



Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 I Thank you.

0:01:00 Thank you. Li, lo, la, la, le, lo, te, lo, dai Li, lo, la, la, le, lo, te, lo, dai Thank you.

0:02:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:04:00 Thank you. I love you. [2 such phrases repeated 10 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]

0:09:00 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:11:00 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:12:30 I love you. Thank you. Oh, my God. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:16:00 The meeting scheduled for July 13th, 2023 for the Committee on Rules and Judiciary has been called to order. I would like to say greetings and good morning to my colleagues, good morning to the testifiers, good morning to the staff, good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands and of course non-committee members. Before I start this committee meeting today, I just want to say to the listening and viewing audience, I would first like to extend my sincerest condolences to the friends and family of our territory's latest victim of suicide and our police detective, Delbert Phipps.

0:17:06 Firstly, I want to take a moment to address persons, especially our young people who deal with depression and other behavioral health issues today in this territory. Every day, it is our collective responsibility to watch out for each other and take care of each other. When you are going through challenges and are in need of help, I want to ask you. There's resources, there's a number that you can call. Please seek assistance at 988 or 1-800-273-8255 or call 911. Veterans, service members and their families can press option one for services and Spanish speaking individuals utilize option two for assistance. VIPD, my fellow colleagues, I am just as shocked and angry and I hurt as you are hurting. I had the

privilege of meeting Detective Philps in 2021. He was an absolute professional and I am comforted by the fact that his colleagues and this community share the same sentiment. To his family, I offer my continued prayers.

- 0:18:47 In my capacity as the chair of rules committee and rules in judiciary, I would use my legislative powers to ensure we address this issue and propose legitimate solutions to bridge the gaps between the public safety and our justice system. During today's meeting, we will hear testimony from the governor's appointment. Lisa M. Alejandro, Commissioner of Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement. Today we have one bill and nine resolutions. So my colleagues, non-committee members, we got a long day.
- 0:19:35 It's time to do the people's work and now we would proceed. I request that the testifiers and those who are present in the chambers to please silence your phone. And at this time, I will direct the clerk to please proceed with the roll call. Good morning, Senator Angel L. Bulquez, Jr. Present.
- 0:20:08 Senator Bulquez, Jr., present. Senator Diane T. Capehart. Present. Senator Capehart, present. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, absent. Senator Maurice C. James. Senator James, absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Here. Senator Johnson, present. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Present. Senator Joseph, present. Senator Milton Potter.
- 0:20:42 Here. Senator Potter, present. Madam Chair, you have five present, two absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Are there any correspondence to be read into the record today from any committee member? Yes, there's two. Please proceed and read those. Honorable Senator Diane T. Capehart, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, 3022 Estate Golden Rock, St. Croix VI00820. Dear Senator Capehart, I do apologize that due to a previous commitment, I cannot be present at the Committee on Rules and Judiciary meeting to be held on Thursday, July 13th, 2023. Kindly excuse my absence. I regret any inconvenience my absence may cause. Thank you for your understanding. Kind regards, Maurice C. James, Senator 35th, Legislature of the Virgin Islands. Are there any other?
- 0:21:51 Okay, go ahead, proceed. Honorable Diane T. Capehart, Chairwoman, Committee on Rules and Judiciary. Dear Senator Capehart, I hope this correspondence reaches you in the best of health and spirits. Please be advised that I will be slightly delayed for today's hearing. I note the importance of the agenda items to be discussed and I will be in the chambers as soon as possible. I thank you in advance for your understanding. Sincerely, Kenneth L. Gittins, Senator. Madam Chair, that's the end of correspondence.
- 0:22:29 Thank you, Madam Chair. Please mark Senator Maurice James as excused and Senator Gittins as tardy. The testifiers are ready in the will. And at this time, I would welcome you, Miss Alejandro, to the 35th Legislature's Meeting on Rules and Judiciary. At this time, I would ask that you proceed to read your testimony. Thank you. Identify yourself first, your name, and proceed to read your testimony.
- 0:23:10 Thank you, Senator. Good morning, Lisa Maria Alejandro, Commissioner Nominee of the Department of Property and Procurement. Good morning, Honorable Senator Diane T. Capehart, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, Vice Chair, Senator Milton E. Potter, committee members, other senators present, and the viewing and listening audience. I am Lisa Maria Alejandro, Commissioner Nominee of the Department of Property and Procurement. I open my testimony by first thanking God for this opportunity and the Honorable Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach Esquire for their vote of confidence in my ability to serve the people of the Virgin Islands in this capacity. I further wish to thank and acknowledge those who are present with me today, both in chambers and viewing remotely. the employees of the Department of Property and Procurement, members of my senior staff, family, friends, and well-wishers. I appear before this body and the people of our great territory as a daughter of Virgin Islands soil. My genealogy not only represents the ethos of Virgin Islands culture, but contributes to the rich heritage of our people.
- 0:24:46 I was born and raised on the island of St. Thomas to the late Joseph Henry and Maria Lanclos Henry. Being the eldest of 10 children, my mother took the role of parenting quite seriously and instilled in me strong family values and ethics. As a child, I witnessed the high regards and stewardship my mother devoted to her parents and her occupation, and how much she strongly believed in and thus taught us that one's reputation is best defined by their actions. Growing up in a diverse, heritage-rich and colorful family that saw beyond the boundaries of its own uniqueness taught me to take responsibility, to be accountable, charitable, and considerate, and empathetic towards others. I am also a product of the Virgin Islands public school system and was fortunate to have been taught by some of the greatest educators who understood that the backbone of sustainable development is the infusion of education and culture. One of those heroines was the late Lydia Buschelty of Evelyn Marcelli School, who taught me to use my talents in the art to advance my learning experience. This lesson proved beneficial, as upon graduation from the Ivana E. Dorican High School, the Virgin Islands Department of Education granted me a scholarship to attend the University of the Virgin Islands for achieving high honors in English and musical arts. While anticipating a career in special education, I pondered pursuing a call to ministry, which I did and

- became a licensed minister in 1990. However, my journey to this occasion would not have been possible without God
- 0:26:57 and the support and coaching of my husband, Tomas Michael Alejandro, who believed in my abilities and encouraged me to continue my education while he took care of our family. As a result, I acquired with distinction a Bachelor's of Art in Business Administration and a Master's of Arts in Operations Management. Today, my husband and I celebrate 36 years of marriage and two sons, Tomas Michael Alejandro III and Theophanes Masada Alejandro. I consider my professional journey to be one divinely inspired.
- 0:27:41 Since from humble beginnings, I have been fortunate to work within various facets of a single industry, and after 27 years, I remain passionate. As instilled in my upbringing, I strongly believe leading by example is the greatest strategy for earning the respect of those we seek to influence and manage. Moreover, challenging myself to be the best at the task I am given, following the chain of command and embracing and valuing people for their uniqueness have been key elements in my professional growth, lifelong friendships, and personal success. My professional journey began in the private sector where as an assistant buyer for luxury retailers for 12 years, I was responsible for the overall management of jewelry, watch brand purchases, inventories, and sales. As such, I played a vital role in ensuring the right brands were marketed, negotiated, stocked, and transferred to satellite locations throughout the Caribbean and Alaska. The overall experience exposed me to the nuts and bolts of supply chain logistics, integrative negotiations, and inventory and property management. One of the greatest experiences that embedded profound insight on the way I view process improvement was being a part of the private sector's point of sale advent. This electronic processing system
- 0:29:33 allowed the company to track real-time transactions of a single merchandise anywhere in the world. From that viewpoint, I learned the change is inevitable and requires a mind shift. In 2001, I transitioned to public service and was hired as a special assistant to the Deputy Commissioner of Procurement at the Department of Property and Procurement. As special assistant, I was introduced to the world of public procurement and was exposed to all of the central government's procurement functions.
- 0:30:16 At various times, I was tasked with performing the universe of public procurement functions. I was later promoted to the role of contract administrator and chaired the evaluation committee for approximately eight years. During those years, I successfully negotiated a few of the territory's first and most technical undertakings such as the design, build, and operate waste water management facilities in both districts, the Virgin Islands Police Department's third party fiduciary under its consent decree, and the interagency agreement for the development of the state longitudinal data system known as the Virgin Islands Virtual Information System.
- 0:31:12 After assessing the needs of the Virgin Islands Department of Education, VIDE's leadership along with its third party fiduciary agent and the United States Department of Education determined that VIDE needed to establish a fully functioning procurement and contract administration office to maintain eligibility for U.S. Department grant funds. Thus, in May of 2011, I was hired by the Virgin Islands Department of Education to establish and manage the contract administration program. During my first year at the Department of Education, I was given the absolute opportunity to shadow the department's legal counsel, where I gained holistic insight into VIDE's contractual needs and compliance requirement, and develop greater proficiencies in contract research and writing. During the subsequent years until my departure from VIDE in 2016, significant milestones and achievements were accomplished, including the rollout of the new procurement division and its contract administration program, establishment of the property leasing and rental forms and procedures, capacity building of the procurement hirees, and full obligation of grant funds tied to contracts.
- 0:32:53 Subsequently, working at the Virgin Islands Port Authority added another layer of property and procurement proficiencies, enabling me to experience the operations of the industry from all facets. During my tenure at Port Authority, I had the opportunity of establishing a procurement division, which included revision and completion of the authority's procurement policies and and procedures, management of the division of purchasing and warehousing, and establishment of its inventory and cycle counts procedures. I was also instrumental in the development of the authority's asset management policy and contributed to the overall property, procurement, and management of the authority's operations. Since returning to the Department of Property and Procurement in February of 2019 under the leadership of former Commissioner Anthony D. Thomas, I was assigned oversight of the divisions of procurement, vendor management and central stores. Being a part of the dynamic core leadership team of DPP has been my greatest professional experience, and I am grateful to the former Commissioner Anthony D. Thomas to have been given the opportunity to serve with this phenomenal team and share in its achievements. From 2019 until now, the Department of Property and Procurement continues to grow in innovation and competencies, and is poised to be named amongst the nation's 1% as we prepare for the rollout of a fully integrated e-procurement system in GVI Buy.

