



2023

Festival REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the activities organized to commemorate the 69th Anniversary of the Emancipation Celebrations held in 2023. The report that follows has been labeled, Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee Annual Report 2023. The report is documented in five parts. Part One comprises an overview by the Chairman, and background information on the composition of the Committee. Part Two includes summary reports of all the festival celebrations executed by the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee and its subcommittees. The Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Financial Analysis is presented in Part Three with Parts Four and Five comprising the Appendices and Photo Gallery, respectively.

OVERVIEW

The 2023 festival season began with the Virgin Gorda Easter Festival, which led the way for the 69th Emancipation Celebration on Tortola in July.

The Festival Village was named the Irene Penn-O’Neal Festiville in recognition of Mrs. Irene Penn-O’Neal who has been a contributor and participant in BVI Festival for many years.

The Irene Penn-O’Neal Festiville boasted many energetic and well attended evenings and events. There was music for every age bracket, and this all took place without any major incidents of violence. Patrons as well as vendors including Booth Owners were pleased with the influx of persons throughout the festival season.

The public was also very pleased at the return of Coney Island in the Festival Village for 2023, as this was a very exciting time for vendors, as Coney Island is a significant draw during village nights for children and young persons.

Coney Island rides were provided by Island Rides out of St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands, after careful consideration and a majority vote was cast by members of the VIFFC Executive in relation to the Coney Island options, which included rides from various parts of Puerto Rico as well.

Both the Festival Village and Coney Island fall under the purview of Vice Chair, Mr. Birchfield Lettsome, who was assisted by Mr. James Lettsome and his team of the Coney Island Sub-Committee.

Part I - Overview of Virgin Islands' Festival & Fairs Committee

The Virgin Islands Festivals & Fairs Committee Act, 2005 provides for the establishment of a body known as the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee (VIFFC). Section 4.3 of the Act gives the VIFFC exclusive jurisdiction to organize, conduct, promote and manage festivals and other events. The body corporate has been given the distinct responsibility to do the following:

- A. Prepare, conduct and manage annual festivals and other entertainment activities designated under sub-section (2).
- B. Initiate cultural and recreational activities and encourage public participation in those activities.
- C. Undertake and assist in the development of projects that will generate funds for the Committee and for the purpose of providing financial support to any organization that is engaged in social, cultural or charitable activities for the benefit of the public.
- D. Advise the Minister on policy issues related to the conduct of festivals and other activities in the Territory.
- E. Advise the Minister on such other matters as may be referred to the Committee by the Minister.
- F. Perform such other acts or things as the Committee may consider necessary for the effective development and promotion of festivals and other cultural activities in the Territory.

VIRGIN ISLANDS FESTIVALS & FAIRS COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Executive Board is comprised of the following persons:

- ❖ Dirk Walters – Chairman
- ❖ Birchfield Lettsome – Co- Chairman
- ❖ Luz Sanchez – Treasurer
- ❖ Ishelle Hodge – Member
- ❖ Lynette Harrigan – PRO and BVI Tourist Board Representative
- ❖ Stuart Donovan – Member
- ❖ Dion Kendall – Member
- ❖ Marietta Flax-Headley – Member
- ❖ Sasha Flax – Member
- ❖ Gregory Callwood – Jost Van Dyke Representative
- ❖ Ottley Hodge – Member

- ❖ Delia Jon Baptiste - Member
- ❖ Harella Wheatley – Anegada Representative

VIFFC- VIRGIN GORDA EASTER FESTIVAL

VIRGIN GORDA SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

There was no Virgin Gorda Easter Festival report submitted.

VIRGIN ISLANDS FESTIVAL & FAIRS VIRGIN GORDA SUB-COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Executive committee of the VGFC was headed by Chairman Franklin Walters.

In addition to the Virgin Gorda Executive Sub-Committee, there were many supporters in the Virgin Gorda community that have selflessly given of their time and energy to support the team to make their fundraisers and events a success.

