

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Morale Rise At Bureau Of Corrections After Salary Increase, B.O.C. Director Says

VIC News / **Published On June 10, 2016 10:49 PM /**

Staff **June 10, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- Employee morale at the Bureau of Corrections is on the rise as a result of [recent salary increases](#) authorized by Governor Kenneth Mapp and other efforts to better train and equip staff, BOC Director Rick Mullgrav reported Friday via a Government House press release.

According to the release, B.O.C. officers were among thousands of government employees granted raises by Mr. Mapp this year. The Corrections officers saw these raises reflected in their June 9th paychecks and, as all raises are retroactive to January 1, 2016, they can also look forward to getting a lump sum for back pay later this month, the release says.

The Administration has said that the raises for government workers [average about \\$5,000 annually](#).

“Corrections officers are truly grateful to Governor Mapp and Lt. Governor Potter for keeping their promises and seeing the salary increases through,” Mr. Mullgrav said. “Ever since we confirmed that they would receive these increases there has been a real upswing in morale - BOC staff are finally seeing the benefits of their hard work.”

Union leaders echoed the B.O.C. director’s statements about improved attitudes and conditions at the Bureau.

“Morale has increased tremendously,” said Acting B.O.C. Chief Vida Edwards, who also serves as Assistant Shop Steward for the Seafarers International Union. “As a senior officer of 17 years, I can say that it has been a long time coming for all the hardworking men and women of Corrections. We want to thank Governor Mapp very much for bringing this to fruition.”

Mr. Mullgrav said the B.O.C. was hard at work making plans to improve facilities for prisoners, provide training opportunities for staff and to comply with the terms of a nearly 30-year old federal consent decree. In March, 105 prisoners were transferred off-island to Florida and Arizona in order for BOC to complete major improvements at Golden Grove on St. Croix, where the majority of the territory’s offenders are incarcerated.

“One of our recent achievements is the implementation of video visitation,” he said. “For the first time this will allow family members to come to the facility on either island and visit with loved ones that are being housed in the United States. We will also be using it for advice of rights hearings.”

Mr. Mulgrav said the first major facility renovation will be to Golden Grove’s kitchen and cafeteria. Work is expected to commence on June 20, 2016. “Due to the poor condition of the cafeteria the inmates have not been able to utilize it for years,” he said.

The director also expressed his thanks to the 31st Legislature for supporting the Administration's efforts to fund raises for B.O.C. employees.

Feature Image: Golden Grove Correctional Facility (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC).