



Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 or 2% for supplies, \$64,835 or 2% for other services, and \$540,680 or 13% for utilities. The Division of Facilities, Parks and Open Spaces personnel list has 62 positions. St. Thomas St. John District has 27 active employees and St. Croix District has 30 active employees. There are five vacant positions, three groundskeepers, one maintenance field supervisor, one heavy equipment operator.
- 0:00:46 The Division of Sports and Recreation organizes, promotes, coordinates, conducts and develops diverse sports and recreational programs to enhance children's lives and the general community. The Department continues to offer diverse, unique and fun programs to the community of all ages. The proposed operating budget for this division is \$3,010,445, which represents 42%, it consists of \$1,756,161 or 58% for personal services, \$990,559 or 33% for fringe benefits, 5,000 or 0.5% for supplies, 26,725 or 0.5% for other services, and 232,000 or 8% for utilities. The Division of Sports and Recreation personnel list has 41 employees. There are two vacant position lifeguard instructors. The St. Thomas St. John District has 20 active employees, and the St. Croix District has 19 active employees. The Office of the Commissioner coordinates and compiles monthly reports, manages human resources and payroll, and plans and develops capital projects. The SPR non-operational miscellaneous provides financial assistance to conduct and promote youth programs, amateur boxing programs, and leadership programs throughout the territory. The Office of Business and Finance oversees the department's business and financial operations and provides support services to all active activity centers.
- 0:02:46 The proposed operating budget for this division is \$2,227,582, which represents 24% of the total budget. It consists of \$1,188,974 or 53% for personnel services, \$585,964 or 26% for fringe benefits, \$56,530, or 3% for supplies, \$243,794, or 11% for other services, \$32,320, or 2% for utilities, and \$110,000, or 5% for non-operational insignia. The Office of the Commissioner's Personnel List has 21 positions, 11 classified, 7 exempt.
- 0:03:52 There are two vacancies, Director of Sports and Public Information Officer. In the St. Croix District, one vacant position in the St. Croix District is Administrative Officer 3. In summary, DSPR has a total of 124 positions, comprised of 11

exempt, 103 classified, and 10 vacant positions. In the district of St. Thomas St. John, DSPR has 65 positions, 51 classified, 6 exempt, and 8 vacancies. The inquiry has 59 positions, 52 classified, 5 exempt, and 2 vacancies. The department's 10 vacancies consist of the following, 3 groundskeepers, Administrative Officer 3, Director of Sports, Public Information Officer, Maintenance Field Supervisor, Heavy Equipment Operator, and 2 lifeguard instructors. Key performance indicators, KPIs. The Department of Sports, Park and Recreation is committed to improving quality services to the people of the territory and providing the necessary tools, equipment knowledge to the employees to enhance their performance and skills. As such, we have performance goals that are linked to the key performance indicators which allow the department to achieve its commitment. goals to provide active programs that encourage community engagement. Bureau of sports and recreation. Number of recreation programs, non-sports and non-competitive annually, 3. Number of adult recreation programs, sporting annually, 5. Number of sporting and recreational programs offered for ages 3 to 17 annually, 5.

0:05:57 of trainings, clinics, professional developments held per quarter. Two, means of measurement, number of program activities offered per quarter or annually. Number two, to ensure that all facilities are clean and safe to use, parks, open spaces and beautification. Percent of unmanned facilities that are inspected and documented monthly · 25%. Percent of manned facilities that are inspected and maintained monthly · 50%. The number of days of keep equipment is offline · 30 days. Means of measurement · number of work orders, facilities and equipment, and number of facilities rented per month.

0:06:49 Number three, to ensure that the public is informed about DSPR programs and events, administration, number of community engagement and outreach events held quarterly, four, number of developmental and non-developmental programs promoted, marketed monthly, five, means of measurement, advertising. The limited funds have impacted the Department's ability to perform at optimal levels, as DSPR's impact score is 51%, down from 89% last fiscal year. Miscellaneous grant. In addition to the Department's proposed fiscal 2026 budget, the Department manages the miscellaneous grant appropriation of \$2,006,750 for Act No. 8916, Bill No. 35.0376. The appropriations offer financial assistance to 50 nonprofit organizations. The allotment to date is \$345,000 for six nonprofits, 19 nonprofit applications, totaling \$424,250 are in process by the Office of Management and Budget or at the Department of Finance for further processing, and 26 non-profits have not submitted a request to date for a total of \$1,087,500.

0:08:29 Non-appropriated funds. The Department of Sports, Park and Recreation also manages the following non-appropriated funds. Casino Revenue Fund. In FY 2025, DSPR received \$151,752.63 and \$378,318.59 in FY 2024. Park Fund. This fund is derived through the collection of park fees, rentals, and charges for use of facilities, concessions, open spaces, and recreational facilities, which are under the DSPR authority. The DSPR has 101 vending spaces, territorial-wide, of which 55 is on district of St. Thomas St. John and 46 in the district of St. Croix. The SPR also has 64 recreational facilities rental spaces territorial wide, 34 in the St. Thomas St. John district, 30 in the St. Croix district. In FY24, the department collected \$307,207 territory wide. To date, the SPR has collected \$204,575 and projects to collect an additional \$65,044 by the end of FY 2025. The Department utilizes this fund for its FEMA projects, change orders, eligible scope, local matches and gas coupons.

0:10:15 The SPR also intends to utilize these funds to reactivate the E-Mail Griffith parking lot as a paid parking facility. Athletics fund. This fund is derived from the collection of registration fees for sports and recreational programs. In FY 2024, the department collected \$129,495 and to date \$104,940 for FY 2025. Tourism Revolving Fund, the SBI received the release of \$1 million for FY25 and projects to receive another million dollars in FY2026. The Tourism Revolving Fund fiscal year 2024, Actual expenditures, FY25 expenditures and incumbencies as of June 15, 2025 is as follows. Actual for 2024 was \$349,696.43.

0:11:28 FY25 expenditures, \$320,533.16. Incumbrances 2025 is \$413,782.50. Federal grants. ARPA, American Rescue Plan Act, state and local fiscal recovery Fund. The Department currently has two ARPA grants. The Sol Green Solar Charging Workstation awarded at \$1,115,400. The Health and Wellness Program at \$279,242.78. Economic Development administrative grant awards the department was issued three sub awards eda award three sub awards eda award number zero one that's seven nine that's one five one seven seven totaling three million one hundred and forty dollars and one hundred and forty one three million one hundred and forty \$2,083 for the following projects, Oppenheimer Beach Facility Revitalization and Coast Protection St. John Project at \$1 million, Department of Sports Park and Recreation Coral Bay Recreational Facility St. John Project at \$500,000, Department of Sports Park and Recreation Revitalize Retrofit 10 Playgrounds Territorywide Project at \$1,640,083. The ARPA State Planning Grant at \$300,000. Department of Interior Office of Insolent Affairs. The Department currently has a Capital Improvement Project grant of \$738,000 programs. The Department continues to implement a wide range of sporting events and wellness programs that solve our entire community. Despite limited resources, our dedicated staff at the Department of Sports, Park and Recreation remains committed to delivering impactful services that improve the quality of life for residents. Through strategic partnerships

- 0:13:59 with fellow government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local sports federations, we have strengthened our capacity to meet our mandate and expand community access to recreational opportunities. Flagship programs such as the Battle of the Agencies, St. Ursula's Senior Fit and FIC circles, the After School Salvation Army program and our co-ed governmental industrial program reflect our focus on inclusivity and lifelong wellness for youth development to senior engagement. As we look to the future, our goal is to continue introducing innovative programs while retaining and enhancing those that the community values most. We are actively listening to our community and using their feedback to shape a holistic approach to wellness. Operational needs and strategic reforms. At the heart of our work is the belief that the access to safe, well-maintained recreational spaces and engaging sports programs is vital to building stronger, healthier and safer communities. As part of our continual improvement process, we recently conducted a comprehensive SWOT analysis. This helped us identify strengths to build upon, weaknesses to address, opportunities to pursue, and threats to mitigate. This internal reflection has guided us in identifying strategic priorities, operational reforms, and cost saving measures that will enhance our services and allow us to operate more efficiently and effectively. I will share several key priorities, operational strategies, and capital needs that define
- 0:15:59 our vision for the future of DSPR. Establishment of a Law Enforcement Division. One of our most pressing needs is the creation of a dedicated enforcement division within the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation. As we revitalize more parks and public spaces, we are increasingly challenged by unauthorized vending, vagrancy and crowd control issues. This department will work in partnership with the Virgin Islands Police Department and focus on recreation-based enforcement. The goal is to, one, enforce park rules and permit requirements, two, regulate vendors and improve revenue capture, and three, reduce theft and vandalism. This initiative is essential to maintaining family-friendly, secure public spaces and protecting the territory's investment. internal efficiency and cost saving measures. In response to rising operating costs, DSBR is initiating several internal reforms to increase efficiency. Facility-based staffing model. To reduce high fuel usage and vehicle maintenance costs, We are considering assigning grounds and maintenance staff directly to key facilities rather than dispatching daily from a central location. This model will, one, improve accountability, build stronger community ties, and increase
- 0:17:53 operational efficiency. Standardization of equipment. The Department is working on standardizing equipment across the territory. This will allow for a more efficient procurement process, easier maintenance, improved security chain efficiency, improved supply chain efficiency, and cost savings through bulk purchasing. Data-driven management. By closely analyzing expense reports, facility usage, and program performance, we are able to identify underused or underperforming programs, identify areas of waste, reallocating resources to programs and facilities that provide the greatest value to our community. This commitment to transparency and database decision-making reflects our focus on fiscal responsibility. efficiency and facilities modernization plan. The SWR is committed to modernizing infrastructure while reducing our environmental footprint. Our primary goals include lowering utility and maintenance costs, updating aging facilities, enhancing user experience for residents and visitors plan of action includes retrofitting buildings with energy efficient lighting solar solutions and motion sensors upgrading plumbing electrical panels and restrooms replacing play equipment with greener safer alternatives introducing safeguards to prevent water and power TEFT, which is a growing concern as more facilities come online, and seeking grants and incentives through the Energy Office to support green building initiatives. These improvements support the Virgin Islands sustainability goals and will be prepared
- 0:20:09 with staffing realignment to reflect modern operational needs and reduce long-term operating costs. our reach and community engagement community engagement remains at the core of our efforts we recognize that an informed and engaged public is key to our department's success at that end our plan is to invest in a more robust communication strategy that includes a redefined user-friendly website with real-time updates and facility availability, programs, and permit access. A greater social media presence, a quarterly newsletter featuring project updates, staff highlights, and community stories, and town hall meetings to gather feedback, share progress and shape our priorities. A major goal for the SBI is to develop a territory-wide sports calendar in partnership with government agencies, schools, leagues and other organizations. This initiative will improve the efficiency of planning and enable more effective cost promotion, capital Improvement and Facilities Enhancement Plan. Following a detailed assessment of all major and minor facilities, the SBI is implementing a capital improvement strategy focused on safety, accessibility, usability and sustainability. Key priorities include building or identifying secured storage areas at key facilities for equipment storage, renovating courts for multi-use purpose, renovating fields, installing shade structures and inclusive playgrounds, installing ADA compliant infrastructure and permanent vendor zones, and beautification and signage upgrades. These investments aim to improve the quality and functionality of our public spaces while supporting tourism and economic growth. Workspace development and training. Workforce development and training. Of course none of this can happen without a skilled and motivated workforce. That's why hiring additional staff and providing fair compensation for employees remains a priority. The Department of Sports Park and Recreation will continue to provide the necessary resources to ensure an

effective and efficient workforce. The SBR will continue investing in staff by providing the necessary training to develop and succeed in their jobs. Key priorities include increasing wages to attract and retain qualified employees, mental health training. With the assistance of the Department of Health's MCH division, the department held mental health training in May for both districts. The focus was on training employees to manage their mental health and wellness. in professional development. Several of our staff members are currently attending the Government Finance Officers Association Conference and later this year we will also have staff attending the National Recreation and Parks Association Conference.

- 0:24:07 Revenue generation strategies. The SBI is actively exploring multiple strategies to to diversify our revenue base. A market-based analysis is on the way to adjust facility rental rates and lease agreements to reflect current market values, reinstating pay pocket at EMA Griffith Park, upgrading our underutilized facilities to create new income streams, maximizing the value of our existing assets. Increasing program fees and advertising opportunities are also being considered. New revenue streams are essential to sustaining growth without overboding to the general fund. We recognize that without proactive cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures, expansion efforts with strained existing resources sports tourism development the SPI is actively collaborating with the department of tourism and local sports federation to position the virgin islands as a premier sporting destination our con our continued attendance at the teams conference has opened ongoing discussion on hosting a Memorial Day American Junior Golf Association tournament in 2026 and a collaboration with the Sarawar Federation has the USVI in consideration to host a Division I Women's Sarawar tournament in 2027.
- 0:25:54 These events promise to stimulate the economy and evaluate the territory's national visibility. Project highlights and recent accomplishments. I would like to highlight ongoing projects and a few of our major accomplishments over the past year. The Vincent Mason Senior Pool and Coral Resort has been completed and reopened to the public. The FEMA score for the Reynolds-Jackson Bar Park has been completed, restroom upgrades and press box additions are priorities. Renovations at the Clinton E-Fibs Racetrack has been completed ahead of schedule and the Racing Service has been certified. Thank you to Saltland Gaming VI for their commitment and support to this project. At Randall Duck James Racetrack, a geotechnical study has been completed. A&E services are ongoing, a certified racing surface, and refers to the existing bonds of priority.
- 0:27:06 The FEMA scope for E. May Griffith Park has been completed, and we are actively moving forward with securing funding for essential upgrades, including the installation of new LED field lighting and the resurfacing of the facility. The revitalized, retrofit 10 playgrounds territory-wide project is ongoing. The installation IFB will be advertised this month. The following facilities are scheduled for new playgrounds. Vincent Mason Pool, Pramos Park, David Hamilton Jackson Park, DC Garnigata, Lavallee Park, Estee Glen, Rudy Cragerbauer Park and St. Croix, Smith Bay, Tatlac, Dorritair Playground, Oswell Harris Court, Harvey McBean Complex, and St. Thomas, Oville Brown Playground, and St. John. The SPR has eight facilities that remain without LED light retrofit. Fort Frederick Tennis and Basketball Courts, Basketball Courts in Campo Rico, Glen, Marmijou, Castle Park, Williams Delight, and Cools Bay Tennis Courts. We are actively moving forward with securing funds to get these facilities completed. In addition, the SPR continues to monitor three ongoing construction projects being managed by other entities. The Skate and Bike Park at Ezra Frederick Bar Park, Paulie Joseph Stadium and Terence Martin Park, along with the Pedro Cruz basketball court covering. Once completed, it will be DSPR's responsibility to manage, staff and maintain these facilities. Special recognition. I want to take a moment to recognize our ATU Nike RBI softball team, recently won the World Regional Tournament and will represent the territory at the Nike RBI Salva World Series in Vero Beach, Florida in August. We are so proud of these young ladies
- 0:29:31 and the way they represented the spirit and talent of our territory. Also, congratulations to our 15U Nike RBI Baseball team for making the Nike RBI Baseball Junior Regionals tournament semifinals game. And finally, congratulations to our Employees of the Year, Mr. Roberto Camacho from the St. Croix District and Mr. Curtis Prince from the St. Thomasin Jan District for the exceptional dedication and service. In closing, I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank the dedicated staff of the Department of Sports, Park and Recreation, their unwavering commitment to serving our community in the foundation upon which our programs and services are built.
- 0:30:29 These professionals work tirelessly, often beyond regular hours, with a level of pride and professionalism that distinguishes our department. Whether it's maintaining our parks, organizing public events, or developing programs that foster wellness, inclusion, and engagement, the efforts are critical to our mission. I am deeply proud to represent such a committed team. Their passion, integrity, and work ethic not only support our department's success, but directly enhance the quality of life for the people we serve. To each of them, I extend my sincere gratitude. Thank you for your service and dedication. Chairman Francis, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I will now be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

- 0:31:28 Thank you very much, Commissioner Namini, Vincent Roberts, for your testimony and defending the governor's request of a budget of \$9,272,040 and also it's not lost on us your commendations to the Employee of the Year Mr. Roberto Camacho as well as Mr. Curtis Prince our kudos to those individuals who have gone above and beyond their government services and be recognized as the Employee of the Year We also want to extend congratulations to the 18U RBI softball team, as well as the 15U RBI baseball team.
- 0:32:09 So in your testimony, I just wanted to ask you about, first of all, your FOI 2025 budget. Have you received all of your allotment to date? I have Carol Peter-Thantelet. Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Carol Peters, Director of Business and Finance Management. We have received nine monthly allotments. The first allotment was at 8.333 percent and the second to the ninth allotment was a decrease 7.50 percent.
- 0:32:47 All right. What's the dollar value of those decrease over the period of time and how that impacted your services can you repeat please the you talk about the 8% decrease so you receive an amount of 8% versus the previous Monday you got 9% that's what you said indicated the first month we received 8.33% the second month to the ninth month we received 7.50% so that was a decrease in the allotment figures a slight decrease yeah so how much I'm asking for the dollar value that I can get that information to you okay what about vendors payments are you up to date we have vendors payment no we actually have two hundred and twelve thousand four hundred and eighty dollars and eighty-nine cents vendor payments in outstanding obligation and for how long within a few within sixty 60 days, over 60 days, and the majority within 30 days.
- 0:33:53 Any over 90 days? No. What's the status of, what's the situation with these payments? All the payments are presently at the Department of Finance awaiting check release. Are you up to date or having discussion with the pending vendors in terms of the status of these payments? Yes, we are. And this \$212,000 represents how many vendors? Approximately 50 vendors.
- 0:34:23 Approximately 50? Off-island or local vendors? Not necessarily 50 vendors, but 50. Let me get back to you. Don't dig yourself in any hole there, right? It's 50 vendor payments, but some of them are actually the same vendor. So it's not necessarily 50 vendors. What about federal monies? How are you doing with your federal monies? As far as spending, you mean?
- 0:34:56 Spending, any clawbacks, any recall of your federal monies at this time? Have you been notified that any of your federal monies is no longer available to you? No, we have not. Okay, and the federal spending that you have, expenditures, are you up to date with For those, are you at risk of losing any of those federal grants? We have several federal grants that have expired in December 2025, so we are in the process of expending them. Okay. Are you expending them or requesting an extension?
- 0:35:30 Yes, we have two grants that we requested an extension. were already granted for additional year and the other one we are waiting to hear back from them okay do you have an impressed one no no we do not petty cash pretty cash one we have a petty cash checking account who reconciles that and what's the status of that petty cash account the person I recognize that is our administrative assistant supervisor over collection.
- 0:36:09 What's the current balance in that account? Okay, give me one minute, please. And in your testimony, you talk about, in terms of your revenue collection, it seems to be that you're on a track to decrease your revenue collection over previous fiscal year. year I think in fiscal year 24 you collected in amount of \$307,000 and so far you have collected to date 204 575 according to your testimony is that correct that is correct so you're you don't see like you can make meet your 2024 projections or amount into 2025. Are you tracking that? And can you speak to what's causing the decline in the revenues?
- 0:37:17 The decline is pretty much the rental of our facilities. They are not as high as they were in the past so our revenues consist of our vendor payments those are fine those are consistent in addition to our vendor payments is the rental of our facility so that is where we're seeing a shortfall as it relates to those rentals and you're saying that what is Is it you have reduced your charges or cost, or you don't have the appetite, individuals don't have the appetite to actually rent your spaces?
- 0:37:56 What are you saying? It has to do with renovations and has been going on. So as some facilities come online, others go offline for upkeep and renovation. So it's a little give and take. Some facilities are a lot more attractive for parties and that kind of stuff as others and that. So as we renovate and bring them back up, then you see our uptake in collection. Very well. So I would imagine that you're prioritizing those areas that brings in the revenue as projects that you want to take care of beforehand, correct? Correct. Very well. All right, this time I'll open up the floor to a line of questions from my colleagues.