The following persons made up the VGFC Executive Team:

- ❖ Franklin Walters, Sub-Committee Chairperson
- ❖ Shaila Stevens, Sub-Committee Vice Chairperson
- ❖ Samatha Stevens, Treasurer
- ❖ Shevonne Stevens, Public Relations Officer
- ❖ Andre Ramgobin, Member
- ❖ Sasha Flax, Member & Sister Island Representative for Virgin Gorda

VIRGIN GORDA EASTER FESTIVAL 2023 FUNDRAISING

There were no fundraising events executed by the Virgin Gorda Easter Festival Sub-Committee in 2023.

VIRGIN GORDA FOOD FAIR 2023 REVIEW

As a Festival warm up, the Virgin Gorda Food Fair was held on Saturday, 8th April 2023 along Lee Road.

VIRGIN GORDA EASTER FESTIVAL 2023 REVIEW

Though there were many positive moments throughout Virgin Gorda Easter Festival 2023, this was the most challenging experience dealing with the Virgin Gorda Easter Festival Sub-Committee, as their planning fell far behind, and many areas were not properly organized.

There was a significant lack of communication and follow up from the Chairman of the Virgin Gorda Sub-Committee, which led to very frustrating occurrences, including several issues with Ground Transportation for bands and artists, accommodations, not enough lead time for adequate marketing and promotion, and severe breakdown of communication and moral with other members of the Virgin Gorda Sub-Committee.

- ❖ A very small number of committee members to execute tasks on Virgin Gorda
- ❖ The current location and size for the Easter Festival Village is not ideal
- ❖ No fundraising activities by Easter Festival Sub-Committee
- ❖ No Report submitted by Easter Festival Sub-Committee in accordance with the VIFFC act of 2005 which states that reports must be submitted within one month following the event.

VIRGIN GORDA EASTER FESTIVAL 2023 CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the appointment of the Chairman for Virgin Gorda Easter Festival, which has now expired, not be renewed, as there have not been reports submitted in accordance with the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Act, 2005 and has not shown satisfactory performance and leadership skills during the last two Easter Festivals.



2023

**Emancipation
FESTIVAL**

EVENT: 69th Anniversary of Emancipation Festival in the Virgin Islands

DATE: 31st July – 9th August, 2023

THEME: “It’s a Cultural Jamboree, So Let’s Fete & Be Free for Festival 2023”

ROAD TOWN SUB-COMMITTEE (VIFRTC) 2023 REPORT

VENUE: The Road Town Festival Village was named Irene Penn-O’Neal Festiville

HONOUREE: Mrs. Irene Penn-O’Neal

DATE: 31st July - 9th August, 2023.

This year’s village was an extravaganza of local and international entertainment (music and dance) and food, which showcased VI culture and history. It was a cultural village of 23 booths, inclusive of the VIFFC and Royal Virgin Islands Police Force booths, respectively. The village also contained 11 vendors, selling toys, typical Festival food treats (cotton candy, candy apple, ice cream, popcorn, snow cone, pizza, etc.) and adult games of chance.

The Road Town Village Committee was led by Mr. Ottley Hodge, Chairman. It consisted of several members, who assisted with all areas of the Irene Penn-O’Neal Festiville. The committee was very effective and was able to cover all areas under the village, which included planning, testing, implementation, maintenance and hospitality, vendor Coney Island, backstage, and gate areas.

Below is the board of administrators who were some key persons on the committee and contributed to the success of the Road Town Festival Village:

- Chairman, Ottley Hodge’s duties included the following:

- Chairing committee meetings; planning and executing the layout; ensuring the successful completion of village events; ensuring that the booth and booth owners were up to safety and environmental codes and operational by established deadlines; ensuring that the entire village and Coney Island were safe and secure (health, environmental, and electrical), ensuring that facilities (bathrooms, etc.) were up to acceptable standards; coordinating electrical and plumbing works; ensuring that the village was appropriately decorated; and serving as a liaison between the booth owners and government agencies to ensure duties were carried out.



