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Governor Bryan Demands Amendment to 'Egregious' WICO Board Retro Stipend Pay

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Governor Albert Bryan, Jr.

Governor Albert Bryan on Monday called a West Indian Company Board decision to [retroactively pay board members \\$1,000 each](#) for every meeting held since Nov. 2020, egregious, and said he has demanded that the board immediately amend the action to reflect a duration no longer than one year. If the board action was kept in place, each board member would have received no less than \$27,000.

Speaking to the Consortium in an interview following a ribbon-cutting event for Fly the Whale — the new carrier providing inter-island travel in the USVI — Mr. Bryan deemed the board action unacceptable.

"I too was a little bit shocked this morning when I read in the paper the board members had gotten retroactive going back for three years," Mr. Bryan said. "So I immediately called up the board member and said we can't have that happen. We went through a bad period and I know we reimbursed the employees, but we can't go all the way back to three years. So they're going to correct that moving forward and make sure that we right-size everything."

The board member the governor refers to in his comment is Jason Charles, who became the chairman of the WICO board when the board removed Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte from the chairmanship in executive session during a Friday meeting, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

"People do a tremendous job coming on these boards; it's a lot of time, sacrifice — they're in the public answering questions about what's going on, so I have no problem with them being compensated for it. But to go back three years is a little egregious, so we corrected that and straightened that up," Mr. Bryan further stated.

The board in November 2020 had [suspended its \\$1,500 stipend](#) that each board member received every time a meeting was called, as the Covid-19 pandemic led to severe financial difficult for the entity. The reinstated compensation will see each board member receiving \$1,000.

WICO leaders have contended that because it operates as a private firm — where board members are paid handsomely — the rules are different from government-run entities. The issue with this argument is that WICO is still government-owned. Additionally, at privately held companies, payments to board members are influenced by several factors, including the size and successes of these publicly traded firms — most of which have billions of dollars in market value.