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Virgin Islands Commission on Aging Established to Prioritize Senior Welfare and Support

Governor Bryan emphasizes the importance of addressing seniors' needs as the new commission plans initiatives like digital literacy programs and tech giveaways to empower and protect the elderly

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On Wednesday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. convened the inaugural meeting of the Virgin Islands Commission on Aging, deemed an important step in addressing the needs of the territory's senior population. In a statement from Government House, the commission was described as a "critical advocacy organization" dedicated to ensuring that the concerns and well-being of seniors are prioritized in both policy development and service delivery across the Virgin Islands.

As the team began the work of finalizing and approving bylaws, Troy de Chabert-Schuter, current State Director of AARP Virgin Islands, was appointed interim chair, with Michal Rhymer-Brown,

pastor and former assistant commissioner in the Department of Human Services, elected acting vice chair. Senator Angel Bolques Jr. was chosen as secretary.

"The Commission on Aging is about lending our voices and advocacy to ensure that Virgin Islanders can age and transition into senior-hood right here at home. We will be working at dismantling the barriers and growing capacity as it pertains to growing older in the Virgin Islands," said Clint Ferris, special projects coordinator for Government House.

"Our community is getting older, and with that comes the responsibility to provide more services, resources, and infrastructure to support our seniors," said Governor Bryan. "The Commission on Aging will play a critical role in making recommendations on how to deliver these services and will help us advocate for the resources necessary to meet this growing demand."

According to the release, the commission must now develop a comprehensive budget and decide on the initiatives it will undertake, to include digital literacy workshops and giveaways of electronic devices essential to ensuring seniors remain connected and empowered in an increasingly digital world.

More than just a policy group, the commission is "an advocacy body that will fight for the rights, dignity, and well-being of our elderly population," said Governor Bryan.