

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## St. Croix Board Certifies Runoff Results, General Election Recount Begins Thursday

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The St. Croix District Board of Elections Wednesday certified the results of the November 18 runoff election between gubernatorial candidates Kenneth Mapp and Donna Christensen. Final numbers show that with a 54 percent voter turnout, Mapp received 9,196 votes on St. Croix and Christensen received 3,945 votes.

Elections Supervisor Caroline Fawkes announced the official results during the first Board of Elections meeting after the runoff, and members Lisa Harris-Moorhead, former Senator Liliana Belardo de O'Neal and Rupert Ross signed the paperwork certifying the figures. Members Roland Moolenaar and Adelbert Bryan, Board chairman, did not sign the document. Members Glenn Webster and Raymond Williams were absent.



Members of the St. Croix Board of Elections

at a Wednesday, Dec. 3 meeting.

Fawkes said the St. Thomas-St. John District Board is also expected to certify its runoff results by Thursday. Results of both districts will be posted to the [Virgin Islands Elections System website](#).

Board members also voted to begin the recount of three St. Croix candidates' votes from the November 4 General Election. Recounts for incumbent Senators Alicia "Chucky" Hansen and Diane Capehart, as well as Elections Board hopeful, Epiphane Joseph, will commence on Thursday, Dec. 4 beginning at 1 p.m. Senatorial candidate Naomi Joseph also requested a recount of her votes, but, according to Harris-Moorhead, Joseph's request was denied because her paperwork was filed four days after the November 21 filing deadline.

However, the recount process, which will be solely conducted by hand count, was not decided upon without controversy. Harris-Moorhead first moved to have write-in votes on the ballot appearing without the corresponding oval filled in to still be counted as a valid vote for the candidate, stating that the voter's "intent" is clear. She said a previous Joint Boards decision allowed for the adoption of the motion.

"I move that this Board honors the Joint Boards' decision at our last meeting prior to the General Election to honor the voter's intent whether or not they bubbled in anyone's name for a write-in, as long as there was a write-in that write-in would count," Harris-Moorhead said.

Bryan vehemently objected, stating that it is unlawful to record a write-in vote as valid if the corresponding oval to the left of the name is left blank. He was referring to the instructions printed on the ballot, which reads:

*"INSTRUCTIONS: Read instructions carefully before marking your ballot. You may vote on both sides. The only way to mark your ballot for your votes to be counted is to completely fill in the oval next to the candidates of your choice(s). Make NO other mark(s) on your ballot, if you do, your vote(s) will not be counted.*

*"Write In: To vote for a person not on the ballot for an office, write the name on the line provided and COMPLETELY fill in the oval to the left of that name.*

Said Bryan, "A none-bubble vote is not a vote."



Community members at Wednesday's St. Croix Board of

Elections meeting.

However, he was outnumbered. With three of the five Board members present voting in favor of Harris-Moorhead's motion, including Belardo de O'Neal, Ross and Harris-Moorhead, the motion carried. Moolenaar, visibly upset at the motion on the table, exited the meeting during the vote, stating on his way out, "You all have gone too far now."

The *VI Consortium* caught up with Moolenaar after the four-hour meeting and he explained that last week when he voted in favor of conducting a recount it was with the sole purpose of providing an exact accounting of candidates' sticker votes, as well as straight-party symbol votes and rejected ballots--something he said had also been the intent of his other colleagues. His intent, Moolenaar stressed, was never to give additional votes to candidates by adding non-bubbled write-in votes to the tallies already published from ballots properly scanned through the DS200 machines.

Moolenaar further explained that the machine prints out a tally of each candidate's votes from the ballots it scans. He said the number of paper ballots scanned should match the tally printed from the machine.

"If the machine tallied 147 scanned votes and prints that out, how can you come back and manually add another 147 votes to what the machine has already recorded?"

The St. Thomas-St. John District Board voted against recounting votes for the General Election.