as a question yes yes yeah I have to get it I have to get information okay so let's add the listing of outstanding vendor payments against the general fund have Have you submitted all of your invoices to the Department of Finance?
- 1:23:45 That's outstanding. So you have pending payments? Yes, pending payments. Got it. All right. Mr. Malloy, you may proceed with your 30-second close. Just want to thank the opportunity for being able to present our testimony and to pretty much again take the opportunity to say that the thirteen point six million dollars that we've been requesting is adequate and we are prepared to be able to do all our mandates and everything with within that that ceiling as with your indulgence I'd just like to ask my Department of Labor team to stand I really want to thank them for all that you've been doing and I've been really pushing them up very very hard and I wanted to make sure that everybody sees and knows that this is the team behind me sitting here and knowing the information I do know. So again just want to take the opportunity as you to stand be recognized and thank you for everything you've done.
- 1:24:47 Alright Mr. Malloy, thank you for your presentation today. As soon as possible please provide the information that we requested and if we need any additional information we will reach out to your office so we can ensure that we are able to make an informed decision for your FY 2024 five budget the committee stands in recess until for 10 minutes Satsang with Mooji Thank you. Let's go.
- 1:26:52 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I love you, too I'll see you next time. I love you Oh, my God. Oh, my God. I'll see you next time.
- 1:33:22 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go Let's go. Thank you.
- 1:36:15 The committee is back on the record. Madam Clerk, can you please read block the items block two into the record block two division of personnel and collect an office of collective bargaining invest invited testifiers miss Sydney Richardson director division of personnel miss Josh Springett Esquire chief negotiator office of collective bargaining this concludes the reading of today's agenda madam chair thank you madam clerk All right, good afternoon to the officials from the Division of Personnel and the Office of Collective Bargaining. Thank you for being here, and good afternoon to your supporting cast as well.
- 1:37:11 I'm going to ask you to put your names and titles on the record, and we're going to start with the OCB director. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Josh Springer, Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargain. And Ms. Springer, do you have anyone here with you? Yes, they're present, they're appearing from St. Croix. Okay, your St. Croix rep, can you please put your name and title on the record?

- 1:37:45 Good afternoon, Nekima Richards, Say that one more time and get a little closer to the mic, we're breaking up on this end. Nakeema Richards, financial specialist. All right. Thank you. Madam Chair, Attorney Zolima Chapman will be appearing as well from St. Croix. He's not there at this time. Okay. Director Richardson. So what we're going to do with your team is you're going to put your name and title on the record, and then we're going to start from my right, your left, put your names and title on the record, and then we will go to the other side.
- 1:38:26 You may proceed. Good afternoon, Cindy Richardson, Director of Division of Personnel. Good afternoon, Cora Reimer, Junior, Division of Personnel. Good afternoon, Florine Audain-Hassel, Assistant Director, Division of Personnel. Good afternoon, Valerie Daly, Chief of Repelt Insurance, Division of Personnel. Good afternoon, Millicent O'Bain, Territorial Administrative Recruitment and Classification. Good afternoon, Valsina Kwashi, Deputy Director, Division of Personnel. Good afternoon, Aaliyah Felix Blyden, Legal Counsel, Division of Personnel.
- 1:39:08 Good afternoon, Gabriel Knight, Strategy and Organizational Development Officer, Division of personnel that's it yes all right thank you you may proceed with your testimony we're gonna start with the OCB director and we will follow up with you miss director Richardson you may proceed miss bring it good afternoon honorable senator Donna Fred Gregory chairperson of the committee on budget Appropriations and Finance, other members of the committee, non-committee members in attendance, and the people of the Virgin Islands. My name is Josh Springett and I am the chief negotiator at the Office of Collective Bargaining. I appear before you today in support of our budget for the fiscal year 2025 in the amount of of \$1,375,564. Appairing with me today from the St. Croix Chambers is Nikima Richards, financial specialist, and Zulema Chapman, Assistant Attorney General Labor.
- 1:40:19 First, I will begin my testimony by thanking my dynamic and mighty team for their commitment and service to the community. I would also like to give special recognition to our stars, 2024 employees of the year nikima richards in the st croix district and julia thomas in the st thomas st john district through act 4440 the office of collective bargaining was established in 1980 within the office of the governor the office is supervised by me the chief negotiator and its statutory responsibilities are as follows exclusively represents the executive branch of government and its departments and divisions and negotiates on its behalf in all collective bargaining proceedings assists the governor in formulating labor policies for collective bargaining and plan strategies for such bargaining coordinates the government's position in all mediation and arbitration cases and labor disputes conducts systemic studies of the collective bargaining agreements for the purpose of contract negotiations and prepares and submits an annual report and such other reports as may be requested to the governor and the legislature on the effects of this chapter on the annual budget and personnel matters. Our offices are located in the GRS building on St. Thomas and at Chandler's Wharf on St. Croix. We currently have a team of six employees and one Assistant Attorney General Labor. The Assistant Attorney General Labor is assigned to OCB by the Department of Justice. OCB's current employees hold classified non-union positions and the Assistant Attorney General Labor is an exempt employee. The team consists of professionals with a wealth of experience in administrative functions, customer service, labor relations, human resources, arbitration,
- 1:42:18 general legal practice labor law and employment law the current organizational chart is attached proposed fiscal year 2025 expenditures personnel services and fringe benefits our proposed budget for personnel services is 772 895 dollars which represents 56.19 percent of the overall proposed budget fringe benefits are projected at three hundred thirty thousand seven hundred sixteen dollars which represents twenty four point zero four percent of the overall budget equipment and supplies our proposed budget for equipment and supplies is thirty two thousand or two point three six percent of our overall budget this amount covers the cost of paper printers cleaning supplies and other items necessary for the daily operations of the office utility costs for fiscal year 2025 are projected to be 13 000 or 0.95 percent of the overall budget this amount only applies to our st croix office because we do not pay utilities in the st thomas office these funds are transferred to the department of finance and utilities are paid through the single payer utility fund other services our proposed budget for other services is 226 453 or 16.46 of our overall budget these funds cover operating expenses including rent service agreements i.t communications and training and below you will see a breakdown of these categories we do not receive any federal funds operations the demands on the office are
- 1:44:12 increasing with more requests for our clients from our clients for training and advice therefore we need to fill the current vacancies improve technology and continue streamlining streamlining operations we are recruiting candidates for our financial management officer labor relations specialists and paralegal officer positions my team and i continue to attend continuing education and skills courses and webinars hosted by authorities such as the local and federal courts district court of the virgin islands equal opportunity equal employment opportunity commission eoc society of human resource management american bar association Bogeltree Deakins, Harvard Law School's Program and Negotiations, Skill Path, and the U.S. Department of Labor. Labor Relations. OCB's mission is to fulfill our legal mandate to fairly engage in the collective bargaining process and enhance the relationship between labor and management.

- 1:45:17 Our goals are to reduce labor disputes, continue training management in labor relations, and improve relations between management and labor. OCB receives calls and email inquiries daily from agencies seeking guidance on legal disputes, organizational plans, or OCB's intervention in various collective bargaining matters. These discussions provide us with insight into the agency's operations, their challenges, and how OCB can better serve the government. We also receive calls from unions who seek to amicably resolve issues without filing grievances or other formal complaints.
- 1:45:59 This dialogue with union representatives serves as an essential element in labor relations. We encourage our clients to do the same, which has resulted in some agencies meeting with unions as often as biweekly. Pending Cases. OCB continues its statutory commitment to amicably resolve pending cases and avoid future ones. As of May 31st, 2024, OCB has a caseload of 325 cases. Of that amount, there are 255 rights arbitration cases, 31 unfair labor practice charges, 31, 26 civil cases eight unit clarification cases one equal opportunity case and one government service appeal case two recertification cases and one decertification case from october 1 2022 to may 31st 2024 we were successful in closing 49 cases through arbitrations dispositive orders withdrawals or settlements. This is about 15% of the caseload. Below is a chart showing the caseload as of May 31st, 2024. Negotiations. OCB engages in contract negotiations with 15 labor unions that represent 33 bargaining units within the government. OCB currently manages 32 collective bargaining agreements of which eight are current and one bargaining unit does not have a cba since our last budget submission we have discontinued our memorandum of understanding with the virgin islands lottery for representation in all labor matters and contract negotiations
- 1:47:49 this reduced the number of cbas that we have to negotiate from 36 to 33. since my last budget hearing we have completed negotiations with the following unions virgin island state nurses association which covers employees at the department of health and the hospital facilities in april 2023 registered nurses leadership union which covers employees at the department of health and hospital facilities may 2024 our virgin islands labor union department of justice staff june 2024. our virgin islands labor union department of agriculture support staff june 2024. negotiations continue with the following unions united state workers for the virgin islands waste management supervisors international association of machinists and aerospace workers for virgin islands waste management support staff and enforcement officers American Federation of Teachers for Education Professionals, American Federation of Teachers for Paraprofessionals, American Federation of Teachers for Support Staff, Our Virgin Anne's Labor Union for the Department of Public Works, Association of Firefighters for Firefighters and Corporals, Association of Firefighters for Support Staff, and the International association of machinists and aerospace workers for security guards at the department of health and both both hospitals attached is a spreadsheet showing the status of each cba and our tentative schedule for the rest of the calendar year although i was not physically present during ocb's last budget hearing i submitted testimony which included a suggested amendment to act 4440 for the benefit of unionized employees i urge you to strongly consider such an amendment to help
- 1:49:49 employees receive regular regular and consistent salary increases as the cost of living and inflation continue to make it difficult for many residents to afford basic necessities my concerns remain the same so does some of my testimony on negotiations the labor relations landscape has changed in many ways since Act 4440 was enacted in 1980. It is time that we expand how unionized employees receive their benefits and compensation.
- 1:50:22 In 1980, there were not as many unions or bargaining units. Each union only represented a handful of bargaining units. Collective bargaining agreements resembled small booklets or contained less than 50 pages. Today, over 70% of the workforce is unionized. Some unions have up to eight bargaining units. Some CBAs are as thick as textbooks. With more unions, bargaining units, and unionized employees, OCB spends more time negotiating collective bargaining agreements. To change that, we need to expand Act 4440 to allow the governor to grant a general increase to all unionized employees while negotiations are pending. I have discussed with some unions the option of extending existing CBAs and stipulating to a general increase pending negotiations.
- 1:51:17 Of the five unions that I have discussed these options with thus far, four are open to considering these options. Those unions are the Virgin Islands Workers Union, our Virgin Islands Labor Union, Law Enforcement Supervisors Union, and the Seafarers International Union. With Act 4440 in its current form, all unions do not have to agree on extending existing CBAs. Therefore, if we stipulate with some unions that agree, thousands of employees are likely to continue waiting before negotiations are completed if the law is not expanded to allow all employees to benefit. On June 6th, the Governor's financial team provided this committee with a mid-year review the fiscal year 2024 and an overview of the budget for fiscal year 2025 everyone was informed that the revenue collections are lower than projections so far for this fiscal year and we expect our revenue collections will be approximately 91 million below and one million dollars below the appropriation level by the end of fiscal year 2024. if this continues into f fiscal year 2025 for salary increases. This committee also stated that the government has absorbed increased cost of health insurance since 2019 because employees have not been receiving salary increases. With all these factors in mind, we need to work together on an amendment to

allow all bargaining units in the central government to get some relief while we wait for a negotiated contract. In conclusion, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of our budget for fiscal year 2025. The Office of Collective Bargaining

- 1:53:05 will continue to manage its limited resources and fulfill our mandates. We urge this body to approve our recommended budget of \$1,375,564. We welcome any questions that you may have. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony, Attorney Springett, Director Richardson, are you ready? Yes. You may proceed with your testimony. A pleasant good afternoon to Honorable Donna E. Fred Gregory, Chairwoman of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance, Honorable Novel E. Francis Jr., Vice Chairman of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance, other committee members, non-committee members, members of the Division of Personnel's team, fellow testifiers, and the viewing and listening audience. I am Cindy L. Richardson, Director of the Division of Personnel. Accompanying me today to provide testimony on the Division's proposed fiscal year 2025 budget are members of my personnel's executive team. Florine Ardeen-Hassel, Assistant Director, Valsina Kwashi, Deputy Director, Cordell Reimer Jr., Chief of Human Resources Information Technology, Valerie Daly, Chief of Group Health Insurance, Millicent Aubain, Territorial Administrator of Recruitment and Classification, Gabriel Knight, Strategy and Organizational Development Officer, Aaliyah T. Felix, Esquire, Legal Counsel. Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the proposed budget for the division of personnel's personnel for fiscal year 2025 themed fulfilling the promise
- 1:54:56 of fiscal solvency this budget is strategically designed to align with administration's proactive approach to preparing for the next economic cycle at the division of personnel we are dedicated to fostering collaborations with agencies to enhance recruitment efforts while automating and streamlining processes to prepare for the next wave of employees essential for advancing the government of the virgin islands i'd like to publicly express my gratitude to the dedicated employees of the division of personnel for their unwavering commitment and service your dedication and service are greatly valued and have significantly contributed to our community your unwavering commitment plays a vital role in improving the quality of life of the virgin islands thank you for your continued efforts and passion in making our islands a better place for everyone overview of operations the division of personnel is in charge with responsibilities mandated in the virgin islands code title 3 chapter 25 sections 451 through 667 and the government of the virgin islands personnel rules and regulations the division of personnel provides human resource management services to all central government agencies as a human resources administrative arm of the government of the virgin islands our focus is on strengthening organizational performance and enabling the government to attract develop and retain a well-qualified diverse workforce these tasks are accomplished within the following units recruitment and classification strategy and organizational development human resources information technology group health insurance and fiscal and administrative services fiscal year
- 1:56:46 2025 budget recommendation the fy 2025 recommended budget by the office of management and budget for the division of personnel is a total of 44 million eight hundred and fifty five thousand five hundred and one dollars included in that are projected revenues of approximately forty five thousand from the training revolving fund the budget the budget recommendation includes allocations of four forty four million two hundred and seventy nine thousand six hundred and thirty four dollars from the general fund and five hundred and thirty thousand eight hundred and sixty seven from the indirect cost fund table one shows that summary our total fy 2025 operating budget summary is five million three hundred and fifty three thousand nine hundred and sixty two dollars which includes the following allocations three million two hundred and forty nine thousand nine hundred and thirty eight dollars and nineteen cents for personnel services one million four hundred and fifty eight dollars three hundred and sixty dollars in eleven cents for fringe benefits fifty eight thousand for supplies and five hundred and eighty seven thousand six hundred and sixty three dollars and seventy cents for other services and charges table two shows the total budget summary as as just mentioned next the total fy 2025 miscellaneous budget summary is 38 million nine hundred and twenty five dollars six hundred and seventy two dollars which includes the following recommended allocations 38 million two hundred and ten dollars and six hundred and seventy two
- 1:58:34 dollars for the health insurance for retirees 75 000 for the certified public manager program 80 000 for the gvi employees recognition activities 275 000 for the contribution to the health insurance board and 285 000 for the health insurance consultants and table three within the testimony shows the breakout of that miscellaneous budget our total other services and charges as stated previously is 587 663 dollars and 70 cents which includes the following allocations 29 853.98 for repair and maintenance 500 for auto repair and maintenance 2500 for rental of machines and equipment 25 000 for training 50 000 for communications 44 000 for advertising advertising and promotion 50 000 for the transportation and non-travel 30 000 for travel 25 000 for purchase of bulk airline tickets and 375 809.72 for professional services the table four within the testimony shows that breakout of other services and charges Lastly, our total indirect cost fund is \$530,867, which includes \$7,869 for supplies, \$303,098 for other services and charges, and \$219,900 for utilities. Table 5

shows that indirect cost fund breakout.

- 2:00:23 Personnel services. The recommended personnel services positioned for the Division of Personnel are a total of 49 employees. This includes 44 funded positions and 5 requested vacant positions. Of the 44 current positions, 28 are in the St. Thomas-St. John District and 16 are in the St. Croix District. Among these positions, seven are union representative, 19 are classified as non-union, and 18 are exempt. Appendix B within the testimony provides you with a breakout of our personnel listing.
- 2:01:04 Professional development. Typically, the Division of Personnel offers staff the opportunity to attend conferences hosted by the Society of Human Resources Management, SHRM, The Public Sector, Human Resources Association, PERSHA, formerly IPMA, the National Association of African Americans in Human Resources, and AAAHR, and NeoGov, either virtually or in person. However, due to budget constraints, this was not possible this fiscal year. Additionally, memberships to these organizations and attendants at the EEO refresher training for investigators and mediation training were also not feasible.
- 2:01:46 I hope that these opportunities will be available in the upcoming fiscal year. Human Resources Information Technology The Human Resources Information Technology Unit provides essential services needed to support the various agencies of the Government of the Virgin Islands. Help Desk staff offers comprehensive technical and clerical assistance to GBI agencies and the Division of Personnel staff.
- 2:02:13 It delivers specialized training on the ERP system to human resources professionals, enhancing their ability to manage HR functions effectively, managing the Notices of Personnel Actions or NOPAs for GBI agencies, ensuring accurate and timely documentation of personnel changes. services are crucial for the efficient operation and effective human resources management within the government in providing this assistance the dop help desk has been instrumental in resolving a significant number of issues successfully addressing 3 290 tickets for fy 2024.
- 2:02:53 these tickets encompass a wide range of queries and problems including technical support hr policy clarification benefit inquiries and other personnel related matters the efficiency and responsiveness of the help desk have ensured that staff concerns are addressed promptly contributing to smoother operations and enhanced employee satisfaction throughout the fiscal year maintaining data integrity in the erp system in order to maintain the accuracy and the consistency of the erp data our team conducts ongoing anomaly anomaly checks when anomalies are identified they are promptly communicated to the human resources and payroll payroll personnel across the various departments and agencies for reconciliation we collaborate closely with the department of finance and the office of management and budget as needed to implement initiatives aimed at enhancing data integrity additionally to minimize errors during bi-weekly payroll processing we diligently monitor personal action errors to pinpoint any issues within specific departments or areas to prevent data anomalies or errors during our annual open enrollment the team developed specific data extraction reports and the procedures that our partner bentek must adhere to the developers at bentec accepted the request and modified existing programs they adopted these initiatives to ensure that all deduction changes are captured quickly thereby resulting in timely collections of deduction adjustments within the erp module at the hrit unit we believe in the power of collaboration to streamline the collection of health insurance premiums from active employees and retirees we've implemented an online payment portal authorized.net in collaboration with the
- 2:04:48 group health insurance unit team and various stakeholders this joint effort has significantly improved the process allowing premiums owed by individuals to be settled without a visit to the division of personnel's office this collective approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility and teamwork making our services more effective the following is a set of tables and charts reporting the various demographics of the employees of the government of the virgin islands this breakout aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the workforce composition facilitating better understanding and strategic planning for diversity equity and inclusion initiatives just a small disclaimer here the information provided in the following charts were pulled on june 7 2024 and may have changed upon the reading of this testimony so in table six we show a total number of employees broken out by department table seven shows gender equality it shows a number of employees um for the gvi showing a females totaling 4 229 and males totaling 2030 for a total of 6 259 employees we've also broken out the average salary of employees by gender which shows female average salary as fifty two thousand six hundred and six dollars while male average salary is fifty two thousand six hundred figure one also shows a breakout of employees by district we also show the percentage of employees by status of classified temporary per diem part-time and exempt figure three
- 2:06:40 shows a total salary cost by department which is not inclusive of fringe we've also provided the employee average salary by department in figure four Additionally, in Table 8, we are showing our employee new hire and separations. So for FY 2024, we're showing a total of 522 hires with a total separation of 249. Table 9 shows the employee NOPA actions by codes.

- 2:07:16 These are the different types of NOPA actions that is performed, that is processed by the Division of Personnel and HR representatives, totaling 2,752 NOPA actions that have taken place thus far for FY 2024. Group Health Insurance. This unit at the Division of Personnel administers health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans for active employees, retirees, and their dependents as negotiated by the Government Employees Service Commission GSC Health Insurance Board. Our Group Health Insurance Unit, a crucial pillar at the Division of Personnel, provides coverage for approximately 14,344 participants as of July 7th, 2024. This significant number underscores our vital role in the supporting active government employees and retirees. Currently, 7,218 active employees are enrolled in the medical plan, with 3,748 covering their dependents and 3,428 employees with single coverage. Additionally, the medical plan also covers 7,126 retirees, including 5,917 26 over age 65 and 1,200 under the age of 65 overall our plan provides a strong sense of security to approximately 25 000 members ensuring their health and well-being insurance coverage costs for all insurance coverage combined including dental vision and life the plan outlays will decrease from 183.1 million in fy 2023 to 182.7 million in fy 2024. this reduction of
- 2:09:18 approximately 403 000 or 0.3 percent of the overall cost demonstrates our effectiveness in cost management ensuring the long-term sustainability of our plan providing silence solid reassurance to our members about the stability of their health coverage figure five shows a breakout of the health insurance estimated costs for the retiree employee share retiree employer share active employee share and active employer share thus far for fy 2024 we have paid 89 million 673 thousand five hundred and seventy nine dollars and twenty four cents in health care premiums of this amount sixty five million four hundred and sixty one thousand seven hundred and twelve dollars and eighty four cents represents the government's portion and twenty four million two hundred and eighteen thousand eight hundred and sixty six dollars and thirty nine cents represents the employee's portion. Software and technology. In October of 2023, we took a proactive measures to ensure accurate and fair payments by implementing the payroll audit through the Bentech eligibility system, which works with the GVI's ERP system. This system captures information on any employee on leave without pay or health insurance deductions not taken from the members by weekly pay ensuring accurate and fair payment since the inception the payroll audit we have collected over 222 726.68 additionally on april 4th 2023 we introduced the online payment system authorized.net allowing employees and retirees to make credit card payments for owed insurance premiums this process has enhanced transparency and fairness in our operations with this online
- 2:11:24 payment system we are able to collect 17 000 and 39.99 outreach in 2023 outside of the open enrollment period we have focused on educating our members about the benefits of the gvi health insurance demonstrating our commitment to keeping our members informed and valued as of april 2023 we have conducted outreach presentation to 34 agencies throughout the gvi additionally as of december 31st 2023 the bentech system showed a 65 completion rate for beneficiary entries, with 5,391 active employees having completed their entries, and 2,444 active employees who have not entered their beneficiaries.
- 2:12:26 One of our biggest challenges was ensuring this completion rate from 65% to 100%. Thanks to our outreach efforts, we have now reached over 78% and anticipate achieving the 100% before the end of the fiscal year. We encourage all those agencies that have received a listing of employees who are missing beneficiaries to please encourage your employees to update their beneficiaries in the Bentex system. Debt claims, we have submitted 178 debt claims. Of those, 132 were retirees, nine are active employees, 20 are spouse life, and three are child life to the life insurance company, The Standard, which resulted in over \$4,677,000 being paid to members' beneficiaries.
- 2:13:31 The GVI Wellness Program, our wellness program plays a critical role, a crucial role in improving the health and lowering healthcare costs for our community. It supports members in pursuing a healthy lifestyle by offering and engaging activities and introducing new events and challenges to keep participation high. Table 10 of our testimony shows our GVI Wellness Program initiatives, the various activities that we've put on for FY24 and FY25, and it shows the number of participants that we have as a comparison for FY25 to FY24.
- 2:14:11 Some of our upcoming wellness initiatives for FY2024 includes currently our June 30-day hydration challenge, our virtual annual health and wellness expo and produce distribution, wellness scavenger hunt and our gvi wellness kickball tournament table 11 shows our fy 2025 gvi wellness program initiatives our motivate me incentive program the gse board and divisions of personnel launched the motivate me incentive program from october 1 2023 through september 30th 2024 all primary active members retirees under the age of 65 and covered spouses of the gvi signa plan are eligible for a gift card as a reward for their healthy activities the program offers health and wellness activities initiatives webcasts seminars and personal health reporting designed to engage signa plan members actively in their health insurance benefits The higher the lever participation or points, the higher the value of the gift card. The maximum amount a member can receive from this program is \$150 on their gift card.

