



Committee on Youth, Sports, Parks and Recreation | February 24, 2021 | Part 2

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0:00:00 Let's get started. Thank you. We'll be right back. [3 such phrases repeated 28 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:14:00 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:16:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:18:00 Thank you. We'll be right back. Oh, oh, oh. [3 such phrases repeated 40 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:38:00 We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Good afternoon. The committee on youth sports parks and recreation is now out of recess. thank you and welcome back our recess was a little bit extended because we

0:54:04 attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Lorraine fish market when we take the opportunity to command and congratulate everyone involved the administration and Governor Bryan the Department of DPNR and also the fisherman who will be now will be able to have a place where they can sell their fishes at the Lorraine Fish Market. Madam Clerk, please read the agenda for Block 2. Block 2, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The committee will receive a status update on operations from the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation to include the status of all projects, sports programs, and recreation facilities. Invite a testifier, Honorable Calvert White, Commissioner, Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation. So this morning we heard from the Department of Labor and we heard with regards to the job training and employment programs for our young people. And this afternoon we will be hearing from the leadership from the Department of

Sports, Park, and Recreation, talking about the programs and the status of their facility.

0:55:28 We had the opportunity earlier, I think it was last week, to visit some of the sites for the Department of Sports, Park, and Recreation over on St. Thomas and also on St. John, and we also were able on Friday to visit the facilities and the parks over on St. Croix. So I know that this afternoon we will have a very interesting discussion as we hear what is the status as we receive a status update from the commissioner, his team on the parks, the facilities the department has overseas. So Commissioner good afternoon to you.

0:56:11 Good afternoon. Good, I want to ask you this time if you could identify your leadership, they could present themselves names names and position please you want them to do that themselves they can let the assistant you know so first district administrators HR and then good afternoon I am Renee Hansen assistant Commissioner, St. Croix District. Good afternoon, Vincent Roberts, Assistant Commissioner St. Thomas St. John Ditchie. Good afternoon, Carol Peters, Director of Basics and Financial Management. Good afternoon, Henry St. Croix District administrator sports and recreation good afternoon kirk thomas district administrator sports and recreation st thomas good afternoon my name is rolina pelham the human resources manager good afternoon elroy hill deputy director sports boxing and good afternoon i am calvin white the commissioner for the department of sports Park and Recreation. Great, thank you all for joining us. I want to ask you to please place your microphones on mute just so we won't have any background interference.

0:57:54 And Commissioner, you can proceed with your testimony. Thank you Senator Carrion. I'm thankful that my team is still here as we was getting ready to hit the reset button for them to leave and come back at a different time. but i'm glad that they stuck with me um before i start i just want to say a happy 25th birthday to my dad today um wishing him a happy birthday and i want to give you congratulations ahead for your first committee hearing as i watched the earlier one and i think it was well ran good day honorable kyleon chairman of the committee of youth sports park and recreation of the 34th legislature of the usvi honorable senators central staff and the listening and viewing audience i am calvert white the commissioner of the department of sports park and recreation before you to provide testimony on the status of operations of my department to include the status of all projects sports programs and recreation facilities i would like to first introduce my staff miss renee hansen assistant commissioner of st croix mr vincent roberts assistant commissioner of st thomas st john miss carroll peters director of business and financial management miss merlina pell human resources manager miss jamila henry district administrator of sports and recreation for the st croix district mr kirk thomas district administrator of sports and recreation for the st thomas st john district and mr elroy hill the deputy director of saint john the recovery team at the spr has been working extremely hard to get our fema disaster recovery projects obligated and available for contractors to bid

0:59:51 currently we have a total of 51 projects territory-wide with a combined estimate project cost of just over 30 million dollars of those 51 projects 59 are now obligated a significant accomplishment for this department currently 10 projects are completed three projects are either starting or nearing completion we are soliciting bids for 16 projects and 14 projects are in the architectural and engineering stage with the majority of them having at least 50 percent of the a and e design completed the priority projects on st croix the vincent mason pool and kramers park have 90 of the design completed st thomas top priority projects lionel robert stadium and emil griffith park are also 90 design completed once the department of public works approved these designs we will request the department of property and procurement assistance in soliciting bids from contractors the completed private projects so far are the smithby tiny tots playground park fairchild park romeo malone center oma brown park emancipation garden park franklin roosevelt veterans park the main office on st thomas and the main office in william d industrial park on st croix d hamletal jackson park and the vincent mason coral resort mumbeju debris removal the following projects have been notified to proceed and either have a contractor there now working or is about to resume uh worked those projects are the clock tower emile henderson court and isaac boing's ballpark the following projects have bids solicited that is boulder park

1:01:54 campo rico basketball court cookie beach composite park kramers park pavilion doris harts tennis center doratea totlock park educators park milton newton park pedro cruz ballpark rudy craiger complex valdemont hill lookout point and winston rainbow the following projects are in the solicited for a and e services only that's architectural and engineering that's edger frederick's ballpark lionel smut richard's ballpark and the st john community center the following projects are in the architectural and engineering fades meaning their designs is currently going on alvin mcbean complex cruise bay tennis court and overbomb basketball court dc canny gator complex emil griffith ballpark estate profit community center ezra fredericks ballpark fort frederick beach joseph obeen ballpark corin terrace ballpark lionel smut richard's ballpark lionel roberts reynolds jackson complex st john community center and the vincent mason coral resort park and pool the following projects are 428 and will be transferred to an alternate project that is the honeymoon beach pavilion and town center facility the two following projects are unobligated boda park and massac boxing center the following projects are on hold but are obligated clinton phipps racetrack harris clark baseball park randall doc james racetrack and the winston

wells ballpark while we continue to move forward with our facilities restoration dspr has additional projects to enhance our facilities we are pleased to add a newly constructed

1:03:53 batting cage at the alvin mabin sports complex funded with public finance authority capital improvement funding a private business is currently considering donating a batting cage at the dc canigata additionally dpp will be accepting bid proposals from contractors to resurface repave and restrike basketball tennis courts and part of our courts in the st thomas st john districts until march 8th and march 12th in the st croix district this for this project is funded by a capital improvement grant for the department of interior office of insulin affairs and will see 20 basketball courts 14 tennis courts and eight part of our courts refurbished across the territory for a total of 21 facilities those facilities are on st croix reynolds jackson recreation complex rudy kriegler dc kanagata isaac boynes emil gravy henderson glenn recreational park la grand princess park mumby mumby ju park campo rico park castle bark basketball court williams delight basketball court la valley recreational park and pedro cruz basketball court on saint thomas these facilities will also receive resurfacing of the tennis basketball and paddle ball courts those facilities are alvin mcbean recreational complex ezra fredericks ballpark lionel smut ballpark winston ramos center doris hodge tennis center and milton newton park on saint john the following facilities will receive resurfacing repaving and restriping they are oval brown basketball court and the cruise bay tennis courts the department recently completed two initiatives that will impact our

1:05:52 senior community on january 19 dsbr alongside the governor's ada coordinator office held the first of several ribbon cutting ceremonies rolling out access mats and the bouillon beach wheelchairs on megan's bay the access mats will allow individuals with the challenge navigating through the sand access to the water on st croix the completion of the aarp fit park brings excitement to all who enjoy exercising outdoors while the park was funded 100 by aarp its use will be open to the entire community. DSPR will also be receiving a grant from AARP to hire a fitness instructor to teach free fitness classes. I want to thank AARP for their willingness to collaborate with DSPR to improve the quality of life for all Virgin Islands. I have already started productive conversations with a private business concerning the potential installation of an additional fit lot in our communities one in the town of frederickston and one on the island of saint thomas the gvi recently completed successful negotiation with the renaissance group regarding the donation of land at renaissance park st croix for the use by dspr and the caribbean drag racing association i've been working very close with the president of the cdra mr arthur hector to rebuild and open the racetrack the initial appropriation by the 33rd legislature of 500 000 act 8288 was used to resurface the track with the recent legislation bill 33 that 014 sent by governor bryan to appropriate 675 000 to complete the racing

1:07:49 strip i hope that we will see car racing very soon as with all agencies the department have several challenges however we are creative in resolving them you can see one such instance as how we are able to add rail loaders to our fleet we requested and received funding from the 33rd legislature to purchase a new garbage truck for the st thomas st john district we bought a second garbage truck for the st croix district with grant funding from the department of interior's maintenance assistance program although this grant was a 50 50 match we used the savings from the purchase of vehicles and the first garbage truck both in fy20 to make up our 50 match the first truck is now on island and the second is estimated to be on island within a week the addition of these trucks would allow our sanitation workers to be more efficient while using less workforce and trash bags in 2020 governor albert brian jr sent bill 33-0453 to reprogram several projects under pfa this proposed reprogram reprogramming is essential in carrying forward the vision of the department Having adequate storage at our most used facilities will enable our maintenance workers to be more efficient in their duties. We are requesting a total of \$118,693.10 to be reprogrammed to create storage units at selected parks. Many of you have toured the Oppenheimer facility on saint john this past thursday i am sure you would agree that this facility potential is the crown jewel of dsbr as a little known secret unfortunately fema deemed this project ineligible for grant funding due to its proximity to the ocean the reprogramming of 200

1:09:58 thousand requested and an additional twenty four thousand eight hundred and five thousand twenty cents currently available in pfa capital project funding will be used to renovate this facility replace the roof and address the porch challenges the newly renovated oppenheimer facility would be a substantial revenue generating property due to the proper popularity of beach weddings and events on saint john another equally beautiful and revenue generation facility is the vincent mason pool as evidence doing our walk through last friday the guard booth at the vincent mason pool was vandalized shortly after the storm once again femur rejected grant funding for this portion of the property as the vandalism was not hurricane related dspr will lose 78 307 dollars in reprogramming financing to repair the guard booth and gate at the vincent mason pool i want to thank the members of this committee and the members of the committee of finance in the 34th legislature in advance for your support and consideration of bill number 33 that's zero four four three sorry zero four five three as our fema disaster recovery projects are obligated and we move towards completion dspr can now shift our focus to other federally funded grants and programs our priority is our territorial comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or our t core the land and water conservation fan fund act of 1965 was enacted to assist in preserving

developing and assuring access accessibility to all citizens of the united states of america quality

- 1:11:52 and quantity of outdoor recreation resources the lwcf state assistance program authorizes the secretary of the department of interior delegated to the director of the national park services to provide financial assistance to states for outdoor recreational programs this apportionment is dictated yearly by congress to be eligible for assistance through the lwcf program states must prepare and maintain a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreational plan or s corp or for the territories a t corp the t corp is a five-year plan that evaluates the demand and supply of public outdoor recreation resources throughout the territory it identifies capital investment priorities for acquiring developing and protecting our outdoor recreation resources the most recent t-corp expired in 2019 upon learning of this dspr has been in constant communication with the department of interior and the nps requesting assistance and guidance in developing the next t-corp installment we in time we intend to apply for a technical assistance program grant through the department of interior which will enable us to execute a contract with a firm that can produce an excellent application for an nps planning grant this step is critical because the nps will be watching closely to see how committed the virgin islands is to meeting the grants requirements as we reflected in our first application once the planning grant is submitted and approved we will then use the funding to cover the cost of developing the final t corp for
- 1:13:43 submission and approval in the immediate months after the start of the covet 19 pandemic all dspr programs were halted and facilities closed with sports leisure and recreation activities held in limbo for the last 10 months we are now seeing a glimpse of hope the 24 supplemental executive order and proclamation by the governor provided a list of sports that were deemed low risk and allowed for training and conditional purposes only excuse me those sports are track and field cross country swimming tennis sailing canoeing kayaking baseball softball and cricket i hope that in the near future doh will allow a few moderate and high-risk sports to resume practices namely volleyball basketball football and soccer the resumption of medium risk and higher risk sports can only happen if the community does our part to keep our COVID-19 confirmed cases down by following the department of health guidelines and the center for disease control i will continue to advocate for the resumption of all sports to ensure that we provide a safe environment for all individuals using our facilities dspr has implemented new policies for anyone who utilize our facilities the dspr guidance for all sports permitted to operate during the covet 19 disaster emergency was created to ensure our employees athletes and the public safety and health all organizations utilizing dspr facilities are required to adhere to this guidance
- 1:15:37 Upon entry of a DSPR facility, your name, temperature, and arrival time will be recorded by one of the recreation staff. When arriving, attending, or departing our facilities, you are expected to maintain social distancing of at least six feet and wear a face covering. Athletes are not required to wear face covering while actively engaged in workouts or practice that prevent them from wearing face covering but must wear fake face coverings when on the sidelines in the dugout etc and anytime six feet of social distance is not possible hand sanitizers will be made readily available for all to use restroom facilities will be open for adequate hand washing equipment and other personal items should be separated and not shared if equipment must be shared we ask coaches to disinfect all gear appropriately between users following the cdc guidance for cleaning and disinfecting anyone not adhering to the department procedures will be asked to leave the facility we thank the public in advance for their understanding and cooperation i need to make a note that anyone that wants to use the facility should call the department in their respective area and apply for some type of schedule before they proceed to that facility the reason for that is we want to ensure that we control the numbers it is organized and we know who is using the facilities the facilities are not open as a free for all we are asking everyone to please contact the department first and schedule a practice time before proceeding to the facilities
- 1:17:33 with coven 19 confirmed cases in the vi on a decline and the restrictions to protect the residents of the virgin islands health and safety lessened you can expect to start to see more activities at our facilities and more programs produced by dspr at the last committee of youth sports park and recreation hearing of the 33rd legislature on november 30th 2020 the team and i explained in detail the combine in the bubble created for our elite athletes initially we hoped to involve sophomores but after careful consideration and a suggestion to reduce the numbers of participation we decided to go with just seniors and juniors since they were the closest to graduation representatives from the interscholastic athletic association or iaa the virgin islands department of education coaches and various local sporting federations all had input on who those elite athletes were we would have we would have liked to create this experience for all athletes and all sports however because of the limited amount of dorm rooms available to us and a strict timeline we made the difficult decision to offer only baseball softball men's and women basketball and coed volleyball this program's goal was to give our athletes a chance to highlight their talent in hopes of securing a collegiate scholarship i am pleased to announce that as of today four athletes were able to secure athletic scholarships because of the reels the coaches were able to see of our athletes time in the athletic combine the dspr combine in a bubble success further proved that there needs to be a system that