- Co-chairman, Ms. Stepheney Williams duties included the following:



- Assisting with the planning and implementation of the village layout; inspecting the booths, vendors and Coney Island; ensuring that Coney Island was set up in accordance with established standards, functional, and started by the appointed date; ensuring that the rides were operated safely; overseeing the collection of funds and distribution of tickets for Coney Island; and creating schedules and managing the workers from the committee for Coney Island.

Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee assisted the Entertainment Manager with the local and international entertainers. These members worked alongside Mr. Stuart Donovan and his team. Their work covered backstage, welcoming acts, cleanliness of areas, fulfilling rider requirements, signaling acts, assisting the stage manager and any other task assigned.

Catering

Ms. Tonya Malone, a member of the Virgin Islands Culinary Team, was assigned to ensure that food was provided as requested. Mrs. Malone met expectations.

Entertainment Schedule

There were significant issues that affected the VIFFC financially due to the air lift situation, as the airlines that fly throughout the Caribbean had multiple cancellations that forced the committee to purchase charter flights, which came at significant costs.

Airline tickets should also be purchased more in advance to save on costs.



Virgin Islands EMANCIPATION FESTIVAL 2023

VI FESTIVALS & FAIRS COMMITTEE

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JULY

Day	Event	Location
SUNDAY 23	PRINCE & PRINCESS	MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS COMPLEX
FRIDAY 28	FESTIVAL WARM-UP TRAMP	CORPORATE EDITION
SATURDAY 29	KIDDIES FIESTA	ENID SCATLIFFE SCHOOL GROUNDS
MONDAY 31	VILLAGE OPENING	GOSPEL EXPLOSION

AUGUST

Day	Event	Location
TUESDAY 1	FESTIVAL GLOW NIGHT	
WEDNESDAY 2	FESTIVAL RHYTHM & DRIVE	
THURSDAY 3	TORCH LIGHT PROCESSION BIG PEOPLE PARTY MISS JUNIOR BVI	HLSCC
FRIDAY 4	CULTURAL FOOD FAIR INTERNATIONAL REGGAE NIGHT	
SATURDAY 5	INTERNATIONAL SOCA NIGHT	
SUNDAY 6	EMANCIPATION SERVICE AT SUNDAY MORNING WELL EMANCIPATION SERVICE AT STICK-IT LONG LOOK 10AM - 1PM MISS BVI MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS COMPLEX MUSICAL MIX NIGHT	
MONDAY 7	RISE & SHINE SUNRISE SERVICE AUGUST MONDAY PARADE	
TUESDAY 8	FESTIVAL FLAG FEST	
WEDNESDAY 9	EAST END RISE & SHINE CULTURAL & HERITAGE VILLAGE GREEN LAND FIELD 10AM UNTIL BEACH JAM LONG BAY FESTIVAL LAST LAP RT VILLAGE	
THURSDAY 10	CARROT BAY FISHERMAN'S DAY	
FRIDAY 11	CARROT BAY CULTURAL FIESTA	











THE TRADITIONAL TORCH LIGHT *Procession*

**VI. FESTIVALS
& FAIRS COMMITTEE**

**IT'S A CULTURAL JAMBOREE,
SO LET'S FETE & BE FREE FOR FESTIVAL 2023**

THURSDAY, 3RD AUG, 2023

**STARTING FROM THE NOEL LLOYD PARK
ONTO THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS
@ 7:00PM**

**MUSIC BY
ZION SOUNDS**

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING YOUR TORCHES

Electrical

Mr. Ramon Sprauve of Advanced Wiring, was the service provider to connect the electrical power of the entire village which encompassed lighting, stage acoustics, booth equipment, vendors' equipment, etc. The electrician and his crew were able to finish and get the electricity connected to the booths and running before the deadline. All electrical equipment was purchased and are now assets of the Virgin Islands Festivals & Fairs Committee to be used for years to come which will see the cost for electrical installation decreasing significantly..

