

SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

#

Held At:

VI PORT AUTHORITY CONFERENCE ROOM

Henry E. Rohlsen Airport

St. Croix, VI

And via Zoom On-Line Platform

(10:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

PLENARY SESSION

Saturday, April 12, 2025

#

DELEGATES PRESENT

Delegate Usie. R. Richards, President
Delegate Stedman Hodge, Jr., Vice-President*
Delegate John J. Abramson, Jr., Treasurer
Delegate Imani Daniel, Secretary
Delegate Lilliana Belardo de O'Neal
Delegate John M. Canegata
Delegate Devin F. Carrington, Esq.
Delegate Lydia Hendricks
Delegate Rudel A. Hodge, Jr., Esq.
Delegate Akima Richardson
Delegate Rupert W. Ross, Jr.
Delegate Ronald E. Russell, Esq.
Delegate David Silverman
Delegate Arturo Watlington, Jr., Esq.
Delegate Alecia M. Wells*

*(via Zoom On-Line Platform)

Plenary Session – 4-12-25

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1 (WHEREUPON, THE PLENARY SESSION WAS CALLED
2 TO ORDER AT 10:15 a.m.)

3 # # # # # # # #

4 PRESIDENT U. R. RICHARDS: Good morning.
5 I'd like to call the meeting to order, and welcome to the
6 delegates and members of the Virgin Islands Sixth
7 Constitutional Convention; guests and those who are listening
8 and joining us on-line.

9 I will ask the secretary to give a roll call.

10 DELEGATE I. DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.
11 We're going to start with Delegate Abramson.

12 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Present.

13 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.
14 Hearing none.
15 Delegate Canegata.

16 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Present.

17 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Carrington.

18 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Present.

19 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Daniel is present.
20 Delegate Hendricks.

21 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Present.

22 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Rudel A. Hodge, Jr.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Present.

24 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Stedman Hodge, Jr.

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1 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Here.

2 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Richards.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Present.

4 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Richardson.

5 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Here.

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Ross.

7 DELEGATE ROSS: Here.

8 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Russell.

9 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Here.

10 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Silverman.

11 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Present.

12 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Watlington.

13 And Delegate Wells.

14 We technically have three absent; 12 present.

15 But Delegate Watlington is here in person.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Well, when he returns,
17 we'll recognize him as being present.

18 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, sir.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And again, thank you
20 and welcome.

21 The agenda for today's meeting has been distributed,
22 in accordance with the rules of the Sixth Constitutional
23 Convention, and if you could please note for the record,
24 secretary and Delegate Daniel that Delegate Watlington is present,

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1 and also, Delegate Belardo de O'Neal is also present.

2 DELEGATE DANIEL: Noted.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: At this point, we only
4 have one member absent.

5 DELEGATE DANIEL: One absent, 14 present.
6 Ms. Wells is not here yet.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Wells.

8 Again, thank you and pardon the interruption.
9 Delegate Belardo de O'Neal is now seated.

10 DELEGATE DANIEL: Point of Information, sir.
11 Were you announcing the agenda?
12 We got interrupted. So I was trying to figure out where we
13 were in the process.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I wasn't interrupted;
15 I was completing my thought. Thank you.

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The roll call has been
18 taken, with 14 delegates present; one delegate absent.
19 Delegate Wells.

20 The agenda was circulated to the members of the
21 Convention on April 4th. Is there a motion to approve the agenda?

22 DELEGATE DANIEL: There's a motion to amend
23 the agenda, sir?

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Motion to amend the agenda.

1 Let's hear the motion.

2 DELEGATE DANIEL: The motion is to amend the
3 agenda.

4 We have here, sir, with enough signatures for the
5 majority.

6 But it's a motion to amend the agenda to add the Resolution
7 to ensure district representation in Standing Committees,
8 and to standardize the reporting of committee actions on
9 constitutional matters to the Any Other Business Section
10 of the agenda, please. So moved.

11 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Second.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: A motion has been made
13 by Delegate Daniel; seconded by Delegate David Silverman.
14 Is there any objection to the motion?

15 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I don't have
16 an objection, but I would like a copy of the motion. If possible.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Hearing no objection,
18 the motion has been approved and adopted, and will be added
19 to Item #6 on the agenda of Any Other Business.

20 Are there any further questions on the agenda,
21 as amended?

22 Hearing no objection, I assumed that we approve the agenda.
23 So we could proceed. Thank you.

24 The first item on the agenda, and I believe everyone

1 should have received a copy of the subject matters that are listed
2 on the agenda. Just for the public record; today's agenda
3 includes not only the Call To Order and the roll call, but Reports
4 by the Executive Committee; the Treasurer's Report; the
5 amendment to the Virgin Islands Constitutional Convention,
6 Resolution #002 relative to the committees' responsibilities.

7 Item #5 is the Standing Committees Chair's Report
8 or Next Steps.

9 Those Standing Committees include the Education & Public
10 Information; Culture & Heritage; Finance & Public Services;
11 Government Structure; Human Rights.

12 The 6th item is Any Other Business, which was just
13 added as an item under this topic.

14 The distributed proposed Resolution in regards to the amendment
15 of the committee's composition.

16 Then the next Session Date and the adjournment.

17 Yes, Delegate Silverman.

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Point of Information.

19 I just have a question. I sent an e-mail to you and the rest of
20 the Convention asking if there were a call for agenda items prior
21 to the agenda being issued.

22 I haven't heard back from you on that, and I was
23 wondering if you could just respond, because in the future,
24 there may be situations where delegates have items that they

1 would like to see included on the agenda; and I am hoping that
2 there is a procedure whereby that can happen.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: As per the rules, the
4 President issued the agenda. The announcement for today's
5 meeting of April 12th was issued on March 1, 2025.
6 Since March 1st, and seven days prior to the issuance of the
7 agenda, individuals as delegates can send any Notice or
8 Request for consideration of the agenda.

9 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.
10 So that will be the procedure going forward?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That is the procedure,
12 by the rules. Not going forward. That's how it exists now.
13 Thank you.

14 The Executive Committee Report.
15 All the delegates, I believe, have a copy before them, and also
16 had received an electronic copy. I'm just going to discuss
17 them in brief, and not going to read them in detail.

18 The first subject matter was the Report on the
19 funding by the Virgin Islands Government for the Constitutional
20 Convention.

21 As you all are aware, since a letter had to be
22 finally issued by me as the President of the Constitutional
23 Convention in regard to the release of these funds, that
24 following our January 28th Oath of Office and first Session,

1 the Legislature, which acts as the custodian of the funds on behalf
2 of the Constitutional Convention had sent a correspondence out
3 on February 7, 2025 requesting from the Office of Management
4 & Budget the release of the funding for the Constitutional
5 Convention.

6 Despite the issuance of that request by the
7 Legislature, they did not, until follow-up with the Office of
8 Management & Budget issued an authorization to release
9 \$100,000 of the appropriated \$150,000.

10 The release of the funds occurred this week,
11 April 8, 2025 in the amount of \$100,000.
12 And so, it leaves a due balance of \$50,000 for the upcoming
13 4th quarter of Fiscal Year 2025.

14 For the record, according to the legislation, the
15 appropriation sets aside \$100,000 for the operation of the
16 Convention and \$50,000 for the Territorial Education on the
17 adopting of a Constitution.

18 These are funds that were appropriated for Fiscal Year 2025,
19 and are expected to be released and received no later than the
20 end of September of 2025.

21 In addition to that, appropriation for Fiscal Year
22 2026 that begins on October 1, 2025, the legislative appropriations
23 are in the reverse where they set aside \$50,000 for the operations
24 of the Convention, and \$100,000 for the Territorial Education

1 on adopting a Constitution.

2 That entails and covers the subject matter of the Government
3 funds.

4 Are there any questions on that section of the
5 Report on Government funding?

6 Hearing none, I'll move on to the second item
7 under the Executive Committee Report, which deals with the
8 administration of the finances, and per the rules of the
9 Constitutional Convention, specifically Rule 10.

10 The treasurer is responsible for preparing Proposals
11 for the operational budget. That should be submitted to the
12 Standing Committee, and then presented for submission to the
13 Convention for their advice & consent.

14 Similarly, the President and the treasurer shall
15 serve as the Certifying Officers of the Convention, in adherence
16 to the rules that have been adopted.

17 The next item under finances, which I would take
18 some time to address, because there seems to be some
19 misunderstanding of what the rules state.

20 The subject matter of Expenditure Reports.
21 The Legislature, by request by a majority of the Constitutional
22 Convention, the Legislature had approved our request to serve
23 as the custodian of the funds on behalf of the Convention,
24 particularly, given the subject matter of the requirements of

1 opening up bank accounts that require certain Articles of
2 Incorporation, we saw it as an expedited process for us to be
3 able to receive our funding.

4 As a custodian of the funds for the Convention,
5 and in accordance to the rules that the Convention shall
6 prepare and submit an Expenditure Report, and given that
7 the Legislature has acted as the custodian and disburse funds
8 on behalf of the Convention, the Report should reflect the
9 preceding calendar month, no later than the 30th day of each
10 month.

11 For example, the only activity that was executed in
12 January was on the 28th in regards to the Oath of Office, and
13 then the activities that took place in February.

14 I believe February has 28 days.
15 Within 30 days of February 28th, the Legislature is responsible
16 to issue to the Constitutional Convention an Expenditure
17 Report as it refers to the preceding month.

18 The Legislature issued the February 2025 Expenditure
19 Report on the 14th of March, well within the 30th day, as outlined
20 in the rules, and the Legislature has also issued and were
21 distributed to all members the March 2025 Expenditure Report,
22 which was issued on April 8, 2025.

23 The final note under the finances is the statement
24 that the treasurer will prepare and submit to the Standing

1 Executive Committee, a Financial Policy of Procedures for the
2 approval and the disbursement of Convention funds, and also
3 per the rules of the Constitutional Convention, the President
4 and the treasurer will act in the capacity as the Certifying
5 Officers on behalf of the Convention.

6 That concludes, at least, the portion of the Report
7 on the finances.

8 Are there any questions, comments?

9 Delegate Silverman.

10 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you, President
11 Richards.

12 My question has to do with the budget.
13 I was under the impression and certainly, you know the rules
14 better than I. But I was expecting that we would have a
15 budget for review at this meeting. Is that not available?

16 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: No. It is not.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Excuse me.
18 Please wait to be recognized.
19 I'm sorry, Delegate Silverman. Could you take your time and
20 complete your question.

21 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.

22 My question is: If it is not, when can we expect to
23 see a budget?

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate

1 Silverman.

2 I'm going to just take the questions, and then provide
3 for the opportunity to respond.

4 Delegate Rudel Hodge.

5 DELEGATE R. HODGE: I think it's a similar question.

6 Based on Rule 7, duly stated, 7E:

7 It says: Prepare a budget, submit it to the Convention for the
8 advice & consent within 30 working days after being elected.

9 The President shall be the Certifying Officer of those services.

10 We are 67 days in, and we have not been submitting
11 any budgets, pursuant to Rule 7E of our rules.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

13 That was a statement. Right?

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: A question.

15 What's going on with the application of that rule?

16 Because I also had sent an e-mail earlier on March 2th of this
17 year, with no response from the Executive Committee and
18 yourself as President.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

20 Any other questions before we move to responses?

21 I would give the initial response, and I think I made
22 reference to it in the Report. You should also look at Rule #10,
23 which is the subject matter of the budget and the role of the
24 treasurer of the Constitutional Convention, to prepare all the

1 Proposals for such budget.

2 And so, I'm going to yield to the treasurer to give
3 a response and make any statement regarding this matter
4 on the record.

5 Delegate Abramson.

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: I was hoping that at this
7 meeting, I could get information to utilize to formulate a budget.

8 As you know, we have various committees that we
9 have to fund, with the exception of Education that has an
10 allotment for its work.

11 All the other committees have to have some idea of what you're
12 going to do; how much you're going to do it in; how much time
13 it's going to take.

14 So I have to have some kind of plan.

15 Now, I could do this ad hoc, but I was hoping that when we
16 speak, I could ask my questions, because we have a section
17 for Committee Reports.

18 I would be able to ask the questions.

19 How many meetings are you going to have?

20 How much money do you think you need? Something along
21 those lines, so that the budget could be close to realistic.

22 I could just make a plan.

23 I could do a generic plan, but I think, because we
24 only have \$100,000 to work with, I wanted to be as

1 close as possible to the realization of what we can spend.

2 DELEGATE DANIEL: I have a follow-up question.

3 If allowed.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Abramson, you're
5 finished?

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Yes.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel.

8 DELEGATE DANIEL: When can we expect a
9 budget, sir? A date, sir.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Secretary Daniel, the
11 inquiry is to the treasurer?

12 DELEGATE DANIEL: It is.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Abramson.

14 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: You could expect a
15 budget within a week.

16 DELEGATE R. HODGE: So a week from today?
17 April 19th?

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Please, allow me to
19 acknowledge you before we speak. Not only for all of us, but
20 just for the stenographer. You have to let me know if you
21 have any inquiry, further questions.

22 Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Further question.

24 So April 19th will be the date for the proposed budget.

1 I'm referring to Rule 10 here:

2 Nowhere does it say the treasurer is the person responsible for
3 creating a budget.

4 It says: --- As per the Operations Budget of the 6th
5 Constitutional Convention to work on all Proposals for such
6 budget, required that all checks issued by the 6th Constitutional
7 Convention be signed by the two officers, as appointed by the
8 President. Then no later than 30 days of each month, the
9 treasurer shall submit to the President and the Convention a
10 Report of the expenditures of the Convention for the preceding
11 calendar month.

12 It says directly in Rule 7E that the President is
13 actually the person responsible for creating the budget, and
14 that has not been changed in any amendment of the rules.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

16 I appreciate your interpretation.

17 The interpretation that I'm making reference to
18 speaks clearly in the very first section, at the end of that
19 sentence. To work on all Proposals for such budget.

20 The Proposals for the budget come from the
21 treasurer, and then the Executive Committee, through the
22 President deals with the adoption of the budget.

23 If there are no other questions –

24 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Point of Information.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Canegata.

2 DELEGATE CANEGATA: I apologize for my lack
3 of sophistication in regards to this type of setting in meetings.

4 Why are the questions from Delegate Rudel Hodge
5 even important? How is it beneficial to the people of the Virgin
6 Islands who have a Constitution to write?

7 I see this as a meeting, as somebody who works
8 more in the private class. I have only worked for Senator
9 Hansen and my good friend over here, my only tenure in the
10 Virgin Islands Government.

11 Why is this important to the people of the Virgin Islands?
12 Why can't we start to conduct business and build relationships
13 to come up with a decent document?

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
15 Canegata.

16 Let me just say this from the onset.
17 The opportunity to make the inquiry – and we are speaking on
18 the subject matter of finances. Each delegate may be able to
19 share what they deem as important and a concern that they
20 would like on the topic of finances, and I think that those
21 delegates that spoke on the matter felt that is a priority issue
22 for them on this particular topic. I acknowledge their concern.

23 Delegate Silverman.

24 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you very much.

1 I have an additional topic that I'd like to explore
2 regarding the Executive Committee's actions.

3 I anticipated that the Executive Committee, particularly yourself
4 would be seeking to retain Counsel for the Convention.

5 DELEGATE ROSS: Point of Order.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I was just getting ready
7 to say to Delegate Silverman that we are on the subject matter
8 of the Report of finances.

9 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I thought this was the
10 Executive Committee Report.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes.
12 But we are finishing the discussion on the finances.

13 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Can you let me know
14 when I can ask the question about the Executive Committee's
15 responsibilities?

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And when we complete
17 the topics that are listed on the agenda.

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross, you had
20 a Point of Order.

21 DELEGATE ROSS: Mr. President, I think you
22 addressed it. I wasn't clear that we had concluded the
23 discussion on the topic that we were debating.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I just tried to bring us

1 back to that point.

2 Delegate Abramson.

3 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Mr. President, you've
4 asked the Legislature's Director of Finance to be in the meeting,
5 so he could answer any questions. Because some delegates
6 said they had questions for the financial structure of the
7 Legislature. So he's on the Zoom, and I would like you to
8 give him an opportunity to speak.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
10 Abramson. We have not reached to that point on the agenda.
11 That is covered under the Treasurer's Report, and the responses
12 and presentation from the Acting Director of the Office of
13 Business & Financial Affairs for the Legislature will be strictly
14 adhered and geared towards the subject matter of the services
15 that they are providing to the Constitutional Convention in
16 regards to being the custodian of our funds.

17 On the subject matter of policies & procedures in
18 the manner and the form and the way in which funds are
19 disbursed by the Convention. That's an internal matter that
20 requires the Convention to adopt its policies & procedures.