- 1:19:28 collects all our athletes data from an early age to market themselves during their senior year following the combine the university of the virgin islands athletic director introduced me to an individual who wanted to assist the virgin islands in joining a network that would capture school athletes data no matter the sport at the beginning from the sixth grade all the way to the senior year of high school since the conversation was about student athletes i felt this service i felt this service platform would be better administered through the virgin islands department of education's athletic department after the first meeting with mr casey chipwater of athlete foundry it was very clear to both mr calendar the director of athletics for the virgin island department of education and myself that this is what the virgin island student athlete needed to increase their collegiate scholarship chances the idea is negotiating the specifics and i look forward to them announcing a partnership with the company and sharing more details about the app and the community that it will preserve provide while a lot of what we promote in sports relate sorry while a lot of what we promote is sports related we understand that recreation activities are not all about sports with covet 19 social distancing protocols and other restrictions producing new and creative ideas is challenging but possible dspr partnered with eccentric moco encounters to create dspr's driving movie night an evening of love and family this event would
- 1:21:22 bring two nights of movies to St. Croix and St. Thomas. The first show offered was a child-friendly film and the second movie was a more adult-appropriate film. With the completion of the National Park battlefield on St. John, the team and I at DSPR plan to hold similar events on St. John. I want to thank my district administrators for taking the lead and organizing this event and all the employees at DSPR that work tirelessly to make this event a success.
- 1:21:55 I also want to thank Eccentric MUCO Encounters for partnering with DSPR and the Department of Health for their guidance. Equally as important, I want to thank the members of the Virgin Islands Police Department who made sure that all who attended were in a fun and safe environment. we hope to offer more outdoor movie events to the to give the community safe leisure and social outlets working its way through the pipeline is dsp our biggest loser challenge the brainchild of assistant commissioner hansen this program's objective is to is to encourage healthy weight loss a healthy lifestyle and of course teamwork groups of five people are enrolled and their total weight is recorded to win is simple lose the most weight as a group within a specific time dspr presented our proposal of the biggest loser challenge to the government employee service commission health insurance board and was successfully approved at this time the biggest loser challenge would be available to employees covered under the gbi cigna health insurance plan however we intend to take to make this challenge open to the public after the first one is administered registration for this program has been extended one more week ending march 5th 2021 i encourage all injured interested groups to register as soon as possible at dspr we understand that what we must keep up with the boom of technology technological
- 1:23:42 trends ironically pre-covid 19 pandemic we created our programs to get individuals out of their houses and into our facilities post covid19 we had to produce programs that individuals can do at home you may have heard the governor refer to himself as the techie governor often i was not surprised when he suggested purchasing game consoles to offer a gaming tournament for those who enjoy playing video games we have purchased four gaming consoles for the st croix district four for the st thomas district and one for the island of st john we have already started to receive applicants for our bring your a game tournament individuals will compete against other gamers in the district both in nba 2k 2020 and mlb 2020. games between the final two contestants on each island will be streamed on our website and facebook pages each islands winner would then compete for the ultimate king or queen game of the territory title i am proud i am proud of the recreation team at dsbr they continually think about new ways to engage in and entertain our community both young and seasoned we have several new programs that we will be rolling out. On St. Croix, one of our largest programs, Take Me Fishing, will take place at the Altona Lagoon and Vates in Mason Beach with a partnership with DPNR Fish and Wildlife.
- 1:25:24 A group of 15 students, ages 8 to 12, will learn the correct way to hook bait, cast a line, and secure the catch. Also taking place on St. Croix will be a three-day girls softball clinic for ages 13 to 18, instructed by Scout with College Scouting Bureau, LLC. On St. Thomas, we are finalizing the details of Muko Jumbi classes for ages 5 to 16 and have begun conversations to offer a Batek print class as well. Also on St. Thomas, we are going to start resuming our after-school baseball clinics administered by the employees.
- 1:26:06 Please remember to like our Facebook page and visit www.dspr.vi.gov for all and more information from the department. The COVID-19 pandemic has stolen a year of play and conditioning for our athletes in the territory. You can look forward to seeing the department play a more active role in partnering with other sports programs to assist them in resuming practices and, hopefully in the future, competition games.
- 1:26:38 The department have started fostering a partner with Next Level Athletics to produce a football showcase for high school football players seeking athletic scholarships. We are also working with the Volleyball Federation to assist the travel team in attending a stateside tournament this June. the department also has plans to help two amateur athletic union or

aau teams basketball teams one from the st croix district and one from the st thomas st john district to travel to a tournament on the mainland a meeting was held with edward elrod hendrick lead west president to determine how dsbr can assist with our little league programs restart i look forward to having the same conversation with the alvin mcbean little league president and both elmo plastic little league east and west presidents on st croix i have already secured a private donor who have offered to assist with team uniforms please be mindful that all of the mentioned above activities are contingent under approval from the Department of Health. DSPR has 104 individuals employed with the Department, with 54 in the St. Thomas St. John District, 50 in the St. Croix District. At present, we have six vacancies in the process of getting those positions filled.

1:28:15 Of the six, we are currently interviewing for one of those vacancies right now. After several unsuccessful years of searching for qualified lifeguards applicants, I am proud to say we have hired two lifeguards in the St. Thomas district. Interviews are currently being scheduled to fill two more spots for a total of four in the St. Thomas St. John district. Our employee morale continues to increase. Needless to say, our employees are just as excited the public to get individuals back to our facilities i am currently the ex-officio member of both the horse racing and virgin island sports commissions i am also an active participant in the ongoing litigation between southland gaming and the government of the virgin islands i am often asked questions about the mediation details of when horse racing will return I want to assure you all, the Governor and I are working to come to some type of settlement to ensure that the territory sees horse racing in the near future.

1:29:32 I must commend Mr. Leon Hunt for his work as the Chair of the Virgin Island Sports Commission thus far. As a subcommittee member for both the Sports Hall of Fame and the Sports Tourism in the Territory, I know firsthand that we have our jobs cut out for us. With 41 mandates for setting policy, it will take some time, however, I have full confidence in all the Commission members to produce a quality sports policy for the Territory. team and i are just as anxious as the community to get back to normal we have created the guidelines and have acquired the resources to ensure that all who frequent our facilities are safe i must thank all the employees of the department of sports park and recreation who are prepared and ready for our full open our ground school are continually maintaining our fields our sanitation teams continue to collect the waste at our facilities the recreation leaders are brainstorming new and exciting programs to administer to the public i want to thank all of you for a job well done senator carrion i want to thank you for listening to my testimony my senior leadership team and i stand ready and available to answer any questions you may have thank you commissioner white I also am hopeful that soon we could have lessened restrictions and that our young people can once again come back out and enjoy our fields and our parks. I am just as many concerned about their mental and physical health of our children, and we know that we need them to be actively involved in order to continue and not stray away into other things and other activities.

1:31:35 So I am also hopeful that soon we'll be able to have more than just certain groups having practice but having other groups coming in and being able to participate so we're going to go into the questions this afternoon and we'll have a seven minute round and we will begin with Senator Frankie Johnson good afternoon mr. chair good afternoon to my colleagues good afternoon to the listening viewing audience and good afternoon to the testifier good afternoon Commissioner White you're on your staff my question was that over the house truck did you hear me Commissioner White see me amigo I'll start talking Spanish and did you say your dad make 25 today 25 well I mean I make 21 last week if you make 25 well happy belated birthday today today's birthday happy birthday mr. White senior right is that fair all right what I I would like to start asking my questions in line with the D.C. Canigata ballpark. Not much mentioned about it. You discussed the complex. What's the status with the baseball field at D.C. Canigata?

1:33:18 Sure. I think that that facility was awarded some \$800,000. dollars. Senator, part of the process we are facing with all of our projects, and these are guidelines requested by FEMA. If there's any type of change into the facility, some type of architectural and engineering have to go into that project. There is a firm that was hired to do the scope for that facility. I think last we heard, it was probably 90 percent completed but before that scope goes to public work these steps must be followed before it's sent to public work well why i ask that in your presentation you mentioned not much about the baseball feeling that is one of the most utilized baseball parks sometimes even used more and and knowing the the nature of at least a idea of what's going on with the poly joseph stadium Wouldn't it be faster to get Canada up and running, if I'm right?

1:34:26 Yeah, so during our walkthrough, we had some talks about that. That facility, like most of our others, are set to receive a change in lights. We're going to be replacing the lights from high-pressure sodium to LED lights, new scoreboard. There's some significant work that is going to be done on the roof of the bleachers. Um, there's additional dirt, um, irrigation, uh, which is something big for our baseball fields is going to be added to the facility. What we would like, and this was also discussed is, is once Polly Joseph comes online, um, putting DC kind of get the offline to do some major

renovation for that. But we do know that right now that is the only big field that we have in the territory. Um, but that field is going to see some significant upgrades. If I'm correct, you said once Polly Joseph come online, then Carnegie Taher will get its work done to it? No, no, no, no, no, no. I said once Polly Joseph comes online, we would like to take Carnegie Taher offline to do some major upgrade. But they are slated to do the upgrades that I just stated, irrigation, replacing lights, roof work.

- 1:35:43 All of those are within the PW that we are moving forward with. As soon as the scope is completed, we will send it to PW to get approved, and that will go up to Public Works or Property and Procurement to go out for bid. Any new information you can enlighten us with the Polly-Joseph Stadium that has some delay at this time? Anything new that you know about as far as it starting to take off to get moving? Still waiting for FEMA to approve the floodplain permit was the last, that information that I was giving.
- 1:36:17 You also have four facilities on hold. I kind of understand the race track issues. Horace Clark, that's because of the module on that. Am I right? That's correct, Senator. Currently, there are modules placed on that facility. and then the other facilities, Winston Wells and St. John, that also have modulars placed on it for education in St. John. All right, let's concentrate on St. John a little bit because with that park being out and it's going to be out for a while, what facilities do we have available for the children to play ball on St. John?
- 1:36:59 Great question. So we have a long, outstanding relationship with the National Park. The ball field that is located down in Coosby when you first come off the boat, that is under the National Park. However, they have already contracted a company to upgrade that facility. They're also doing LED lights, the playground. They're putting in a press box. Once that is completed, MOU will be signed between the department and the National Park. and DSPR will manage that facility where we can administer our programs for St. John.
- 1:37:39 Would that be the only ballpark in St. John? Is there any other park available on the island of St. John? I'll let my deputy director answer that, but to my knowledge, I am not aware of any other ball field currently. But I'll let Mr. Hill answer that. Good afternoon, Elroy Hill, deputy director. Good afternoon. Senator, we are currently using the Gif Hill soccer field for we will from last week Friday we started doing our registration of 13 and under children and we have a few young ladies we are practicing up there right now. So, we're utilizing the Gif Hill soccer field until hopefully by now and the end of the summer, the National Park Ball field will be ready for use. Okay, thank you very much for that.
- 1:38:41 Commissioner, I see you say in your testimony, you'd start a productive conversation with a private business concerning the potential installation of additional fit parks in our community. And you said one in the tongue of Frederickstead. what part of Frederick said were you guys interested in putting this fitness bar right inside of Major Cummings Park you had some other additional things you say you wanted to do with that part yes I did I'll go ahead and let my district administrator miss Jamila Henry she they had some great ideas of some additional things it's it's a great facility a lot of space I think we could utilize and maximize that area but I let her go ahead and explain if I may uh you may you may senator yeah go ahead let them continue ma'am you may answer you could proceed with all the information in regards to the Hi, I'm Jamila Henry-Sinkroy, District Administrator, Sports and Recreation. So, I've been doing some research and putting a proposal together to install some splash pads throughout the Virgin Islands at various locations. And for those who may not know, a splash pad is a miniaturized water park that is inclusive of everyone. One, it's handicap accessible, the water pressure is not too harsh to or abraise the skin or anything like that.
- 1:40:15 So I'm looking at putting that at Nedra Cummings Park and hopefully Sina Farm, the Woody Criger Park, and then one in our Christian Sted location. And then hopefully the same, three on St. Thomas and one on St. John. Thank you very much. Commissioner, one more thing. I was told that the island of St. Croix have not received their video games yet. Can you confirm that? I can confirm that they have not. If I could turn my camera right now, you'll see that I have, as a matter of fact, literally behind of me, other way.
- 1:40:56 They're trying to want to hear what they want to see. It's the TVs and video games that I have to send them. And like, as I stated, I have already received all of them for the entire territory. They are in my office. You asked that question, I hope nobody don't break into my office now. Put on your cameras quick. To be quite honest with you, Senator, we received them, I think, last week between doing the site visits and preparing testimony. I have not gotten a chance to send them to St. Quar yet. they needed to be tagged for us first because they are property of the government so property and procurement had to come and tag them they are tagged now if not this week first thing next week we will have them on the boat to St. Croix and then St. John will get theirs also. Now Commissioner I'm going to give you a lot of kudos here. I know you're a man on the job. I know you're someone that you can call out to and you're going to get an answer but let you know again a lot of blues because the talk is all the projects that are completed is set to be on the island of St. Thomas. And we're going to always have these different issues and, you know, people want to see projects moving. So how would you answer that for me?

