

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, MT. WHELDALE, ST. GEORGE'S  
ON FRIDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2021.**

**PRESENT**

***St. George South-East***  
**Chairman**

Honourable Gregory Bowen, MP - Minister for Finance, Planning, Economic Development, Physical Development, Public Utilities and Energy

***St. George North-West***

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, PC, MP, JP - Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Public Administration, Youth Development, Home Affairs, ICT and Disaster Management

***St. David***

Honourable Oliver Joseph, MP - Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business and CARICOM Affairs

***St. John***

Honourable Alvin Da Breo, MP - Minister for Trade, Industry and Consumer Affairs

***St. George South***

Honourable Nickolas Steele, MP - Minister for Health and Social Security

***Carriacou and Petite Martinique***

Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart, MP - Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Local Government and Legal Affairs

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***St. Mark***

Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste Curwen, MP - Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation  
Climate Resilience and the Environment

***St. George North-East***

Honourable Tobias Clement, MP - Parliamentary Representative for St.  
George North-East & Leader of the  
Opposition

***Town of St. George***

Honourable Peter David, MP - Minister for Agriculture, Lands and  
Forestry

***St. Patrick West***

Honourable Anthony Boatswain, MP - Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary  
Representative for St. Patrick West

**ABSENT**

***St. Andrew South-West***

Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford, MP - Minister for Sports, Culture and the Arts,  
Fisheries and Co-operatives (Excuse  
tendered)

***St. Patrick East***

Honourable Pamela Moses - Minister within the Ministry for National  
Security, Public Administration, Youth  
Development, Home Affairs, ICT and  
Disaster Management wrf Needy

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Assistance, Uniform Allowance, Special  
Projects and ICT (Excuse tendered)

Honourable Kate Lewis, MP

***St. Andrew North-East***

Minister within the Ministry of National  
Security, Public Administration, Youth  
Development, Home Affairs, ICT and  
Disaster Management wrf Youth  
Development(Excuse tendered)

***St. Andrew South-East***

Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP

- Minister for Education, Human  
Resource Development, Information and  
Religious Affairs (Excuse tendered)

***St. Andrew North-West***

Honourable Delma Thomas, MP

- Minister for Social Development,  
Housing and Community Empowerment  
and Minister wrf Hospital Services and  
Community Health Services (Excuse  
tendered)

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Andrew Augustine

- Clerk of Parliament

Mr. Mike Sylvester

- Permanent Secretary (Ministry of  
Finance)

Mrs. Isha Abraham

- Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)  
(Ministry of Finance)

Mr. Philbert Charles

- Accountant General

Mr. Justin Hazzard

- Chief Budget Officer (Ag.) (Ministry of  
Finance)

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- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Mrs. Hilary Joseph   | - | Budget Officer (Ministry of Finance)                             |
| Dr. Kelvin George    | - | Director, Economic & Technical Cooperation (Ministry of Finance) |
| Ms. Chevanne Britton | - | Senior Planning Officer (Ag.) (Ministry of Finance)              |
| Ms. Rachel Payne     | - | Budget Officer (Ministry of Finance)                             |
| Mrs. Raquel Morgan   | - | Recording Secretary (Office of the Houses of Parliament)         |
| Ms. Janelle Palmer   | - | Recording Secretary (Office of the Houses of Parliament)         |
| Mr. Gayvon Mark      | - | IT Officer (Office of the Houses of Parliament)                  |
| Ms. Naphila John     | - | IT Officer (Trainee - Office of the Houses of Parliament)        |

**COMMENCEMENT**

The Chairman, Honourable Gregory Bowen called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

**PRAYERS**

An opening prayer was said by Honourable Oliver Joseph, Parliamentary Representative for St. David.

**WELCOME**

The Chairman acknowledged the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, participants from the Ministry of Finance and the Clerk and his staff at the meeting.