- 2:15:30 To access the MotivateMe platform, members can log in to the MyCigna.com and complete the two-step authentication process. All members must complete their biometrics to redeem any rewards. The following are the biometric measurements that have been conducted continuously from October 1 to present. These numbers reflect those of the biometrics collected by the WOW VAN. The St. Croix team has completed 538 biometric screenings, and the St. Thomas team has completed 436 biometric screenings.
- 2:16:10 Eligible recipients for the Motivate Me Rewards cards, the number of persons eligible for gift cards between the period of 10-1-22 to 9-30-2023 was 4061 the number of persons eligible for gift cards between 10-1-2023 to the present is 1995 individuals the amada program campaign was launched october 1 2023 the program focuses on prevention sustainable lifestyle changes better management of type 2 diabetes hypertension and behavioral health the virtual integrated care program helps members make lasting healthy lifestyle changes by offering health plans personalized tools resources and support the enrollment numbers for the mode amada program are as follows the number of individuals enrolled between 2022 and 2023 1417 number of persons enroll between 2023 and 2024 1574. the employee assistance program eap supports members facing challenging mental emotional and physical situations that affect their health and quality of life the ap provides members with up to five free count confidential free counseling sessions the eap utilization the utilization of the eap program includes 10 agencies that require on-site eap counseling services for 21 hours for fy 2024 our current utilization rate for the employee assistance programs concerning the top presenting issues are stress and anxiety job and career issues depression concerns information only by inquiries and marital
- 2:18:03 and partner issues we have a demographic breakdown of individuals utilizing the eap program and it shows those sessions by age we also have figure six that shows the eap statistical demographics by gender united healthcare as part of the medicare advantage program members can participate in the in the renew active gym membership program available at no additional costs exclusively from united healthcare table 12 the renew active gym membership program we have a breakout here of the active members and the number of visits they have made and that's broken out for the fiscal year all the way till the month of august sorry april 2024 our uhc members also receive their healthy benefits plus a 40 credit that members receive every three months to spend on approved healthy food and over-the-counter health and wellness products table three sorry table 13 shows a breakout of the healthy bonus program and it shows you the total of cards activated and inactive recruitment and classification through fy 2024 our recruitment and classification team has actively engaged in a wide wide range of recruitment efforts aimed at attracting retaining and diversifying our talent pool we have a table below as a reference of those activities we participated in significant events which have enabled us to bridge generational gaps and to promote diversity equity and inclusion reaching over 700 individuals with career tips pathways and outreach efforts furthermore our recent hiring of our public information officer
- 2:19:52 has bolstered our recruitment campaigns, enhancing our visibility on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, DOL views, and other popular national job boards, such as ZipRecruiter, RecruitX, and Diversity Jobs. Currently, we are exploring job platforms in the Caribbean to expand our recruitment reach. Table 14 shows a listing of the recruitment a classifications unit outreach activities that have been conducted for this fiscal year and also extends just a few months before the start of this fiscal year neogov summary for fy 2024 from october 1 2023 to june 7th we have processed 7203 applications and referred 2124 qualified candidates to their respective hiring agencies figure seven shows the potential candidates that have been hired and referred to by neo-gov and that is broken out by month for the fiscal year and provides the number of individuals referred our recruitment programs. To address critical workforce shortages, we've introduced two new recruitment programs, the U.S. Army Partnership for Your Success Pays Program and the Entering Retirees Program RRRP. The Pays Program is our partnership with the U.S. Army and it sets a precedent for facilitating seamless transitions for our soldiers into public service roles. This program has hundreds of partners throughout the United States representing the public and private sector. The GVI is the first territory to participate in this program. The PAES program
- 2:21:46 ensures that qualified soldiers are given an interview and potential employment opportunities upon leaving the Army. We have provided a link that funnels veterans to our website to view and apply for government vacancies and receive an interview once deemed qualified. Our re-entering retirees program addresses workforce shortages in the GVI by bringing retired professionals back into service enabled by Act 8560, thereby bolstering our recruitment efforts with seasoned professionals. may return for up to 36 months with a waiting period of nine months or for up to 24 months with no waiting period if he or she is a nurse police officer or teacher however retirees must apply and qualify for our hard-to-fill continuous recruitment positions there are currently 17 members in this program examinations vi territorial emergency management agency emergency call center exams as part of our recruitment efforts we facilitate examinations for various positions across agencies including 18 emergency call center operator positions filled in 2023 for fy 2024 12 candidates were referred resulting in four new hires bureau of corrections in collaboration with boc we've developed a quarterly examination schedule to meet the federal consent decree mandates in fy 2024 15 correction officer candidates were

referred with 19 candidates applying territory-wide as of may 31st 2024 currently in the saint thomas st john district five candidates were scheduled for exams with one eligible for waiver in the

2 : 23 : 45 st croix district 10 candidates were scheduled with two eligible for waiver exams started this week on june 24th and will end on june 28th virgin allen's fire and emergency medical services the firefighter emt exam currently the vi fire and emergency medical services has 10 vacancies in the the St. Croix District for the Firefire EMT positions. We have received 118 applications of which 105 meet the minimum qualifications. 19 candidates have military or advanced degree waivers and 86 are scheduled for exams starting on June 24th and ending on June 28th. Promotional No exams for all ranks for VIFMs, BOC, and VIPD have been completed. Through our collaboration, 52 mandatory leadership positions were filled by December of 2023.

2 : 24 : 47 All ranking lists under the applicable CBA agreements have expired, prompting the start of a new exam process as required. Classification, alongside our recruitment efforts, we've conducted classification studies to optimize organizational structures. At the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, we've structured units and divisions to improve efficiency and fiscal viability by consolidating redundant positions and realigning roles. This effort has streamlined operations and facilitated career progression for six impacted employees through salary adjustments. A similar initiative is planned for the Lieutenant Governor's Office Appraisal Unit, which has eight employees. However, it's currently on hold pending funding identification. This initiative aims to enhance efficiency and serve as a recruitment tool for seasoned professionals while aligning with our evolving organizational needs. Job descriptions.

2 : 25 : 55 commitment to enhancing job description transparencies and consistency is steadfast in fy 2023 we finalized 157 job descriptions as of fy 2024 we've completed 90 more providing comprehensive tools resources and hr training for semi-autonomous agencies innovatively we have integrated ai into our operations to write and edit job descriptions aiming to improve efficiency and relevance in recruitment efforts this proactive embrace of ai underscores our dedication to innovation ensuring job descriptions accurately reflect our organizational needs figure eight shows a breakout of our agency requests for job description reviews and we have that for the entire fiscal year up to june and it's separated from classified and exempt positions our strategy and organizational development unit is faced with a challenge of enhancing training and development for over 6 000 gbi employees while seeking new ways to be more effective human resources partner to the gbi departments and agencies by leveraging technology we continue to push the limits of our resources creatively creatively and effectively to expand and the reach and impact of our training services for the employees and HR officers.

2 : 27 : 28 The SOD team has advanced the implementation of NeoGov Perform, an online employee performance evaluation system. Insights gathered from the pilot agencies has guided the modification to streamline and enhance the initial evaluation process. We've integrated the best features from traditional evaluations into the online version, making it more user-friendly, transparent, and engaging. To support user adoption, we conducted training sessions for our HR officers and created instructional videos for employees and supervisors. Our final step involves transferring employee and supervisor data from the ERP system to the neogov database the goal is to launch perform for agency use by the beginning of the 2025 fiscal year the certified public manager system we have continued this collaboration with the university of the virgin islands to launch the 2023-24 cohort of the nationally accredited virgin island certified public manager program the 14-month training initiative aims to enhance the performance of public sector managers and the organizational performance of state local and federal governments the program offers a rigorous curriculum focus on applying best practices and theory to management behaviors and strategies throughout professional competencies all candidates must complete a proposed individual applied project demonstrating the program's effectiveness as they collaborate with their agency supervisor and head to implement it 40 government employees and one individual from the private sector were selected to participate in this cohort the sod team attempts to meet and expand our training capacity by maximizing capabilities of our current resources absence of a learning management system forced us to be creative and resourceful in utilizing the limited functionalities of our JotForm survey software to develop training beyond the virtual

2 : 29 : 48 and in-person sessions we offer. Our sexual harassment prevention training. We've pushed the limits of the JotForm to create an online version of our in-person respect at work sexual harassment prevention training launched in november of 2023 the module provides comprehensive training to title 7 workplace rights focusing on preventing and reporting sexual harassment it includes slides with written audio and video content featuring customized scenarios aligned with the gvi sexual harassment prevention policy registration by hr officers required with supervisors notifying to allocate time for completion. The users can then access the course online from any device with internet connectivity. The average completion time is two hours, similar to our virtual and in-person training sessions. The module includes quizzes after each section to assess understanding requiring an 80 percent score for passing. upon completion users receive a certificate

and hr officers are notified of their status as of June 7 2024 1225 gvi employees have registered with 735 completing the module the successful launch of the respect at work successful harassment prevention training online module highlighted a limitation in our training capacity because in the seven months since its launch, the unit was able to train 735 GBI employees by simultaneously conducting other training workshops. This contrasts with 281 employees who receive the virtual version of this training as part of their new employee welcome orientation. As the start of the fiscal year, the acquisition of an LMS will allow us to expand our training

2:31:51 capacity and update our materials so that it reflects the most up-to-date information. It will facilitate continuous employee learning and development by allowing us to evolve our material and training methods to meet the needs of the GBI employees. Rule 15 shows our EEO sexual harassment cases reported and investigated from FY 22, 23, and 24. Other trainings, we continue to offer regular ongoing facilitator-led training such as brilliant customer service and the new employee welcome orientation.

2:32:30 As of July, June 7th, 320 employees have participated in both programs. In addition to our current workshops, we are launching a customer service workshop series, a culture of patient experience excellence. This workshop will guide GVI employees who are healthcare practitioners on how to become champions in the concept of patient experience. We'll begin the offering of the workshop in August.

2:32:59 In collaboration with DOP's legal counsel, we have developed an ethics workshop to enhance participants ethical awareness and decision making skills this initiative aims to cultivate a culture of integrity accountability and ethical behavior within the government of the virgin islands the workshop offers a thorough exploration of ethical principles and practical strategies for addressing ethical dilemmas our goal is to ensure all employees adhere to ethical guidelines promoting public trust in our government's integrity this training is in the beta testing phase and will roll out to the entire t of the gvi agencies over the next several months figure nine in the testimony shows the number of employees that have attended our trainings that the number of session training sessions that we have provided figure 10 shows the attendance and those respective training sessions our hr success series staying in gear while focused on the training for employees we did not want to neglect our responsibility to provide regular refresher trainings for hr officers of the gvi based on our common hr inquiries made to the division of personnel we've identified the opportunity to increase the engagement and development of our hr partners recognizing that we did not have the resources to host another multi-day in-person hr training recreated the monthly virtual gvi hr series success success series staying in gear the two-hour session started in august 2023 and are held on the last tuesday of each month some of the topics covered in the past sessions include nova processing recruitment and classification processes donated leave progressive discipline and collective bargaining agreements employee background checks and cyber security awareness each of the sessions is

2:34:55 recorded and stored in the hr partners section of the division of personnel's website our upcoming fy 2025 training initiatives include interpersonal communication and conflict resolution a culture of patients experience excellence and ethics workshop for donate donated leave we have provided additional training and development is what is the sod team is responsible for this program for fy 2023 we approved 356 donated leave applications for gvi employees at a cost of over 2 million dollars as of June 7th the fiscal year of this fiscal year 234 donated leave applicants have been approved at a cost of one point just over 1.3 million dollars as of June 7th 2024 there are 48 gvi employees on the donated leap program and we've provided several um figures to show the approval and disapprovals of 2024 um and the cost approved for 2024 as well we've also provided in figure 13 a four-year cost comparison of the donated leave program we anticipate the fy 2024 year-to-date cost to exceed that be equal to or exceed that of fy 2023 the career incentive program for fiscal 2024 14 gvi employees have received the career incentive program pay totaling \$146,098.86. This included nine employees from VIPD, three from VOC, one from the VI Department of Health, and two from VI FEMS. Figure 14 shows that cost of the career incentive program broken out by the respective agencies mentioned to meet the deal divisional personnel's key performance indicators we aim to process nopas internally within an

2:37:09 average of five business days or less our team has consistently achieved this goal every month this fiscal year moving forward we are focused on the training our agency hr leads to minimize errors and streamline the NOPAR process upcoming FY 2025 goals the employee handbook and the GBI personnel rules and regs DOP has started updating the employee handbook and the GBI personnel rules and regs we've completed an initial planning and research research phase and we've then moved to the data collection and analysis we've conducted focus groups with executive leadership and rank and file employees in both districts gathered and compiled their feedback and analyzed it to identify common themes and critical points we are now summarizing our findings and drafting initial recommendations for updates our plan is to have both documents in the final review stage by the end of 2026. conclusion i extend my sincere thanks to the opportunity to testify today regarding the proposed budget for the division of personnel for fy 2025 this platform has allowed me to comprehensively outline our strategic vision and detailed plans designed to ensure fiscal sovereignty and

robust economic preparedness a budget proposal is not just a financial document is it represents our commitment to enhancing recruitment efforts integrating advanced automation to streamline our processes and fostering an interagency collaboration these initiatives are fundamental to preparing a skilled and capable workforce that would drive the government of the virgin islands forward thank you once again for this invaluable opportunity to present our vision and plans my staff and i are available to answer any questions you may have regarding DOP's fiscal year 2025 budget testimony.

