

The Virgin Islands Consortium

PFA Authorizes \$300,000 For Security Services Company To Assess VIPD

VIC News / **Published On March 24, 2015 11:57 AM /**

Cynthia Graham **March 24, 2015**



At a Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority board of directors meeting held Monday on St. Thomas and chaired by Gov. Kenneth E. Mapp, seven resolutions were adopted, one of which authorized a contract of up to \$300,000 with [T&M Protection Resources, LLC](#) for the purpose of the New York-based security services company completing a full review and assessment of the Virgin Islands Police Department.

Calling the undertaking a "Police Assessment Study," the resolution said the study will primarily focus on "police personnel matters, organizational structure and management, use of technology, and crime reduction and prevention strategies." Furthermore, the study is expected to assess the VIPD's "facilities and fleet for adequacy and equipment

needs."

In order to finance the project, the PFA says it currently has on deposit more than \$300,000 from funds previously made available in 2013 through its authorization of the issuance of up to \$7,000,000 aggregate principal of gross receipt taxes loan notes that were used to purchase a fleet of vehicles and related equipment for the VIPD. Only \$6,700,000 had been used.

The PFA resolution comes on the heels of Mapp's announcement while giving a speech at a cruise industry conference in Miami last week that the V.I. government would be working with "folks who were responsible for the restructuring and re-positioning of the NYPD under Mayor Giuliani that are going to be in the Virgin Islands working with our law enforcement team to do a complete, top-to-bottom assessment of the VIPD."

At the conference, Mapp elaborated on his plans for the VIPD.

"We're going to change our recruitment strategies, we're going to exchange officers with departments on the mainland, we're going to send our leadership team to schools on the mainland that are sponsored by other police departments to bring professional law enforcement and policing into the community," he said.

He admitted the government's investment in law enforcement and other first responders had been neglected.

"We recognize that we have to make a very big investment in our first-responder community," he said. "We have tremendously dedicated first responders, police officers, EMTs, fire fighters and the like, but we have not really invested in their training, and given them the resources and given them the tools to professionalize the job that they do."

Mapp, who said his "first real job" was that of a police trainee in New York City where he worked for 3-1/2 years in the 83rd precinct in Brooklyn "at a time when it was rife with crime and violence," said he knows that it is possible, through good policing, for communities with a crime problem to get a handle on it.

"We have seen policing take a trajectory that crime in many of our worse places in America have been brought under control," he said. "That the way we teach, and the opportunities we give our young people, and the after-school programs that we support, and recognizing the families in distress and need help and support, that as we do these things, that we change the whole environment in which crime festers."

In addition to the stateside partnerships for professional development and training of VIPD officers, Mapp said his administration will begin training the next generation of law enforcement professionals from as early as high school.

"We are going to be opening and launching, in our high schools, a law enforcement cadet corps to begin the process of growing our talent in law enforcement to provide the kinds of services and policing that the islands need," the governor explained.

Mapp said the contract with T&M is phase one of his planned overhaul of the territory's police department.

