The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Appoints OMB Director But Fails To Notify Public

Economy / **Published On January 31, 2019 10:36 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert January 31, 2019

Governor Albert Bryan has appointed Jenifer O'Neal as Office of Management and Budget (OMB) director -- one of the most important positions in government right now because of the calamitous state of the territory's finances. But the administration, just as it did when it failed to inform the public that Mr. Bryan had appointed Carol Thomas-Jacobs as acting attorney general of the USVI, failed to notify the media or the public of Ms. O'Neal's appointment.

Ms. O'Neal was on the job introducing herself to OMB employees on Wednesday, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. She was also present at Mr. Bryan's State of the Territory Address, where the governor spelled out the dire condition of the

USVI government, describing it as an operation "distressed," and one with only a small window of opportunity to get it right. Yet with such a gloomy outlook, the governor failed to advise the public that he had chosen someone who will play a great role in his administration's efforts to stabilize and, hopefully, build on territory's economy.

The Office of Management and Budget serves the Bryan administration in overseeing the governor's strategy and vision across the executive branch of government. The office plays an integral role in the administration's policy, budget and management objectives.

Be it carelessness or an oversight, the failure, which has occurred more than once, places a dent in Mr. Bryan's stated intent to run a government that is transparent. Part of transparency is informing the public of pertinent decisions made by the administration, including the appointment of individuals to key roles.

According to her LinkedIn profile, Ms. O'Neal appears to be an experienced individual well suited for the job. The profile says she has over 25 years in finance, and has "consistently provided the analytical, transactional, strategic and foundational leadership to empower strong financial performance and profitable business growth."

"A visionary, driven by challenge and undaunted by obstacles, I devise strategies that eliminate barriers, while providing the facts, tools and financial foundation for decision execution. I have prepared budgets of up to $800M and administered budgets of up to $1.3 Billion," Ms. O'Neal wrote on a her profile, which can be viewed here.

Ms. O'Neal has also worked for the Government of the Virgin Islands in the past. "I strengthened program decisions by overhauling the executive budget document to improve the usability of data. I was also instrumental in developing a 5-year financial forecast plan," she wrote.

In other qualifying information, Ms. O'Neal, through her LinkedIn page, said, "I have represented 2 governments at international meetings, conferences and trainings in Europe, Asia, the U.S. and the Caribbean."

She has a master's degree in business administration focusing on finance and international business.