- 2:39:13 Thank you for your testimony, Director Richardson. Colleagues, we're going to go to a five-minute round, and we're going to begin with Senator Blyton. You may proceed, Senator. Thank you Madam Chair, good afternoon Director Richardson and the supporting team there with you and thank you so much for your testimony. Department of Personnel. Let me start with your vacancies. How many vacancies do you have at your department? We have three vacancies. We currently have three vacancies. Five. five five sorry five what are those um positions while you look for them um let me ask you in respect to you can't jump out of me the program that deals with um The vacancies that are listed are the recruiter, insurance officer, administrative officer, recruitment and classification technician, and HR IT technician. My name is Valsina Kwashi, deputy director. Recruiter, how long had that position been vacant? Which position? Recruiter.
- 2:40:52 Recruiter. The recruiter position was available, I mean vacant from last year, however, it has been budgeted at half of the salary and so we're trying to fill that position and asking for the budget that we asked for. Okay, very well. As I was saying, this jumped up at me in a testimony, directed a certified public manager program, which is an excellent program, and you have 40 individuals in a program and one from the private sector.
- 2:41:27 Who made that decision and why? Is your thumb not jumped up at me? Yes, so it is open to public sector, I'm sorry, private sector participation. Division of personnel only covered the GBI employees. Very well. let's go to on the post our report page 9 of 14 let me actually under your lease we spoke about this last year on the indirect cost fund your lease for GRS 228,000 is still pending ratification what's going on with that lease any discussions we have already finalized that lease agreement and we realizing that some information was picked up incorrectly in what was sent down however we have a lease from 2022 okay to um 2045 if i'm not mistaken and what's that amount the normal 2042 sorry what's the amount of the lease the elite the lease currently is uh 228 169 dollars annually of course based on the agreement there will be years we'll have changes in that amount okay very well um your professional service contract listing also um are there any outstanding payments to those vendors to those individuals for the professional service yes we do not have any outstanding professional services okay what about your vendors so I'm gonna except for the \$6,000 in total. Do you have any outstanding payments for any of those individuals?
- 2:43:35 Currently, yes, we do. And what the reason? We have processed our invoices, however the appending the check runs. Repeat that for me, I'm sorry, I didn't hear you. We have processed the invoices timely, however the appending check runs. Okay, thank you for that. Let me ask you in respect to your wellness program, and on the chart on page 223, the Participants in 23 was 2,268, but for 24 is showing 350, can you speak to the large difference in participants in the program and what's going on there and what are you going to do to increase those numbers?
- 2:44:38 Valerie Daly, Chief of Health Insurance, those numbers are to date numbers, so we're not finished with that program as yet. So we're hoping that we'll get more individuals to participate in that program. What quarter are we in right now? We're in the fourth quarter? Third. Third quarter, I'm sorry. Correct. It's still a big difference because it would have been at least a little over half right now in terms of number of participants.
- 2:45:08 So we need to jump on it. Thirty seconds. It's a very good program and it helps with the insurance costs right around. correct senator so jump in after me please and before my time one runs out let me ask you in terms of trainings the brilliant customer service service training and also the training for new employees you know when they come to the government services many individuals say that service is not the best but I I I beg to define, it depends on the department, you know, so what are you doing in respect to training and what does that training, those training look like?
- 2:45:55 How do you determine who gets trained, et cetera? Can you speak to that, please? Sure. I'll have Mr. Knight answer that question. The mic, the mic, please. speaking to the mic gabriel knight strategy and organizational development officer the trainings the trainings are registered the employees are registered for their trainings by their hr officers and we post it on the division of personnel's website as well as send out flyers monthly letting them know about the availability of the trainings By their HR, by their HR department?
- 2:46:36 Yes, by their HR departments. So what type of accountability measures are in place in respect to training, because say for instance, if there are complaints coming in from a third department and the HR person have not referred a person, how do we know, you know what I'm saying, what What type of measures are there to assure that everyone that needs training receives the training?

- 2:47:02 Or to assure that everyone that asks for training are receiving the training? What's in place from your level to assure that this is happening? So while it is the responsibility of the HR officers to enroll those individuals in those sessions, we've also just introduced a notification that when those NOPAs go through, Mr. Knight and his team would get a notification of the new NOPA, so that we could then try to follow up to ensure that those individuals are enrolled.
- 2:47:34 Thank you for your response. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, for the time. Thank you, Senator Blyton. Senator Francis Jr., you're recognized for your five minutes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and good afternoon to Team DOP, as well as to the Office of Collective Bargaining. Chief Negotiator Springett, I would imagine that you're aware of the waste management sick out, and I'm not asking you to reveal any information in particular to that, but that you do have some perspective on this and that you're doing everything possible to resolve that issue.
- 2:48:12 Joss Springett, Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargaining. That is correct. Thank you. And I see that you have a legal counsel position. long has that been vacant and um what are you doing to fill that position uh this what is this april it's a new position it's a new position yes okay so you have not had um because i thought we had a discussion regarding the legal counsel position the last time um that your team came before us and it has been pending for some time now this is a legal counsel position that i'm referring to. In your office? Yes. So it's been vacant since April, you said, or it just became online as of April? It came online as of April. It's a new position. We have to create a job spec, of course, because it's not classified and so forth. Okay. And I would imagine that's a necessary position in terms of helping you to move this negotiation forward. Yes. Thank you.
- 2:49:11 Thank you. Director, in regards to the current numbers of the government of the Virgin Islands in terms of central government employees, have we seen a decline there or an improvement? You know, that number has been fluctuating, but it usually stays within the same range, I would say, over the last several years. Do you have a glance of how many we have lost during this fiscal year thus far?
- 2:49:42 If you look on page 12 of the testimony, that chart, table 8, shows the total separations. So it shows you everything from individuals who may have passed away, those that were dismissed, resignations and retirements. So for the benefit of the public, can we share that number? Sure. So that's a total of 249 separations for FY 2024, with one appointment end, six deceased, 17 dismissals, 133 resignations, and 92 retirements. In terms of those resignations, have you done an exit interview with those individuals and have a perspective in terms of causes?
- 2:50:27 So, you know, this is something that came up in our last budget testimony. So since then, we've provided each agency with an exit interview package, because that's something that would happen at the agency level. However, when the NOPA does come to my queue, I have a tendency to go in and look at those resignation letters, so get a feel from what's mentioned. So I usually, you know, usually we are seeing individuals leaving on good standing and just a few, maybe some disgruntled, but we have also seen individuals that leave and just transfer to another department within the government.
- 2:51:05 Okay. And obviously you're also required to then provide some, I guess, information in regards to that person who has to seek new employment as well? Correct. Okay. In terms of your NOPA, I saw that part of your KPI was to be able to track the NOPAs and for quick turnaround. What do you see as a bottleneck that's occurring with our NOPAs at this point? Right now, you know, we've taken a very proactive approach for the NOPAs. One of those, for example, our KPI gives us the five days to process a NOPA. We're right now maintaining the average of three days.
- 2:51:46 So what we've done, we've provided numerous training which are HR individuals to include cheat sheets and recorded trainings that's provided to them that's available on our website along with our two-day training that we did in collaboration with Munis. That training is also available and then our staff is also available to them. Even to recently to the Division of, sorry, the Department of Labor, we've also provided them access to process their own NOPAs. So it's not a bottleneck for their summer students' programs. So in order for them to get paid prop.
- 2:52:21 30 seconds? On time. That usually create a bottleneck for us to process them. So we will then do an audit at the end of the summer. Okay, real quickly, I got two more questions as we follow up. In regards to your new mode of operation from OMB with the output performance-based budgeting, have you been able to get a good understanding of that and really working towards making sure that you meet that. I know that there's no expectation in this FY25, and we're really looking forward to that in FY26, where we talk about driving accountability and transparency. Time. Have you gotten a good hold of what's required now with the output-based performance?
- 2:52:58 Yes, and we do conduct regular monthly meetings with their team, and so I do feel that we've seen drastic improvements, and we're in line with their goals as well. Okay, and my final question on this round, in regards to the insurance claims, is there any new revelation in terms of trending of major illnesses or any situation, conditions that we should be concerned about as we continue to endeavor to address our best life, the living and again, our wellness programs? So, yes, you

know, Cigna presented a very extensive CAP report that went into detail in regards to that. But it's just as a brief review, it's mainly the diabetes and hypertension that we're seeing cancer as well. But I do believe that when the board is here, they can go into more detail.

- 2:54:01 the governor did see that cap report he did ask for a recorded presentation with him and Cigna so we're right now in the process of planning that hopefully for next before the end of this summer okay can we get a copy of our report as well though is it available I can request that through the board yes all right thank you very much thank you madam chair for the time Thank you, Senator Francis Jr. Let me go to Senator DeGraff and then I'll ask my question. I think he probably will ask it. So you go ahead. Senator DeGraff, you're recognised for your five minutes.
- 2:54:40 Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon colleagues, good afternoon testifiers, all of you listening and present. Chief Negotiator, did you take a, did you get a cut in your budget? no senator okay so then is there's a 25 budget reflect the GS increases in 25 yes okay okay now for director Richardson did you get a cut in your budget no we did not okay so based on the post auditor's report that I'm looking at I'm seeing seven million two nineteen four thirty nine decrease so your your acts is forty four one eighty nine four ninety nine can you tell us what page you're referring to? Page 3 of 14. I'm just doing my own calculations here on my phone but I was looking at the FY 24 acts is 44 million 189,499. That's your acts. 25 for the 25 budget.
- 2:56:01 44 million yeah post auditors report page 3 of 14 FY 25 division of personnel 20 25 the recommended budget correct it's 44 million based on what's listed in the post-additors report is \$44,189,499 however the requested budget that came down in the management letter as well as what is live on open gov is requested at 44 million two hundred seventy nine thousand six thirty four okay so dying itself is another change okay so forty four two seventy nine six thirty four So what is your personnel acts for the 25, correct?
- 2:57:17 Personnel acts for 2025 is \$3,249,938. Okay, we correct on that. What's your fringe? The fringe acts is \$1,458,360. 60, okay. Other services and charges? Under general fund, \$587,664. \$664, okay, good. Any capital outlay?
- 2:57:56 No. Utilities, zero? Under general fund, it's zero. Okay. Health insurance for retirees? The ask is \$38,210,672. This is where the discrepancy lies. Okay.
- 2:58:25 Okay, so the difference is for the insurance for retirees. Okay, so the GBI employee recognition, \$80,000, correct? Correct. a health insurance consultant 285 000 correct okay certified public manager one minute 75 000 correct correct okay an insurance board our contribution to health insurance board 275 000 correct okay okay so the difference is in the health insurance retirees for \$38,210,672 is this is this an increase or is just a I guess a typographical error there was a typo error that was picked up 30 seconds when the budget was being sent down however like I mentioned based on open gov live as well as a management letter it is the 38 million two ten to ten six seventy two okay so we're gonna look into that also in regards to I see a capital projects are zero for 25 with all the rain that we sustained those couple of days early in the year what happened to on the St.
- 2:59:46 Croix buildings and the St. Thomas buildings time any for any issues that needed correction and we need our any capital outlays for so the St. Croix building needs some improvements and we did a bid and the bid came up to so much more than what we thought it would come up to so we have to look forward to future year and see whether or not we can accommodate it in our project to make those repairs okay so so back to the rain issue did the did the rain get inside the buildings any other buildings when it rains real heavy it can come inside okay so so then it needs some kind of we need improvement to reach out to some different contractors and the one you got to try get some repairs. So on the St. Croix end, Chief Negotiator, on your end on St. Croix.
- 3:00:48 Springer, Chief Negotiator? No, I do not know of any issues with the ring. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for the time, Madam Chair. Thank you, Senator De Graff. So let's go back to the buildings. So the building in St. Croix is a rental property it is a rental property and your conch your lease with that rental property does not require the landlord to fix repair to repair a leaking roof no it's uh we in the contract we bail out we repair you paid a billion or you build out is one thing you upfit the internal um structure of the building to what you want your internal office to look like but your roof the roof is your responsibility if you have leaks it's not from the roof we are condensation yeah we are on the first floor so what is it from so it's intrusion Pardon? The water... Condensation from the air condition?
- 3:02:02 No, when it rains, that was the question. So when it rains, we have a tendency for water to get in and we have to have sandbags which it mess up the tiles and all those things. So this is not in the roof, this is on the ground? It's on the ground. And it comes downstairs to you? Well... I'm trying to understand. I don't know what the building looks like. The settlement. So you're downstairs. Correct. Where are you located?