- 1:42:17 I'm glad you brought that up because I can explain that. All the projects that you see completed were projects that was \$50,000 or less, which is considered a small project those projects i don't have to put out a bid i don't have to go through the procurement process um i all i have to do is get three quotes uh give it to the lowest better um ironically st thomas had a lot of those small projects st croix have large projects and i'm talking about uh projects over a hundred and twenty six thousand dollars um million dollar projects which have to go through the procurement process there's no way around that so the reason that you see those small projects um are already completed senator is because like i said they were like twenty thousand dollar projects the the other projects on sincroy that have work going on now are also small projects emil henderson clock tower um those were projects under fifty thousand dollars which are easier to get out to the public to to um hire contractors that's the reason for that and in closing what about the videos for the combine for the college scouts for the island of saint royal close with that another another great question um uh reached out to mdm uh who was a company that was hired to do that um they have been reaching out to parents um the feedback that i'm getting is if parents are not being receptive out of everyone that they call i think five responded but if i can because they asked me to give out over the over the airways um please if you had a child that was in the in the combine uh please contact mdm at 340-690-6636 you will need to to submit a jump drive uh once they get that they are going to be able to upload the information on
- 1:44:13 it and give it back to you but they have been reaching out to parents and are not getting responses thank you very much thank you very much mr chair for this additional time there thank you you are you're welcome senator johnson uh senator javon james senior you're recognized good afternoon to the people of the u.s virgin islands and good afternoon to my colleagues i just want to ask this out of the 21 million dollars from the hurricane disaster recovery funds for the department of sports parks and recreation uh how much has been expended thus far and how much is available out of the 21 you said yes and if you could correct me if this is yeah it's probably more than 21 totally totally combined i have about 31 million dollars worth of projects um i will ask my financial director she have that information um so here it is why are you looking for why are you looking for it i'm gonna ask my next question okay uh and what i would like to know is what are the status of the 435 000 that is obligated for project 70616 which is for the bottle park what is what is the status of that project that that project's anytime my testimony i stated it's not obligated yet um that's one of the two projects out of the 51 that is not obligated i recently signed um signed off on the project so i'm estimated it should be obligated soon but that's one of the two that is not obligated the reason why i'm asking i frequent the bottle park for different activities and what i would like to know is what is what would actually be done with that \$435,000. Not saying I'm pleased with the actual sight of it because it looks beautiful as is, but I just wanted you to explain to this committee what is going to actually be
- 1:46:17 done with the \$435,000. So within that project, Senator, there's several projects lumped into that and that's why when I stated the disparity of why you're seeing some projects completed in st thomas and not st croix because like i said there was a lot of small projects i think boulder project is is one commissioner i just want to know what exactly will be done with the funds i'm not asking about um all of that richard's park is included in there um um major coming part is including it's going to be upgrading any hurricane damages that happen to those facilities there was a fence that was knocked down uh when the hurricane came around uh the stadium we got funding for that there's about four or five projects that lumped into that one border project it's going to be upgrades nothing new only what only hurricane damage i'm glad that you made mention of that because what i have before me is the document that i received from your office on december 7 2020 which speaks to the department of sports parks and recreation female projects and i guess you would have to update it to reflect what you just made mention of because it's kind of misleading if you said bottle park but it includes the major comment and other stuff so i'm just going based off what based off of what i have here from your office so that needs to be corrected uh i know that there is two million dollars 2.5 million dollars that is obligated for the vincent mason senior coral resort for those who don't know vincent mason senior was an employee of the department of commerce conservation and cultural affairs and he died well on duty and then they renamed the pool down there in frederickstead after him in 1980 and it was known as a place in the past where individuals went there to learn to swim and as i google on um the internet i know that miss jamila henry was working on some swimming programs
- 1:48:24 i think that was in 2019. can you just give the people of virgin island specifically saint croix an idea of what can we see with the vincent mason pool as far as a structured swimming program for our youth in the island of st croix i'll refer to my assistant commissioner of st who could tell you a little something about the swimming program um and and what the plans are once that pool um is open miss hanson and with that answer can you just be specific and straight to the point so i can ask more questions thank you just to be straight to the point commission um senator we we started off with some our youth um learn to swim program we had some adults learning to swim program, we just plan to carry on the same programming as we began. As we began, we had about, I would think, I would say 35 participants before we had to shut down.

- 1:49:26 So my question to Commissioner White, when you, I know you were the assistant commissioner under the past administration, but is there a blueprint of any past swim programs that the Department of sports parks and recreation goes by, is there a concrete plan or structure? There is a structure. Our lifeguards, we have a lead, one of our lead lifeguards, Ms. Kai Ransom. She is a certified, she certifies a lot of the lifeguards throughout the territory. She has a playbook that she goes by. I do not have it, I'm not a lifeguard, but they do have a structured program.
- 1:50:07 Thank you, Assistant Commissioner Hanson. the reason why i'm asking that because i'm looking for continuity at some point commissioner white and assistant commissioner hansen you will no longer be in that position and i want to make sure that as the years goes by when all of us outgrow this institution and our jobs that we have things put in place as far as a plan where individuals who come after us can be able to go as a guide because one thing i i learned about these senator hearings and uh based on ribbon cutting ceremony that we had today it took them 14 years to finish the lorraine fishing market project and i want to make sure moving forward that when we have individuals taking over government that there is a form of continuity there is a documentation put in place and individuals are not going to the grave site with the information so we need to structure these things create plans and document them so when we have these conversations we can hold you guys accountable based on the plans that are put in there and as we budget money we know for sure when we budget money for these programs that it's going to a structural and organized cause which leads me to my next question uh what has become of the actual intent for the 4.1 million dollars of federal funds for the clinton phipps race track project 70425 that fund is also on hold as i stated in my terror in my testimony the funds are there um depending on what happens with this legal case um it will either be transferred to another project or the governor of the virgin islands will instruct me to use it to put back what was there before but that that fund is obligated and they're waiting and mr chair would you indulge us if i just ask one more question sure sure you may During my tenure in the 33rd legislature of the Virgin Islands, Commissioner White, you and I, you and I, you know, we both had conversations and you gave me a copy of a five-year plan. And in our last meeting, I think it was in November of last year, I inquired about the status of that five-year plan. What is the status of that? Have you completed it?
- 1:52:20 No, so the five-year plan that you're talking about is the T-Corp that I mentioned. Senator, that is not a plan that you put together in a week, two weeks, or even a month. As a matter of fact, as I stated, we are applying for a planning grant that is going to give us access to \$200,000 that is going to be able to hire a firm to assist us with writing this T-Corp. Now, put that into complex. The Department of Interior is giving us access to \$200,000 just to write this planning, just to write this T-Corp. That shows you the magnitude of the information, the surveys, interviews, capital projects.
- 1:53:09 A lot of things that we have to put within the next five years, the Department of Schools, Park and Recreation does not have the resources to put that together. So we are applying for that grant. i'm confident that we are going to reach it um it's a step but once we get the the money um we will be getting the assistance to put that t-corp together which is the five-year plan that you're talking about awesome because you and i know that we both know this information but the public need to hear this as well so we're speaking to transparency because it bothered me when i was in the 33rd legislature of the virgin island i was like anytime we heard made mention of the Polly Joseph Stadium, the car track, and several other projects. Some of my colleagues have said they're building things and they don't even have a plan and I want to be able to end that and to make sure that moving forward that we do have a plan and individuals are not just saying that we're erecting these structures and move along with projects and we don't have a plan because if we speak about sports tourism in the territory, the VI Sports Commission, I know these things take time. I know we're doing the clean up of what the past administrations and institutions failed to do in the past, but at some point we definitely need a concrete plan moving forward to make sure that we can hold you guys accountable to something because there's nothing to hold you accountable to if there isn't any plan. So I just want to place that on the record. Thank you, Mr.
- 1:54:29 Chair, for the time. Thank you. If I may expunge on that a little bit, Senator, if I may. Once we get access to the t-corp or once it's approved that's going to give us access to four million dollars automatically and then thereafter every year the department will receive 1.7 million for capital improvement projects for the department so that's how important this t-corp is to us it like i said it's not a 10 page document it's a plan for the next five years we are going to get the professionals them in to assist us with that to make sure that you know it's done the right way so that we can tap into this this money to add to continuing continuity of our swimming program uh again just give you a little story to to show you that um we believe in our learn to swim program is that the young man by the name of dante morgan who went through the department of sports park and recreation swim program after he completed that he became a counselor at the department of sports park and recreation last week we hired that young man as one of our lifeguards in st thomas so um i think the program is working and it shows that that we will continue because we we want the people that we are training to then be able to come to the department and then give back and help thank you senator james senior and thank you commissioner for expounding on that i would I would like to recognize with us, Senator Genevieve Whitaker has joined us. Thank you, Senator, for being with us. She's an end committee member, and she has joined us this afternoon. Next,

we'll have over on the District of St. Thomas, Senator Alma Francis Heiliger. You're recognized.

- 1:56:13 Thank you so much. Good afternoon, colleagues. Good afternoon, testifiers. Good afternoon, people of the Virgin Islands. Commissioner White, quickly, while we were on the discussion of T Corp, I'm trying to understand, it says that on line 164, the most recent T-Corp expired in 2019. When did you become aware that it expired? 2019.
- 1:56:39 At the same time. So this \$200,000 plus that you're going to get to write this grant, this is a current one that's going to be upcoming, and the one you were under previously is the one that expired or you did not participate prior to? Yeah, the one in 2019 has expired. I was not involved in the planning of that. Okay. As I stated, it's a long process, Senator. We don't have the resources to write a grant like that. So we are going to go out to get monies. Okay, all right.
- 1:57:18 And I am hoping that you are successful in getting this \$200,000 plus in order to get the necessary monies. I want to ask a little bit on line 83 of your testimony. You spoke about unobligated funds in regards to two locations. Could you expound a little bit more on that in case I missed it? Sure. A project becomes obligated after you go through the FEMA process and then that money is now available as i stated i have 51 projects of those 51 49 are obligated which means i have the funding to move forward to now get the scopes uh get them out to bates and get contractors um boto park um i like i stated would probably be obligated within a week or two. The Massac building, which is the other one that's not obligated. I am basically in a dogfight with FEMA right now because they deemed that that property had damages before the hurricane and did not agree that we should be awarded. I appeal that decision and I'm going forward to try to fight to get monies for that. Well, I am definitely hoping you are successful in getting those funds on line 81 on line 80 of your testimony you have the department has plans to help two amateur athletic unions um in regards to the basketball team st croix and st thomas st john districts where exactly do you intend to look to get those funding from they'll be coming from the department we we have one of the things that the department do have senator is is funding for programs um i i when it comes to program i'm very confident that we
- 1:59:13 could carry out uh you know different ideas and stuff for for those programs we we get 500 000 from the department of tourism they're revolving front for programs so we have money for programs uh we are going to be funding that from our budget okay as it relates how can say for example this 500 000 that you do have available say you have organizations and non-profits how do they apply or does it just take your department to make those decisions no um you know a lot of different sporting organization would go to different entities they'll come to dspr they'll go to luxury uh they go to it's simple as writing a proposal um sending anything to the department with a budget uh kind of explaining what you're trying to do where you're planning to go what your budget consists of and then the department will decide um if we can fund some of it if we can fund all of it or we don't think it's a program that that that deems um sponsorship um but it's as simple as sending a a a proposal to myself um action requests for funds okay well you know one of the things that is consistently talked about is you know making sure that we have activities and programs for our young people but because of covet 19 there has to there had to have been a shift in how some of these programs are executed what has the department done in order to assist with this or even do things a little bit differently because our children cannot be exposed or even outdoors as much as they previously were well i i think the first thing the staff did was get educated um first on
- 2:01:06 covet 19. we went through several trainings um as it until entails to coven 19. we have been on several calls with the cdc uh in specific talking about sports um you know you'll get some riff there because you'll have the sports minded people thinking that we could do more um and the health people wanted to be a little more conservative but i think you know the the knowledge and education was the first thing that we did we then looked at different activities that don't require us to be um you know in contact with people uh summertime we had a lot of virtual programs we had virtual art classes uh virtual basketball volleyball classes um but i think with with with outside starting to open back up a lot more um we can now bring people back to the facilities and still control that contact with just practice and and social decision well how has your relationship been with the health department because even speaking to some of the previous testifiers and other agencies a lot of things that they need to do is one minute on the decision of the health department how are you guys working cohesively hand in hand to bring some of these things about yeah i i am in constant communication with with the department of health um you rarely or not really you would not see any um program or activity administered by the department unless we get that approval uh from the department of health we just did the the movie uh drive-in um but like i said we are getting ready to roll out a lot more activities that we're going to be sending for health for approval um the staff is confident that we can
- 2:02:58 administer them safe um so i look forward to to favorable approvals and continue to collaborate and work with department of health i i know for example the drive-in that you're speaking about and when i was reading a little bit about it you said on that particular decision to do that you you are time going to lose um mr chair can i have a few more moments you may you may continue and finish thank you um what i'm trying to find out i know it was reported that you

did share that it was shared that you're going to lose monies doing that particular drive-in where are these fundings coming from and are you do you have a board do you have a group of you that decide what projects is going to be best to utilize these funds to impact as many people as possible thank you for that senator so the department have an athletic fund that we use for programs um to be honest with you senator our focus right now although the department would like to bring in revenue is really not making money um you know i i knew off the bat we was going to lose but we wanted to be able to give um some type of outlet to the community the the bubble in a combine that was a service we provided free to our athletes we didn't make a dime for that but we spent um easily over 30 000 but the good thing about that like i stated in my testimony we had four individuals that receive athletic scholarships so was it worth it 100 it was worth spending the money um to give these athletes an outlet we will continue doing programs and not