21 I'm now going to move on to the last part of the
22 Executive Committee Report. The subject matter on the
23 meetings and activities calendar, which I determined are very
24 important and needs to be adhered to and considered,

1 particularly, our most recent experience with the scheduling
2 of Standing Committee Meetings.

3 I do note that on the 12th of March, the initial
4 Memorandum that laid out the Standing Committees' leadership
5 and membership, and also on the 4th of April, the 3rd Memorandum
6 that amended the committee's leadership and membership
7 specifically reminded the Standing Committee Chairs of the
8 importance of submitting a monthly calendar to the Executive
9 Committee for review and approval to ensure the timely adoption
10 of a calendar; to ensure that members and all delegates,
11 whether they are committee members or not has an opportunity
12 to participate in these committee meetings.

13 Lastly, to ensure that there is appropriate Public
14 Notice of the schedule for each of the Standing Committees in
15 a timely manner to be able to provide public participation and/
16 or presence for these Standing Committee meetings.

17 I believe on March 12th, prior to the Standing
18 Committees preparing to conduct meetings, that was also
19 included in the Memorandum to submit prior to you making
20 your public scheduling, the proposed dates that that committee
21 is intended to have meetings.

22 To date, the only committee that had adhered to
23 that structure was the Committee on Government Structure,
24 as chaired by Delegate Rupert Ross, Jr.

1 And so, I am just re-emphasizing, not only for the
2 purpose of not conducting the meetings under stress or chaos,
3 but more importantly, for the intent of conducting those
4 meetings, and having the public announcements under a
5 structure that allows for the participation of all delegates and
6 the public in general.

7 Are we straight on the meeting calendar?
8 That concludes the items that have been listed on the
9 Executive Committee Report.

10 As such, I believe, Delegate Silverman, you had a question.

11 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes.
12 Thank you, President Richards.

13 My question had to do with the authority of the
14 Executive Committee to hire staff for the Convention, and in
15 particular, a General Counsel, an attorney, to assist the
16 activities of the Convention.

17 There have already been a number of questions
18 raised in Committee Meetings, in which I've participated
19 about the propriety of certain language that may or may not
20 be in a Constitution which should be properly deferred to
21 Legal Counsel.

22 My question was simply: what progress has been
23 made in identifying an attorney to represent us?

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you for your

1 question, and much appreciated.

2 Le me begin by responding, in accordance to the
3 rules that have been adopted by a majority.

4 Delegate Daniel, I'm going to pause until the system
5 comes back up.

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: I'm on my phone.
7 So I'll let everyone know.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: All right.
9 We'll stand in Recess for two minutes.

10 (WHEREUPON, THE CONVENTION RECESSED
11 BRIEFLY).

12 # # # # # # #

13 We're back on the record.

14 I wanted to complete this section of the Report,
15 based on the inquiry made by Delegate Silverman.

16 Under Rule 7, Item #G; the last item.
17 Duties of the officers.

18 In this particular case, it speaks to the President
19 has general charge of the hiring and supervision of all
20 salaried staff employees of the Convention, and of such
21 consultants as may be engaged by the Convention, subject
22 to the advice & consent of the Executive Committee.

23 Specifically, the response to you, Delegate
24 Silverman.

1 Unfortunately, I've put myself in the position not
2 to engage in these kinds of discussions of hiring, and putting
3 in place, particularly, any particular consultant or legal advice
4 in the absence of monies in the hands of the Constitutional
5 Convention.

6 That's been a practice of mine through my entire
7 40 years in Government; that I don't like to put myself in
8 that position. That was the sole reason we didn't proceed in
9 that manner, and with the release of this funding, I am hoping
10 and intended to secure the necessary Professional Services
11 for the Convention.

12 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you for that
13 response.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You're very welcome.
15 Delegate Russell.

16 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I was listening to Delegate
17 John Abramson, and I believe his Proposal to have the Chairs
18 of the committees submit a budget to him, based on their
19 anticipated meeting schedule. Persons who attend the meetings
20 and an idea of what they may need for meetings should be put
21 in a motion. Because the Committee Chairs are responsible
22 for managing a committee.

23 Since the committee meets; we receive stipends, we
24 receive whatever. It's better that the Committee Chairs interact

1 with the treasurer, based on a budget that they created, and
2 that they have approved with the Executive Committee.

3 Mr. Abramson suggested that in his attempt to
4 respond, but I believe it needs to be put in a motion that the
5 Committee Chairs submit a budget to the Executive Team for
6 approval, and we are guided by what the Committee Chairs
7 decide when they're going to meet; how often they're going to
8 meet, and the Reports that they make to the Executive
9 Committee.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
11 Russell. That was just a statement or was it a motion?

12 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I'm ready to transmit it
13 into a motion.

14 To have the Committee Chairs responsible to the
15 Executive Committee, to provide a budget that is approved by
16 the Executive Committee for the operation of their committees.
17 I so move.

18 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Second.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: A motion has been moved
20 and seconded. Is there any objection to the motion?

21 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Objection.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Objected to by
23 Delegate Watlington.

24 Madam Clerk, could you give us a roll call on that

1 motion?

2 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Point of Information.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry, Delegate
4 Silverman. I didn't see your hand.

5 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Is this motion debatable?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It is debatable, if someone
7 wants to speak on it.

8 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I heard an objection.
9 So I would assume it's appropriate to have debate.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.
11 That's not an issue.

12 It's been moved by Delegate Russell; seconded by
13 Delegate Abramson; objected to by Delegate Watlington.

14 Anyone want to speak on the motion?

15 DELEGATE ROSS: I do.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross.

17 DELEGATE ROSS: As Chairman of the Standing
18 Committee on Government Structure, as I've expressed privately
19 and now publicly, the budgetary allotments for the functions
20 of this Constitutional Convention is wholly inadequate.

21 I've been asked to prepare a budget that if I'm to
22 execute my assignment, devising or coming up with language
23 for the Government's structure of this territory, no Legislative,
24 Executive; Judicial; Local Government; Transitional

1 Government; Transitional System from the Government, I
2 could come up with a budget that basically spends half the
3 money that was given to us to do that.

4 As you are aware, to date we have spent, at least,
5 one-fifth of the money allotted for Government Operations.
6 I'm the only standing committee that has had two meetings
7 in that arena.

8 I am concerned that the Standing Committee
9 Chairs are being placed in a position of presenting a budget
10 that has no meaning.

11 I'm willing to do that, with the understanding that
12 if we submit a budget, that we feel it is realistic, and the budget
13 surpasses the allotment given to us by the Legislature, that the
14 Executive Committee would take steps necessary to get us more
15 money. That's my statement.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
17 Ross.

18 Anyone else wants to speak on the motion?
19 You had a Point of Information in regards to the motion?

20 DELEGATE CANEGATA: No. Just a correction.

21 The Finance & Public Services Committee actually
22 had three meetings and not zero meetings.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
24 Anyone else has any other comment and discussion on the motion?

1 Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.

2 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Good morning
3 to everyone.

4 Mr. President, in my mind, I thought that that was
5 understandable. That if you have a committee, you need a
6 budget, but that budget, whenever you present it to the
7 President, that you would approve it. I don't think there is
8 a need for a motion to do that.

9 As Delegate Ross said, you might submit a budget
10 this way and then next month, it goes up or goes down.
11 So you are putting the Chairman in a situation to give you a
12 budget that may not be adequate or may be over their request.

13 To me, the motion is not necessary.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
15 Belardo de O'Neal.

16 Delegate Silverman.

17 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.

18 My view on this budget process is that we are
19 obviously, very, very tightly constrained by what has been
20 approved by the Legislature. I think everyone around the
21 table would agree that it's insufficient to do the things that
22 we have in mind to do.

23 So the process of six Committee Chairs saying
24 what they want and sending it to you is inevitably going to

1 lead to you saying that that's too much, and we either can't
2 operate or we have to cut it back.

3 What I would prefer to see is a process which
4 begins from the fixed number that we're forced to live with
5 that allocates that for materials; services; staff and Committee
6 Meetings. You may very well conclude that we can't afford
7 to pay \$150 per member per meeting. That we need to pay
8 significantly less than that, and I think many of us would be
9 perfectly willing to accept that reality.

10 So I'm envisioning an inverted process to what was
11 suggested in the motion, rather than come up with what we
12 need; tell us what we got and we'll figure out how to work with
13 it.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
15 Silverman.

16 Anyone else has discussion on the matter?
17 Delegate Richardson.

18 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: President Richards,
19 for the record, what constitutes an official committee meeting?
20 How many members have to be present, for example?

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: In accordance to the
22 rules; if your standing committee has a membership of five.
23 At least, three members.

24 If we have a standing committee, with a membership

1 of seven, four members.

2 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Point of Information, sir.

3 The Committee on Finance & Public Services has
4 only had two official meetings.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

6 Before we go to all the Points of Information, are we finished
7 with the discussion on the motion?

8 Having no further discussion, could you give us a
9 roll call on the motion?

10 MADAM CLERK M. PICKARD: Delegate John J.
11 Abramson, Jr.

12 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: No.

13 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Lilliana Belardo
14 de O'Neal.

15 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.

16 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate John M. Canegata.

17 DELEGATA CANEGATA: No.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Devin F. Carrington.

19 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: No.

20 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Imani Daniel.

21 DELEGATE DANIEL: I'm abstaining.

22 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Lydia Hendricks.

23 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

24 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Rudel A. Hodge,

1 Jr.

2 DELEGATE HODGE, JR.: Abstaining.

3 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Stedman

4 Hodge, Jr.

5 DELEGATE S. HODGE: No.

6 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Usie Raymond

7 Richards.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No.

9 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Akima

10 Richardson.

11 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: No.

12 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Rupert W.

13 Ross, Jr.

14 DELEGATE ROSS: No.

15 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Ronald

16 Russell.

17 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate David

19 Silverman.

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: No.

21 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Arturo

22 Watlington, Jr.

23 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: No.

24 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Alecia M. Wells.

1 DELEGATE WELLS: No.

2 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Mr. Chairman,
3 eight yeas, five nays, two not voting.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: What's your roll call?

5 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Eight yeas, five yeas,
6 two not voting.

7 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Point of Order.
8 May I call for a show of hands on this?

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry?

10 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: May I call for a show
11 of hands. Through the Chair.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You may call, but I don't
13 see it necessary.

14 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I'm questioning the tally.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: What's the tally,
16 Madam Clerk?

17 MADAM CLERK RICHARDS: Eight nays, five yeas,
18 two not voting.

19 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I don't know the correct
20 procedure, but can we recount?

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Can you read the results
22 of your roll call? Not roll call, what do you have there on the
23 record?

24 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: I have eight nays,

1 five yeas, two not voting.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's correct.

3 Thank you. The motion fails.

4 I'm just going to make this comment on the same
5 motion that just failed, and as Chair, I didn't want to make the
6 comment and have any particular influence.

7 But we need to do the responsibility that we have;
8 the treasurer and the Executive Committee and put together
9 what needs can be met with the \$100,000 as we expect to
10 have in our coffers for administration. So, in comparison
11 to the projection of all the expenses that each Standing
12 Committee should have.

13 It's \$100,000 for the administration, and put
14 together the proposed budget for the \$50,000 for the
15 Territorial Public Education Campaign with those confines
16 of what we know we have to manage.

17 Delegate Hendricks.

18 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: I understand what is
19 happening, but I believe we still need to put a cap on some of
20 those committees, because you could have one committee
21 spending all of the money by having 10 meetings, and maybe
22 not anything happening.

23 So I think we should still have a cap, because
24 we know how much money we have, and let us work with

1 what we have.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Hendricks,
3 I could only say ditto to that. I agree with you, and it's our
4 responsibility. When I say ours, the Executive Committee,
5 based on the presentation from the treasurer to put that
6 ceiling. So we will take the responsibility for that.

7 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.
9 Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.

10 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Thank you
11 very much.

12 My question is a Point of Order.
13 There are certain committees that a member may not be a
14 member of that committee, but wants to go, and they go.
15 Are they going to get paid for attending or they'll just go
16 there free?

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Let me interrupt you.
18 You have a Point of Information.
19 There's no Point of Order.

20 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Okay.
21 A Point of Information. Whatever.

22 What is the answer to my Point of Information?

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: In accordance with the
24 Statute, meaning the Acts passed by the Legislature,

1 Delegates are supposed to receive a Per Diem for meetings
2 attended. In the case of standing committees, whether
3 they're a standing committee member or not, they are entitled
4 to a Per Diem.

5 This observation that I will share.

6 It's not intended to be personal to anyone.

7 I got a little uncomfortable (which is a nice word) without
8 saying scared. Because there are people that attends
9 Standing Committee Meetings who are present when the
10 meeting is opened up, and then you don't hear from them
11 the rest of the day.

12 The Legislature passed the law that allows for
13 virtual attendance of participants. But I am one that –
14 I don't really like this virtual thing. But the law is in place.

15 But if you're going to expect to participate and
16 expect Per Diem, then attend the meeting.

17 Are we still on a motion that failed?

18 Because I took the liberty as the Presiding Officer to just share
19 something that I didn't say prior to the vote. So it has now
20 become mute, and I am prepared to move on to the next item
21 on the agenda.

22 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Just a final point.

23 I'm not sure if it's a Point of Information or a Point of Order.

24 But the Finance & Public Services Committee.

1 We might have a Proposal to actually save some money, and
2 to actually make this process more efficient.

3 We deep-delved and dived into just the process.
4 Delegate Ross' timely assignment of meetings and his experience.
5 He got out the gate first. I think makes it very difficult for five
6 committees to have three meetings on three separate islands.

7 We spent the majority of one of our meetings just
8 discussing this. We actually came up with a Proposal.

9 I'm not sure when the appropriate time is to discuss this.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Sorry for the interruption.
11 The appropriate time is on the agenda under Standing
12 Committee Reports, and whatever your standing committee
13 has to report or present, please share it during that time.

14 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Thank you, Mr. President.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross.
16 I was trying to move on, but you had something?

17 DELEGATE ROSS: I need a Point of Clarification.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

19 DELEGATE ROSS: And Delegate Richardson
20 shared the thought. Can a standing committee conduct a
21 meeting without notifying the other members of the Convention
22 and the public that this meeting is being held?

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No.

24 DELEGATE ROSS: I'm only raising that issue

1 because I think that we are subject to both internal and public
2 criticism if we conduct meetings not in accordance with our
3 established procedure.

4 The public needs to be informed, whether they
5 participate or not; and other delegates need to be informed
6 whether they participate or not that these meetings are being
7 held. Thank you for the clarification.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And thank you, Delegate
9 Ross. I don't know if I was unable to make the point that you
10 just raised clear. That was, the intent and the purpose of
11 having the rule in regard to the Meeting Calendar.

12 The intent and the purpose that I placed it on the
13 Agenda – for the lack of a better term—to re-enforce the
14 necessity to follow that particular process.

15 The direct response to you was no.

16 The next item on the agenda for Reports is Item 3B;
17 the Treasurer's Report.

18 I'm going to yield the floor to the treasurer, Delegate Abramson.

19 At the end of discussion in regards to the monthly
20 expenditures for February and March of 2025, the Reports as
21 distributed, we're going to go into Committee of the Whole and
22 hear from the Legislature, just to ensure clarity with all the
23 delegates on the "services" that they are providing to the
24 Constitutional Convention as the custodian of our funds.

1 Delegate Abramson.

2 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: As of today, we've spent
3 \$11,749.09.

4 As you all know, that is a cost that we incurred already.
5 So we don't have a starting bar of \$100,000.
6 We've already spent, as Delegate Ross said, one-third of money
7 has been spent already. So using round numbers, we have
8 \$90,000 to work with. That will be the budget that I will be
9 submitting to you all on the 15th of the month, and all activities
10 must be done within those budgets.

11 I have received some Payment Forms from some
12 Delegates, and I'd like to speak to all individually after the
13 meeting or when we take a Recess, so you could resubmit
14 your Form. Because as we made a determination, when we
15 have Working Sessions, we decided that will be one flat fee
16 for all Working Sessions. Not \$150 each.
17 It's one flat fee.

18 So if you went to 10 Working Groups, not
19 Committee Meetings and not Sessions, it's one flat fee.
20 That is why I brought the Legislature's Director of Finance
21 into the meeting, so that he could answer any questions.

22 We had some members that had some personal
23 questions they wanted to get answered. And so, I want him
24 to come on now.

1 As we know, the monies we have, and everyone is
2 saying the same thing. It's very limited.

3 We must keep in mind that the majority of money we spent in
4 the last two months has been in travel.

5 So I anticipate if I use a Standard Operating
6 Procedure, I would say \$10,000 of the \$90,000 gone again,
7 because we've spent \$7,000 worth of travel.

8 Do you all have any questions?

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Did you discuss both the
10 February Expenditure Report and the March 25th Report?