- 3:02:32 We are located at Orange Road. No, no, no. You're downstairs? We're downstairs on the first floor. So you're on the first floor. And the leak comes from where? Up top? No, from the floor, the settlement of the water on the ground. So then why did you reference something about the roof needing to fix? Because of the leak? I don't remember mentioning that. So what leaks? You said something about leaking. that's what made me ask the question I don't I don't remember saying leak okay so the water comes in in the under the doors correct so what repairs will you do to stop the water from coming in in the doors well like I said the tiles are all messed up um from water coming in under the door which also costs the I think it's face board you call it the the bottom board and the painting and all those type things that so this is the issue this is what concerns me the landlord needs to address to mitigate the leak coming the water coming inside before you fix the floor because what's gonna happen is you're gonna fix it they run into the same problem so y'all need to make contact with your landlord to address those issues and I'm sure at that point we won't have an issue supporting you fixing the space so it could be livable for the employees but there's some work that a landlord has to do to ensure that your space is livable internally. That's basically I was getting at. Thank you Sonny. Okay all right so let's go back to so I see that I know that annually we we've been carrying the costs of the health insurance for the retirees
- 3:04:22 and I see that there's a number this is a this is an approximate number correct that's what this is right it is because the negotiation is not complete uh Miss Daly I would I would ask Miss Kwashi to answer that question but the negotiation is not complete as yet help me out this question so the 38 million 38.2 million is an approximate figure okay yeah all right and the certified public manager program how much money did you spend in fiscal year 24 so \$75,000 okay so how are you recruiting those employees is that is it is it based on their interests or you do the recruitment for those for that cohort we usually share the information with the respective agencies and they would then determine individuals who they feel should participate and they express interest in the program.
- 3:05:46 Okay. So I think about two fiscal years or last fiscal year I asked, how are you all assessing this program to determine the effectiveness of the program? What's happening with those employees? Are they being promoted? Are they now in middle management positions? Are they moving up to higher management positions? What's the status of the, what do you do to, or is there any internal opportunity or options that you, well, not options. Is there anything internally that you all are doing to evaluate what's really happening with this certified public manager program?
- 3:06:30 So thank you for that question, Senator. So what we have been doing since your inquiry is we've been collecting the names of the individuals who we've seen have been promoted because of this program along with a listing of effective projects that have come out of this program to be implemented within the GBI. We can provide that to you. Okay. So you are evaluating. Correct. Okay.
- 3:07:00 So, I see here that in FY24, we budgeted some money for the health insurance consultants, 285,000. And I know that to date, you haven't spent any of that money. So, do we use the consultants when we're negotiating a new contract? How does that work?
- 3:07:30 So, the contract is currently being negotiated and is at property and procurement. So you will see that if you had to go and look live in ERP or one of those, you will see within the next coming weeks that that entire \$285,000 is encumbered because to finalize the contract and then we can start paying based on who the contract is given so what consulting are they doing valerie they're consulting to your name on the record valerie daily chief of group health insurance they're the consultant to the gsc board so they assist the board in terms of acquiring the different carriers and contracts and unhealth insurance and i ask the question because the current provider um they are here with us for how long more over um 16 17 years no that's not what i mean so they have a current term when does their term expire for us to go out back auto market that's what i mean is this on the contract for the insurance or the carrier oh the consultant which one are we the insurance i'm asking to get back today so i'm asking the question about the insurance to get back to the need for the consultants so yeah that's what i'm asking every five years but they do every year they do a renewal and so you would need a consultant to help with the renewal process okay so okay so the current insurance provider what year are we in the what year they just sign this contract I believe it was last year last year right mm-hmm so it's last year so this year they are on the ground now when
- 3:09:41 do they plan to come on the ground the I'm going someplace with this when are they plan to come in on the ground when you say when who is planning the consultant consultant the consultants work every day with the GSC board okay good the reason why I'm asking the question is because every single year since I have sat in this institution we have to speak to the GSC board about this but I'm just making sure I put it on the record because I it's not within the control of any of you here every year the new rates come to us right before we pass the budget the day of sometimes so guess what we don't have an opportunity in the legislature to drill down and make sense out of it that is not good business for the people of the Virgin Islands it's bad business and what we've done because of this we have assumed 38 million dollars of the retirees portion and help me Ms. Daley, how much of the employee's portion?

- 3:11:12 The percentage for the employee, well, the employer portion is 70. The last fiscal year, how much money? This fiscal year, how much? I think it was... 180, 183.1 million, and it went down for this fiscal year to 182.7 million. That we're paying? Direct? no but that's that's the whole thing though I'm talking about the employees portion I'm trying to make sure that we get on the record how much the government is paying for the employees portion not the employer portion what we have cons we have taken on 34.5 million 34.5 million 34.5 million in addition to the 38 right yes senator that's 72.5 million dollars coming out of the top of our general fund uh director please share with the gsc board members that we expect to get this information in a timely fashion this year they do it because they know that because this year we're not passing the budgeting we are intending to be done based on our schedule we intend to be done by the end of august and we are not waiting we need to get these numbers straight and we need to be able to ask the questions and they answer the questions outside of this setting so we could all understand it and then we could bring it to this setting but it's time for us to really do a deep dive
- 3:12:59 and an evaluation of this money that we spend and it's a lot of money okay and we know that this is a bill we have to pay and i'm saying it because you know we hear about the fact that the GVA has a challenge with paying its vendors, this vendor that get paid, so 72.5 million, and they bring it at the last minute, and our hands are tied, not fair to the people, okay?
- 3:13:37 Senator Fonseca, you're recognized for your five minutes. Yes, thank you Madam Chair, yes I echo that they bring that at the last minute because they know we got to approve it and it's not fair because we really need to ask some questions but welcome Department of Personnel and the Office of Collective Bargaining Agreement. These are two well-run divisions in the government so kudos to the staff.
- 3:14:11 So I wanted to start off with Ms. Springit. I think you have a total of six employees and three vacancies, is that how it is? We have a total of six employees plus one assistant AG from the Department of Justice and I currently have seven vacancies. Seven. Okay, so the financial management officer, the labour relations specialist and the paralegal positions, you've already conducted the interviews.
- 3:14:40 do you plan to onboard those positions no I have not conducted interviews we've we've we've been advertising we've had some applicants we continue to advertise on the one labor relations specialist on St. Thomas and the paralegal on St. Croix okay because I noticed some you actually have 32 collective bargaining arrangements 32 or 33 some later 32 32 so I know you're very busy and kudos to you because I know last year you did a wonderful job with the nurses I know you have the teachers there was a little thing yesterday we saw with waste management authority employees so I know I know you're very busy, and keep up the good work because the employees need to know that we're recognizing and respecting those collective bargaining agreements, and we want to keep trying our best to keep the employees on grade and on step. So I'm glad to hear that your budget was not cut, and so I'm glad to know that you're actively involved with all of these collective bargaining agreements, As you know, cost of living is high, it's very important, thank you.
- 3:16:02 Personnel, division of personnel, I want to ask you real quickly, because the governor in the state of his territory address, he mentioned the need to basically increase the workforce to get these projects, these major disaster projects, and he mentioned a visa program. Is the division of personnel involved with that? Directly? Not exactly. It's more so coming under the Division, sorry, the Department of Labor. Okay, Labor. Okay, good. I want to go to page 14 here. Okay, the 170, you say you submitted 178 debt claims, 132 are retirees, 9 are active employees, 20 spouse, 3 are child. But when When I add those up, it only comes to 164, so there's a difference of 14. Is that a number? Or the numbers are wrong?
- 3:17:04 You see that? If you add 132 plus 9 and 20, that's 29, and 3, that's 32, 132 plus 32 is 164. You're showing it's 174, 78, so there's a difference of 14. So Senator, the numbers are incorrect. We did submit additional claims after we provided this information, but it was 178 claims that were submitted to standard for the debt claims. Okay, through the chair, can you submit the correct number? We can.
- 3:17:36 Okay, good. I wanted to go to, oh, you know, and kudos because on page nine, people of the Virgin Islands, listen, this is the official report. One minute. they are more than two times the amount of females employed in the government and then males they are more than two times the amount of females and also the average salary of the females is slightly more than the males these are the official number coming from the division of personnel that's good kudos okay so um I wanted to go to arm the insurance program that we was basically 30 seconds the basically discussing so um you you are estimating that they're going to be some savings in the in the government insurance health insurance cause are we talking about the health insurance for the retirees yeah the retirees there is no savings there's no savings there is no savings okay I thought the numbers was gonna go down because with all of the wellness programs and you're doing a wonderful job with all the when wellness program you'd figure the arm the set the the the life expectancy of the retirees Excel would be increasing that's interesting that's there's no savings okay well that's that's fine continue to keep up this good work and I noticed that your bills for WAPA are paid I was checking out the start I noticed that your bills for WAPA paid so that's

that's pretty good thank you madam chair for the time thank you Senator Fonseca OCB very quickly so in your under your personal services for fiscal year 24 we budgeted we appropriated 740

3:19:47 And this year, you're asking for an additional \$32,129. What is the reason for that additional 4.3%? I'll refer the question to Ms. Richards. Kima Richards finance specialist so the additional monies will make up the difference for so let me backtrack the in fiscal year 24 this the legal counsel position was funded at a hundred percent whereas the two financial positions were funded at 50 percent and those were filled with taking funding from the to the legal counsel and special assistant which was funded at a hundred percent so now in this fiscal year 2025 we're requesting the additional funding to make up that shortfall also to the \$26,000 difference for the increase for the chief okay so how many vacancies do you currently have we currently have six vacancies so you have six vacancies any well any of those vacancies vacant in fiscal year 23 moving into 24. you said 23 going into 24. yeah when we pass the 24 budget what were your vacancies then i will defer that question back to chief as i wasn't on board then

3:21:46 okay so you you guys could look for it and um you have it the question was from 23 going into 24. so so when we pass the 20 FY 2024 budget do you recall or do you have any information what you as to the amount of vacancies. Yes, I had. You have it. Going into 20, from 23 into 24, we had four positions vacant. And now you've lost two additional persons?

3:22:19 We had, yes. You lost two additional. Yes, and then we also have, we don't have, when we're telling you our employees, don't count the justice appoint assigned so we have one of those no no I didn't with your numbers okay so you have lost how many employees in it's two we're talking 23 to 24 did I get that right no yes so you said went into FY 24 yes what vacancies I had going from 23 going into 24. I counted four, I told you four.

3:23:00 And you said six, so it's four? We have a total of six currently. Okay, so you have six- We did fill some positions during this fiscal year, but there were some separations since then. Okay, so let's make it make sense. So this is how many separations, so we got to come back to the number. That's what I'm trying to do. How many separations did you have this year? two okay yeah two separations and you had four going into the year so that comes back to the sixth did you have any new hires in this fiscal year yes how many one two sorry so if you had two because you see good so in 2023 there was a higher close to the end of the fiscal year right and then there were two more hired at the beginning of the fiscal year i've had some a few other hires since that and then i had some separation so it's it's as if i see what you're saying so you don't have any new positions new positions would be the legal council position that was approved for fiscal year 24. so that's where the that's where the number is off you had one new position yes okay one new and that's the and you were able to hire your legal counsel not as yet no what's the status of that we were able to complete the job spec we had because of how the funding was for all the positions we were not able to fill it in so far we had some position that were funded at 50% some were funded at a hundred percent some of them were already being actively advertised and so So the funding was short to fill the legal counsel position.

3:24:50 But we also had to do our basically preparing to put it online, which is creating a job spec and so forth. Where do you need a job spec? You don't have a legal counsel now? We have an assistant attorney general under the Department of Justice. That's a justice job spec. But we could not use that same. We use, of course the information is similar, but we could not use that title for the position. So as you move to hire a legal counsel, is it that you're sending back the Assistant Attorney General that would not allow us to support you?

3:25:26 No. No, we're not. So then why are we mixing the bag the way we're mixing it? You have two lawyers on your team, one will be an Assistant Attorney General, the other one would be a legal counsel. Is the responsibility different? No, but the Assistant Attorney Generals at DOJ employees, two of those are, there are two positions at Department of Justice specifically for OCB. We had requested additional because of the caseload and the responsibility for our legal team in OCB.

3:25:58 So we're trying to increase the number. We won't send them back. Yeah, but you understand. I think we asked you this question last fiscal year, you know, as we're talking about this. Well, as you know, it was not present physically. yeah this conversation is not new so the concern is you have lawyers coming to work for the office of collective bargaining the title of one is going to be assistant attorney general doing are they doing the same work because i see you have a whole case load here will they be doing the same work as a legal counsel position yes So why are we, you don't see that becoming an eventual challenge for you?

3:26:46 I'm not clear on your concern. I don't see the challenge. You have employees with different titles doing the same job. While the employee is coming from the Department of Justice, there must be a way to align it. Then if that's the case, then petition to remove the Assistant Attorney Generals from there and have them fill the slots that you have. I'll take it.

3:27:16 But you have these different... You are OCB, so you know that how employees are when you have different titles, same job. These things will create problems. I'll take it under consideration, Senela. Yeah. So, we discussed this last time. This

is a potential issue that you're creating in your shop. If you have an AAG, then should we just... So, how much Assistant Attorney General do you have assigned to you right now?

3:27:51 Currently one. And you said that there is a responsibility for the Department of Justice assigned to? Yes. And what is the challenge there? Funding. Okay, so you see the issue? So we give you the funding to hire the position. We could have just say in the AG office, Assistant Attorney General of Labor, I have them send them to you. That's what we should have done. That's what makes sense. And that's what avoids us having any challenges with employee issues, employment issues. So it's kind of strange that we have this conversation with the employment folks. Y'all should be the one telling us this is what makes better sense for us to do.

3:28:42 So that's something we need to look at because we should not be moving in that direction. It's not, it does not, it's expeditious for now. For now, but it does not help for in to as if it doesn't help the Organization with employee issues. You you just don't want to please the organization in a position. So we have to figure it out. Senator James senior you're recognized for your five minutes. Greetings to the people of the U.S. Thank you Madam Chair for the time. My question is to the Division of Personnel as we page seven of the post audit report speaks to training. I'm not mistaken yes training and it continues on page 8 and within that training division or whatever section you have unit it speaks to three positions can you speak to those three positions what are those three positions those three positions are the strategy and organizational development officer human resources technician and a training coordinator okay and then I saw under training which is page continues on page 8 it mentions that that unit

3:30:33 provides customer service. So that that unit has a budget of \$330,544 for FY 2025. So my question is out of that \$330,000 how much is allotted specifically just for customer service training because I see of customer service as one of the things that you provide to the executive branch workforce that 330 544 is solely for personnel services so there's no cost associated to customer service training there is cost in training that is utilized for all the training that are provided give me the cost for customer service training all of our costs are rolled up in that twenty five thousand dollars under general funds um i do not have a breakout as to the different trainings and the different costs for the trainings because i'm trying to get it together it says this this unit is expected to receive additional funds from the training revolving funding amount of 45 000 so i need to know in addition to the 45 000 how much more is used for specifically for training and not for personnel services what's the grand total the 45 000 is an estimated cost the total are used specifically for training costs associated to training forget about customer service so now we get back to that you said in the in the post other report it says this unit is expected to receive additional funds from the training revolving fund in amount of 45 000. so with additional 45 000 how much more you have

3:32:27 specifically for for training approximately 25 more so the total would be approximately 70 000. okay so out of that 70 000 how much goes towards customer service training and how many customer service training can you put on in a in a fiscal year utilizing a fund? I do not have that breakout I can provide that to you through the chair. The reason I'm asking that as we speak to a budget we need to have an idea of how many you can put together because this government definitely need customer service.

3:33:07 you know um if you have the resources or you have the means to do it i salute you but we need to know how many customer service trainings you can put on in a year and if not we at least me because customer service sucks virgin islands government i don't put it out there you know sometimes i call and i pretend to read just some ideas i don't care to call a senator javan james because i might get senator javan james treatment which is probably mostly good at sometimes and sometimes it might just be bad but it doesn't matter who calls you should treat everyone with respect you know i love our people but we have a long way to go so i'm gonna follow up so through the chair i like to request that out of that 70 000 how much goes towards customer service training and how many customer service training in a fiscal year 30 seconds. And then moving right along I see where you have the cooperative testing and there's a total of \$9,422 that's on page 10. It speaks to the testing for fire correctional officers and VIPD. For the FY2025 utilizing on 9,422 how many tests each agency or department will be able to conduct with that funding? You have those numbers? Time.

3:34:41 And the reason I'm asking this again VIPD has a strong need for police officers and not those VIPD but across the board when it comes to law enforcement and we continue to give these funds but I never really saw a breakdown of how how many tests and how many trainings utilizing the funding that we give y'all that can be put together so if somebody could us answer that I think my time was called but you can answer that please. Hello good afternoon Senator this is Melisanto Bain, Territorial Administrative Recruitment and Classification. It all depends. Most of the funding is for police at the different ranks, the testing that we actually provide for them and also because of the fact that within every year or every other year we change those exams because we want to make sure that we capture information that is part of what they actually do in the Virgin Islands so the customization process itself may outright may be a certain amount of money and then the total number of officers that actually take the test I have a breakdown if you would like me to share that with you

I could actually have it down I can go through it with you now or I could have it sent to you so you could see the total number of actual officers that actually have taken these tests and these exams as I mentioned it is all part of their collective bargaining agreements and and that is where this money comes from. Madam Chair I would just simply ask if the previous speaker can just submit that to the chair so we can have a better idea of when we fund these things how much bang of our buck we'll be able to get. Thank you Madam Chair for the time. Thank you Senator James. Specifically what is the through the

3:36:38 chair requests. We, well she, I apologize, I do not know her name so I'm saying she, but the previous speaker when it comes to the cooperative testing on page 10 it speaks to a total of \$9,422 from the general fund that goes towards the cooperative testing for fire, correctional officers and VIPD. So I was trying to get is an average of how many tests for each Department of Agency we were able to get utilizing that 9,422 and I know that she said that it varies but we need to have an average and an understanding of how many tests and knowing that we have a strong need for police officers and correctional officers in this government. Thank you Madam Chair for the time thank you senator james so how many tests did we administer in fiscal year 24 thus far promotional we do not do testing for entrance police officer but if you're talking about promotional exams i can give you that information whatever the funding is used for is what the the Senator is trying to ascertain. I will add these numbers up for you. I have it on a spreadsheet right now.

3:38:04 Just remind me when you get it. I have it for you. Thank you. New problem. All right, so let me go back quickly to the Office of Collective Bargaining. So in 2023, your supplies expenditure was \$14,000. dollars in 2024 we appropriated 45,000 I do not remember recall why we increased that amount so exponentially attorney chief negotiator Springett can you tell us the purpose of that entire 45 million dollars or that significant increase 45 000 45 000 are you talking millions these days yeah sorry yes i recall there being a need to we had a lot of equipment to purchase also we have a very aging network that required some can you hear me we had a very aging network and we needed to purchase some equipment and a lot of our devices were outdated and required some upgrades or replacement. That's what I recall at this time.

3:39:25 Okay, so then tell me, how have you expended those dollars in FY24? FY24. Ms. Fisca, yeah. will direct that question to ms richards ms richards so thus far for fiscal year 24 the funds have been expended for the day-to-day office supplies as well as we have secured the purchase orders and start the payment process for a lot of the the it upgrades okay so the it upgrades right okay so and i noticed that are you intending to continue the it upgrades in fiscal year 25 20 25 because the amount in 2025 is still significant basically what i'm seeing here is the balancing out of the appropriation from 24 to 25 as you as the capital project amount was removed and that's not something that we could do we need to get information that says to us this is what you truly need what we're seeing here is a balancing out of the numbers because an amount was removed so 32.5 is the 12 000 less but it's still twice as much as what was appropriated in 2023 so is the work continuing what what is the reason for an additional twelve thousand dollars over 2023 so right now what's being done it's please excuse I'm not too technical but more so this server upgrades is what's being done right now and we're looking forward in 2025 to complete the whole IT upgrade in which we'll be able to replace computers laptops and

3:41:30 stuff like that in 2025. Okay so what did you use your sixty eight thousand dollars for in capital projects? So that sixty eight thousand dollars for capital that money actually has not been utilized it was actually slated to do some office upgrades in saint thomas however after receiving quotes it was revealed that the the project it's actually not considered capital because it does not meet that fifty thousand dollar threshold capital has to meet a fifty thousand threshold ms kwashi Not that I'm aware of, I'm not 100% sure on that if anything has changed.

3:42:20 So I know there was a change in how you apply the category for computers. Those could potentially fall under supplies, right? Yeah, which is data processing. So I understand the data processing piece, but I'm not following the 68,000. What was the reason for the request of the 68,000 last year, Ms. Springett, Attorney Springett? At the time, it's the same thing. Some of the office upgrades, we had to make some repairs in the St. Thomas office.

3:43:02 We also had the same network upgrades. We expected to replace, at first, the entire network. When we received estimates for both of the projects, as Ms. Richards said, they were lower than we expected. And yes. I ain't understanding this one. I'm not following this. category does um network upgrades fall on there ms richards that was placed under small tools small tools and minor equipment i think that's exactly what it's called in the erp and the server same budget category so everything for the the server upgrades um the it upgrades right now it's under the small tools and minor equipment so it's like servers I think they call it routers access points okay and the upgrades in the office was outside of the servers what else I'm just trying to figure the capital projects part of it we were we had to uh tile the remove carpet and tile the floors in the st thomas office did that happen no not as yet we removed the carpet so far but that's not capital only no that's that's what that's what that's why she's saying that the the projects were not projects that we're working on yeah but it's not the amount it's the it's the category that they should fall under um

- 3:44:51 um other services on charges you have a 17.64 increase as well what's the reason for that miss richards so the increase in the other services category is where the bulk of the 68 000 from capital in this fiscal year was placed considering that we're not able to do the floors this year with the monies being placed in capital and the endeavor not being capital in nature so then what prevented you from coming to the legislation asking for a transfer a to a reauthorization we could have done that last week so we could get this done because we don't we don't want to go into fiscal year 24 5 with funding that we don't have and it would be unfortunate that you lose the opportunity to get us done all right Senator Gittins, you're recognized for your five minutes.
- 3:46:21 Thank you, Madam Chair, and good afternoon to all. Let me start with OCB first. Before me is a copy of the Virgin Islands Code 24VIC Section 377 which speaks to the creation or establishment of the Office of Collective Bargaining and also outlines your statutory responsibility where it includes exclusively representing the executive branch of government and its departments and divisions and negotiations on its behalf in all collective bargaining proceedings and coordinating the government's position in all mediation and arbitration cases and labour disputes. Now my question to you first is what's your communication and or interaction chief negotiator, your office's communication and or interaction like with the respective agency or department heads especially in order to avoid grievances and having to pay out large sums of back pay our communication with agent well our communication first of all is not only with agency heads are you talking about grievances and as you know a number of grievances may begin at a lower level Are you hearing me?
- 3:47:48 Attorney, answer the question specifically though. I know you don't have just with agency heads, but I want you to answer that specifically because I'm going somewhere. The question is my communication with agency heads. I do communicate with agency heads about labour relations, avoiding additional costs and the matters that you just referenced. I'm asking that and I don't expect you to and I don't want you to get into any particular grievance or arbitration but I'm looking at an arbitration award that was granted from back in March 2023 and it granted something specifically and made the order clear to reinstate a grievance. To date we are now in June of 2024 and that arbitration award is not granted. That's why I'm asking what's the communication or interaction like with the agency heads because in this case it's not the union to return the employee to work, it's the agency head. And in cutting costs or trying to fill the government deficit, you play a key role in making sure that agency heads adhere to these types of arbitration awards. I see under pending cases you said that you have 325 cases of which 49 were successful in closing through arbitration how is this I'm wondering if this one case that I have before me is one of those 49 that you're speaking of because then there's no follow-through senator senator to begin it's its cases
- 3:49:51 through various means that they're disposed of to various means if the case we were speaking about from we give you October 1 2022 to May 24 bear in mind when we say that we're successful in closing them it's in our office in terms of whether it's settled we attend a hearing we get a dispositive motion order and so forth as if going back to your original question we provide when an arbitration decision is issued or any decision is issued for that matter, we do of course inform the agency head of the decision, provide sufficient guidance in complying with the decision, and we provide support as necessary beyond that the date that the decision is issued.
- 3:50:45 All right we'll have the conversation separately but I ask this because I want to ensure that the Office of Collective Bargaining stay on some of these agency and department heads so that we can prevent the government from having to make these large sums of payout. I like your statement where you said OCB continues a statutory commitment to amicably resolve pending cases and avoiding future ones. But we're not avoiding future ones if we have arbitration award done from March 2023 and we're in June 2024 and there's still no adherence. Madam Chair, no time is coming. I just want to beg your indulgence quickly.
- 3:51:42 Division of Personnel. What's time Kyle? Go ahead Senator. Thank you. Division of Personnel, I continue to ask agency heads whether or not government house is the HR arm of this government because every vacancy everybody come here and sit before us and say oh they send the documentation to government house. Isn't the division of personnel the key HR hub for the government of the Virgin Islands and this is established in 3VIC section 452 correct? Yes Senator. Okay so and you're to establish and maintain a system of personnel administration based on the merit principles and all the stuff with dealing with appointments, promotion, transfer, layoff, removal, discipline, etc. And this is a conversation that we had with the exit NOPAs, etc. and whether or not your agency will also be a custodian of these documents because upon retirement an employee shouldn't have to be running helter-skelter trying to find a NOPA. You're also a custodian of all government NOPA's correct? Correct.
- 3:53:13 So regarding the the hundred plus vacancies I mean applicants that you stated that you have. You said it was something like a hundred and eighty and just a little over a hundred of those applicants were actually qualified, some were military personnel, etc. Because we have such a high demand to fill these vacancies, are you all discussing any way that you could wave some of these entry exams and try to expedite people coming on especially if they have military experience or

advanced degrees? Thank you for that question senator in the in the testimony we did indicate that we do have waivers for those individuals with degrees and a military background so we are in fact taking that into consideration. Okay I would love to see proof in the pudding though with this because it seems like everything is stagnant. Every time the agencies come before us we see all these vacancies still. And lastly based on the president's line of questioning earlier I was hustling coming back here and he asked a question that I usually ask about with regards to the exit interviews and the The question wasn't fully answered in my estimation. As the government of the Virgin Islands HR hub, is there any evidence of exit interviews taking place at the respective agencies and departments? In your response you gave that you can see in your queue the resignation letter. However, in a resignation letter at times, people are just furious. don't even send you the reason why they're leaving they're just leaving hothead outside of that is there any evidence of exit interviews taking place so again senator we have provided the