- 0:35:02 My assignment to lead this initiative, as well as the DPP's transition into its paperless hallmark in procurement the rollout of the department new procurement procedural manual work on proposed legislation which resulted in bill number 33-02-69 now act number 84-36 passed by the 33rd legislature and the government's membership into the national association of state procurement officials showcases my qualifications and experience in property and procurement operations and the propensity for process improvements.
- 0:35:53 As I draw your attention to the position for which I am before this body today, I take no reservations in saying that I understand the gravity of the department's duty to our people this territory. This responsibility and the overarching authority that governs DPP operations are codified in the Virgin Islands Code under Title III chapter 13 sections 211 through 221, Title 31 under chapter 20 sections 151 to 169 and chapter 23 sections 231 to 251 and the associated rules and regulations I am cognizant of the opportunities and challenges we face as the custodian agency of the government's fleet its property assets and all acquisitions Hence, I am purposefully driven to safeguard against asset abuse by tracking data that is useful for the proper management and increased lifespan expectancy of the government's fleet. As fuel prices continue to soar, negotiating beyond the pump rates is almost impossible due to the logistics that compound rack rate costs.
- 0:37:31 Therefore, managing fleet utilization must become a priority to reduce waste and ensure the government's fleet operate at peak performance. Next, reducing bureaucracies that present themselves or the narrative as lawful must be wean out of the traditional mill to foster property management and procurement system that is productive, accountable, and transparent while having real-time insights for managing performance and government spend.
- 0:38:13 As we work to improve operations, legislation is again being drafted to support acquisitions and property innovation that align with the federal standards and the industry practices, best practices, and constantly evolving times. The above initiatives took root after I was placed as assistant commissioner in February of this year, as I considered the department's present conditions and how we could create a system of sustainable productivity that improves the service we provide to our stakeholders to include the user agencies, vendors, and the public.
- 0:39:00 In looking towards creating that system of sustainable productivity, the following highlights a few short-term goals that I believe are the building blocks to achieving greater efficiency. The short-term goal consists of, first, skill management succession planning. To recurring are the discussions regarding the lack of skill sets and competencies due to employee retirements and resignations.
- 0:39:36 The nature of what we do is tied to stringent laws and policies and experience for the purpose of protecting taxpayers' dollars and the government's interests. Establishing a plan that commits management to tracking these skill sets, recruiting with focus, mentoring employees to transfer knowledge and expertise, and creating standard operating procedures are paramount to building and retaining a skilled workforce. Another short-term goal is focused on completing the e-procurement integration, allowing all agencies to carry out their procurements as well as make payments to vendors through an account payable module within one system. Additionally, adding the space management property vendors to GVI Buy for invoicing purposes will enhance the payment process for additional GVI vendors. Next, to complete an assessment of existing property and procurement laws that will ignite the process for proposing legislation to reflect best practices in procurement and property management. And finally, we remain focused on our short-term goal to complete the government's fixed asset and transportation process and procedural manuals.
- 0:41:16 This includes updating the policies and procedures on the acquisition, use, tracking and disposition of fixed assets and establishing and implementing a vehicle use policy and procedural manual to extend asset life expectancy. Deeper developing stronger collaborations between agency stakeholders is necessary to develop a clear understanding of the needs and compliance requirement. This will increase process lead time in the acquisition and delivery of goods and services as well as a diverse team of contract writers.
- 0:42:09 Secondly, by way of long-term goals, creating a plan for continuous process improvement is transformational and will allow the department to be agile and functionable during times of uncertainties as realized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, establishing a system of check and balances is necessary to audit the agency's performance and prevent reoccurring errors and practices that may affect the government's ability to receive federal funding and other funding opportunities.
- 0:42:53 And lastly, we are strategically working to develop a real property management plan to increase revenue and drive property improvement towards ensuring the highest and best possible uses. Although what I have outlined may appear to be far-reaching, these are fundamental business practices that are achievable, particularly when employees are empowered to play a role in the decision-making process. Further, and given the team of professionals at the Department of Property and Procurement and with your favorable consideration, I strongly believe we stand on the horizon of

re-imagining business operations for the next normal. I'm excited about the opportunities which lie before us and if confirmed, I am committed to leading the Department of Property and Procurement with integrity and innovation. This concludes my testimony, and I thank all the committee members for your time this morning and favourable consideration of my nomination. I stand available to answer your questions.

- 0:44:19 Thank you. Ms. Thank you, Ms. Alejandro, Ms. Alejandro. At this time I would like to recognise committee member, Senator Gittins on St. Croix, Madam clerk can you mark Senator Gittins as present before we proceed with our line of questioning I would ask at this time that we swear you in Miss Alejandro so I'm going to begin by saying do you solemnly affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you will give to this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth to the best of your knowledge and belief thank you so at this time is where we would ask our questions but in my opening statement I forgot to mention someone on St. Croix passed away Miss Gloria Kenny Gata Waterman if you know her she was a leader in our community and I just want to say my condolences to her family Gigi and Eugene my condolences to you she would be definitely remembered for all her contributions to this community so we will proceed today we have a long agenda and I just want to say that when oh I'm I forgot I'm going off script
- 0:46:11 Madam Clerk, can you please read the agenda into record? Block one, governor's nomination of Lisa M. Alejandro, commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement. Block two, bill number 35-0013 and act amending title 20 virgin islands code part 2 chapter 35 related to the issuance of limited local purpose identification cards and operator's license Sponsored by Senators Samuel Carrion, Angel L. Bocas, Jr., and Kenneth L. Gittins.
- 0:47:11 Co-sponsored, Sen. Marvin A. Blyden and Sen. Ray Fonseca. Invited testifier, Barbara McIntosh, Director, Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Block three, Bill number 35-0033, an act honoring and commending Mr. Ben Boren, Benny Stephens, post punishmently for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children, and to rename, Stephens, and to rename the Bovoni Road, Route number 30, specifically from the entrance of the Abitur to the entrance of the Bertha C. Buschelt Middle School the Ben Buren Benny Stevens Drive sponsored by Senators Ray Fonseca Marvin A. Blyden Angel L. Bulquez Jr. Bill number 35-0036 and an act amending title 3 Virgin Islands code chapter 16 section 274 subsection F paragraph 11 to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the executive director of the taxicab Commission sponsored by Senators Angel L. Borges Jr. and Marvin A. Blyden co-sponsored by Senator Kenneth L. Gittins bill number 35-0075 an act to designate the third Monday in February as Virgin Islands
- 0:49:04 Governor's Day sponsored by Senators Angel L. Borges Jr. and Marvin A. Blyden Bill number 35-0078, an act requiring the commissioner of the Department of Tourism to conduct a survey to assist in the establishment of an official dish and dessert of the Virgin Islands, sponsored by Senators Angel L. Borges Jr. and Marvin A. Blyden. Block 4, Bill No. 35-0029, an act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian Christensen, M.D., for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in a medical field and representation in a United States Congress. sponsored by Senators Novell E. Francis, Jr., Angel L. Borges, Jr., Franklin D. Johnson, and co-sponsored by Senator Carla J. Joseph. Bill number 35-0035 and act amending title 20, Virgin Islands Code, part two, chapter 39, section 436B, Section 436B, expanding the definition of disabled veteran for the purpose of eligibility for a handicap window decal.
- 0:50:46 Sponsored by Senators Franklin D. Johnson and Alma Francis Heiliger. Bill number 35-0041, an act awarding the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor post mostly to former senator Edgar Milton Isles and bill number 35.0041 an act awarding the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor post thomas's lee to former senator edgar milton isles for his commendable public service and contributions to the people of the virgin islands sponsored by senator kenneth l gittins and co-sponsored by senator carla j joseph bill number zero bill number 35-0100 a resolution honoring and commending music emotion school of higher dance education and its founder charlita schuster on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the music emotion dance academy sponsored by senator samuel carrion bill number 350101 a resolution honoring and commending dr olaf Bronco Hendrix for his tireless years of remarkable and invaluable contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the field of psychiatry his advocacy for social justice for individuals with behavioral health and substance use issues and for his music sponsored by Senator Franklin D Johnson and co
- 0:52:52 co-sponsored by Senator Carla J. Joseph. Madam Chair, that's the end of the agenda. Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, I will take a quick recess of three minutes. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:55:22 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 0:56:52 so so Thank you. Oh, my God. Thank you. [3 such phrases repeated 9 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 1:02:22 Are now back on the record, I am going to ask the Madam Clerk to reread the agenda. There was an error on the agenda, so we're going to have the Madam Clerk to reread the agenda into record.