2:04:48 looking uh for anything in return as long as we we're giving that surface to the community okay well my time has been called what i would like to say in closing yes yeah i just want to let you and my colleagues know we would have a second round so you would have opportunity to ask some more questions okay oh so we do have a second chance thank you well i will hold my closing statements since we have another round thank you so much yeah and uh we have uh two colleagues here they have to travel back to st thomas so i would like to get uh their questions and i have a few questions myself um but let's let's have uh senator carla joseph you're recognized thank you so much mr chairman uh for your joseph before you continue i just want to acknowledge that we have uh senate president uh a non-committee member senator adonna fred gregory over in saint thomas you recognize thank you so much mr chairman i want to say a pleasant good afternoon to all of our colleagues here and who are listening in department of sports and recreation commissioner the Honorable Calvert White, members of your team, and if I can be so liberal in saying that you're a team based on your testimony, the viewing audience and viewing listening audience as well, I wanted to just say kudos to you and your team. You have done a tremendous job in assuring that many of the projects that you have deemed worthy of the FEMA funding based on your assessment have been obligated 49 out of 51 so that's a very great score for you so kudos and you should be commended for doing this yeoman job I do have a

2:06:57 a couple of questions for you relative to your testimony and I want to also thank you for being a very great host you and your team during the tours last week Thursday in the st. Thomas st. John district let's look at page 10 actually page six, line 104 of your testimony. And you mentioned, which I thought I wanted to really give you some kudos there for providing ADA accessibility to our disabled population. But I noted that at these access mats and buoyant beach wheelchairs are available in megan's bay is that the only beach no senator we intend to place uh access mats um at another location on st thomas which is cookie beach uh we're still trying to determine where in st john we would place one and then two locations on st croix uh we know for sure kramers park is going to be one uh the second location that we was looking at was fort frederick after accessing that beach with how rocky the terrain is there, we're thinking that we're going to focus and put all our ADA access into upgrading the pool to where there's a lift for individuals confined to a wheelchair to be able to go into the pool.

2:08:34 Okay, thank you. And how many of these access mass and buoyant beach chairs, wheelchairs do you have in your inventory? have a total of we have a total of five in inventory right now and these have been already distributed to various sites correct only one of them have been installed the others need additional uh uh structures uh the launching pad which is where the individual would transfer from the wheelchair into the bouillon um there's some additional uh things that we want to do handicap parking but there's some we got to make it complete ADA compliant before we put them down what is your time frame to get this completed Commissioner because I know you're a man of time and of action so I know you already have some time frames already in place what is your timeline so Senator Senator Payne which is the assistant chair of this committee he he have a bill that was supposed to give the Department of Sports Park and Recreation some additional funds that was going to allow us to do these things. Handicap parking, the transfer stations. I think that that bill was successfully passed. I don't know if it's an act yet, but we have not received that funding. As we receive it, then we can move forward as far as trying to put in the amenities at those facilities. Megan's Bay already had the handicap parking. They had a transfer station. So it was easy to roll out that map. The other facilities don't have it and will need to be installed. Thank you so much. So that's a follow-up with the executive branch which you work for relative to being able to identify those funding because that would have been a bill that was

2:10:29 passed in the 33rd legislature uh moving on you mentioned about cookie point beach being one of the places that these access mats will be placed and buoyant beach wheelchairs will be placed are there is cookie point beach part of your inventory and underneath your purview it is senator kindly indicate if you have plans or you have the intention of placing a lifeguard in on that beach senator we we currently have two lifeguards on that beach um the lifeguards have been on duty now for two weeks as i stated um one of those lifeguards came through our our very own swim program so we're very proud of that but currently we have two lifeguards at that beach and uh currently looking to hire two more and where will you place those additional lifeguards where are you strategically looking to place those additional lifeguard

are they going to be in a saint thomas district or are they going to be in the saint croix district or uh are they going to be on saint john so i i don't really have an issue i don't have an issue with uh lifeguards in saint croix um i think i have about seven or eight lifeguards currently on staff in the st croix district um as i stated for the last four or five years we didn't have any lifeguards in st thomas on any given day that you go to cookie beach uh you will see hundreds and hundreds of of patrons out there exactly i i actually had some lifeguards come over from st croix to train my st thomas like 30 seconds they stated that two lifeguards on that beach is not enough

2:12:19 okay i got your point my time is running commissioner please bear with me and because we do have a flight i was a bit um unclear and you can clear it up for me this table that you have here on page eight of your testimony i needed to understand And you have on the right-hand column the balance. Mr. Chairman, may I? You may.

2:12:49 And I'm making sure that I give my good St. Thomas, St. John district member some time because we've got to catch a flight back to St. Thomas. Yes, please. Thank you. So just quickly, and be succinct, Commissioner, the balance. On the right-hand column, you have a balance for all of these projects. Kindly indicate what a source of fund. You have the source of fund, but I need to know what the beginning amount was that you received from these sources of fund because it has a balance, and if you have a balance, you should have had some monies to begin with.

2:13:24 So what was the original amount of money that was allotted for these projects, line item? Or if you could provide it to the chairman, that would be easier and we wouldn't have to eat up so much of the time and that would allow my good colleague to my left to be able to make a presentation. So on second thought, to the chair, can I request what the original amount received and also if there were any timelines to expand or deadline to expand that that be provided to you as well mr chairman very well that concludes my questioning i just wanted to make sure i i allow my good senator to my left to have some time thank you kindly mr chairman and again mr the honorable uh commissioner white awesome job thank you so much and thank you for your a team thank you senator the graph you're recognized for your seven minutes uh thank you mr chair good afternoon colleagues thank you to my colleague to the right for consideration thank you uh good afternoon testifiers all of you enlisting and present commissioner thank you to your team you you have an awesome team you have an awesome job to do um have you gotten any more new employees since 2019 to know to assist with some of the endeavors yeah i'll let my human resources manager miss relina pell gave you that information okay good good afternoon relina pell human resources manager yes we have we hired some groundskeepers. We, like Commissioner White said, we did hire some lifeguards. We hired more custodians. Of course, we still need a lot more, especially on the island of St. Troy.

2:15:30 Currently, I have advertising a general maintenance worker as well. Okay, so sports parks and recreation need employees. They have jobs to put now to the public. Okay, Commissioner, I have your testimony that you gave September 27th, 2019. I'm just reviewing that today where it said the department had a total of 61 FEMA projects in 2019.

2:16:02 61? That might be a typo. It should have been 51. In 2019, not 2021. It said 61. Oh, so you're saying it's a typo. It was 51 the whole time. we have a total of 51 51 projects okay so how many projects are okay so estimated 28 on st croix 26 st thomas four st john and three ward island is that still how it's broken down now yeah that that sounds accurate senator what what happened and i probably know where that 61 come from as I stated there were several projects that was lumped into one project to make it a large project that happened to several other projects on St. Croix what happens is when you have a project over a hundred and twenty six thousand dollars there's additional cost that you get that is factoring to the amount of money that you're giving so some of those projects it might have been 61 and when they was lumped in uh together that brought it down to 51. okay good uh emile griffith park uh is when is that due to be completed seating and everything there's 90 completed of the a and e um that should be going to public works for review uh once they approve of the design and the scope uh it will go up to property and procurement to go out for bidders to bid on uh that is one of the priorities in the st thomas uh district okay you have you have the funding for that it that project was obligated i think 1.4 million dollars for emil griffith park uh after our car share it comes down to okay so the share was covered yeah actually it's 1.4 after after we we're getting 1.4 for emil

2:18:00 griffith park okay and the 4.1 million that they had for the clinton phipps horse track that you it came under the 428 project where you could re uh appropriate those monies for other areas has that 4.1 million dollars uh um been allocated for other projects fully no so it and that 4.1 is probably not accurate i think on saint thomas is probably 3.4 3.3 something like that and on st croix it might be 3.6 3.7 um but but we have not reallocated that money those those funding are still there for those projects um you know again just think let's say the deal does not fall through with with vigl and the governor decides listen the government of the virgin islands is going to then go back and put what was there before that money is there to put back uh some type of infrastructure for both tracks okay so it was 3.7 million for vincent mason pool and 4.1 for clinton phipps is the 3.7 million for vincent mason pool still there or has that been for the yes senator that is there um vincent vincent mason is uh is actually 2.5 million but vincent mason is a standard lane project which means

let's say when we get in there we start doing the work it comes up more than the 2.5 uh fema would then cover that that cost we will go back to them and let them know and they will cover that cost okay good uh how is the the project the the beaches for the disabled persons how is that project actually working is it smoothly working now we still working out kinks yeah i i haven't heard i haven't heard any complaints about the one that was placed

2:19:50 on on megan's bay um i i passed by the beach the other day and it's still there um as i stated to the previous senator um as we get access to the fund that the 33rd passed for the additional funding for ramps um ada compliance with with parking uh tables uh then we could then go to these other facilities and then start to install those stuff so we could place the additional match down okay and the facilities the basketball courts or the i guess the handball courts provide a lighting source in the evening for and some of these uh facilities there was an issue with obtaining the bulbs the 1500 watt bulb and a 1000 watt ball for the basketball courts uh where they totally purchased you had a uh twenty thousand dollars and uh the great tim duncan donated extra ten thousand one minute what is the status on those yeah so i i have all of that inventory in storage senator uh as i stated at some point um we are going to move away from those high pressure sodium lights um in the next five years i probably am not going to be able to get parts um for for those high pressure sodium so it just makes sense now that we're looking to move into the led lights everybody's is moving into led light 30 seconds a lot of the companies are not going to even sell you the parts because they are not making the parts anymore um we will have to make a decision because i'm sure we're going to have a considerable uh balance of bulbs in stock um of what we're going to do with that um in hindsight maybe we shouldn't have purchased so much um but i i have no doubt that we'll be able to find uh somewhere for those bulbs to find a home okay good i have two final questions uh one uh time was up if i may miss time okay yes two final questions uh one the four benches that i donated to the uh vessel beach on saint thomas uh i haven't had a chance to check word day uh were you able to be able to secure those beach those benches down to the ground by stakes or anything yeah the benches are still there i want

2:22:10 to thank you personally for that um i think vessel beach is one of the beaches people are starting to frequently morgan um you know once we get this t corp um we were talking about considerable amount of money hopefully we can put some type of infrastructure out there whether it's a uh you know concession booth or restroom facilities um but i i think um once we tap into that t-corp fund um we're going to be able to do some significant stuff to our facilities our playgrounds um all of them are old a lot of them are deplorable we'll be able to enhance and change those um there's been talks about putting uh covering over some of the basketball courts those are things that we could do with the money um you know there's talks now about bike lanes um you know i'm really excited about getting that funding because like i said this is additional money that that i call it free money that we're going to be able to get every year um if we can tap into that t cup okay and finally uh you have done what we're able to do a lot with public private partnerships uh you still have those private uh organizations and who assist you with uh accomplishing some of your tasks uh i don't recall if you mentioned them in your um testimony so if you could take the time uh final time and just uh name some of them and you know give that gratitude to them too uh thank you for the time we will be here for hours if i name all um but um you know this department is blessed that we have individuals in the private sector non-profits that that is always willing to assist somehow whether it's monetary or in kind um you just saw french town the other day we had a a baseball team that donated a tiller to the department um we had people donate scoreboards on st croix um just got a call from from from a gentleman, Mr. Christian in Frederick said yesterday, who wants to adopt Debo and Richards Park. There's a lot, like I said, too many to name right now, but I do want to say that,

2:24:20 you know, I'm grateful and I thank all of those nonprofits that generally want to help this department see our success. And a lot of the times it's for the children that they're doing that, and I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you, Senator DeGraf. I just want to follow up on A question that Senator DeGraff made, I think he was asking what's the number of new employees since 2019? I heard, I think it was Ms. Pell mentioned some in some areas, but what's the number of new employees that you guys have acquired or hired, I should say? Ms. Pell, you have the total number of employees hired since 2019?