3:55:28 ahrs with the tools in order to conduct those exit interviews we have i do know that in some agencies it is being done but we can continue to encourage and we can start to look into requesting from the respective HRs if in fact it is being done and provide you with that data at a later time. The agencies sound like you're moving from a point of weakness. I can't and I can't accept that response. If you are the HR hub and this is the mechanism that you have in place to make things more streamlined and more effective then there should be some adherence and if agency heads are not adhering to your instructions then you should invoke it to the chief executive during you all's cabinet meeting. Thank you all for all that you're doing I know that you you all are working but there's more to be done and this is why I have to ask the questions that I'm asking. Thank you much and to your director I don't know why every time I want to call her name I can't remember her name but your director that said that I was double paying this government for so long I want to thank you all for your diligence and and seeing this because if my mom was around she would I hit me took off and say I always tell you to look at your check stubs so I'm thanking your team for being so diligent in looking at those documents. Thank you.

3:57:07 Thank you Senator Guitens. You mean to tell me a lady saved your money. Save you money and you don't remember her name? Her name is Miss Daly. You remember her name? Come on. Come on family. My humble apologies. Let's go back to what the Senator was just talking about. I know that we, you know, the thing that I hear a lot in all of the conversations from the agencies is we encourage.

3:57:50 There's a lot of encouraging going on. How do we get to action, right? Right? So, when an employee leaves the government, they have to process their NOPA through the Division of Personnel, correct? Correct. Great. So what prevents, let me know in that manner, do you think that you can put a policy in place that says, once you submit your, what is the NOPA call, your exit NOPA, your, whatever the NOPA is.

3:58:33 Termination or resignation. Resignation NOPA, whatever it is, that the agency have to attach what my colleagues is talking about. That allows you attach information around the reason for leaving. you could put a form together I mean some people it's it's optional it's optional but they have to they have to show that the employees sign off and city didn't want to to do it you see what I'm saying can we put that in the system because I be I agree with him that is important for us to collect data because the only way we can improve our government is to collect data around what the challenges are so we can make the necessary improvements. Absent Ada.

3:59:24 So yes, that is something that we can ask the HRs to attach and include as part of that process. I just also want to just note that there's times in which agencies receive a letter of resignation citing effective immediately and sometimes the HR does not even get the chance to do that exit interview. but it is something that we can start to encourage like i said we did provide them with a package and a form in order to do that exit interview so we could then look into that being a requirement as part of their termination package well you have different categories if it's somebody who just resigned and people want to annually the one that this the one that they gotta sign the form yes i mean a termination is different it's clear it says termination so you don't have an expectation around that but employees who are leaving at will you gather the information so you can have an idea as to what our challenges are and then you you utilize that as your basically your survey so you do have information as these are the reasons why employees are leaving our government yes noted it's important so thank you Thank you for that, Senator Gittins. Now going back to OCB. So OCB you have, oh, and it goes back to the question that Senator Gittins asked.

4:00:48 So once you spoke about you closed 49 cases, if those cases have a funding obligation, money obligation, how do you all treat those? How do you treat it from your office? We speak to the, we inform the agency of the obligation to pay or process whatever is necessary for a payment if there's a payment due. We get verification that it was completed.

4:01:24 I hope, hopefully I'm answering your question. So I just think that we need to take that a step further too. So you close a case, a case that has a monetary, something monetary attached to it. Right. We provide the agency with a copy of the order, lay out the details of what is required for compliance with the order. The agency has to, we do not process the

monetary. But do you have a listing that says these are the cases and this is a monetary amount?

- 4:02:00 What is that relationship between your office and the Office of Management and Budget to ensure? Because there's one thing to close the cases. I have a gentleman, as you're aware, and this has been a good minute. But what is that relationship? Because that should become part of the budget process. When your office is submitting your budget, I remember back in the day, there was a... We used to have an arbitration fund or something. Yes, that fund is no longer, that fund does not contain any monies.
- 4:02:34 I was specifically, I have the actual sources of funds for that account. So that's my point. So every year, you should be bringing before the legislature, this is the amount that needs to be, based on what we've closed, Closed, right? Closed. This is what we've closed for fiscal year, whatever. So, at minimum, the employees will be paid by the next fiscal year. If nobody's monitoring that, that's paid at the whim and the will of that particular commissioner.
- 4:03:11 No? I can't say it's at the whim. I can't say that. I do know that we provide sufficient guidance on what is done, what needs to be done. We get information as to where it is periodically. We get proof of payment because it's not only we have other payments like for arbitrators and so forth so we keep track of those. We do, to your question, your first question, we do keep track of what is owed for each case once the case is closed. Do you have that? I do not have it but I can locate it. Can you send that to the chair? Please provide an update of all of the arbitrations.
- 4:03:53 All of the cases through arbitration, we have it, this positive orders, withdrawals, settlements, et cetera, to this committee with the amounts owed. We don't necessarily have to see the employee, but we want the amount and the department that it's attached to. we will have the conversation because if we need to add them to the budget for 2024 to make sure that these people get paid, then that's what we need to do. But it's not okay for individuals' cases to be settled, the matter to be settled, and they take years and years. Some of these settlements, there's interest associated with them if you don't pay them in a certain amount of days, right?
- 4:04:39 No. So we don't do that no more? Not. Senator, I know in these cases that we're speaking about, no. And by statute, the government does not pay interest on these matters. Okay. So that's why there's no urgency to pay out these items. There isn't. I'm telling you. I mean, as a senator, I'm finding myself getting involved, calling departments to say, you know, these people need their money and we got to go through every step. The OMB release, the payout and on and on and on.
- 4:05:12 we gotta do better than that. Senator Gittins, you're recognised for your point of information. Thank you so much Madam Chair and you asked for half of what I was just about to ask for as well because this is definitely costing us. Through the chair, approximately how long should it take an agency to adhere to to an arbitration award.
- 4:05:46 Jean Springett, I cannot provide a time frame. I'm mindful of the different steps that it takes to obtain funding, process documents, get approvals throughout the chain, and get a check processed. So I cannot provide you with a time frame because we're not the ones processing them. okay it varies by agency okay and in the meantime it's costing us because some of these orders are stating specifically to go retroactive back to years past and this one in particular that i'm looking at takes us back to retroactive 2019 so we will now be paying an employee that should have been reinstated one whole year ago, we have just paid a whole year vacation pay.
- 4:06:43 So while it might not be any interest owed, we do have to pay it in retroactivity. So I will be looking forward for those documents as well coming to the chair. Thank you Madam Chair. Madam Chair, just to be, I can also submit and clarify whether interest is also included. i just gave that from memory based on a statute that i'm familiar with but i'll verify you know some that some says if you don't pay within a certain day period of time you got px amount and y amount so um therein lies some of the challenges all right um this is let's go back to the division of personnel So I see that in fiscal year 2024, so we have to fix this, they move your utility to the single payer.
- 4:07:39 It's not under your budget, so we got to put it back. It'll come out in the year that it is to be paid. So under your... Did I ask you this question already? Personnel. So you have how many vacancies? Five. Five.
- 4:08:07 Turn the mic. We have five vacancies. And what's your total amount of positions under the general fund? 44. 44, and you have five vacancies. Are they considered critical vacancies? Yes. Okay, so I see you have an increase in your personal services of 14%, 395,242. What is the reason for that increase?
- 4:08:42 Repeat the question for what amount? Personal services. There's an increase, your personal services last year was 2.8, this fiscal year 2.854. five four six nine six and this year the recommendation is three point two four nine nine three eight which there's a difference of three hundred and ninety five thousand that is to accommodate the salary increases as well as the vacant positions for that was not budgeted in 2024 we're asking to make sure that it's budgeted in 2025 I ain't following that what what vacant positions did you have in 2024 in 2035 that were not budgeted in 2024 Yeah.

- 4:09:42 Are they new? Are they now funded? What are you saying? So, we had, let's see, 2024. Mm-hmm. And while we're waiting for you, Attorney Springett, just send back to the committee an update of your personal listing, please update your personal listing, and a breakdown of how you plan to utilize your supplies and other services category for fiscal year 24. Five, sorry.
- 4:10:19 Okay. Yes, updated personal listing on how we intend to use the funds in supplies. Supplies and other services and charges. You ready for me, Ms. Bashi? Yes, so we had, in 2024, we had \$46,000 budget for the recruiter. we are asking to fill that position in 2024 and make it whole in 2025 so that's an additional um the full position is 92 000. so so you're basically talking about the fact that we budget we gave you like 50 percent or 75 percent or something correct so to make the positions whole from 2024 to 2025 we're asking for so tell us what this recruiter is going to be doing are we recruiting for specific critical critical needed positions what are we recruiting well so So we currently, we have our regular staff who is also doing the computer work.
- 4:11:36 Tell me about the recruiter. Okay. So the recruiter would be actively recruiting. So all the interruption in staff of going out and trying to recruit and not having the type of results that even you, Senator, would like to see, we expect from a recruiter, off island in the Caribbean, far reaching and recruiting, bringing back people who have left because of jobs, and giving ideas and spin-off of how we can make the Virgin Islands the employee of choice.
- 4:12:12 So who are you recruiting for? Are you recruiting for the entire government? Central government. so currently you go out and do recruitment outside of the job fairs that you have that's what we can do no the job fairs asking you what do you currently from time to time i know you have job fairs but i'm asking you do you currently go out because you said that your employees internally they have their other responsibilities so it will cause them to have to stop to do recruiting so I'm asking you specifically what um are you doing now other than the job phase um the last time we were able to go off island and try to recruit off island was in 2022 to we are unable to do far reaching so so this this is i'm i am not i don't have an issue with a recruiter what i have an issue with is a lack of a structure so we know that we have a challenge in the virgin islands with salaries right so the last time you went to recruit how many people did you get I don't have that data give me a ballpark figure you how much you have to not leave some of these departments you hire you do you know we had a name on the record put your name on the record middle center being territorial administrator recruitment classification you talking about the Georgia when we went yes Atlanta ten so okay ten mm-hmm okay so you're able to bring back ten people for what departments it was a combination of different department give
- 4:14:02 me high level the power of education that's something I time the man autonomous we helped them we also had corrections view of Corrections just in those on the top of my head those are the agencies men all right but that was a so that was a doesn't that's a lot of money that the government spent on that So, all of those departments traveled and went and did that recruiting event and we got ten people out of it.
- 4:14:32 And I said that to say that in order to attract individuals to the Virgin Islands or people back home, we have to really look at our salary structure. We have, before we do that though, we also have to look at our critically needed positions. So if you're saying to me that you're looking for a recruiter to begin to look at those different buckets of critically needed positions, I can appreciate that conversation in addition to also saying, look, based on my recruiting work, these are the salaries that it should look like and this is what we need to be moving towards.
- 4:15:17 But we cannot have a recruiter that don't have a structure around it. And just so I can add to that, so not only that Atlanta trip, but we also went out to the University of Florida and we went to their nursing schools and were able to discuss and talk to potential graduates and encourage them to come back home. We also have some very hard to fill positions such as, let's say, Department of Justice, medical examiner position that is a high salary position and they're having a hard time to fill that position I have requests from let's say Public Works with engineers and other agencies even to certain the other agencies that need these hard to fill positions so by us having a recruiter they could target some of those positions because even of the way we've been advertising recently we've started to do it more in a demand or industry base so we're actually posting these hard-to-fill positions so having that recruiter would then allow us to then focus on these hard-to-fill positions to include some of the projects that you see coming down from ODR and what they need especially from the financial and grant management side of the house they'll be able to focus on those hard-to-fill positions I'm glad you brought up the financial and grants management because I think it's time that the that we have career type employees we've lost a lot of good financial people from this government because of the exempt status and the politics and we are feeling the pinch now so those are the types of things that we would like to see coming out of the division of personnel as it relates to those classified non-union type employees that we you know you put them on the scale that they should be on so and then you talked about the engineers you talked about Public Works in