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**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The Chairman requested that the Agenda be adopted and the Committee adopted same.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee considered Item No. 2 on the Agenda, the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, held virtual via Zoom platform on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

**MOTION FOR THE MINUTES, AS HAVING BEEN READ**

A Motion for the Minutes, as having been read, was moved by Honourable Nickolas Steele, and was seconded by Honourable Alvin Da Breo.

**CORRECTIONS AND AMENDMENTS OF MINUTES**

There were no corrections to the Minutes. The Chairman complimented the staff for the Minutes, which was well done.

**MOTION FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES**

A Motion for the confirmation of the Minutes held on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 was moved by Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen and seconded by Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

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Honourable Clement posed a question under Vote 40 – Ministry of Education, to the Committee as to the disbursement and use of the allocated funds of approximately \$2.5m for schools, contractual agreements and sanitisation, since schools were closed for the greater part of the time allotted.

In the absence of the Minister for Education, the Permanent Secretary Finance (Mr. Mike Sylvester) indicated that the funds were granted for expenditure and that the detailed answers would have to be derived from the Ministry of Education.

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The Prime Minister indicated his confidence that the Minister for Education would be able to provide the breakdown of spending at a later date.

Honourable Tobias Clement inquired about the disbursement of funds from the Stimulus Package to persons and entities.

Mr. Sylvester informed the meeting that the programme was slowly ongoing, with components which included the SEED Programme, the Income Support Programme, the Temporary Unemployment Benefits Programme and two programmes at the Grenada Development Bank (GDB) among other programmes. He advised that further details could be provided.

Honourable Tobias Clement questioned whether there were hiccups with the disbursement of funds with the second phase of payments being made from the Stimulus Package.

The Chairman informed the Member that no hiccups were encountered so far with the disbursement of funds.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES OF RECURRENT EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE YEAR 2022**

**VOTE 01                    -            Governor-General                    -            \$1,524,373.00**

Honourable Clement enquired about the rebuilding of the Governor-General's residence. He further commented that consideration should be given to Grenada becoming a Republic.

The Prime Minister stated that requests were made to public contractors or persons for bids under a BOLT System since the local Government was not capable of funding the project presently. He indicated that promises were made by the Government of the United Kingdom that had not come to fruition thus far.

The Prime Minister stated that an estimated amount to reconstruct the building would be \$20m.

The Chairman thanked the Leader of the Opposition for his comment. In response to the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition, he indicated that the President would also need a residence.

PS, Sylvester informed the Committee that the budgeted amount under Vote 1 included the budget for the Integrity Commission.

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**CONSIDERATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION – 2022  
BUDGET**

PS, Sylvester pointed out that the budget item was placed under the Vote of the Governor-General in the sum of \$1,403,145.00.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 02 - PARLIAMENT - \$1,699,931**

Honourable Clement commented on the zero allocation under Capital Expenditure for Parliament. He made recommendations that ongoing maintenance of the facilities should be done and budgeted for.

The Prime Minister indicated that the Ministry of Infrastructure and Works was responsible for the maintenance of all Government buildings under their Budgetary Vote which included Parliament.

Discussions were held.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE OMBUDSMAN PLAN – 2022 BUDGET AND PLAN**

The Chairman pointed out that the item was under Parliament in the sum of \$339,812.00 where the Clerk, as the Accounting Officer, would have oversight.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 03 - SUPREME COURT - \$4,071,672**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 04 - MAGISTRACY - \$1,265,664**

**Agreed.**

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**VOTE 05 - AUDIT - \$1,526,502**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 06 - PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION - \$770,745**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 07 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS - \$880,332**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 08 - PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OFFICE - \$2,204,638**

Honourable Tobias Clement commented on the allocated spending of the Recurrent and Capital Expenditure in the sum of \$580,000.00. He recommended a larger sum of money be allocated for registration of persons in anticipation of an up-coming national general election.