2:25:08 Senator, I do not have that response right now, but I'll get it to you shortly. Please, please do. Also, Commissioner, are you at the table when it comes to the Department of Health or the task force that deals with COVID? The last executive order, I did give some suggestions. I will be honest, and like I said, I have a great relation with the Department of Health. I think going forward with the new executive order, somebody from the department or somebody with an athletic inclination needs to be there kind of to give some guidance and experience of how certain sports can operate during the pandemic. But let me ask you, Commissioner, are you officially part of a task force that deals with COVID-19, though? I am not.

2:26:03 You're not. Okay. We heard testimony here on another committee that you were part of that task for providing insight and information in regards to the area of sports. And I think it's important that you're part of, that you are at the table with

regards to that, so that you could give your input in regards to sports and decisions moving forward. So that's an important part. We'll be reaching out also and making that recommendation. Senator Whitaker, you are recognized for seven minutes.

2:26:38 Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, and good afternoon to all the listening and viewing audience. Good afternoon to you, Commissioner White, and thank you for your testimony. Commissioner White, I'm going to start off just on some basic details. It's always important just to highlight the main items. What position do you hold on the Horse Racing Commission? I am the ex officio, so by virtue of my position, I am on that board, on that commission. And the sports commission?

2:27:12 Senator Whitaker, can you speak into the mic? And the sports commission? I am also the ex officio on the sports commission by virtue of my position. Okay. Just on the, so in terms of the sports commission meeting, how often does the commission meet, and when is perhaps your next meeting date? I think every two weeks. The Sports Commission meets frequently. Like I said, the chair has a good handle and grasp on what's going on. I think every two weeks, so twice a month, that the Sports Commission meets. And who is the current chairperson?

2:27:49 Mr. Leon Hunt. Okay. And meetings are sent out pursuant to Sunshine Law five days before and members of the public can participate. Are these meetings physically, in person, via Teams, Zoom? How are persons from the public able to participate? Yeah, so both commissions are open to the public. They're sent out by the media. What about social media? What about the Facebook page for the department?

2:28:17 it. We do not send out that meeting on the Facebook page. Let me clarify, Senator, I am not the chair. The chair and the secretaries who send out those meetings and invitations, but I will suggest to the secretary that she can use our Facebook as a medium to get those out also. Yes, I believe in that collaboration. It's really important and key, and I want to thank you because my office did reach out, and we will be part of those meetings, and want to thank you for that and we did have our informal meeting um on the topic of the horse racing commission though i wanted just to get um on the point of the live racing as you as a commission member have you do you have any insight because as we look at you know those of us who you do follow horse racing and the like we do see persons in the stand following social distancing football or different games are happening um just in terms of us as we move beyond the topic on the issue and and get us into finally having our races and and everything that goes with it what plans has the board made once we begin live racing within the cdc guidelines so do you have a document um good example i've searched the country and there are a number of different policies that different racetracks have put out um this one pager just telling all the guidelines for um and and do you have that kind of documentation as you guys move forward um with horse racing and even all games in general yeah so we we have not discussed uh once races to be honest with you senator we we want to get to that point first where we can actually have racing well i mean race everything every less not just the horse racing basque everything all the sports that we're gonna have through the territory um how involved are you with working with commissioner and canace young in the element of putting out information and guidelines for public participation physical

2:30:13 participation in those sports yeah i think my team did a wonderful job of creating the guidelines that are going to be administered at our facilities um i'm sure within the next week or two we plan to contact all the coaches or individuals that plan to use these facilities go over these uh guidelines and make sure that they're aware of what we are asking of them that document is already been created and i gotta thank my assistant commissioners and my district administrators for that we already have that documentation it's now to get it out to the public we will be doing that via our facebook page so that they know what the rules and regulation is to add to that senator we just secured some two hundred thousand dollars within the cares act to get some additional equipment that is going to help the department at our facilities the facial temperature scans sanitation equipment that stuff was already order was already placed with property and procurement waiting for that to be approved so that we can receive those those uh items but until then i i still still think my team and myself can administer at a safe environment we do have the handheld well let me hold you there because my time my time is a little short i mean to cut you off good very good information i appreciate your depth this was this to the chairman just for my perspective i like documentation through the chair if you can at least for the documents that are in the final form through the chair um to really see that documentation um that's important what occurred you're referring to the policies in policies and procedures he's indicating that they've been working on a series of policies and information and guidelines to get out to the public i would like to see that the other item are the was fema fema wow we continue to hear the stories from department to

2:32:06 department um our role as senators is to once again senator please speak into the mic they're They're having problems hearing you. Thank you. The issue that we hear from department to department concerns the FEMA issues. And as a commissioner, if you could, what would be most helpful at least to myself to assist you and work with my colleagues is if we can really know from project to project what the issues are. I would like names to those issues who you're dealing

with in FEMA. We as senators are engaging with FEMA to address those issues. But the only way we can help you is when you get into those bottlenecks where it's you've done everything you can For us to at least with this one minute jurisdiction to assist in that regard Beach access commissioner a member of my staff. He's legally blind and part of his role He's been coordinating with the ADA coordinator. I've met with ADA coordinator and one of the elements one of the items is the is the beach access Matt's very commendable commissioner as the according that effort I saw they come and so on in st. Thomas but there's a plan for Kramers Park 30 seconds as you may well I know you know st. Croix quite well it's hard for anybody who has challenges with transportation to get out of Kramers Park so as we've engaged 80 coordinator mr. Henley this hopefully it'll be either that maybe Maybe working with public works to see if we can get persons out there, or just selecting another beach location. And finally, on the Caribbean Drag Race Association, I did have a chance and opportunity to meet with Mr. Arthur Hector, a very fruitful meeting, as he gave me the update. Time. Chairman? Yes, you may.

2:33:45 Yes, thank you. I had a meeting with Mr. Arthur Hector, and he basically updated me. I went out there physically with my team on the status of the racetrack. How are you, I mean, I know you have over the year, I mean, just in your position, have provided support as best as you can, that property just for the public to be aware is actually owned by the Port Authority. Okay, so Commissioner White, how have you worked on, does the governor have you assigned to that project?

2:34:18 As I understand, it's about \$600,000 that's left needed to basically get the racetrack where it needs to be so it can start races. Yeah, like I stated, I have a great relationship with Mr. Hector. A lot of what the department have done have been more in kind, you know, helping him with the grass out there. He needed some poles removed from WAPA. You know, I was able to make the connection and call WAPA, they was able to come out and assist us. VI Paving is assisting with the lights, sorry, VIGL and VI Paving, but the property is going to be turned over. Like I said, it is under the Department of Sports, Park and Recreation, horse racing, car racing is a sport. They have a junior drag racing component within their association, and I've already talked Mr. Hekken told him that I'm very, very interested in seeing how the department can assist with that junior derogation program. Yeah, and I just want to again commend you. That demonstrates how a department can step in. But at the same time, I will state that when we have a department that is responsible, because when you said you stepped in for the grass cutting, Port Authority is on Port Authority's property.

2:35:37 So that, you know, what's going on with that maintenance? And you hear the same stories about maintenance issues. so thank you again commission for your statements and I just wanted to conclude chairman is that as we move forward what's again going to be really important for us to with the FEMA issues and a crisis we're under just be open with us so we can help you through the process so that we can see a lot of us courses we know recreation isn't tied to our youth development and certainly as a chairman of Education Committee I'm really in support of us shifting and moving forward thank you so much thank you senator Whitaker just for my colleague my colleagues just to make you guys aware we will most likely be bringing this matter of recovery dollars for SPR facilities to the committee of disaster recovery and infrastructure I have sent a letter will be turning it into committee chair senator Saru so that we can thoroughly be able to talk about these projects and their status and see how we can assist the department in moving these projects forward. Thank you very much. Senator Donna Fred Gregory, you're recognized.

2:36:50 Thank you and good afternoon, colleagues on the Big Island of St. Croix. And then good afternoon to the testifiers. And you know, as I sat here and I listened to the testimony and I've seen the work of Mr. Calvert White I'm echoing can we turn off either one of the please thank you as I sat and I listened to the testimony and I look back at the testimony of November of last year of Commissioner White I must say that there are times when I reflect on individuals who have supported and voted for as they come before the Senate for nomination to the various positions of commissionership here in the territory. And there are a few that I'm proud of that I said yes to. And I must say today that Commissioner White, you're one of them. So congratulations on the work that you and your A-team continue to do. Your work speaks volumes and I know there's a lot more work to do and I know that of course the COVID-19 situation has slowed you up and of course the situation that we had with the 2017 storms did not help your situation either but there is where there are challenges there are always always opportunities so you are now in a position where you can fix I want to say all all of your parks here in the territory because of the the funding that you're receiving from FEMA and HUD as well, so I hope that you utilize that funding to really ensure that at the end of the day we will be proud of the parks

2:38:36 that we have here in the Virgin Islands, and then it's our responsibility as legislators to support you, to support the department in ensuring that those parks are in fact properly maintained via the appropriate funding. Okay? So I want to thank you and your team. But let me just ask you very quickly, Commissioner, let's talk about this sports tourism plan. You know, in the 30, several legislatures, but in the 33rd legislature in particular, since I've sat as a senator, this legislature has appropriated additional funding to support the Pauly-Joseph Stadium. And I know that the governor has

said to us that he needs some additional funding to make sure that this project gets completed. And I'm a firm believer that this project needs to be completed. We've already put millions of dollars into it, and we need to see it to fruition.

2:39:38 But my question for you is, as the Commissioner of Tourism, what's the status of the sports tourism plan and i ask because a year and a half ago or prayer yes a year and a half because it was prior to covet we had a discussion with the governor around yes we have no issue with putting the funding in there but senator saru and myself in particular we asked about so how are we marketing what we're doing as it relates to the paulie joseph stadium so is there a plan in place are we working on a plan what's the status of that thank you for the question senator yeah i remember the the hearing uh uh very well um i think after we talked about sports tourism and how do we market poly joseph stadium i had conversations with wtjx and we noted that uh there wasn't really in place the infrastructure uh for the video coverage of that facility uh we did go back and we were able to get it in there to where now anything that happens at poly joseph stadium uh wtj just received a new satellite truck will be able to now be carried out to the mainland so we wanted to make sure that that was in place there uh senator when it comes to sports tourism i am a very very uh avid uh person in support of that uh you're aware that we brought the soccer team these united there um people are going to come to the territory that's a no-brainer hold up a second hold on a second commissioner i'm just i am trying to establish whether or not the territory through your office is in fact working on a sports tourism plan i understand all of the you know what what is that objective what are the strategies do you have something that you're earnestly working towards yes the short answer to that is the sports to the sports commission is working on the policy for sports tourism there is a sub committee specifically for sports Tourism. Myself is on there. Commissioner Joe Boshelti from Tourism is on there.

2:41:44 And there's several other committee members on there. So there is a committee specifically. So you all are meeting and this is something that you're earnestly working towards. That's what I wanted to hear. That's that's affirmative right? As early as last week Senator. Great. Good news. That's why I said what I said earlier. Okay also let me ask you. So I note that that you had some \$738,000 in some CIP dollars from the Department of Interior, if I'm not mistaken. And with all of the funding that has been approved for the parks here in the territory, have you used that money already or do you still need to utilize those funds?

2:42:27 funds. No, so those funds are going to be utilized. I think the funding was made available. It's available. Go ahead. It's available. Those funds are what we're using to resurface the basketball courts. We just had the pre-bid meeting for St. Thomas two weeks ago. The pre-bid meeting for St. Croix was held Monday. Within the next couple of weeks. So basically the answer is yes. Yes. Yes, my time is running. So basically the answer is yes. you are one minute in need of the funding and you're utilizing the funding as we speak right absolutely absolutely okay great now you talked about combining a bubble that combining a bubbly initiative and i must say that that was an excellent initiative and i heard you earlier when one of my colleagues asked they asked you about the status and how effective it was etc you talked about some scholarships that were garnered as a result of the combined in a bubble are we extending that to this school year 30 seconds repeat your last thing senator yeah i was asking if you're extending the combining a bubble um initiative to this new school year so so part of the bubble being able to work we was able to get university of the virgin islands where we're able to isolate the students because uvi have now called back students and they're in session we don't have access to those dormitories anymore if the commissioner of health or the department of health cdc deems that we can now uh administer those same uh services outside of the bubble um yes we will be interested in continuing those okay so i have one last question if that's okay with you mr chair yes

2:44:17 Yes, you may. Okay, so you talked about six vacancies in your testimony, but you were not specific to what the vacancies are and actually whether the vacancies are, whether you've identified persons to fill those positions. So I'm trying to get specifics around the vacancies and whether or not you're in the process of actually bringing folks on, you've identified individuals to fill those positions. i'll let miss relina pill my human services manager then answer that good afternoon um senator yes i do have one groundskeeper one automotive mechanic two lifeguards and one recreation leader starting on monday march 1st they're scheduled to begin i do have two groundskeepers that was just offered um positions on the st thomas st john district so they it's in the process to their nopa and i also have pending two more lifeguard instructors and a general maintenance that's currently running and i recently got sent out a prf receptionist collector which i have not received back from omds yet could you repeat that last one that you said i i we couldn't hear you You sent out a PRF. For what?

2:45:41 Sent. For approval. You're breaking up. It was sent for approval. Okay. All right. So I'm going to close, Mr. Chair. I want to thank you. But before I close, I wish to share with Commissioner White that I am still looking forward to having the discussion with him around the VI Olympic Committee, around the structure that they're proposing to have to put here in the St. Thomas-St. John District, as well as the matter around the Cricket Association. I think those are two very critical matters that we need to discuss and we need to get moving here in the St. Thomas-St. John District. So I'm looking

forward to meeting with you so we could finalize those two matters and make some determination as to exactly where they're going to go and how we're going to make this work for the people of this this district that i have been uh voted on to serve and represent so thank you for the time mr chair and thank you again to commissioner white for all that you do as well as your team well thank you thank you my president for sharing and your questions uh let me ask you with regards to i know uh commissioner senator the graph was asking i think it was the graph or senator johnson regards to the projects that have been completed on saint thomas uh versus um saint croix and you mentioned that some of the projects on saint thomas were smaller projects uh under 50 000. do you have the amount of how many projects do you have territorially that are under 50 000 And a breakdown for each district.

2:47:30 I do, I do, I do. Give me a second because I have a chart here. So, Smith, B. Tiny, Todd, Parks. So, without going through it, when I look at what was completed, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, about 9 projects were under \$50,000. The two that was under \$50,000 in St. Croix, as I stated, work is being done as we speak. that contract was already signed a notice to proceed was already went out but all the projects them that are we are working on now are the large projects that had to go through a more stringent red tape before we could move forward do you have a come a time frame when these projects will be finished the two that are that have started on st croix um i could look at when the notice to proceed was and I think the contractor had um either 90 or 120 days to come and if anybody from your team could assist that's that's fine because I see they're they're kind of quiet there so um you know if you if you need their assistance they could pitch in so you're saying I was saying senator I would have to look at the notice to proceed and see when that when those contracts was allowed if it was 90 days or 120 days I'm glad that you you said the team is quiet they are not quiet a lot of these projects required you know some type of engineering knowledge or construction background you know my team is not really handling the FEMA projects I know my assistant commissioner Hanson and mr. Roberts is involved and that's why I'm

2:49:36 so proud that we have 48 or 49 of those projects because we don't have engineers like a lot of the bigger departments we don't we don't have project managers a lot of this stuff is being done in-house um you know I've asked these individuals to do more than they're required to and they've stepped up to the plate um I do have that information and and if I can I will submit it to your office yes I appreciate that and I must commend you and your team because uh you know I know it's not an easy tasks that you guys have on hand, and to be able to have 49 of the 51 obligated, I think that's commendable, and it speaks about the work that your team has been doing. So kudos to you and your quiet team. They're quiet here, but I know they're working bees behind the scene. We had the opportunity to be able to travel to and tour many of the facilities and the parks, like I said at the beginning, on St. John, St. Thomas, and St. Croix. And I must say that even though we know that many of our facilities need repair or suffer damages due to Hurricane Irma and Maria, and it's no secret also that many of our facilities are old and really you know need to be restore but I must say that I saw and many of them how your team have worked very hard digitally to be able to ensure that at least they are available to be able to use to a certain degree and I know there were some programs that were in place last year for 2020 that unfortunately because of COVID stopped. So let's speak a little bit about programs, but let me ask Madam Clerk, please put me on the time for seven minutes and then we'll go into our second round once I'm finished. Let's talk about our programs because I know last year there were some programs and they were stopped because of COVID. What projections do you have this year how many young people are you all expecting to get involved in the programs that

2:51:48 you have in place and what are these programs so i'll defer and ask mr thomas to talk about the st thomas district as far as programs going forward and then uh mr mila henry to talk about the programs on uh st croix good afternoon uh kirk thomas district administrator us good afternoon john as far as numbers um the intro the intention is really to try to capitalize on and what the covet has done um first and foremost direct staff on saint thomas the intent is to actually not just train as far as drills and and um put a ball or basketball or baseball back in the hand of a child but we actually have to get the fitness program up and running before anything else um the numbers that i foresee as far as the clinics and drills we have over 100 to 250 youth as far as partake in the baseball program and then um right now the starval program was picking up and went it was a blast the salvage program actually shoot off on the island of st thomas st john and st froy so that program in itself um increased so i say that's another hundred young ladies we most likely would would expect to see um with the coming on of the two lifeguards on the island of st thomas as we we give them time to to wet their feet with the high with the help of um of kai and mr mulatto from the island of saint froy as far as our life gods um we already spoke about you know the learn to swim program here on the

2:53:41 island of saint thomas um that was part of the initial interview that we did here and saint thomas was with one of the life gods so let me let me let me ask you um what programs are we expecting to see um what maybe next week or do you have any programs currently now well right now we're completing we somewhat completed the guidelines that's forwarded to the commissioner once those guidelines are put in place and like the commissioner said we intend to meet with the organization my second question to you is by when um are you expecting to have those guidelines complete going after the commissioner statement i was saying it in two weeks i would say more or less a two-week window as far

as completion um it's already been vetted by the assistant commissioner now and we should have it the commissioner should be finalizing that and he can speak upon that so so let me let me expand on that a little bit uh senator those guidelines have already been uh vetted by the department of health and on paper okay uh the first thing that we need to do is make sure that all of our employees know what these guidelines are we can't expect them to administer it to the public if they don't know what the guidelines are so the first thing is our employees need to come familiar with what we are going to be doing when people come to the facility after that then we will get this information now to the coaches um and the people that are going to be using so let me let me ask you commissioner what's the date that you have in place for training uh or workshop to ensure that uh your employees are aware of the new guidelines i think as soon as next week i think as soon as next week that'll be

2:55:32 going out to the employees um i i just signed off on the the guidelines this week um next week we'll get the training and it'll probably be a day or two we like to do simulations within this department have a real life simulation so that when people come it's not something surprising and then to the public the following week so I think the two weeks is accurate. Okay yeah and I'm asking you for a timeline because you know we have many parents that are anxious to see their children out of the house and engage in some sort of sports or activities or programs so I want to make sure that they are aware what the time frame is and that the department is really working to ensure that their children will be safe once they are out at the parks or the activities, the programs you guys will have in place.

2:56:24 So thank you for that. So within a two weeks time, correct? I think I lost you a little bit, but absolutely, you know, safety is our number one priority. And what type of programs then, I know I heard, I think baseball and volleyball, so what type of clinics um and programs we'll be seeing so you you're going to see a lot of the the the literally contingent coming back out to the baseball fields um keep in mind senator a lot of these children have not picked up a ball in in 10 months so we're not just going to throw them on the field and ask them to start playing we're not allowed to play anyway um it's going to be a lot of conditioning a lot of drills a lot of individual training because it's safer with COVID-19 to do that so you're more going to see a lot of teaching more than actual play and if any for those that are listening and viewing and they want their children to get involved how can they do it where they have to call absolutely the first call should be made to the department of sports park and recreation for any activity that's going to be held in our facilities uh in the st croix district that is seven seven three zero one six zero uh either ask for my assistant commissioner renee hansen or district administrator jamila henry uh in the st thomas st john district seven seven four zero two five five uh either ask for mr vincent roberts my assistant commissioner, or Mr. Kirk Thomas, the district administrator. For any activities on St. John, that would be my deputy director, Mr. Elroy-Hill. And it's the same number for St. John, it's the same number for St. Thomas?

2:58:18 Correct. All right. My other question with regards to reach. So with regards to marketing, what's the plan to get the information out about what programs are coming or online are coming online? Yeah, so again, and I stress this a lot. We don't have public information officers like other departments and people who write. You know, the people that you're seeing on this screen, some of the employees, you know, they handle our media, our Facebook, our website. You know, like I said, I'd like to add people to add us to Facebook, all of our information, whether it is a program, we usually post flyers that we're going to have those programs. The website is up, www.dspr.vi.gov, or you can just call the department and ask if there's any programs that interest your child.

2:59:18 So just like I mentioned to, during the first block, the Assistant Commissioner of Labor, If we wanna reach out our young people, we need to reach them where they at. So social media is a platform to be able to promote any program activity that the department will have, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. The department I know has Facebook. Do you have any other, are using any other platforms other than Facebook to be able to reach out to the young people? I will let Ms. Henry talk about that. know there was conversations about our instagram um page um i know we're not on twitter um again the website is the individuals that you see here we didn't pay anybody to create our website i gotta thank bit for helping us with that but all the information was was with these individuals Ms. Henry.

3:00:19 Afternoon again. We are working on our Instagram page. We have our email from BIT. So Ms. Hanson and myself will be setting that up. Let me ask you, because we hear this a lot and this could mean a lot of things. When you say we are working, what does that mean? We're working on a page, getting the content together, what we're going to post stuff like that we just got the email address so we have to transfer our stuff from what we have on facebook and make sure we mimic the same thing on instagram because um if i may i mean it's it's not you know you know it's not rocket science really it's just um starting the page and putting up the flyers on instagram it uploads pictures so um i i i can't stress it enough um that we have to improve and not only to not only to your department commissioner but to various departments we have to improve our communication and ensure that our community is aware of the programs and services that this government has to offer so many of our people whether as seniors or young people they fall on the

sidelines because they are not aware of what the departments are offering what the government has to offer so i i want to stress to your staff, to your team, to yourself, to please make sure that this is done. Snapshot is another area where you could reach the young people and ensure that you have information out there. I'm hearing some of the ads in the radio, so that's a good thing. I was able to hear the ads and I have to commend you for the drive-in event that you had and some of those ads were on the radio. So we need to use different means to be able to reach the community that we serve.

3:02:06 Noted, Senator. We're going to go have some more questions, but I'm allowing my colleagues to ask. We're going to go to a second round of questions so that we can continue because I know they have some more stuff they want to share. So we're going to go into a three minutes, three minutes round of question. And Senator Johnson, your first. Good afternoon. Thank you very much again Mr. Chair for this opportunity. I want to pretty much stay on the line of questioning that Chair Senator Carrion was asking about programs and my question really direct directly to summer programs or summer camp with these numbers low in and there's There's guidelines that we're trying to put in place. Are we intending to be prepared if that possibility for summer programs by Spokes, Parts, and Rec?

3:03:06 The quick answer to that, Senator, is yes. We do know that that is going to be contingent on whether the Department of Health allows in-person summer programs. everybody in the territory knows sports park and recreation is the best of a program in the territory but if we get the approval to administer them absolutely we will and then you have your funding capability of pulling this off and program and that's why they keep asking about the programs if you're preparing them and putting them in place to make sure if that opportunity arise you don't at the last minute scrambling trying to put these programs and set up your facilities to accommodate these summer camps. I don't think funding is an issue for our programs. We lack funding in a lot of other things, personnel, equipment, but when it comes to funding I think we're okay with that. And my next question. I realize that you have 104 employees, 54 in the St. Thomas, St. John district, 50 in the St. Croix district. Out of the 54 in the St. Thomas, St. John district, how many St. Thomas, how many St. John? Let Ms. Pell answer that.

3:04:32 Good afternoon, Raleena Pell. Currently in the St. John District, I have six employees over there. Okay, thank you very much. And back to Commissioner. In the discussion with sports tourism, it's a language that we've been using for quite some time, but it's not something that we have capitalized on big enough.

3:05:05 And 30 seconds. My good colleague out of St. Thomas continued to ask the question about sports tourism, but I want to be a little direct with it. And she continued to sponge on the Polly Joseph Stadium in regards to sports tourism. You have a big sports tourism activity with basketball on the island of St. Thomas, Paradise Jam. And I hope... Time.

3:05:37 May I, Mr. Chair? Yes, you may. I would hope that we would start reaching out early in the same aspect with the baseball and the college baseball teams to utilize that park or either reach out to a minor league team because to keep that park is going to be very costly to Parks and Rec. But if you find a private partner to align with that will take that park and keep it up to par and also continue with the tournaments, it's going to be profitable. And then I can see sports tourism at the highest in the Virgin Islands when it comes to that baseball park being utilized with tournaments with all the college and the Virgin Islands national team taking part. But more than anything, I want to get back at a plate to cow balls and strike. Definitely want to see that happen.

3:06:37 All right, so I applaud you for all you and your team have been doing thus far. But I really encourage that you look into that avenue to make sure that when it comes to sports tourism with the ballpark, the Polly Joseph Stadium, that you start having discussion with either the college or the minor league team. Because if we do this in the wintertime, I assure you, everyone will want to take part in that tournament. Because when they get cold, they ain't going to want to stay up there and camp the ball. They're going to gladly come to this tournament. So it's something that I hope you really look at strongly and consider it. And let's make it happen, Commissioner. Have a good day and thank you for all you've done. Thank you.