- 4:17:16 particular Public Works I don't have to increase their salary but only paying 68 thousand dollars for engineer who are we recruiting as it relates to the medical examiner that has long been a challenge but where are we advertising from me where so that's the thing I we will have you have to go to the national level to do that so the funding for that as well to be able to advertise is something that I know that they're having issues with that they have reached out to us to to to assist them in our reach to advertise even from the neo gov platform that can in fact get us on to some of those national job boards and And what is the cost on a national job board?
- 4:18:03 It depends. They vary. We have recently looked into those prices and sometimes just to have a job posted for 15 days can run anywhere from \$169 to \$350 just for 15 days. But you're saying that you're hiring a recruiter. You'll have the same problem. You see what I'm saying? You have to figure out where you want to spend your money. So when I said that, I've just said this is what we're looking at now without a recruiter that to advertise on those job boards, that's how much it would cost.
- 4:18:34 Yeah, but we've been long, long not having an Emmy. We win a couple dollars to go on the national sites with needing a medical examiner in the territory. How much money, like who, what, isn't that Department of Justice? It is. Yeah. So I'm sure they have other initiatives. I'm just mentioning that they have reached out to us to assist them with some of the tools and resources that we have in posting and getting the word out about that vacancy. Yeah, that's been going on for too long and it's something that needs to be, you need to put out a universal recruitment and that. Senator Gittens, you recognize your point of information.
- 4:19:21 Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I'm in trouble sometimes. I have one point of information and you just said three things that really, really been on the top of my mind. The medical examiner, these exempt positions that's through the roof in government now and I'm not going to even do the breakdown again. But the first, what I wanted to ask about was this off-island and Madam Chair you spoke to salaries we have a challenge for real but when we're doing these off-island recruiting are we doing do we have a contract that these individuals sign as they come on and I ask this because I have knowledge we received complaints and documentation where they did this same recruitment in Atlanta and relocated I allow people to uproot themselves relocate home and change the salary as the person looking to start if you promise just say \$60,000 then when you look the person coming on you change a NOPA to say \$45,000 are we signing contracts with these individuals before uh they come home if we're doing any more of these our filing recruiting senator i'm not aware of any particular contracts as you're referencing i do know that when the individual is hired they are they do have hiring documents in which they have to sign accepting the salary and the title for the various positions they're being hired for So I'm seeing that's bobbing a weave in there yes I saw those documents too but what I'm saying is
- 4:21:16 is I didn't see where there was adherence to the promise of the one salary and then when you look they get a NOPA showing up to \$15,000 less so I'm just bringing this to the forefront to ask you all if you're doing any more of these things make sure that you're able to fulfill the promises especially after people have uprooted themselves to do a relocation. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Gittens.
- 4:21:57 How much money did you expend? Have you expended all of your dollars for the uh employee recognition activities see we have 80 000 here yes we have yeah okay all right um senator de graf do you have a burning question you may proceed uh thank you thank you madam chair in regards to women women may get mammograms in regards to mammograms that women get if we need to do density tests of the breasts can they be negotiated or new insurance contract that for those in regards to that for women that the mammograms are free under the insurance but But if you have more details or more specifics, that's something that the board can answer.
- 4:23:14 Okay. I got a follow-up on it offline. But I just wanted to know also in regards to the exit interview, it is mandatory on the end of the department giving the exit interview, but is it mandatory on the individual who is exiting? Florine O'Dayne, Hassell, assistant director. We asked the agencies to give the exit interviews and majority of them do, however, the employee does not have to do the exit interview if they don't want to.
- 4:23:53 Okay, because that's all I figured and, you know, in terms of gaining information or data from that I think it becomes a little tricky other than you know what you basically are doing correct you would find that like the director said a lot of the letters that we receive because it's attached to the don't pass why they're leaving and some people are very detailed as to why they're leaving mm-hmm very much so and very honest and upfront as to why okay all right thank Thank you for your time, Madam Chair.
- 4:24:30 Thank you, Senator DeGraff. One more question and then we're going to close. I don't think that I clarify. We got the other services and charges category, just the not inclusive of the insurance, just your expense for other services. see that there's an increase of 120 000 what's the purpose of that increase so senator when we were before you um last budget hearing by some error the neogov cost was not placed in the budget however we utilize the funding that you gave for let's

say with the acts for the LMS program which was approximately if I'm not mistaken approximately 126 if I'm not mistaken and so we had to utilize that and all our other funds to try to see if we could pay neogov because we have to pay neogov so in order to function as an agency we asking that you honor the 120. that may have been an error yeah i i believe so so do this for me just submit to the chair through the chair submit an updated listing of your other services and charges category other services and charges you have it already it is correct in our book I what page it is on page the testimony of the Commission yes that's the money

4:26:23 it is on page six and it's in its entirety from repayment tenants all the way down to the professional services yeah everything is listed so that we don't have that problem again what is acts nicely what is acts nicely I'm working on it this was acts nicely yeah could you recognize the mic of my chair on the floor go ahead Gabriel Knight strategy and organizational development officer it's the software program that we use to collect employee data on their employee experience within the agencies so that's done how often we send out surveys on a daily basis anywhere between 50 to 100 employees and what's the feedback the feedback in terms of the what they say or the response rate it both the response rate is just under 20% and the feedback varies from overjoyed to disgruntled so then it still goes back to the conversation we had earlier are you collecting your data and you do you do like do you do it by departments so you can see what's happening with the responses in respective departments so you just overall random we generate we can generate reports by departments yeah Okay. All right. And what's NetMotion?

4:28:06 Good afternoon, Cordero. I'm our Chief of Information Technology, Division of Personnel. NetMotion is the software that we utilize that allows the Division of Personnel employees to work from anywhere remotely. We implemented the software prior to COVID. So who paying for that, we? The Division of Personnel, yes. Okay. So how did you make it?

4:28:35 Yeah, no, we utilize it daily. This allows us to be out of the office, but still have access to office resources, answer phones, cell phones, and things of the like. Awesome. It's a good thing, but let me ask you, how are we pushing this out to other departments and agencies? We, division of, we implemented it for division of personnel, and we haven't pushed it out to other agencies. I mean, I don't know what the government's policy is. Are you working on a policy for? We, when we implemented that motion, the purpose of it was we had a management team and individuals from our training unit that were just by the day, daily duties of the, The daily duties were outside of the office, but still needed access to office resources.

4:29:24 Okay. So that sounds like that should come from your indirect cost money though. We struggling. Yeah, man. But it did came in. The software did came in. Good for us. I could see that. You know, COVID and stuff like other initiatives. You were working on a project. what was the name of that project again we were doing scanning and it's the scanning project is it done no which where is it here the scanning project there is in professional services with tyler tech well that's tyler technology yes okay so when that will finish um we only have one employee working on this project that wasn't a question when is it going to finish we are not we do not have an end date at this time because the last time we spoke about this you did give an end date you did i mean they have you have to have an end date even if you have one employee that employee you that you have to know whether or not what what the expectation is you may not meet the goalposts but you have to have some expectation how you know how are you able to then manage or assess is the word not manage how do you how are you able to assess whether or not there is productivity there if you don't have an end date you have to have an end date because of the volume of files um like for example last year we were at a like a two percent two points something percent in the scanning and right now we are a little bit over six percent

4:31:12 so do we do we utilize summer employees do i mean how are we getting to the end of this we this has been at this there's a lot of money we've been discussing this for well this is old records right yes well i mean it's active and well actually old records yes because everything is being done in erp now okay so are you up to a certain year i mean how are you doing it we're doing it alphabetically so what alphabet are you at we are at the last time check was d this is what three years you sure ain't longer than that this this is about three years because we we first had to bring tyler tech in get the training get everything going and but this is a this is a good project right but you have to figure out around that project how do you fast track that project is it that you need people to come in part-time do you need to get we have we have students who we um who are in the these different programs at the high schools that come to work with us i have students that work for me this summer i could have sent one of them to you i'm just saying what what is that what are you you have to lay out when you want this to be finished and then you put the resources around it even if you're not able to pay for it there are ways for you to get the resources to take care of this good ideas okay yes all right um travel you know we're taking that one out high budget this year right use your indirect cost money we we don't have kidding all right okay I think that's it that's it

4:33:08 miss obeying you had something you wanted to share in regards to the total number exams that Senator Jevon James had asked recently yeah okay it's 245 tests so far but like I indicated it varies because upcoming for the late later part of this year we still have to come factoring entrance fire for the St. Thomas district which will not be nothing less than 120 you

know fire corporal you talk more all these firefighters you know that will be eligible to take this promotional exams we're talking of fire sergeants you know within the both districts we have requests that actually came in that we are getting ready to have a pre-planning meeting okay with these agencies so that that'll happen that'll happen prior to the close or after this fiscal we're working on um prior to the close okay thank you got it all right and this is something that basically happens annually got it all right so we're about to close uh there were several through the chair requests I have to have sometimes the requests are not clear so I've been reading them back into the record for a reason so I'm going to start from the bottom up so it says submit a listing of all the other services and charges category which is right and that's for both Ms. Springett and Attorney Springett, that's for both OCB and DPP. And then the updated personnel listing for OCB as well as DPP.

- 4:34:58 and information on your arbitration your other what did I say OCB DOP I'm sorry Department of Personnel Division of Personnel update on all those settled matters OCB information on them so we could see what is what's outstanding, so I suspect it's going to require you to also reach out to some of these agencies to find out the status. But I really think you need to put a system in place to get to know exactly what's happening with them. And there was one that asked about the amount of customer service training that could occur per year with the allotment of the 70,000.
- 4:35:53 you can go ahead clarification senator yeah this was a request i was asked remember i went back and asked the question but um no the clarification for the personnel listing and other services listing since we already submitted it in the the book when that is currently here testimony sorry um do we still need to submit it again because it's the actuals you're correct Okay, thank you. You're correct.
- 4:36:20 Sorry about that. So we're going to take those two off, and you're clear on this customer service training and how, I guess it's how many trainings could occur with the, I guess it's how many people could be serviced. That's the question that the senator asked. If you need clarification, you can ask, I think this was Senator Javon James, and he's not here. Okay, so those, you will be getting a letter with the information, but please move forward with providing it because, like I said before, we want to wrap up our budget by the end of August, okay? Thank you.
- 4:37:01 Attorney Springett, I'm going to allow you a 30-second close, and then we'll go to Miss Cindy Richardson for her 30-second close. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of our budget for fiscal year 2025. We urge this body to approve the recommended budget of \$1,375,564. Thank you.
- 4:37:31 Yes, 30 seconds. Ms. Richardson, you may proceed. First of all, I'd like to thank my entire Division of Personnel team for all your work this fiscal year. I would like to thank this body for the opportunity to defend Division of Personnel's FY 2025 budget today. How long our testimony reflected all of the work that we do outside of just processing NOPAs while acknowledging our impact on all of the GBI agencies and its workforce. So thank you.
- 4:38:15 Thank you for your presentation today. I do agree with you that your presentation was very thorough and very insightful. So again, thank you for your presentation. And if we have any other follow-up questions, we will reach out to you. And that's for both yourself and the Office of Collective Bargaining. The Committee on Budget and Appropriations and Finance Meeting of June 27, 2024 is hereby adjourned. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back.

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke · only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

- 11x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittens, Gittins, Kenneth Gittens
- 7x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice James
- 6x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: De Graff, DeGraff
- 5x **Commissioner Gary Malloy**
the surname alone also matches: Ruben Malloy
heard in this transcript as: Malloy, Molloy

- 5x **Senator Javan James**
heard in this transcript as: Javon James, Jevon James
- 4x **Senator Marvin Blyden**
heard in this transcript as: Blayden, Blyton
- 4x **Senator Novelle Francis**
heard in this transcript as: Francis Jr
- 3x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
- 3x **Senator Samuel Carrion**
heard in this transcript as: Carrion

Bills and acts referred to

Matched by number against our own acts corpus. The number is what the recognition heard, so it may be wrong; where it resolved, the title is the one the Legislature gave the act.

Act 8560 Act 8560 · March 24, 2022 · An Act amending Virgin Islands Code, title 3, chapter 27, section 706 and chapter 28A, section 755 relating to the service retirement annuity to allow retirees to reenter government service and retain their annuity while paying a contribution to the Government Employees' Retirement System; amending title 3, chapter 25, subchapter III relating to the government personnel position classification system position to cover positions of annuitants who reenter government service; and for other related purposes ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Act 4440