- 0:38:40 And we'll start off with a five-minute round. Senator Marvin Blatt, do you recognize for your five minutes? Thank you so much Mr. Chair, good afternoon. To my colleagues again, good afternoon, Interim Director, Commissioner Roberts and your supporting team there again, thank you so much for your testimony. A lot of information basically. First, I want to start by also congratulating both Employees of the Year for St. Thomas and St. Croix District and also the 18U Solveall team. That was a big, big, big, big thing in terms of what they did accomplish and the 15U.
- 0:39:14 I look forward to continuing supporting those young ladies and other young men in the territory. Let me ask you, though, I want to focus honestly on your grants, because here in the territory, we have a lot of our talent. But with the rebuild and renovation of many of our parks, I must say that we have some work to do. And when it comes to the federal grants, as I was just talking about, some \$5.6 million worth, we need to assure, based on exactly what the post, like I said also in the post report on page five, we need to be way more aggressive in terms of execution and assuring that we utilize these funds. I want to be specific on the capital improvement grant from the Office of Interstellar Affairs, right, we have expended 404,000 and it expires in 26, January of 26.
- 0:40:20 For the St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John Districts, you have a balance of \$330,000, \$3,000. Do we anticipate a showing that these funds are utilized and we will complete the class at hand? Yes, Senator. So what's actually happening right now is the IFB for the installation of those playgrounds is at DPP right now, so we expect that by this year, I mean this month, that the advertisement tour will go. Okay, very well. What about the \$1.6 million for the economic adjustment assistance that basically will revitalize, retrofit 10 playgrounds? That's what you spoke of with- Let me make a correction. Please. The CIP is what you were talking about first, right? the 700,000.
- 0:41:10 Speak into the mic. The 738,000, the CIP. Okay, so that grant was actually used for the resurfacing of the courts in the territory. What's happening with that grant right now is we are working with DPP to go after the contractor for liquidated damages and his banning. His contract is up, he's out of the territory, and he's refusing to come back to finish the project.
- 0:41:41 Wow. So that's what's happening with that grant. We are in discussion with OMB to get an extension on that grant based on the circumstances. The EDA, the one for 1.6, which is the playground equipment, all the playground equipment has been purchased in the territory in both districts. And that is the advertisement that's going out this month for installation. Okay, very good. And economic adjustment for one minute now. Not a time has been spent and it expired at the end of this year.
- 0:42:17 Is that the one you're speaking to for extension? No. In actuality, that's the one for Oppenheimer. It is at zero, but we have actually completed the geotechnical study on that project. and the drawings are at 90%, it's just that invoices have not come in as yet. So a million dollars will be suffice for Oppenheimer? It will not be suffice, but for the purpose of what this grant is for, which is more or less shoring up the shoreline from the sea, it will be to get that completed.
- 0:42:58 Okay, let's go to Carabay, the recreational facility in Carabay. \$500,000, nothing had been spent to date. It expired at the end of the year. Talk to me about that. One minute. Because there is nothing happening in Carabay. So, this money will actually not be able to be utilized for that project, so what we are in discussion with OMB right now to do is to utilize that money to complete the retrofit of all our lighting projects in the territory. 30 seconds.
- 0:43:28 That's a good report on those funds, but what about Cowabee? What would happen? We don't have a facility out there. We don't have anything that's- I understand, and I know that so. Do you have any plans to do anything out there? Yeah, that's something we have to go back and look at because we have to identify property and whether it's for leasing or purchasing, but for this particular funding source instead of losing it we're trying to get it reassigned to so that we could get something accomplished from it and let me actually in respect to health and wellness programs um you did get a grant from the upper state and local recovery fund for 279 000 you have spent 179 you have 100 000 left and we know what health and wellness means in the territory you have been doing a good program what other program you have planned for that hundred thousand dollars we have a slew of programs planned for a hundred thousand dollars um we want to bring back the walk of wednesday um we want to bring back some senior senior programs that we did at emancipation um during the day middle of the day and in st john and st croix so we have a long list of programs that we have um in line for that money so we plan to incumbent on money uh right away and in closing Mr. Chair, you stated in your testimony that you have 50 non-for-profit organizations that receive sons, right? But 26 did not submit anything in terms of a listing. What's the process in terms of those non-for-profit? Can you send to the Chair a listing to us so we can know who have not been submitting? Because we fund these non-for-profit because they do a great job and they do a lot in
- 0:45:15 in terms of filling the gap and assuring that our young people have things to do. So can you send us at least through the chair to those individuals that have not submitted because many times they call and say they submit, but they disconnect somewhere around. So we would like to see what we can do to assist, to assure that they utilize the fund because those are great programs. No problem. Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for the time. Thank you very much,

Senator Blighton, for your line of questions. Commissioner Namini Roberts, in regards to the Reynolds-Jackson ballpark, the press box can be used due to a faulty retrofit, what's being done to address the situation?

0:46:00 The plan, well actually, the issue with the Reynolds-Jackson press box is that the height of the counter requires bar stools. One of the things I plan to do while we're looking at is enclosing the bottom part so we could utilize that as well as press or for scoring. And then what you'll do, I guess, purchase bar stools high enough to be able to...

0:46:35 For the top portion, because of how the design is with the windows. We can't bring the windows down without breaking and... Alright, so you do have a... We do have a plan to address that issue, so that it is more usable. Okay, what about the LED lights? I know that there have been some discussion back and forth even with my office with Gotten a listing of a number of our parks on St. Croix that required Lighting upgrades. Yes. What's what's being done to address that?

0:47:18 So that's what I was telling Senator Blighting We trying to get the five hundred thousand from Coral Bay to address All our parks all our facilities that does not have LED lighting So that would address those in St. Croix as well, you said? Yes. The majority of them that left to be done is in St. Croix. Just for the record, I mean, we have Castle Burke, Williams Delight, Montbijou, Estée Glynn, Campo Rico, Fort Fredericks. All right. It's time for St. Croix to get a share.

0:48:00 So you recognize your point of information. Thank you. You're talking about federal grants, but can you briefly discuss the FEMA funds that was received for both restructs, the status of those monies, the monies that were received for Clinton and Phipps, and the monies that were received for Randall Dr. James? The federal grant, the FEMA monies, you said? Yes. My understanding, and I could double-check on it, that the FEMA monies for Clinton and Phipps were transferred to Randall Jack James Waystra. Did you receive the authorization? I know that you requested a transfer. Have you received written notification that it's okay? I think Mr. Abel should know.

0:48:47 Mr. Abel, have you received written notification in reference to the transfer of those monies? The request was made by ODR to FEMA to transfer the monies from the Clinton FIPS to the Randall Jack racetrack. However, we were informed by FEMA that those funds would not be accessible because at the time of the disaster, those facilities were no longer under the purview of the government. So they said that for both facilities, so the money is also for Randall Dr. James? Yes. Okay, so that's \$7.5 million that we no longer have access to, correct?

0:49:29 At the Middle East Centre. Okay, thank you so much. Sir Roberts, you get money from the RBI, you get funding associated with the RBI? From, yes, in the miscellaneous part of the budget, yes. From the miscellaneous? Yes. So there's a question as to why are children still being charged \$200 to play despite you being provided by miscellaneous funding?

0:50:03 Well, the majority of the, the API program is a territorial program. So all travel, St. Thomas to St. Croix, St. Croix to St. Thomas, is covered through the funding, as well as those teams that travel to the regionals. So the \$300,000 basically just take care of travel and accommodations for the league to be territorial. The additional funding is used for the additional things that is necessary to operate the league. The question is, I mean, children are being charged \$200 to play.

0:50:41 So this is how it works. Because the registration cost is \$100. What we offer is fundraising opportunities for our \$100, which we give every player books, raffle books to sell to cover our \$100. So we don't really require parents to go in the pocket. We just want parents and kids to be apart and have some kind of skin game okay very well we continue to query that as the questions come in and to add to that we only receive 150 of the 300,000 half of it half of it so far so that he but Frederick see recognized for your five minutes at this time thank you very much mr. cheer pleasant good afternoon colleagues testifiers acting Commissioner designee Mr. Roberts and senior staff listening and viewing audience my staff and central staff the reason why we do this long intro is because we want everyone to know we appreciate them I wanted to talk to you a little bit sir about your tenants you seem to have a lot of tenants if you could help me out with some of these I saw a lot of expired leases is that is my mic on okay yeah what is the status of some of these leases that I saw what What page are you on, Senator? Oh, it was on the post audit report.

0:52:33 What page? This didn't have a page. Okay. I don't see a page on this one. Okay, well, we'll move on. Let's talk about your automobiles. What's the status of your automobiles under operation right now? What is the status of the automobiles that you have? Majority of our automobiles are in good shape.

0:53:08 We purchased automobiles within the last, a number of automobiles within the last five years. So the majority of our automobiles are in fair to good shape. They're functional? Yes. Okay. Okay. Because I had gotten a report from someone who called and said they didn't have any way to move around, and I said, I'll ask. But everybody, as you know, they could move around, right? Yeah.

0:53:34 Okay. Maybe it was down for servicing or something. Yeah. Okay. So, I wanted to dive in more with some issues like, I'm looking for cost savings, unlike most people. I look to see how we could save money. what what have you seen so far being in the position opportunities where we could actually try to save some money I know you were given a budget and

you know it's beautiful to spend money but what can you see that will help us the people of the Virgin Islands save some money given the fact that you need to still carry out your duties so we have identified that we could We definitely save some money with the gas consumption, the gas consumption, I think right now we are spending close to \$200,000 in gas territory. We kind of find that high, so that's one of the reasons we are looking at stationing employees at facilities to cut down and the traversing from one field to the next and have them stationed at key locations to bring that number down. Utilities is another one. The water and electricity seems to be on the high side as well. We do believe that we have some theft going on, as well as some old infrastructure that needs to be upgraded, whether it's plumbing and plumbing pipes that have a lot of underground leaking and that kind of stuff. But between utilities, gas consumption, those are two of the biggest ones that we see right now.

0:55:15 So we're trying to also increase our productivity. We would like Sports Park and Recreation to be a very efficient organization. Given your headcount that you currently have, do you think you could squeeze a little bit more out of it or you need more people? We definitely need more people to function better we are right now um a lot of our facilities might have one or two rec staff one minute additional one or two but um that's one of the reasons we're looking to cut cars certain ways so that we could come back and use that money to hire more employees okay one last thing what is the status of poly joseph stadium if you could give us an update because we're still waiting to see when that's going to be completed update as far as that's one of the properties that you're you control yeah so what's the status so the department role is basically when the facility is completed to manage staff 30 seconds um dpw is actually the construction manager of the project but what's the update you've been getting on um it's going to be turned over based on my understanding the project should be completed December 2025. That's this year, six months. Correct. So we're all excited about that. We should be. And you have the staffing that's going to maintain this facility, right? Time. No, we're going to come back to you guys to get it.

0:56:46 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Frederick. One of the things we've been doing during this budget cycle is to encourage individuals to continue to monitor, you know the hearings so that they could offer opportunity to weigh in on some of these matters so you know we've been inundated at times with with text messages from from those constituencies that's watching and have questions about certain things one of the areas in addition to some of the questions that have already been asked was in regards to the exposed electrical wiring over at the um sign farm um ballpark you know what's what's happening there with those exposed wires you're creating a very unsafe environment uh i am not aware of that um i don't know if mr abel could speak on that mr abel do you have a perspective on what's happening with those exposed electrical wiring on um really quicker ballpark i am not aware of that okay yeah all right we got some photos that we'll um certainly be able to pass on and circulate once once we aware we normally send out a walkada and and take care of those those issues okay all right we'll share that with you um at this time we recognize senator avery lowest you recognize for your five minutes good afternoon mr chairman good afternoon colleagues good afternoon sports park and and Recreation. Good afternoon, people of the Virgin Islands. Mr. Roberts, I'm not certain if the Chair Actualists are ready, but how many employees do you currently have making under 35,000? Under 25? 35. 35. Ms. Pell-Panteller.

0:58:36 Raleena Pell, Human Resources Manager. Currently we have 67 employees making under 35,000. All right, Mr. Roberts, how many of the unions is under you're in your shop I mean different you know one union two unions which one Raleena Pell human resources manager we currently have two unions we have SIU and USW supervisors okay well as we had a SIU USW USW one last we had a negotiation with USW we had it last year and we're scheduled to have a a continuation in july for siu and a tentative date of september for steel workers so nothing was completed as yet nothing was completed negotiations correct all right mr mr roberts look at page seven and eight of the uh post audit report for me please and those pages i noticed to the very end reasons for non-payment it says approve a pending check um in finance follow me yes okay yeah so i mean i think some of these are some small payments that we probably could call your colleague and see if we can crank out some i know they have a priority listing thing going on, but some of these are very small payment, \$100, \$350, \$1,600, \$400 type of thing. I mean, well, how's the communication going with you and Department of Finance?

1:00:15 I have a very good working relationship with Department of Finance. OK, well, let's utilize it a little bit here. Huh? Yes, let's utilize it here for the people, please. Yes, sir. Talk to them. Give me an update on Linearaba Stadium. So Linearaba Stadium right now, the FEMA portion is 90% completed, the lights, the retrofit of the lights have been installed. What happened is once the contractor finished the electrical, we found out that the transformer needed to change. So we're in communication with WAPA to get that transformer changed but the the conch the contractors portion as far as installation and lights has been completed um uh so a structural analysis was done and it was deemed that when i was still old you gotta come down for lack of better words yes all right so we gotta find some monies for that correct um i heard you talk about 500 000 for our lights you plan to utilize those for the different facilities yes a portion that will be used for

grifford park well um grifford park itself needs about a million dollars total to to get the entire lighting upgraded at a park because of its location and the fact that we really can't can't dig down without running into water. It requires some engineering. So we need about a million dollars for Griffith Park. So with the \$500,000, the LED lights on St. Croix is a lower hanging fruit that we could get completed.

1:02:08 We're talking about Griffith Park. What about the drainage and the field? We plan to address that yeah fast upgrading so that I mean it's doing a lot better than it been in the past but it does need to upgrade like all of our facilities if we see us and we're interested in sports tourism we can't rain out Thursday and can't play again until Monday that doesn't attract teams who want to come here to play our facilities that don't drain properly and and they come here and they can't play. Well, I'm so glad you bring up sport tourism.

1:02:45 So what is the current status of the sport tourism strategy funded by the Harper State Plan? So that funding is actually through the department for the study of sport tourism through the sports commission. So I have reached out to Ms. Hobson, who is the secretary of the sports commission, request a meeting with the Commission so we could start to discuss and spend this money. Is the Commission functioning? Well, not that I know of, so not since I've been sitting in the seat so that's one of the reasons I am kind of trying to take a little charge and at least get a meeting to find out what's what. What's going on? Mr. Chair, may I ask one more question here. You may, Senator. Mr. Roberts, there appears to be a discrepancy in your personnel counts. The executive budget lists 124.5 field positions while OMB lists 133.5. You could clarify that for me please. What the actual field vacant unfunded positions?

