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WAPA Board Postpones Vote on Pay Increases for Top Executives Amid Social Media Scandal, But Gives Raises To Board's Auditing Staff

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Protesters on St. Croix demand change at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority on Wednesday. By. VI CONSORTIUM

After a tumultuous week that included a social media scandal and anti-WAPA protests, the Water and Power Authority board postponed a move to give pay raises to top executives.

The WAPA Governing Board unanimously voted at a Thursday meeting to remove action on pay hikes for “management and confidential employees” from the agenda. The items were not immediately rescheduled.

But the board took action in executive session to approve pay raises for internal auditing staff. WAPA provided no information on the raises, and the Consortium has been attempting to get more details.

Despite a week of anti-WAPA protests and reporting in multiple media outlets about the proposed salary increases, authority spokesman Jean Greaux said Thursday evening that Kupfer was never really up for a pay raise after all.

He did not, however, identify the “management and confidential employees” referenced by the board.

WAPA topline executives and board members were reeling this week after Deputy General Counsel Mark Kragel posted incendiary racial comments to Facebook.

A furious reaction from the public forced Mr. Kupfer on Tuesday to fire his legal counsel and issue a statement condemning Kragel’s remarks.

Mr. Kragel, in a weekend Facebook post labeled the Black Lives Matter movement a “domestic terrorist organization” and some of its supporters “fools” who do not understand policing in America. He concluded his post by dismissing the anti-racism movement and declaring “F*ck Black Lives Matter.”

Residents on St. Croix demonstrated in opposition to the pay raises and to demanded Mr. Kragel’s termination from public employment.