

SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE  
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Held at:

Arthur Abel Complex Conference Room  
56A Prince Street, Frederiksted, St. Croix  
and via Zoom Online Platform

(1:40 p.m. - 3:05 p.m.)

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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025**

\* \* \* \* \*

**DELEGATES PRESENT:**

*Delegate Usie R. Richards, President*  
*Delegate Stedmann Hodge, Jr., Vice-Chair*  
*Delegate John J. Abramson, Jr., Treasurer*  
*Delegate Imani Daniel, Secretary*  
*Delegate Lilliana Belardo de O'Neal*  
*Delegate John M. Canegata*  
*Delegate Devin F. Carrington, Esq.*  
*Delegate Rudel A. Hodge, Jr., Esq.*  
*Delegate Akima Richardson*  
*Delegate Rupert W. Ross, Jr.*  
*Delegate Ronald E. Russell, Esq.*  
*Delegate David Silverman\**

**DELEGATES ABSENT:**

*Delegate Lydia Hendricks*  
*Delegate Arturo Watlington, Jr., Esq.*  
*Delegate Alecia M. Wells*

\*=[Via Zoom On-Line Platform]

**Press Present:**

*Diana Dias - VI Source*

*Janeka Simon - VI Consortium\**

*Marisol Garcia - WTJX Newsfeed\**

I N D E X

<u>ITEM:</u>	<u>Page:</u>
1. MEETING RECONVENED.....	5
2. DISCUSSIONS ON STANDING COMMITTEES:	
Delegate Russell.....	6
Delegate Belardo de O'Neal.....	7
Delegate Silverman.....	23
Delegate S. Hodge.....	26
Delegate Richardson.....	27
Delegate Daniel.....	29
Delegate R. Hodge.....	30
Delegate Ross.....	31
Delegate Carrington.....	33
Delegate Abramson.....	37
President Richards.....	39
3. MOTION TO ADJOURN.....	64
4. ADJOURNMENT.....	69
5. CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER.....	70

1 -----  
2 Thereupon, the meeting convened at 1:40 p.m.  
3 -----

4 PRESIDENT USIE R. RICHARDS: Can we rise out of  
5 recess and convene the Committee of the Whole for the  
6 discussion of the second item on the agenda?

7 And just as a -- for the purpose of information,  
8 since Delegate Silverman saw things being distributed,  
9 the only thing that was being shared to each of the  
10 delegates is the signed Oath of Office by the Chief  
11 Judge of the Superior Court. Those of you who are not  
12 present here on St. Croix, your Oath will be returned  
13 back to the Executive Director's Office on St. Thomas  
14 and you can be able to collect it there and sign  
15 "receipt" so you could have your original copy of your  
16 Oath of Office.

17 Having said that, this is the suggestion that I  
18 am sharing at this point, as stated before we took a  
19 break for lunch:

20 On the subject matter of Standing Committees, its  
21 number, its composition and issues as such, that we're  
22 going to take at least a 'lil half hour for everyone or  
23 anyone, or any delegate, pardon me, who have any  
24 suggested ideas for consideration with the expected hope  
25 that we can finalize the organization of the committees  
by our first Saturday in March meeting so we could

1 proceed with the business.

2 Is there anyone that wants to open up -- any  
3 delegate that would like to open up this discussion on  
4 the subject matter of committees?

5 No one?

6 DELEGATE RONALD E. RUSSELL: Yeah, I would say --

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Russell?

8 -----  
9 DISCUSSIONS ON STANDING COMMITTEES  
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10 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I would say that we  
11 should limit the amount of committees that we have,  
12 because we have 15 people. And three or four commit-  
13 tees, I think, would cover all areas giving each dele-  
14 gate an opportunity to participate meaningfully.

15 Because I reviewed the former Fifth Constitution  
16 and I think they had too much committees. And that's,  
17 when comparing it to the Fifth, which is what we're  
18 supposed to do, I would say they had too many commit-  
19 tees. And since we only have 15 members, we should  
20 limit the committees to make them meaningful, cover  
21 respective areas that we need and to give everybody full  
22 participation in the committees.

23 That's my comment, general comment about it.  
24 Thank you.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

1 DELEGATE IMANI DANIEL: Point of Information?  
2 Are you just doing 3-minute rounds for this discussion  
3 or, just raise your hand? We have more than one time?  
4 What's the structure here?

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm going to stick with the  
6 three minutes --

7 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay, thank you.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- to make sure that every-  
9 one have the opportunity. Are you going to keep some  
10 notes on this subject matter, or we're going to just  
11 rely on the receipt of the transcript, and then we could  
12 send out that portion to everybody so everyone will have  
13 fresh in their minds --

14 DELEGATE DANIEL: That works.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- for the subject matter of  
16 the -- so, Part 2, we will prefer that you work on Part  
17 2 first, then part -- in comparison to Part 1.

18 Senator Russell, you did have three minutes, but  
19 you've completed --

20 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, yeah --

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- your discussion?

22 DELEGATE RUSSELL: -- I done.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay. Anyone else have  
24 ideas?

25 Are we finished with this topic then? [Laughter]

1 I'm just asking.

2 DELEGATE LILLIANA BELARDO de O'NEAL: Mr. Chair?

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Belardo de O'Neal?

4 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Thank you, Mr.

5 Chair.

6 Mr. Chair, I agree with Member Russell to limit  
7 the -- I'm in favor of what he said to limit the numbers  
8 of committee that we have. And we have 15 members, so  
9 each member can probably be assigned to five or three of  
10 them. But I think with the limited committees we can do  
11 a better job, and then when we meet with the whole body  
12 then we can dissect what the committee has been doing.  
13 And it's easier to work with limited committees than  
14 five, six, seven committees, and some people are not  
15 going to be doing anything.

16 And then we have committees that are non func-  
17 tional and the other committee that's functional. So I  
18 agree with Senator Russell.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Belardo  
20 de O'Neal.

21 DELEGATE RUDEL A. HODGE, JR.: Point of Order?  
22 Is the people who's on the Zoom, can they hear us right  
23 now?

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, the technician had came  
25 in and made sure that they were on.

1 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can we hear them? 'Cause I  
2 haven't heard nothing from them, and I heard before.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It all depends whether or  
4 not they're still there. I know I heard Silverman, but  
5 I haven't heard the others. But they're still on?

6 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can you chime in if you guys  
7 could hear us? Or can we hear you guys, because there's  
8 nothing.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That don't mean that they're  
10 still there.

11 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Oh.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And so I hope they're still  
13 there.

14 DELEGATE STEDMANN HODGE, JR.: Maybe they ain't  
15 come back after lunch.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Young man? 'Cause all we're  
17 seeing is empty chairs.

18 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Can the camera move? Can you  
19 control it?

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, the camera is in the  
21 Election System.

22 DELEGATE DEVIN F. CARRINGTON: Silverman is  
23 there.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Silverman is there.

25 DELEGATE S. HODGE: He home.



1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah. Delegate Silverman,  
2 can you hear us?

3           DELEGATE DANIEL: He says he's not.

4           DELEGATE DAVID SILVERMAN: You are muted --

5           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

6           DELEGATE SILVERMAN: -- on my screen. I can't  
7 hear a word being spoken.

8           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay, well, we could hear  
9 you.

10           Let's ah -- that microphone in the corner need to  
11 be on, or you need to do something?

12           DELEGATE RUSSELL: Well, this working. This one  
13 working here.

14           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, because we heard him  
15 through that.

16           DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

17           DELEGATE R. HODGE: But he can't hear us, so  
18 that's the issue. So, you can start over.

19           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, we got that part. We  
20 hear you with that.

21           What were you suggesting? Excuse me, technolo-  
22 gist?

23           THE TECHNICIAN: Star 6. Okay, let me try this.

24           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman can you  
25 hear as yet?

1 THE TECHNICIAN: Testing.

2 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I object to any substantial  
3 discussion right now because the delegates cannot hear  
4 what's going on. We cannot hear a single word being  
5 spoken in your committee room.