11 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Right. I combined them.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

13 Delegate Daniel.

14 DELEGATE DANIEL: Just because we're talking
15 about funds spent, for full transparency.

16 Based on my Attendance Record, which I'm pretty sure are
17 correct; we also owe \$13,950 in Delegate Per Diems at the
18 \$150 rate.

19 So to echo what Delegate Silverman said, I think
20 we need to re-think our compensation structure for ourselves.

21 So we are looking at the \$11,740, plus the
22 \$13,950, which brings us to \$25,690 already out.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

24 Are there any questions in regards to the Report that

1 Delegate Abramson as treasurer was discussing, in accordance
2 to the information in your Working Papers documents?

3 You have the copies of February and March.
4 Any questions specifically to that?

5 Delegate Ross.

6 DELEGATE ROSS: Again, for clarity.

7 Through the Chair, could you define what is a
8 Working Group vs. a Committee Meeting?

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: May I respond?

10 DELEGATE ROSS: Yes, please.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
12 Ross.

13 At the March 1st Session at the Port Authority
14 Conference Room in St. Thomas, you, Delegate Ross raised
15 the concern of whether or not the delegates that participated
16 in the three initial Working Groups that did the initial
17 assessment of the 5th Constitutional Conventional document.

18 Whether or not those delegates that attended those
19 Working Group meetings would be entitled to the Per Diem of
20 \$150 per however many Working Group Meetings they attended.

21 Me, in particular responded to you that given
22 the definition in the law that sets aside Per Diem for meetings,
23 and given the expected amount of money that would be
24 allotted to us, that the Executive Committee will make a

1 decision whether we would in fact allow for the payment of
2 \$150 Per Diem per delegate for every meeting they attended
3 in the Working Groups.

4 The Executive Committee, inclusive of the
5 President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary made a
6 decision that for the Working Groups, that we would make
7 a one-time payment of \$150 to delegates who were on the
8 Working Group and delegates that attended that Working
9 Group Meeting. A one-time payment of \$150.

10 MEMBER R. HODGE: Point of Information.
11 That's per Working Group.

12 If you attended all three, you'll get the \$150 times
13 three. Correct?

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Rudel Hodge.

15 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Just for clarification.
16 That \$150 payment would be per Working Group.
17 Because it was three Working Groups, so if you attended all
18 three meetings, you'll get paid \$150 for each. Correct?

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It's \$150 per delegate
20 per those delegates that were members of the Working Group.
21 If one delegate was on two Working Groups, it would be \$150
22 for that delegate for one Working Group.
23 The second Working Group; \$150.

24 So it will be the payment total of \$300.

1 DELEGATE R. HODGE: But if the delegate
2 participated in all three Working Groups, even if he wasn't
3 a sitting member. Because it was stated that any delegate
4 can participate on those Working Groups.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: We need to go back and
6 research and make sure that was the decision.
7 But no decision in regards to the Working Groups.

8 DELEGATE DANIEL: Point of Information.
9 I have the notes here.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You took the notes
11 from our Executive Committee Meeting, right?

12 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel, could
14 you issue the clarification from what we decided on?

15 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Daniel here.

16 The decision was that it was not named members
17 or groups, but if they participated in the Working Groups,
18 that they would get the \$150 per Working Group.
19 Not per meeting, per Working Group.

20 So the maximum somebody could have gotten
21 was the three times \$150.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's correct.
23 Okay. And thanks for going back to that meeting's records.

24 Delegate Carrington.

1 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Point of Inquiry.

2 Going back to Delegate Daniel's figure of \$13,950
3 that is due and owing in Per Diem.
4 That should be subtracted from the \$90,000 that was stated
5 to be left in the budget?

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, sir.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross, then
8 Delegate Silverman.

9 DELEGATE ROSS: I don't want to prolong this,
10 but will this be sent to us in writing?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, it will.

12 DELEGATE ROSS: Thank you.

13 My follow-up question is – so that it's clear in my
14 mind. If I'm in a Working Group and I attend three meetings
15 of that one Working Group, I'm entitled to \$150.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: One flat payment of
17 \$150.

18 DELEGATE ROSS: Even though I attended more
19 than one meeting of that group. Right?
20 But if I attend Working Group A Meeting and Working Group
21 B Meeting, I'm now entitled to \$300.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That is the interpretation
23 that we have from our notes.

24 DELEGATE ROSS: Okay.

1 Please send that in writing.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That would be issued in
3 writing. It was an issue you had raised, and we tried to the best
4 of our ability to see how we could address it, given the financial
5 constraints.

6 And I did say Delegate Silverman.

7 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

8 I have a question about the roughly \$10,000 budget
9 reported by Treasurer Abramson, not inclusive of the additions
10 that Secretary Daniel spoke about.

11 It appears that almost 50% of that is on account of
12 one charter air flight of about \$5,000.

13 I was wondering if we could have some explanation
14 as to what that \$5,000 expenditure was for.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman, so
16 we could all be on the same page with your inquiry.
17 You're speaking of the February or the March Report?

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: This is in the Calendar
19 Year 2025, month ending February 28th.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's the February
21 Report.

22 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: The February Report.
23 It shows a charge of \$4,930 for a charter flight.

24 My question is if that was for the Inaugural Session,

1 which I'm anticipating it probably was, who would have
2 authorized it? Because we didn't have an Executive Committee
3 at that time.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

5 I will give a response to that.

6 The subject matter, according to the Acts that the
7 Legislature passed established the responsibility and the authority
8 to the Legislature of the Virgin Islands in the preparation and
9 the conduct of not only the Oath of Office, but the first Session
10 of the Constitutional Convention. That's by law.

11 The Legislature – not intended to provide any excuses,
12 but just to be able to draw our memory and reflect that initially,
13 the Oath of Office for the Constitutional Convention was to
14 happen on Monday, January 27th.

15 The Legislature agreed with the Governor's request
16 to move the State of the Territory Address to the 27th, and
17 moved at the last minute, moved the Oath of Office and first
18 Session of the Constitutional Convention to the 28th.

19 In the decision-making, they, the Legislature, given
20 the last-minute arrangements that they were making for the
21 delegates from the St. Croix District, they decided the easiest
22 way for them to ensure the presence of the St. Croix District
23 delegates were to charter a plane.

24 Not only that, because I inquired on this matter,

1 I believe on January 13th while I was over there at the
2 Swearing-In for the senators; I asked them what are they doing?
3 How are we going to travel over there?

4 The initial response was the delegates are going
5 to have to buy their own tickets and get reimbursed.
6 And since I had that knowledge that early, I bought my ticket,
7 and a couple other delegates had bought their tickets; and then
8 they had this charter that they had put in place.
9 But I've been reimbursed for the ticket that I bought, but that
10 was the expense of the charter.

11 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.
12 So they owe us an extra \$5,000.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I won't say that they
14 owe us an extra \$5,000.
15 I would say within the confines of the law, I think it's a subject
16 matter that we ought to broach with them, because if initially,
17 the responsibility by the law, it's their responsibility to have us
18 there, then that should be taken out of the Legislature's budget,
19 in comparison from out of the budget.

20 That wasn't the only expense.
21 I don't know if you missed the other one. But that little brooch
22 you had on your jacket. It's on that Expense Report.

23 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.
24 I appreciate that.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That was how and why
2 it appears on our February 2025 Statement.

3 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I appreciate that.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No problem.

5 Any other questions for Delegate Abramson?
6 Delegate Russell.

7 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Delegate Abramson, how
8 are we reporting our attendance to whatever? Whether it was
9 a Plenary Meeting or a Zoom Meeting with whatever.

10 How are you accounting for attendance?

11 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: I sent all delegates a
12 Payment Form that you are to fill out. I sent three documents.
13 A Payment Form; a Requisition Form to process in the
14 Legislature.

15 Those are the two Forms you need to send to me
16 so I can verify your payment.

17 We're on some kind of Honor System where each
18 delegate accounts for his or her own time, and sends that to
19 me. The President and I will certify that information and send
20 it to the Legislature for payment.

21 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: For the record, I neglected
23 and I went straight to the Treasurer's Report.

24 Madam Secretary; Delegate Daniel.

1 Remind me to go back to this after we've finished those questions.

2 The secretary and I have a major concern with that
3 particular process.

4 There are at least two items for the Executive
5 Committee to review and determine, or two Proposals that
6 requires the attendance in some form or fashion to be, whether
7 electronically or by hard copy to be submitted at the end of each
8 meeting by the Chair of the committee who is the verifier of your
9 participation and attendance, and the submittal made to the
10 secretary and the treasurer, so then they would have an official
11 record.

12 Whether electronic or hard copy that is verified by
13 the Chair of the committee that you were in fact participating,
14 and thereby, it would have that electronic or hard copy
15 document to be reviewed by the treasurer when each delegate
16 makes their submission of all the money or all the meetings
17 that they've been to that totals this amount of money.

18 That's in the papers. For some reason, it wasn't
19 two-sided, but that process would be finalized within the week.

20 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Okay.

21 Thank you for the explanation.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Any other questions
23 on the Report? Any other questions on the February or
24 March 2025 Report?

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1 Are you finished with your Report?

2 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Yes, sir.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And we covered the
4 items in regards to the subject matter, of the availability of
5 the funds from the VI Government.

6 I would like to ask if we could go now into
7 Committee of the Whole, so we could have an opportunity
8 to hear from the Acting Director of the Business & Financial
9 Services of the 36th Legislature, Mr. Benjamin.

10 (WHEREUPON, THE CONVENTION MET IN
11 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.)

12 # # # # # # # # # #

13 (WHEREUPON, THE BODY RESUMED ITS
14 PLENARY SESSION.)

15 The next item we're going to address, and this is
16 before we take a break for lunch. After lunch, we will go into
17 the details of the Standing Committee Reports.

18 We're going to rise from the Committee of the
19 Whole and go back into Session.

20 The next item on the agenda is Item #4, which is
21 also in your Working Papers, which is the amendment to the
22 VI Constitutional Convention, Resolution #002 - Committees
23 Responsibilities.

24 We did on March 1^{dy} Session adopted a motion

1 that was made. Seconded, with no objection to create the
2 Standing Committee on Culture & Heritage.

3 The creation of the committee did not completely
4 define the articles that will fall under the jurisdiction of the
5 Standing Committee on Culture & Heritage.

6 In your Working Papers, you just have a red line
7 copy that shows that from the Standing Committee on Human
8 Rights, Article #3, with the definition of a Virgin Islander will be
9 removed and go to the Standing Committee on Culture & Heritage.
10 Then the red line copy of the bill shows the recommended language
11 to be included and covered by the Standing Committee on
12 Culture & Heritage.

13 Question. Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr.

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Not a question.
15 I'm going to make a motion.

16 A motion to amend Section 1F to include the
17 Preamble under the jurisdiction of the Standing Committee
18 of Culture & Heritage.

19 We had made a mistake and that included the
20 Preamble in the purview of any of the standing committees.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: As a matter of fact,
22 you're a little early. Let us finish this part of what I was
23 speaking of.

24 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Okay.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The language that is in
2 the red line copy of the Resolution was what was put together
3 initially by the proponents.

4 Then, on the next page, there is the amendment
5 itself, as submitted to the Executive Committee.

6 The amendment is to be discussed and voted
7 upon. If someone can move that amendment to the floor and
8 then we will entertain the concern raised by Delegate Rudel
9 Hodge, Jr., in making the amendment. You'll point out what
10 you want to strike from a previous article.

11 In this instance, it's not assigned to any of the
12 committees, with the inclusion of the Preamble under that
13 Committee on Culture & Heritage. That's correct?

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Correct.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman.

16 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: So moved.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: What are you moving?

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: You asked for a motion.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No. I did not.

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I'm sorry.

21 My point was that: Article 2; you have a redundancy
22 in Sections D & F. You've removed part of Article 2 into
23 Culture, but you haven't removed it from Government Structure.
24 There needs to be a technical amendment to correct it.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Just for clarification.

2 I think Delegate Daniel can speak to that.

3 The portion of Article 2, Principles of Government,
4 based on the amendment that is being proposed.

5 The only item that is being removed from the Principles of
6 Government is Section 2.

7 This is why the entire statement of Article 2 is in
8 the prior Standing Committee. And so, Section 2 will be the
9 only item. So there's nothing to remove in the previous
10 committee that listed the Principles of Government, based
11 on the submittal.

12 Delegate Daniel.

13 DELEGATE DANIEL: Delegate Silverman.

14 You are both correct. I did not strike Section 2, I don't think
15 from Government Structure, but I would love a further
16 amendment to this.

17 To strike Article 2, Section 2 from the Government
18 Structure Committee, just for clarification.

19 If that's another amendment, that would be appreciated.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: What I'm going to do,
21 since this is the last item that we're going to address before
22 we break for lunch, can I stand in Recess for five minutes,
23 and provide you all an opportunity just to write it down?

24 Because as stated at the March 1st Session,

1 there were no objections to having this committee.

2 So if we could just utilize this time and write it down, so
3 it will be properly in the record, and we all will know exactly
4 where we stand. We'll stand in Recess.

5 Delegate Daniel, five minutes?

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay.

7 So just to be clear, right now in the Committee
8 on Culture & Heritage, we have acceptance of Article 2,
9 Principles of Government. Just Section 2, Symbols of the
10 Virgin Islands. That's in Culture & Heritage.
11 Which means we need to strike Section 2 from Government
12 Structure. That was what David was mentioning.

13 Rudel also pointed out that nowhere in our
14 Committees do we talk about the Preamble.
15 He is asking we also put the Preamble under Culture &
16 Heritage.

17 Are all the delegates clear on what we're trying
18 to change in this document?

19 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Yes.

20 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay.

21 And are we all good on that, so we could vote on it?

22 (WHEREUPON, THE BODY RECESSED BRIEFLY).

23 We'll rise out of Recess.

24 I suspect I created the little confusion by having

1 the discussion on the red line copy and didn't get the opportunity
2 to go to the next page, which has the actual amendment itself.

3 And so, what they were complaining about in the red line
4 document, it's already interpreted in writing in the amendment.

5 But I'm going to read it for everyone to make sure
6 we're still on the same page.

7 It's proposed by the Standing Executive Committee.
8 The VI Sixth Constitutional Convention, Resolution #002
9 Standing Committees are deleted from the Standing Committee
10 on Government Structure, Article 2, Principles of Government,
11 Section 2. Symbols of the Virgin Islands and deleted from
12 the Standing Committee on Human Rights, Article 3
13 Virgin Islander, and add to the established Standing Committee
14 on Culture & Heritage, in addition to Article 14, which is
15 Culture.

16 The amendment continues.

17 The role and responsibility of the Standing
18 Committee on Culture & Heritage are defined as follows:

19 Standing Committee on Culture & Heritage.
20 This committee shall conduct and review the proposed
21 revisions to the Preamble, Article 2, Principles of Government,
22 Section 2, Symbols of the Virgin Islands.

23 Article 3, Virgin Islander; and Article 14,
24 culture of the proposed Fifth Constitutional Convention

1 document.

2 The proposed revision of this standing committee shall be
3 submitted to the standing Executive Committee for presentation
4 to the full Convention body for consideration and action.

5 Is there a motion to adopt the amendment?

6 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: So moved.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It's been moved by
8 Delegate Carrington.

9 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Second.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Seconded by Delegate
11 Canegata.

12 Are there any objections to the motion?

13 No objections? Hearing none, the motion has been adopted,
14 and this will define the role of the Committee on Culture &
15 Heritage moving forward in regards to the standing committee.

16 At this point, we're going to Recess for one hour.

17 Individuals, upon return from lunch, the items that we're
18 going straight into; we've completed mostly the administrative
19 discussion of the Constitutional Convention in Items 1, 2, 3
20 & 4.

21 Executive Committee's Report; Treasurer's Report;
22 The Expenditures Report; the Financial Processes of the
23 Legislature and the availability of funds from the VI Govern-
24 ment, and the amendment to Resolution #002 – Committees

1 Responsibilities.

2 The items that we're left to address is the
3 Standing Committee Chairs Reports/Next Steps.

4 They are: Education & Public Education;

5 Culture & Heritage;

6 Finance & Public Services;

7 Government Structure; Human Rights

8 Then we go to Any Other Business

9 We stand in Recess from Session for one hour.

10 Thank you.

11 (WHEREUPON, THE CONVENTION RECESSED
12 FOR ONE HOUR).

13 # # # # # # # #

14 (WHEREUPON, THE CONVENTION RECONVENED
15 AT 1:15 p.m.)

16 Good afternoon. We are back out of Recess from
17 Lunch. We're on Item #5; Standing Committee Chairs
18 Reports and Next Steps.