1:03:49 Raleena Pell, Human Resources Manager. There was a typo. And who in? OMB in. So you have 124 positions? We do have 124, yes. Okay, how much is actually filled? We have 100 and, wait, give me a second. Give me one second, sorry about that. Yeah, so it'll be 114 with 10 vacancies.

1:04:39 Well, I'll wait for her to give me the actual. While we're waiting for that, with over 138,000 spent on fuel and maintenance over your 57 vehicles, and so many are listed in poor condition. What is the long-term plan for your fleet? Repeat again, Senator? In your testimony and in the budget book, you have 57 vehicles. Most of them are listed in poor condition. What's your long-term plan for vehicle maintenance and thus changing all the fleet, I guess? Well, like I said, our long-term plan right now is to reduce costs with gas and maintenance by stationing employees employees at key facilities which would reduce the amount of vehicles we would actually need the amount of vehicles on the road on a regular basis. Have a lot of driving around sometimes that really and truly is unnecessary. So the plan is to really kind of station employees to facilities and reduce the amount of automobiles, the amount of gas, the amount of maintenance for those vehicles and what about the van for st john you're carried back you're taking from caribbean automata the the one for you buy a new one no st john is up and running um it in st john sometimes sometimes it all depends on um the newer program um st john district so we use our vans to assist mostly programs and teams are coming from St. Croix for weekends, whether it's basketball or whatever. So we go for it, we bring it up, we carry it on, all depends on me. She ready? She's ready? I am, yes. Talk to me.

1:06:27 So we have 117 that's filled. Filled and vacant would be the difference? yes thank you mr chair one last thing mr roberts when you're coming on here you're walking on it okay good thank you very much talk about abuse just run five minutes and then ten minutes over the time no problem mr chair yes mr able yes i I just received some additional information as to the question Senator Viola had asked previously. Can I give him that information? You may respond.

1:07:14 Go ahead. Yes. I just found out that the St. Thomas Waste Shock Funds may still be available. Very well. Thank you. Place your name on the record, please. We have a new recorder. Mr. Abel. Errol Abel, Disaster Recovery Specialist, Department of Sports Market. Senator Viale, you're recognized for your five minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. You have two established casino accounts, 20, 30, and 476? No, we have one casino. No, yes, yes, that's...

1:07:54 Oh, sorry. Carol Peters, Director of Business and Finance Management. We have... Can you pull down the screen a little bit it so you can be seen over the cameras and be able to pick up. Go ahead, you may proceed. We have two casinos. We have one casino account. I'm seeing in the post audit report an account 2030 and then I'm seeing the next account 476. What's the difference? Okay, let me correct that. We have a casino account in the St. Croix district and a casino account in the St. Thomas St. John District. Okay, so you have two accounts? Yes, that's correct. And how do you distribute the monies? What percentage goes to each account? 50%? Is it 50%? So the money is distributed basically as needed in the St. Korea. I think everything comes through the St. Thomas account, and then we just deposit monies into the SINCOE account whenever they need or whenever they request it.

1:09:06 What is the total that you receive on your basis for the account, the average total? One minute, Carol Peters, Director of Business and Finance. I'll go ahead and say the next question. I'm seeing an average on the same time as I count them, I'm seeing an average balance of 200,000 plus on this inquiry account, I'm seeing an average balance of 17,000 or 18,000.

Okay. We really need to look at a different distribution method.

- 1:09:43 In reference to, you have a vacancy, you said for Director of Sports? Raleena Pell, Human Resources Manager. Yes, we do. Is that different from the Deputy Director of Sports, the position that is filled? Yes, that's a new position that we're creating. And that is for which island, which jurisdiction? It'll be territory. So the Deputy Director of Sports now is territorial? No, the Director of Sports would be territory. And the Deputy Director of Sports is what? That's based on St. John. Okay, so now you're creating a territorial position? Correct.
- 1:10:21 In reference to, you are now the promoter of races at the Clendon Fifth Race Track? I am not as yet. Who held the carnival races? The carnival races? Southland Gaming. OK, so you were not responsible for putting on that race, or you have not been responsible for putting on any of the races? As far as I know, the only one I've been involved in was Carnival, no, and the one that's coming up on Saturday, July 5th, no. The races prior, was it? Sports Park and Recreation.
- 1:11:01 Yes, the one in December, yes. We were responsible for that one. Did you guys collect all of the receipts? I can't answer that. So you don't know who collected the receipts, the five races that have been held? At one point, I think former Commissioner White was responsible for collecting you. Have any monies been deposited in any account for sports park and recreation from... yes or no?
- 1:11:30 No. Not to my knowledge. Not to your knowledge? No. But sports park and recreation from the casino account have been making payment for work done at the racetrack? There's the Horse Racing Improvement Fund, the funds for the... Okay, hold up a minute. Casino Account 2030, which is the account based on St. Thomas, paid for ICE, paid for announcer, paid for services for FIPS Race Track. Why are we paying for expenses at FIPS Race Track if Salt Lake Gaming is the promoter and responsible for those expenses on that day? How can we pay for expenses? If whoever is collecting all of the receipts on Carnival Race Day, why are we paying for the announcer from the government account and other services for the racetrack from the government account? What is the agreement with that?
- 1:12:29 So as far as I know, all the expenditures for the racetrack, which is the racing surface, the day of the races, is paid through the Horse Racing Improvement Fund. I am not aware of any money being paid through our accounts. Check 3462, 3464, 3466, 3467, 68, 69, they are in the account. They have been paid from your casino account. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the racetrack? The racing surface itself?
- 1:13:09 The maintenance, emptying the garbage, paying the electricity, water, cleaning up. So until the track is actually completely turnover, Southland has been paying for the trash removal, security. The only thing that outside of that that is not their responsibility has been the maintenance of the racing surface and the track itself. So you have assigned guys to work on the track? Well, yes, yes. Basically through the St. Thomas St. John Commission because that's basically all the checks are being written.
- 1:13:43 Okay. Oppenheimer Beach, the cruise ships use that on a regular basis? One minute. No, they do not, as of right now. It's basically used for locals or weddings and that kind of stuff, kind of stuff. Tourists that come to use for weddings and that kind of stuff. So no tours are being conducted at the beach? Tours? No cruise ship excursions are being conducted?
- 1:14:12 No. Okay, quickly, entities that receive monies from True Sports Park and Recreation, turn to page 22 of your testimony. 30 seconds. My testimony is that? Yes. Appendix B, you have the appropriation for 25, and then the next category says report needed FY24. So report needed means that they haven't turned in the report, correct? Correct.
- 1:14:51 Okay. No funds received mean what? American Legion, all of those are no funds received. They never made a request for funding? What does no funds receive mean? Hi, Carol Peters, Director of Business and Finance Management. No funds receive, they submitted their application but they haven't received the check as yet. So it's either at the Department of Finance or at the Office of Management and Budget.
- 1:15:26 Time. Okay, and report needed mean that they didn't turn in the report for the year before? That is correct. Okay, so colleagues, you need to look at that, the number of entities that have been allocated monies and have not submitted the report for the past year. And we have made a standard practice of those entities that don't report how they spend the money that they're not funded in the next fiscal year. So we have to take a close look at that, and if you can update that before we do the budget markup so we can know exactly.
- 1:15:59 And I just want to put on the record, the Post Auditor did an average salary by department for every department in government. And when she did that analysis, Sports Park and Recreation is the lowest paid government entity that exists right now. The average salary in Sports Park and Recreation was \$33,000-something. And then the next one was like \$37,000 and \$38,000. I think that was Public Works and Agriculture. But by far, Sports Park is the lowest paid entity.
- 1:16:35 Those labourers and groundskeepers that you have in this budget, do you have groundkeepers that have been working for 10 years? Yes. Aurelina Pell, Human Resources Manager, yes. You have ground keepers that have been working for 20

years? Yes, or close to it. And what is the salary? I'm seeing the highest salary I'm seeing here for ground keepers is \$28,138. That sound right? Yes, Commissioner.

1:17:05 But we get a pushback for individuals working for this government for 10 to 20 years and making \$28,000. And there's a pushback that we're financially irresponsible. so tell me how you have these guys driving truck up and down cutting the fields our children to play and we want to file a court case so that they can make more than \$28,000 after work in 20 years and we call it a fair government for the legislature looking out for those employees. Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Villalera's abomination.

1:17:53 Commissioner nominee Roberts, in respect to the various casino accounts that you have there are desegregated for expenditures per district. For example, the account in the St. Thomas district take care of issues and concerns in the St. Thomas district, or there's a cross designation? How do you address that? So the majority of the funding in the St. Croix district is more so used for emergency or things that we need right away. Other than that, majority of other stuff are just written out of the St. Thomas account. Okay, very well.

1:18:37 and um i think we spoke about the williams delight community center why is that not open what's going on the committee the community center williams delight why is that not open i have a henry answer that oh i don't even that's really on the rentals good afternoon I'm Jamila Henry, Sinclair District Administrator. The Williams Light Centre mostly is used as a rental facility. We don't have anybody staffed there or used it on a regular basis.

1:19:13 So it's a community centre but it's used only as rental, that means that individuals that are going to use that centre, the community centre has to pay for the use of it? Since I've been here, they use it as requested and some people do rent it out but we've never used it as a regular use facility for any kind of community activities. Is that being done in any other community? I don't think so. We don't have any other specific buildings in other communities per se. Only the one in Willem's Light? As far as I know. Okay. Well, there's a concern being raised, Commissioner Namini, that the community center was built for the purpose of the homeowners and the community to be able to utilize that community center. And the community center is not available for use by that community, except for, again, rentals.

1:20:04 Okay. I look into it, Senator. Thank you. The Chair will now recognize the College A. Joseph, you recognize for your five minutes. Thank you so kindly, Mr. Chairman. A pleasant good day to the listening and viewing audience, my colleagues, and, of course, the fine men and women, hardworking men and women from the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation. How are you doing today, Mr. Roberts, Acting Commissioner, nominee? I'm fine.

1:20:38 You're doing well? Good. I'm looking to having a conversation with you tomorrow. And, of course, to vet you during the Committee on Rules and Judiciary process. I want to ask you my question and it goes back to your comments within your testimony relative to sports tourism. This past weekend I had the wonderful and phenomenal opportunity to go to the George E. Goodwin Cricket Ground and they were playing lovely cricket there and they also had another team the girls team playing rounders i wanted to ask you is i didn't see any lease do you have lease agreement because i know my colleague to my right left left was talking about lease agreement do you have any lease agreement currently uh with any external entity to to utilize any of our properties uh with the lease agreement for cricket is going to come through um dpp oh they're coming after you so I'm going to ask about that so I think they're working on and getting them along to home lease agreement are you involved in that those discussions yes I am okay and how far away are they um I understand that um it's it's close close yes well I'll follow I'll follow up is you see there's a method to my little madness with asking these questions because I want to know exactly. This has been a long time in coming. This body in our regular session in 2022 passed about 1.5 million dollars to give to the St. Thomas Cricket Association. Where are we with that?

1:22:31 Because they've done a significant amount of work. They have drawn I think a half a million dollars off and a million dollars so far. Okay and how are they looking to get the balance? Is this Is this money, the one million still available? The one million is still available. Okay, what do they need to do so far to draw down on that money? I think it's just a proper paperwork requesting it, I guess also what they plan to do with it. Okay, I think they have everything that they needed.

1:23:01 Have they submitted that to you? I have not seen it. Okay, so I'll follow up with them because when I was out there, they're putting all kind of title on me and I don't know if I want to be have those titles they want to make me an ambassador I don't understand that so for them and so I'm like I just like to watch you guys play I enjoy watching cricket Mr. Nominee Roberts you had a great year Roberts you're related to Lionel Roberts that was my great grandfather your great-grandfather what was he he was never cricketer that's right so I know I know he was a cricketer all the time but I wanted you to be able to put it on the record your lineage your deep lineage coming from being a sportsman and now you are a nominee for the position of commissioner for Department of Sports and Recreation so cricketing playing cricket is in your blood in your veins okay that's part of your ancestry now one minute i thank you so much i want to ask you about this one grant here that is going to expire it's on page five of the post audit report kindly follow me uh it says here this is

the one for the department of treasury the ARPA money is \$82,700. And it expired a couple days ago. Is that still available?

- 1:24:42 This is for the sole green solar charging workstation. Yes, we have submitted a no-cost extension request for that. Okay, so you're awaiting their response? Yes. Okay, wonderful, wonderful and uh let me see if you had and you had that other one that expired already for that's another planning grant i think we talked about that the economic development that one how how will you do that that expired on may 30th we got an extension on that one you had yes till may 2026. okay hold on time Mr. Chairman, may I? You're so gracious. Thank you kindly. May of 2026, right? Yes, correct.
- 1:25:28 Okay. And I believe that's it, because those others, I think you're going to be able to spend them down. Oh, one more. This other American Rescue that has an outstanding balance of one hundred thousand dollars are the last one. For the health and wellness program? Yes. Yes, we have everything lined up ready to go to spend that money. Okay, all right. And finally, my final, I wanted to ask you what is happening at Down, We didn't touch on it, but that's all part of tourism. What is happening down by Limburg Bay, Emerald Beach?
- 1:26:14 Do you have contract with any of those vendors down there? Yes, we have permits for the vendors down there. Is it listed here? Because I was trying to find it in your presentation and I didn't see it. I don't think we list the vendors. Those are your leases, right? I didn't see it.
- 1:26:41 I know one of my colleagues, he was mentioning those leases. That's why I brought it up. Miss, if you could provide that information, if it isn't here, to the chair, because I couldn't see it. It's only posted. So you do have it leased. what are those numbers you're leasing it at? Are those accurate? Yes, Senator. Okay, so those numbers are accurate and the total you collect annually aggregate for those leases.
- 1:27:29 Correct. So they pay on a monthly basis. They pay by month? Yes. Okay, but you do have an actual agreement. Correct. Okay, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for the leniency and your time. Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Joseph, for your line of questions. Before we go on to the next senator, which would be Senator Dwayne DeGraff, I wanted to ask you, Commissioner, are you actively involved, or are your federal folks actively involved in the Pauly-Joseph Stadium rebuild? If we actively involved?
- 1:27:59 Involving it in any way, shape, or form. I know Public Works is responsible for the Yeah, we're actively involved as far as attending the meetings. Assistant Commissioner Hanson is the one task to attend all the meetings, any input from the department. So, so are you in a position to update the community and what's going on at Polly Joseph Stadium at this time? If I am available to do that right now, you say? Yes. No, I'm not. Do you have any information in regards to any updates or anything that's transpiring? Well, I mean... One second.
- 1:28:32 You said that you were actively involved in, or you have your assistant commissioner that's participating in the meetings. So I'm asking whether or not you have any information that you could pass on to the public that has continued to be in the wait to find out what's transpiring with Paulie Joseph Stadium. So. So as far as my knowledge and the information I have received. I know that there's work going on for the infrastructure, rerouting the communication lines, some plastering, the tilings and that kind of stuff to the restrooms, as well as other ongoing work. So the contractor is on site, he is conducting business. DP&R is making sure they, DPW is making sure they stay on top of him. They're pushing him, they're pressuring him to meet that December 25th, 2025 deadline. When was the last time you've been at the facility?
- 1:29:42 I have not been to the facility since, what was it, July? Probably two months ago. two months ago yes okay so during the graph you recognize for your five minutes uh thank you mr chair good afternoon colleagues good afternoon testifiers all of you and listening i'm present you know i've been hearing people i would say messing up your name you know commissioner roberts period okay so good uh you know in your testimony the major problem i have with your testimony is praise your staff first and then you praise them last don't wait until the end bore me to death what you're reading and your testimony and then get to the end for the exciting part about thanking your wonderful staff noted that's commissionership budget 101 okay for me at least. Now, okay, I'm trying to get the actual in terms of personnel. You said 117 positions filled. Correct. How much vacancies? Currently, we have 10 vacancies. 10 vacancies.
- 1:30:57 Now, I think in post auditor's report they said you will authorize 133 positions. Is that accurate? No, it's not, Senator. Okay, how much positions are you out there? Just 127, 17 and, 117 and 10? Yes, Senator. Okay, okay, good. Now, parking lot Griffith, for over four years I've been hearing it gonna get fixed, it gonna get fixed, it gonna get fixed. It's a revenue generator for you.
- 1:31:33 The longer you're stalling it, the less money you're going to get. What is the actual, if any, dates of getting something done, getting an arm in, getting someone down there to correct and make money off of this parking lot? Okay, so we just actually received an updated code from the vendor for the arms and the machine and computers that needed to run it. How much?