Discussions were held.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 09 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS - \$3,156,503**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 10 - OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER - \$6,686,655**

Honourable Tobias Clement questioned the present system of funds allocated under the Recurrent Expenditure of Vote 10 to Constituency Offices and not under the Parliament Vote as is done within the Westminster operated system.

The Prime Minister stated that a former Clerk of Parliament pointed out the inability of Parliament at the time to manage the process of allocation of funds to the Constituency Offices, and consequently, the Office of the Prime Minister took up that responsibility.

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He stated that audits of vendors projects would soon be completed and that a re-negotiation of the system would be done at the end of the contract period.

The Chairman reiterated that all Departments would be subject to be audited. The Prime Minister commented that the Prime Minister's salary was notably smaller than some Public Servants.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 11 - PRISONS - \$1,333,293.00**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 12 - POLICE - \$11,372,969**

The Prime Minister commented on and complemented the Police Force and its members on their outstanding work and efforts made during the COVID-19 emergency period.

He complimented the members within the Health Sector and Public Service and all other Departments/entities that provided exceptional service.

Honourable Alvin Da Breo recommended that consideration be given to examining the function of the Police Barracks system.

Honourable Kindra Maturine-Stewart commented on the need for a fire tender for the Island of Petite Martinique.

The Chairman stated that consideration would be given to the recommendations made through grant funding as an option.

Honourable Dr. Modeste-Curwen reiterated the importance of having a comprehensive approach, which included putting plans in place to meet the needs for fire tenders for parishes.

The Leader of the Opposition supported the recommendations made, adding that consideration should be given to the provision of a coast guard service for the sister Islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Honourable Peter David commented on the issues related to preadial larceny within the Agricultural Sector and recommended the establishment of a special unit within the Police Force to specifically deal with those challenges.

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The Prime Minister supported the recommendations made under Vote 12 and indicated that the recommended measures be taken. He verified that there were limitations to spending due to COVID-19 and Government commitments that existed.

The Chairman reminded the Committee of their financial obligation to the IMF, World Bank and IFAD stating the Government's (Ministerial) responsibility to develop project proposals to enable returns that would benefit the country.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 14 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR - \$934,889**

Honourable Peter David indicated his satisfaction with the expenditure for the Ministry of Labour. He specified that the plans and goals outlined would be adequately addressed within the requirements of the Budget.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 15 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CIVIL AVIATION, CLIMATE  
RESILIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT - \$20,975,333**

Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen highlighted that there would be improvements in revenue in the Tourism Sector in 2022.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 16 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS & CARICOM AFFAIRS - \$6,979,106**

Honourable Oliver Joseph spoke of the Ministry mobilising resources through external funding for activities in order to depend less on local revenue.

**Agreed.**

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**VOTE 17 - FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT (FIU) - \$565,089**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 18 - MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY, PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, HOME AFFAIRS,  
ICT & DISASTER MANAGEMENT - 57,400,988**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 19 - MINISTRY OF SPORTS, CULTURE & THE ARTS, FISHERIES  
AND CO-OPERATIVES - \$17,900,055**

The Chairman advised that the Minister responsible for Vote 19 had an emergency and could not attend the meeting.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 20 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC UTILITIES AND ENERGY  
- \$160,640,628**

The Leader of the Opposition inquired whether there were plans for the divestment of shares in GRENLEC to Grenadian citizens and other entities.

The Chairman responded that there was a possibility once all requirements were met. He also explained the way forward for the company.

The Prime Minister advised the Chairman to clarify a statement that was made on a local Television Station that the price of energy would not be reduced until the year 2030.

The Chairman denounced the statement.

