

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## V.I. Next Gen Network To Hold Board Meeting In Face Of C.E.O.'s Rising Tension With I.S.P.s

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Next Generation (V.I.N.G.N.) will hold an important board meeting on Thursday at 10:00 a.m., following a lively Senate hearing where the firm's CEO, Dr. Tonjia Converdale, clashed with some senators over V.I.N.G.N.'s path forward, and whether the semiautonomous entity should start providing internet services to residents.

The move would abandon V.I.N.G.N.'s role as a wholesale bandwidth supplier to the local internet service providers (I.S.P.s), and, according to Senator Kurt Vialet and other senators, would hurt companies that employ Virgin Islanders.

For Dr. Coverdale, however, her goal was to ensure that senators and residents understood the power of V.I.N.G.N. and what it can do for the territory — even if it meant upsetting those who resist change.

“My goal is to make sure that this technology touches every Virgin Islander because I really understand the potential that it has to transform the economy. So I strove to be very truthful and I know that there are a lot of feathers that I ruffled,” she said in her closing remarks at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall [early February](#). “However, my goal was to make sure that if I’m not sitting here and this is my last time addressing you guys, that you would know what the technology can do. And don’t let anybody tell you that it can’t do it. Think big and understand that we really do have the power.”

Aside from the dispute in the territory, Dr. Coverdale said V.I.N.G.N.'s network is so powerful that major firms — including one that wants to invest \$1 billion in an undisclosed project on St. Croix — have been in talks with her for the network’s services. She said that just one such client could yield roughly \$1 million a month for the territory, an estimate that piqued the interest of Senator Nereida Rivera-O’Reilly and others.

Dr. Coverdale’s vision is indeed gargantuan. In September of last year, she told The Consortium that St. Croix stood to be the next [Silicon Valley of the Caribbean](#).

“I want people to understand what we have here in the Virgin Islands. We are a major player,” she said. “I do want to say that St. Croix is going to be the epicenter for this technological revolution. We have targeted here, starting with the [Cisco academy](#), and St. Croix is going to be the Silicon Valley of the Caribbean.”

But Dr. Coverdale also revealed that V.I.N.G.N.'s board was opposed to the expansion in the U.S., as they would rather focus on providing service to local government agencies. It's one of the reasons why Thursday's meeting is especially important, as it could reveal the board's thinking -- whether they fall inline with Dr. Coverdale's vision to thrust the company into a money-making machine for the government by expanding outward; and their stance on Dr. Coverdale's frustration with local I.S.P.s, which she contends are moving to slow in providing quality high-speed internet to residents.

The meeting is open to all by calling 1712-832-8300 and entering upon prompt the access code: 1020626.

*Feature Image: Dr. Coverdale preparing to give testimony at a Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture & Planning hearing in February.*

*Image Credit: V.I. Legislature.*