- 1:32:04 \$100,000, \$127,000. \$127,000. Good. Is it in your budget? Was that allotted in the 26 budget? No, it was not, Senator. Yeah, you see, we're here for numbers. Numbers, you generate, you spend money to make money. OK, so we're going to look at that because you can make, how many slots, parking spots? 105 spaces. 105 spaces. You see, you could make back the \$127,000 in no time. So that's one. That's top priority. You're going to be the commissioner of this department. We're coming down to the second half of 2025. 2026 is done. I know you for 100 years. I expect you're hitting the ground running, even if it got to be backwards, running fast. Okay? So I got your back.
- 1:33:01 got your back I can support you a hundred percent but you know no time for talk and and I'm assessing and assessing you've been in the department too long let's go let's get that money in the parking lot from the parking lot and get all those derelict vehicles towed out of the parking lot at the person's expense that's number two okay um now how many vacancies do you have of those ten, under \$35,000? Give me one second, Senator.
- 1:33:38 Okay. Now, okay, so while you find that, you said the Dorothea playground, that little tot lot belongs to sports parks? Yes, it does, Senator. Oh boy, so glad to hear that. I took my grandchildren the other day and we had such a ball. I'm gonna take and I'm gonna clean it up. I'm gonna cut the grass. It was well kept, but I'm going to touch up the grass and I'm going to clean up the equipment and stuff, okay? I'm going to go over there and do a clean up. I just didn't know who owned it, so I didn't want to go ahead and start. We appreciate that. I'll check with you. I'm going to do that myself because my grandchildren, we have such a ball. We also have, that's one of the playgrounds that's going to be upgraded as well.
- 1:34:17 Okay, great, great. So now that's four, four vacancies. Four vacancies. Okay, now can I have your actuals and personal fringe supplies as of what you have received thus far in 2025? 30 seconds. Personal actuals? Carol Peters, Director of Business and Finance Management. Personal actual thus far, \$2,609,514.10. Fringe?
- 1:34:48 Fringe \$1,428,409.40 Supplies \$119,000 Time \$119,790.56 Other services and charges \$128,414.38 Any capital improvements? No. Your utilities is at \$8,500. Last year it was at \$600,000.
- 1:35:30 The utilities? Well, no. Actually, the utilities budgeted for fiscal year 2025 is \$805,000. \$805,000? Yes. We have expended \$534,165.02. five dollars and two cents okay do you have any gs employees relina pal human resources manager no no okay and and finally uh for 2025 has anyone in your department received wage increases relina pal human resources manager no with the exception of the commissioner nominee we accept of the commission nominee okay so is anyone old retro no senator no okay so no wages no retro okay so so like i say commissioner again you have a year and a half you gotta know everything you have a good staff they're underpaid we're gonna work on that but i'm just saying remember your staff first personnel first and the facilities that they're working in come right behind it so day one and 1a is what they're working in make that happen you'll be set thank you for the time mr. chair thank you very much Senator de Graff Commissioner nominee in regards to how was the morale at sports park and recreation employee morale the morale the morale is okay it It could be better, to be quite honest, but you know, pay and morale go hand in hand. But I feel that our employees have the best interest for the community to solve. Sometimes they're frustrated when they can't get supplies as needed. So there's room for improvement.
- 1:37:28 So these, the groundskeeper and these laborers and these individuals that continue to be at the low end of the spectrum in terms of salary, I mean, what are the conversations they're having with you? What are they saying? We need more money, you know, and like I always tell them, they have to speak to the union, they need to get with the union, they need to be a little more representative when it comes to the discussions with their unions. They just figured, as a commissioner, I could fix everything, you know? I tried to steer them in the right direction as far as who they need to be speaking to, becoming a sharp steward, just getting involved in the communication. Well, the reality is union is only half of the battle. You two have to be able to step up and indicate that these salaries are inadequate for you to be able to find competent individuals that could be able to do these work and keep going at this. Someone that's been there for 10, 20 years and continue to make \$28,000 is really unfair. It's very difficult.
- 1:38:35 I can't see how the morale would be good, because every payday, I'm sure once they receive that check, there's a level of frustration. I've been there. I've served as a commissioner. And for individuals, I made much more money than the \$28,000, and still there was a level of complaint. So you two have to join in to having that conversation with the administration as well and the chief negotiator that we have to do better by these individuals so we could address that and make sure that they could get the work done. So yes, the union is half of the battle, but true as a leader and the commissioner in charge, You two have to do your part to make sure that your people below you are compensated. Lifeguards. We didn't talk a lot about lifeguards today.
- 1:39:25 I know that in our previous discussions with the former commissioner and others, and some of your staff, HR and others have been here, what are we doing to ramp up the hiring of lifeguards? So, we've been struggling with getting people to

apply, and even the ones that apply have not been able to pass the swimming portion. My conversation with my HR is what we're going to start to do is bring on people and train them. So instead of bringing them on and they're not qualified because they can't swim, we are going to allow them to apply and then put them through a training so that they can qualify and we can hire them. Instead of waiting for them to come ready or pre-approved in a sense. I think the longer we wait, and just saying that nobody's applying or not qualifying, I think we just need to train them. I know I'm saying we have the junior lifeguard program as another option of starting that on the St. Thomas St. John District as well, but I think we just need to change how we're approaching trying to fill those positions. Okay and we had the Director of Veterans Affairs before us yesterday and he spoke about a conversation that he had with you in regards to the turning over of the the Byrne Richards Park as well as the Roosevelt Park to the Veterans Affairs. I'm not convinced Because I'm concerned about where the resources will come from and the capacity to be able

1:41:13 to maintain those facilities. Can you shed some light on what that discussion is or the logic behind it? So, the thing is, we could go in and maintain as far as cutting the grass and cleaning the facility. But when it comes to the monuments and the upkeep of all of that stuff and what they mean and it becomes we're in between two things like once we rent out a facility then I get a car from him questioning how we plan to use the facility or we can protect the monuments and I think that's the most important thing with it with the boat facilities is the the veterans and what it means to the veterans so if it means that he has we have to figure out the heat to transfer our groundskeeper or two in order to do the upkeep because I think that's where his concern is but I think me just cutting the grass and I don't have no knowledge or how to deal with the the monuments and all that it takes um it kind of creates a little back and forth um between between us in the sense of who who really and truly should be in charge of those facilities Okay. Well, I guess you all could continue to have the dialogue, and at some point, we could be able to really make sense out of how a path forward on this.

1:42:35 But just turning over the facility and not ensuring that there are individuals to properly maintain it and do everything else is counterproductive. I mean, if we're already being challenged by how the facilities look and how they maintain and upkeep, you know what I mean, then just turning it over wouldn't address that particular issue. I agree. Just a little more conversation and just kind of figure out how everything would kind of flow. Okay. I look forward to you all having that. Any, you had a point? Point of information, Senator Frederick? Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Commissioner nominee Roberts, can you tell me what the track and field federation allocation has been over the last three years?

1:43:23 Tell you what, can you get that information through the Chair? We need to find out the status of that, the funding track and field federation. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Very well. Thank you. A point of information, Senator Avery-Lewis. Good afternoon again. Mr. Roberts, I look in the book here, and I see all the list of programs that Sport Park offer. And, you know, in the afternoon, I go down there, I see, you know, Mr. Clendenin and those folks, you know, doing a great job. You know, thank you for that. But I just have to access it.

1:44:11 How is your communication with Department of Education in terms of all the sports that we have here going on in the territory? we could probably put something like a comprehensive package together so parents when they're looking for something for the children to do they could pick up a a book a flyer something not a flyer but you know i'm talking about mostly like a directory okay sport park have this it coming out this season in schools have this uh all the acronyms you all have for the different sports and thing you know even in nightlife you know you go down there you got frisbee you got all kind of thing you know uh so that's enlightened me like what's the communication and what's the plan to you know maybe have an interactive website where we could see these things or something so so that's part of the plan is um to increase our marketing um not just show our website but flyers in the schools. I know we have a really good relationship with the principals at the schools. They allow us to come there and promote, put up flyers, sign up kids. We actually do programs in the schools sometimes. So we have a very good working relationship with VIDE. But for us it's just, we have to do a better job marketing. And I think we have an idea of exactly how to attack it. so that the information is out there. We still have nothing to do, and we know there's a lot going on. So it's attacking our media sources, radio, social media, newspapers, flyers.

1:45:57 We just have to be a little more comprehensive in our approach. Thank you for your response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Senator Blayden. Senator DeGraff, you recognize? Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, it's the first I ever see Mr. Clendenin in a tie. What's Mr. Clendenin's title? Mr. Clendenin Youth Community Coordinator. You keep doing what you're doing, a great job, man, but you look good in a tie. And in closing, I would just like to ask about the update on Smith Bay Ball Park. I know you started to clean it up and then you stopped, forget update on that, please. So, as far as the FEMA portion, the dryings are 100% complete.

1:46:41 So that will be going out a bit, which will be to repair the retaining wall and to repair the restroom concession building. The drainage issue is a bigger issue than just the park. Us fixing our problem, we create a problem outside of the park. The field is actually the lowest area in the location. Right now, we have issues throughout the Smith Bay area with

drainage. I know Army Corps engineers and DPW have been working on some engineering stuff to try to mitigate that area. But for us, we don't want to go ahead and do something because of the community. Because they want to use the field, and then when we repair that, then the water ends up in the house. So for us, it's try to make, go back up the retaining wall, the restroom concession, and repair the basketball court. And in between, I just try to keep the grass down as much as possible.

1:47:51 Thank you. I'll come to you, Senator Blight, in a minute. Thank you, Commissioner Namini. in regards to the other entrance to Carnegie Gator ballpark, what's happening with that roadway and that water that seems to continue to create some puddles there and really create some nuisance? What's happening with that? You're talking about the main entrance when you're going towards the community center? Yes, correct. Yeah, so I know there's some issues with the drainage and water as well. For us, it's just to repair our side of the road, because I know it could be kind of dangerous. Not dangerous, but it's a rough ride going in. So we're looking at upgrading or repairing, finishing with some asphalt and stuff in there as far as phase two of the the Sabah field. Who's tasked with looking over some of these projects in St. Croix that you have there, those type of things? Mr. Abel, our Heated Disaster Recovery Specialist Territory. She wanted you to give the name of who you just referred to. Oh, Harold Abel. Yeah, yeah. But this is not a disaster recovery project, the roadway is not a part of that, correct? It is not.

1:49:18 sometimes we we try to request approval from FEMA for additional scope once it doesn't affect the whole up the project or if we deem that is something that we could just pay fine in-house and it would not so long the the repairs yeah maybe you could talk to Public Works too as well as the support and assist you in that endeavor and if there's a funding requirement then we need to know what that is and and certainly I believe under the Capital Improvement Fund or some other entity, some other funding source, we'd like to be able to get that fixed because it's been a problem for quite some time. The facilities is used for a lot of events, a lot of sports activities also go on there. So yeah, it's been problematic for quite some time. All right. So I'd like to recognize for your Boiner question.

1:50:09 Point of information first. Point of information. Boiner question. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. In respect to Smith Bay area, you're correct. There's an organization that have been holding meetings over the years in terms of an underground system and catchment in terms of the whole water system in Smith, because you're right, it's a problem over there. But I'm going to try and get information for you. But I think you guys need to meet with them before moving forward, because they have put a lot of work in already to assure that they take care of the water problem in Smith area. Because if you do the work on the basketball court and the field, it's going to just destroy it. you know but that's a good area to have those activities and it'd be good to collaborate with them to assure that you'll be on the same page now in respect to my burning question i want to follow up on a question with um line of rubber stadium and smith edward frederick's park in freedom hoy what the time frame in terms of um completing first of all line of rubber stadium and secondly edward frederick park they're doing a very good job over there with the skate ball park the basketball court and other areas can you speak to both of those please and what time of time line we're looking at in respect to those two parks okay so Lennaraba stadium the FEMA portion is 90 percent completed like I said the lighting has been put up the electrical has been done but the issue is WAPA replacing the transformer on the outside that's it yeah they've been in communication with them it's a padmonk transformer outside that needs to be changed out in order to light up Laniarabo Stadium. Outside of that, anything after that is going to be a set of drawings to demolish and rebuild. Ezra Fredericks, the surfing federation, the VIAE surfing federation is who's doing the bike and skate park out there. They should be finished the end of August. The FEMA portion of the project is, what we're doing is doing some drawings now to have restrooms and concession buildings put out there, repair all the perimeter fencing as well as change the rims and backboards at the basketball court and the fencing as Okay, in closing Mr. Chair, in respect to the line of WAPA stadium, waiting on a transformer

1:52:43 from WAPA. I understand the shortage with transformers on WAPA, but at the same time we need to understand the importance of having those lights in that area and having a park be available for young people to utilize. So we need to really reach out and see what we can do in terms of them expediting our process and let them know the importance of having a transformer. It may seem like it's just a transformer, but it's a bigger picture, you know what I'm saying? So that's my two cents. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for the time. Yeah, having those transformer in place is a big issue, but we had a situation where in St. Croix where even the pool was delayed as a result of not having a transformer as well for quite some time. So yeah, I know that transformers are in order, and WAPA have indicated that they hope to have those in in the very near future that have to be special ordered. So my final question to you is in regards to Dr. James Racetrack, you know you couldn't leave here today without us having a conversation about Dr. James Racetrack, it's the topic of conversation these days, it's a hot topic, it's a hot button topic. So what is the current posture from sports park and recreation? Obviously the VIGL has already relinquished the the the track what is what is your instructions what what is happening is currently back under your purview what we're doing to continue to maintain it or what's the path forward

on it I know that and I'd like to hear mr. Abel's point in terms of the FEMA money that that I know that the governor had indicated that they will go by reaching back out to try to get FEMA to reconsider their position regarding the funding but you know I know that there is an amendment that's moving through that to provide the five million dollars that's that's currently available to be able to support and assist with the the um the upstart of the dr randall james racetrack what is your current update to this community regarding your position on the racetrack at this time well the dr james

1:54:56 Basically, like I said, the geotechnical study has been completed, which was needed for the A&E firm to complete the grandstand drawings. It is the department position to focus on the running surface and getting that running surface back up and functioning, certified. There is a company that is scheduled to come in the middle of this month to start to assess and test soil and kind of guide us in how to proceed with getting a running surface back up and running. Beyond that is the existing barns, we want to be able to get those repaired as well. In my conversation with many other horsemen, their sentiment is that that is the most important thing to them right now, is the running surface, the barns, so they could start to at least be able to purchase horses, horses start to walk the horses even if it means in the meantime running races without a grandstand or even coming to St Thomas I think my conversation at least with all the horsemen over there is the running surface and the existing barns okay what about the maintenance of the facilities at this time I mean the grass at the front and stuff that is overgrown the fence fence line i passed there um just several times this week on my way over and the fence line is down right um and you know what is the plan to at least do the maintenance of having conversations with the maintenance and sinkroy about finding a way to secure the facility so that people can walk in and out as they want so um repairing the fence line and and being able to at least lock it and close it up is something that we're looking into um and seeing where we could find funding to get that done what about the landscaping yeah we could definitely look at that um and see how we could address that concern okay all right i look forward um and i'll reach back out with you in in regards to to that the landscaping and those other areas who could at least get a facility um

1:57:07 in some type of shape so I guess that that runs out your budget questions for today I wanted to ask you what keeps you up at night you know what is it about your current mission statement your tasking um that keeps you up at night um like my biggest thing um is improvement of morale employee morale um we only go as far as our employees carry us and when they're not happy or they disgruntled it it we on top we're gonna feel the run we're gonna take the blows but At the end of the day, I think employee being comfortable, coming to work because they want to be to work, and enjoying and just creating an environment that when you get up in the morning, you want to come to work. Outside of that, it's just completion of these FEMA projects, getting them off the books, and then kind of proceeding to do additional repairs be needed to make our facilities look whole and welcoming. I think there's a lot still needed even after FEMA work is completed to make them look welcoming and want children to come out of the house and get from in front of the TV and them games.

1:58:37 Thank you. Thank you for that response. Senator Colleges-Joseph, you had a point of information, a burning question? Yes, I did have a burning question. Thank you so kindly. It's a follow-up to a question that was asked by the good Senator from St. Croix, Chairman of the Committee on Education and Workforce Development, regarding the payments for activities and persons at the Clinton E. Phipps racetrack. Now, you are an ex-official member of the St. Thomas St. John Horse Racing Commission and all of the horse racing commissioner, correct? Acting Commissioner?

1:59:19 Correct. Okay. When was the temporary agreement with Southland Gaming executed? I have to get back to you. Yeah, that's very important because they're supposed to be able to absorb some of these costs if it was subsequent. We have billing here from November 27, 2024, so that's a very important thing for you to look at because if they're the promoters, they're supposed to be absorbing some of those costs, temporary or not. I don't know what the agreement states.