6 [Simultaneous speaking]

7 DELEGATE R. HODGE: So, nobody on the Zoom can  
8 hear us.

9 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: We can't hear a --

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Can you all please don't  
11 engage me in that manner? You'll speak one at a time.  
12 And I've already got the message about the fact that  
13 they can't hear. And so when I just said, Delegate  
14 Silverman can you hear, is to try to make sure that we  
15 have it fixed so we can proceed with the knowledge that  
16 everyone is back in contact.

17 And, Silverman, I don't know if you can hear, but  
18 we're working to make sure we get it back where it was.

19 And, you didn't need to do nothing from your  
20 thing for that up there?

21 DELEGATE JOHN J. ABRAMSON, JR.: I put my thing  
22 down.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You want us to say something  
24 or...?

25 THE TECHNICIAN: No, let me see this.

1 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Test. If you want me test, I  
2 could say "test" again. You want me do it?

3 Mic test!

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman?

5 DELEGATE DANIEL: He says we're still muted.

6 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Mic test! Silverman?

7 DELEGATE R. HODGE: So maybe try redialing the  
8 number again. I think it just, because of the length of  
9 time, it might have just went through and got discon-  
10 nected, so just call in again.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I know the Legislature could  
12 provide virtual access for all meetings, you know,  
13 whether we're in a session or committee meeting. But  
14 it's nice to see everyone's face; right Delegate Daniel  
15 --

16 DELEGATE DANIEL: I hear you.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- to be present and to make  
18 an effort, you know, so that we should gather together.  
19 Even, we leave ourselves subject to the behavior of  
20 technology, irrespective of what building we deh in or  
21 what island we deh on.

22 The Legislature work well because they do that  
23 everyday. And even self in the Legislature they were  
24 still doing virtual thing during corona, Senators from  
25 St. Thomas and Senators from St. Croix don't come over

1 to the district when it got committee meetings and stay  
2 in their office. One time they been on a talk show  
3 talking, it come like ah you could sit down on a toilet  
4 on a plane and participate in meetings.

5 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Who's the host?

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: I am the host.

7 THE TECHNICIAN: So, you could add him.

8 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Okay, you got to add him.

9 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Okay.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Just as I was saying, John,  
11 who didn't want to listen, when you shut down the thing.

12 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: I shut it down 'cause ahyo  
13 say shut it down.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh, you could blame we.

15 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Participants, wifi, admit,  
16 admit, admit. Okay, everybody in now.

17 DELEGATE R. HODGE: All right, then you need to  
18 close out of that and mute it.

19 DELEGATE RUSSELL: So, John you putting that on  
20 that main screen or that's you doing that?

21 DELEGATE R. HODGE: No, no, that's a separate  
22 instance.

23 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: That's a separate instance  
24 right now.

25 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Oh, okay.

1 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Right.

2 Now we got to mute this one again; okay?

3 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: So, I need to end this yah.

4 I end it. Everybody is in now. They're all in now.

5 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Go back, press back again?

6 Participants.

7 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Start again. Participants --

8 DELEGATE R. HODGE: You end the whole meeting for  
9 everybody so everybody got kicked off just now.

10 So, now they're going to be all added back in  
11 one-by-one; okay?

12 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Me ain't using it -- my thing  
13 no more.

14 Ahyo, find a new way to do Zoom from now on then.  
15 I ain't using my thing.

16 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Okay, mic check. Can you  
17 guys here us on the Zoom now, David?

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I can hear you, but I can't  
19 see anyone, but I can hear you.

20 DELEGATE R. HODGE: All right. We're going to  
21 set it up so you could see now, but we have the audio  
22 part corrected.

23 Visual is coming shortly.

24 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay, thank you.

25 DELEGATE R. HODGE: No problem.

1           So, you're going to turn off the audio and start  
2 the video. On the left-hand corner, audio off, video  
3 on.

4           DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay, it appears that I can  
5 see you and hear you. And I apologize if it was just me  
6 who was having that difficulty.

7           DELEGATE R. HODGE: No, no apologies necessary.  
8 It was collectively some issues going on.

9           Did you just -- wait!

10          DELEGATE RUSSELL: John, you controlling; right?

11          DELEGATE R. HODGE: You just end the meeting  
12 again?

13          DELEGATE ABRAMSON: No, no, no, no. It's still  
14 up.

15          DELEGATE SILVERMAN: The video did disappear just  
16 now.

17          DELEGATE R. HODGE: You got to join back on here.

18          DELEGATE S. HODGE: Patience, my brother,  
19 patience.

20          DELEGATE RUSSELL: Oh, so, Usie, you're suggest-  
21 ing that we can use the Legislature at times when we  
22 have meetings?

23          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Me?

24          DELEGATE RUSSELL: No?

25          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, I didn't go that far

1 down the road.

2 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Okay.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, what -- the only thing I  
4 said about the Legislature is that we didn't have this  
5 kind of difficulty 'cause they have a system that they  
6 utilize everyday.

7 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And the use of the Legisla-  
9 ture in the beginning of a new body, you know they're  
10 going to be having meetings going back and forth --

11 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Right, right.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- so we're going to have to  
13 --

14 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Maneuver.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- be at the liberty of when  
16 they don't have anything scheduled.

17 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Right, okay.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: What I did suggest, and I  
19 did mention it earlier and I could mention it again, is  
20 that we have clear weekend access --

21 DELEGATE RUSSELL: To the Port Authority.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- to the Port Authority  
23 conference room in St. Thomas and St. Croix --

24 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I like that.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- where their facilities

1 are up and running.

2 DELEGATE AKIMA RICHARDSON: Mr. President, when  
3 we have like bigger rooms and stuff, the public is wel-  
4 comed to attend?

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The intention, and this is  
6 why I'm mentioning those rooms --

7 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- is that the rooms should  
9 be ah --

10 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- a larger space. Or that  
12 was Delegate Daniel that had lunch with us?

13 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Maybe somebody else.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, it was Delegate Daniel  
15 that had lunch with us. You left her all alone.

16 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Not me.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, you did.

18 No, I was saying that they have a bigger space  
19 upstairs that they offered us --

20 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Okay.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- but it has no technology.

22 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: In this same building?

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: In this building.

24 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Okay.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And so we looked at the Port



1 Authority. We'll also possibly look at the Research &  
2 Technology Park that has a -- at the university --

3 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- that has a large area  
5 that allows for delegates and the audience to be in  
6 attendance.

7 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Nice.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Are we still stuck here?

9 DELEGATE R. HODGE: We somehow --

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, but we were on and then  
11 we went off again?

12 But those are at least the two viable alterna-  
13 tives that I think would accommodate --

14 DELEGATE RUSSELL: The public?

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- the public and the dele-  
16 gates.

17 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, because I'm really  
18 concerned about the public being involved.

19 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Because I did notice --

20 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can I suggest we have some  
21 sessions at the high school as well?

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: We, we -- that'll be the  
23 sessions of...?

24 DELEGATE R. HODGE: We could have a session right  
25 there, you know, on the auditorium at high school or

1 Kean or in the gymnasium and have students and also the  
2 community come out for that.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: But suggestions are always  
4 welcomed.

5 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Um-hm.

6 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, but the logistics.

7 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can I suggest?

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And did I just respond to  
9 say suggestions are welcomed? Yes.

10 DELEGATE RUSSELL: But the logistics.

11 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Um-hm.

12 Those would be major sessions for sure. We just  
13 have to find out --

14 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, but they got security  
15 issues with people coming onto to the schools.

16 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Since I am apparently the  
17 only remote participant, I don't want to hold up these  
18 proceedings. I don't need the visual feed. I can hear  
19 you fine, but I don't want to -- I think we can probably  
20 start talking while you try to sort out the videos.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Everybody is okay with  
22 Delegate Silverman's suggestion?

23 CHORUS OF DELEGATES: Yes.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

25 DELEGATE RUPERT W. ROSS, JR.: On the assumption

1 that he's correct. Are there others?

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The other people have  
3 vacated the space in the Election System.

4 DELEGATE ROSS: They have? So he's the only  
5 other person?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes.

7 DELEGATE ROSS: If you guys are comfortable,  
8 fine.

9 DELEGATE R. HODGE: And we also have to acknow-  
10 ledge that there are public participants who are viewing  
11 and watching who might want to see it live.

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, well, they are secon-  
13 dary to Delegate Silverman and ourselves. So if they  
14 could hear, they should be able to do what they're  
15 doing.

16 Can I -- can we rise out of recess and convene  
17 with the Committee of the Whole once more? And we were  
18 on the subject matter of Item No. 2 on the agenda  
19 regarding discussion of the Standing Committees (Number  
20 & Composition), suggestions and ideas.

21 If my memory serve me correctly, we heard from  
22 Delegate Russell, Delegate Belardo de O'Neal. Did I  
23 miss anyone else who spoke? That was it?

24 And, anyone else wanted to offer any discussion  
25 and/or suggestion on this topic?

1 Delegate Silverman, were you saying something?

2 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes.

3 Could you just summarize what was said previously  
4 by delegates that you just mentioned, 'cause the audio  
5 feed was not working when they were speaking.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Ah -- Delegate Russell, you  
7 want to summarize your statement --

8 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I could.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- and then Belardo de  
10 O'Neal.

11 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Delegate Silverman, I was  
12 suggesting that we limit the amount of committees, not  
13 to proceed like the Fifth having so many committees.

14 And the limiting would be based on the fact that  
15 we are 15, and you're trying to include as much dele-  
16 gates in each committee. And you can -- I think we can  
17 convene committees to cover the areas that we need to  
18 cover in three or four committees. I don't believe we  
19 need as much as the Fifth Constitutional Convention.

20 And my last comment was about inclusion of the  
21 delegates. With 15 people, you know how you could do  
22 three or four committees and cover everybody being part  
23 of a committee and having a meaningful input. That was  
24 my commentary.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Belardo de O'Neal?

1 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.

2 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: My remarks was that  
3 I am supporting Member Russell with his recommendation,  
4 because I think that once you have less committees that  
5 more can be done rather than have some members chairing  
6 another committee and doing nothing productive. So  
7 having less committee and working members, we can have  
8 better efficiency in running the committee and bringing  
9 it to the whole members.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And, before I move on to  
11 recognize whoever would like to speak next, I think we  
12 should also put in context the subject matter when we're  
13 making comparisons to the Fifth or even the Fourth when  
14 Delegate Ross, who is here, presided over the Fourth  
15 Constitutional Convention. I think they had 60 members.

16 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And in the Fifth Constitu-  
18 tional Convention, I think they had -- it had to be at  
19 least 30.

20 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Thirty.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It was 30?

22 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Yes.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: At least 30. And we're a  
24 body of 15.

25 And then, more importantly, outside of the size

1 and the numbers, a few of us may have in our 'lil pri-  
2 vate sit-downs and discussions or just in talking to  
3 each other, may have had a concern about the restric-  
4 tiveness of -- I can't remember the Act No. -- but it's  
5 86 -- 80-something --

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: 8681.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: 8681. The restrictiveness  
8 in the manner in which the Legislature put the initial  
9 legislation in place, where it particularly says that we  
10 should be looking at the content of the Revised Organic  
11 Act of 1954 as amended, and that we should be looking at  
12 the content of the Fifth Constitutional Convention  
13 document, as was proposed.

14 And, thirdly, that we should be looking at the  
15 transmittal from the United States Department of Justice  
16 in regards to their concerns of the submitted Fifth  
17 Constitutional Government of the U.S. -- to the United  
18 States -- document, excuse me -- to the United States  
19 government.

20 And so, with those confines, I just wanted to add  
21 that to the discussion so that it will bring more focus  
22 into where, you know, we ought to be going. And, more  
23 importantly, by them outlining these three items of  
24 documentation for us to review, it also sets forth the  
25 -- some prerequisites, boundaries, structure of what we

1 are to begin to address.

2 And so that was only my comment given the two  
3 comments shared by Delegate Russell and Lilliana Belardo  
4 de O'Neal.

5 I have no intention of us putting ourselves in a  
6 position of criticizing past Constitutional Conventions  
7 and what they did and how they did it. As a matter of  
8 fact, I think there might be, at least in this room,  
9 there's only two persons that have already been -- have  
10 -- during our lifetime -- that have already been on a  
11 Constitutional Convention, which is Delegate Stedmann  
12 Hodge, Jr. and Delegate Rupert Ross, Jr.

13 I don't think any one of us, at least in this  
14 room, have sat on a Constitutional Convention previous-  
15 ly.

16 Is there anyone want to offer some discussion on  
17 the subject matter? And I'm hoping, that if not --

18 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I do.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman?

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you for your recogni-  
21 tion, Mr. President.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh, no, sorry I thought you  
23 wanted to be recognized?

24 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes.

25 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Please?

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, oh, please?

2 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes. I was simply looking  
3 for clarification on what's the composition or what the  
4 charter would be of the three to four committees that  
5 have been suggested.

6 I would just say that when I was sifting through,  
7 when I looked at the proceedings of the Fifth and the  
8 charter of the Fifth, there were 30 members; there were  
9 12 committees; they had 9 members per committee.

10 We have half the number of -- and I should also  
11 say they had two years to perform their duty.

12 We have half the amount of time and half the  
13 amount of members. So obviously, we need a far more  
14 efficient structure and focused structure than was in  
15 the Fifth.

16 What I have trouble with is, if we reduce it to  
17 three or four committees, I'm curious who, for those who  
18 are advocating for that, what would be the charter?  
19 What would be the scope of those committees?

20 In the proposal that I sent forward I had sug-  
21 gested half the number of committees as were present in  
22 the Fifth, reflecting half the membership that we have.  
23 And I have proposed committees one each on each of the  
24 three branches of government; one committee on educa-  
25 tion; one of health care and one on cultural and



1 historic resources. And I think I came up with six or  
2 seven committees.

3 So I have just this question for the group of  
4 what would those three or four committees you're  
5 recommending consist of?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Silver-  
7 man.

8 The point of our discussion at this time is  
9 basically to allow all the delegates that would like to  
10 share their ideas on the subject matter of committees,  
11 its numbers and even on focus, but not at this point to  
12 have one delegate questioning the belief, positions  
13 and/or ideas of a delegate as shared with us.

14 It is a listening session, I suspect, for us to  
15 be able to make some assessments.

16 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay, then if I could just  
17 rephrase my comments:

18 I thought that it was reasonable to expect each  
19 of our 15 delegates to put in four days a month of time  
20 on this Constitutional Convention. And given that there  
21 will probably be one plenary session a month, that has  
22 actually left 3 x 15 -- 45 days a month of delegate time  
23 for committee meetings.

24 It was my feeling that if we had six members per  
25 committee with a balance between districts, that would

1 allow us to have seven committees each with three mem-  
2 bers each per district, and then it would not require  
3 any delegate to participate in more than three com-  
4 mittees per month.

5 And that was the basis on which I was recommend-  
6 ing six or seven committees. Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Silver-  
8 man.

9 Any other delegate?

10 Delegate Stedmann Hodge, Jr.?

11 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Thank you, Mr. President.

12 What I could share is I'm in support of at least  
13 five to seven committees. The thing is, even if we keep  
14 it down to four, what we're looking at is, based on the  
15 combined -- I'm going to use the term "issue" -- let's  
16 say it's the judicial branch; something from the execu-  
17 tive branch, and it can cause meetings to become very  
18 very lengthy; okay, versus just meeting in that short  
19 period of time as most delegates here may want to allude  
20 to.

21 The -- I'm not going to -- I don't want to com-  
22 pare it to the Virgin Islands Legislature in any way  
23 with the number of committees that they have. But hav-  
24 ing those committees and the way and the fashion that  
25 they are broken down, it actually can provide better

1 structure to the type of meetings we're going to have.

2 The committee chairs have a responsibility to  
3 host meetings. The president has the authority to, if  
4 someone is not performing, because he's in the position  
5 to appoint those members, he can remove them; get some-  
6 one in there that's doing their job; okay? That's your  
7 accountability. So we're leading from the front.

8 But I am in support of five to seven committees.  
9 They're much more targeted, specific, and if we do it,  
10 we can accomplish more. That's my thoughts on it.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Stedmann  
12 Hodge, Jr.

13 Anyone else want to speak on this subject matter?

14 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: President Richards?

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Richardson?

16 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

17 My only question is: Is it the expectation for  
18 committees to meet separately, meaning the committee as  
19 a whole? Or do all delegates meet in support of those  
20 committees?

