

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Rupert Ross To Leave BOE On Jan. 5, Slams Bryan For "Dysfunctional" Board

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Board of Elections member Rupert Ross.

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Longtime member and former chairman of the St. Croix District Board of Elections Rupert Ross announced at a press conference on Tuesday morning that come Jan. 5, he will relinquish his seat on the board, a move that makes room for the next candidate in the Democratic party who came in after him, in vote count, to take the seat.

That person is current board member, Raymond Williams.

Ross, who has served the Virgin Islands in many capacities, not the least of which has been a longtime educator, said it was "simply time to move on."

"As you know, the new board term begins on January fifth, and even though I was elected to serve on that new board, I will not serve," Ross began. "The law allows for the next individual from my party that has the highest number of votes to be certified to serve and Williams, if he decides to serve."



Board of Elections member Rupert Ross.

Ross was referring to Virgin Islands Code (VIC) Title 18, Section 41 B, which reads: "Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Board of Elections shall certify within thirty (30) days thereafter, the candidate who received the next highest vote count in the immediately preceding election. The individual must be a member of the same political party in which the vacancy occurred.

"The person appointed shall serve for the remainder of the term; provided, however, whenever a vacancy occurs and the candidate who received the next highest vote count either is not in the same political party as the person who vacated the position, or the person who vacated the position is not affiliated with any political party, then the Board shall certify the candidate who received the next highest count."

The current chairman, [Adelbert Bryan] has made the Board dysfunctional. The current chairman has spent more time carrying his board members to court and challenging their decisions than working with the board to resolve the decisions. It is either his way or no way.

When asked if Williams, a 12-year board veteran who [lost his seat in the 2014 General Election](#) to Barbara Jackson-McIntosh will take the vacant position, Ross said it was a decision Williams was holding "close to his chest." Ross added, however, he believes Williams will take the seat.

At the press conference, Ross released documents to the media showcasing his educational background and positions he has held throughout his career.

"I've served this community for 51 years," he told *VI Consortium*. "Most people who know of me today, don't know that, and basically I took an opportunity to share with the press a snapshot of the accomplishments that were a part of my 51 years [of service], that I was instrumental in causing to happen."

Ross pointed out that he was the administrator of St. Croix when the Point Udall Monument was built and helped formed the committee that approved the project. Ross also said he was the chairman of the Racing Commission for 17 years, and was instrumental in building the barns and stadium at the Randall "Doc" James race track. Ross, making known many of his other accomplishments, also revealed he was the principal at Central High School when the gymnasium was built.

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"The current chairman, [Adelbert Bryan] has made the board dysfunctional," Ross said. "He has spent more time carrying his board members to court and challenging their decisions, than working with the board to resolve the decisions. It is either his way or no way."

Ross said his decision to leave the board was not based on the differences he has had with Chairman Bryan.

"I made a pledge in May of 2014 to my Democratic colleagues, three of us were running, and the pledge was if the three of us don't get elected and I was elected, I would yield to the person who did not get elected. So, I'm just fulfilling the pledge," he said. "Because there is no need for me to hold on to the seat when I have a younger, more vibrant member, who got almost the same amount of votes that I did, to serve."

When pressed on his incessant referencing to what he deemed as Bryan's obstructive habits, Ross said: "Because I was trying to talk about how dysfunctional the board has become because of his leadership."

Ross went on to outline a series of decisions he said Bryan made that he believes renders the board "dysfunctional."

"Dysfunctional in the sense that the board members are no longer working together or coming to consensus and implementing decisions," Ross said. "He came on the board and the first thing he did was instigated a recall to get rid of all six members. That failed, but it cost the people of the Virgin Islands \$54,000 because we had to hire our own attorneys with the approval of the board.

"[Bryan] took all the old machines and put them in storage at \$800 a month--it's been past ten months [so] that's \$8,000. [And] they are still there. [Bryan did this] without authorization.

"He hired people to work [during] the Primary Elections [and] rented cars without authorization. And the rest of us driving our own cars up and down, doing different things, doing all kinds of stuff," Ross said.

Ross said the board authorizes vehicle rental, which it did for the General Election in November; however, he said the body did not give authorization during the Democratic Primary in August.

Ross did not reveal to *VI Consortium* what his future plans are; however, he said there were many other avenues through which he could continue to serve the Virgin Islands, and that he would do so "until the Maker makes me stop. Trust me."

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