



Parliament
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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**Public Administration and
Appropriations Committee**

Public Hearing Summary

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present at the meeting:

- Dr. Lackram Bodoie - Vice-Chairman
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy - Member
- Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine - Member
- Mr. Clarence Rambharat - Member
- Mr. Wade Mark - Member
- Ms. Amrita Deonarine - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

- Mr. Haimdath Ramoutar - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Dr. Jeffrey Reyes - Programme Coordinator
- Ms. Nina Antoine - Senior Economist

East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOS)

- Mr. Newman George - Chairman
- Dr. Deborah Thomas- Austin - Managing Director
- Mr. Michael Aberdeen - Projects Manager
- Mr. Rennie Mohan - Procurement Officer
- Ms. Nissa Hosten - Manager, Finance and Administration

Key Issues Discussed

General Issues

1. The areas under the purview of the Company;
2. The goals, strategies and mandate of the Company;
3. The governance and management of the Company;
4. The duplication of functions among the Company and other Ministries and State Agencies;
5. The sub-head and sub-item under which the Company receives allocations from its line Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development;
6. The transformation works conducted by the Company;
7. The targets achieved by the Company to date ;
8. The status of the East Port of Spain Development Plan;
9. Details of the Data Review Plan conducted;
10. The insufficient number of Board members and the intention to increase its complement;
11. Whether the Board of Directors of the Company is legally constituted;
12. The challenges faced with appointment of Board of Directors based on the change in government administration;
13. Cabinet's decision to appoint additional Board Members to achieve its full complement;
14. Details of the Community Impact Centres and the programmes offered at these centres;
15. Success stories as a result of the programmes offered at the Community Impact Centres;
16. The percentage of the budget allocated to Social Economic Programmes;
17. Details surrounding the Latrine Eradication Programme in EPOS;
18. The engagement by other Ministries or State Agencies to implement the strategies used by the Company in the communities under its purview;
19. The cost and benefits of leasing against purchasing of assets such as the telephone system and motor vehicles;
20. Irregularities in the disbursement of funds to the Company by the line Ministry.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The oversight challenges faced by the Managing Director;
2. The status of implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework;
3. The engagement of a Consultant to assist in the establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

Internal Audit

1. The absence of an Internal Audit Unit within the Company;
2. The lack of proper internal controls;
3. The method of tendering used to retain Anthony P. Pierre & Company;
4. The cost for contracting with Anthony P. Pierre & Company for auditing services;
5. Details surrounding the forensic audit conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC);
6. The costs associated with the forensic audit conducted by PWC;
7. The failure of the Company to perform bank reconciliations as evinced by the report of PWC;
8. Details surrounding the ongoing investigation by the Fraud Squad Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service involving sixteen million dollars in unauthorized cheque payments which was discovered in October 2017;
9. The actions taken by the Managing Director with regard to fraudulent activities within the Company;
10. Details surrounding the termination of the Company's Accountant;
11. The role of the Managing Director during the period where the now terminated Accountant failed to carry out his accounting duties;
12. Whether performance appraisals of the Accountant were conducted on a consistent basis for the duration of the Accountant's employment;
13. The key performance indicators for the Accountant;
14. The consideration of the Company to develop a Whistle Blower Policy in accordance with the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual.

Staffing

1. The steps taken to recruit more staff in keeping with its organizational structure;
2. The challenges faced by the Company as a result of the shortage of staff;
3. The key vacant positions at the Company;
4. The status of the Draft Cabinet Note sent to Comptroller of Accounts for the approval of the position of Auditor III.

Audited Financial Statements

1. Status of the outstanding audited financial statements from 2013-2018;
2. The anticipated timeframe for the submission of outstanding audited financial statements for the years 2013-2018;

Project Management

1. The cost overruns experienced with projects;
2. The challenges faced with completing projects on time;
3. The number of projects completed by small contractors;
4. Details of any underperforming projects;
5. Details of the training provided for small contractors;
6. The procurement methods used in engaging small contractors;
7. The prerequisites which companies are required to meet to qualify as a small contractor.

Next Meeting:

The next Public Hearing of the Committee will be held on **Wednesday, February 13, 2019**, at 1:30 p.m. At this meeting, the Committee intends to commence its inquiry into the approval process for land use in Trinidad and Tobago.

PAAC Secretariat
January 25, 2019