Lighting

It is recommended that the Festival Grounds be more adequately lit for large-scale events such as Emancipation Festival, as there are many pockets of dimly lit areas including the permanent restroom facilities.

The grounds were reserved for the VIFFC for a period of one month. Poor management of the grounds cost VIFFC monies as the Committee was expected to meet and exceed certain standards.

Ground Maintenance and Plumbing

Ground maintenance and plumbing services were handled by Mr. Austin Todman.

Mr. Todman has proven to be exceptionally reliable, professional, and willing to go above and beyond to assist in matters pertaining to the festival village.

Restroom Facilities

Bathroom services were contracted to KB's Cleaning Services. This building is managed and maintained all year round by the Office of the City Manager.

Portable bathrooms were also used for the duration of the Festival Village. Connect Enterprises Ltd was contracted to provide this service.

Stage

Frontline Systems was contracted to provide stage and sound for the Irene Penn-O'Neal Festiville.

Mr. Jason Smith of Frontline Systems remained professional, courteous and was very accommodative to the needs of the Committee when called upon.

Security

The Emancipation Festival 2023 was celebrated without any major incidents. Security was provided by FLR Enterprises, who met the Committee's expectations. This security provider was on site promptly before the event began on a nightly basis, ensured patrols were frequent throughout each day and night, and supplied additional personnel when needed as challenges arose.

Parking for booth owners and vendors were clearly marked, which helped with any issues associated with parking.

Police

RVIPF is an instrumental body as it relates to national security and events. RVIPF needs to have a presence at the Festival Village from early in the evening before patrons start to pay for entry.

Sponsors

The major sponsors of the Irene Penn O'Neal Festiville were the Government of the Virgin Islands, BVI Tourist Board, National Bank of the Virgin Islands, Road Town Wholesale, Caribbean Cellars and CCT.

Departmental Assistance

Public Works Department (PWD)

The team at the Public Works Department was extremely helpful in the creation of the layout plan for the village. The VI Festivals and Fairs Road Town Sub-committee was able to set up a new layout for the village in time for a successful opening. The architects at the department went beyond the normal work hours to accommodate the committee with creating a plan that worked with the stage position, and orientation.

It is imperative for the Virgin Islands Festivals and Fairs Committee to have its own office, and, therefore, it is recommended that the space become available exclusively to the VIFFC for future Emancipation Festivals.

Other Government Departments

- Inland Revenue
- Trade Department
- Environmental Health
- Labour Department

The above listed offices worked hand in hand in ensuring that the Festival was a success and carried out their functions without any deliberate hold-up to the effectiveness of the festival. Government departments like these need to be applauded for their stellar contributions.

Assets

Venue

The Festival Grounds require more upkeep and regular maintenance to be aesthetically pleasing with fencing, drainage, landscaping and paving in order to produce world class events for Emancipation Festival and other events throughout the year including fundraising activities.

Management of the Festival Grounds does not fall under the purview of the VIFFC.

PARADE SUB-COMMITTEE 2023 REPORT

The VI Festivals and Fairs Parade Sub-Committee report was submitted by Marietta Headley, Chairperson of the Parade Sub-Committee.

Committee Purpose

The committee was mandated to organize and ensure the successful execution of the Territory's annual Emancipation Festival Parade slated for the first Monday in August. This year, the committee was tasked with doing this in a timely, efficient and cost effective manner, as the British Virgin Islands was celebrating its 69th anniversary of the Emancipation Celebration. With a celebration of this magnitude scheduled, the committee was tasked with ensuring that this year's parade was a memorable one. Just like any other event, the committee faced both positive and negative aspects during the planning stages of this event.

