

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Administration, Police Benevolent Associations, Reach Wage Increase Agreement For Police Officers

VIC News / **Published On November 13, 2018 10:54 AM /**

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The Police Benevolent Association in both the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix Districts voted to approve proposed wage increases for police officers, detectives and corporals, many of whom have not seen a step increase for eight years, according to a joint release the associations issued Monday.

“The St. Croix leadership of the Police Benevolent Association greatly appreciates the administration’s attention to their concerns, which were addressed last Monday,” said Jason Viveros, president of the Police Benevolent Association on St. Croix.

“We thank both Commissioner [Delroy] Richards and Governor Mapp for their efforts in ensuring a smooth process on Monday. We look forward to the signed agreement and the realization of the wage increases,” added Kerdin Lewis, vice-president of the association on St. Thomas.

[In October](#), the associations issued a joint resolution of no confidence in the Mapp administration, criticizing the government on a number of grievances.

The resolution said the vote of no confidence was issued to “bring forth to the public the serious concerns about public safety, union busting, and poor treatment of police officers, police detectives, and police corporals.”

It added that the Government of the Virgin Islands was “in violation of the current collective bargaining agreement, which provides for annual step increases to the members of the association, among other violations of the conditions of employment contained in the collective bargaining agreement.”

The unions condemned the government for allegedly not paying police officers overtime for several weeks, and stated that the “mistreatment” from the current administration resulted in “overworked and grossly underpaid officers.”

Following the resolution, the Mapp administration defended itself with its own release, stating through the territory's chief negotiator, Nathalie Tang How, that scheduling conflicts, not negligence, delayed contract negotiations with the associations, and that it had worked to accommodate the unions.

“My office is very successfully working with the territory’s collective bargaining units, but the PBA’s counsel/chief negotiator was unavailable for most of October and then tried to confirm a date at the last minute, which was no longer available following her absence out of the country for almost a month,” Mrs. Tang How said in the government's response late October. “It’s unfortunate that the PBA, despite our ongoing communications and good faith negotiations with them, elected to take this route. It was wholly unnecessary – especially in light of the fact that our next scheduled meeting has been set for November 5. Based on what has transpired with the St. Croix PBA, one must question the politics in play.”

The unions' membership voted to approve the step increases on November 7. Government Kenneth Mapp is expected to sign the agreement.