- 1:03:00 Black 1, Governor's Nomination of Lisa M. Alejandro, Commissioner of Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement. Part Two, Bill Number 35-0013, Amendment Number 35-255, and Act Amending Title 20, Virgin Islands Code, Part Two, Chapter 35, Relating to the Issuance of Limited Local Purpose Identification Cards and Operator's Licenses, sponsored by Senators Samuel Carrion, Angel I brocas jr and kenneth I gittins co-sponsors marvin a senator marvin a blighton and senator ray fonseca invited testifier barbara mackintosh director bureau of motor vehicles block three bill number three five dash zero zero three six and act amending title three virgin islands code chapter 16 section 274 subsection f paragraph 11 to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the executive director of the taxicab commission sponsored by senators angel I bouquez jr and marvin a blighting co-sponsored by senator kenneth I gittins bill number 35-0075 and act to designate the third monday in february as virgin islands governor's day sponsored by senators angel I borkes jr and marvin a blighting bill number 35.0078 and act requiring the commission the commissioner of the department of tourism to conduct a survey to assist in the establishment of an official dish and dessert of the virgin islands sponsored by senators angel I broquez jr and marvin a blighting black four bill number three five dash zero zero two nine and act honoring and commending donna donna marie christian christiansen md for her tireless
- 1:05:16 contributions to the people of the virgin islands in the medical field and representation in the united states congress sponsored by senators novell e francis jr angel I broquez jr franklin d johnson and co-sponsored by senator carla j joseph and senator javon e james senior bill number three five dash zero zero three three and act honoring and commending mr ben boren benny stevens post thomas lee for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children and to rename the bovoni road route number 30 specifically from the entrance of the arbitrator to the entrance of the bertha c busheltie middle school the member the ben barren benny stevens drive sponsored by senators ray Fonseca, Marvin A. Blyden, and Angel L. Borges, Jr. Bill number 35-0035, an act amending Title 20, Virgin Islands Code, Part 2, Chapter 39, Section 436B, expanding a definition of disabled veteran for the purpose of eligibility for a handicapped window decal, sponsored by Senators Franklin D. Johnson and Alma Francis heiliger bill number three five that's zero zero four one an act awarding the virgin islands medal of honor postcomitously to former senator edgar milton eyes for his commendable public service and contributions to the public to the people of the virgin islands sponsored by senators kenneth I gittins and franklin d johnson and co-sponsored by senator carla j joseph bill number three five that zero one zero zero and resolution honoring and commending music emotion school of higher
- 1:07:16 dance education and its founder charlita schuster on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the music emotion dance academy sponsored by senator samuel carrion bill number three five zero one zero one a resolution honoring and commending dr olof bronco hendrix for his tireless years of remarkable and invaluable contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the field of psychiatry his advocacy for social justice for individuals with behavioral health and substance use issues and for his music sponsored by Senator Franklin D Johnson and co-sponsored by Senator Carla J Joseph madam chair that's the end of the agenda Thank you, Madam Clerk.
- 1:08:05 Colleagues, I would ask that you have your conversations outside if you cannot keep it quietly. At this time, I would like to recognize a motion. You may proceed. Senator Bulgis. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move to reorder the agenda by placing Block 2 as Block 3. and Block 3 as Block 2. I so move. Second.
- 1:08:39 Any objections to this motion? Hearing none, so ordered. At this time, I forgot to acknowledge someone who is here with me from St. Croix. I would like to introduce Julissa A. King. She pursues a dual bachelor's in public policy and service and a master in public administration at the Florida International University.
- 1:09:14 Julissa enjoys reading, research, analysis, and matters that involve, if I may, involve conflict resolution. She is a passionate student with drive and preservants to educate, assist and advocate on behalf of her community. Julissa King is the daughter of Adelisa Jackson, a native of Cousin. Thank you. Senator Gittins.
- 1:09:54 Thank you, Madam Chair. I wasn't actually following just now I think there was a motion to reorder the agenda however on the agenda we have agency heads that's testifying that's here to testify and I'm just saying if we're going to reorder the agenda we should take into consideration their schedule so So if that's the case, should they be excused at this time and ask to return if they can or what will happen? Senator Gittins, after I introduce a non-committee member, or acknowledge a non-committee member, Senator Fonseca, who is here with us today, then we would proceed with our nominee on the floor And after that, we would proceed with the second block. So we're asking if the, if the, uh, since we've readjusted the calendar, I mean the agenda, so the testifier who is here, agency head, they can be excused at this time.
- 1:11:04 Senator, the sponsor of the bill requested that we move the amendment to the end of the block and that's what we're doing at this time before we proceed. So we're going to be on schedule, we're still going to see Alejandro who is before us today and we're going to now entertain colleagues for their questions and then proceed into block two thank you so colleagues before I proceed with entertaining questions I would like you to know that we are going to have a five minute line of questioning. If we need to go to a second round then we will do so. So at this time we will begin with Senator Bolquez,

then Senator Franklin Johnson, then Senator Carla Joseph, Senator Milton Potter, Senator Gittins, Senator Fonseca, non-committee member, and then Senator Samuel Carrion, non-committee Member. Senator Bocas, you may proceed with your five minutes.

1:12:29 Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to the listening and viewing audience. Good morning, Central Staff. And good morning to designee Commissioner Alejandro. The Commission of Property and Procurement plays a vital role in managing government assets and overseeing the procurement process and promoting cost efficiency and ensuring accountability and implementing sound operational policies your responsibility to contribute to our effective governance is prudent of fiscal and financial management and the responsibility of public resources today i would like to ask you a few questions on how you plan to stay updated with the latest trends the best practices and regulations for property and procurement management thank you senator basically i think that was my concept when i began to look into federal regulating bodies and other bodies so that we could remain current and in best practice one of those bodies is a national nc we have the naspo which we are part of the national association of procurements and also include assets and property management as well these bodies provide you with not just the changes in federal codes and regulation they offer training to our staff certification to our staff as a matter of fact we do have one of our employees that is up for a chronic award for sitting on the national procurement boards so again staying in touch with these bodies and ensuring that the employees are exposed to that that is how we intend to stay on track okay very well and i've been very impressed with the

1:14:23 technological advancements of the department during the past few years and i'm looking forward to see what else comes out the box as well also what type of strategies do you plan to employ to ensure transparency and fairness and integrity of the procurement process great question um so we began by the e-procurement system the e-procurement system has provided trans transparency to our our vendors as a matter of fact we do have testimonials from them and the fact that we We have not had any protests in regards to the process. Bidders are able to see the process move from one phase to the next, the status of their bids, and it's also to a point where not even a department has access to bids and awards. It is all done through the system. Additionally, with our fleet management system, as well as our fleet management system in transportation as well we have those capabilities to track performance etc to ensure that we have best life expectancies and transparency okay lovely lovely um you you blew your horn a little bit about um assisting with some legislative language um for the procurement there was an act that was referred to um how do you plan to also you know remain in compliance with those laws and regulations and ethical standards and are there any other types of suggestions from a legislative standpoint that the department is looking at absolutely yes senator and so um we presently have in draft legislation again to improve the acquisition process um and not only that but as well as we are working on some property uh concerns that are in the code that impedes our ability to get maximum um you know revenues so we will continue the process we do have some in draft

1:16:32 one minute and we'll be rolling out pretty soon okay thank you and what i would like to also ask is um from a scale of one to ten um what would you say or classify the morale of the department currently i think the morale of the department is is fair but it is a priority for me to move the needle up um at least to about eight or nine right now we're about i would say seven but it's a priority of mine to move it up and by doing so it involves empowering employees as well as providing them with training development empowering them to be a part of the decision-making um of the department as well so we do have a plan for that okay excellent and thank you for the time madam mr chair madam chair everybody um and uh commissioner nominee i look forward to voting in the affirmative thank you senator time thank you senator bolquez um you know I had the opportunity to meet Miss Alejandro when I returned back into government Department of Planning and Natural Resources and I had the opportunity I was tasked to oversee all the DPNR FEMA projects and I had worked with property and procurement back in the day under environmental protection and the processes that were in place back then to what was now implemented when i returned to dpnr i know it was part of your doings also and i just have to say that

1:18:24 with a such an important department and having all these processes in place was very important like having a checklist and having that guidance that it wasn't there basic things to give government departments guidance so I just want to say that you offer a wealth of expertise when I read your your bio I was really moved because Because I think being a commissioner in a department, you must know all the different divisions and programs and their mission.

1:19:11 And you have been in this department and you understand what your responsibilities are. And this nomination that the governor sent, I am very elated to see your wealth of information that you have that you your short term goals your long term goals and i'll ask some questions later on um because i don't like to have the chair as the chair so i will lead to my colleague senator johnson for your five minutes thank you very much good morning and thank you very much madam chair good morning to my colleagues good morning to the testifier good morning to the viewing and listening audience

i'm impressed with what you say here today and most of all what i'm more more impressed about on page eight of your testimony you say although i have outlined what may appears to be far-reaching these are fundamental business practices that are achievable and when i when i listen to that they tell me you're walking on a big stick that's what it tells me and and it's basically about people just doing their job that's that's what the bottom line comes in government you know in my previous job before this everybody used to come asking for a job and i used to say ask them if they want to walk because everybody wants a check but then time to deliver is a whole different ball game and and this agency is very important and critical to the operation of government and how government function if it's going to function and be progressing and moving this territory forward

- 1:20:59 this agency really holds the ball and i i see that you're you're talking about implementing an e-procurement how would this speed the process up and in what ways you see we're going to be beneficial to the agency thank you senator so we have begun the journey with the e-procurement system we've already begun right now the system is fully working in terms of acquisition so bids like bids evaluation our process is completely electronic and we have been getting some really good feedback in terms of that from our vendors When I talk about extending the e-procurement system, it's about onboarding as well our property side to ensure that payments can be processed more timely on the leasing side of things. And as well as integrating it to a point where agencies themselves can have a standalone like the Department of Education to manage their procurement within that single system. What time frame are we talking about with the whole process and this new process as far as e-procurement?
- 1:22:12 What timeline are we looking at? So we're looking to go completely integrated into the ERP system by November, end of November this year. And we will continue our implementation on the property side of things into late December of this year. okay and you also spoke about tracking of government vehicles and the fleet yes and especially the part with the the the gas coupon yes sir i kind of had some experience with seeing the numbers that are coming for gas and how do we rectify that how do we kind of bring it to a balance where it can be acceptable because sometimes you're seeing car running left right south and the government work ain't getting done but we're spending a lot of money in gas yes that those prices does just blow my mind when i see what we pay in gas what what what direction you plan to go with this and how you intend to try and curtail it great question senator so it's it's not um we it's not unconscionable to begin talking about uh gas prices those are external factors that we cannot control so we have to look at how can we get the greatest efficiency out of it and that is by managing the fleet ensuring that um we are conducting and preventative services. Managing the time when cars are idle for too long, especially in this heat. It's not just about driving their, the cars are idle.
- 1:24:01 And those are the things that we have been tracking and sending them out to notification to the agencies. We've also empowered now all commissioners to be able to view that tracking of their employees with the use of the government vehicles. I smile when you say that because I remember one day coming over here doing my other tasks and I went by Emancipation Garden and I saw one of the government vehicles there idling and running. And the guy then was cleaning the park. So I said, well, there ain't nobody in this vehicle. So I went to the gentleman. I said, who's driving that vehicle? And he said, this gentleman. I said, how come the vehicle is running? He said, I want the car to be cool when I jump in it.
- 1:24:45 Yes. and I asked him do you leave your car idling so when you jump in it it could be cool he said no I said well turn it off now and he thought I was joking I said if I ever say this again I will make sure that you get reprimand yes out of the pocket so I appreciate hearing these things and I hope that we could be more physically responsible in this government in order to get this government to move in a better trend and I could start off by telling you congratulations on your nomination quite sure you're going to do a good job. And my last question, that gentleman right there, Vincent Richards.
- 1:25:23 Keep the whip on him, okay? Yes, sir. Make sure he do you all. Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Senator Johnson. You have a full audience here. You have your staff on one side, and is this your family on the other side they're all integrated integrated yes they're all thank you well welcome i do um at this time i'll entertain uh senator joseph for your five minutes and thank you so kindly madam chair a pleasant good morning to everyone especially a pleasant good morning to you nominee mrs lisa alejandro for the position of commissioner of the department of property and procurement i we want to begin my comments by indicating first i really commend the governor for noticing your talent and more importantly i want to commend you for saying yes this is not an easy seat that you're coming into and i pray that our god gives you the strength the integrity as well as a spirit of discernment to be able to carry out this work with a level of fidelity especially should you pass this legislative questioning and vetting and then go on to the full body for full consideration now i read with relish your
- 1:27:12 testimony it was very well written and also i have some questions that came up from it specifically let's uh take a look and i just want to get your perspective further uh page six of page eight you mention hence i am purposely driven to save god against asset abuse which is which is to me a level of integrity understanding that we are all paid by hard-working taxpayers money and that's goes towards stewardship now how are you uh and your team because you can't do it by

yourself how are you and your team going to ensure this how are you moving to ensure that and if you could be so succinct in in your remarks absolutely um thank you senator and so because we've invested in technology that allows us to do that um from printing reports updating the staff and ensuring that they too have a clear understanding of what their roles are as custodian of the government assets but we have been doing that we've been sending out notifications to those regards and ensuring compliance with those asset we are also doing the asset manual we're also getting ready to roll out transportation manual in regards to using government assets and you are right up my alley because i like manuals i like and i'm and i have created them having worked in uh the federal side those standard operating procedures it's critical how far away are you to getting that completed and to be able to roll it out what's your time frame we expect to have it out i believe we may have the asset draft ready for the new fiscal year there about the transportation is still in draft and again both of them are in draft

1:29:16 um one is in the second draft second and and we anticipate by next year should next year okay so i'm going to hold it told you to that and i'm going to take that note because your department comes on the oversight i have oversight over it with the committee i chair so i'm making those copious notes of that now i also wanted to ask you and this is not in your testimony um but it's for me how how are you and your perspective as a public employee public servant is it is it that you see that the governor is your boss and you're only answered one minute to him or is it uh because of your public service how is it your what is your perspective and public service and your overall uh alliance to being a public servant if you're following me i am thank you senator i i talked earlier about um being a licensed minister i'm also a pastor and so i would say it's not just to the governor we answer to the people repeat that again it's not only to the governor but we answer to the people so that means when a senator calls you and say we're having a issue you are not going to avoid our calls is it that is correct i'm not going to avoid your calls you are going to respond try to do it timely because we have i don't know if any other my colleagues but i have encountered and it's bothersome to me um time that i'm sorry i wrap up now madam chair if you would allow me quickly you may proceed thank you kindly it is bothersome that we don't understand that we are public servants being paid by the public people money hard-working people and when i call you it's not because i want to bother you it's one of our people who pays me right that i'm calling you on their behalf so i will be voting in the affirmative i know i've sent your you some correspondence in all earlier but i'm hoping to have you and your fine staff come before the committee which i chair um in the future

1:31:42 thank you kindly madam chair for the leniency i deeply appreciate it you're welcome senator Joseph before I proceed to Senator Potter I just wanted to ask one question as Mrs. Alejandro you mentioned about internal processes that you're working on and in your long-term goals you said long-term goals consist of and your first bullet was develop stronger collaboration between agency stakeholders understanding gvi's needs and compliance requirements tell me what have you been doing to work with the stakeholders work with these government departments for them to understand their responsibilities and all the things it entails when you're doing business with the government just tell me what what are some of those plans that you plan to work with your stakeholders thank you senator in terms of being able to build strong and if you notice it was a long-term goal because long-term goals mean that we're working on it currently but we expect to see the fruit of those labors within the next three to five years and we have done that by onboarding senior contract administrators who intimately work with the departments to understand what their requirements are what their needs are helping them in developing better scopes of work on on that end as well and and also the training that we are providing our property team also helps us in in collaborating more on the property side of things we have been doing a lot of team meetings with staff and those within the respective areas of our business so we have ramped up communication at the department with our stakeholders thank you I just have to