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Just for clarification --  
22 and I'm just going to paraphrase to make sure I  
23 understand your question:

24 On the subject committee -- excuse me -- on the  
25 subject of standing committees --

1 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Correct.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- the understanding and the  
3 operation of both of standing committees in the past and  
4 moving forward, is that a standing --

5 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- each standing committee  
7 has a particular scope of jurisdiction that they are  
8 responsible to pursue in developing whether it's revi-  
9 sions, modifications or new proposals to the Constitu-  
10 tional Convention.

11 This is just an example, and just an example:

12 If a committee have five persons and five  
13 committee members, that they will have a scheduled  
14 meeting on the calendar.

15 Now, the fact that the committee have five  
16 persons, does not negate, exclude or prevent non  
17 committee members --

18 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: From attending those  
19 meetings.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- from attending, partici-  
21 pating, offering their input.

22 The five members are responsible for casting  
23 votes and making decisions of what should be moved out  
24 to the full body for consideration.

25 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I answered your question?

2 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

4 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes, thank you.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

6 Delegate Daniel?

7 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, I'd just like to be  
8 recognized to speak on the issue, please?

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay, you're recognized.

10 DELEGATE DANIEL: Thank you.

11 So, I'm still in support of more committees. I  
12 think that was kind of blatantly outlined in the propo-  
13 sal that came out of the St. Thomas/St. John district.

14 I agree with Mr. Hodge that five to seven work.  
15 And in the interest of time -- 'cause I do have to leave  
16 soon, unfortunately -- I'm just going to explicitly name  
17 the committees:

18 So what we were thinking was a legislative branch  
19 -- there are seven total; right - so there's a Legisla-  
20 tive Branch committee; a Judicial Branch committee; an  
21 Executive Branch committee.

22 And side conversations that I've had with I think  
23 most of you, there is interest in significant change in  
24 each of those branches that brings a different skill-  
25 et; right?

1           Then we move into the Education committee, which  
2 I've also heard Mr. Abramson mentioned. It seems like  
3 there seems to be consensus around that committee.

4           I think where we might differ a bit on the addi-  
5 onal three is a Taxation, Finance and Commerce commit-  
6 tee; a Health, Human Services and Public Safety commit-  
7 tee and then an Environmental, Cultural and Historical  
8 Preservation committee.

9           And so, I would appreciate any support or any  
10 debate or argument on why none of those committees would  
11 be helpful for the full document.

12           I think I'm going to just hold on to rest of my  
13 time just in case. Thank you so much.

14           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Daniel.

15           So, you might have to use some, because I don't  
16 want you to hold on to time and then miss the opportu-  
17 nity to share.

18           DELEGATE DANIEL: We'll see how it goes, but  
19 thank you.

20           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

21           Anyone else?

22           Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr.?

23           DELEGATE R. HODGE: So, I will also agree with  
24 Delegate Daniel. I think seven is the optimal number  
25 with this delegation, with six members on each of those

1 committees; three from St. Thomas; three from St. Croix  
2 -- St. Thomas/St. John, of course, and then three from  
3 St. Croix with the at-large delegate being on as many  
4 committees as they want to.

5 I think that will be the most equitable way that  
6 we can proceed by giving shared responsibilities between  
7 both jurisdictions that have different needs.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

9 Anyone else that are present?

10 Delegate Ross, Rupert Ross, Jr.?

11 DELEGATE ROSS: Thank you, Mr. President.

12 I have been looking and reviewing the different  
13 committee structures being proposed, and I'm concerned  
14 about the omission of a committee to deal with issues as  
15 it relates to Initiative, Referendum and Recall --

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And recall.

17 DELEGATE ROSS: -- and amending of this document.

18 And, just from a historical perspective, my com-  
19 mitment on the Third Constitutional Convention and on  
20 the Fourth basically focused on that -- those particular  
21 issues, because I deem them to be necessary for the  
22 future evolution of the document going forward.

23 And I would like to see a committee that deals  
24 with that specifically on this Convention.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

1           If I may, Delegate Ross, ask, so at least -- and  
2 hopefully it's not for my own edification, but for all  
3 of us:

4           On the subject matter of Initiative, Referendum  
5 and Recall -- which is a subject matter that I hold  
6 dearly like yourself -- do you think that that is a  
7 matter that can be addressed under the structural review  
8 of the Revised Organic Act of 1954 as amended, in making  
9 determinations of what we may want to expound upon  
10 within a Constitutional document?

11           And, sorry, I didn't mean to put you on the spot,  
12 but I just want to make sure that I -- at least, that I  
13 grab your concerns clearly.

14           DELEGATE ROSS: Well, my concern -- my observa-  
15 tion is that, none of the committees being described  
16 seem to address that --

17           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

18           DELEGATE ROSS: -- that issue.

19           And I think a standing committee ought -- that  
20 issue should be assigned to a standing committee, whe-  
21 ther it's incorporate it into one of the committees  
22 being described or a committee on to itself, it should  
23 be something that this Convention revisit and address.

24           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Point well-taken.

25           Delegate Carrington?



1 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I just want to go back to  
2 Delegate Ross, the second committee, which was that  
3 committee? I think you mentioned two committees that  
4 you -- you said the Initiative, Referendum and Recall  
5 committee. And then you spoke about another committee;  
6 did you? I'd like to --

7 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: I'm having difficulty hear-  
8 ing Delegate Carrington.

9 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: The question to Delegate  
10 Ross, I thought that I heard him mention two committees.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, he only mentioned one.

12 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Did I hear that?

13 DELEGATE DANIEL: I think it's just Initiative,  
14 Referendum with amendment and recall for the Constitu-  
15 tion as one focused area.

16 DELEGATE RUSSELL: As one committee.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: As a focused area. He  
18 mentioned -- not as a committee, he mentioned that focus  
19 could be as a committee or included into a committee the  
20 subject matter of Initiative, Referendum and Recall.

21 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: And you did mention some-  
22 thing about, some where to address the amendments to the  
23 Constitution itself; did I hear that?

24 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes.

25 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: So, that's something

1 different.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I got you. All right.

3 Let's see --

4 [Phone ringing]

5 DELEGATE ROSS: I'm sorry. I turned off my  
6 phone.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Rudel, I mean, sorry --  
8 Delegate Hodge -- could you help out Delegate Ross there  
9 --

10 DELEGATE ROSS: I really was trying.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- with putting it on  
12 vibrate, mute or silence?

13 DELEGATE ROSS: That's what I thought I did.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That's why -- I know you  
15 tried, I just asked for some competent person with these  
16 technology to help you out.

17 DELEGATE ROSS: Can you strike that from the  
18 record?

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Strike that from the record.

20 [Laughter]

21 Sorry, go ahead, Delegate Ross.

22 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Mr. President?

23 DELEGATE ROSS: I said Initiative, Referendum and  
24 Recall, and then I said and amending the Constitution,  
25 those were the two.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, two separate topics --

2 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: That was my point.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- for a committee.

4 DELEGATE ROSS: Correct.

5 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Two separate topics for "a"  
6 committee or two separate committees?

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Someone --

8 DELEGATE ROSS: Two separate topics. However you  
9 want to assign it is fine with me. I just want them to  
10 be part of the process.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: When you're leaving, leave  
12 the document here.

13 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay. I have not reviewed or  
14 signed it yet.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, no, no. I just didn't  
16 want you to leave with it. That's the Resolution from  
17 January 28th, that's the same one.

18 DELEGATE DANIEL: Understood.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

20 DELEGATE DANIEL: But I'm going to give it back  
21 to you because you said you were going to scan it so I  
22 could distribute it.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, I want to keep that  
24 original here that I could scan it without the original  
25 and then let you look at it.

1 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, sir. So I'm going to give  
2 it back to you.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

4 DELEGATE DANIEL: Here you go. Thank you.

5 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Silverman has his hand up.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah. Anyone else?

7 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I -- I -- I --

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I coming to you, Delegate  
9 Silverman.

10 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I -- I -- public education and  
11 dissemination of information, of some type using social  
12 media, using the media, I would like that to be consi-  
13 dered in one of these committees as a primary goal of  
14 the Constitution.