3:07:23 If I may, Senator, you know, with a sports management background and event management, we know that any event probably starts two years before that event actually takes place. Both my assistant commissioners, which is Assistant Commissioner Hansen and Assistant Commissioner Roberts, attended a team's conference about a year and a half ago, a year and a half ago, where they form relationships with different sports organizations. And I'm talking about not just baseball, basketball. We're talking about lacrosse, tennis, badminton. So we started the procedure to make those connections and those relationships. Both of them went to that conference. They brought back a lot of information. So we will continue to form those relationships before the stadium opens so that when it's due, we already have people willing to come to it.

3:08:24 Good, good. Thank you, Senator Johnson. Senator Javon James, you're recognized. Thank you. Commissioner White, or anyone who can be able to answer this question, I realize as a freshman senator in the 33rd Legislature of the Virgin

Islands, as I toured at various parks and recreational centers, I realize that we do not have signs placed by these parks and recreational centers and I always say that when we name a park or a building after someone we must take pride in what we do so I just want to ask you with the funding that we're receiving from FEMA have has the department included the erection of signs for the various parks in the Virgin Islands as far as the funding We cannot use that funding to erect signs. The FEMA funding is specifically for hurricane damages.

3:09:22 So my question is, have you done an assessment of what it would cost to provide funding for the various parks and recreational centers that are named after prominent and important Virgin Islanders? Have you? I have not done an assessment, Senator, but I think in my last Senate hearing, I did state that if the legislature would appropriate funding for those signs to go up, we would gladly put them up at every facility.

3:09:55 And what I'm saying is we cannot appropriate funds without an assessment. So I'm asking that an assessment be done by the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation so we don't just write you a blank check or you come back and tell us it's not enough. So an assessment needs to be done, especially with the Pedro Cruz Bar Park. There is no naming of it. And yes, we call it the San Juan Bar Park because no one knows the actual name of it because there's no signs. So I'm just kindly asking that you do an assessment of all the parks that are named after Virgin Islanders who have done great things for this territory so the legislature can appropriate the funds. Can you do that? Absolutely.

3:10:31 Thank you. One minute. And I know that I made mention of some disparities with the DSBR FEMA project listing. So through the chair, I'm asking for sports parks and recreation to submit an updated DSPR FEMA project listing to this committee so we can keep track of the progress of all the project worksheets. And my question to Commissioner White. Can you speak to any collaboration with the Department of Education's athletic director during COVID-19 so when school gets back in session that we can be able to accommodate our young men and women in the field of sports? is there any collaboration going on there with the athletic director yes we have a great working relationship uh with education they partnered with us in the combine we just received a proposal from the department of education i think last week uh for a softball program um that i know the department is is ready and willing to assist them with um so the answer to your question is yes there collaboration. Time. It's only about four of us in the chamber, so can you give us some extra time? Yes, you may. We're flexible this afternoon. We're good at time. You could go ahead, Senator James. I want to say congratulations to the Department of Sports, Box, and Recreation.

3:11:51 Commissioner White, you're doing your thing. You're working hard, and you're doing your thing, and I applaud you, but we have a job to do. The DSPR website was developed by the Bureau of information technology um in the november 2020 hearing you you brought it to the forefront and ever since then i told you of some of the challenges i've had like i just tried to get to the dspr website on my phone and i'm unable to do so but i'm but i'm able to do so with my ipad so um i i see that the website is not user friendly have you had a follow-up a conversation with bit to to rectify that problem you might need to upgrade your phone senator maybe that's No, no, no. Don't try that. I got the baddest iPhone out.

3:12:36 It could be that. But in all seriousness, we had the same challenges last year, and some of my colleagues even made mention of the same problem. And then you tell us to try a different route, which is, I guess, a different spelling or some additional word into it, and it actually worked. So I would take the little piece of but please work on that and you mentioned last year that you're working on a new organizational structure chart for the department doing one of my line of questioning what is the status of that chart have you been able to complete that chart yeah it's not completed senator I noticed with between the two departments you had position titles that one island had that another island they didn't um i'm trying to rectify and put us on the same plane um i i could honestly say that that the group of individuals that that i'm working with um i i know they talk to each other more than they talk to me but i love that they have that that cohesiveness um that they talk to each other the assistant commissioner from st croix has conversation with assistant commissioners from st thomas and then vice versa the administrators from st thomas have conversations with with with st croix um you know it's one department you you see me preach all the time that is is one team one goal one vision um so we're trying to to get that org chart where it's equal all around thank you and um i would just end by saying that um i know you have a lot on your table but that's why you have an assistant commissioner and other individuals to assist you i just kindly ask you to please find some time to meet with the saint croix cricket cricket association um since last year i've been meeting with them and mr chair i would suggest that you reach out to them uh they would like to bring cricket to the island of saint croix we have ample lands so i don't see why we can't accommodate people from different sports or different areas of interest and there's no way she performed comparing St. Croix to St. Thomas

3:14:46 but the St. Croix Cricket Association wants to do a project on St. Croix and last but not least there's an individual by the name of Hakeem Maynard who have reached out to me Commissioner White and he said that he wants to bring down a baseball clinic he reached out to you and something happened there but he was unable to do so so I'm just please asking you to just remain open-minded and even email you the information for Akeem Maynard. He has access to a lot of

professional baseball players on the U.S. mainland, and he wants to bring a baseball clinic here to the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the time. You are welcome, Senator James Sr., for your questions. Senator Alma Francis Halligar, you recognize?

3:15:33 Good afternoon again. First of all, I would like to quickly ask the question. I know there was a discussion earlier in regards to employees of sports parks and recreation attending conferences to make connections. And you also may notice that most of these connections, if you do, it usually takes about two years before anything comes to fruition. While at that conference, were there anything in particular that you guys gravitated to that since it was a year and a half that potentially could be coming online maybe in the next year or so.

3:16:14 I'll defer to Sister Commissioner Hansen or Roberts if any of them want to take that question. Mr. Roberts. Thank you. Yes, good afternoon. While we were at that conference and even when we got back, we did have some conversation with some of the groups that were interested in bringing different different sports to the territory one of the things that we were focusing on it's the groups and the sports that what kind of we saw as a low hanging fruit we had table tennis there was archery stuff that thus required the gymnasium a ballroom things that we could put in place quite easily what happened was uh covet hit um and it kind of threw everything out of the loop but um there was a lot of interest in a lot of different sports um that had a lot of uh following um um so we got we got kind of stopped because of coving but we would definitely be right now um we've been in the pandemic for about over a year and as vaccines are coming out as we are continuing social distancing and a variety of other things and hopefully potentially um we could get back to some sort of normalcy maybe next year are you doing anything to do follow-ups in anticipation of this Well, actually, honestly, Senator, I actually had a conversation with the gentleman from tourism that went with us up to yesterday about beginning conversation with some of the groups again. So, yes, we are planning, we are talking about getting the bar.

3:18:17 So you haven't done it yet, but it's part of your agenda? Yes, it is. You haven't done it yet, but you plan to? yes okay well I'll be looking forward to hearing a little bit about that Commissioner White I would like to ask if you had a wish list because we talk a lot about all the repairs and all the major things that have happened mr. chair yes I had some additional time thank you we spoke about all the damages we're dealing with COVID, but as a government agency, if you had a wish list of things that you genuinely wanted and needed in order to propel your agency to do its very best, could you share some of those things with me? The number one priority would be, you know, our greatest asset, which is the human resource, additional employees, and that's from all aspects of the department, you know, the recreation in the office, grounds and maintenance, and then additional equipment.

3:19:25 A lot of people don't realize that, you know, when you're asking a department to take care of, you know, 50-something facilities, territory-wide, a lot of the times we ask for assistance from other agencies and they usually nine times out of 10 are able to assist. If we had those equipment ourself, I think our staff could do a lot more of the work or get a lot more done. uh but definitely human more personnel and equipment okay as have you guys looked into for example grants to in order to get some of the equipment that you might need or have you looked at that yes i have senator um part of the 428 funds from the honeymoon beach we got some 2.2 million dollars on honeymoon i submitted a letter to fema asking them to transfer that money to get us some capital improvement uh equipment uh in that fund was uh some buckles um so i i have but we we we need more to be honest with you so that 2.2 million what percentage of your wish list per se you would say that covered and what would you anticipate you would like to get more in order to make you whole to do the best that you can um the the two john dares came up to about 240 000 dollars um that was just two but then we're talking about you know attachments um we we need a lot of equipment um the amount of grass that this staff have to cut around the island um zero ton machines um bush hogs um you know i i if i was to put a number senator i'll say close to a million dollars in just capital equipment that we would need to make the job easier for this department.

3:21:17 In addition to the 2.2 that you've already gotten, that would roughly round it off. Correct. Like I said, the 2.2 is going to several things. Out of that 2.2, only \$240,000 is for equipment, and that's for two John Dare tractors. \$240,000. All right. Well, I would wrap up as my time has ended. I want to personally thank you and your staff for the time that you guys took out to give us the tours of the various facilities, myself and my staff that attended these tours, as well as the time and the care that I see a lot of the staff put into keeping these grounds groomed. You know, it's kind of interesting when you're in a situation where you are almost stuck between a rock and a hard place between trying to repair things and not touch them, get FEMA funding, but still be able to provide a service to the community. So I applaud you guys for what you guys are doing thus far.

3:22:15 And I know the importance of these parks and the different programs that your department provides, because when it comes to the young people and the individuals in this territory, a holistic adult, a holistic child, a holistic human being, when it comes to the mind, body, and soul is very important. So I think this department plays a critical role when it comes to the residents of our territory. So thank you so much for that. So I look forward to getting the necessary

information that several of my colleagues have requested. And I am also would like to get some follow up as it relates to reaching out to these various entities that would like to partner with us to bring more sports tourism to our territory. Thank you very much.

3:23:01 thank you senator francis heiliger for uh your questions um now my clerk if you could put me on the clock commissioner yeah i have a few questions also let's talk a little bit about about money um uh what's what's your total budget uh i'll let miss peo as my financial director our 20 2021 fiscal year budget is 7.4 million dollars 74 million 7.4 oh 7.4 okay want to make sure i heard correct it was like wow 74 7.4 uh how much of that is directed to programs and how much is directed to personnel okay personnel personnel and fringe is approximately 6.9 approximately and the other then we have so so our 7.4 million dollars over 80 something percent is personnel and fringe the difference goes into our operating expenses such as our supplies and operating services as well as utilities so how much is that percentage for 110 000 for programs 110 000 for programs yes senator i i i want to reiterate what miss peters is saying out of that 7.4 million 83 point cent of that 83% probably a little higher is just for personnel alone so we don't have a big budget to work with when we're talking about you know our operating budget you know people might pay 7.4 million but but as she stated six point point something of that is just for our employees just for employees correct so what's the percentage for operational Okay, let's say, personnel and fringe is about 83%, so the difference is in operations, which includes utilities, supplies, as well as other services.

3:25:32 So we're talking about what is that difference? Help me out. The short answer is it's small, while she's getting the number, you know. About 83% of our budget goes into personnel and fringe, the difference is in operating expenses, which is about 17%, like I mentioned, utilities and our supplies and other services. Okay, so then the amount for programs is just \$110,000.

3:26:08 yes the pro the programs the programs i'm referencing is actually um was actually part of the non-profits miscellaneous part of the budget but as of time last year and the year before that that amount which is um about 110 000 was moved from the miscellaneous non-profits and moved under our budget so that is the 110 000 that is actually part of our budget clearly clearly we have a problem here because if we're called to serve the community and our young people and um and the amount for programs is just a hundred and ten thousand dollars um something is something is clearly wrong if i may add as well we also receive five hundred thousand dollars from the tourism advertising revolving fund that assists with programs as well oh 500 500 000 yes that's correct okay and you said the size of your staff is is how much 104 total 104 okay i heard a gentleman reference the other day that 104 was years ago was st croix alone um so we see that every year personnel for this department is decreasing but the demand is increasing. And you have a total of how many facilities and parks that are under your jurisdiction? Senator, if I used to call out the recreation centers, restrooms, clearly territory-wide, easily over 50 facilities.

3:28:10 Over 50 facilities. Territory-wide. Aren't you? So what are the challenges that you say that you're facing right now? I'll start off with my employees. You know, I will always be an advocate for my employees. You know, salary is always an issue.

3:28:38 it comes to morale you know we we demand a lot of these employees with some still of the lowest paid in the territory just vacancies getting additional people to work vehicles you know we just hired some new custodian workers to clean these restrooms but we don't have the vehicles for them to go to the different facilities equipment so in regards to custodian workers how many do you have in each district uh miss bill currently i have um three full-time on st croix and a st thomas and john district three and a half three full-time one part-time three on st thomas and three on st croix three on okay three on the st thomas and john three on st croix and st thomas and john three full-time and one part-time three full-time and one part-time all right and um and that's for how many facilities you have on st croix you said 50 is about 50 and all what's the division between district i'll get an information for you within a few seconds senator Because three custodial workers for one district seems like there's a problem here.