19 The first Standing Committee Report and/or
20 Next Steps we're going to hear from is the Committee on
21 Education & Public Information.

22 The Chair is Delegate Devin Carrington.

23 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Good afternoon,
24 everybody.

1 I am happy to have assumed the chairmanship
2 of this committee. It was originally chaired by Rudel
3 Hodge, Jr., but he gave it to me. He's the Vice-Chair.
4 I assumed the position and actually, this committee has
5 not – I'll refer to the committee as EPI, which is Education
6 & Public Outreach.

7 This committee has not formally met, but the
8 committee actually informally met.

9 The committee members being: Delegate John Canegata;
10 Delegate Lilliana Belardo de O'Neal; Delegate Hodge and
11 Delegate Daniel.

12 The committee members actually met informally
13 on, I believe, two or three occasions.

14 With respect to the mandate of this committee,
15 we've crafted and submitted a Comprehensive Educational
16 Outreach Plan which was circulated among all members.
17 All members should have seen that. That was late in February,
18 I believe. That plan was very comprehensive.

19 I must give some real good credit to Delegate
20 Daniel and Delegate Rudel Hodge, and of course, Delegate
21 Canegata.

22 We came up with the Comprehensive Plan that
23 addressed the mandates of the committee, to include an
24 objective and a vision; key goals; consideration of Educational

1 Outreach Strategies, to include Monthly Newsletters;
2 Digital and Social Media Campaign; a Podcast Series;
3 Town Halls; a website; Constitutional Convention branding;
4 Traditional Media Partnerships with newspapers & radios;
5 Youth engagement and Faith-based and community
6 Organizational partnerships.

7 I urge everybody to read that plan.

8 The plan is really comprehensive. It's important that this
9 Convention engages with the public and educate the public
10 on what a Constitution is; why a Constitution is needed,
11 and the work that we're trying to do to effectuate our mandate
12 pursuant to the law by 8681.

13 I'm awaiting some conversations with the Executive
14 Committee who will vet and approve the committee within the
15 budgetary constraints that we're in. Because as you know,
16 we've only gotten \$100,000. I think that was administrative.

17 In my discussions with the Chair, we're going to
18 try to divide that money in a way that some of it can be used
19 for EPI mandates.

20 The next step for this committee is to have an
21 approved budget, an approved plan, in conjunction with the
22 Executive to finalize the Proposal that we have, then move
23 to deploy it by contracting with individuals that we need to
24 be able to effectuate the plan.

1 My plan is to set a series of meetings of the
2 committee in the next few weeks, so we can have further
3 discussions on the practicality of this Comprehensive Plan,
4 and finalize it and start acting on it.

5 That's my Report as we speak. Any questions?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Chairman
7 and Delegate Carrington.

8 Delegate Watlington.

9 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: I know that you said
10 that your plan had been submitted to the Standing Executive
11 Committee for review and approval.

12 You're suggesting this plan be presented to the
13 full Convention body for consideration and action.
14 Thus, the plan that you envision, from what I'm understanding.
15 Correct me if I'm wrong. Whether it's through the Chair to
16 Delegate Carrington or the President.

17 What type of consideration and action would all
18 the delegates be taking on the plan?

19 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: May I?

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Go ahead, Mr. Chairman.

21 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: The plan is very
22 comprehensive. It has a lot of facets to it.
23 You should have received the plan as well. It was sent to all
24 the delegates. Have you vetted it? I'm not sure.

1 But we're looking for any suggestions; any contributions that
2 the separate delegates may have with respect to what we've
3 proposed.

4 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Through the Chair,
5 may I ask another question?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Watlington,
7 before you go, could I add something to that response?
8 Because you had a second part to your question that he
9 didn't address.

10 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Yeah.
11 He didn't address.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The understanding,
13 based on the Standing Committee Memorandum that was
14 sent out. Your inquiry was whether or not the full Convention
15 body would have an opportunity to consider and have input
16 into the plan. That's correct?

17 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: No.
18 I said based upon the standing rules, it doesn't have to come
19 to the full body. That's what I'm asking.
20 So what consideration and action is expected of the other
21 delegates, other than the Executive Committee?

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
23 I clearly understood your inquiry.

24 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I think I answered

1 your inquiry by saying that we presented it to the full body,
2 so that people could make suggestions on it; can opine on it,
3 and give any input that you wish.

4 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: And vote on it?
5 That's what I'm trying to understand.

6 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: No.
7 Not vote on it.

8 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Okay.
9 Then really, there's nothing to be considered if you don't have
10 a vote or action to be taken.

11 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: No.
12 There's a lot to be considered. If you read the plan, there's
13 a lot to be considered.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Carrington,
15 could you allow Delegate Watlington to finish his question?

16 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: I'm done. I'm done.
17 Thank you.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Carrington.

19 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I'm just saying, it's
20 a very comprehensive plan. It has a lot of facets to it.
21 There's a lot to be considered.

22 The committee would like input from all the
23 members with respect to this plan.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

1 Any other questions for the Chairman and Delegate Carrington?

2 Delegate Ross.

3 DELEGATE ROSS: Thank you, Mr. President.

4 Delegate Carrington, you made reference to a
5 document that was sent on February 6th.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: February 28th.

7 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I didn't mention
8 the date.

9 DELEGATE ROSS: Who sent it out?

10 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I sent it out to all
11 the delegates.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: On the eve of the March
13 1st Session.

14 DELEGATE ROSS: I'm looking at the wrong
15 document.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Your question was answered?

17 DELEGATE ROSS: I'll look for the right document.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Any other questions?
19 Delegate Silverman.

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you for giving me
21 the opportunity.

22 I'm thinking back to our earlier discussion about
23 Fiscal Policy; the fact that we don't actually have policies &
24 procedures in place yet as to how procurement goes about.

1 I understand that Delegate Carrington's committee
2 will have \$50,000, hopefully, to spend on Education & Public
3 Outreach.

4 Some of those actions require a fairly immediate
5 response time. An opportunity arises, you need to spend
6 money. You can't put things out to bid; you can't ask for
7 multiple vendors. You need to have the authority to spend
8 money so it's effective.

9 I'm curious, whether any thought has been given
10 as to what the financial procedures will be, or to give maximum
11 flexibility to this committee to spend the funds that are allocated
12 to it, and not get bogged down in unnecessary paperwork.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: In tune with the inquiry
14 from Delegate Watlington and your question.

15 The bidding process of the Government that you
16 may have been making reference to, it's not applicable to the
17 Constitutional Convention in regards to the decision-making
18 process.

19 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Say that again, so
20 everyone can hear.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It is not applicable to
22 The Constitutional Convention.
23 As is presented under Rule 7 of the duties of the officers, and
24 the role of the Executive Committee, specifically in regards to

1 entering into contracts; authorized payments; cost to be paid;
2 any necessary expenditures.

3 That is an internal decision that is vested in the
4 Executive Committee to address those matters.

5 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.
6 That's very comforting.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
8 Any other questions for Delegate Carrington?

9 Delegate Wells.

10 DELEGATE WELLS: Thank you.

11 Initially, back in January, February, March; I asked
12 to be placed on this committee, and I noticed that I am not on
13 the committee. I heard that committees should have an arbitrary
14 number, but I don't know where that's written. If someone
15 could show that with me. But this is one of the committees
16 I'd like to serve on as a member, and I made that known
17 earlier-o-clock, and I don't know if there was a procedure for
18 requesting this, because no procedures were in place at the
19 time.

20 So I would like to be considered as a member of
21 this committee.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you for your
23 statement.

24 Are there any other questions specifically to the

1 Report that was shared by the Delegate and Chair Carrington?

2 Questions on the Report?

3 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Yes. Question.

4 Is there any time line that you're going to suggest
5 that we get back the feedback? Because the Comprehensive
6 Report was sent out on February 28th, and it is now April
7 12th. Branding & Marketing are an absolute necessity for
8 this Convention's success.

9 It reflects very poorly on the Convention that
10 nothing has happened officially in that regard.

11 So is there any suggested time line that you can present to
12 us today that we can start moving in that direction?

13 My suggestion would be we only have a few more
14 days to review and submit comments. Because clearly,
15 nobody had submitted any comments, to our knowledge.
16 So can we get the ball rolling on this situation? Because it's
17 imperative that we get some type of Marketing & Branding on
18 Social Media pages; websites for this Convention to be a
19 success, because it's actually one of the most important
20 attributes of this Convention.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Delegate Russell, before I share a response.

24 DELEGATE RUSSELL: As the Chair, do you have

1 any allotment for the type of Radio; print or any type of budget
2 that you have sat and suggested to the Convention?

3 Because we were discussing budget this morning.

4 This is an important one. Because a lot of the things that are
5 included in that Report relates to payment.

6 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: If you look on pages
7 11 & 12 of the Comprehensive Educational Outreach Plan that
8 was submitted, there is a budgetary breakdown.

9 DELEGATE RUSSELL: So it's an allocation.
10 So you plan to submit it as part of the budget of your committee?
11 I'm looking at it here right now.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Let me try to make some
13 points clear. Because this impression that it was submitted
14 and shared with everyone needs to be clearly understood.

15 On February 28th, an e-mail was issued by Delegate
16 Carrington to all of the delegates some hours before our
17 March 1st Session in regards to that Proposal that is being
18 referenced.

19 There is also the establishment of the Committee
20 on Education & Public Information, who in the minds of the
21 majority of the Executive should have an opportunity to vet
22 the submitted plan.

23 It is my understanding from the Report of the Chair
24 and Delegate Carrington that that plan is being presented

1 before the committee for consideration, vetting and finalizing,
2 so that it would have gone through a committee process.

3 The subject matter of funding.

4 As we speak today, we have received \$100,000 of Government
5 funds. It behooves us and it is necessary that we make a
6 decision of the percentage of monies that would go towards
7 this particular committee, once that plan has been vetted
8 and submitted to the Executive Committee for its execution,
9 and the percentage of the money that will be set aside for
10 the administration of the Constitutional Convention.

11 So it is in that context.

12 There is no way we can move forward with the impression
13 that the \$100,000 is solely for the administration of the
14 Convention. A portion of that money has to be set aside to
15 begin that process of public education and information.

16 Any other questions on the Report?

17 Hearing none, we're going to move on to the next committee.

18 I'm sorry. Delegate Rudel Hodge.

19 DELEGATE HODGE: I had a whole question
20 that was ignored.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.

22 DELEGATE HODGE: You went to his question.
23 You answered his question and then I --

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No. I didn't mean to

1 ignore your question. What question did I miss?

2 DELEGATE HODGE: A time line.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh. The time line to
4 the Chair.

5 DELEGATE HODGE: Yes.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.
7 Delegate Rudel Hodge was inquiring if you, through the
8 committee has set a time line for completing this, since you
9 already have a working document to review and submit to
10 the Executive Committee?

11 Sorry. That was to him and I probably jumped
12 in, in dealing with Delegate Russell's question.

13 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Delegate Hodge, having
14 sent this proposed plan out late in February; we're now in April,
15 I would have expected some feedback from the delegates.
16 We haven't gotten that yet. The sooner, the better.
17 At the end of the day, I have to sit down with the Executive
18 Committee. They have to vet it, but if we can get some
19 suggestions and input into the plan as soon as possible, that
20 would be helpful.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Just for clarification.
22 You're making the statement that leaves the impression, that
23 in your committee, with your committee members, you all
24 have already went over and reviewed the Strategic Plan you

1 are referring to?

2 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: The whole committee
3 has not met on the Strategic Plan.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: So then, at least, in my
5 mind from the question is when is the committee going to meet,
6 so that the entire committee members can view and have input
7 on that plan before the consideration of the Executive Committee?

8 DELEGATE R. HODGE: That's not necessarily
9 my question.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, no.
11 That is my question, given the process.

12 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: We have not set a date
13 for our first official meeting. That shall be done this week.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

15 Delegate Daniel, you had your hand up?

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, I did.

17 Can I just propose that as a member of this
18 committee, we meet by Wednesday, and have something in
19 to the Executive Committee by Friday?

20 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: We sure can.

21 DELEGATE DANIEL: Great! Thank you so much.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman.

23 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: As I've already said, that
24 the entire Convention will be notified of the timing, so we could

1 participate in the meeting.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you for your
3 interjection, because I was about to say that was one of the
4 issues we discussed earlier this morning. The subject matter
5 of proper Notice and timely Notice to ensure, not only delegates
6 the opportunity to participate, but to ensure Public Notice on
7 this scheduled meeting on this sensitive topic.

8 Sorry, Delegate Watlington.

9 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: No problem.
10 Thank you.

11 I just want to be very clear that this plan will be
12 implemented after a short time for comments, and it would
13 become implementable, once approved by the Executive
14 Committee.

15 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: That's my understanding.

16 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: So the other members
17 who are not members of the committee will have no opportunity
18 to approve the plan? Am I correct, Mr. President?

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Based on our discussion,
20 I would concur that that decision will be made.

21 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: The decision will be
22 made by the Executive Committee?

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The Executive Committee.

24 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: The Executive

1 Committee solely?

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Solely.

3 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Okay.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Particularly, given the
5 section earlier where I spoke on the subject matter of Contract
6 & Services, and the necessity to expedite this particular process
7 on this topic.

8 Delegate Ross.

9 DELEGATE ROSS: First of all, for the record, I
10 can't find that Report you're talking about.
11 If somebody could please send it to me.

12 DELEGATE DANIEL: I'll send it to you now.

13 DELEGATE ROSS: Thank you.

14 I'm reading; the plan should you submitted to
15 the Standing and Executive Committee for review and approval.
16 Said plan shall then be presented to the full Convention body
17 for consideration and action.

18 You said it will be presented to us for action.
19 Is that what it is?

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's the same point
21 that Delegate Watlington was making in regards to that
22 sentence, which applies to all the other committees, but
23 shouldn't in this instance apply to this committee.

24 DELEGATE ROSS: My question was answered.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

2 Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.

3 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Thank you,
4 Mr. President. Mr. President, I'd like to refer to Delegate
5 Daniel recommending that Delegate Carrington's committee
6 meet on Wednesday and Friday.

7 I must remind you all that Friday is Good Friday,
8 and I don't work on Good Friday. So we need to look at the
9 fact that we are dealing with Good Friday, for those of us who
10 are Catholics.

11 So Mr. Carrington, maybe you can take an alternate
12 date.

13 DELEGATE DANIEL: Can I just quickly respond, sir?

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel.

15 DELEGATE DANIEL: Thank you.

16 Rudel and I just observed 30 straight days of
17 Ramadan and did not ask this Convention to move it all for
18 religious reasons. While I am also a Catholic, we have work
19 to be done. I think if anybody is willing to do the work, we
20 shall do the work.

21 Also, just for clarity. I was not suggesting we meet
22 on Friday. I was suggesting we meet before Wednesday, and
23 that we then submit something by Friday.

24 So I was just suggesting one meeting this week, to be before

1 Wednesday, whenever we can coordinate our schedules.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And the concern goes
3 back to the subject matter of the Meeting Calendar.
4 That it is done in a timely manner. So next Wednesday is
5 within that constraint of calendaring and providing the
6 participation of other delegates to give any input.

7 Are we finished with questions for Delegate
8 Carrington?

9 The Committee on Culture & Heritage.
10 The chairperson of the Committee on Culture & Heritage.

11 Alecia Wells, are you prepared to give your Report
12 and Next Steps, whichever one suffices on that definition?

13 Delegate Wells.

14 DELEGATE WELLS: Thank you very much, Mr.
15 President.

16 On April 4th, I was notified that I was named the
17 Chair of this committee. I'm happy for that nomination by
18 this committee.

19 The committee members met informally, so we
20 could get to know each other, and look at what was required
21 of us. Some of the members that met that day had a conflict
22 with the originally scheduled meeting for one of the other
23 Standing Committees.

24 This meeting was only the introductory meeting,

1 and to see if we had the Articles that originally were supposed
2 to be looked at and discussed.

3 Now today, because we had added amendments
4 to our job load, I have scheduled and have planned a calendar,
5 a meeting for the 24th; 5 to 6 at the Cleone Creque Conference
6 Room in St. John.

7 The reason for that is that there will be I.T. people
8 there, and they'll be able to help. Because when the
9 Committee on Government Structure met there last week,
10 it was really hard to hear.

11 So we had to step back and out and the Standing
12 Committee on Culture & Heritage needs to meet, to include
13 today's motion and acceptance that was passed, so that we
14 could go forward with our Public Hearing on the 24th.

15 I know that next week is a short week, but I'll
16 contact the committee members individually, and see what
17 date would be good for us to meet. The week of the 13th,
18 and then we'll get ready for our meeting on the 24th.

19 We will send that information on to the Executive
20 Committee to be brought forward with any need for a motion,
21 or any other matters which will be taken care of prior to our
22 meeting.