2:00:00 In fact, through the chair, can we get a copy of that agreement? Commissioner, kindly send it to the chair so we are informed. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Senator Joseph. At this time, I'll give you a 30 seconds closing. Commissioner Namini. Thank you again, Senator Francis, Chairman of the Committee on Budget Appropriation and Finance and Committee members and non-committee members. Again, it's always a pleasure to have the discussion on how we can help the department and go department. We can't do it with you guys. We need your assistance to make things happen. We plan on implementing a lot of the needed stuff for our community. Wellness is at the forefront, as well as repairs and making our facilities whole for our community and getting more people outside and moving. been a rough year uh i think i've been to you more than enough funerals um for people that that just didn't take care of itself or needed to start moving so it is really a top priority to get our community moving and a lot healthier uh thank you guys uh thank you very much and again i want to thank um sports park and recreation of course your rank and file for all that they do you know it's I know it's quite challenging there have been determined to be at the lowest scale of the spectrum and that's that in itself

- 2:01:46 presents some challenges for them to be effective you know so you know well we are doing our budget review you know we'll certainly take that into consideration and you know thank you for coming before us today and truthfully and honestly answering our questions in regards to defending your budget of nine million two hundred and seventy thousand forty dollars and you know this at this time that concludes the hearing of sports park and recreation and we'll stand a recess for five minutes and when we return we'll be coming back with the Department of Property and Procurements Committee of Budget Appropriations and Finance stands at recess for five minutes Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:06:02 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:07:32 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:10:02 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:13:02 Thank you. Thank you.
- 2:14:02 Thank you. a good afternoon we are out of recess at this time madam clerk please call up the items in block number three black tree vi department of property and procurement invest invited testifier honorable Lisa Alejandro commissioner this concludes the reading of black tree and the agenda, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. At this time we do have the Department of Property and Procurement at the testifiers table. We go to the Commissioner, Alejandro. Good afternoon. Welcome. At this time I'll allow you to introduce yourself and your staff, introduce themselves and then we'll get your testimony on record. Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. Lisa Maria Alejandro, Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurements.
- 2:15:30 Good afternoon, welcome. Good afternoon, Lady Shawna Martin, Chief Financial Officer. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Khalid Pickering, Assistant Commissioner. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Magdalene Maranci, Chief Legal Counsel. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Vincent Richard, Assistant Commissioner. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Sharmila Richardson, Director of Human Resources.
- 2:15:59 Good afternoon. Welcome to all at this time, Commissioner. You could go ahead with your testimony. Thank you. Thank you. Good afternoon, Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Budget Appropriations and Finance, Honorable Marvin A. Blyton, Vice Chairman, other Honorable Committee members, members of the 36th Legislature, fellow testifiers, and all other persons in the listening and viewing audiences. I am Lisa Maria Alejandro, Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement. Together with members of the Department's leadership team, we present DPP's proposed FY2026 budget, Accompanying me today are Mr. Khalid Pickering, Assistant Commissioner of Transportation and Asset Management, Mr. Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner of Property and Printing, Ms. Liddy Shauna C. Martin, Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Magdalene A. Maranci Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel, and Ms. Shamila A. Richardson, Director of Human resources building on our goals to redefining and elevating the operational climate with new business solutions and improved practices we describe dpp's leveling up endeavors and the fy 2026 budget request that will allow us to continue unlocking growth and improvement the department of property and procurements fy 2026 operating budget request is \$24,068,337. Including in this amounts are \$18,868,337 in appropriated funds and \$5,200,000 in non-appropriated funds. The appropriated funds encompasses the general fund, the business and and Commercial Fund, and the Indirect Cost Fund. The \$5,200,000 in non-appropriated funds
- 2:18:18 cover the Central Motor Pool Fund, Central Warehouse Fund, Gasoline Coupon Fund, and the Printing and Production Fund. Broken down in detail, the \$18,868,337,000 in appropriated funds, incapaces the general fund in the amount of \$14,616,564, business and commercial revolving fund in the amount of \$4,066,773, and the indirect fund in an amount of \$185,000 for a total of \$18,868,337. The increase this upcoming fiscal year on the capital outlays is crucial to address.
- 2:19:24 I'm sorry, DPP's general fund in the amount of \$14,616,564 represented a 7.36 or \$1,001,518 increase from our FY 2025 operating budget. This is attributed primarily to various repairs and maintenance needed in DPP's facilities. The FY request covers the following. Personnel services in the amount of \$2,817,046.99. Infringed benefits, \$1,104,874.34. \$874.34, supplies in the amount of \$238,721, for utility services in the amount of \$450,000, other services in an amount of \$8,930,921.67, and in capital projects, \$1,075,000. one million seventy five thousand dollars the increase in this upcoming fiscal year under capital outlay is crucial to address several critical infrastructure issues that directly impact our operations our ability to address these projects will ensure a safe efficient and resilient and working environment. Some of the issues to be addressed include in the St. Croix District, repair of DPP's main building's roof, repairs and upgrades to the main office, staff break room and restroom walls, replacement of the HVAC system in the modular building, and addressing the flooding of the driveway and parking platform outside of the modular building. in the St. Thomas-St. John District, repairs of DPP's main building stairwell, both exterior and interior stairwells, repairs or replacement of the

elevator in DPP's main building, repairs and maintenance of the HVAC system and walls in the printing office division, and repairs to the central motor pool building.

2 : 22 : 03 Each of these issues, if left unaddressed, will result in higher future repair costs, safety risks, potential regulatory violations, and operational inefficiencies. The proposed increase in capital outlay will allow us to protect our assets and advance a safe and efficient working environment. DPP's Business and Commercial Properties Revolving Fund request is \$4,066,773, representing a 14.53% or \$515,821 increase from FY 2025. The increase is primarily in the areas of supplies and other services, such as repairs and maintenance, professional services, and security services. The Business and Commercial Fund represents revenues derived from the department's rental activities and supports employee salaries across the department.

2 : 23 : 18 The fiscal year FY2026 request covers the following. Personnel services in the amount of \$2,475,289.37. Fringe benefits in the amount of \$1,091,483.63. supplies \$100,000 and other services in the amount of \$400,000 for a total of \$4,066,773. The indirect cost fund remains the same as FY 2025 at \$185,000.

2 : 24 : 03 DPP's FY26 budget request for \$5,200,000 in non-appropriated funds covers the following. The Central Motor Pool Fund in the amount of \$700,000. The Central Warehouse Fund in the amount of \$900,000. The Gasoline Coupon Fund in the amount of \$2,800,000. and the Printing and Production Fund in the amount of \$800,000 for a total of \$5,200,000. Approval of the Department's FY26 budget request allows the Department to maintain the consistency of its operation while unlocking its untapped growth. With its 76 active employees at a total personnel cost of \$6,765,967.33, the Department of Property and Procurement has general management and control over four primary areas. is number one the acquisition and procurement of all property and non personnel services to management control use and disposition of government real property and assets three the operation of the government's printing office and for the acquisition assignment maintenance and control of all motor vehicles within the executive branches fleet the Department of Property and procurement mandates are accomplished through four core divisions and corresponding units which are the Division of Procurement, the Division of Property and Printing, Division of Transportation, and the Fiscal and

2 : 26 : 01 Personnel Services. There are 46 employees in the St. Thomas District and 30 employees in the St. Croix District. 23 employees are classified and and 53 employees are exempt. The department's fiscal year 2026 requests support salaries including fringe benefits in the amount of \$722,727 for 11 new and vacant positions. In FY2025, six exempt employees received salary increases and salary adjustments were completed for 16 classified employees under the United Steelworkers Master's Unit as of October 1, 2024. Two employees were promoted and there were four hires assigned to the divisions of procurement and fiscal and personnel services. Unfortunately the department lost seven employees including three to retirements and four to resignations. The procurement division continues to unlock success in key areas, meeting its KPI goal of processing requisitions within an average of three days of the requisitions entering the department's queue. This translates to the conversion of 7,530 purchase orders, valued at \$580,512,923. and \$0.75. Additionally, as of May 31st, 2025, the Division performed 103 solicitations, processed 8,191 requisitions, and completed 228 contracts. The Division's Central Stores and warehousing unit has recognized total sales of \$473,096.54 as of May 31, 2025.

2 : 28 : 38 The Procurement Division is proud to report that the Procurement Manual was revised this cycle, updating several areas including delegation of authority to user agencies. Additionally, since the passage of Act No. 8954 on December 2, 2024, the Department provided introductory training on the changes to the Virgin Islands Procurement Statute to 380 employees of the Government of the Virgin Islands. Additionally, the Department conducted three additional training sessions of delegation of authority and contract administration to 128 and 120 employees respectively of the government of the Virgin Islands. Testing occurred on June 12, 2025 resulting in 82 employees taking the delegation of authority test with a 96 percent passage rate. The department's e-procurement system gvi buy is in live testing production requisitioning soliciting drafting and executing contracts and contract management are fully functioning payments are being tested in gvi buy for central stores inventory purchases and payments solutions are being identified to address the remaining integration issue to allow for full functionality for the entire Government of the Virgin Islands. Training continues for user agencies beginning with the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Finance, the Bureau of Corrections, the Bureau of Information Technology, the Division of Personnel, and the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services on how to conduct informal solicitations in GVI by.

2 : 30 : 40 Committing to never resting on our laurels, the department continues to seek and assess different avenues for deepening community relations and contributions contributing to the development of the Virgin Islands through creative sourcing of goods and services and establishing relationship with partners near and far. The department's relationship with the National Association of State Procurement Officials continues to be deeply beneficial and gratifying. For the second year, we were able to secure a \$20,000 grant to host procurement interns. The interns' selection process was extremely rigorous

and competitive, and out of close to 40 applicants, two interns were ultimately elected to participate. Additionally, our relationship with NASPO has given us access to approximately \$187,000 in membership funds towards billing procurement competencies through technological enhancements and support, professional development, and increasing community awareness of public procurement. The department's access to membership funds allow us to cover the \$81,954.54 cost for our hosted service agreement with Agilof Incorporated, our vendor who provides contract lifestyle management solutions. Most excitingly, we have begun communication with the University of the Virgin Islands to explore and execute a three-way academic partnership between the department, the university, and NASPO to strengthen the talent pipeline of the public procurement profession. Once executed, this partnership will provide University of the Virgin Islands students with access to NASPO's academic and loan repayment scholarship program, participation in the NASPO summer internship program

- 2:32:50 across the entire United States, classroom speaking opportunities, access to NASPO student membership, which includes access to ProcurementU, a virtual learning platform specifically for public procurement that also bestows college credits and access to additional NASPO resources and services, effectively exposing the University of the Virgin Islands students to more opportunities and options for learning and occupation during their academic careers and after graduation.
- 2:33:25 The Division of Property and Printing is comprised of 14 team members on the property side and 14 members on the printing side. The printing shop's 14 members are the core of the print operations of the government of the Virgin Islands. The offering of cost-effective graphic design, layout, and digital printing services with a fleet of commercial-grade digital printer presses allow government agencies to receive quality print services at reasonable costs. During the fiscal year 2025, the Department of Property and Procurement invoiced \$612,622.75 for print jobs and services and collected \$568,753.11. cents. When equipment leases recently expired it prompted a strategic decision to downsize the fleet of equipment and a renegotiation of a more favorable lease and maintenance terms for the remaining equipment. These measures are expected to reduce operational costs while preserving service standards and improving overall efficiency the property division is primarily responsible for managing the government of the virgin islands real property portfolio serving as custodian from acquisition through disposal and functioning in dual roles as both landlord for government-owned spaces and a leasing agent for spaces lease by the executive branch the business and commercial unit of the property division oversees lease negotiations processing and administration for all government owned properties leased to the public currently the business and commercial unit
- 2:35:31 provides property management services to 179 tenant tenants generating an annual rent roll of four million thirty nine thousand one hundred sixty nine dollars and ninety six cents comprising of three million three hundred four thousand nine hundred thirty six dollars and eighty four cents from the saint thomas district four hundred forty three thousand three hundred thirty five dollars and ninety two cents from the St. Croix district and two thousand ninety two hundred ninety thousand eight hundred seven ninety seven dollars and twenty cents from the sink from St. John these revenues are deposited into the business and commercial properties revolving fund as of June 20th 2025 the The Department has collected \$3,197,822.57 in the Business and Commercial Fund. In FY 2025, the Business and Commercial Unit executed 15 lease agreements with 37 proposed lease agreements and two easements pending. property inspections of all lease properties are ongoing the department continues to collaborate with and support both the virgin islands department of agriculture and the department of planning and natural resources with the processing of their respective agricultural and submerged lease agreements the unit currently manages vendor plaza with 16 cabana style kiosks
- 2:37:28 There are 33 current licenses, from which DPP collected \$18,530 in rental revenues as of May 31st, 2025. Planned improvements to the plaza include the installation of sun-shading structures and targeted aesthetic enhancements aim at increasing functionality, licensee appeal, and overall visitor experience. These upgrades are part of DPP's broader strategy to elevate the plaza as a vibrant public marketplace and economic driver.
- 2:38:11 Unlocking the potentials for more revenues, DPP plans to solicit to develop the first food truck plaza to host 8 to 10 local mobile businesses and create a local food destination for locals and visitors alike. The Space Management Unit administers 153 leases for privately owned commercial spaces and storage, parking, and telecommunications spaces on behalf of the executive branch agencies. These leaseholds amount to \$12,452,491 in annual expenditures, reflecting a projected \$503,458.87 annual increase over fiscal year 2024 due to temporary transitions during rehabilitation and renovation of the government of the Virgin Islands own spaces.
- 2:39:25 During FY 2025, the unit processed eight new leases and seven lease renewals, along with an additional 21 storage agreements and agreement renewals. Currently in process are 11 new lease agreements. Slated to close in FY 2025 are acquisitions of approximately \$20 million worth of real property for the utilization and development by the Departments of Labor, Planning and Natural Resources, and the Department of Property and Procurement. Further, the Property

Division is positioned to capitalize on the expiration of several long-term lease agreements from the 1970s and 80s, particularly within the Subbase District in St. Thomas.

2 : 40 : 22 This presents a unique opportunity to renegotiate, repurpose and redevelop high-valued properties. New lease agreements with modernized terms and market-aligned rental rates are expected to generate stronger financial returns, drive improved property performance, create job opportunities, and stimulate broader economic growth. For FY 2025, DPP's management of the government's motor pool vehicle fleet, which consists of 1,899 vehicles, of which 22 are vessels, required building on lessons learned and using innovation to continue to improve operations to further advance our digital leveling up efforts the division is in the process of procuring a comprehensive virtual action platform and action services for the sale of government assets this paradigm shift from traditional in-person vehicles action to a digital platform will increase operational efficiency and reduce administrative costs the new platform will expand visibility beyond the territory reaching a broader audience of potential buyers the solution will enable DPP to conduct and execute the actions of movable property more responsively transparently efficiently and cost effectively we expect the increase in competition to drive the prices for property we sell higher resulting in increased revenues recognizing our need to enhance

2 : 42 : 11 the way we source fuel the department is assessing the acquisition of a fuel fleet card system that will offer retail solutions with cloud storage capabilities specifically for the islands of st croix and st john as st thomas has an existing system the overall goal is to implement a territorial system to enable the government to transition completely from the manual coupon process in st croix and st john to a fully electronic system thereby reducing administrative tasks like time consuming record keeping and reconciliations to ensure real-time data gathering on fuel consumption fuel times and locations moving to an electronic fuel management system will enhance control transparency cost efficiency and operational effectiveness to fully leverage the benefits of technology advancements the division has collaborated with its GPS vendor to streamline data reporting and deliver KPI reports directly to agency and department heads within the executive branch. Presently, reports are generated and emailed to agency heads on the first of every month. These reports provide agency heads with insight to elevate fleet, to evaluate fleet and driver performance, promoting responsible usage and effective fleet management. To that end, standard operating policies and procedures have been refined and are currently going through the review and approval process. These will regulate and guide the use and operation of government vehicles. Implementation is slated for the fourth quarter of this

2 : 44 : 05 fiscal year. The Asset Management Unit oversees the management and optimization of the government of the virgin islands fixed assets to ensure effective compliance with policies guidelines and procedures the unit administers the acquisition use control protection maintenance tracking inventory and disposal of assets currently the unit is developing training sessions for g for the government of the virgin islands fixed asset custodians. The sessions will be a refresher on current standard operating policies and procedures and preparation of new policies and procedures that will be issued. Unlocking a success that has been long awaited, the necessary asset management warehouse has been acquired and the Department of Education and the Department of Property and Procurement are working diligently to establish the scope of work and floor plans for the design and build out which undoubtedly would optimize operations across the government. In FY2026, the unit intends to complete training ensuring that all Government of the Virgin Islands fixed asset custodians follow the policies and procedures set forward by the Department of Property and Procurement and that the transition from the third party fiduciary oversight is seamless with the overall objective of consistency across government operations lastly but certainly not least our vendor management team is a dedicated two-person

2 : 45 : 55 team which was established to exclusively support vendor related operations and enhance vendor relations across the government. Despite its small size, the team has delivered impactful results in FY 2025. And to highlight a few, the team have registered over 761 vendors in GVI by and 600 in Tyler Munis system, significantly expanding the government's vendor database and accessibility. They continue to serve as a system administrators for both GVI by and Tyler Muniz system, assisting users with password resets, navigation support, and real-time coaching across user agencies. They've assisted over 2,500 vendors, including user agencies with Psalms.gov registrations and renewals, supporting compliance and access to federal opportunities. They've also successfully launched the Preferred Bidder Certificate, spearheading an initiative to expand the preferred vendor list and promote participation amongst qualified vendors. All of this while simultaneously providing education and outreach to both vendors and user agencies.

2 : 47 : 23 These achievements underscore the commitment, efficiency, and broad impact of the vendor management team, proving that even a small unit can drive large-scale progress in leveling up government operations. Senators, in FY2026, the Department of Property and Procurement intends to continue unlocking growth and improvement as we have been successfully elevating the operational landscape across all divisions. We respectfully request the support of this body in approving our FY2026 budget requests And in closing, I would like to recognize our Employees of the Year in the St.

Croix District, Marsha Theophilus, and in the St. Thomas District, Ms. Deviqua Paris. I also would like to thank the entire Department of Property and Procurement team who work tirelessly to provide absolute best service on behalf of our government to the people of our Virgin Islands.

2:48:40 Senators, this concludes our testimony of the FY2026 budget, and my team and I stand readily available to address any questions this body may have. Thank you. Thank you very much, Commissioner, for that comprehensive testimony in regards to defending your budget requests on behalf of Department of Property and Procurement. FY2026 DPP intends to continue unlocking growth and improvement as we have been successfully elevating the operational landscape across all divisions. From the backdrop of that is where we will definitely query our concerns to you and I want to also take this opportunity on behalf of the legislative body to congratulate your employees of the year um marcia theophilus and miss devitra paris right yeah devicoa paris devicoa paris and marcia theophilus very well all right congratulations to them so commissioner um have you received all of your budget allotments in fy 2025 yes senator okay to date and any cuts Cuts in...

