

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION



BOARD OFFICERS

Kyza A. Callwood, MPA
Chairman

Winona A. Hendricks
Vice-Chairman

Shawna K. Richards
Secretary

St. Croix Members
Winona A. Hendricks
Terrence T. Joseph
Emmanuella M. Perez-Cassius
Shawna K. Richards

St. Thomas/St. John Members
Kyza A. Callwood, MPA
Judy M. Gomez, Esq.
Nandi Sekou, Esq.
Jeanette Smith-Barry

Angel L. Bolques, Jr.
At Large Member

Vacant
Executive Director

Emmett Hansen II
Associate Executive Director

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Virgin Islands Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2021

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the 20th Virgin Islands Board of Education was called to order at 5:36 p.m. by Chair Kyza Callwood.

II. Roll Call

The following were present: Kyza A. Callwood, Judy M. Gomez, Winona Hendricks, Terrence T. Joseph, Emmanuella M. Perez-Cassius, Shawna K. Richards, Nandi Sekou and Jeanette Smith-Barry. Member Angel Bolques, Jr. was late and joined by phone.

VIBE Staff members in attendance: AED Emmett Hansen, Business and Financial Director, Alcenta DeWindt and Atty. Jennifer Jones

Stenographer: Ms. Porter of Porter's Court Reporting

III. Disposition of Minutes

January 16, 2021 Minutes

MOTION - Member Sekou moved to accept the minutes of January 16, 2021.

SECOND – Member Callwood

So ordered.

January 27, 2021 Minutes

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved to accept the minutes of January 27, 2021

SECOND: Member Perez-Cassius

So ordered.

February 4, 2021 Minutes

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to accept the minutes of February 4, 2021.

SECOND: Member Hendricks

So ordered.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virgin Islands Board of Education is to provide leadership and oversight, set policy and advocate for continuous improvement of the Public Education System of the Virgin Islands of the United States.

VISION STATEMENT

Each child is provided with the best quality education which guarantees academic excellence, promotes our history and culture, and builds strong local and global communities.

February 10, 2021 Minutes

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to accept the minutes of February 10, 2021

SECOND: Member Hendricks

So ordered.

February 25, 2021 Minutes

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved to accept the minutes of February 25, 2021.

SECOND: Member Callwood

So ordered.

IV. Correspondence

AED Hansen reviewed the correspondence log in both districts. Member Hendricks asked if a letter received from Mr. Abdul Ali can be sent to the Public/Private Partnership Committee. Chair Callwood asked AED Hansen to ensure that it gets to Member Bolques. Member Perez-Cassius noted the retirement of longtime employee Theolinda Connor and asked how it would affect certification. Chair Callwood said her concern would be addressed in the AED's report.

V. Reports

A. Associate Executive Director – AED Hansen reported on the following:

1. Orientation – a follow up meeting needs to be scheduled
2. Guirly House – AED Hansen met with Bryan Turnbull regarding a project manager for Guirly House. Mr. Turnbull previously drew up the plans for the project. He has forwarded a proposal, which did not include the cost.
3. Personnel – AED Hansen discussed the upcoming retirement of Ms. Connor and says VIBE needs to think about succession planning and decide if the position will be filled internally or externally. He also discussed the vacant IT position.
4. DPNR Grant Program – AED Hansen discussed the DPNR's grant program for historic buildings which has a March 31st deadline. The grant is specific to hurricane related damages, and cannot be used for other purposes. Ms. DeWindt clarified that the \$275,000 previously received for Guirly House was set aside and remains available.
5. Office Hours – AED Hansen recommended a return to 8-5 in accordance with the governor's mandates. Plans are in place for the safe return to normal operational hours. Member Gomez said the return to work is not absolute and that employees' special circumstances must be considered.

There was further discussion about the proposal submitted by Mr. Turnbull. Atty. Jones asked about Turnbull's method of selection. AED Hansen said what Turnbull submitted is a continuation of his previous contract since the Board did not have the money to proceed at the time. Members discussed the need to move quickly on the grant application in order to meet the deadline.

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B. Director of Business and Finance – Ms. DeWindt reported on the following, to include:

1. Status of scholarship checks and application processing a
2. CARES grant – OMB has set a deadline of March 31 to expend the funds. Chair Callwood reviewed the letter sent to Governor Bryan on March 8 asking for an extension to expend the CARES funds and the authority to expand the grant parameters. Members discussed the poor application rate, and ways to inform the public of the available funds. Members are unable to expand the funding guidelines until guidance is received from Governor Bryan.

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved for VIBE to apply for the DPNR grant to facilitate repair of Guirty House.

SECOND: Member Perez-Cassius/Member Sekou

So ordered.

Member Sekou said the Board would need to see the application before it is submitted. Ms, DeWindt suggested that a portion be used for the wall.

3. Budget – Ms. DeWindt reviewed Board expenses and the budget, which included increases to classified and non-union staff. Member Sekou asked when staff increases would be processed. Ms. DeWindt said the Board had been overlooked when increases were calculated. She is unclear of the process to correct it and will have to find out.
- C. Legal Counsel – Atty. Jones reported on the status of pending cases, including VI History, which was assigned to a new judge.
- D. Policies, Rules & Regulations Committee – Chair Hendricks reported that the committee has a draft of the distance learning policy and is scheduled to meet on March 19.
- E. Certification Committee – Chair Smith-Barry reported on the candidates for certification.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved to approve the use of the certification checklist, template and operating procedures that have been prepared.

SECOND: Member Sekou

All were in favor and the motion carried.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved for the Board to approve certification requests that have been approved by the certification committee.

SECOND: Members Joseph and Gomez

So ordered.

F. Schools, Plants & Facilities Committee – Chair Perez-Cassius reported on the committee’s meetings and inquiries to the Board of Education.

G. Finance Committee (formerly Scholarship and Collections) – Chair Richards reported on the need to clarify the scope of the newly formed

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committee. There was discussion as to who has oversight of the Board finances.

- H. Public, Private Liaison Committee – Chair Bolques reported on the goals for the committee.
- I. Internal Controls Ad-Hoc Committee – Chair Gomez reviewed the proposed changes to the Financial and Travel Policies and Procedures.
- J. Chairman’s Report – Chair Callwood reported on the Executive Committee actions/decisions, which included a letter to Governor Bryan regarding the status of the CARES Act funding administered by the Board.

MOTION: Member Gomez moved to ratify the letter sent to Governor Bryan regarding the CARES Act funding.

SECOND: Member Hendricks

So ordered.

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss pertinent matters of the Board.

SECOND: Member Gomez

So ordered. The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:11 p.m.

MOTION: Member Gomez moved to move out of Executive Session.

SECOND: Member Callwood

So ordered. The Board returned to regular session at 8:43 p.m.

Chair Callwood briefly summarized the matters discussed in Executive Session.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved to vote to reconsider the previous motion made on January 16.

SECOND: Member Joseph

Objection: Member Hendricks

There was discussion about the existing law on Virgin Islands history and the Board’s options while there is a pending lawsuit.

The vote was as follows:

Yea (4) – A. Bolques, T. Joseph, N. Sekou, J. Smith-Barry

Nay (1) – J. Gomez

Not Voting (4) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, E. Perez-Cassius, S. Richards

The motion failed.

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Member Gomez

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Submitted By:



Shawna K. Richards, PMP
Secretary

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