1:33:48 mention if my colleagues don't know of this manual I when I was dealing with those FEMA contract that was my Bible have you revised that that manual as a matter of fact I have a new we have revised it and we have a new issue that is coming out I think next week I just have to commend you because that was such a great guide we're giving you sample letters and I just want to ask if all the departments have that manual all of them do have the manual senator as well as we provided a training a virtual training on how to utilize the manual great thank you senator Potter you may proceed with your five minutes thank you very much madam chair good morning colleagues a good morning to Virgin Islanders and the listening and viewing audiences and good morning special good morning to you Commissioner nominee Alejandro I want to really thank you for accepting the governor's challenge I don't have to tell you but this is probably one of the toughest jobs in government it's really a no-win kind of thing you a procurement is essential it's an essential component to the running of an organization to the running of a government yes that is how we acquire goods and services and the goods and services stop then for all intents and purposes government comes to a screeching halt so the person that you put in this position can't be some accidental person you have to be very intentional you have to know who you know who you're putting in this very important post. And I am very comfortable, I must say, that the Governor made a sound decision in appointing you to serve in this very important role. I wanted to ask you what unique skills or attributes that

you possess that you bring to this table that may not

1:35:54 have been there before. I didn't put that pressure on you necessarily, but what unique skills and attributes do you bring to the table, do you believe? Thank you, Senator. You know, in my testimony I shared that I believe that my journey was inspirational and that I believe with all my heart. And when it is so designed, I have had the opportunity to see it from a user agency, so I understand what they go through, their frustration in getting work through to the department. I do understand what it is to be the sovereign working at the Department of Property and Procurement and holding the hatch. I understand what it looks like on the semi-autonomous agency side, having to go before boards. So I have seen the department property management, asset management from all sides, And so I understand, and it's very sensitive to the needs as well of all sides. So I'm finding a level ground and a plane to be able to satisfy the government's need holistically. Awesome.

1:37:05 One thing that you cited in your testimony, you mentioned when you were talking about your long-term goals, You sort of reiterated that, let's see, you said that the nature of what we do is tied to stringent laws and policies and experience for the purpose of protecting taxpayers' dollars and the government's interests. And I thought about the fact that how do you balance the pressures to get things done quickly? Because there are pressures and forces on your shoulders to get it done quickly versus your obligation to maintain compliance with the procurement laws and policies.

1:37:53 And I suspect that that is always a challenge historically to anybody who holds your seat. Are you prepared for that pressure, and how do you balance that as the leader of this department? Well, I really think, Senator, thank you. I live in that environment. I live in it, but I think the most important thing is communicating. Communicating at the end of the day, we are placed in these positions to make decisions. And sometimes they're tough, so I have to weigh between, do I allow a contract to lapse just because the agency's sent it in at the last hour, and it's \$40 million versus \$60,000? So we have to make those tough decisions, but we try our very best to communicate that to our stakeholders. important communication is essential I wanted to ask you about this topic that we've discussed here in this territory for decades probably from the time I was a child there was talk about the need finally for us to have a government building it makes logical sense everybody on the street will tell you it's time everybody's sort of a no-brainer but somehow it has never been able to 30 seconds to move to the next step of making it a reality as the lead person in procurement and contracting in this territory and you will be because you will be confirmed what role can you play first of all is it a viable is there a viable need for this and if so how can you as the procurement chief lead the talks and the drive towards making something like that a reality Well Senator thank you for that question. I want to share that I actually chaired the

1:39:43 committee for the first time that initiative took ground where we were looking for that. It was going to be a design build operate facility. There are a lot of variables involving that in that as well as the government having the financial to fund something on that level. It did not go through because of that the bonding that it would take but also uh senator um i do believe in putting together resources that are shared so we definitely will look into and are looking into and having those discussion with putting those agencies that have like services and stakeholders alike exactly it makes makes good sense and i was thinking that you know it's sort of a unique situation that we find ourselves in with the potential you know for 12 13 billion dollars that we have never seen before to somehow utilize uh funding and i don't know what the rules and limitations might be but perhaps that might be um you know the source of some funding for something like that but i i won't press you any further on that thank you very much uh commissioner aleandro and good luck because i think you will be moving on to the next step thank you thank you very much madam chair thank you the rules and judiciary vice chair thank you um i want you to take us through this transition from of property procurement from back in the day to now where vendors are paid online is that correct well they're paid in a different process they ERP system correct yes so take us through the transition from back then when somebody would say oh we sent a package two months ago three months ago did you get it take us through that process as far as how you transition and

1:41:49 how effective it is now well in terms of the process so removing the paper based process not only compound and bottleneck the end goal which was to pay the vendors as well and and there are still challenges I want to say there's still challenges however again from carriers involved in taking paperwork from one agency to the next requisitions being handwritten purchase orders being handwritten and typewritten you know so we've removed a lot of those processes and now it's completely electronic and that's what we're actually trying to do with GVI by in terms of allowing all of the vendors to be able to issue payments through GVI by and not through email through to the Department of Finance. Thank you. Next I would entertain Senator Gittins our Majority Leader. You may proceed with five minutes. Thank you Madam Chair and good morning to all nominee thank you for accepting the nomination to lead this agency which you have been a part for quite some time you know quite frankly I was contemplating whether to ask any questions of the nominee but it is my duty to do so so I had to quite second guess myself but you know with this

- 1:43:38 agency in itself there's a lot of external pressures when it comes to your department it's not a matter of if but it's a matter of when and in knowing that I wanted to ask you how confident are you in your ability to independently carry out your duties and responsibilities as Commissioner? Thank you senator you know I believe very strongly and I live in terms of my integrity and my integrity is not just about something written on paper but I believe that I answer to a higher power and with that you know I there are tough decisions that have to be made I have made them I've been placed in those positions where it even came to my job and I have made those decisions so senator I believe with all my heart that I can make those tough decisions I do make them daily thank you well thank you for that response and your response coupled with some of the things that you've stated in your testimony makes me believe like you you can't do this and you just use a word that I that I like to use and i don't take it lightly integrity and i oftentimes speak about life life the acronym meaning leadership integrity fidelity and efficiency yes so thank you for utilizing uh that word with me integrity how many uh attorneys does your agency have because you have to review a number of contracts all these government contracts come through your office correct
- 1:45:42 yes sir uh senator we have three you have three for the territory that is correct senator uh is that sufficient it is not okay thank you uh does the property and procurement uh department have an updated inventory on government buildings and properties? Senator, great question. Thank you for that. As a matter of fact, we did not, but we hired, not hired, but onboarded some summer students. And so I want to say thank you to them. And their job was to put together a catalog of our raw land and facilities. So thank you to those summer students we are on our way please don't kill the summer students with uh full time they loved it senator i could imagine i could imagine but um i i do want to see and uh if you know me today gonna be the last that you hear of this question i definitely want to make sure that we have an inventory of government-owned properties this senator believes that we need to start becoming independent again i don't think that certain places certain agencies should be uh renting from people we shouldn't be renting nobody place for a police station we shouldn't be renting nobody place for a fire station etc so one minute i will be uh talking to you about that now um as soon as these students are finished can we get a copy of this uh catalog as well absolutely senator okay and and if you can let's make sure that it also tells us and and this isn't for the
- 1:47:36 summer students but whatever um full-time employee you have if they in this catalog if they could break down the buildings whether the buildings are in use or abandoned will do thank you okay now uh when will the department also um strike that what role does the department property and procurement play in uh agencies need to rent time other i'm sorry i missed the last what what role does your agency play with other agencies having or seeing the need to rent other spaces well our agency senator you may thank you well the department of property and per company is very much involved when the agencies approach us in regards to rentals we do have negotiations on our end of course we look at the value that they're interested in but first of all we also propose if there's any property but a lot of times senator day the funding does not exist for them to move into a government property that will require significant maintenance so we do look at those as well but we are heavily involved in putting the contracts together etc negotiating the costs thank you for that madam chair uh i beg your indulgence uh two quick quick short questions if i may you said two you know yes they're short you may proceed uh commissioner nominee your agency again do you still maintain uh what you call central stores uh in both districts and the second questions uh the second question will be are we buying supplies and materials in bulk or agencies are still able to go out there and purchase uh as separate agencies so senator yes
- 1:50:00 both of our central stores are operational in both districts and however we do order in bulk we do have supply contracts but uh since covet the market prices have so significantly and there's instability in the market so some of the things our central stores managers have been doing is having to go open market to get those goods and services additionally some agencies as well may make purchases and mostly the type of purchases they make are not of the it's not amounts to supplies that we would have in central stores thank you for your response thank you uh madam chair i'll be in touch with the commissioner nominee thank you thank you you're welcome senator gittins uh mrs alejandro i was just thinking about as my colleague was asking some questions the government has all these buildings that they they rent they lease and you know how you have landlords and you have slumlords yes you have some individuals that rent to the government that lease to the government and they don't take responsibility for the wear and tear of their buildings and I am requesting and asking of you because I am very hopeful that you would pass this committee favorably that you look at all these leases and the do's and the don'ts of these leases as it pertains to maintaining your buildings and I could call a few I can call a few as it pertains to what the
- 1:51:52 department is responsible for for upkeep and what the responsibility of a landlord and I think some of these landlords take advantage of the Virgin Islands government and I am very upset when I work in government and I see that my co-workers and my colleagues whatever we had to work under uncomfortable work environment because the landlord didn't think it was a need to fix this or to fix that so I'm asking you kindly that when you are placed in this position that you look at these leases and make sure that these landlords take full responsibility of upkeeping their buildings as it