15 Because unless the public understand and in sync  
16 with us, we don't make no sense, unless we got that  
17 under control. And I think a committee should address  
18 that. I don't know how we're going to do it, but I  
19 believe so.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Anyone else on the topic?  
21 Delegate Carrington?

22 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Yeah, I think that I'm  
23 persuaded by the arguments of all who spoke that I think  
24 we may need more than four committees.

25 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

1 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Public dissemination is  
2 something we need. I think that we also -- unless any  
3 of these topics could fit squarely and neatly within the  
4 four committees we have already formed, there may be a  
5 need for more than four committees. How we determine to  
6 look at this we can debate that.

7 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I agree.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Abramson, you're  
9 saying something?

10 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: I think we can do a govern-  
11 ment structure that entitles all of them into one com-  
12 mittee that deals with government structure, legisla-  
13 tive, judicial, all of them. Say "government" and do  
14 everything, and that takes care of the problem, at least  
15 in my mind.

16 DELEGATE S. HODGE: If I may? Because I want to  
17 -- I want to --

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Please, please, please?  
19 Wait until you're recognized so that the stenographer  
20 can keep an accurate record?

21 Delegate Stedmann Hodge, Jr.?

22 DELEGATE S. HODGE: Yes, through the President to  
23 Delegate Abramson: It would be like the term "Committee  
24 on Government Operations" that sounds good?

25 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Like that, something like

1 that.

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: All right.

3 Delegate Silverman, sorry for some reason I  
4 believe you were saying something additional?

5 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes, but I was -- just sim-  
6 ply wanted to say is I think things like referendum,  
7 recall and other topics such as women's rights, such and  
8 environment, I don't think we can possibly capture all  
9 of the topics which each of us believe needs to be  
10 addressed simply within the names and titles of whether  
11 it's four or seven committees.

12 And so I do believe that at some point we will  
13 need to more clearly define the scope of each of those  
14 committees and find a home for all of the topics we want  
15 to discuss.

16 And simply because we don't have a committee  
17 which is identified by title as Initiative, Referendum  
18 and Recall doesn't mean that the committee -- one of the  
19 other committees couldn't handle that matter.

20 So, I just didn't want to get too hang up on the  
21 names. Obviously, every topic has to find a home as  
22 such, and that was all I had to say.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

24 Anyone else?

25 DELEGATE DANIEL: Mr. Chair, I need to leave. I

1 will call in to continue listening, participate  
2 virtually, but I do need to go.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay, call in. Sorry, that  
4 was Delegate ah --

5 DELEGATE DANIEL: Daniel.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- Imani Daniel.

7 When you say "call in" you're logging in on the  
8 Zoom thing is what you're saying?

9 DELEGATE DANIEL: Yes, I'll be joining you virtu-  
10 ally for the rest of this discussion.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

12 DELEGATE DANIEL: Okay, thank you. Thanks every-  
13 one. Have a good day!

14 CHORUS OF DELEGATES: Same to you.

15 DELEGATE DANIEL: Thank you so much. I'll see  
16 you at the Ag Fair, if you guys are there.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I just have a 'lil take on  
18 the committee thing. I know we had concerns with this  
19 topic for discussion.

20 The -- I understand the importance of having  
21 functional committees and the necessity of them. And  
22 after listening to the discussions and the ideas of  
23 everyone, it just raised a thought in my mind, as a "for  
24 instance" or as "an example." If my memory serve me  
25 correctly, the current document for the Fifth

1 Constitutional Convention is 27 pages long.

2 And I mentioned that to raise the question, since  
3 the question keep popping up in my mind: Whether we  
4 should have a structural approach to reviewing that  
5 document in ah -- let's say in five stages of six pages,  
6 if it were 30, and see if there's things in there that  
7 we make a determination of needing to be revised, modi-  
8 fied, added to, deleted from.

9 If a task like that is completed before the esta-  
10 blishment of committees, so when we have the committees,  
11 what are the committees going to come up with, their  
12 ideas on the subject matter, when we've been tasked to  
13 review the former documents.

14 And this is just -- not something firm in my  
15 mind, this is just thought 'cause I keep listening to  
16 everyone about a committee to address this, or a commit-  
17 tee that have jurisdiction over that, so that was just a  
18 thought that just popped in.

19 Rudel Hodge, Jr.?

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: May I respond to that, sir?

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Rudel?

22 Delegate Rudel Hodge, Jr. has the floor.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: So what mechanism would you  
24 imagine for doing that? Are we going to go each dele-  
25 gate line-by-line of the Fifth draft, and then say we



1 agree with this line or disagree with this line until we  
2 have that, you know, compiled information? Or is it  
3 something you want to do in a group exercise?

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: In response to you, I wasn't  
5 speaking about a group exercise.

6 Let's say you have ah three committees of five  
7 persons and assigned particular sections to do an  
8 immediate review to come back and give like an input to  
9 the group about the things that they saw. And this  
10 isn't for them to develop some consensus or agreement,  
11 but for them to have an opportunity to --

12 DELEGATE RUSSELL: To present it.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- to present and see if  
14 things jump out at them on the page. And so then we  
15 will have a better idea of how then to slap those things  
16 into committee for further discussion and vetting for  
17 making amended changes.

18 That was just a thought.

19 Delegate Silverman?

20 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes. I think that that's an  
21 extremely production suggestion. I believe that each of  
22 us probably has issues that are burning issues that we  
23 consider to be critical to be addressed, whether it is  
24 revision of sections that were incompatible to federal  
25 law or it is addition of sections that were not consi-

1       dered 15 years ago, or whatever it may be.

2               I don't think it needs to be a line-by-line revision  
3       sion by each of the 15 of us. I think it would be pro-  
4       ductive if each of us, in a very short period of time,  
5       submitted a brief point-by-point list, a bullet list of  
6       the sections within in the Fifth draft which need addi-  
7       tions or revisions, and then that would be a very good  
8       basis for getting into what we adopt into committee with  
9       similar subject matters.

10              So I think that that's a very constructive  
11       approach to how we would decide what the scope of our  
12       committees should be and how many there would be.

13              DELEGATE RUSSELL: I agree.

14              PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Sorry, don't agree until  
15       you're called to agree.

16              DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

17              PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate  
18       Silverman.

19              Delegate Russell and then Delegate Carrington.

20              Delegate Russell?

21              DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I agree with that  
22       structure, because I think it would -- it would focus,  
23       bring focus on what we're supposed to be doing, and I  
24       like that. Because it brings into focus and it engages  
25       each delegate, so I like that. So I agree.

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Carrington?

2 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: So we inadvertently tran-  
3 sitioned into the second topic of this afternoon's dis-  
4 cussion. Because the second topic, as I understand, is  
5 to determine the methodology use to go over the Fifth,  
6 which is our tasks.

7 But in discussing your -- you haven't crossed-  
8 over officially -- but we're discussing that process in  
9 order to determine how committees are structured.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I like everything you said  
11 except for the word "inadvertently."

12 I didn't -- I did not inadvertently go there.  
13 But I arrived to that third topic from just taking in  
14 what everybody was saying.

15 And Delegate Russell, I think, refined my  
16 thoughts in his statement about doing an exercise like  
17 that can aid and assist us in making a real determina-  
18 tion of what committees we really need.

19 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: And --

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And, sorry, no, no, I'm  
21 finished. Delegate Carrington?

22 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: -- and which topic that we  
23 would -- which topic goes under what heading or what  
24 committee.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That was -- that was my idea

1 after just listening.

2 I guess, that was one of the reasons I prefaced  
3 my statement by saying I'm just giving feedback to what  
4 -- I'm just giving feedback to what was being said and  
5 just trying to process of listen to myself what every-  
6 body has been sharing.

7 Since I "inadvertently" slipped into Item 3 on  
8 the agenda, I want to just ask of the group:

9 Irrespective of my simple approach by calling the  
10 number of pages 27, what we can do, and we should do,  
11 that although it have 27 pages, they have topics;  
12 correct? There is Articles.

13 And so that we might find some way to equally  
14 divide these Articles into three pieces for three groups  
15 of five to begin to work on the review, and come back  
16 and make a report based on their analysis, although we  
17 may not have been part of the group, but they have  
18 dedicated the time to do the initial analysis, and then  
19 go from there.

20 What's the thinking? Is that something we can  
21 work with?

22 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Could you -- I think I  
23 missed some of what was said.

24 Are you saying, after the initial stage right  
25 now, that you divide the Fifth draft by Articles into

1 perhaps three sections or three groups of Articles and  
2 that different individuals would comment on the changes  
3 required in each of those groups?

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The last part requires some  
5 clarity -- requires some clarity and correction, Dele-  
6 gate Silverman.

7 In your last statement, the last part of your  
8 statement, my intention and what I stated was that: We  
9 would have three equal groups of five persons tackle a  
10 certain number of Articles and each group, amongst them-  
11 selves, the group, will begin to conduct a discussion on  
12 those subject matters and see if there are in fact  
13 things that jump out from those Articles that they  
14 think, they believe, require attention for modification,  
15 revision, amending or deletion.

16 Am I clear, Delegate Silverman?

17 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay.

19 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: But are you saying that  
20 those three groups would be the three standing  
21 committees?

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No.

23 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry.

25 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, no, no, but no, it's  
2 important that you asked that question.

3           And what we said earlier, which was not solely  
4 shared by me, but was shared by a couple other dele-  
5 gates, is that from the vetting --

6           [Interrupting noises]

7           Come on, people?

8           -- that from that vetting process, we will be  
9 able to make a determination of the outstanding, the  
10 thorns that stick out from each of these committees on  
11 the basis of -- each of these groups, excuse me -- on  
12 the basis of those thorns, we could utilize the thorns  
13 to determine the type of committees and what committee  
14 we should have to address further discussion on them.

15          DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes, and I fully support  
16 that two-phase process.

17          I think we can balance committee workload; we can  
18 have a focus on what needs to be done --

19          DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes, that's what we said.

20          DELEGATE SILVERMAN: -- by the entire body.

21          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: All right. Thank you.

22          Is there anything else that we should -- on the  
23 topic, Delegate Hodge -- I'm sorry, Delegate Stedmann  
24 Hodge, Jr., for the record.

25          DELEGATE S. HODGE: Yeah, thank you, Mr.

1 President.

2 I think we should also consider going over the  
3 nine recommendations that were made to the Fifth. It  
4 can give some, especially for those who don't have that  
5 experience, it'll give us an idea of what went wrong;  
6 what went right since we're going to be really using the  
7 Fifth as our guide.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Hodge.  
9 Anyone else?

10 So, as we are about to conclude our meeting,  
11 Delegate Russell that finger was to say something?

12 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I -- yeah, because --

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Russell?

14 DELEGATE RUSSELL: You know, I don't know if we  
15 have subpoena power in our Article of formation from the  
16 Legislature. And when you come up with your idea that  
17 you just came up with, and you need information and you  
18 need stuff from the government and you need stuff, you  
19 need to have subpoena power.

20 And I'm just throwing it out there because I like  
21 the idea of groups forming to get information. But un-  
22 less you got subpoena power, some of them government  
23 offices ain't going to provide the information.

24 So it's a suggestion that we got to consider;  
25 okay? Thank you.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And, that was Delegate  
2 Russell. And you made that statement and all you do is  
3 frighten me more.

4           DELEGATE RUSSELL: No, no, no. It --

5           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You're not allowing me to  
6 share my -- what you call it -- my biopic view of what  
7 you just said? Because it may be just my shallow view-  
8 ing of the topic.

9           And where my mind went after you said that is ah  
10 what exactly a Constitution should be. Because -- and  
11 this is not in regards to what you said -- I'm just  
12 saying where my mind went, because sometimes people  
13 think -- sometimes you'll hear people speak about the  
14 Constitution as if it's about the manner in which  
15 government is executed in comparison to the Constitution  
16 being the format, the umbrella of how government should  
17 operate.

18          DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah.

19          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: So, I do want to make sure  
20 we're talking about manner of operation and the format  
21 of how it should operate.

22          And that wasn't to dismiss -- you just get me  
23 frightened, 'cause when you said, you know, the  
24 Legislature or the Committee of Health and calling the  
25 Commissioner from the Department of Health saying we



1 want you in and we want to hear -- for me, and this just  
2 me -- from a Constitutional standpoint, they are Execu-  
3 tive Branch representatives, that in my mind, I don't  
4 see as being responsible for the structure of how the  
5 Executive Branch operates. That's just my mind.

6 And it falls on both sides of the coin depending  
7 on the topic --

8 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes, exactly.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- and the subject matter.  
10 That was it.

11 Attorney Carrington -- I mean, Delegate Carring-  
12 ton?

13 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: I think Ronnie's -- excuse  
14 me, Delegate Russell's -- thought is important.

15 I think that, as part and parcel of what we do  
16 here, we definitely may need to speak to people with  
17 respect to how government operates; how government  
18 should operate and get their perspective with respect to  
19 how government is operating.

20 So what I'm saying is that, the calling in of  
21 certain individuals may be very necessary to get the  
22 best sense that we can get so we can get the highest  
23 understanding as to how government operates as opposed  
24 to how it should operate and then reduce that into the  
25 document that we need to generate.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I hear you clearly.

2           And my last perception of that suggested idea is  
3           ah:

4           *"Here comes these delegates from the Sixth Con-*  
5           *stitutional Convention coming to the Legislature of the*  
6           *Virgin Islands; seeking some power to subpoena to do*  
7           *this, before they get busy in dealing with this Consti-*  
8           *tutional document."*

9           Because subpoena powers, as pointed clearly by  
10          Delegate Russell, is not something that is currently  
11          included in the law.

12          DELEGATE RUSSELL: No.

13          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And so in order to secure  
14          that, that requires us to put our neck out on the limb  
15          to go to the Legislature to ask them to add this thing  
16          and then they will be in a position to have to have  
17          discussion, debate amongst themselves, privately and  
18          publicly on the floor, about *"why -- they ain't self*  
19          *start yet, and now they want to subpoena people."*

20          I'm just saying -- I'm not disagreeing, I'm --  
21          well, let me put it this way: We have a bunch of peo-  
22          ple here who been in politics a 'lil while. And I was  
23          just speaking on the political impression to a body that  
24          will have to approve of this idea, enact it, or pass it  
25          in the Legislature and a Executive that have to sign it

1 into law.

2 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: If I may?

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Um-hm. Delegate Carrington?

4 DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Two things: I think that  
5 we need to impress upon the whole public how serious we  
6 are about this process. And if subpoena power is some-  
7 thing that we determine is necessary for us to do this  
8 process as fully and informed as we can, so be it.

9 Number two: I'd rather err on the side of going  
10 for it and deal with the political blow-back rather than  
11 not go for it and not have the information that we need  
12 to structure the best document we can.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

14 Now, can we go back to the --

15 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: If I may speak to this?

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman?

17 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes, just briefly:

18 I think it would have been great, would have been  
19 very good for us to have been given subpoena power by  
20 the Legislature; however we weren't. It's not in Act  
21 8681, as amended four times.

22 I think the practicality of the matter is in  
23 order to get that power we would probably need an  
24 additional amendment to 8681, that would probably be  
25 several months before they'll actually be actions by the

1       Legislature, and it's no guarantee that they would even  
2       approve it at that time.

3               But a bigger concern is, in my experience, if you  
4       have to subpoena an individual to come and testify, you  
5       probably are not going to get very forthright and coope-  
6       rative testimony from that individual. Most people who  
7       have something really to contribute will voluntarily do  
8       it.

9               So I question how much benefit in the end we  
10      would get from insisting on subpoena powers. That's  
11      about it.

12              PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you, Delegate Silver-  
13      man.

14              I am hoping that we could come to the focus of  
15      some agreement in regards to the -- and correct me if  
16      I'm wrong -- what I believe I've heard today is that  
17      there is consensus or agreement of the division of the  
18      Fifth Constitutional document into portions to be re-  
19      viewed by a group to get some assessment of whether or  
20      not they're items in there that needs to be reconsi-  
21      dered, changed, readdressed or whatever.

22              In addition to the review of the document from  
23      the United States Department of Justice on the -- I  
24      think it's still nine --

25              DELEGATE RUSSELL: Nine, nine.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- on the nine recommenda-  
2           tions made by them.

3           Is that a -- I'm only trying to repeat what I  
4           believe that I'm hearing -- is that a fair assessment by  
5           me of what we're hearing?

6           CHORUS OF DELEGATES: Yes.

7           DELEGATE RUSSELL: Definitely.

8           DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Affirmative.

9           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Then the last question --  
10          because I am cognizant of the importance of how we esta-  
11          blish these groups, similar with the committees. And if  
12          we have three of them; we have 15 members; we have five  
13          persons in there. And so the question is being asked  
14          out loud by me is:

15          The entity that should make this discussion,  
16          based on our Rules adopted, of these three groups to  
17          ensure inclusion of everyone -- hello?

18          DELEGATE CARRINGTON: Rephrase your statement.

19          PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Common denominator language?

20          The Rules were adopted, and that Rules provide  
21          for the President in conjunction with the Executive  
22          Committee members to make a proposal of the group of  
23          Articles to be considered and who the group of five  
24          persons on three groups is going to be.

25          DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes, that's correct.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And so we could do that;  
2 send that out, you know, give everybody an opportunity  
3 to look at it, and then make a determination of moving  
4 forward to address those initial tasks.

5           DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Mr. President?

6           PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Oh, sorry, I keep forgetting  
7 I can't see you, so thanks for speaking out, Delegate  
8 Silverman.

9           DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Presi-  
10 dent.

11           It was my understanding based on our earlier  
12 conversation that these three groups that you are --  
13 that we're talking about would be, what I would call,  
14 informal working groups and not the standing committees  
15 which we would ultimately have.

16           And I don't see anything in the Rules which we  
17 just adopted which stipulate how informal working groups  
18 are created.

19           So, I -- although I have no objection to it being  
20 a discussion at the Executive Committee -- I don't think  
21 we should say that the Rules either allow it or disallow  
22 it.

23           DELEGATE ABRAMSON: He's correct.

24           DELEGATE SILVERMAN: The material point that I  
25 wanted to make is as a delegate, let's say I was

1 assigned to Articles 1-3 or 1-5 of the Fifth draft, I  
2 still would want to have the opportunity, if I have a  
3 burning issue that is in one of the Articles which is  
4 not in the group that I'm participating in, to make that  
5 suggestion to the appropriate group.

6 I think we should all be able to offer comments  
7 on any matter that we think is relevant even if it's not  
8 within the domain of the group to which we're assigned.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Silverman, let me  
10 start from the top of your statement:

11 You are correct that it doesn't state in the  
12 Rules about the appointment of informal groups. I think  
13 what is being discussed when I mentioned it, is a con-  
14 sensus, so we do, in comparison to the suggestion that  
15 15 of we sit down here and go through about who is going  
16 to be in a group and whatever. And that is the reason  
17 why I ended my statement with a proposal to the group to  
18 look at the three groups in regards of the membership,  
19 the Articles that are being addressed, so that we can  
20 best utilize our skills and experiences, both personal  
21 and professional, in addressing and discussing the  
22 issues.

23 On the second of Delegate Silverman's statement,  
24 I definitely agree that that should not prevent any  
25 delegate member from looking at those Articles that he

1 may not be a member of that working group and offering  
2 ideas to that working group to consider and to include  
3 in their report that will be coming back out to the full  
4 body.

5 So, I am in agreement, Delegate Silverman with  
6 that.

7 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: In that case we're on the  
8 same page.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you. But I am in  
10 agreement with what you said. I just want to make sure  
11 that I bring clarity to the first portion of your state-  
12 ment.

13 Delegate Hodge?

14 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Yes. I just want to --

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I'm sorry, Delegate Rudel  
16 Hodge, Jr.? It have two "Hodge," and this is for the  
17 stenographer.

18 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: And a lot of  
19 juniors.

20 DELEGATE R. HODGE: There's a lot of juniors  
21 also.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Too many.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Legacy.

24 But, yes, I want to reiterate what Delegate  
25 Silverman stated, that I think we should give all



1 delegates the opportunity to review the whole document.  
2 And then from there we could see which key pieces that  
3 actually we are concerned about, versus trying to split  
4 us up, you know, arbitrarily right now in any working  
5 groups.

6 It makes more sense as a group assignment, you  
7 know, homework, as per se, every delegate to go through  
8 the document, point out their issues, point out their  
9 concerns and then come back and collectively share that  
10 with each other so you could have a understanding of the  
11 core issues that this delegation needs to consider  
12 moving forward versus trying to arbitrarily assign 10  
13 pages to x amount of delegates; 10 pages to one or more  
14 of the delegates.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The ah -- thank you, Dele-  
16 gate Rudel Hodge, Jr.

17 I don't know, I've been told that ah -- and this  
18 is not to be funny, facetious or disrespectful -- in  
19 high school I had an English teacher, Ms. Wendy  
20 Williams, and she was from England --

21 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Um-hm.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- she said "I would if I  
23 could, but I can't, so I shan't."

24 And I say that to say -- to make this point:

25 That -- I can't remember the word that you used,

1 but the meaning of the word mean like throwing a line  
2 out in the water in some haphazard manner --

3 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Haphazardly?

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah -- some haphazard  
5 manner we would be dealing with groups. And I don't  
6 think that that was the understanding that I have.

7 And I think --

8 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Arbitrarily.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Arbitrarily --

10 DELEGATE RUSSELL: No, we're not going to do.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- well, arbitrarily,  
12 haphazard, that may be a distinct difference; right?  
13 But "arbitrarily" is the word that actually generated my  
14 concern.

15 I do not see in my mind that the review individu-  
16 ally of the document -- which a lot of people should of  
17 read especially if they run for public office -- is  
18 something that should be placed in front of the tasks  
19 that were doing to assess so we could try to make some  
20 determination of the committee.

21 People should have go out and read the documents.

22 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Correct.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And so I don't think that  
24 that should be a prerequisite to the forming and the  
25 discussion of a working group of some of the Articles.

1 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Pardon me, Wendy Williams was  
2 Spanish.

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Wendy Williams was Spanish?

4 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Yeah, Spanish.

5 DELEGATE RUSSELL: You don't --

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Well, you know, John ain't  
7 talking 'bout you. Yes, that's that 12 years of --  
8 that's from catechism.

9 [Laughter]

10 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Mr. President?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yes, I'm trying to clear,  
12 Delegate Silverman, to bring the meeting --

13 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Just one quick question?

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You want a question, but I  
15 was saying something to you, so a least listen --

16 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Okay.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: -- just a quick minute,  
18 because it was to you and for everyone: That we will  
19 try to ah -- please do not take your sign?

20 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: We have one missing here.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Because we -- or if you're  
22 going to walk to the meeting with it?

23 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: She going to forget. Take  
24 it!

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, we have one that's been

1 gone.

2 I'm sorry, Silverman. I've been rudely inter-  
3 rupted by delegates here on the island of St. Croix with  
4 some sidebar discussion.

5 [Interrupting noises]

6 I was simply saying, Delegate Silverman, after we  
7 hear from you, we're going to try to wrap up the meeting  
8 with a plan of moving forward on how we would success-  
9 fully achieve it.

10 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I have question.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: But after Delegate  
12 Silverman.

13 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: Thank you.

14 It was just a quick question:

15 As you know, I've spoken in favor of your pro-  
16 posal and how you've structured our review of the Fifth  
17 Constitutional draft. My question is:

18 What did you have in mind in terms of timetable?  
19 When did you want the initial review to be completed?  
20 And when did you envision following that review that the  
21 standing committee structures to be decided in a time  
22 specific scopes and for review?

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Today is the 11th of  
24 February, and we are scheduled for, based on the adopted  
25 Rules, for the first Saturday in March, March 1st as our

1 next meeting. I would think that some time by mid-March  
2 we should -- the group should come back with some sort  
3 of report and progress.

4 Delegate Rudel Hodge, you're saying before mid-  
5 March?

6 DELEGATE R. HODGE: I think we should have our  
7 review of the document, the document and our suggestions  
8 by March 1st, so we can have a productive March 1st  
9 meeting.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: That was Delegate Rudel  
11 Hodge, Jr. I'm glad he said it and not me.