23 The members of that committee are Lydia Hendricks,
24 Vice-Chair; Devin Cararington, member; Ronald E. Russell,

1 member and Akima Richardson.

2 I'd like to thank the ones who showed up last week,
3 who had gotten the Notice, and because of the power outages
4 wasn't viewed. But taking part and being involved in this
5 important Standing Committee.

6 Thank you, Mr. President.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Wells.
8 Just for clarification.

9 You submitted a request to put on the calendar,
10 a scheduled meeting for April 24th for one hour.
11 From 5 to 6 p.m.? Then you said at the Legislative Annex, and
12 then you also said this is virtual.

13 Could you just clarify exactly what this submittal
14 means?

15 DELEGATE WELLS: This submittal was requested
16 to be virtual because it was going to be in St. John, and because
17 the acoustics were not good, and we would have I.T. people
18 available between those hours.

19 The persons in St. John who would like to attend
20 and some persons who would like to attend virtually.
21 I thought we should have given them the opportunity to do so.
22 So I was hoping that people from St. John would go down to
23 Cruz Bay, and the other persons would join by Zoom in that
24 meeting.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And this is for an hour?

2 DELEGATE WELLS: Yes.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Any other questions?

4 DELEGATE WELLS: Mr. President, now all of
5 this might have to change, because of what was done today
6 regarding the Culture & Heritage Committee.

7 The added instructions that were given and passed.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

9 Any other questions? Go ahead, Delegate Hendricks.

10 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: I'm confused.

11 What does one have to do with the other?

12 If we are meeting virtually on the 24th, what does one have to
13 do with the other?

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can I clarify for you?

15 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Let me just get your
17 question on the record, because I was a little lost myself.

18 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Ms. Wells said the
19 meeting should be on April 24th via Zoom, and now she is
20 saying it might have to change because the Human Rights
21 Committee had some other plans; but that doesn't have
22 anything to do with us.

23 DELEGATE WELLS: No. I didn't say that.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: She didn't say that.

1 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: So why are you saying
2 that we might have to change?

3 DELEGATE WELLS: Because of the other
4 assignments given by the crafting of that motion, and I didn't
5 have that on April 4th when I made arrangements for the
6 24th.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Hendricks,
8 you're finished?

9 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Rudel Hodge,
11 Jr.

12 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Just to clarify.

13 It seems what Ms. Wells is stating is that April 24th
14 Meeting would be from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., which would allow
15 the I.T. person who's on staff for the Legislative Annex to be
16 able, because there were a lot of audio issues the last time
17 we had a meeting on St. John.

18 So it is a meeting that you can attend virtually,
19 but it is a physical place that the meeting is happening.
20 Just like this is a physical place that we're having the meeting,
21 but there's a virtual attendance option.

22 She's also stating that because there was an
23 additional requirement of a Preamble to be reviewed for this
24 Culture & Heritage Committee, that the timing might need

1 to be changed, because it's additional work.

2 So that's basically what she was saying in her Report to us.

3 Understood?

4 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm glad you shared that,
6 because I'm still unclear, and that's what I'm trying to get the
7 Chair, Delegate Wells to bring some clarity to.

8 I think you have made some clarity on the subject
9 matter of virtual and the use of the Legislative Annex on
10 St. John from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

11 I'm just going to paraphrase, to make sure that
12 I understand correctly.

13 You're saying the committee is going to be in the
14 Legislative Annex, and that the committee members, whether
15 they're from St. Croix or St. Thomas are going to be expected
16 to travel and to be present at their committee meeting that
17 evening, and to overnight on St. John.

18 That needs to be made clear, and then I understand
19 the issue of wanting to involve residents on the island of
20 St. John, where supposedly in the Annex, that the technology
21 and the technical person would be available to ensure
22 appropriate audio and visual via some virtual meeting.
23 But it's not clear exactly how it will be implemented.

24 Madam Chair, I wanted to yield to you, so you

1 could at least bring some clarity to exactly this Plan of Action
2 for this meeting.

3 DELEGATE WELLS: Thank you, Mr. President.

4 The residents of St. John will be in the Cleone
5 Creque Annex, or on the Zoom link or on the Teams link.
6 Whichever one. That is not ironed out yet with the I.T.
7 person.

8 The persons who want to travel from St. Thomas
9 may do so on the Ferry. Ferries run until 11 o'clock.
10 So there's no overnighting.

11 The persons from St. Croix can get on the meeting
12 virtually. So there's no overnight necessary, unless people
13 just want to spend a night on St. John. We'd love having
14 them, because it makes money for us, if they could find a room.

15 So there's no overnighting.
16 They're either going to be in the Cleone Creque Annex, or you'll
17 be on Zoom or MS Teams.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
19 And this is all supposed to happen in an hour?

20 DELEGATE WELLS: Yes.
21 Initially, I planned it that way, wanting to go back to the I.T.
22 person, and to the person at the Cleone Creque Annex, to
23 see if I can be able to start earlier. From what I had on the
24 4th, it didn't seem like what we were expected it to do would

1 take longer than an hour, with testimony and whatever
2 coming from the persons.

3 But now, since we've had the motions that were
4 passed today, I would imagine it would take longer than an
5 hour.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, delegate and
7 Chair Wells.

8 There's a question from Delegate Richardson.

9 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: My question for
10 Delegate Wells was regarding the St. Croix participants.
11 Will they be able to go back to St. Croix the same day?
12 Because I'm not sure if there are any night-time flights
13 available, once they catch the 6:30 boat to St. Thomas.

14 DELEGATE WELLS: Mr. President, may I
15 respond?

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, Delegate Wells.

17 DELEGATE WELLS: I imagine that the delegates
18 from St. Croix will probably be on virtually.
19 I would have to check now. This whole community focus needs
20 to be revamped, because of what happened today with that
21 motion.

22 In the Hearing that was initially scheduled for the
23 24th, between 5 and 6 will have to be re-looked and re-evaluated
24 because of the amount of work that we're now expected to do,

1 and what we should do as a committee.

2 I'm going to get back to the I.T. people, come May.
3 I thought the Ferries ran until 11 at night, unless something
4 has changed.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
6 Any other questions for the Chair, Delegate Wells of the
7 Committee on Culture & Heritage?

8 We're going to move on to the Committee on
9 Finance & Public Services.
10 The Chair is Delegate John Canegata.

11 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Mr. President, thank you.
12 I'll give the initial Report, but I'd like to give my
13 Vice-Chairman the opportunity to speak afterwards to fill in,
14 if we missed anything.

15 We've been meeting for about two weeks.
16 We had three meetings. Two of them would constitute what
17 an actual committee meeting would be.

18 Our first meeting just consisted of myself and
19 my Co-Chair.

20 We did a lot of housekeeping issues in our
21 Committee Meetings, and to me, I think it was very beneficial.
22 I actually made the request where we wouldn't have any other
23 delegates or public input. I said I know it wasn't going to be
24 sexy. It was really getting down to the meat of the matter,

1 where we actually needed to be.

2 We first discussed the Preamble.

3 We identified in the Preamble. It was not assigned to any of the
4 committees. Stedman Hodge recommended that the Preamble
5 be assigned to Finance & Public Services.

6 Delegate Rudel Hodge made a Proposal and we had
7 no objections to passing it on. So let's state that right now.
8 But we're glad to see that the Preamble is going to be assigned
9 somewhere, and we'll definitely give our own input.

10 I'm going to combine what we did; a summary of
11 what we did in our three meetings.

12 We discussed the Bill of Rights also.
13 Even though The Bill of Rights is assigned to another committee,
14 we thought it was important for us to actually stay very abreast
15 on The Bill of Rights. A lot of us are going to have some input
16 on that. We had some discussions; we shared some ideas, and
17 we're going to continue with that.

18 We did a very brief review of the three articles that's
19 assigned to the Finance & Public Services Committee.
20 Just kind of a review to look over it.

21 We know probably one of the most controversial
22 items were in one of those sections which we highlighted, and
23 we're going to address that. But we made no actions or any
24 thought or anything really in-depth in regards to those three

1 articles, but we're going to get to that.

2 What we found most important was basically
3 how we're going to move forward. Initially, we spoke about
4 the meetings. I applaud Chairman Ross for getting his three
5 meetings on the calendar, getting approved by the Executive
6 Committee, and executing those meetings.

7 I think I made a suggestion.

8 In my analytical mind, I wanted to know how five committees
9 are going to meet on three separate islands and getting this
10 on the calendar altogether. David Silverman, and obviously,
11 my Co-Chair and Delegate Carrington.

12 We really started to think about how we were going to move
13 forward with this.

14 I think we found an opportunity. At least, for our
15 committee to make some significant savings, or to save this
16 whole delegation. We're proposing obviously, the first Saturday
17 of the month is assigned for the Plenary Sessions.

18 We were suggesting that the 4th Saturday of the
19 month be assigned as an Information Session which is fully
20 opened to the public. We'll give all committees an opportunity
21 to present what we've been doing and get suggestions also
22 from the public. That would be the 4th.

23 Our Committee Meetings which would be somewhat
24 (this is subject to change) closed to the public. But I think we

1 could find a platform where they can view, but not contribute
2 to give the delegates and the members of the committee the
3 opportunity to really work without any disturbances or any
4 heckling from the bleachers.

5 So even though we have nothing formal to present
6 today, we can work on something formal to present.

7 But instead of our committee traveling to three islands every
8 month, all committee would travel just once on that final
9 4th Saturday, and we would be meeting virtually; in addition,
10 saving.

11 We plan back-to-back meetings initially.
12 We had a Tuesday and a Wednesday meeting.

13 We spent two hours at each meeting, but from
14 my frugal point of view, I'm constituting that as one meeting.
15 So even though we meet two times in a week; moving forward,
16 we're going to meet on a Tuesday and a Thursday, to give us
17 a little break in between there.

18 Those two separate meetings are going to constitute
19 one meeting. We'll probably do that anywhere from two to
20 three times per month.

21 So those are the items we discussed.
22 We actually discussed the pay. I think some of us talked about
23 this. I wasn't even aware initially when I got elected that I was
24 going to be receiving a stipend.

1 I'm ecstatic at this point, because it is a sacrifice.

2 Every time I spend 16-hour days with my job and then on
3 the Constitution, it is time away from my family.

4 It is time away from the things I would like to do, but I told
5 my delegates that this is so important.

6 I remember when my parents were dying, I put
7 my life and my other family members aside to take care of
8 my parents.

9 To me, the Constitution is just as important to me in that
10 sense. I told them, I plan to put my life on the side, until
11 we can successfully submit a Constitution and passed by
12 the people of the Virgin Islands. That's what I'm going to
13 do.

14 When we talked about limited budgets and
15 potentially taking less than \$150.

16 I can honestly say, even though I didn't expect to get paid,
17 I know my worth on this delegation.

18 I know the worth of every delegate on this delegation, and I
19 think I would be insulted that somebody who is assigned to
20 the Board of Directors for WICO receives \$1500 per meeting,
21 and we would take \$150, and consider taking a pay reduction.

22 I wish they had never said I would take a penny,
23 and I would be happy with that.

24 But now that they've said: Hey. We will give you a small

1 token and Barbecue chicken & rice and the other goodies
2 that we eat, I would have been happy with that.
3 But I would never under-sell myself by taking a pay cut of
4 any significant or insignificant amount for any position that
5 I take. Either don't pay me or pay me what the law constitutes
6 be paid. That is what we discussed in our meetings,
7 Mr. President.

8 If my Vice-Chair would like to have some input,
9 thank you for the time and opportunity.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Chair and
11 Delegate Canegata.

12 Vice-Chair; Delegate Richardson, do you wish to
13 add anything additional?

14 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: I have nothing to add
15 at this time, but I thank you for the floor, Chairman Canegata.

16 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Thank you, Vice-Chair.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
18 Delegate Daniel; Secretary.

19 DELEGATE DANIEL: I just have a couple of
20 questions, if we've gotten to that portion.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Let me make sure.
22 Delegate Canegata, have you completed your presentation?

23 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Yes, I have, Mr. President.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel.

1 DELEGATE DANIEL: Two clarifying questions for
2 you, Chair Canegata.

3 The first is: Did you send out Notice to the full
4 Convention about the Finance Meetings that you held over
5 the last two weeks?

6 DELEGATE CANEGATA: We did not send it out.
7 We copied the President and unfortunately, I left off Delegate
8 Turo Watlington, because I was working with old information,
9 where Delegate Silverman was on there. So I apologized to
10 him. I actually briefly brought him up to speed, but our
11 meeting started on the 29th, to have the full delegation be
12 informed of when our meetings are going to be held.

13 It's an agenda. They will be informed.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Before you go, for the
15 record. I think the Chair didn't tell you that his e-mail was
16 sent, but never left his inbox the second time.

17 DELEGATE CANEGATA: The second time. Yes.

18 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay.

19 You also sent it to Delegate Carrington who's not
20 on the committee. Is that correct?

21 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: May I interject?

22 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Yes.

23 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: So the night of our
24 meeting, I recall a St. Thomas/St. John District Meeting that

1 I did not attend, due to our Finance & Public Services
2 Meeting. So in light of me attending that meeting, it was
3 Delegate Carrington and Delegate Wells present who were not
4 aware of the meeting, which I shared the link to them.

5 DELEGATE DANIEL: Absolutely fine.

6 Really, the point that I'm getting at is that if it
7 wasn't shared with the full delegation, with all delegates
8 being able to join the meeting if they wanted, it's not an
9 actual Committee Meeting. So I commend you all for
10 getting structured, getting organized; but we were correct
11 earlier in saying that there have been no official committee
12 meetings from Finance & Public Services because it wasn't
13 following the procedure of letting the delegates know, so that
14 we could participate.

15 DELEGATE CANEGATA: True.

16 Point of Information.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel, were
18 you finished with your comment?

19 DELEGATE DANIEL: With that point.

20 I do have a second question. But yes, feel free.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Allow Delegate Daniel
22 to exhaust her questions. If need be, Mr. Chair, Delegate
23 Canegata, keep a quick note with your pen and paper, in case
24 you think you might miss in your response.

1 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Yes.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Go ahead, Delegate
3 Daniel.

4 DELEGATE DANIEL: I have a series of questions,
5 so I can be clear.

6 This 4th Saturday that you're proposing in-person
7 Informational Sessions. Is that just for the Finance Committee
8 or for the entire –

9 DELEGATE CANEGATA: It's a session.
10 All the committees.

11 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay.
12 Because I was at the Finance meeting where we talked about
13 this, and I do think it's a good idea. I do actually fully support
14 it. My only question is why is this being proposed by the
15 Finance & Public Services Committee and not the Education
16 & Public Information Committee if this is an outreach endeavor?

17 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Like I said, we had
18 Delegate Carrington on there and that was actually his
19 suggestion. But it was actually proposed during our
20 Committee Meeting. So we're just proposing it as a team.
21 So it doesn't really matter what committee it comes out of,
22 it's just a Proposal to run an efficient delegation to allow us
23 to even meet. Because at this point, Delegate Ross is the
24 only calendar dates that we've seen so far.

1 DELEGATE DANIEL: So you two are okay with
2 it coming out of the Education Committee then as an
3 educational information endeavor as far as execution and
4 operation goes?

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Are you finished?

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, I am.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Carrington,
8 would you want to respond to Delegate Daniel?

9 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Just briefly.
10 May I?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Please.

12 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Prior to this meeting,
13 Delegate Canegata and I conversed. Because the idea was
14 brought up in his committee meeting, I deferred to him to
15 present it to the full body.

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: Got it. Thank you.

17 DELEGATE CANEGATA: May I?

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I didn't forget about you.
19 I recall that I did ask you to make a note, so that you could give
20 your thorough response.

21 Delegate Canegata.

22 DELEGATE CANEGATA: I admit, initially when
23 we started, we started off a little rocky, and we weren't fully
24 aware of the rules. I thank President Richards for correcting

1 myself and my Vice-Chair in the procedures moving forward,
2 and I think it's a learning experience for all of us.

3 But having said that, we did send out the rules.
4 We were waiting for approval also from the Executive Committee,
5 and I don't think we actually saw the approval, but our meetings
6 went forward, and I think we were able to accomplish the work
7 that we needed to accomplish.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.
9 Delegate Richardson, do you want to say something?

10 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Thank you.
11 Point of Information.

12 Regarding the inquiry made by Delegate Daniel
13 for the inclusion of all members in attendance.

14 I did in fact advocate for all member-inclusion.
15 However, sometimes different opinions may come to play,
16 whereas, as Delegate Canegata mentioned, this is the process
17 where we're just fine-tuning things.

18 So as my Chair, I owe him that respect to respect
19 his decision.

20 DELEGATE DANIEL: May I, sir?

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel.

