



YVONNE E. L. THRAEN, PH.D.
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December 11, 2016


Honorable Kenneth L. Gittens.
Chairman
Committee on Rules and Judiciary
31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands
100 Lagoon Street Complex
Suite 2
Frederiksted, St. Croix
U.S. Virgin Islands 00840-3912

Dear Chairman Gittens:

Forwarded herewith is my testimony for my confirmation hearing on Membership to the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Port Authority, scheduled for December 19, 2016

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely Yours,


Yvonne E. L. Thraen, Ph.D.

**STATEMENT OF THE NOMINEE TO THE
GOVERNING BOARD OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
PORT AUTHORITY**

YVONNE E. L. THRAEN, Ph.D.

DECEMBER 19, 2016

HONORABLE KENNETH L. GITTENS, CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY, OTHER COMMITTEE
MEMBERS, NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS, VIEWING AND
LISTENING AUDIENCE, GOOD AFTERNOON.

MY NAME IS YVONNE E. L. THRAEN. MY APPEARANCE
BEFORE YOU TODAY IS RELATED TO MY NOMINATION BY
THE HONORABLE KENNETH E. MAPP FOR MEMBERSHIP ON
THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PORT
AUTHORITY (VIPA). I THANK CHAIRMAN GITTENS FOR
SCHEDULING THIS CONFIRMATION HEARING.

I HAVE STRUCTURED MY PRESENTATION TO, FIRST, PROVIDE SOME HIGHLIGHTS ABOUT MY CAREER. THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH MY RESUME AS WELL AS MY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, BUT CAREER HIGHLIGHTS WILL ENABLE THE LISTENING AUDIENCE TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO MY PREPARATION FOR THE POSITION TO WHICH I HAVE BEEN NOMINATED.

AFTER PROVIDING CAREER HIGHLIGHTS, I WILL DESCRIBE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE VIPA, THE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THOSE FUNCTIONS, REVENUE GENERATION, SELECTED PROJECTS AND MY INTENDED CONTRIBUTION TO THE OPERATIONS OF VIPA.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

RELATIVE TO CAREER HIGHLIGHTS, I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN ST. THOMAS, GRADUATED FROM STS. PETER AND PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, EARNED A BACHELOR OF ARTS FROM CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, A MASTERS OF SOCIAL WORK FROM HOWARD UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK; AND A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SOCIAL WELFARE FROM BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY, FLORENCE HELLER GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN SOCIAL WELFARE.

I SERVED IN THE V.I. GOVERNMENT FOR OVER THIRTY FOUR (34) YEARS. I HAVE HAD THE UNIQUE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE

AT THE CABINET LEVEL IN THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR,
YOUTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, IN THE LUIS/BRADY
ADMINISTRATION. I ALSO SERVED AS ASSISTANT TO THE
GOVERNOR IN THE FARRELLY/HODGE ADMINISTRATION
AND THE SCHNEIDER/MAPP ADMINISTRATION. I PROVIDED
PROGRAM LIAISON AND CONSULTANT SERVICES TO THE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR; ALSO, INTERNEED FOR ONE
(1) ACADEMIC YEAR AT THE U.S. CONGRESS, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN RONALD V.
DELLUMS (D. CALIFORNIA). I HELD MEMBERSHIP ON A
NUMBER OF BOARDS, SUCH AS CATHOLIC CHARITIES,
ROTARY CLUB OF ST. THOMAS II, THE V.I. MEDICAL

INSTITUTE AND THE V. I. PORT AUTHORITY, MY LAST TERM ENDING IN JUNE, 2016. I PRESENTLY SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

FUNCTIONS

RELATIVE TO V.I. PORT AUTHORITY FUNCTIONS, THE AGENCY WAS CREATED BY THE V. I. LEGISLATURE, ACT 2375, ON DECEMBER 24, 1968, AS A PUBLIC CORPORATION AND AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENTALITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING, OWNING, CONSTRUCTING, DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING, AND MANAGING AIRPORTS

AND SEAPORTS SO AS TO MAKE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AVAILABLE AND INCREASE COMMERCE AND PROSPERITY.

VIPA CONTROLS THE HARBORS OF THE V.I., EXCEPT THE DOCK ACTIVITIES THAT ARE CONTROLLED BY THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY, LTD. (WICO). PREVIOUSLY OWNED PRIVATELY, WICO WAS PURCHASED BY THE V.I. GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY IN 1993 AND, AS SUCH, CONTINUES TO CARRY OUT THEIR CRUISE SHIP AND RELATED ACTIVITIES. CRUISE SHIPS ENTERING AND LEAVING THE HARBOR ARE GUIDED BY VIPA HARBOR PILOTS.