pertains to leaking windows when it rains that people have to move the desk to other side to leaking ACs in the roof that causing mold so I beg you senator yes you may please thank you senator I I am at the point where I think you may have been a fly on the wall in our office as a matter of fact I just sent a follow-up to my team in regards to developing a form for landlord performance that will be issued with our contract as well as I did meet with my chief legal counsel in regards to tightening the language for the responsibilities of our landlord so I believe you was a fly on the wall thank you yes I guess you know when I say who feels it knows it and I always say if I'm working in a department and I'm a head or a supervisor if I don't want to

- 1:53:45 walk in them conditions. I feel the employees should not work in those conditions. Senator Fonseca, non-committee member, you may proceed with five minutes. Yes, thank you very much Madam Chair and a pleasant good morning. Yes, it's still 11.53 to the listening audience and it's so nice to see the whole posse come out to support the commissioner. Well, you know, this is my family, and you know, Ms. Alejandro is an ordained minister, impeccable lady. They've been married about 25, 20, 36 years. Brother, look at that, Poppa. You know, this is, you know, a reflection of the community values, you know. Of course, you know, Pastor Thomas Alexandra here is, you know, my pastor, my brother. I'll tell you a little story, but I don't know if I'd live to tell the story. He say, yes. Well, you know, his brother, David, name after my father, David, so his brother is my brother, and his sister, Beulah, name after my aunt, Beulah, so his sister is my sister. So Lisa is my sister-in-law. so we are the same family so i'm encouraging um my colleagues um you know i'll put in a good word it's an impeccable family um but madam chair um i wanted to request to through the chair that the um commissioner designee do two things because you know property and procurement right you control
- 1:55:35 the government inventory and specifically there's two areas that i'm interested in so i'm going to ask through the chair if you can prepare a report detailing all of the government leases with the total cost because i know i'll be with other day here the other day they paying like eight hundred thousand dollars in lease i know the lieutenant governor office boy they paying boku money so we want to see how much lease money the government is paying and then also in addition to that i i would like to request through the chair that we have a listing of all of the government vehicles that are authorized for 24-hour use because you know i was in car siu last sunday and i saw some vehicle um you know i ain't gonna call the name but so to those two things if we can get the total of the government leases because you know i know with 800 000 a lease for the irb i'm sure we can amortize that one quick question are the wapa leases um controlled by property and procurement or wapa is separate wapa is separate wapa is separate okay and then also you know um you know in i i would encourage you to let the commissioner the committee know because i understand i heard a question from the honorable vice chair of this committee regarding the amount of attorneys you need and you know there's been some tour mile in the department as a matter of fact the governor even said that there was some delay with procurement and as you know the government has about 8.3 billion dollars that we have to spend so property and procurement is very very busy so if you need a couple more attorneys let the legislature know because we're We are here to provide the assistance.
- 1:57:30 And one other thing, I'm going to be church this Sunday, so look out for me in church. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the time. Blessings to everybody. Thank you, thank you. Thank you, Senator Fonseca. This is our, what should I say, I won't say, he keeps us on our toes, okay, with the jokes and everything. and when he said Popeye you know Fonseca is here but Mrs. Alejandro you are coming before the Committee of Finance next week is that correct that is correct and this is a nomination hearing so I would ask my my colleague Senator Fonseca to request that report in the Committee of Finance I think that would be more the purview to request that document through the chair at this time I think I have senator Carrion I don't know if he's in the chambers on St. Croix but he is number seven on my list and if he is not there to ask any questions to our nominee then i would proceed with a short round of questioning for the second round and this would be three minutes senator bolquez you may proceed with three minutes thank you madam chair uh commissioner i was interested to know what strategies would you implement to enhance vendor management and contract supplier relationships
- 1:59:22 so right now we have been working with um sba as well our local offices they have actually been providing training to uh those those entities as well we provide uh training to our vendors um in vendor management even going through the system the er not the erp the gvi buy system as well um and the fact that we are now maintaining a repository of their documents actually helped them to keep it current okay and how many vendors do you currently have uh wow in gvi buy i want to save and those would be ones that are in contract i think about 1900 in gvi by um and thousands um in in the erp but they're not specifically contractual vendors in the erp could you elaborate a little bit more on contractual versus so contractual would be those that are seeking opportunity with the government so they bid for government contracts whereas in the erp while they are also in the erp you're a vendor in the erp so anyone that gets any checks etc you're considered a vendor as well so since the department of finance erp is the records is the vendor record management system of the territory so gvi buy is specific to contracts those that are bidding on awards and contracts are there any specific requirements for those individuals who want to sign up on a GBI program like SAMS or whatever else is required?

- 2:01:02 So if you're doing business with the government, you have to be registered with SAMS because as you know, majority of our funds are tied to federal funds and it's a requirement. So on my team also, my very small vendor management team also provide and assist vendors in acquiring their registration. Okay, one last question. How would you balance the need for speed if i can call it that concerning the procurement process um you know ensuring compliance and and due diligence meaning you know sometimes we we input our uh purchase order you gotta wait for the invoice to come back um then you upload the information you have to go through the approval process finances involved sometimes this whole process even though it's designed to have safeguards right it takes a lot of time and how do you foresee any other ways of trying to speed it up a little bit so that vendors in turn would be getting paid on time billing competencies um and i say that only because when we think procurement and speeding things up most time people see contract but procurement is the umbrella on time there's so many uh there's so many activities that take place and oftentimes if we begin a process at procurement with a bad scope of work it impedes our ability to execute a contract so there's so much activities that take place so it's about building competencies building awareness of the procurement processes as well okay thank you for that answer I already crossed the line through designee already Mr. Chair Thank you.
- 2:02:42 Thank you very much, Senator Bocas. Senator Franklin Johnson, you're recognized for your three minutes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Three minutes is not needed. I'm ready to vote, but I'll ask a question. What are some of the challenges that you face right now in this agency, some of your challenges since you take over, prior to taking over, that you face in this agency and how you see yourself getting through these challenges? well so i would say number one let me talk about the external challenge because that i think is the greatest challenge right now to the government or risk and that is the vendor pool the vendor pool a very small vendor pool to be able to meet the demand right now of the government that is one thing and then we have the bonding issues the ability of these vendors to be able to um to get bonding especially when they are exhausted with contracts they have to wait until that is completed and i think internally one of the things internally that i see as an opportunity though is our continuous development of the policies and processes etc but internally i think the government on a whole is in recruiting skilled workforce thank you very much i wish you well and keep you in my prayer because if you do well the virgin island government do well thank you thank you thank you senator johnson i wanted to ask mrs alejandro regarding the fleet of vehicles for the virgin islands government are these vehicles insured do we have insurance on these vehicles so we have the government is self-insured there is some insurance but it's mostly when the vehicles are not so much in in movement but we do have insurance okay so if an
- 2:04:45 employee who did not cause an accident with another vehicle on the road how does that process go for the damages that occurred with a Virgin Islands government vehicle to with a personal vehicle so if if the employee that is driving a government vehicle was not at fault they will go through the same process the police report and then we would call on the insurance of the the um the car that yes yes on on the one who caused the accident so it would go through the same process as we would as civilians and what about vice versa if an employee with a government vehicle caused the accident and that uh say private citizen vehicle had damages well it depends because uh whether or not there's a couple of things was the employee driving that vehicle were they approved to drive the vehicle did they cause the accident and were they negligent and in some instances of course the employee will have to fund that okay um i just stepped off the floor for a second did my colleague ask that question before me no okay good um senator joseph you may proceed with three minutes thank you so kindly madam chair um nominee alejandro i wanted to ask you just in managerial perspective how have you managed issues with your directives relative to their performance and productivity as well as efficiency do you do performance appraisals that's that's what i'm
- 2:06:57 i'm getting at so the department does um overall we have been doing those um the managers sit with their employees but we allow them first to rate themselves and people are mostly honest when they're rating themselves and then we share with them what the rating what our rating of their performance And now disciplinary issues, persons who are not performing, persons who are not taking the work seriously and understand how important even the minor role they may think they're playing is there to help move the whole of the organization forward. How do you handle those issues?
- 2:07:44 Well, from the standpoint, because I have not really gone into all of the divisions on that end, while we have, I do know that we do provide, if they're not performing, the training right now that is on the procurement side of things was literally targeted to those employees that needed extra support in certain areas, whether they were coming short in negotiation section or communicating or those things we were we target their specific training for that development purpose and it is the same I believe on the property side with the training that the property entire property team is undergoing as well but we do document those okay good and my questions for this round and this is a final round is mostly about you and how you manage because human beings and we have a lot of issues regarding um the shortage of human beings we need to move things forward with the government and so have you also performed any coaching are you mentoring somebody that's my question madam chair and you can finish up on the chair's time thank you so much madam chair your time was