**Agreed.**

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**VOTE 21 - PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES - \$75,431,188**

Honourable Oliver Joseph pointed out that the increase in Social Security contribution was as a result of the increase in wages and salaries which was something that was often overlooked.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 22 - CHARGES ON ACCOUNT OF PUBLIC DEBT - \$420,376,948**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 25 - CONTRIBUTIONS - \$24,060,50**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 26 - MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
- \$2,543,971**

Honourable Alvin Da Breo highlighted issues that his Ministry was often confronted with, the main ones being liquor licenses, banking hours and poor internet services.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the matter was not only related to consumer affairs but generally. He mentioned that he was writing to the NTRC to complain of poor internet service and also spoke on the price of goods and services and agriculture inputs.

The Chairman suggested that where the prices could not be controlled then the input of subsidy could be examined and also mentioned that an investigation could be done to see if price gouging was the issue.

The Prime Minister pointed out that those issues were not solely tied to Grenada but was being experienced worldwide and expressed that the worldwide pandemic could be responsible. He further articulated that the Consumer Protection Agency should be modernised and used FLOW as an example, which continued to bill customers for services that they had not received. He therefore urged that something be done in order to bring relief to the public.

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Honourable Nickolas Steele also cited the increase in shipment fees and significant delays in delivery.

Honourable Alvin Da Breo spoke further on the issues with the bandwidth and cost, Caribbean Agro Industry monopoly and price gouging.

Honourable Peter David also weighed in on the issues faced in the Agriculture Sector on behalf of the farmers.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 30 - MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT,  
TRANSPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION - \$130,940,93**

Honourable Anthony Boatswain inquired about the status of the St. Patrick Road Project since he saw no allocation.

The Chief Budget Officer gave an update on the project.

Discussions were held and the Chairman gave suggestions as to how the situation could be resolved for the completion of both phases of the project.

It was agreed that the sum of \$2.5m be added to that Vote for the completion of Phase I of the St. Patrick Road Project.

Honourable Boatswain also questioned about funds allocated for the Break Water Project.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance gave a breakdown on the allocation of funds.

Honourable Peter David spoke on the St. John's River Flood Control Project.

The Leader of the Opposition made mention of other projects and inquired of the Perseverance Landfill Project and the impact on the environment.

The Chairman advised the Leader of the Opposition that the project was under the control of the Greanda Solid Waste Management Authority which was a Statutory Body.

**Agreed.**

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**VOTE 35 - MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT - \$67,251,566**

Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen advised that Honourable Delma Thomas asked her to convey to the Committee that she was satisfied with the allocation for that Vote.

Honourable Anthony Boatswain made inquiry on the Chinese Low Income Housing Project.

The Chairman explained that the delay might have been because of the number of applications and the limited number of houses available.

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 36 - MINISTRY OF CARRIACOU AND PETITE MARTINIQUE  
AFFAIRS & LOCAL GOVERNMENT - \$19,535,240**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 40 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, HUMAN RESOURCE  
DEVELOPMENT, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION  
- \$133,531,654**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 50 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY - \$97,056,168**

**Agreed.**

**VOTE 64 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND FORESTRY  
- \$20,437,606**

Honourable Peter David stated that he was satisfied with the allocation of resources, and remarked that there was a problem of implementation and efficiency to be dealt with within the Public Service.

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The Chairman explained the participation of his Ministry to assist with the implementation rate.

Honourable Oliver Joseph made suggestions on the subject and highlighted that it was not a problem faced by one Ministry and must be addressed holistically.

Honourable Anthony Boatswain also weighed in on the matter.

Honourable Oliver Joseph further suggested that the Department of Economic and Technical Corporation be strengthened to help with implementation, citing that Dr. George was overworked.

Honourable Peter David added to the discourse and supported the comments made by Minister Joseph.

The Chairman advised that additional staff would be added to the Unit.

**Agreed.**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**


The Chairman recognised the hard work of the Permanent Secretary and his team.

**ADJOURNMENT/CLOSING PRAYER**

A Motion for the adjournment was moved by the Honourable Anthony Boatswain and seconded by Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen.

Closing prayer was said by Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen.

There being no other business, the Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

  
.....  
Honourable Gregory Bowen  
**CHAIRMAN**