2:50:03 Any reduction, any cuts in any areas? I'll let my financial officer speak to it. Good afternoon, Lady Shauna Martin. Please recognize the mic. Go ahead. Good afternoon, Lady Shauna Martin, Chief Financial Officer. To date, no, we have not had any reductions to any of our allotment. allotment okay and of course the um the utilities single-player utility is taken off the top or is that taken out every quarter or monthly how is that it is done monthly monthly on a monthly basis and who's responsible for um checking to ensure that the wapa bills are accurate so internally we do our reconciliation on a monthly basis and then we also make sure that we do our reconciliations with the Department of Finance they will then provide the updates and reports so that we know exactly where we stand as far as our utilities and we are paid to date. Very well and any federal grants that you'll have any federal grants that have been clawed back or in jeopardy? We do not manage federal grant funds. No federal grants at all comes? Vendors payment, what is your delta, what do you owe in vendors payment at this time? So I am actually proud to announce that we are actually, right now any payments that we have pending to our vendors do fall within the 30-day processing window. All of our payments are simply waiting released from Department of Finance to payment disbursed. That's excellent. That's a breath of fresh air. So in your revenues, I know that you recorded a little bit over \$473,000 in the warehouse revenues. And then you spoke about the Commercial Properties Revolving Fund that there was \$3.1 million that went into that \$3.2 million or so. Yes. Is that all of your revenues, that's your total revenues so far?

2:52:18 It's not. It's not, Senator. So we are in the last quarter of the fiscal year. Based on our rent roll value, it's at \$4.0 million. So we're at collections \$3.1 million. And we do expect it to increase. Okay. So you're on track to meet your projected amount? We are. Okay, very well. Do you have any impressed fund, checking account, petty cash? We do not have any bank accounts. We do not have any impressed funds. We do have a petty cash fund through the Department of Finance.

2:52:56 And that is \$300 per district. \$300 per district. \$300. Okay. Sounds like you could buy a bag of ice. Not much more than that, right? At this time, I'll open up the floor to my colleagues and then come back with some additional questions. Senator Marvin Blight, do you recognize for your five minutes? Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and good afternoon. Commissioner Alejandro, supporting the management team there again. Thank you so much for that most comprehensive testimony. Let me start off with the post-auditorial report on page seven. The post-auditorial reported and based on appropriations that received your department should have an unallotted balance of \$9,652, but however, the Office of Management and Budget reported a lower unallotted figure of \$8,015,013,039. So you have a discrepancy of \$1.6 million, can you explain why? Good afternoon, Lady Shauna Martin, Chief Financial Officer.

2:54:20 Based on that, that would be due to, I'm not sure if when this report was prepared, there were any information or updates that were provided as far as our insurance payment okay which was a sum of about 6.1 million okay so that would explain the discrepancy that is correct okay um let's let's get on that page in respect i'm going to speak to supplies and i'm going to I'm going to speak to capital outlay. For supplies, you had \$132,681 for the fiscal year, 25 this fiscal year. But for fiscal year, 26, \$235,000, a variance of \$102,000. What's the reason for such a large variance?

2:55:13 So in preparing our budget, we kept in mind The factor of inflation. Okay. That's it? Yes. Inflation? Okay. Also on Capital Outlay, I know in your testimony you spoke to several areas, like for instance you have a leaking roof, stairway, etc. I think about 1,025,000, is that enough to cover all of those challenges you have in terms of ensuring that you have a safe workspace for your employees? And with the roof, is that an exterior issue or interior?

2:55:55 Yes, so it's both, Senator. It's not sufficient. However, we do have a few PWUs pending that only address the exterior of the buildings, roof and the outsides of the building. Um, and, and those PWs are, I think at about, just about a hundred percent between 90 some percent to a hundred percent before we begin, um, prepping for, uh, the bid documents, et cetera. Okay. Very well. And let's go to, um, your revenues in respect to your rental spaces. Um, what's the total amount, um, slated to to collect and what's your outstanding balance is in terms of rental spaces?

- 2:56:43 AC Richards. Repeat the question, sir. The rental spaces, what amount slated to collect and how much have you collected? How much is outstanding, basically? Senator, if I may, are you speaking to the lease whole value? It's \$4 million, \$4.0 million, and we are expected, we did do some projection of about I think it was \$3.5 million for this year only because there were some issues that we we had with some rental, I believe, going through some evictions, et cetera. So we did make those projections.
- 2:57:31 To date, we're at 3.1 million in collections. You're doing a little better than the last time? We're doing, yes, much better. What's the value of all of our properties for the government of the Virgin Islands? What's the value? The actual cash value? Yes. The actual cash value currently is insured is about \$1.2 billion. \$1.2 billion. Yes, Senator. Very well. Let me ask you in respect to vendors, plaza, much improved. Everyone is paying a rent over there? Senator, the majority are. We have implemented a new vendor's license agreement.
- 2:58:21 We got some feedback that they had some issues with the language. We had a meeting with the vendors. We adjusted our language to meet a mutual consensus. And then we also adjusted the rate as well based on the feedback from some of the tenants. tenants and uh most of them are current okay i'm going back to your leases and rentals um the postality also reported you did not submit a listing so please through the chair can you do that i don't know um in respect to um the information when it comes to leases it is submitted yes sir i see 30 seconds nonetheless very well very well that's fine um let me lose my train of of thought. Okay. Let's go to your relationship, your partnership, your partnership with NASPO and UVI. When did this occur and what does that mean in terms of your employee when it comes to the training and capacity within your organization? This discussion began about, I would say, about three months ago with the University and NASPO with regards to doing that. Our intent is about giving the University of the Virgin Islands students the opportunity of looking at a new career here and exposing them to that arena. In addition, I want to say that last year the University of the Virgin islands all local interns we were able to onboard last year with naspo's funds as well and it was about six of them three in each district that was my next question in respect to um your vacancies
- 3:00:15 because how many vacancies do you have at this moment good afternoon shamila richardson we currently have 11 vacancies 11 vacancies um which divisions I would respectfully say all to exclude the fiscal division. Okay, and that is an excellent, in my opinion, an excellent way to onboard individuals, especially local Virgin Islanders, and it makes it more effective for your department in terms of assuring that the work continues and that everyone knows what they're doing moving forward.
- 3:00:57 Thank you, Senator. May I respond? thank you so much for the time thank you thank you senator blight and you may respond commissioner senator you're absolutely correct and that was the department's goal and presently we do have a prf pending for one of our interns that were there as a matter of fact all of them were outstanding and we do have a prf pending for their employment with the department uh thank you Thank you for that response. Commissioner, do you have a contract administrator on St. Croix?
- 3:01:31 I do. Who? Yes, I do, Senator. Yes, we do. Yes. You have one on St. Croix? And one on St. Thomas as well? We have in both districts. Correct. All right. How is the morale at the department? Well, the morale can always be better, Senator. I think a lot too with us having to reassign employees to another location because of issues with facilities and those things as well as you know can damper their spirits. But the morale can be better, but we really do do our very best to ensure that the needs of our employees are placed above all. So how are we working towards, you have your HR has a specific task in terms of building morale among employees? Because obviously if your employees are disenfranchised, then how can they produce at the level that you would want them to produce?
- 3:02:37 As a matter of fact, sir, yes, Senator, if I may, we formed a team internally to do that and I'll let our HR speak to that. Yes, ma'am. Sharmila Richardson. So, currently we have initiated a small team where we are trying to put different activities or different programs together to get the employees more involved. We have looked at doing employee of the month based on their performance, their work performance, of course attendance, time and attendance, all of those things, to grant employees the opportunity to we have requested of our leadership team each of us to give a small donation that we can put whether it's towards a small lunch or a gift card you know Amazon Home Depot those things that are necessities in these times to grant the employees we also have right now running did you know every month we spotlight a division notifying just letting the entire department know small things of the different employees within the division when we started it I got good feedback some individuals actually sent the information that they would like to be shared on them so we're working on ways our end of year employee celebration is always a big one employees look forward to it especially the items that we you know share as our token of appreciation So I think that we are getting there with getting them involved.

- 3:04:10 We have Battle of the Agencies coming up, and I've gotten good feedback as well with that. Okay. So if you had to put a score on it from 0 to 10, what would that number be? I'll say a 7. A 7. So that's a benchmark, 7. For me? That's the benchmark, a 7, you believe? I would like for it to be a 10, but for now I'll say a 7. No, I'm saying that's your benchmark where it's at 7 now, and you're waiting for it to get to 10. No problem. We need to determine where it's at so we know where we're going, right?
- 3:04:39 Definitely. So, good show. Real quickly before I go to the next senator, which will be Senator Frederick, correct, yeah, Senator Frederick. You spoke about the GVI buy. What does that do for property procurement and a government divergent house? Well, the e-pocurment system in GVI has created much more transparency in the bidding process. So in the past years when we've had a lot of protests, we've had inquiries with regards to the bidding process, we don't see those. I cannot tell you that I have seen even a protest for this year or last year may have been one or two. But it's usually addressed because there's full transparency and competition in GVI Buy. It also requires that the contractors that bid on them are in good standing with the government of the Virgin Islands. So it ensures that as well. All of our solicitation, acquisitions of goods and services, our contracts are done within the GVI Buy system electronically. we are moving into the government-wide requisition of it. Our hopes now that we are in the final testing of the payment module, that we will have that house within GVI buy-in. That will give all agencies transparency. We would know where payments are, where they're pending, whether or not they were submitted, whose queues they were in, etc.
- 3:06:12 Very well sound like you're having a system that will create accountability, transparency Absolutely and fairness. That's important. Yes, Senator. Frederick you're recognized for your five minutes. Thank you very much Mr. Chair. Pleasant good afternoon colleagues listening and viewing audience testifiers and my staff and of course central staff. Commissioner thank you so much for coming it's a pleasure. I wanted to ask you you just spoke about the efficiencies that your agencies implement to better manage your department and the government but I still notice that it's growing in terms of headcount so we're seeing efficiencies you know better systems put in place better accountability but we're adding more headcount too why why isn't that number going now and I I see a lot of people add new system upgrades but then they just keep adding more employees you're you're you've got 11 vacancies we do senator yeah so you're trying to add more right well we have the 11 vacancies we do have the 11 vacancies you want me to respond in whole I'm just trying to figure out what things so the advent of all this technology we're doing all these good things I'm saying why is it we can't try to reduce costs well our casa is B is has been reduced and you know our term leveling up senator if I may leveling up it was because we began this process of unlining and digitalizing services one case in point I think for us is with our action over the last two years we have somewhat integrated technology into it and based on the system that we're looking at right now to put in place at at no cost up to the government, we will be saving about \$40,000 in administrative cost. And so, and if I may as well, the department's numbers has actually trended down. When I first came to the department, we were very close to about 100 employees. We're down to 73 now.
- 3:08:32 73, but you've done so much great work. 76. from when I worked in the government back in 2004, it was a big agency, but everything was manual. And you're still doing gas coupons. I'm so glad to see that you're finally digitizing and improving that system because that system is fraught with a lot of abuse and fraud. I can tell you that right now, I've dealt with that. So I'm glad this is happening. I just, you know, I know we are spending money to get better but we're still adding more people and that's my issue well senator if I may when we when we look at the Department of Property and Procurement and what our responsibility is to the government all roads lead to the Department of Property and Procurement we have right now 14 about 13 or 14 employees in procurement that is taking on disaster recovery projects about that you know that is taking that on that is unheard of in every state that you go so when I look at the numbers and based on what we do in acquisition of property in in procurement acquisitions across the government I really think that our staff is quite lean yeah and I'm not your staff I think they're awesome I want to commend them and let them know keep working hard we appreciate it my job is to find money this is a budget here and so we're talking dollars and cents so that's the bottom line so I mr. Richards had deputy commissioner which is that assistant commissioner Richards my correction had stated that the property value is roughly 1.2 billion dollars is that numbers pretty fair the insured Vincent Richards are for the proper proper property procurement the
- 3:10:27 We've insured policies around 1.2 billion dollars, but if I may, as these construction of new facilities and renovations are completed, the values are going to increase significantly. Which is music to my ears because as a banker you would love to leverage this opportunity because right now the government is paying a high interest rate on our debt. We need to pay off some vendors, tax returns, you know, retro, blah, blah, blah, blah. We've got assets that we could leverage that could help us do that.
- 3:11:06 So keep up the good work. I like that, Commissioner. One minute. See if you can get some more, all right, from these free FEMA projects that we've got. In terms of GBI by these vendors, it's like 2,500. I know there was a very strict

protocol you went through to vet these people. They're complaining, saying that when they do bid on stuff, they don't get pay on time. So they're always threatening to not do business with the government. Is this number growing or increasing? 30 seconds.

3:11:41 Well, that's not the number. That was what the team was able to add to the system. I don't have the number right now, but it's a much greater number than that in terms of vendors. But it is an issue with the government in terms of how payments are processed, and that is our goal and our intent to ensure that the payment processing is done in GVI in the AP modules. And we believe that will give more transparency and cause more accountability between both the agencies and the vendors are like senator who there are some that are very delinquent in in signing their invoices mr. J if I get one last and in terms of the leases that we have another opportunity for us to maximize our revenues as a government I noticed going through the listing that our post auditor did there was a quite a few that have been expired what where we in terms of are you is there a formula to make sure the renewal rate is standardized or is there how do you go about going up coming up with a new lease amount because that that's the question i was i was curious to know uh vincent richards um appraisals help give us guidance uh new appraisals a significant part of our portfolio of leases date back to the 1970s and 1980s and as they reset we start to try to reset them as close as possible to current market value and you know um you know so which is causing the problem with people complaining right now with insurance costs and everything else makes sense thank you very much mr chair i appreciate the time thank you for your answers uh thank you very much senator um frederick before i go to the next senator which which will be Senator Avery Lewis.

3:13:36 Real quickly, you spoke about the food truck plaza. Where is that? Where are you intended to put that? I'll let AC Richards. Vincent Richards. Currently, Senator, the plan is to place it directly east of the Fort Christian, between the Fort Christian parking lot and the actual fort. There's a little park area there that we can carve out for that. Okay, I think it's a wonderful idea.

3:14:03 Are you going to also ensure that there is electrical hookup and perhaps even some off-the-grid support in the future and that facility, again, to drive the cost down for perhaps electricity? Electricity. Yeah, what is the plan? Electricity, water, Wi-Fi. Yeah. Standard. All of the utilities would be in place. Lighting, standard. Yes, Senator. Very well. Senator, Avery Lois, you recognize for your five minutes. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, colleagues. Good afternoon.

3:14:33 DPP. Big DPP. Good afternoon, people of the Virgin Islands. Commissioner Leandro, I noticed on page 10 of the post-auditors report, in the category of professional services, a tremendous sleep drop. You want to explain that? And in 2024, you had an expenditure of \$120,000. Then you had \$96,000, and now you're recommending in 2026, \$30,000. Yes, Senator. Thank you.

3:15:05 So in the professional services area, you would find during that time was when we began the contracting with GVI by some of the larger contractors. so right now all we're paying now we're out of the developing of systems and we're now just in annual fees so that that is correct so what you're seeing is annual fees okay and then opposite side of the page page nine i signed 2024 you had for security services 3 210 dollars and now there's it's zeroed out what was the security for security services security services i'm paying nine of the post audit we're all in the post post auditors report good afternoon lady shauna martin chief financial officer uh that was for surveillance services monthly for the central warehouse in st croix so we don't need it anymore not at this time okay miss martin while i have your attention page 13 of the same report you uh the post auditor stated that you you had one outstanding vendor payment uh to a vendor for forty thousand five hundred fifty two uh the obligation stems from invoices of fiscal year 2023 and as of january 15 2025 this hasn't been rectified where we at with that where are we with that sorry so currently we are working with the office of management and budget and the department of finance to see how best those payments can be accommodated without affecting our current fiscal

3:16:59 year but uh commissioner you concur with this uh with the following statement right beneath it it says in addition the department has reported two hundred and ninety thousand five hundred four dollars eighty six cents and outstanding vendor payments currently pending with department of finance we do have payments and and gasoline does that too as well okay so you're in communication with uh commissioner mcurdy absolutely our team work very well together in especially processing those um that looks like just sometimes could be a payment for gasoline um but but absolutely we work together we are creating a system where we can budget it uh set the funds aside a little differently as opposed to paying out in a traditional way as we've been doing it and i know when we are strapped for cash here i know in onset of this earlier part of this administrate brian roach administration they your department had made a great charge for after those who are delinquent with rental payments uh where are we with that like i i know it was like one step to go to court you know what's happening i i haven't heard no real uproar so i don't think anything is happening so we've we've done a pretty good job i must say that the fiscal team we call those uh leases in for the most part and establish payment plans that sought to help a lot of them that were in I mean significant arrears to come up to speed create a and in some cases we you

know may have seek to to to waver certain things if in fact they were able to pay on time and the amount so we've established some payment plans that did work there's still a few that is out there that is going through that process but not as it was before as you can see our collections has greatly

3:18:54 increased thanks to the fiscal team but I would say that you know the government I wouldn't say is the best landlord but we one of the better landlords so I mean people need to treat us fairly and pay their pay their rent as well because everybody want rent from the government right? Commissioner, the FY2026 recommended budget funds 89 position, but as of May, you only have 76 fill where recruitment strategies are in place to fill the others.

3:19:26 For the positions, we have already recruited and we take part in all of the departments of laborers and personnel strategic out you know their their plans to recruit we have been working on that and I want to believe we may have had recent hires as well to fill 30 seconds so we are doing some heavy recruiting thank you and lastly my last question I the part Vitima has some funding to do some cyber assessments of different of your systems and so forth to harden the infrastructure uh with all the recent other semi-autonomous on one or two of your other agencies having cyber attacks and breaches and things what are you doing to make sure that you know you ready well you know luckily for us um time that is director ross's but we work very close as a matter of fact we just had a meeting last week no earlier this Monday to discuss yesterday to discuss the cyber security threats and how we are working together with even some of the other agencies to prevent that there was some discussion in looking at some companies etc to do it but I want you to know it's on the table and we have been working towards a solution but DPP again and it falls squarely under B.I.T.

3:20:54 Thank you very much for your responses and I'll await another round. Thank you very much, Senator Lewis. Commissioner, when was the last time you were on St. Croix? How often do you go over to St. Croix? So, Senator, in my first, I would say, year or two, I probably lived on St. Croix for the most part. That's why onboarding an assistant commissioner in the St. Croix district, realizing it's not just about traveling to St. Croix, but it's also about having a presence there and leadership in St. Croix. Having the assistant commissioner there in St. Croix has helped as well. But I do travel over to St. Croix. It just has not been very recent. I have not been in the St. Croix District's district.

3:21:49 So I'm getting reported that they're longing to see you. Oh yes, I love my staff. They love me too, they tell me. So see if you can find some time to pay them a visit. Absolutely, I'm actually on schedule. Okay, so tell me Commissioner, those police cars that have been parked at PMP for quite some time now, tell me how them are gone, where they need to be. Issy Pickering? Good afternoon. Khalid Pickering, Assistant Commissioner. There are seven left cars that are parked at DPP. No fault of DPPs. DPP has been in conversation with the VIPD, understanding that Bronx Communication has some work left to do on those cars. Those cars are not retrofitted with all the equipment that the VIPD needs to operationalize those cars, in particular cages. So there are conversations and there is a plan. I know some funding discussions have taken place as well and so Browns Communication has to pick up the cost for the delay in processing those cars.

3:22:55 Assistant Commissioner, it's unacceptable. These vehicles need to be out on the street doing police work and protecting this community. They serve no good purpose sitting at PMP and this has been close to two years. By the time these vehicles hit the street, they're going to be out of contract, and they'll be useless. It's been way too long. Understood. We're putting people on the moon, and we can't address this communication issue that I've gotten these vehicles to be sitting there. Seven vehicles that need to be out on the street. Commissioner, I'm asking at least exercise the nuclear option.

3:23:30 I don't know what it is, but we need to get these vehicles out. We'll have that option. The last set of vehicles went over. They went over to St. Grant and sat. I took money out of my pocket and buy batteries just to be able to get these vehicles mobilized because by the time they got there, the batteries were dead, they were useless, just parked them. You know, I mean, we got to do better at this. I mean, you know, these vehicles, again, I don't know. Let me just move on. At this time, Senator Collegiate-Joseph, you recognize for your five minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

3:24:06 a pleasant good day to everyone. I can hear our chairman's frustration. We are having a lot of homicide. Our men and women in blue need this vital tool and equipment to do their work. So let's make it a priority. Okay, let's make it a priority and also we want to to assure that whatever is needed, it is urgently needed. Crime is up. We have a lot of people who are being victims of gun violence, and we need to have our police presence very strong in our community. Now, Commissioner, you and your talented staff, I want to really commend you and your talented staff, and also commend you for your strategy relative to succession planning. Because I believe that's what you are doing with your partnership with NOPA? NASPO. NASPO. And also working on a partnership with the University of the Virgin Islands and NASPO. That's great, that's a visionary leadership. So I want to commend you and your team. Now, I do have some questions. I know one of my colleagues asked what is the value of all of the government's property right now, but I would like to ask if any recent appraisals have been conducted of our properties. Vincent Richards. Senator, appraisals are ongoing on a regular basis.

- 3:25:48 When was your last? The last appraisal? Yes, sir. for a piece of government property? I don't know, what is your methodology and approach in doing the appraisals? Are you asking about the entire portfolio? The portfolio, sir, don't eat up my time. We don't customarily appraise the entire portfolio, Senator, it's too large to appraise. When was your most recent appraisal? The most recent appraisal was last week. We conduct appraisals weekly, Senator. Okay, and what, how many properties was appraised? Is it just one parcel?
- 3:26:20 Probably in the last few weeks we've probably appraised probably about three or four different... How many have you appraised for the fiscal year thus far? I honestly can't give you that answer, but I can get you that answer. And the cost. I'm going somewhere with it because we did appropriate in Act 8619 \$100,000 for PMP appraisals. So I wanted to ask you where you are as far as those appraisals are concerned. Senator, we have utilized the \$100,000 appropriation and we've always asked for an increase in that appropriation for the appraisal, Senator.
- 3:27:06 Okay. You have utilized all of it? It? We usually utilize, annually we usually utilize all of it and more. Okay but you can't give me a figure right this minute on the total amount that has been utilized thus far. Sir? No Senator. Okay. I can get the information for you how much I'm done. Yeah get that information to me that would be great. I really want to let you know Commissioner, thank you so much Mr. Richards, you're always are very efficient in our discussion. I want to ask you, Commissioner, when we are looking at the central warehouse and how much money that I'm looking on page 8 of the post auditor's report and I love the central warehouse.
- 3:28:02 They have the best pen that I really, not this one, but a different one. I have it right in my drawer, right? They have the best pen, the best equipment at a more convenient cost and cost effective. How often are your stock replenished? So that would be for my central stores. Yes, your central. It's replenished based on what is set in the replenishment system, so it's by item. It depends on how that item sells and what we have the inventory registered at. For example, if it's 8, we know we start to purchase or rebuy at 3, whatever that target is, but it's replenished consistently.
- 3:28:49 Okay, I was looking through your presentation, and I didn't see how many leases that you have in your queue that is upcoming. Do you have, at least I missed it, because I was in and out, I may have missed it. Yeah, I think we have, it may have been on, I think that is, that is outstanding, and you are still in the pending, yes. about 11 we'll get the numbers for you but it's in the testimony senator okay it's about 11 of them and i do have one that i'm really concerned about i did ask the previous department head regarding it uh sports park and recreation department of sports park and recreation about it and that is the lease agreement with the saint thomas cricket association where are we with that Vincent Richards, we have arrived at terms, and it is on its way out of our shop.
- 3:29:52 How many days are you looking for it to be out of your shop and to the AG's office? It will be out of our office by the end of next week, Senator. End of next week? Yes, Senator. And what usually is a turnaround time to get it from the AG's office, Department of Justice, for legal sufficiency, etc.? 24, 48 hours. Okay, so we're looking at least by the end of July, early August, to get it up to the Governor? Yes, Senator.
- 3:30:19 Okay, I'm holding you to that. Yes, Senator. Thank you so much. Because I know that's a long time in coming. They have done exceptional work out at Estate Nazareth. I am just impressed by the amount of work that has been done. Mr. Richards, you wanted to say something? I just wanted to say that they do have an agreement. the Cricket Association does have an agreement currently and I believe they do have full access to their funding that they need through that agreement to to do the development that they're doing well I that is another challenge and discussion we have we need to start to expedite okay because the I went to a cricket game over this weekend and I was really impressed by the turnout I was impressed because I've been monitoring it for some time what somebody a great lady said what gets monitored gets done so I monitor and check okay that's something I do and and sometimes I go in and disguise but I have to change that because people one minutes in me so they they do exceptional work a lot of work and I'm telling you grunt work and I don't think the money that they are receiving is, is equitable to the work that they have put into the cricket field out at the state Nazareth, who I passed a resolution to rename it in honor of the late. So you've heard of Vivian Richards, the cricketer?
- 3:31:51 The late, I never heard of Vivian Richards, you know, I saw where he was born and everything. So you need to stop it. Okay, I saw where he was born in the island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, but I named it after the late, great George E. Goodwin, the estate Nazareth property. Now, I wanted to ask you, Commissioner, what are some of the key items you want to look at as far as fiscally in your budget that you are in dire need of? Mr. Chairman, I'll wrap up with that one question. Thank you so kindly. That you are in dire need of commissioner that is a part of your budget. Let's exclude the vacancies. That you know that you need to help build the morale of your people, your staff, and keep them rolling out all of those documents and procurement functions that you have, operational functions.

- 3:32:55 Thank you, Senator. Great question. I think as far as looking at what is most important for us, we are a service agency and we provide service to the government. The government is our customer and the people are our customers. And so for us, it's being able to provide them with the service, the skill set, the professionalism and the support that they need. And that's all tied basically to everything that we propose here in our professional services. And you said to leave personnel out, as you know, it's the most valuable of them. That's why it was important for us to step back, develop the framework, develop the policies, propose the legislation, and even request increase. Some instances we've lost positions to be able to add salaries to increase salaries because of the work that this lean lean very lean but professional team has continued to put in and that's the entire staff so it's about getting them the services and the resources we need to serve our customers and this budget does that the budget does it you know we are very grateful for the increase and the increase is mostly in the area of us being able to provide a cleaner and safer environment for our team.
- 3:34:26 Understood clearly. Thank you so much. Oh, we have one more response. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. You can respond at the chair time. I don't want to abuse him even though he's so kind. Thank you so much for your responses and you have my full support of your budget. Thank you very much, Senator Joseph, you may respond. Oh, that's Martin. Lady Shana Martin, Chief Financial Officer, to go back to Senator Joseph's inquiry regarding appraisals, we have conducted for FY25 approximately 30 appraisals and to date we have spent \$58,100 in doing so. Very well on the...
- 3:35:07 Out of an allotment of \$100,000. And the appraisals, these are individual properties. I think what she's getting at is that we need to do a kind of general overall appraisal, which could be extremely expensive, but so that we could get a good assessment of the value of government property at this time. As well as inventory, that's something I wanted to come to as well. Do we have a good handle on all of the government property? Are we accounting for every single piece of government property? Vincent Richards, yes, Senator, we do.
- 3:35:36 Okay, and that's in a database and tracking? Yes, Senator, it is. Very well. Senator Frederick, you had a point, and then I'll come to you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we're talking about in terms of an appraisal, not the customary appraisal you need, as you're aware, Mr. Richards, but one that gives us a general evaluation of the value of the assets of the government of the Virgin Islands. That is different. That's more of a compilation analysis that they could do for us so we could know what is the value of this asset that we have.
- 3:36:11 And it won't be that expensive. Senator, that's a good question. I believe that the Department of Finance keeps a fixed asset registry that manages and tracks the valuation of all of our- But they don't know what the valuation is, though. They just know what cost they use. But it's a different argument. We could have that discussion. Senator, if I may, I do understand need to have that portfolio and in terms of you know it's it's good for bonding it's good for those type of needs that we may have but also in order to do something of that nature you know it requires a lot of funds as you can imagine to get something like that done and historically it has not been done because property value changed so quickly so investing in something of that magnitude waiting about two three years that has changed a year could change and with the developments right now of the territory right now we did not see something of that nature right now in the best interest in terms of how we spend those funds we also work with the LT's office when they're going out to do those assessment and that's about merging services and utilizing dollars better when we can get those you know those type of services done through the LTE office as well as they do the land assessments right the last part of like my question if I may Mr. Chair is so we've got this awesome asset that we have not gone out to the bond market ask investors to invest with us like that it's just for portions of it we've done that portion your agency is the you control all the assets of this government including vehicles we need to
- 3:38:03 leverage that some kind of way you know we've done other things we've leveraged other assets in the government and I'm not trying to get us in debt I'm trying to pay off the expensive debts that we currently have so that we could start fresh and anew that that's the reasoning for my question yeah so don't don't I'm not in any way demeaning or saying you guys are doing a bad job you guys are excellent thank you we understand and thank you very much it's important and and it's something that we ourselves have spoken about but again because how quickly value land value can change um it's it's just has not been one of those priorities very well thank you um senator lois you have you recognize your point of information that we come to senator via for his his line yes uh commissioner i been in correspondence communication with waste management and about e-waste electronic waste and i said well in the community we're racking up this large amount of electronic waste the landfill them have refused electronic waste and you know the government itself is racking up electronic waste. So the waste management turns to me and says, well, you have to go to the Commissioner of Poverty and Procurement. She's going to have to handle all the government's electronic waste. Are you aware of this? Or do you have a plan for this? I mean, did it straight on you?
- 3:39:35 I like that. No. So when we get the asset report, they usually would note whether or not it's for disposal i do know that it was waste management that is involved in the process in terms of getting it badged out etc and that and that's what the

government has been doing setting aside until such time they turn it over to um waste management yes okay so you're aware of it and are we going to when i say we as a government are we going to address it we're going to put it our rfp or something for somebody to come and go with it for us i don't know i'm asking Senator, Commissioner, if I may, Khalid Pickering, Assistant Commissioner, BIT has just recently, as recently as last week, started conversations about a project that they will be taking on to facilitate the disposal of e-waste. It's just hot off the presses, so there will be more to come on that, but BIT has taken the lead on e-waste from a GVI perspective.

3:40:45 Thank you for your response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Everybody have a wonderful evening. Thank you. Senator Lewis, Assistant Commissioner. Senator Lewis, as recent as this week, we were in discussions with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and I believe they have identified some grant funding that basically would be able to start addressing or chipping away at that need on a regular basis. i will i will circle back with you off offline and get you some information on that thank you thank you very much at this time that you would like to recognize senator vla you recognize for your five minutes thank you thank you mr chair uh commissioner in your testimony you refer to six and exempt employees receiving raise can you please tell me the position on the cost Those position titles were special assistant receiving a \$5,000 increase, I'm sorry no, a \$10,000 increase, two executive secretaries receiving both \$10,000 increases, another special. Can you go tell me what the special assistant was making?

3:42:09 Okay, so the first special assistant, she made \$55,000, she was increased to \$65,000. The executive secretaries both made \$60,000, they were increased to \$70,000. Another special assistant, she was making \$65,000, she was increased to \$70,000. And we have two PICS asset managers, they both were making \$59,000 and they were increased to \$65,000. okay thank you you're welcome okay so the average is somewhere like seven eight thousand if you add all of them up together okay thanks a lot um i'm reading and taking note as to how much properties we rent versus how much we lease and we actually renting properties or to individuals or leasing property to individuals on behalf of the government some 179 properties generating four million thirty nine thousand one hundred sixty nine dollars on the converse we are leasing from private landowners 153 properties are we paying twelve million four hundred and fifty two thousand four hundred dollars so we paying about three times what we actually rent into other individuals is it that the government fees that they utilize into renting individuals are very minimal Vincent Richards senator a lot a significant part of the government's portfolios undeveloped so it's not necessarily comparing apples to apples, oranges to oranges. But the information that you have is that we actually have 179 lease agreement

3:44:04 with private individuals? That the government is leasing the private individuals? Is that what the data said? Yes, it is correct, Senator. OK, so I'm just saying we are renting more properties than we're actually leasing from individuals, but the revenues are three times less. What is the status of the Lieutenant Governor building the old First Pennsylvania Bank? Senator, we closed the purchase on the property in the previous fiscal year. And I believe that the Lieutenant Governor's office is in the middle of planning to develop the property, to use it.

3:44:44 So we closed that purchase last year, you're saying? In the previous, yes, Senator. And how much is the Lieutenant Governor presently paying to lease a building? I'd have to get that number for you, Senator. Okay, I don't know which, I'm looking at your, the data that you sent, but I don't know which one is the Lieutenant Governor. So if you can get that because I wanted to put it on the record, is this government leasing buildings that are not being utilized presently? is it leasing buildings are not being utilized presently yes the government has acquired several pieces of property that necessitate being uh renovated not purchase not purchase a lease agreement what's the cost of the lease agreement for the building across um the old k-mart in sunny hills for department of health i'm i'm i'm lost sender st croix whoever you're st croix person sunny isles kmart there's a building right across the street that has been leased by the government by department of health and it's empty and it's been empty for the last two and a half years they'll rent their own property How many everybody don't know exactly what I'm talking about?

3:46:16 It didn't go through Property and Procurement? All leases go through the Department of Property and Procurement, Senator. So you're not aware that DOH is renting a building and it has not been utilized for two and a half years? Senator, the Department of Property and Procurement effectuates or effectuate the lease agreements I know what you're going to say. It's a department's responsibility. You're going to defer a question. Give me the amount of the lease. I need you to find that before you leave today. I need to know how much you've been paying every year for a building that is empty. In reference to vehicles, the figure, Commissioner, is \$1,899 vehicles owned by this government?

3:47:06 Yes, Senator. So \$1,899 for 6,000 employees. That is about 3.2 employees for every one car. Senator, if I may, some are vessels and there are other high... Five? What do you call those? Five vessels? 22. And then there... 22 vessels. I'm sorry? 22 vessels? Yes, Senator. So 1,877 vehicles for 6,000 employees?