called i don't think your time was called No.

- 2:09:02 Oh. Okay. Go ahead. Thank you. So, Senator, I have across my career and I'm happy to say that I actually have one that I coach at the Department of Education. When she came on board, she knew nothing about procurement, but she's here supporting me today, the Director of Procurement for the Department of Education. There are others as well along the field that my Deputy Commissioner as well as my Chief procurement officer i love coaching i i it's it's my life i'm passionate about it so it just happens and thank you so much nominee alejandro for your questions i have no further questions to ask at this time madam chair thank you kindly thank you senator joseph um mrs alejandro as you are here before us today i'm sure that you and your team have worked hard on improving processes in property and procurement but what about any kind of legislation drafts that you think needs to be revised because presently i'm you know going through all these different codes and there's a lot of things from 1954 that has not been revised so can you tell me if there are any legislation that you would be bringing to us to say there needs some amendments absolutely senator thank you so much for that question yes we have we began the process in the 33rd legislature proposing and changing the laws that were on the books for for eons so we began that process presently we do have have drafted legislation that of course we are going through our administration first before we complete the process but we are and some of the things we we are looking at is addressing the bonding issues, how we can assist better in that, creating baseline requirements for
- 2:11:10 entrepreneurs, startup businesses. So those are some of the things we're looking at to move the progress, to move the process forward, but we do intend to bring before this body proposed legislation. Thank you. Senator Potter, you may proceed with three minutes. Hello. Thank you very much. I may not need my full three minutes. My friend from Frederick said I'm ready to vote on this nominee right now. But since I have a little bit of time, I wanted to ask you, Commissioner, as a leader who has really risen through the ranks in various progressively more important roles in this community and as a person of faith and as a person who has a strong family how has faith and family or what role has faith and family played in helping you to successfully navigate your way through this very successful career journey thank you senator uh and and i think again i go back to my testimony in terms of be believing and knowing that it was inspirational and i say that because i think that's why ministry came first for me that carl came very early in my life to teach me lessons about people and the values of people, valuing people. And I think with that, that integrity, and that's where my integrity is, it's founded in my faith. And I believe that I answer again to some greater, someone greater, God, higher.
- 2:13:08 And so with that, that's how I live. And I try my very best to manage in that vein. Thank you very much, well said. Madam Chair, I return the rest of my time. Thank you, Senator Potter. As I got to know you just a little bit, I think what emanates from you is integrity. And you have a team behind of you, and you've moved through the ranks in property and procurement.
- 2:13:42 And you know you establish relationships when you work with individuals, but then when you climb in the ladder, you have to work with your subordinates differently. So how is that relationship with your staff? Are they elated to know that you are nominated as their commissioner? Tell me how that is with your staff. I believe because we've had this relationship for so long, Senator, I know quite a few of the staff that has been there, the team that has been there since I was there back in the early 2000s and to present, I believe all were very excited for me to take this position and this role, particularly because we've had that relationship. But then I think my procurement team was a little bit jealous to let me go. So it's intentional for me not to visit them, not to visit them as often but it has been very welcoming my team has been very supportive i can't tell you the amount of texts that i had from those that couldn't be here today they have all been very very supportive of my nomination thank you Thank you.
- 2:15:03 Senator Gittins on St. Croix, you may proceed with three minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. You asked a question earlier to the nominee regarding damages to government vehicles. However, I'd like to flip that and ask about the department's involvement when it comes to government property. I know that traffic signage, guardrails and whatnot will come under specifically the Department of Public Works. However, because you're the agency responsible for recording all government-owned properties, I'm asking, what is your agency's involvement to that end?
- 2:16:03 And these would be government-owned properties. So once there is any type of damage that is done to the facility, the agency's responsibility is to notify us about those damages. and as well as the Department of Public Works. And a lot of times in those instances, those damages would be addressed by the agency themselves in putting out solicitations or bids and acquiring the funds. Hence my question to you, how involved is your agency?
- 2:16:38 Are these reports being forwarded to you? Not as they should, Senator, but we do get those reports because it's important for us because as we be as we bill infrastructure and improve infrastructure it's important to be added to the schedule of values for our property insurance so these types of discussions should be had in cabinet level meetings and I'm asking you to have these types of discussions with your fellow cabinet members so that you can properly properly have these

things documented if you're the agency responsible for documenting these government-owned properties then as they're damaged you should also have that information and we should be going after individual insurances so that the taxpayer this doesn't drop on the taxpayers backs and I'm going to be holding agencies accountable to this we need to follow this through from A to Z thank you so much and I'm looking forward to supporting your nomination thank you madam chair thank you senator Thank you, Senator Gittins. There was one thing I wanted to ask. Mrs. Alejandro, do you have a strategic plan that for the department that you would like to share with this body?

2:18:20 A strategic plan? Like anything that you, I know you have your short-term goals, your long-term goals, but anything like a plan, immediate plan that you have that you may want to start right away? We're working on a plan, and I know the property division in particular is working on the management plan for the facilities as well. The only other plan right now that we've completed is our disaster recovery plan. as the as the responders for responsible for ESF one and seven or four okay colleagues I think this concludes our second round of question and before I entertain your motion I would ask my colleagues if they were any other comments any questions that you wanted to ask before I entertain senator Joseph motion no so mrs. Alejandro I'll give you this opportunity before I entertain this motion that you would like to say to this body before you are excused from the well. Thank you, Senator Capehart.

2:19:50 I would like to say thank you to all senators today, the community senators. I would like to thank you for your questions. Thank you for your time and for asking those questions that we need to hear to be able to serve our people. I also want to thank my team, my staff that is here with me supporting me today. have been awesome during this entire process and my family that is here today as well my husband thank you so much and my son that is here present with us today um but to two other special people i want to say thank you i i lost my mom a year ago and so in the world with me supporting me and representing her is my two auntie mommies so i want to say thank you to them as well And thank you to this body and the governor, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. for his nomination. Thank you so much. Yeah, I would give you this opportunity also to have your team stand and your family to stand to be identified today.

2:20:56 Thank you. So your family, so family, if you could raise your hand because, okay, that's family. OK. Mr. Alejandro, you're proudly here today. Congratulations for this great nominee that the governor has sent us. And to the staff of Property and Procurement, Mr. Richards, who I'm very familiar with, thank you. Thank you for all as your support team. So at this time, I would excuse Mrs. Alejandro from the well and then, okay, my colleague is suggesting to have you stay so you could see, just feel the process in the well. So at this time, I will entertain a motion. Motion, Senator Carla Joseph.

2:22:10 Thank you. Thank you kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair and colleagues, I move that the Governor's nominee for the Department of Property and Procurement Commissioner, Mrs. Lisa Alejandro be favorably voted upon in this committee and forwarded to the full body for further consideration and action. I so move. So. So yeah, in the body we don't clap.

2:22:49 I'll give you the opportunity to show your emotions later. So properly moved by Senator Carla Joseph and seconded by Senator Bolquez, seconded by Senator Johnson and seconded by Senator Potter. May I have roll call on the motion? Senator Angel L. Bolquez, Jr.? Senator Bolquez, Jr., yay. Senator Diane T. Capehart? Yes. Senator Capehart, yes. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? Yes.