Parade prizes based on judging were reintroduced for 2023

Rise and Shine

Two bands VIBE and ABM and two DJ trucks were granted permission to participate in the Road Town Rise and Shine 2023. The Rise and Shine started at 4:00 a.m. and traveled on the west-bound lane of the highway to the back of the Central Administration Building. There were no incidents reported along the Rise and Shine route.

There was also a Warm Up Tramp on Friday 28th July, 2022 which featured entertainment by ABM and Xtreme.



Parade

There were 28 entries registered in the August Monday Parade.

Parade Challenges

The committee took time to gather feedback and suggestions from the troupes and bands that participated in this year's Emancipation celebration. Please see these below:

- More incentives towards road march winners was suggested. (Reconsider the past act of using bands as ambassadors for the BVI, i.e. entering a truck in Labour Day celebrations with the Road

March winner). This will go far in promoting the BVI and its cultural festivities. In summary, if



Financial Statements

BVI Festival and Fairs Committee

2023

Financial statements in U.S. dollars

REVENUE			
Government Subvention	\$	1,020,000.00	
Coney Island Tickets	\$	193,100.00	
Ticket Sales	\$	598,500.00	
Sponsorship	\$	132,400.00	
Vendor Fees	\$	51,700.00	
Concessions and Bar	\$	29,100.00	
Popularity Tickets	\$	11,200.00	
Net sales			\$2,036,000
EXPENSES			
Entertainers			\$826,500
Performance Fee	\$	508,000.00	
Travel Expenses	\$	185,500.00	
Accommodations	\$	57,800.00	
Ground Transport	\$	32,000.00	
Per diems	\$	43,200.00	
Equipment Rentals			\$755,800
Stage Sound Lights	\$	419,600.00	
Backline: Musical Instruments	\$	44,600.00	
Tents	\$	26,700.00	
Furniture	\$	13,600.00	
Security/Crowd Control	\$	6,200.00	
Coney Island	\$	245,100.00	
Construction			\$52,200
Lumber	\$	6,100.00	
Electrical Wiring	\$	21,500.00	

Plumbing	\$	6,000.00	
Labor	\$	10,100.00	
Site Preparation	\$	7,000.00	
Paint	\$	1,500.00	
Venue			\$56,600
Rental	\$	11,400.00	
Decorations	\$	28,700.00	
Restroom Rental	\$	16,500.00	
Security			\$64,700
Officers	\$	64,700.00	
Prizes			\$63,500
Money	\$	54,000.00	
Trophies	\$	3,400.00	
Gifts	\$	6,100.00	
Content Creation			\$52,180
Graphic Design	\$	630.00	
Photography	\$	50,300.00	
Video Production	\$	650.00	
Audio Production	\$	600.00	
Services			\$21,900
Bathroom Attendant	\$	7,200.00	
Bar Staff	\$	6,100.00	
Cleaning	\$	2,200.00	
Health & Safety	\$	6,000.00	
Miscellaneous	\$	400.00	
Contestants			\$34,900
Preparation	\$	28,800.00	
Intl Appearance	\$	1,000.00	
Official Appearance	\$	5,100.00	
Printing			\$16,400
Tickets	\$	8,700.00	
Banners	\$	6,000.00	
Booklets	\$	1,700.00	
Catering	\$	21,600.00	\$21,600
Utilities	\$	13,300.00	\$13,300
Clothing			\$11,500
Contestants	\$	3,800.00	

Committee Members	\$	7,700.00	
Trucking	\$	5,400.00	\$5,400
Supplies			\$9,316
Stationery	\$	916.00	
Booth Supplies	\$	8,400.00	
Taxes			\$7,800
Wharfage	\$	7,800.00	
Advertising			\$16,300
Radio	\$	8,600.00	
Online	\$	2,200.00	
TV	\$	4,000.00	
Billboards	\$	1,500.00	
Transportation			\$20,200
Car Rental	\$	8,200.00	
Taxi	\$	9,900.00	
Biz Travel Expenses	\$	2,100.00	
Total expenses			\$2,050,096
Net operating income/loss			-\$14,096