- 3:47:36 No, Senator. There's also all the heavy equipment, the backhoes and those things that those other agencies utilize that is included in that total. How many are cars and trucks and not heavy equipment? Senator, I'll have to get that information. Okay. I know it's not going to decrease the amount of 500 or 600. What is the cost that we're spending on gasoline? One minute.
- 3:48:08 Currently \$2.7 million year to date. On maintenance. We don't have the maintenance figure. I'll get that back to you. What austerity measures are being put in place to decrease the purchase of gasoline? for the amount of gasoline that we purchase every year. Senator, if I may, the gasoline purchase year to date has decreased. I will get you the numbers, but we have been monitoring it. We have, again...
- 3:48:47 Okay, different question. What austerity measures? I see government vehicles 24-7 to include PMP every single day. What austerity measures are being put in place? Is it that every individual that has access to a vehicle in government is allowed to drive it on weekends, holidays, every single day? Absolutely not. What are the austerity measures? Absolutely not. Time. Senator, as we speak, we have sent out and requested the only 24-7, those employees that are required. The agencies are working and has pulled back on quite a bit of the vehicles that were out to employees. So, we are working on that. We have addressed that in terms of them returning and parking the vehicles up in the evening. We have submitted. If that were. One minute. We got my time as I had to explain. It ain't working. Okay, the holiday weekend coming, and I'll see them out 24-7. That ain't working. I don't know what where that is coming from, but there are no austerity measures. We have heard nothing whatsoever no directive no executive order given to employees in reference to austerity measures we just continue to drive these vehicles as if it's ours as if it's a personal own senator if i can't understand that but thank you so much allow the senator to finish and then you could ask the question allow him to finish well i'm finished now go ahead mr pickering yeah so just a timeline of some austerity measures that have been taking place. So in 2003, August of 2003, Commissioner Alejandro sent out a memo to the executive cabinet team outlining the guidelines and the SOPs for the use of government vehicles.
- 3:50:40 What's that date you said? It was in August of 2003. 2003? Yes. Again, in February of 2004, the Commissioner sent out... 2023? Oh, you're saying 2003. Excuse me, 2023. Okay. Again, in February of 2024, Commissioner Alejandro sent out a follow-up memorandum to the Executive Branch Cabinet members, outlining the rules and regulations for the operation of government vehicles. Mr. Bickering, does the commissioner have authorization to tell any commissioner how they should use the vehicles that are assigned to their department, does she has authorization that she could tell them to do X, Y, or Z?
- 3:51:30 I'll let the commissioner answer. No, I don't, Senator, and that was actually my response. Thank you. The point I'm getting, and I don't mean to cut anybody off, but those answers, did just don't suffice because you don't have the power over any other department. You might have the will to suggest areas that they can improve, but unless that comes from the top, it's just a memorandum. That's all it is. And they have X anybody in the Virgin Islands. It's rampant use of vehicles 24-7. Well, thank you so much Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thank you very much. And half of the vehicles you see now have private plates you can't even tell their government vehicles not to mention is there a tint policy in place because everybody seems to have 360 everything every window windshield the side the back everything is completely tinted you can't see in the vehicle is there a tint policy in regards to government vehicles yes there is there is and who is enforcing the tint policy well it's first of all a tint policy should follow the law there's a law that outlines a tint policy any vehicle that needs it has to be approved you know we we sit here we act like we don't live in this community you know with these responses I mean we act like we don't live in these committees seeing these things senator if I may the tint policy is enforced by DPP we give approval and non-approval when the cars come in for registration they are removed if those things are not there what happens that you may see is in between the registration coming back at times that's what happened but I just mentioned I don't disagree with you but then what happens correct so then what happens I
- 3:53:25 mean I don't disagree with you that's what happens when they go to motor vehicles the same thing that happens but the minute they leave the motor vehicle that's exactly what will go wrong so all right we'll move on senator de The graph you recognize for your five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Jig. Good afternoon, colleagues. Good afternoon, testifiers, all of you listening. President, Commissioner, you see you collect rent from Venda Plaza? Venda? Is that Venda Plaza? Yes, yes, Senator. OK, are you aware of the parking lot for Venda Plaza? When it rains, floods terribly for years. Is it something that is your purview to have corrected, or whose purview? Yes, Senator, as a matter of fact, we are working within our AC Richards to speak to the developments that we are engaged in towards remediating those concerns.
- 3:54:18 Okay, could I just have it to, how much it would cost to fix it? Senator, the flooding situation is being handled by the Department of Public Works. Cost? I do not have the cost to repair the drainage. Okay, so it would be under Public Works, not under you? Yes, correct. Also, the Taxi Commission is downstairs of your building. How much money have you expended from your budget toward repairing that building or assisting them and getting them up and going? Because

again, it's from you. You know, do we need to reimburse you or do they have to reimburse you? What's the deal on that?

3:55:02 So, Senator, we'll have to get the numbers to you, but repairs, everything actually is on PNP. Okay, through the chair, if I could get that cost that you spent for that. Yes, Commissioner? Yes? The department also hosts the taxicab commission in the St. Croix district as well as in the St. Thomas district. Okay, okay, I wasn't aware of that, but for both entities, that's fine. We'll get this. Excuse me, can I get the listing of the value of agricultural properties under property procurement, if you could get that again through the chair, if you don't have it, all of agricultural properties that come under property procurement that belong to agriculture, they still belong to property procurement, get a value of that, those please. The motor pool, how much mechanics do you have now?

3:55:59 Five total, three on St. Croix and three on St. Thomas and two on St. Croix. Okay, because, you know, it's five in your fleet. And the last I went down there, the area of the motor pool where they're housed was atrocious. Has any repairs been done to the facility where the mechanics are kept? I don't know about St. Croix, but on St. Thomas. The building, from a repairs and maintenance perspective, is going through a scope of work process led by the Department of Public Works. That is forthcoming to have that building renovated.

3:56:41 Okay, and does the president's batch rooms work? So the mechanics need to use the restrooms. Do they work? Yes. Okay, good, good. Now, Commissioner, total amount of employees, you said 76, with 11 vacancies, in a 25 budget, was anyone in your department who received wage increases? Yes, we've had wage increases every year, but I'll let HR speak to the number. Good afternoon, Shamila Richardson.

3:57:14 So, yes, we have 16 United Steelworkers Master's employees that recently received their 10-1-2024 salary increases. Okay, and we put \$15,000 in the 25 budget to accommodate the wage increases? Yes. They were the entity? Yes. Okay. Is there any retro owe to any of them? All of them received their retro as of April 30th. As of April 30th this year? 2020.

3:57:43 Okay, good. One minute. Did that deplete the \$15,000 that was added to the budget? Yes. All of it? Yes. Okay, so it wasn't short in any way? No. Okay, so we added \$15,000 toward wage increases. You had exempt employees who received wage increases, but your personal and fringe went down for \$26,000. If I may. Sure. And the reason for that would be allocation of percentages with us adding new position titles.

3:58:19 And also, once a vacancy, if you have an employee who was receiving family insurance and they left, would it be coming a vacancy? Then that fringe changes to single insurance. So that plays a role in a decrease in that fringe benefits. Okay, and personnel went down \$5,000. Same thing. personnel because we deleted probably one or two positions to satisfy those increases and to put towards promotions okay so out of your 76 employees time if i may wrap up mr chair how many is under general fund and how many are under the business commercial properties fund how many under the general fund general fund i have a total of 39 employees and business and commercial there's a total of 37. okay now how many employees do you have under 35 000 three three how many vacancies you have under 35 000 excuse me i will say two but again that's because they're at 50 percent Okay, and then I just would like to wrap up with your actuals from 25, personnel, fringe, supplies, other services, personnel, and when did you receive the last allotment for your actuals? Good afternoon, Lady Shawna Martin, Chief Financial Officer. Senator, can you repeat the question, please?

3:59:53 I'm trying to get the actual and personal fringe supplies, et cetera, but I'm wondering as to what date or month did you receive your, if anything, your third quarter or your last allotment? So we do receive our allotments on a monthly basis from OMB. To date, as it pertains to salary and fringe benefits, we have spent a total of \$3,281,389.88. And that is between the general fund and the business and commercial fund. As it pertains to supplies, to date we have spent \$3,796,036.46, other services. Wait, excuse me, go back to finish up supplies and then go back to fringe please.

4:00:50 Okay, so excuse me, what I'm trying to figure out is, is the same thing, information you were given HR, or you are the person giving me the actuals? I am providing the actuals. Okay, okay, so do, do, okay, personnel is 3 million 288, 287, 389, 85 cents. That's personnel. Personnel by itself?

4:01:18 No, no. Yeah, personnel by itself for general fund. Personnel by itself for general fund. Okay. And then fringe general fund. So I would have to break it out because I have it together between both funds. Okay. You can allow me to get that. Okay, so now back to supplies. \$3,796,000. \$3,796,036.46. Other services?

4:01:56 Other services, we have spent \$2,206,213.11. Any GS employees? No, we don't have any, but we do have a vacancy for a purchase order analyst that falls under the G.S. pay scale. Okay, so a vacancy for one in the G.S.? Yes.

4:02:24 Okay, so then the personal and fringe comes under general fund and the... Business and commercial. The business and commercial, so only personal and fringe. Comes with supplies and all that don't come under that. Yes, in the 26th, I'm sorry, in the 26th budget we are requesting for services and other services under the business and commercial. Okay, so from under the general fund you're moving other services under the business and commercial?

- 4:02:56 No, it's also under the general, both of them, correct. Okay, well through the chair, if you could get that information through the chair, and with the breakdown, the total and then with the breakdown, please. And you know, Commissioner and the Chair's time, the Assistant Commissioner gave me a little tour of the printing shop and the work that's being done in the printing shop, if you don't mind elaborating, if you could give us a short version of it and the Chair's time. Thank you for the time, Mr. Chair.
- 4:03:23 Thank you. Real quickly though, as we go back to the personnel, actuals, you said you're working on that number to make that determination, But in the utilities, \$450,000 was earmarked for the utilities. Are you on target with the \$450,000? Yes, we are, Senator. Actually, to date, we have paid \$265,080.15 between electricity and water. Okay. And on your personnel, I know you're still working on that number, But based on the budget line item It was \$2.8 million for personnel And then fringe was \$1.23 And the general fund Yes, Senator I do have the total here But I'm not certain if the Senator wanted the total Or you wanted what was in allotments He wanted actual to date He wanted actual to date What you have expected to date Yes, because that helps us to determine if you're on target and if you meet your requirement to go over.
- 4:04:42 Yes, Senator. We'll have that information. Do you have any litigation or liens against property procurement? No, Senator. And the insurance was a line item of \$7.2 million for renewal insurance premium, that's a reoccurring annual cost?
- 4:05:17 Yes, Senator. And the amount is the same for FY26? Senator, we do anticipate that there's going to be an increase in that value. But it is right now at the 7.2 and we've paid all. We've just renewed it and it has been paid in full. Thank you. All right. Any burning questions? Senator Frederick, do you recognize your burning question?
- 4:05:50 please recognize the mic of senator frederick thank you very much mr chair commissioner i just want to verify one piece of information um what in your testimony how much did we spend on fuel gasoline purchase in fy 2025 and also 2024 if you have that number as a government for FY25 thus far we have spent two million five hundred and eighty one thousand nine hundred and twelve dollars and eighty seven cents whereas for FY24 we spent two million seven hundred and twenty two dollars I'm sorry two million seven hundred twenty two thousand nine hundred and forty two dollars and 40 thank you very much mr. chair thank you and that was to date did that comparisons is to date or the entire comparison is based on today so it's it's not annualized yet so we've got two three more months right all right and what is it supposed to be for the year what are you projecting we project about 2.9 right under three million dollars a year for the entire government okay thank you very much appreciate it thank you any additional burning questions colleagues senator Joseph you recognize I thank you so much mr. chairman I just need a clarification on that same topic because based on your records total expenditure of all funds for fiscal year 2023 to 2025. I see for the gasoline funds for fiscal year 2024,
- 4:07:45 you have \$4,277,885.85. So that's a total for the entire year, correct? Yes. Okay, and so as far as up to May 30th of this year, you've expended \$2,581,912.87, correct? Correct, Senator.
- 4:08:17 Okay, good. Thank you. So you are going to meet at least this 4.2 mark for the whole fiscal 2025. well we have the next quarter so yeah you you're looking good to make it thank you thank you senator viola you recognize your burning portion thank you i was looking for the projections in the various from the business and commercial property fund are you going to meet the target are you going to generate as much as you're generating this year or are you seeing a decrease actually senator we've seen an increase this year i think versus the previous year we were at we were at 3.6 in 20 at the end of 2024 and right now we are at the 3.2 at this point but that was a total for last year so we do see and do anticipate that we will increase so you're projecting what for this year like for we are projecting the 3.7 okay and then next year you're projecting 4 million yes we're projecting at 4 million next year okay thank you mr. chair yeah thank you very much so really smart and you have the information were you able to do the the drought of the personnel and fringe separation?
- 4:10:02 I was able to obtain it for business and commercial. I was still working on general. Okay. All right. Senator DiGraffi, you recognize? Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to what my colleague was just stating, the Business and Commercial Fund has, you see, year-to-date \$3.2 million in it. And you're projecting \$3.7 by the end of this fiscal year, is what you're saying? Collections? Correct. Collections, we have received the 3.1 million.
- 4:10:35 We do anticipate reaching the 3.7. Okay. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, thank you. If you don't have that information really available, I guess you'll send it back to the Chair so we could pass that information on. Will do. This time, Commissioner, I'll just give you an opportunity to do a wrap-up. Well, before we do the wrap-up, I want to ask you, what about your current assignment, your mission statement that gives you a reason for pause? What keeps you up at night?
- 4:11:14 You know, Senator, as I mentioned earlier, thank you for the question. The Department of Property and Procurement is a service agency, And what keeps me up at night is our ability to provide and to support government operations one and also to be that partnership to our vendors. So I have a great team with me and that also keeps me up at night to make sure

that, you know, I don't lose them because it's a lot that each of them put in at the table. this leadership team that i have here um we're very lean but they do great things so it keeps me up at night and um yes and i i want to again implore and encourage the morale building because there is some fragmentation um i could i could sense it and we hear about it you know so i think it's important that you in building that team outside of the executive staff you want to make sure that the team encompasses those other individuals rank and file as well so um so work on that. So I'll give you a minute to go to your wrap-up at this time.

4:12:28 Vince? In the printing shop? Certainly. I'm Vincent Richards for the Department of Property and Procurement. Senator De Graff, yes, it was a pleasure giving you a tour of the operation of the printing office. Senator Frederick did ask about efficiencies. Yes, we have reduced our fleet of print presses by 50%, and we do anticipate at least a 40% reduction in our operating costs for acquisition of our equipment. We also intend to or project to get a reduction in our operating costs when it comes to electricity as well. So efficiencies is definitely something that we're looking at doing more with less or doing what we can do with less. So thank you. That was a good question.

4:13:29 I don't think you're doing justice to the printing office and their contribution and the work that they do there. I think that's what the Senator DeGraf was trying to get out of you is the product that they're putting out there and I think it's important that you're able to drive home the exceptional work that's being done there by Julia Reimert Jr. and those folks over in the printing office. Senator, we're humble. Our commissioner's humble. We're all humble. The employees, employees, employees. The leadership team is nothing without the rank-and-file employees and the great work and diligence of what they do.

4:14:03 So thank you very much. Thank you. At this time, Commissioner, I'll allow you to close. First, Senator, I just want to thank this body for, you know, your support and collaboration with us. And of course, the Department is always open and welcome to visit from the Senators as well. But most importantly, I just want to thank the team, the Department of Property and Procurement, all of them, the very small four-man team within the Division of Printing that does, I mean, just miraculous things in the community. So I want to really appreciate all of the divisions, the employees, and just to note that our commitment to leveling up operations, we are quite clear on it. We do plan to continue building on these efficiencies. We've created the framework necessary to grow our employees, and we are on task for doing so. So we want to thank you today for your consideration and for our dialogue today, and of course, the employees of the Department of Property and Procurement. Thank you so much for your hard work. Thank you. Thank you very much, and I want to extend our appreciation to DPP for the work that you do in this community. I want to thank my colleagues for the participation over the last two years. We went through six agencies. Of course, today we had BMV, we had Sports Park and Recreation, And of course, we're wrapping up with DPP, the Department of Property and Procurement.

4:15:34 I want to thank central staff. I want to thank the Posada Division, certainly everyone that, my staff as well, that worked to make the last two days successful. And I want to take this opportunity, wish everyone a happy Independence Day, as well as a happy festival. We have the Fourth of July event that's happening over in St. John, so we look forward to that. The Committee of Budget Appropriations, and happy Emancipation Day as well, yes, that's correct. Happy Emancipation Day as well, that's correct. The Committee of Budget Appropriations and Finance is hereby adjourned, God bless.

4:16:28 Thank you. Thank you.

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.

- 8x **Senator Hubert Frederick**
heard in this transcript as: Frederick
- 5x **Senator Avery Lewis**
heard in this transcript as: Lewis
- 5x **Senator Carla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Joseph, Joseph's
- 5x **Senator Dwayne DeGraff**
heard in this transcript as: De Graff, DeGraf, DeGraff

- 4x **Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro**
heard in this transcript as: Alejandro
- 3x **Senator Novelle Francis**
the surname alone also matches: Novel E. Francis Jr.; Navelle Francis Jr.
heard in this transcript as: Francis
- 3x **Dr. Randall James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Marise C. James; Neville James
heard in this transcript as: James
- 2x **Senator Kurt Violet**
heard in this transcript as: Viale
- 2x **Senator Kurt Viola**
heard in this transcript as: Viola
- 2x **Senator Marvin A. Blighton**
heard in this transcript as: Blighton
- 2x **Senator Marvin Blyden**
heard in this transcript as: Blayden

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 8916** · An Act providing an appropriation from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the operation of the Government of the Virgin Islands during the fiscal year October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025 ---0
- Act 8954** · November 20, 2024 · An Act amending title 31 Virgin Islands Code, chapters 21and 23, sections 205, 23 1a, 232, 236, 236a, and 239 pertaining to the management of public property and procurement and sale of goods and services; amending title 19 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 34, section 778(2) pertaining to the Virgin Islands Cannabis Use Act; amending title 30 Virgin Islands Code, section 104 pertaining to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority; amending Act Nos. 8899 and 8916 to provide supplemental appropriations: and for other related purposes
- Act 8619** · An Act providing an appropriation for the Legislature of the Virgin Islands for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 ---0