22 DELEGATE DANIEL: I just want to make it very
23 clear. That every single delegate has the right and opportunity
24 to participate in any committee meeting.

1 I don't care what anyone's opinions are.

2 We've gone through this so many times. We may not have
3 a voting chair or seats in these committee meetings, but we
4 have the right to come and participate.

5 So I shouldn't have to be texting my friends on the side for a
6 secret Zoom link about a meeting that I just found out about.

7 So I'm just hoping, moving forward, we can make
8 sure that all Convention Delegates have invites to all meetings.

9 There was a second thing you said, John Canegata.
10 All of our committee meetings must be accessible to the public.
11 It is well within your purview to not allow public comment,
12 like you're saying. But to say that you're going to have closed
13 Committee Meetings, I think it's highly inappropriate.
14 I just wanted to get that on the record as well.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: If I may ask that we
16 put a pin on the back & forth of clarification in regard to this
17 committee process.

18 It is my hope, although it would be reiterated prior
19 to the adjournment of this meeting, that Committee Chairs
20 understand the importance of abiding by the rule, particularly
21 with the meetings and calendars.

22 Yes, I received an e-mail from both of you, three
23 days before the meeting was scheduled to happen.
24 I'm trying to find a nice word, but I was a little perturbed,

1 particularly, since the Memorandum issuing and appointing
2 the committee, its members and establishing its roles, duties
3 and responsibilities at the very last paragraph in bold, black.
4 It's directing the Committee Chairs to make sure that the
5 Calendar – I mean, Delegate Ross is Chair of the Committee
6 Government Structure.

7 He didn't just jump out the air and send something
8 to me and say this is for the Executive Committee; the
9 Government Structure would like to meet at this time and this
10 day. It was requested that it be done by the Memorandum.

11 Dumb, stupid me even went ahead and sent my
12 unorthodox and nicely designed copy of a calendar.
13 A calendar for the month of April and a calendar for the month
14 of May, so you could have simply put something in the calendar,
15 so when you send it back to the Executive Committee, we could
16 review it, and then probably put it together in some nice
17 boutique and presentable manner. But I think that's the
18 point that Delegate Daniel was getting to; that's the point
19 that we had on the agenda that we discussed this morning.

20 It is surely a point that will be driven home,
21 prior to the adjournment of today's meeting.
22 The expected role, responsibility; the functions and duties
23 to not only your fellow delegates, but the mandate of being
24 able to keep the public and community abreast.

1 Delegate Silverman, you're not getting ready to
2 try to put a nail in this topic that I just tried to close, or you're
3 moving on to another topic?

4 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: No.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I understand the bill.
6 I did begin by saying I'm putting a pin on the discussion in
7 regards to --

8 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: No. It has nothing
9 to do with that.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: All right. Go ahead.

11 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I wanted to both
12 commend Delegates Carrington and Canegata for suggesting
13 that we need for the entire Convention to have open meetings,
14 in each of the islands and invite the maximum level of public
15 participation.

16 Because we're now five months past our election;
17 we're close to three months past our Inauguration (or whatever
18 we called it) and I am not getting fewer questions from the
19 public. I am getting more and more questions from the public
20 as to what are we doing; and when are we going to give them
21 a chance to talk, and why aren't we listening?

22 I think this is a serious problem for the entire
23 Convention, not for Mr. Canegata or Attorney Carrington's
24 committee, but for all of us. The logistical problem that

1 Delegate Canegata identified, that we can't have five committees
2 on three islands, all having separate meetings.

3 We tried that in Delegate Ross' committee and it
4 was relatively successful. But what we found is that although
5 the Committee on Government Structure, the members of the
6 community who came to provide input were talking about
7 taxation. They were talking about Human Rights, and they
8 were talking about Government Structure.

9 There were confining their comments to the
10 jurisdiction of our committee. And so, we ended up having
11 to say: Well, that's not our business. That's kind of a foolish
12 thing to say.

13 So I strongly endorse the idea that sooner, rather
14 than later, we identify dates when the entire Convention can
15 set a day or whatever it takes to solicit the maximum
16 amount of public input with an opportunity to feedback
17 questions to the public, under your guidance and really
18 engage the public. That's all I want to say.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It has been a whole
20 mouthful, but thank you.

21 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: See, I didn't want to
22 criticize the closed dates during committees.
23 I wanted to speak for openness.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I don't think we went

1 more than just peruse that concern. I think there was a lot
2 of discussion on it. And so, you've done well in re-enforcing
3 what has already been clearly stated. So I think we can work
4 from there.

5 Were there other questions to Delegate and Chair
6 Canegata in regards to Finance & Public Services?
7 If there are none, I'm going to move to the Chair of the
8 Committee on Government Structure, who is Delegate
9 Rupert Ross, Jr.

10 DELEGATE ROSS: Thank you, Mr. President.

11 Before I begin my Report, let me just politely
12 correct my colleague, Delegate Silverman.
13 I don't recall ever saying it was not our business.
14 I don't want the record to reflect that.

15 I was the Chair of the committee, and if it were
16 said, I'm responsible for it. So I'm just simply correcting the
17 record. I think it was basically said that the other Standing
18 Committees would be coming forward, and that the committee
19 members should be prepared to address the issue before them.

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I'm sure you're correct.

21 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: That's what I
22 heard.

23 DELEGATE ROSS: That's what you heard?
24 Am I correct? Not that it was not our business.

1 I may have said that in a different way.

2 Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity.

3 The Committee on Government Structure, as has been referred
4 to, submitted a Report to the Executive Committee, through
5 you requesting that we be allowed to have meetings on
6 March 27th; April 5th and April 26th.

7 The 27th in St. Croix; the 5th in St. John, and the
8 26th in St. Thomas.

9 Once that was approved, reviewed to make sure
10 it was not in conflict with any other committee meeting, and
11 it was approved, we proceeded to conduct those meetings.

12 The meetings were healthy and provided an
13 opportunity for members who attended to interact with the
14 committee members.

15 For those of you who were unable to participate
16 in the meeting, the agenda basically was structured with myself
17 as Chair. I gave Opening Remarks; identifying the purpose of
18 the meeting, which was to address the articles of the Fifth
19 Constitutional Convention that was assigned to us; and also,
20 to talk about the protocol of the meeting.

21 We did something that I would like to share with
22 the other Standing Committees when they interact with the
23 public. Is that, we introduce ourselves to the public.

24 Most of us make the assumption that everyone

1 in the room knows everyone, and most people, while they may
2 know some of the delegates, they did not know all of the
3 delegates. And so, by giving a two-minute presentation about
4 who we are; why we're in this process, and what we have
5 done to solve this community, gave them an opportunity to
6 have an understanding of the nature of the Convention.

7 We're not all the same people with the same
8 experience; with the same motivation; with the same opinion,
9 et cetera. We're just a diverse people of the community out
10 there that we're seeking to serve.

11 I think, if I may say, that went very well.
12 After that presentation, then the public was asked to give us
13 their input on the articles that were before us, or as aptly
14 said by Delegate Silverman, any topic that they think that
15 the Constitutional Convention should address.

16 After that, we had some Closing Remarks.
17 Talking about follow-up meetings. We shared with them
18 that the name and the leadership of the other Convention
19 members and other Standing Committees, and that they
20 should look out for the schedule of those meetings, so that
21 they can contribute and participate.

22 In the St. Croix meeting, which was held on a
23 Thursday, it was a challenge basically, an understanding of
24 those of us who planned these dates. It's going to be a

1 challenge for the community to fully respond if it were held
2 on a Saturday, or at another location.

3 The committee in its wisdom decided to have a
4 discussion on Article 2 of the Fifth Constitutional Convention,
5 part of which we lost.

6 The reaction from those who were present were
7 very favorable. The members of the Constitutional Convention
8 who were present basically discussed the five sections of
9 Article 2. We gave them an opportunity to see that we didn't
10 all agree on all aspects of Article 2.

11 For example, some of us talked about where the
12 Capitol should be. Others talked about leaving the Capitol
13 where it is. So even the public in our presence were able to
14 see that we didn't all come to the table with the same idea,
15 with the same Session.

16 What we did share with them is that we were
17 committed to work together to write a Constitution that will
18 be a benefit to the people of the Virgin Islands.

19 I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Delegate
20 Silverman; Delegate Daniel; Delegate Richards; Delegate O'Neal;
21 Delegate Russell for participating in that first meeting in
22 St. Croix in-person.

23 I'd also like to thank Delegates Wells, Carrington
24 and Hodge for participating in the Convention deliberations

1 virtually. Delegates Wells, Carrington and Hodge participated
2 not only in the committee meeting on the 27th, but also the
3 meeting on St. John on the 5th.

4 I'd like to pause at this junction and apologize to
5 them for the meeting on the 5th.

6 On the meeting of the 27th, I reached out to you
7 to ask questions of the presentations. In the heat of trying
8 to catch a Ferry back to St. Croix, when I went to St. John
9 on the 5th, I neglected to reach out to you to ask if you had
10 any questions for the presenters in St. John.

11 For that I apologize, because whether you were in
12 the meeting in-person, from where I sit or virtually, you should
13 be permitted to participate in the meeting as any other person.
14 So I apologize, in trying to get back to St. Croix to deal with that.

15 Let me just share with the delegates present and
16 those who are listening.

17 In St. Croix, there were presentations concerning the
18 concept of Open Primary. Basically, people should not be allowed
19 to vote in the Primary strictly along party lines.

20 A voter, once registered, could decide to vote for whom he wants
21 to, regardless of whether –

22 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: I missed the last portion
23 of what you were saying.

24 DELEGATE ROSS: One of the presentations that

1 was said is that we should have Open Primaries, for lack of a
2 better term. That people shouldn't be confined to vote along
3 party lines. Democrats only vote for Democrats.
4 Republicans only vote for Republicans.

5 As occurred in other parts of the nation and other
6 Constitutions, they're allowed to vote for who they want to vote
7 for, regardless of which party they belong to.
8 That was an interesting concept.

9 We also had a testifier who testified virtually, by
10 the way; both virtually in St. Croix and also in St. John.
11 They made some recommendations that we take a look at
12 other Constitutions. The Constitutions of Maine and Alaska
13 and the District of Columbia that talks about taking the party
14 out of the Primary process.

15 In St. John, we had 12 presenters.
16 They presented topics, such as the first-class citizenship vs.
17 second-class citizenship.

18 They talked about Local Government; Municipal
19 Government. They talked about our Constitution should be
20 made clear that slavery should not exist at all, not even in our
21 prisons.

22 They talked about ancestral Virgin Islanders, and
23 its definition, and it should be dealt with in such a way that
24 it does not create a conflict in the society, but just basically

1 a recognition of the people who have been residents of this
2 territory for the past 200 years plus.

3 They talked about St. John's economic contribution
4 to the territory, which was news to me, which I found very
5 enlightening.

6 They talked about the Government's restrictions
7 that were being imposed on our people.

8 They talked about the process that we're in should
9 reflect the will of the people. They're very strong on that.
10 They don't want us to sit in a room and write a document and
11 just bring it out to them and tell them: Love it or leave it.

12 They basically want us to be cognizant, if at the
13 end of the day we are going to be successful in getting them
14 to agree with whatever we come up with, we should reach out
15 to get their input into the process.

16 I think they called it our work should basically reflect the will
17 of the people.

18 The question as to whether or not why are you
19 writing a Constitution before you deal with the issue of Status.
20 All of that was shared with us.

21 They talked about the role of the Media.
22 We basically had to share with them that --- I just paused to
23 say, particularly through the contribution of our secretary,
24 Delegate Imani. The Media had been fully informed of all our

1 meetings. For the first time, we had an in-person presenter
2 in St. John who participated in the meeting.

3 Some of you may have seen the article written in
4 The Source concerning that meeting.

5 I was also approached by a radio personality who
6 asked for me to give a synopsis of the meeting.

7 They talked about Local Government; the issue of
8 protecting our environment. They want the Constitution to
9 address all these things.

10 They want the younger generation to be given the
11 opportunity to figure out what our structure should be.

12 One of them thinks that our Tax structure was
13 poor; that we're not paying enough Taxes, and so forth and
14 so on.

15 I just went through all of that to share with you
16 that when we interact with the community, even though we
17 have our own personal ideas as to what the outcome should
18 be, we get some very interesting comments from them that
19 would help us understand basically where they're coming from.

20 A more interesting thing, for those of you who
21 served in the Legislature, there was a comment made about
22 the fact that the public is basically unaware of what the
23 Legislature is going to act on before they act on it.
24 The Constitution should protect the public's right to know

1 what the Legislature is dealing with before the Legislature
2 actually acts on it.

3 Our next meeting, as I indicated, would be
4 rescheduled. Thanks to the approval of the Executive
5 Committee. It's scheduled for St. Thomas on April 26th
6 at UVI.

7 Just like we did in the past, all the members of
8 the Constitutional Convention will be so informed.

9 I'd like to take this opportunity before closing to
10 thank the Vice-Chair, Delegate Daniel for facilitating our
11 public access virtually, like she's doing today, to our meetings,
12 and basically, for sharing with the members of not only the
13 committee, but the Convention Delegates in particular what
14 are the plans of the Committee on Government Structure.

15 I'd also like to thank President Richards, because
16 he also took the opportunity to share with the people present
17 why we're having a Constitutional Convention; from the
18 passage of the law; the scope within we're supposed to work;
19 review; revising; editing the Fifth Constitutional Convention
20 document; dealing with the Revised Organic Act, as amended,
21 et cetera, et cetera. He sort of set the platform for how we
22 must react to the public comments.

23 That basically reflects the contribution of Delegate
24 Russell who at one point had to broaden the understanding of

1 a presentation, by explaining to them the limitations of the law
2 as we exist as a territory under the US flag.
3 Basically, we've been charged with doing something that we're
4 not just free to do. Excuse the language; what the hell we
5 want to do, not only by our local legislation, but by Federal Law.

6 Mr. Chair, that concludes my Summary Report.
7 I apologize for not having it in writing. I was struck by Viya's
8 lack of Internet Service for five days, and unable to reduce
9 this in writing for the delegates.
10 Thank you very much. I'd be able to answer any questions
11 anyone may have.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
13 Ross, the Chair of the Committee on Government Structure.
14 We are fortunate, at least, to have in our presence a stenographer,
15 Ms. Andrews. So at least, we would have a verbatim document
16 That covers all of the proceedings that began this morning.

17 Is there a question for the Chair of the Committee
18 on Government Structure?

19 Delegate Watlington.

20 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Good afternoon.

21 This question, I believe it goes to the Chair, and
22 for the benefit of all the delegates.

23 In the last three Committee Reports, there were
24 in fact statements of the Committee on Culture & Heritage;

1 the Committee on Public Finance & Public Service, and the
2 Standing Committee on Government Operations.

3 In each of the statements on the agenda, the
4 last sentence therein, there's a statement: The proposed
5 revision of each of the Standing Committees shall be
6 submitted to this Standing Executive Committee for
7 presentation of the full Convention Body for consideration
8 and action.

9 I assumed that means that the entire body will
10 be voting today to approve these revisions, specifically the
11 revisions which apply to my role on this committee, which
12 has been revised very recently.

13 Is that supposed to be acted upon, or are we
14 supposed to assume that these revisions have already been
15 submitted since it appears on the agenda through the
16 Standing Executive Committee for action today?

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The information on the
18 Working Papers?

19 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: From the agenda.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's the Working Papers.
21 The Session Papers.

22 Yes.

23 That is what was adopted from the Memorandum #002, as
24 amended where they approved the changes in the

1 committee membership; and so, that is a reflection of the
2 adopted language, if I understood the question correctly.

3 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: It says:
4 For presentation to the full Convention body for its
5 consideration and action.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And that's the second
7 part I did not respond to.

8 Mr. Chair, I'll respond, because it applies to all
9 of the other committees.

10 The discussion of revisions to the Fifth Constitutional
11 Convention that happened under the umbrella and perimeter
12 of each one of the Standing Committees.

13 Once the Standing Committees have come to some
14 agreement on what needs to be revised or modified under the
15 Articles that they are reviewing, those proposed revisions and
16 modifications are submitted to the Executive Committee for
17 the sole purpose of the orderly presentation for the full body's
18 consideration in regards to the proposed language from each
19 of the committees.

20 I hope that I've answered your question.

21 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: No.
22 You have not answered my question, if that's what you're asking.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.
24 Could you repeat your question?

1 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: I have been now placed
2 on two committees within the last couple weeks.

3 That's a revision to the committee.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's correct.

5 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: It says here:

6 The proposed revision of this Standing Committee
7 shall be submitted to the Standing Executive Committee for
8 presentation to the full Convention for consideration and
9 action.

10 My question: Are we saying that these are
11 revisions of the committees?

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Committee members.

13 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Committees.
14 Whether you call them committee members or committees
15 are now being put for the full body to vote on?

16 Because again, I don't know how or who asked
17 or when. I know I submitted some information in terms of
18 preferences for committees. That was not acted upon.
19 I was placed on a committee that I didn't even say I wanted
20 to be on.

21 Now I see that I'm placed on the two committees
22 that I requested. That's a revision of the committee.

23 I'm saying, if you're saying the proposed revisions
24 of this Standing Committee shall be submitted to the Standing

1 Committee for presentation to the full Convention body for
2 consideration and action.

3 When we're talking about action, we're talking
4 about a vote.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Could I answer your
6 question?

7 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Yes.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm going to start at the
9 top of the paragraph, particularly for the one you're referring
10 to, of Government Structure.

11 It says:

12 This committee shall conduct the review and
13 proposed revisions to Article 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19.

14 It says:

15 Transition of the proposed Fifth Constitutional
16 Convention document.

17 So the proposed revisions of this Standing Committee
18 is referring to the sentence above in regards to what they had
19 conducted for the review and proposed revisions of the various
20 Articles. That's the intention in regards to – not the Standing
21 Committee member revisions, but the revisions for the Articles.
22 That was the intent in the language change.

23 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: That was your intent?

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That was the intent of the

1 language.

2 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: It says that for each one,
3 except for the Committee on Education & Public Information.

4 It says:

5 The plan shall be submitted to the Standing
6 Committee for review and approval. Said plan shall be presented
7 to the full Convention body for consideration and action.

8 Which is the question I asked earlier, and was told
9 that is not what you were talking about.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

11 Any other questions for Government Structure?

12 Delegate Ross, you had something to clarify?

13 DELEGATE ROSS: I wanted to try to address
14 Delegate Watlington's inquiry.

15 The last sentence.

16 If I had written it, I would have said these proposed provisions,
17 which would have clarified that you're talking about provisions
18 to the Articles above.

19 I understood it from our deliberations that the
20 revisions that we are going to work on and agree on is to be
21 submitted to the Executive Committee for presentation to
22 the full body. As far as I understand it, we're not even there
23 yet, because we're in the public information, public-gathering
24 process. We haven't gotten any input from the St. Thomas

1 community.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Can we move on to the
3 next topic?

4 DELEGATE ROSS: Yes.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The next Committee
6 Report is from Human Rights.

7 The chairperson is Delegate Stedman Hodge.

8 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Good day, Mr. President.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good day. Proceed.

10 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Good day, Mr. President.
11 Good day, to all delegates; the listening audience.

12 I'm going to give my Report on the Standing
13 Committee on Human Rights.

14 The members of the Standing Committee on
15 Human Rights are: Myself as Chair; Rudel A. Hodge, Jr.,
16 Vice-Chair; Lydia Hendricks, member; John Abramson, Jr.,
17 Member; Usie R. Richards, member; David Silverman,
18 member and Rupert W. Ross, Jr., member.

19 The Standing Committee on Human Rights did
20 not meet this week as a Working Group.

21 Our committee will meet as a Working Group on Wednesday,
22 April 15, 2025 and Thursday, April 18, 2025.

23 This is once there are no scheduling conflicts with
24 any other Standing Committees. Prior to this, I will contact

1 this Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr., Vice-Chair to discuss the
2 agenda items for the Working Group meeting in order to hold
3 a progressive Working Group meeting.

4 To date, from the Standing Committee on Human
5 Rights Public Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 2, 2025
6 in the District of St. Croix. Tentatively, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

7 Then on Saturday, June 7th on the island of
8 St. John, U.S Virgin Islands, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., tentative time.

9 Tuesday, June 9th, a Virtual Meeting, which
10 is going to be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

11 Please note that the Standing Committee on
12 Human Rights will conduct and review proposed revisions
13 to Article 1, The Bill of Rights; Article 4, Suffrage &
14 Elections; The Youth Referendum Recall; Political Status;
15 The Advisory Commission.

16 These articles are from the proposed Fifth
17 Constitution Convention document, as required under
18 Act 8661 as amended.

19 This is my Report to the members of the
20 Sixth Constitutional Convention.

21 I thank you, Mr. President, and look forward to any questions
22 that are going to be asked of me as the Chair. Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, delegate
24 and Chair Stedman Hodge, Jr.

1 Delegate Hendricks.

2 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Delegate Hodge, I'm
3 very happy that you are able to give us all of these dates.
4 I think it was a little aggressive. I would like for me to find out
5 first; let us start with our first meeting on April 15th.
6 When and where will it be? What time?

7 It's also Tax Day. I don't know.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Hodge.

9 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Those meetings; I'm going
10 to officially submit them so they could be added to the calendar.

11 I believe I'm also scheduling two dates, so that if
12 delegates can't make one date, that's the alternate date to
13 attend. But those meetings are going to be held around 6 p.m.
14 in the evening.

15 Once I meet with the Vice-Chair, which is Rudel
16 Hodge, Jr., we're going to have an agenda, and a nice
17 streamlined outline. It's going to allow us to get through the
18 process smoothly.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Hendricks,
20 thank you for your question. Not only your question and
21 concern of others regarding this schedule thing and
22 calendar thing will be addressed prior to the adjournment
23 of the meeting. Your point is very important and concerning
24 to me also.

1 DELEGATE HENRICKS: Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I believe I heard
3 Delegate Wells.

4 DELEGATE WELLS: Thank you, Mr. President.
5 June 7th, as is customary, will normally be our
6 Plenary Session. That's a Saturday.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's it, Delegate
8 Wells?

9 DELEGATE WELLS: Yes.
10 I'm just reminding him, unless something has changed.
11 I note that our first Saturday in May would be the period in
12 St. Thomas. I imagine I'll hear later on about the change
13 of dates for our Plenary Session in May.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
15 Wells.

16 Again, this calendar thing is going to be addressed.
17 The subject matter of the first Saturday of the month.
18 It says may. It says: We shall have it on that first Saturday,
19 but we may. We've already had to use the other day, other
20 than the first Saturday in April. That's an issue that's not
21 really insurmountable to be addressed.

22 Are there questions for the Committee Chair and
23 the Committee Report?

24 Delegate Daniel.

1 DELEGATE DANIEL: I think it's going to be resolved.

2 But for the record, this Committee Report is just inaccurate with
3 the dates. And so, I'm just requesting that Delegate
4 Stedman Hodge, you do meet with Delegate Rudel Hodge to
5 get like the actual correct dates you're proposing to add to our
6 calendar.

7 If you were trying to meet on Tuesday, that does
8 not give you enough time per our rules. We need five days.

9 So I would suggest that you try a different day.

10 That's it. We just need for you to send this out to the Media.

11 Please push it back. I'm done.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Daniel, I'm
13 coming to you before we move on to the subject matter of
14 Any Other Business, of which we have an item on the agenda
15 of Any Other Business.

16 It's evident at this time of the day, after being here
17 all day that there is a clear need for those that are functioning
18 in the capacity of Chair of Standing Committees to have
19 some clear guidelines, structure and framework of how they
20 plan to implement the activities of the committees.

21 How we plan to meet the mandate, because while
22 we're sitting here, we just got one e-mail about scheduling a
23 meeting in four, five days. That is not the intent of establishing
24 the calendar. I mentioned it earlier and I'm forced to repeat it

1 here again this afternoon.

2 For timely notification for participation of all
3 delegates; Public Announcement. Three and four days before
4 after today, it's not something the Executive Committee will
5 consider as appropriate. I would close off this topic.

6 Delegate Daniel, are you prepared to share a little
7 synopsis on a subject matter that the President and Secretary
8 have discussed that was clearly exhibited today?

9 The need for some guidelines to be put in place to meet the
10 Proposals that have been approved in the rules, so that we
11 could have a step by step understanding that these things
12 need to be done.

13 And so, I'm going to yield to Delegate Daniel to
14 share. We're just sharing it because this is something that
15 we end up having to present and discuss with the other
16 members of the Executive, but I need to reign in and bring
17 focus.

18 Before she starts, the last item that I would
19 mention, particularly, we have the public presence on-line;
20 the Media and public presence in the room; and some
21 discussion was made about our engagement with Working
22 Groups. I think it needs to be clear that the Convention
23 after whatever February date it was.

24 It started with three Working Groups.

1 One on Government Structure; one on Finance & Public
2 Services and one on Human Rights that were divided up
3 by three all of the Articles of the Fifth Constitutional
4 Convention, and within those Working Groups as members
5 and delegates, they gave responses about some of the things
6 that they saw.

7 Following the completion of those Working Group
8 Reports; I believe that was on March 1st, and the committees
9 being established that the understanding was for the
10 committees to now have in their possession the delegates'
11 ideas and concerns and now to develop a process for getting
12 input and engaging the public before the consideration of
13 preparing revisions, modifications to the Fifth Constitutional
14 Convention document.

15 Sorry, Delegate Daniel. But I just wanted to, at
16 least, give that background so all of us could have a focus.

17 You could proceed.

18 DELEGATE DANIEL: Thanks.

19 You guys know me by now. I'm going to speak quite frankly,
20 but I promise, this is out of love. This is not a condemnation.
21 This is actually just us trying to do better.

22 So personally, I haven't been too happy with the
23 performance of the Executive Committee.

24 I think it has trickled down to some of the other committees

1 as well, and us not having a strong organized start.

2 As Rudel and I have been saying from the beginning,
3 just given our short time line and our tight budget, I feel like
4 this should have been run as a start-up.

5 Like strong organization; strong strategy; strong time line;
6 strong partnerships.

7 President Richards and I had a really fruitful
8 conversation yesterday. A really frank and fruitful conversation
9 yesterday that led to my drafting of an Executive Committee
10 Improvement Plan. I did this like 3 o'clock this morning.
11 So bear with me.

12 We just want to clarify that these points that we're
13 going to bring out are in no way meant to change the rules.

14 DELEGATE WELLS: Excuse me, Delegate Daniel.
15 Can you speak slower, please?

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: I'm sorry, Delegate Wells.
17 I know I speak quickly.

18 This is not meant to change the rules that we have
19 already established as a group, but to provide procedures and
20 tools necessary for us to act in accordance with the rules.

21 This is a draft. Only I have seen this full document.
22 The President has seen about 80% of it, but I've been working
23 on it here and there, after I sent it to him this morning.

24 We also kind of want your feedback.

1 Please, hold any questions to the end. But again, this is so that
2 The Executive Committee can get our stuff together and then
3 hopefully, provide better instruction and framework for the
4 actual Standing Committees to operate more efficiently.

5 I'm going to go through this kind of quickly.
6 Most importantly, there are two phases.

7 Phase 1 are things that we need to get done via
8 the Executive Committee between now and next Friday.

9 Phase 2 are things that are going to take a little
10 bit more time.

11 The first topic is Government Structure.
12 Again, I'm going to run through this and then I can share this
13 all with you. For each of these, there's a lead, which is usually
14 a member of the Executive Committee. A potential Due Date;
15 the deliverable; like what we're trying to create and then the
16 KPI, which is like the Key Performance Indicator.

17 Going through the Executive Committee Charter
18 & Role Descriptions. Of course, this is already included in
19 the rules, but there are some places where we could be more
20 specific about yes, somebody might have a function here, but
21 how does the function actually go?

22 Next, an Organizational Chart, which is also
23 helpful for the public, so they can see the Executive Committee;
24 the different committees, and the different memberships

1 visualized.

2 And then, of course, a Comprehensive Branding
3 Kit that clarifies color schemes, funds, logos and usage for
4 our public presence, which Rudel and I have been screaming
5 at the top of our lungs for the last, like three months.
6 So we really want to get branding done, or some sort of plan
7 towards branding by like the end of this week.

8 The next area of focus is Fiscal Oversight.
9 That includes getting a Fiscal Policy drafted; having a
10 Reimbursement Policy; getting Internal Fiscal Policies for our
11 Convention that then gets communicated to the Legislature.
12 Regular Reporting Schedule, which would include templates,
13 so we aren't re-creating the wheel.

14 Then identifying funding sources for staff and
15 Consulting Contracts. David Silverman brought up Legal
16 Counsel. A few other delegates have brought up the need
17 for Admin. support and things like that.

18 I know I'm going through this quickly.
19 This is an offer from the Executive Committee to be fully
20 transparent about just some early ideas of where the
21 President and I thought we could be stronger.

22 Again, this is a draft. We're working on it, and
23 we will meet as an Executive Committee and finalize some
24 of these things to get them out to you.

1 The next is Meetings & Communication.

2 Establishing a Recurring Meeting schedule for the Executive
3 Committee. Again, that's in our rules. We're getting it
4 into a digital, usable space.

5 Having an Agenda & Meetings Template.

6 That kind of falls into my purview, but I don't know if anyone's
7 noticed, but no Minutes have gone out from any of the
8 meetings. Agendas are kind of pushed through here and
9 there. So trying to standardize that.

10 Of course, creating Group Communication
11 Platforms, so we can communicate with each other more
12 efficiently.

13 Next is staffing.

14 Again, I think the Executive Committee could prioritize and
15 identify our immediate staffing needs while the treasurer is
16 starting to sort through how we could possibly pay for some
17 of those supports. Of course, that will come with any
18 Job Descriptions for those staffing positions.

19 Next is Documentation, which is an Executive
20 Committee shared drive. This is where people can find
21 all of this, so we have access to. So if anybody asks, or
22 if we need to reference anything, it's all there.

23 Conflict Management

24 We do have in our rules obvious voting and Quorum Policies,

1 but I think there could be a little more depth in how we settle
2 any disagreements. We haven't gone there yet, but as we get
3 into the real meat of things and head to our October deadline,
4 it might be worth looking at proactively.

5 Next is Phase 2.

6 What we just went through is Phase 1.

7 Those are things that hopefully, we all are humans, and we
8 are new at this Pro Bono.

9 So hopefully, the Executive Committee can get to Phase 1
10 this week, but Phase 2 is a little further out.

11 Succession Planning Policies; Attendance Protocols.

12 Just having a really clear language, so that we're all on the
13 same page.

14 Again, staffing.

15 Moving from just having a Job Description to actually trying
16 to hire some sort of staff if the budget allows.

17 Even if it's part-time with students or something, that would
18 be helpful.

19 Meeting and Workflows

20 I don't know if the President saw this on there, but a
21 Team-Building or Meeting Workflow is a rotating Agenda-
22 Builder, which I would also suggest for the committees.
23 Allowing people to set the flow of the meeting, just adds
24 to boosting morale and diversity of thought, which could

1 be nice.

2 For transparency

3 Making sure that all of the Minutes, updates and decisions,
4 as well as recordings; transcripts; all of that are accessible
5 to all the delegates and the public.

6 That kind of goes into the second Bullet Point
7 about having a digital presence with domain names; websites
8 and e-mail in the system; things like that.

9 On-boarding, which is kind of ironic that we're
10 almost in Month 3 and we're proposing an Orientation portion
11 for the delegates, but I think, at least, for the historic record,
12 that could be helpful. So we could have a slide deck presented
13 with different crafting materials, as well as Project Management.
14 Some sort of Project Management & Task Tracker, especially
15 with the committees.

16 Delegate Ross did a fantastic job of bringing up
17 some of the things that were discussed in the Government
18 Structure Standing Committee. I hope there's a way that
19 you can actually track that for the historic record, and for
20 folks who aren't able to make the committee meetings.

21 Legal & Ethics

22 To Delegate Silverman's point about Legal
23 Counsel. I think we could also put together a frequently-
24 asked questions section that we could refer to which might

1 reduce some of the hours for Legal Counsel.

2 Culture & Team-Building; because we are all in this
3 together. Some sort of recognition and feedback and appreciation
4 protocol to people we'll hire, I think will go a long way as well.

5 Again, these are things from the Executive Committee
6 that I think adds structure and a foresight for us as delegates,
7 including the Strategic Plan of how we're going to get where
8 we're going, and also provides structure for the delegates as
9 well, and for the committees as well.

10 As I get to the top of this page, some people just
11 think differently. So this is the same thing that I just read
12 through, but in some sort of Project-Management Format that
13 I'm talking about. These are all of the Action Items; the lead;
14 the date that it would be due; the deliverable and the Key
15 Performance Indicator and then a Progress Tracker.

16 I made this in like ten minutes this morning.
17 These are simple tools that we can all use to stay updated.
18 This will be publicly accessible so the public can see where
19 we are as well. So I just want to reiterate; we're not trying
20 to change any of the rules. We're just trying to create
21 procedures and tools to make the rules implementable, and
22 then really trying to get our structure together, so that we
23 can work better together, and also engage the public better.

24 Do you have any quick questions about this?

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I was just going to share
2 a comment.

3 DELEGATE DANIEL: Sure.

4 MR. A. BRYAN: Question.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No. We're in Session.
6 While we're in active Session, we're not taking questions from
7 the public.