3:30:14 Now, let me ask you, do you have any positions that have been held that are frozen right now but are within the budget? And what's that number? Not frozen. I don't think we have any positions frozen. I know when COVID-19 hit, we did lose a number of positions. um if i'm not mistaken it might have been like 11 positions but miss pell you could correct me if i'm wrong um we felt really good early part of last year i think i had 18 positions we were trying to fill um we had failed a number of them but we had 11 left that we were unable to and we lost because of COVID-19. Just to give you some numbers, Senator, 25 facilities on St. Croix, 18 facilities on St. Thomas, 5 facilities on St. John. On St. John. So three custodial workers for all those facilities on St. Croix and three, three and a half for St. Thomas. Is that correct? You are correct. All right. Do you have, are you currently have any vacancies for custodial workers? Ms. Pell? No, we don't. The budget can't handle that. So now that we are in COVID and there are some guidelines and this require some more cleaning what's the plan can you use some of the funds from the CARE Act to be able to hire custodial workers so I've

reached out to Commissioner Gary Malloy we've had several conversations he is going to try to assist me they have a program where I think that individuals that lost their jobs because of covid they're going to be placed in them um he is going to try to see how many custodians and that's what i requested some custodians um he can give to the territory um it wasn't a lot that that he was going to be able to afford us um but but again when you think about the territory especially st croix when you look at the distance between east and west our custodians go from from facility to facility um with with three on the island you could understand um how frustrating and how enormous of a task that is to keep all of those facilities clean and as you stated with covet 19 now we have to do more cleaning um it is going to be a problem for the department definitely and this this really this really needs to be a priority um we really can't continue operating like this. I understand that you have some shortcomings. I think your department has been trying hard with what you have. You have a lot of facilities and not enough staff, even though it sounds like approximately 80% goes into personnel, 80% of your budget,

3:33:29 but clearly there's some shortfalls that you need to really dig into. Are you planning to submit a supplemental budget? And before that, I'm sorry, one of your members from your team wanted to say something. I just wanted to say, just for the record, if I may, while we have three custodian workers on St. Croix, we have one on extended sick leave. Matter of fact, we have three employees on St. Croix and extended sick leave. So just wanted to put that on the record.

3:34:06 Duly noted. Are you planning to submit a supplemental budget? Absolutely, Senator. I expect to bring some numbers to you guys in the Committee of Finance to get some additional assistance. me and the team would work on what see what our most emergency needs are but absolutely we would submit that to you doing the committee of finance you spoke about having some I think equipment or materials in in inventory what's the plan with regards to that I'm not following the question I think one of my colleagues were asking you about I don't know if it was some reference to some material that you had an inventory light bulbs light bulbs correct yeah so so the Department of Sports Park and Recreation for years have a long outstanding relationship with the Housing Finance Authority from time to time they have contacted department to assist them with with bulbs and lighting at their facilities um you know that is one avenue that that we probably would see if if those bulbs are something that they can use um i'm sure eventually they would probably try to move from the high pressure sodium lights to leds also um but but we we do have a number of fifteen hundred and one thousand one thousand watt light bulbs for our facilities okay i was just curious to know know what you know because you said that they're almost becoming obsolete I believe so I want to make sure that what's a plan with with those material that we have in inventory now going back to the needs that you have within

3:36:00 within your department and I asked about the CARES Act you said you're having conversations with Commissioner Malloy but don't we have funding for critical hires have you reached out yeah my question is have you reached out to OMB to find out what funds are available for for critical hires noted have you had that conversation reach up i i have not had that conversation um um and the equipment that i want from the kayaks um it's already been sent up to property procurement Like I said, we're just waiting for them to send a PO so that we can get that stuff.

3:36:41 If there is funding for hires in CARES Act, I will be reaching out to Director O'Neill to see how we can go about getting that. Yes, definitely, definitely have the conversation. And, you know, this is something that sometimes I'm very concerned about how we're not having these type of conversations within the executive branch. Different departments, you know, need to have these type of conversations and support each other. because there's funds that are available for critical hires within the department within OMB for critical hires. So please look into that. The other question I had was in regard to also, within that same field, you are managing approximately 51 different projects. You stated earlier that you have an A-team, a small staff, and you don't really have engineers within your departments or project managers so what's the plan are you planning then to have project managers to see through these projects yeah so there is some cost within the fema fema projects that give us for project management we do have a disaster recovery specialist that was sent down from the office of disaster recovery we constantly meet with the office of disaster recovery and i need to thank them because they keep us on task uh week in and week out as far as moving from one step to the next step uh every week um but we we have been you know reaching out to different resources some of our projects we have gotten scopes done from engineers of education uh odr have helped up with with with with engineers from port authority um so you know it's it's it's help wherever we can get it um you know we could stay here and quarrel and and and screw our face up

3:38:37 because we we need the help but i think um i can honestly state it that we're reaching out to several other agencies and they are trying to assist us with getting these projects i hear your commissioner but i'm talking about in in in-house or um have you requested to have in-house project managers or someone to assist with these projects we don't have the funding in our budget to hire that so like what i'm saying is some of the projects the money that come with the project covers for a project manager so we would have to use some of those FEMA monies to see if we can hire project management okay i guess we'll go into more depth with these questions with regards to the recovery at another committee hearing uh senator

uh johnson you recognize our point of inquiry Commissioner, good day again As I know that You have horses on And I know we're not discussing the opening of the track But on both facilities There are still horses, am I right?

3:39:39 Yes, Senator What's the plan in the meantime While this is going on Are the tracks somewhat Kind of open because the horsemen have to go there To take care of the horse And different things like that What's the accommodation? I think right now everything is back in in your lap, is it? Correct. On the St. Croix side, keep in mind the department haven't managed that facility probably since the late 1990s. It's always been outdoor vendors. This was something that was thrown in Assistant Commissioner's hands in lap. We're now required to go and maintain and cut the facilities. There is horses on the track. we wanted to extend to the horsemen out there to allow to those horses to at least train and exercise and gala. Now, I've been getting some disturbing news that some of the horses out there now are starting to have races. I will assure you that if that continues, and I don't want to speak for the governor, but at some point we are going to have to shut down the track completely, which we don't want to do because we want to make sure that those horses are getting out there and training. But it's a liability issue right now, and if the guys that are there can't abide by just training and galloping a horse and they want to have races, we will be forced to shut it down.

3:41:05 Two horses working out together is not considered a race, is it? Senator, we're talking about horses lining up and going down the trap. I got calls from Port Authority, from their officers. I wasn't there, so you are right. I did not see it, but I am getting some reports of actual races taking part. And who secures the property at this time?

3:41:35 The department has no staff assigned at that facility. We can't afford moving an employee from one facility to that right now. again this was something just thrown in our lot when VIGL decided to vacate the property but eventually like I said we would have to make a decision on asking for additional funds for a track superintendent where they can manage the facility or unfortunately like I said just closing the track I sure do hope that the governor is in his best wisdom trying to do everything to get this track open we've been going a little too long without horse racing in the territory. It's a major sport here in the territory, especially on the Big Island. We have to get this going, so I sure hope that they can come to some agreement. I know there's some legal, technical issues there with it. I just hope that we can get it going and get it going fast. It's very critical. Thank you again very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You are welcome, Senator Johnson, and I echo your sentiments.

3:42:41 We know that horse racing, it's something big here in the territory, and also it's a revenue-generating sports. So with regards to that, there was another question I had, and it's to how much revenue does your department generate? Because I know there are facilities that you all rent out. I know maybe with COVID it was affected. so I would like to have that information how much revenues anyone on your team can share with me in 2019 and now 2020. Ms. Peters can give you that information. I see that she just ran to the restroom.

3:43:21 When she gets back, I'll get that information to you. Okay, I would appreciate that. So in closing, is there anything else that you would like us, and before you give your closing remarks, anything else that you would like us to know and the community to know um just just off the bat i i just want to assure the community that that the employees of this department are working have been working since the onset of kobe 19. um i am hoping that the 34th we saw some some light at the end of the third tunnel with the 34 33rd legislature as we got some additional funding Senator, I'm pleading with you that although it helped, it was not enough. The department have a lot of needs. There's a lot of mandate that is placed under this department by law. But for some reason, the equipment and the personnel was not given to the department to carry out that mandate. Doing budget hearing, I look forward to once again, giving you those problems that we have and hopefully the committee on finance and at the budget hearing can assist us with closing that gap um you know one of the things that that is going to have to happen for this department to move forward is the budget is going to have to increase there's no way around it the budget is going to have to increase uh we're going to have to increase the personnel um but you know for the meantime like I said I can't thank the staff enough for the work that they're doing. You know they get beat around a lot by the public for people who walk around and they don't really understand what these guys do every day but you know I am proud and pleased with the work that they have brought forward. Thank You Commissioner. We'll be back for your closing remarks but now the Committee on Youth Sports Park and Recreation stands for a one-minute recess.

3:45:50 Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'll see you next time. The Committee on Youth, Sports, Parks, and Recreation is back out of recess.

3:56:37 Commissioner White. I'm here. Thank you. Thank you. I want to thank you and your staff for your patience this afternoon. You may now proceed and share some closing remarks. If you would allow me to have my finance director give you those numbers as far as the revenue generation in 2019 and 2020. Hi, good afternoon, Carol Peters, 2019, the department received 156,505, 553 dollars from the territorial park fund that was from the collection of monthly rental fee

from our vendors the athletic fund which is our programs we collected 85,760 dollars in 2020 from our vendors monthly fees we collected 141,855 dollars and for programs we collected 11,320 dollars. Thank you for that information. You may proceed, Commissioner. All right. Senator, again, I want to first congratulate you on your first committee hearing. It was a pleasure. Don't let the quietness of the individuals on this Zoom fool you. I have some bulldogs on this team that are very aggressive when it comes to sports in the territory um they they want to see the same outcome as as myself and that's um just for sports in a general to be better in the territory to give our youth and our adults an outlet for lesion recreational activity so thank you again a lot of people you know i always say you know commissioner you're doing a great job but i want to assure the public um that this is in no way a one man or two in job i depend on all of these individuals um if i could i would have all 104 employees

3:58:51 log on and zoom because we truly are one team with one vision and one goal but the credit goes to them the men and women that are out there every day who are actually doing the work once again i thank you i look forward to your assistance in in making this department better um and i definitely look forward to seeing the committee of finance for budget hearing so that we can again give you guys our needs and concerns to make this department better thank thank you commissioner and i want to also thank you and thank your staff I look forward for a very productive working relationship in this term with your department in particular. Also I really appreciate all the effort that the staff has done. While you understand that my job is also to oversight and hold the department accountable, but I'm also here also to provide the support that you need to ensure that you guys your department can fulfill the mandate and and that you all have so i appreciate you taking out the time to share testimonies and align the colleagues to inquire and ask questions reference to the status and the programs that are affect uh our young people in our territory and i am optimistic just like you and hopeful that soon uh we can have some less restrictions and our young people are able to come out and enjoy the facilities that we have and i'm also hopeful that not only the programs that you the projects that you spoke about this afternoon that they're not only have been obligated but that we can see them completed and that we could have facilities that are a that we are able to use and and enjoy so from our end you have our support anything we can do to be able to assist the department in fulfilling its mission we're here to provide that support you will also be hearing from us when we believe that something can improve we will provide suggestions and ideas or call and ask what's happening but we're here um to be able to work hand in hand with the department because i think we both uh want the same thing we both want um our young people to be able to enjoy and not only young people even our seniors also and everyone in the community to be able to enjoy the facilities that we have available whether they are beach facilities where whether they are uh recreation of recreation centers uh whether they are parks um we we want to ensure that everyone in our community has access and are able to enjoy the facility so i i want to thank you and i want to thank my colleagues the members of this committee and the non-members of this committee for taking out the time today and um being present and sharing their thoughts their

4:01:56 questions and ideas so i look forward to continue working with you commissioner and and your staff having nothing else the committee on youth sports parks and recreation stands adjourned thank you Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. I'll see you next time.

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.

- 5x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**
heard in this transcript as: Frankie Johnson, Johnson
- 4x **Senator Genevieve R. Whitaker**
heard in this transcript as: Genevieve Whitaker, Whitaker
- 3x **Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger**
heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis Halligar, Alma Francis Heiliger
- 3x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: DeGraf, DeGraff
- 3x **Commissioner Gary Malloy**
the surname alone also matches: Ruben Malloy
heard in this transcript as: Malloy

- 3x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James, James Sr
- 3x **Senator Samuel Carrion**
heard in this transcript as: Carrion
- 2x **Governor Albert Bryan Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Bryan
- 2x **Senator Javan James**
heard in this transcript as: Javon James
- 2x **Senator Steven D. Payne Sr.**
heard in this transcript as: Payne, Steven D. Payne Sr
- 1x **Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna Fred Gregory
- 1x **Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory

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 8288 Act 8288 · An Act appropriating \$500,000 from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to the Caribbean Drag Racing Association for infrastructure improvements at the St. Croix Motor Sports Complex; requiring that the Caribbean Drag Racing Association comply with the requirements under 2 V.I.C. §29 and requiring the title to any improvements made at the St. Croix motor sports complex to vest in the V.I. Port Authority ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 33-0453