

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Submits Supplemental Budget To Legislature, Including \$1.8 Million For Police Recruit Effort

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Governor Albert Bryan announced Monday that he has submitted a supplemental budget to the Virgin Islands Legislature as an addendum to his FY 2020 executive budget.

Among the items included in the budget supplemental is funding for the Department of Justice's White Collar Crime Task Force, funding to pay prior year outstanding obligations of the Virgin Islands Government and funding to support clean up of the towns within the territory. According to Richard Motta, the administration's communications director, the \$3 million for prior years' obligations are funds set aside to

pay "various fines and judgements against executive branch agencies dating back as far as 2011.

According to the release, the recent supplemental includes:

- \$3 million to fund prior year outstanding obligations of the Virgin Islands Government;
- \$1.8 million to the Virgin Islands Police Department for two recruit classes of 30 new Police Officers;
- \$1.7 million to fund the Department of Justice's White Collar Crime Task Force;
- \$600,000 to the Department of Public Works for street maintenance and cleaning crews to conduct routine cleanup of towns;
- \$100,000 to the Office of Veterans Affairs to fund an increase to the veteran burial benefit from \$3,500 to \$5,000

Mr. Bryan's FY 2020 budget proposes \$1.2 billion in expenditures, which includes \$69.1 million for debt service payments, \$216.3 million of federal funds, and \$941.9 million of local funds.

The governor's FY 2020 budget assumes no debt financing or new taxes and includes full funding for the pay increases negotiated by the previous administration, which added \$41 million to the Personnel Services section of the budget. It also includes 1 percent set aside for expected salary increases.

The budget also includes a \$75 million set-aside to pay income tax refunds owed to Virgin Islands residents; an increase in the minimum requirement of the Insurance Guarantee Fund from \$10 million to \$20 million and a \$5 million appropriation to the Budget Stabilization Fund, Government House said.

The FY 2020 Executive Budget contains notable increases to the Virgin Islands Fire Service for the transfer of Emergency Medical Service personnel from the Department of Health to the Virgin Islands Fire Service. It also sets aside \$7.1 million in funding for mental health services in the Department of Health for individuals with mental illness who are in, or at risk of entering, the justice system.

The budget calls for equal distribution of general fund resources to both the Schneider Regional Medical Center and the Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital at \$22 million, and an increase to the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation.