

**GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION**



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Winona A. Hendricks
Vice-Chairman

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

St. Thomas/St. John Members
Kyza A. Callwood, MPAam
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 – October 15, 2021**

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the 20th Virgin Islands Board of Education was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chair Kyza Callwood.

II. Roll Call

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

Staff Members Present: Executive Director Stephanie Berry

Stenographer: Diane Andrews

Counsel: Jennifer Jones

III. Approval of Agenda

Member Sekou noted that correspondence was not listed on the agenda.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to approve the agenda as presented.

SECOND: Member Hendricks

OBJECTION: Member Sekou

Member Sekou said an item she requested to be placed on the agenda was missing. Chair Callwood said the item would be discussed in Executive Session since it concerns personnel matters. The objection was withdrawn.

All were in favor and the motion was so ordered.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes

For each set of minutes, members spoke on any matters arising from the minutes.

July 19, 2021

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to accept the minutes.

SECOND: Member Emmanuella Perez-Cassius

Voting was as follows:

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Yea (5) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, T. Joseph, E. Perez-Cassius and J. Smith-Barry

Absent (2) – A. Bolques and S. Richards

Abstain (2) – J. Gomez and N. Sekou

The motion carried.

Member Smith-Barry asked whether touchless faucets and other items mentioned by Dionne Wells-Hedrington were installed in all schools. She requested that a request for a status update be made to the VIDE. Chair Callwood said the ED has been following up on this and other items.

August 27, 2021

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to accept the August 27 minutes.

SECOND: Member Gomez

So ordered.

V. Correspondence

ED Berry reviewed the correspondence logs. Member Smith-Barry asked about letters sent by the Chair on behalf of the Board that were not copied to all members of the Board and requested that all correspondence be copied to all members. Chair Callwood apologized for the oversight. Member Sekou asked about the disposition regarding disparity in course offerings. Chair Callwood and ED Berry advised of the follow up action.

VI. Executive Director's Report

ED Berry and staff presented the Management report. She discussed use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, which will be used to expand broadband, update website and implement the online teacher certification.

ED Berry is working with the STX landlord to address leaking. She discussed a planned collaboration with the Career and Technical Education Board for online certification. She commended the Financial Aid Staff for doubling collections during a pandemic and thanked the public for making the sacrifice to pay their loans during challenging times. ED Berry is doing outreach to EDC beneficiaries and to the EDA on compliance. There have been 2 layers of CARES Grant processing thus far, which will continue until funding runs out. ED Berry also updated on scholarship processing.

She asked for the Board's permission to proceed with the Architect's contract for Gurdy House.

Comments arising from the Management Report:

Sekou - Requested that the letter to EDC beneficiaries be revised to acknowledge that it is a statutorily required donation and commented on the certification process. She requested a listing of the 221 students whose applications are incomplete

Smith-Barry – Timeline for the Gurdy House.

Joseph – Status of \$18,000 payment from FEMA

Gomez – Discussed Building repairs and requested list of incomplete applications be forwarded to Finance Committee.

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MOTION: Member Gomez moved to approve the architectural services contract of Brian Turnbull to complete design of Guirty House and to authorize the Executive Director to accept the service agreement no later than December 30, 2021.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

So ordered.

Other comments:

Hendricks – asked for record to be clarified regarding reimbursement and for the ED to make a St. Croix office space a priority. She asked ED to ensure that every committee chair has stipend record and to submit record within 3-5 days after meeting and suggested virtual support to familiarize students with financial aid process. Richards – suggested doing away with notarization for promissory notes and having easily recognizable email address to support student response rate.

VII. Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

The Committee Chairs reported on their committee activity.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to accept the 2021 School Management Accountability Report addendum, with accepted changes and forward to the Senate President and administration.

SECOND: Member Hendricks

So ordered.

Member Smith-Barry asked for the committee spend some time analyzing data provided.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius to approve the walkthrough procedures and checklist standard draft and to add a principal readiness report to the standard reopening requirements to VIBE policy for use by the committee in official school reopening reports.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

So ordered.

Certification

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved to approve the list of candidates for St. Croix for requested certifications, as presented

SECOND: Member Joseph

So ordered.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved to approve candidates for certification for St. Thomas-St. John.

SECOND: Member Joseph

So ordered.

PRR

Member Smith-Barry raised a point of inquiry regarding the 9-12 grade promotion and retention policy,

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concerning the instructional day consistency, Virgin Islands history and culture not being synonymous and the number of hours in school.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to accept and approved 9-12 grade promotion and retention policy.

SECOND: Callwood

Objection: Member Smith-Barry

Amendment:

Motion: Member Sekou moved to include JROTC to substitute as a health credit

SECOND: Member Smith-Barry

Atty. Jones said there should be no substitutions for health.

Voting on the amendment was as follows:

Yea (2) – N. Sekou and J. Smith-Barry

Nay (5) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, S. Richards, T. Joseph and E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (2) – A. Bolques, Jr., and J. Gomez

The motion failed.

Voting on the original motion was as follows:

Yea (5) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, S. Richards, T. Joseph and E. Perez-Cassius

Nay (1) – J. Smith-Barry

Abstain (1) – N. Sekou

Absent (2) – J. Gomez and A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to circulate the 9-12 grade promotion and retention policy to the community for a 30 day period beginning on Monday, October 18.

Objection: Member Smith-Barry

Voting was as follows:

Yea (5) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, S. Richards, T. Joseph and E. Perez-Cassius

Nay (1) – J. Smith-Barry

Abstain (1) – N. Sekou

Absent (2) – A. Bolques, Jr. and J. Gomez

The motion carried.

Finance

MOTION: Member Richards moved that a gift of commendation be made for all employees who supported the scholarship and collection process, in an amount not to exceed \$100.

SECOND: Members Perez-Cassius, Hendricks and Callwood

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So ordered.

MOTION: Member Richards moved to delay the amnesty pending a review in 6 months.

SECOND: Members Perez-Cassius, Hendricks and Callwood.

The motion carried.

Internal Controls

Member Sekou said the policy has not been presented to the full board and she has not had the opportunity as a non-committee member to fully discuss the policy, which also has not been presented to the community.

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to remove the Financial and Travel Policies and Procedures from the agenda.

SECOND: Member Richards

Voting was as follows:

Yea (6) – W. Hendricks, S. Richards, T. Joseph, E. Perez-Cassius, N. Sekou and J. Smith-Barry

Abstain (1) – K. Callwood

Absent (2) – A. Bolques, Jr. and J. Gomez

VIII. Public Comment

Ms. Harriett Mercer said that she appreciated the dialogue and was looking forward to the release of the curriculum framework. She also asked the VIBE's role with private and parochial schools.

IX. Unfinished Business – Approval of VIBE Strategic Plan

ED Berry gave an overview of the strategic plan.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hendricks moved to adopt the VIBE 2021-2023 strategic plan.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

So ordered.

X. Executive Session

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hendricks moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

So ordered. The Board went into Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to come out of Executive Session

SECOND: Vice-Chair Hendricks

So ordered. The Board returned to regular session at 9:06 p.m.

Chair Callwood recapped items covered in Executive Session, which related to personnel and the scholarship Process. Atty. Sekou requested from the Executive Director a listing of all employees who have received

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scholarship awards from the Board. ED Berry said she would start from present and work her way back in compiling the information.

Atty. Jones reported on legal activities. Member Sekou asked that cases involving VIBE be discussed in Executive Committee.

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: Vice- Chair Hendricks moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Chair Callwood and Member Joseph

So ordered. The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m

Submitted By:



Shawna K. Richards, PMP
Secretary

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