BOARD COMPOSITION

THE LEGAL MANDATES OF VIPA ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH A GOVERNING BOARD, CONSISTING OF NINE (9) MEMBERS: THREE (3) FROM THE GOVERNOR'S CABINET AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD, ALL OF WHOM SERVE IN AN EX OFFICIO CAPACITY. THE FIVE (5) REMAINING MEMBERS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ARE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO THREE (3) YEAR TERMS AND REQUIRE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE LEGISLATURE. TWO (2) ARE FROM ST. CROIX AND TWO (2) FROM ST. THOMAS AND ONE (1) FROM ST. JOHN. AS OF THIS WRITING, THE BOARD CONSISTS OF SIX (6) MEMBERS, WITH

TWO (2) VACANCIES ON ST. THOMAS AND ONE (1) ON ST. CROIX.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

THE BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SETTING POLICY FOR THE VIPA'S OPERATION. THE AUTHORITY IS MANAGED BY AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WHO IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNING BOARD, ASSISTED BY APPROPRIATE STAFF. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE AGENCY, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICIES SET BY THE BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH LEGAL MANDATES.

THE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF VIPA INCLUDE: (1) AVIATION, WHICH OWNS AND OPERATES THE TWO (2) AIRPORTS; AND (2) MARINE, WHICH OPERATES FOURTEEN (14) SEAPORTS, INCLUDING ST. CROIX, ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN, THAT HANDLE CRUISE, CARGO AND FERRY ACTIVITIES. THE AGENCY ALSO INCLUDES AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT THAT HANDLES ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONAL MATTERS.

REVENUE GENERATION

VIPA IS SELF-SUFFICIENT AND DOES NOT RECEIVE FUNDS FROM THE V. I. GOVERNMENT. REVENUES ARE DERIVED FROM SIX (6) SOURCES:

FEEs CHARGED TO USERS OF VIPA FACILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH AVIATION AND MARINE TARIFFS

FINANCING OF BONDS APPROVED BY THE V.I. LEGISLATURE

FEDERAL GRANTS, PRIMARILY FROM THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) AND LIMITED TO FAA APPROVED PROJECTS

PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGE PROGRAMS (PFC), ALSO LIMITED TO FAA APPROVED PROJECTS

LEASING OF FACILITIES AND PROPERTIES FOR COMMERCIAL USE AT FAIR MARKET RATES

RENTAL OF UNITS AT BOURNE FIELD ON ST. THOMAS

THE 2016 -2017 BUDGET IS \$97.4 MILLION.

THE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF VIPA REPRESENT A

MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OF THE TERRITORY. THE AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS ARE

VITAL IN IMPORTING BASIC ITEMS SUCH AS CLOTHES,

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, GAS, FURNITURE,
VEHICLES AND MOST FOOD ITEMS. MOST
IMPORTANTLY, OUR AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS ENABLE
AIRPLANES, CRUISE SHIPS AND OTHER COMMERCIAL
VESSELS TO BRING TOURISTS AND LOCALS TO AND
FROM THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS AS WELL AS
TRANSSHIPMENT OF GOODS BETWEEN NEIGHBORING
CARIBBEAN ISLANDS AND BEYOND.

COGNIZANT OF THE FACT THAT TOURISM IS THE VI'S
MAIN INDUSTRY AND THAT OUR PRODUCT, WHICH IS
ALWAYS IN COMPETITION WITH OTHER ISLANDS, MUST
NOT ONLY BE MAINTAINED BUT IMPROVED FOR

VISITING AS WELL AS LOCAL CONSUMERS, VIPA HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN CAPITAL PROJECTS, SOME COMPLETED AND OTHERS PLANNED.

SELECTED PROJECTS

SOME PROJECTS FOR **ST. CROIX**, IN DESIGN OR PERMITTING STAGE, INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED

TO:

- (1) WILFRED ALLICK TRANSSHIPMENT CENTER, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A 100 TON BOLLARD ON THE NORTH PIER, A NEW PERIMETER FENCING AND UPGRADED LIGHTING
- (2) GORDON A. FINCH MOLASSES PIER, AT WHICH A 19,000 SQ FT. MULTI USE FACILITY WILL BE CONSTRUCTED TO RELOCATE ALL CARGO ACTIVITIES, PROVIDE OFFICE SPACES FOR CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, V.I. INTERNAL REVENUE AND VIPA'S DOCKMASTERS

- (3) GALLOWS BAY, WHERE SCHOONER BAY CHANNEL WILL BE DREDGED TO ACCOMMODATE SMALLER CRUISE SHIPS AND THE DUAL PURPOSE FACILITY WILL BE RENOVATED
- (4) ANN E. ABRAMSON MARINE FACILITY WILL UNDERGO IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS UPGRADE TO THE PIER'S LIGHTING SYSTEM, REPLACEMENT OF THE TENDER LANDING AND THE DESIGN FOR A CATWALK AND BOLLARD REPLACEMENT
- (5) HENRY E. ROHLSON AIRPORT HAS A NEW AIRCRAFT RESCUE AND FIRE FIGHTING FACILITY PRESENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- (6) HENRY E. ROHLSON'S RUNWAY 10-28 AND TAXIWAY ALPHA IS UNDER REHABILITATION. THE REHABILITATION ON THE APRON IS JUST ABOUT COMPLETE
- (7) HENRY E. ROHLSON WILL ACQUIRE A THREE (3W) MEGAWATT GROUND MOUNTED PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAY TO MEET THE ENERGY CONSUMPTION NEEDS AT THE AIRPORT.