2:23:29 Senator Gittins, yes. Senator Maurice C. James? Senator James absent. Senator Franklin D. Johnson? Senator Johnson, yes. Senator Carla J. Joseph? Senator Joseph, yes. Senator Milton E. Potter? Senator Potter, yes. Madam Chair, you have six, yay, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. This motion carries. Lisa Alejandro, the Governor's nominee as Commissioner to the Department of Property and Procurement has been voted upon favorably and it has been passed by this committee and now will be reported out of this committee to the full body for further consideration.

2:24:26 Thank you. At this time, I would allow you to. So at this time, I would just like to say, Mrs. Alejandra, this is your first hurdle that you have passed. and your resume, your experiences says it all for yourself. You are one of those nominations that I know right off the bat that you would go through this committee favourably.

2:25:05 So I just want to say thank you and congratulations. I look forward to all the good work that you will be doing with your team and may God bless you. At this time, colleagues, we will take a recess of half an hour for lunch. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

2:27:44 We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. I love you I love you Let's go. Let's go. Just a few minutes Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go. Thank you. Let's go. Let's go. Thank you. Sous-titrage Société Radio-Canada I love you Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

- 2:47:14 G6 Polar Piano We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go. See me See me See me Light my gun Light my gun Light my gun A clear shield up A clear flag Water tool in the air Hey, hey, hey Hey, hey, hey Hey, hey Let's go. Bye. nothing sequence quill quill quill quill quill quill We'll see you next time. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. I'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:00:08 Let's go. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Let's get started. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.
- 3:03:38 We'll be right back. [1 such phrases repeated 11 times · standby audio before the proceeding, transcribed by the recogniser as speech]
- 3:09:08 We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. I love you. Thank you. I love you. Thank you. Let's go. We'll be right back. We'll see you next time.
- 3:17:38 I'll see you next time Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go. We'll be right back. I love you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To be continued... We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. I Transcription by CastingWords We'll be right back. so Thank you.
- 3:34:08 Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:35:08 Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:38:38 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:40:08 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you.
- 3:43:08 Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God.
- 3:44:38 Thank you. The Committee on Rules and Judiciary is out of recess. Do I hear a motion? Can you please recognize Senator Bolkis, Mike? Motion Senator Bolkis.
- 3:45:25 Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move to remove bill number 35-0013, amendment number 35-255, an act amending title 20 virgin islands code part 2 chapter 35 relating to the issuance of limited local purpose identification cards and operators licenses from the agenda i so move hearing no objections motion sorry um properly moved by senator bolquez seconded by senator carla joseph any objections on the motion hearing none so ordered who speaks on bill number 35-0036 i do madam chair senator bolquez you may proceed with two minutes a brief synopsis of the bill thank you madam chair madam chair i support i ask for your support and colleagues for this measure as it aims to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the executive director of the taxicab commission ensuring that there's a clear understanding of their role within the organization this clarification enhances accountability and it also fosters clear expectations from the executive director's performance and it enables effective evaluation of their work this clarity ensures that the elect the executive director can focus on core responsibilities and effective management from day-to-day operations of the commission it can lead to more efficient decision making and implementation of the policy improve accountability streamline operations enhancing regulatory compliances and promoting professionalism of customer service ensuring fairness and transparency when dealing with their facilitating stakeholders the taxi men and women of the taxi industry thank you madam chair thank you senator bolquez who speaks on bill number 35-0075 i do madam chair proceed with your two minute synopsis
- 3:47:46 madam chair uh i support bill number 35-0075 and ask for the support of the committee members as establishing a virgin islands governor's day in the territory is a powerful step towards advancing self-determination and our constitutional maturity this initiative reflects the commitment of our democratic values citizen engagement and a transparent governance all of which are vital in the development and progress of a territory a governor's day provides an invaluable platform and fosters an environment that nurtures civic education and awareness and therefore encouraging the development of an informed and politic politically conscious citizenry in closing the primary focus of a governor's day is and should be on facilitating meaningful and direct interaction between the governor and the citizens they serve a crucial aspect of fostering transparency accountability and public engagement thank you madam chair thank you senator bolquez who speaks on bill number 35-0078 i do madam chair you may proceed with two minutes thank you madam chair colleagues i ask for your support of bill number 35-0078 to begin the groundwork on establishing a national dish and dessert by casting your vote in a favor in favor of this initiative we have the opportunity to create a unifying culinary emblem that can enhance our cultural identity stimulating tourism boosting economic opportunities and preserving our rich culinary heritage through the selection of a national dish and dessert we can proudly showcase the diversity and

distinctiveness of our cuisine drawing attention of our unique flavors techniques and traditional ingredients this endeavor cannot can also attract visitors eager to savor our authentic culinary experiences, but also it can foster a sense of pride among the fellow citizens as we come together.

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.

15x	Senator Kenneth L. Gittens heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins
11x	Senator Milton E. Potter heard in this transcript as: Milton Potter, Potter
10x	Senator Carla Joseph the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph
10x	Senator Diane T. Capeheart heard in this transcript as: Capehart, Diane T. Capehart
9x	Senator Franklin D. Johnson heard in this transcript as: Franklin Johnson, Johnson
7x	Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr. heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bolques Jr., Angel L. Bolquez Jr., Angel L. Bulquez Jr., Bolquez, Bolquez Jr., Bulquez Jr.
6x	Senator Marise C. James the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice C. James, Maurice James
6x	Senator Ray Fonseca heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
3x	Governor Albert Bryan Jr
3x	Senator Angel L. Bocas Jr heard in this transcript as: Bocas
3x	Senator Angel L. Bolkis Jr heard in this transcript as: Bolkis
2x	Senator Athneil 'Bobby' Thomas heard in this transcript as: Anthony D. Thomas
2x	Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro heard in this transcript as: Alejandro
2x	Senator Samuel Carrion

Bills and acts referred to

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

Bill 35-0013	Act 8790 · December 19, 2023 · An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, chapter 35, relating to the issuance of limited local-purpose identification cards and operators· licenses aea(Jace
Bill 35-0033	Act 8733 · An Act honoring and commending Mr. Benburin ·Benny· Stephens posthumously for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children and to rename the Bovoni Road (Route No. 30), specifically from the entrance of the St. Thomas Abattoir to the entrance of the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, ·The Benburin ·Benny· Stephens Drive· ---0
Bill 35-0036	Act 8735 · An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code. chapter 16, section 274, subsection (f), paragraph (II) to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director of the Taxicab Commission ---0
Bill 35-0029	Act 8739 · An Act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian-Christensen M.D., and bestowing the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor upon her for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the medical field and

representation in the United States Congress ---0

Bill 35-0035

Act 8734 · July 20, 2023 · An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, chapter 39, section 436(b), by expanding the definition of ·disabled veteran· for the purposes of eligibility for a disabled window decal, making various appropriations and amending Act No. 8681 ---0

Bill 35-0101

Act 8737 · An Act honoring and commending Dr. Olaf ·Bronco· Hendricks for his tireless years of remarkable and invaluable contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the field of psychiatry, his advocacy for social justice for individuals with behavioral health and substance use issues, and for his music; and mandating that any mental health facility established on the islands of St. Croix be named in his honor ---0

Act 8790

Act 8790 · December 19, 2023 · An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, chapter 35, relating to the issuance of limited local-purpose identification cards and operators· licenses aea(Jace

Act 8733

Act 8733 · An Act honoring and commending Mr. Benburin ·Benny· Stephens posthumously for his heroism in saving the lives of a mother and her children and to rename the Bovoni Road (Route No. 30), specifically from the entrance of the St. Thomas Abattoir to the entrance of the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, ·The Benburin ·Benny· Stephens Drive· ---0

Act 8735

Act 8735 · An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code. chapter 16, section 274, subsection (f), paragraph (II) to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director of the Taxicab Commission ---0

Act 8739

Act 8739 · An Act honoring and commending Donna Marie Christian-Christensen M.D., and bestowing the Virgin Islands Medal of Honor upon her for her tireless contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the medical field and representation in the United States Congress ---0

Act 8734

Act 8734 · July 20, 2023 · An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, part II, chapter 39, section 436(b), by expanding the definition of ·disabled veteran· for the purposes of eligibility for a disabled window decal, making various appropriations and amending Act No. 8681 ---0

Act 8681

Act 8681 · An Act establishing the Sixth Constitutional Convention of the Virgin Islands; and providing for an appropriation to cover convention-related expenses i

Act 8737

Act 8737 · An Act honoring and commending Dr. Olaf ·Bronco· Hendricks for his tireless years of remarkable and invaluable contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands in the field of psychiatry, his advocacy for social justice for individuals with behavioral health and substance use issues, and for his music; and mandating that any mental health facility established on the islands of St. Croix be named in his honor ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 35-0075, Bill 35-0078, Bill 35-0041, Bill 35-0100