8 I lost my trend of thought. Let me come back.

9 Let me re-emphasize the point that Delegate
10 Daniel made.

11 The question was: Were you saying that we're going
12 to quickly send this out to all delegates, in case they have some
13 feedback before we go in as the Executive Committee and review
14 and make final decisions?

15 DELEGATE DANIEL: It's up to you.
16 The Executive Committee can refine it and then we send it out,
17 or you give feedback.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.
19 I was just saying that based on Delegate Daniel as secretary
20 and our discussion, I've looked at 80% of them, except the
21 nice new design that she has on the screen that she did this
22 morning. So I'm familiar with the concerns.

23 The point that I want to drive home is that it is
24 clear in our discussion today that there needs to be some

1 motion and action from Chairs, from the Executive Committee.

2 And so that this will be presented to the Executive Committee
3 members, based on the discussion that I've had with Secretary
4 Daniel. Hopefully, within a week. That's correct?
5 That's what we decided?

6 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, sir.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Within a week, we would
8 have something finalized, so that it can be shared within the
9 Convention and the delegation members.

10 I want to close off the discussion on the Standing
11 Committee Chair Report and Next Steps.

12 That was an additional Report from the Secretary, with
13 discussion from the President.

14 We're moving to Item #6, which is Any Other
15 Business. Under Item #6, there was a motion that was made
16 to add something to the agenda. Somebody wants to add
17 something? I'm sorry. You have a motion?

18 DELEGATE CANEGATA: In New Business.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Well, let me finish.

20 The item, I believe, was distributed to the members.

21 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, sir.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm just saying it for
23 the record, not that I was asking.

24 I'm trying to find out what happened to the one

1 that you distributed to me.

2 This Memo and submission of Resolution #004.
3 It's on the agenda. Is there any discussion by anyone on
4 this Resolution before the consideration?

5 DELEGATE DANIEL: I motion that we adopt
6 Resolution 004, titled The Resolution to ensure equal district
7 representation in Standing Committees, and to standardize
8 the reporting of committee actions on Constitutional matters.

9 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Second.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: A motion has been made
11 by Delegate Daniel; seconded by Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr.
12 Is there any objection?

13 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Objection.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Objection by Delegate
15 Canegata. Can we entertain discussion on the Resolution?
16 Delegate Watlington.

17 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Mr. President, before
18 you do that, please. Can we limit the amount of time each
19 person has to speak?

20 I move that we limit the debate time on this
21 matter to one minute per person. So moved.

22 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Second.

23 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Object.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Please, there's a motion

1 on the floor. Moved by Delegate Watlington; seconded by
2 Delegate Abramson.

3 The motion on the floor is being amended by
4 Delegate Watlington to limit the debate time.

5 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: No.
6 A separate motion.

7 To limit the debate time on the motion being objected to,
8 limit the debate time to one minute. So moved.

9 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Second.
10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Seconded.

11 Is there any objection to that motion?

12 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I objected
13 to Delegate Watlington's motion.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You're objecting to it?

15 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: To the one
16 minute. Yeah.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: To the one minute.
18 In this instance, we could go straight to a roll call on the
19 motion of limiting individuals to one minute.

20 Could we get a roll call vote.

21 Yes, means you approve the motion.

22 No means you're against the motion. Roll call.

23 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate John J.
24 Abramson, Jr.

1 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Yes.

2 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: John J. Abramson, yea.

3 Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.

4 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Can you speak
5 a little louder?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Belardo de O'Neal,
7 what is your vote?

8 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Which one are
9 we doing? The amendment for Member Watlington?

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The motion by Delegate
11 Watlington is on the floor. And your vote is?

12 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good.

14 Belardo de O'Neal is no.

15 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Belardo de O'Neal, nay.

16 Delegate John Canegata.

17 DELEGATE CANEGATA: No.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate John Canegata,
19 nay.

20 Delegate Devin Carrington.

21 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: No.

22 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Devin
23 Carrington, nay.

24 Delegate Imani Daniel.

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1 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes.

2 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Imani

3 Daniel, yea.

4 Delegate Lydia Hendricks.

5 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

6 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Lydia

7 Hendricks, yea.

8 Delegate Rudel A. Hodge, Jr.

9 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Yes.

10 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Hodge,

11 Jr., yea.

12 Delegate Stedman Hodge, Jr.

13 DELEGATE S. HODGE: No.

14 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Stedman

15 Hodge, Jr., nay.

16 Delegate Usie Raymond Richards.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Usie

19 Raymond Richards, nay.

20 Delegate Akima Richardson.

21 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yea.

22 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Akima

23 Richardson, yea.

24 Delegate Rupert W. Ross, Jr.

1 DELEGATE ROSS: Yea.

2 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Rupert W.

3 Ross, Jr., yea.

4 Delegate Ronald Russell.

5 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

6 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Ronald

7 Russell, yea.

8 Delegate David Silverman.

9 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes.

10 MADAM CLERK SILVERMAN: Delegate

11 David Silverman, yea.

12 Delegate Arturo Watlington.

13 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: Yes.

14 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Watlington,

15 yea.

16 Delegate Alecia M. Wells.

17 DELEGATE WELLS: Yes.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Alecia M.

19 Wells, yea.

20 Mr. Chairman, ten yeas, five nays.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

22 The motion has passed.

23 The motion on the table is the proposed submission

24 of the Resolution #004 that has been moved, seconded and

1 objected to. Who wants to speak on this measure?

2 Does the proponent want to speak first?

3 DELEGATE DANIEL: The proponent wants to
4 speak last, sir.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: One minute.
6 Who wants to speak?

7 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.
8 I have a Point of Information.

9 We just applied a one-minute limit. Is this one minute going
10 to apply to the discussion that we're going to have now?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes.
12 The one-minute is for anybody that's talking about this item
13 on the agenda.

14 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I got it.
15 I got it.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman.

17 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Just to be clear.
18 I'm not taking my one minute.

19 Are we talking about one minute per delegate or one minute
20 debate?

21 I would like to speak in favor of this Resolution.
22 Thank you for the one minute, Mr. President.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Go ahead.

24 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Act 8661 which created

1 this Convention created equal representation from two electoral
2 districts; the district of St. Thomas/St. John and the district
3 of St. Croix. Seven members each.

4 That reflected the will of the Legislature that we
5 would have balanced representation in the deliberations of
6 the Constitutional Convention. As such, given the key role
7 which our committees who are proposing language have in
8 this process, it seems that it is clear that we need equal
9 representation from the two delegations in each of our
10 committees.

11 The only objection that I've heard so far about
12 this Proposal is that it could create the potential for tie votes.
13 However, tie votes are not a matter of the number of
14 committee members, it's a matter of the number of people
15 who vote. So in a committee of seven, you can have a tie,
16 with one abstaining.

17 In a committee of five, you can have a tie.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Time.

19 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: If you would just give
20 me another five seconds.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No. It's one minute.

22 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.
23 You voted for one minute.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Time for Delegate

1 Silverman is completed.

2 Who else would like to speak next?

3 Delegate Hodge.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate R. Hodge.

5 DELEGATE R. HODGE: I would like to yield 15
6 seconds of my time to Delegate Silverman.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman,
8 15 seconds.

9 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I'd like to point out that
10 in the 10 committees of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands,
11 according to the Legislature's website, six of those committees
12 have even numbers of the senators in them. Four have odd
13 members. So this was clearly not a concern within the
14 Virgin Islands Legislature, and in the Board of Elections,
15 there were 14 members.

16 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Time.

17 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: That's what I
18 was trying to avoid when I voted no.

19 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Please give him five
20 more seconds.

21 (WHEREUPON, SEVERAL MEMBERS SPOKE
22 SIMULTANEOUSLY).

23 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: That's why
24 I was saying give you all more time. You voted for one minute.

1 If you had voted no, then you would have gotten all the time
2 you wanted.

3 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Absolutely.
4 We're tired of this.

5 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.
6 We can't have this.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross, do you
8 want to speak? For your one minute.

9 DELEGATE R. HODGE: I still have 45 seconds.
10 Correct?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes.
12 But you're speaking on your 45 seconds without yielding
13 additional time to somebody that has spoken for a minute.

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Okay. No problem.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You're recognized for
16 your 45 seconds.

17 DELEGATE R. HODGE: In terms of the Resolution
18 passed. I think it's very important that we have equal
19 representation from both districts on these committees.
20 It allows for the most diverse freedom of thought, and allows
21 for the most buy-in from both districts.

22 As we have been presented at this point, multiple
23 configurations of delegates right now that doesn't necessarily
24 represent the will of the people of the Virgin Islands, and we

1 should really focus on the mission of Act 8681, which is a
2 representation of the entirety of the Virgin Islands, and it's
3 very important that we do get this Resolution passed.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Ross, you're
5 recognized for a minute.

6 DELEGATE ROSS: I'd like to speak against the
7 motion. One minute.

8 I was elected to this Constitutional Convention
9 to write a document for the people of the Virgin Islands.
10 I was not elected to write a document for the people of
11 St. Croix; even though I'm a delegate for the people of St.
12 Croix.

13 I have more Virgin Islanders living in my family
14 in the St. Thomas/St. John District than most of you got
15 votes in the last election. I represent them also, even though
16 I'm from St. Croix. And to place me in a position of only being
17 a representative of St. Croix, I find insulting and unproductive.
18 I yield the rest of my time.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
20 Ross.

21 Delegate John Canegata.

22 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Thank you, Mr. President.

23 The reason why I'm opposed to this, just like
24 Delegate Ross.

1 This Resolution makes the assumption that Crucians
2 are going to present some kind of malice towards our St. Thomian
3 and St. Johnian delegates. I think it's offensive.

4 I keep hearing this equality and justice.

5 Crucians have experienced more inequity and
6 more injustice than any other of the two districts in these
7 Virgin Islands.

8 So please, if you guys continue to use these words,
9 expect me to respond with a proportionate response to the
10 ignorance and hypocrisy that we continue to see right now.
11 It's unfortunate. I yield my time.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
13 Canegata.

14 Anyone else want to speak?
15 Delegate Daniel, you said you'll speak last.

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: If there's no one else, I'll
17 speak.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You're recognized for
19 a minute.

20 DELEGATE DANIEL: All I'm going to say to the
21 last part is a wise man once said, if the cap fit, let them wear
22 it.

23 All we are proposing is equal districting.
24 That's it. There's no underlying malice here, that we don't trust

1 St. Croix delegates, or that we are trying to pull anything.

2 Honestly, if we're looking at the history of this delegation so
3 far, there has been an eight-member, a very small majority that
4 has pushed through every single thing without even considering
5 the feedback from the District of St. Thomas/St. John.

6 We are not asking for anything ahead.

7 We are asking for equal and equity.

8 We are actually putting forth an actual process for
9 how to get things out of committee and into the full document,
10 which we have, which we have like five months to figure out.

11 Finally, it was told to me by Delegate Abramson
12 that under no reason whatsoever can we have any committee
13 with even numbers. Yet, somehow our Executive Committee
14 of four members still somehow can conduct business.
15 So which is it? Do we need to cut somebody from the
16 Executive Committee to have an odd number of people then,
17 so through parliamentary procedure to conduct business?

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Time.

19 DELEGATE DANIEL: That's it.

20 You all vote yes or let me go home.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

22 I suspect the debate on the subject matter has concluded.

23 We are going to put to a roll call vote the proposed Resolution

24 #004.

1 Yes means you approve adopting the Resolution.

2 No means you do not approve adopting the Resolution.

3 Roll call, please.

4 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate John J.
5 Abramson, Jr.

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: No.

7 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Lilliana
8 Belardo de O'Neal.

9 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No.

10 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate John M.
11 Canegata.

12 DELEGATA CANEGATA: No.

13 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Devin F.
14 Carrington.

15 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: No.

16 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Imani
17 Daniel.

18 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes.

19 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Lydia Hendricks.

20 DELEGATE HENDRICKS: Yes.

21 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Rudel A.
22 Hodge, Jr.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Yes.

24 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Stedman

1 Hodge, Jr.

2 DELEGATE S. HODGE: No.

3 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Usie Raymond
4 Richards.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No.

6 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Akima
7 Richardson.

8 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

9 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Rupert W.
10 Ross, Jr.

11 DELEGATE ROSS: No.

12 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Ronald
13 Russell.

14 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes.

15 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate David
16 Silverman.

17 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes.

18 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Arturo
19 Watlington, Jr.

20 DELEGATE WATLINGON: Yea.

21 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Delegate Alecia M.
22 Wells.

23 DELEGATE WELLS: Yes.

24 MADAM CLERK PICKARD: Mr. Chairman,

1 seven nays, eight yeas.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

3 The motion has been approved and adopted, and thereby,
4 the Resolution #004 will be executed.

5 The next scheduled Session date is on May 10th.

6 I keep reminding us, the first Saturday is we may, but with
7 logistics; and hopefully, to ensure that some work could be
8 done to be considered on May 10th.

9 Delegate Canegata.

10 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Point of Information.

11 Were we finished with New Business?

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.

13 I think I asked the question. Was there Any Other Business?

14 DELEGATE CANEGATA: I did not hear that,

15 Mr. President.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.

17 I stated that the only Any Other Business that I had to date
18 was the motion for the Resolution that was considered.

19 Do you have another business?

20 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Mr. President, I did make
21 it clear earlier that I did have something to add to New Business.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Any Other Business?

23 Go ahead. I may have missed that.

24 DELEGATE CANEGATA: I was going to make a

1 Proposal. I think Delegate Ross' meeting for April 26th on
2 St. Thomas should include all of the committees, to allow
3 all the committees to present the information we suggested
4 in our earlier Proposal, so we can have open and transparency
5 to the public of the Virgin Islands.

6 Initially, we thought it was starting on St. John,
7 but obviously, the meeting is going to be scheduled on
8 St. Thomas.

9 We'd like to propose that all of us can attend.
10 We can meet separately, but all of us speak and have an
11 Open Session to the Virgin Islands.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thanks for your
13 suggestion.

14 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Yes, Mr. President.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Any other suggestions
16 or notes under Any Other Business?

17 Delegate Ross.

18 DELEGATE ROSS: I'd like to ask to be excused
19 for the May 10th meeting. I have a commitment on May 10th
20 out of the territory, and I'll be in a situation where I will be
21 unable to participate virtually. Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Richardson.

23 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: My suggestion to
24 the delegation on a whole is in terms of attendance.

1 It should be that at least 70% of the meeting is
2 attended by the member who seeks to claim attendance on
3 committees. That is my suggestion.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

5 I don't understand what you mean. Could you clarify?

6 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: If you're in attendance
7 of a meeting to constitute your attendance, you would have
8 to be present for 70% of the meeting.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate
10 Richardson. I understand you clearly.

11 Delegate Watlington.

12 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: The only concern I
13 have – that's just a suggestion. Correct?

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes. That's correct.

15 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: The only concern
16 I have about it; you can't say how much is 70% until the
17 meeting is over.

18 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Correct, correct.

19 DELEGATE WATLINGTON: In most other
20 organizations, we usually specify the amount of time.
21 Like four hours; three hours; two hours.
22 I think it would be a little bit easier to determine
23 number of hours, rather than a percentage, because you
24 wouldn't know how long it's going to be.

1 Because we could have a meeting for two hours. That's 70%;
2 an hour and a half, most of the business may have been
3 already completed.

4 I just would like for you to think about what
5 would be a reasonable amount of time.

6 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Okay.
7 Thank you, Delegate Watlington.

8 DELEGATE CANEGATA: They're ready to burst
9 off.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I am aware that they
11 do have a scheduled flight. That is why I was trying to wrap
12 up Any Other Business, and we scheduled the meeting to
13 3 o'clock, and the flights are scheduled at a certain time after
14 3 o'clock.

15 Yes, Delegate Ross.

16 DELEGATE ROSS: And that's why I voted to limit
17 debate to one minute, in deference to you guys.

18 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Wells,
20 Delegate Stedman Hodge, Jr.; you're on-line.
21 We are here adjourning the meeting.

22 Is there a motion to adjourn?

23 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Motion to adjourn.

24 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Second.

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1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The motion to adjourn
2 by Stedman Hodge and seconded by Delegate Rudel Hodge.

3 The meeting is adjourned, and thank you all for
4 coming and participating.

5 (WHEREUPON, THE PLENARY SESSION WAS
6 ADJOURNED AT 3:30 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Diane D. Andrews, Stenographer, do hereby certify
that the Plenary Session of the Sixth Constitutional
Convention was taken by me in Machine Shorthand on
Saturday, April 12, 2025, and represents the official
transcript.

In witness whereof, I hereunto subscribed my hand.

s/_____
Diane D. Andrews - Stenographer