ST. JOHN

ST. JOHN PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- (1) THE CARGO APRON AT THE THEOVALD MOORHEAD DOCK AND TERMINAL WAS COMPLETED
- (2) A PAID PARKING LOT SYSTEM WILL BE INSTALLED AT THE MOORHEAD FACILITY AND AT THE VICTOR SEWER MARINE FACILITY (CREEK)

ST. THOMAS

SOME ST. THOMAS PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- (1) FILLING THE DEPRESSION IN THE BULKHEAD USED BY CROWLEY AND LEVELING THE SURFACE TO THE PAVED AREA
- (2) CHARLOTTE AMALIE WATERFRONT HAD UPGRADES TO THE FENDERING AND CLEAT SYSTEM COMPLETED
- (3) EDWARD W. BLYDEN IV TERMINAL WILL UNDERGO FENDERING REPAIRS ALONG WITH OTHER AREAS OF THE BULKHEAD
- (4) EDWARD W. BLYDEN IV WILL INSTALL AN ELEVATOR TO BRING THE FACILITY INTO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT
- (5) AT RED HOOK, A TWO (2) LEVEL PARKING GARAGE WILL BE CONSTRUCTED AT THE URMAN V. FREDERICKS TERMINAL TO

ALLEVIATE SOME OF THE PARKING
CONGESTION AT THIS BUSY PORT.

SENATORS, THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE PROJECTS
COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY. OVER THE PAST THREE (3)
YEARS, I HAVE SEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE
PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLETION OF BOARD
APPROVED PROJECTS UNDER THE AEGIS OF EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR CARLTON DOWE, AIDED BY HIS STAFF. VIPA IS
POISED TO COMPLETE A NUMBER OF OTHER PROJECTS
ALREADY IDENTIFIED AND NEW ONES FOR WHICH FUNDING
MUST BE IDENTIFIED.

THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE QUALITY
OF SUPERVISION PROVIDED BY THE HEAD OF THE AGENCY,

IN THIS CASE, THE BOARD, AND THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY. BOARDS GENERALLY INCLUDE MEMBERS WITH PARTICULAR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION AND INTEREST. IN MY CASE, MY FOCI IS ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION, MANAGERIAL EFFICIENCY AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT. I AM ALWAYS CONCERNED ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED TO ACCESS THE AIRCRAFT AND OTHER AREAS, THE COURTESY OF OUR TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS AND THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE FACILITY ON ALL ISLANDS. MY EXTENSIVE TRAVELS ENABLE ME TO COMPARE THE FACILITIES AS WELL AS THE TREATMENT AFFORDED

VISITORS NATIONALLY AND OVERSEAS, IN COMPARISON TO WHAT IS PROVIDED IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

RELATIVE TO MANAGERIAL EFFICIENCIES, I WILL CONTINUE TO ASCERTAIN, IF NECESSARY, THAT OPERATIONS ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH LEGAL AND AGENCY PROMULGATED POLICIES AS FAILURE TO DO SO CAN FACILITATE AUDIT FINDINGS, LITIGATION AND OTHER PROBLEMS.

ON PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, I WILL CONTINUE MY ADVOCACY ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRAINING AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES, WHICH WILL FACILITATE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT PREPARES STAFF FOR EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION.

SENATORS, I DECIDED TO ACCEPT GOVERNOR MAPP'S INVITATION TO SERVE ANOTHER TERM ON THE VIPA BOARD FOR THREE (3) REASONS:

- (1) MY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASSIMILATED EXPERIENCES, ESPECIALLY THOSE GAINED THROUGH PRIOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE VIPA BOARD, HAVE PREPARED ME TO DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE POSITION,
- (2) THE THREE (3) CURRENT VACANCIES ON THE BOARD HAVE RESULTED IN DIFFICULTIES IN MEETING THE QUORUM OF FIVE (5), RESCHEDULING AS WELL AS CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS; AND

MEMBERSHIP HAVING TO DOUBLE UP ON COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS TO COVER FOR THE VACANT MEMBERSHIPS; AND

- (3) MEMBERSHIP ON THIS BOARD (OR ANY OTHER BOARD) ALLOWS ME TO EXERCISE MY CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OF CONTRIBUTING TO PROGRAMS AIMED AT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

IF CONFIRMED, I WILL DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE POSITION AS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY AS I CAN.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND I WILL BE HAPPY TO RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS.