

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Will Soon Announce Winsbut McFarland As Territorial Chief Of Police

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Governor Kenneth Mapp will soon announce Winsbut McFarland, currently chief of police on St. Croix, as the USVI's territorial chief of police, The Virgin Islands Consortium can confirm. A pending announcement by the governor during an upcoming press conference is expected as early as Monday, although Government House had not issued an invite to media houses as of Wednesday.

V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards, in an interview with this publication today, would not confirm nor deny that Chief McFarland would be announced as territorial chief, but he did confirm that Mr. Mapp will hold a press conference on July 24, where "we'll be considering restructuring within the police department from a management and

operational standpoint." Mr. Richards said, adding, "I know the governor intends to make



Winsbut McFarland

The plan has been in the making for months now, The Consortium has learned. Chief McFarland, whose responsibilities will surge more than two-fold upon taking the position, will crisscross the islands and attempt to implement strategies proven to work on St. Croix in St. Thomas, whose crime rate -- especially regular homicides -- surged in the early months of 2017. But St. Croix's regular homicide count has steadily climbed to match Charlotte Amalie's, a frustrating reality that lays bare the complexity of effectively fighting deadly crime in the territory.

As of today, 10 regular homicides have been reported on St. Croix for 2017, and 14 regular homicides on St. Thomas during the same time. When vehicular homicides are factored in, the count climbs to 31 territory-wide, to include [last night's vehicular homicide](#), according to information provided by Mr. Richards.

While the commissioner did not speak on Chief McFarland's new position, he said territorial police chief isn't a new position. Mr. Richards himself was a territorial police chief in the 90s, which he retired from in 1994. Following his tenure, Novelle Francis and Jose Garcia were territorial chiefs as well.

The commissioner, who began his current role in 2015, expressed support for such moves, stating that having territorial chiefs "enhances the capabilities of the department, and you're maintaining a sense of consistency in the territory." Speaking on past appointments of territorial chiefs, the commissioner said officials were once worried that the St. Thomas-St. John and the St. Croix police operations were running divergent strategies, and moved to unify the departments with one person at the top.

"Some folks would say, 'Well, what works well in one island might not work well in the other,' but I disagreed with that. I've always said that it's one police department and the policies have to be consistent throughout the territory," Mr. Richards said.

The commissioner in June 2016 announced that he had fired former St. Croix Police Chief Arthur Hector, Sr. and St. Thomas Police Chief Darren Foy. The changes came at a time when violent crime had been unrelenting in the territory, with gun crimes being reported in both districts every week. Chief McFarland and current St. Thomas Police Chief Jason Marsh were given acting chief roles at the time.

The decision to remove the former chiefs came with careful deliberation, Mr. Richards said during the announcement. "We obviously assess the V.I.P.D.'s organizational structure and decided that it was time to make some modifications, and those modifications were done," he said [last year](#). "I think that whenever decisions are made, they are made after careful deliberation that the department needs to move in a different direction."

What role current St. Thomas Chief Marsh will play in the new structure remains to be seen. And whether or not Chief McFarland's lauded efforts in St. Croix will prove effective on a territory-wide scale, will takes months -- if not years -- to determine.