12 So, I want him to -- so I won't be said that  
13 "we're pushing," but I am -- I can work with that.

14 Delegate Ross? Whatever the group decides.

15 DELEGATE ROSS: I rise in support of Delegate  
16 Hodge, Jr.'s position --

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good.

18 DELEGATE ROSS: -- March 1st. We only have nine  
19 Saturdays between now and December or October.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, well, and just, you  
21 know, just for everyone's comprehension, for the lack of  
22 a -- when I get tired I can't find all the nice English  
23 words.

24 We keep saying the -- we-may-hold-a-session-  
25 on-the-first-Saturday-of-every-month-period.

1 [Slow dragging emphasis on spoken words]

2 And in there, it-does-not-say-that-we-cannot-  
3 hold-an-addi-tion-al-session-in-any-month.

4 [Slow dragging emphasis on spoken words]

5 DELEGATE RUSSELL: I don't think we need that.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: No, I'm saying, if we deter-  
7 mine we need one -- a meeting more than the one Saturday  
8 that we set aside, and we need another meeting, it  
9 doesn't have to be on a Saturday, it could be on a  
10 Tuesday, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, whichever,  
11 but the point I'm trying to make is that we are per-  
12 mitted by the Rules, since it's "may" it ain't "shall"  
13 to pick other days.

14 So, I -- and that wasn't just for the discussion  
15 now -- that was for the discussion that's going on all  
16 day that it seems that people are missing some of these  
17 facts in the language that are in there.

18 Having said that -- and you all correct me, if  
19 I'm wrong -- it is my understanding -- and I'm coming to  
20 you, Delegate Ross -- that the majority of us who are  
21 still tuned in to today's meeting agree with Mr. --  
22 Delegate Rudel A. Hodge, Jr. suggestion that whatever  
23 we're working towards should be something that we looked  
24 at and be prepared to address by the March 1st session,  
25 which is the first Saturday.

1 We're all in agreement?

2 CHORUS OF DELEGATES: Yes.

3 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Aye aye.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good.

5 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Are we going to discuss where  
6 that March 1st session will be before we recess today?

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: When you say -- the Presi-  
8 dent, through the Executive Officers and the Executive  
9 Committee, schedule the meeting. Are you saying that we  
10 need to discuss where it's going to be held?

11 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Well --

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Let me help you out? And  
13 then, my intention -- and I don't know which premonition  
14 of thoughts that people may have been or may have had --  
15 we had the first meeting in St. Thomas; we came to St.  
16 Croix, and then we -- my intention was to alternate the  
17 meetings back and forth between the districts.

18 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Can we -- can I suggest that  
19 we have the meeting on St. John on March 1st?

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You could suggest that, but  
21 whether or not it will be so is a whole different ball  
22 game.

23 DELEGATE R. HODGE: Well, I'd just like it to be  
24 on the record that's it's my suggestion March 1st for  
25 St. John.

1 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Mr. President --

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah?

3 -----  
4 MOTION TO ADJOURN  
5 -----

6 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: -- I have a motion. I move  
7 that we adjourn.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, I was getting --  
9 motion on the floor to adjourn.

10 DELEGATE CANEGATA: Second.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: It's seconded.

12 DELEGATE SILVERMAN: We need to move out of the  
13 Committee of the Whole to have a motion.

14 DELEGATE ABRAMSON: Yes, we do.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Yeah, I know that. But I'm  
16 just saying, I'm acknowledging that a motion was made;  
17 one was second. I'm also acknowledging that we're still  
18 in the Committee of the Whole. And what I was moving  
19 from was the closure of the discussions of Items 2 and  
20 3. We've closed that discussion?

21 CHORUS OF DELEGATES: Yes.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good.

23 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Mr. Chair, I had my  
24 hands --

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: You have something to add to  
--



1 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I had asked you for  
2 a time, but you went all around and -- and --

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Well, if you did, I surely  
4 missed you. I'm sorry.

5 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: I only had one  
6 question.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Belardo de O'Neal?

8 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: You're talking about  
9 forming three groups with five people each. And I'm a  
10 little confused, because now we're saying that we're  
11 going to meet on the 1st to discuss what the group have  
12 come up with or the general members? That's my first  
13 confusion.

14 My next --

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Can I stop you there and  
16 then answer your question and then move on?

17 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: No, let me finish  
18 because --

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Okay. Let me write it down.  
20 I wrote it down.

21 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: And then I am trying  
22 to find out:

23 These three groups that you are forming, do each  
24 member tells you well this is what I am interesting in  
25 and I would like to serve on this committee or you would

1 assign us to any committee that you may think that we  
2 should serve?

3 Those are my two concerns.

4 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: President Richards, may I  
5 share a suggestion?

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Delegate Richardson?

7 DELEGATE RICHARDSON: Yes.

8 In regard to Delegate Belardo's response, with  
9 respect to the fact that you appoint head of committees,  
10 I think it should be up to the delegates to decide which  
11 committees they would like to join. And that is the end  
12 of my statement.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Thank you.

14 The first part of your question was in regards to  
15 --

16 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: My 'lil confusion  
17 with the three groups --

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good, the three groups.

19 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: -- of five people  
20 and who's going to meet on the 1st.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: The last thing, I believe  
22 that was missed is that the Executive Committee would  
23 put the Articles into three groups, whether it's the  
24 first three, 1-2-3 or Article 1, 2 and 3, or then go 4,  
25 5 and 6 into separate groups, and then we will send out

1 a proposal -- and I did say "proposal," in case anyone  
2 -- to ask individuals what groups based on the Article  
3 that they would like to serve on.

4 If one group exceeds five, and one group has less  
5 than five, then we will make a decision of how best to  
6 balance out the group to make sure they all have equal  
7 participation.

8 DELEGATE BELARDO de O'NEAL: Okay, now I'm  
9 understanding.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I mean that's -- is that we  
11 were saying earlier?

12 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yeah, I think that's it.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: All right. The ah --  
14 Delegate Ross?

15 DELEGATE ROSS: My position on the issue is: If  
16 a delegate has an interest in a particular area, they  
17 should let you know --

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Um-hm.

19 DELEGATE ROSS: -- and that you take it into  
20 consideration in making your assignments.

21 At some point or the other --

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Somebody ain't going to get  
23 what they want.

24 DELEGATE ROSS: -- you can't please everybody;  
25 okay?

1 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Good.

2 DELEGATE ROSS: And we can't hold up the process  
3 to determine --

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Everybody want to say I want  
5 there; I want to be there.

6 DELEGATE ROSS: Yeah, yeah.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: I will concur with Delegate  
8 Ross.

9 DELEGATE ROSS: And my other position is -- my  
10 understanding is that each committee is going to come  
11 back with a report to the rest of us --

12 DELEGATE RUSSELL: Yes.

13 DELEGATE ROSS: -- on their findings or notes on  
14 their assignment. It doesn't preclude the rest of us  
15 reacting to it --

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: From participating.

17 DELEGATE ROSS: -- and giving some input into the  
18 process.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: Exactly correct. And --

20 DELEGATE ROSS: You could go from Group 1 to  
21 Group 2 to Group 3 --

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDS: And they will have an  
23 opportunity to do that --

24 DELEGATE ROSS: -- and at the end of that we will  
25 form the standing committees.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDS:  -- on March 1st.

2           DELEGATE RUSSELL:  At the end of that, we will  
3 form the standing committees.

4           PRESIDENT RICHARDS:  Thank you.

5           We're going to rise from the Committee of the  
6 Whole back to the session.  And as we go back into  
7 session, we will immediately adjourn the session until  
8 our scheduled next full session of March 1st with these  
9 correspondences to come out.

10           We thank everyone for their presentation and  
11 their participation, and we hereby adjourn.

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13           Thereupon, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.  
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, **KATHLEEN D. DOWLING**, Stenographer, Division of St. Croix, do hereby certify that I reported, by machine shorthand, stenographically, the proceedings had and testimony given at this **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION** held on the 11th day of February, 2025.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing **69** pages constitute a true and accurate official transcript of said proceedings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my hand this the 14th day of February, 2025.

/s/  
KATHLEEN D. DOWLING  
Stenographer