

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Police Department Promotes 45 Officers On St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- Family and friends of 45 police officers gathered at Government House here on Monday morning to witness a promotional ceremony held for their loved ones, as 7 officers were promoted to captain, 12 to lieutenant and 26 to sergeant.

The event, a similar of which will be held in St. Thomas on Tuesday with roughly the same number of officers being promoted, was the first promotional event for V.I.P.D. officers since the Mapp administration took office; the administration has so far held four graduation ceremonies that has increased the V.I.P.D.'s manpower.

During his talk, Governor Kenneth Mapp said that with just about 300 officers making up the entire V.I.P.D., the promotion of what will be 90 officers to supervisory ranks

represents almost a third of the department.

"I am charging Police Commissioner Delroy Richards, in the next 12 months, to fill 100 more vacancies as police officers in the Virgin Islands Police Department to bring our compliment to 400," Mr. Mapp said.

The governor said that the government had been spending nearly \$18 million annually in overtime, a model that was unsustainable, he said. Mr. Mapp said that asking officers to work an average of 80 hours weekly "is not something that can be done over and over and over." The territory's leader then committed to supporting the force and ensuring that it becomes one of the best police departments in the U.S.

"This department will become one of the rising stars of police departments in the United States of America, because we will support our officers, our supervisors, our police commissioner and the leadership of the Virgin Islands Police Department to deliver to the people of the Virgin Islands law enforcement service and protection second to none," Mr. Mapp said. He thanked officers who show up to work daily and perform -- sometimes under difficult circumstances.

"You will continue to get our support, you will continue to receive the services and equipment you need, and in short, we will have your back," he added.

Commissioner Delroy Richards said today's ceremony represented many months of discussions and planning between the V.I.P.D. and the various bargaining units. He later told reporters that the promotions would cost the V.I.P.D. less than \$300,000 annually territory-wide for the officers, adding that the raises -- some officers might not even see increases in their salaries -- were minuscule at best.

"It's not really a great increase; some of them will receive a couple hundred dollars, some will receive like \$1200. Their salary is already set, and their pay plan set. They have not negotiated contracts in years for salaries, so the salaries are basically frozen. Some of them might not even benefit money-wise from the promotion. It's just an advancement that gives them the authority to make certain decisions," Mr. Richards said. He said the police department had already budgeted for the promotions.

The commissioner also said that the officers' contract mandates that tenor determines pay. "A new sergeant will not make the same like a sergeant that's been there for 15 or 20 years," he said.

Even so, the commissioner said the promotions were a longtime coming. "I think it's deserving, they've waited years for it, some of them," he said. Mr. Richards also said that the promotions would help with the V.I.P.D.'s [protracted consent decree](#).

In his remarks, St. Croix Police Chief Winsbut McFarland struck a more stern tone.

"The old saying that the higher you go, the less you do, is just that, an old saying. As managers and supervisors, in your new positions, you will be held responsible for managing personnel and resources. You're expected to lead and guide your subordinates into meeting the objectives of the department, to which you will be held accountable for. And for those of you who made your calls one way or the other to influence your assignment, rest assured [that] all of you here today to be promoted, your

hands will be held to the fire. You will perform regardless [of] your assignment. The days of laying back doing nothing while waiting to be paid are gone," Chief McFarland said.

Promoted to the rank of Captain: Lieutenants Petra Olsen, Sidney Elskoe, Edmund Walters, Dennis Vanterpool, Clyde Newton, Dino Herbert and Joseph Platt.

Promoted to the rank of Lieutenant: Sergeants Richard Matthews, Hermina Rivera, Marisol Colon, Mark Corneiro, Cecil Gumbs, Deborah Hodge, Naomi Joseph, Isaac Porter, Herman Lynch Jr., Emanuel Turner Jr., Terrence Desormeaux and Leslie Williams.

Promoted to the rank of Sergeant: Officers Sahmantha Smith, Keisha Benjamin, Darius George, Cynthia St. Luce, Gail Liburd, Roland Huertas, Frankie Ortiz, Kirk Fieulleateau, Terance Aaron, Denise Skov-Santos, Antonette Sargeant, Sean Santos, Cynthia Francis, Alexander Moorehead IV, Cassandra Jhero, Miguel Charriez, Vincent Heyliger, Arthur Joseph, Nadine Samuel, Benjamin Alecia, Dave Looby, Aldemar Santos, Tehran Parris, Mario Christian, Karen Stout and Luis Ortiz.

Superior Court Magistrate Judge Jessica Gallivan administered the oath.

Feature Image: Officer Luis Ortiz is pinned by his wife. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)