



VIRGINISLANDS  
**WATER**  
AND **POWER**  
**AUTHORITY**

P.O. BOX 1450,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands  
00804-1450  
TELEPHONE: (340) 774-3552

OFFICE OF THE  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**DATE:** December 18, 2019

**TO:** VI Water & Power Authority,  
Governing Board Members

Commissioner Anthony Thomas, Chairman  
Noel Loftus, Member  
Juanita Young, Secretary and Chair of Finance Committee  
Elizabeth Armstrong, Member  
Hubert Turnbull, Member  
Cheryl Boynes-Jackson, Member  
Director Joel Lee, Member  
Director Kyle Fleming, Chair of the Planning Committee

**FROM:** Rupert N. Pelle, P.E.   
Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** **Notice to Board of Governors**

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Enclosed please find 2 documents, (1) my request to Mr. Kupfer for more information as to his resent Notice of Performance action and (2) notice to the board of a whistle blower complaint and retaliatory actions against me for attempting to present corruption.

If actions are not taken in these complaints within 20 days, including protecting me from further retaliation, I will file a whistle blower action in court.



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**TO:** Lawrence J. Kupfer, CEO

**FROM:** Rupert N. Pelle, P.E.   
Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** December 18, 2019

**RE:** **Performance Notice Clarification Request**

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Over the course of my leave, I have taken some time to understand the Performance Notice that was presented to me on the morning of November 19, 2019. It was certainly not the reason that I was asked to travel to St. Thomas; notwithstanding the unsubstantiated claims presented. I would offer that the next time you feel the need to meet with me regarding any matter, that you can truthfully tell me the reason for the meeting before we meet. I have been trying to make a good faith effort to completing the Action Plan detailing my strategies for addressing the deficiencies outlined in the November 19<sup>th</sup> memo; however, I will need some clarifications to do so.

I need the following in order to respond (1) when were these expectations documented and communicated to me and by whom? (2) Is there a specific policy or procedure that I violated? I cannot be expected procedurally to respond to non-specifics or generalizations of roles and responsibilities; did you make a decision to change the Division of Office and Property to Facility Management? And if so, when did you do so and why was it not communicated to me?

I note that prior to your performance notice HR had stymied all HR actions in my department. It is unfortunate that you and I have never had a one-on-one discussion regarding these matters; although I have tried several times to meet with you. As you stated in the Memo, my role as the Chief Administrative Officer has a profound impact on the success of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority and there is nothing I take more seriously. My success to obtain this title did not come without my ability to do so, through my 19 years of employment at the Water and Power Authority.

I request a significant improvement in our working relationship over the next 90 days. Having a one-on-one discussion would be an opportunity to formalize roles, responsibilities and expectations going forward. Had this previously been done, the present concerns could have been prevented. Please note that expectations must be supported by adequate resources in terms of staffing and organizational restructure, funding, equipment and technologies to be accomplished. I have been repeatedly been denied such resources. Please respond to these inquiries within 15 days, the failure to do so will be taken as a denial of these requests and I will be forced to seek an appeal of your actions.



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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

December 18, 2019

VI Water & Power Authority  
Governing Board Members

Dear Governing Board Members,

In reviewing the allegations of failure to perform presented to me on November 19, 2019, it appears that this memo was not originated from Mr. Kupfer. Mr. Kupfer has now been with the Authority for just over a year and a half and he has only sat down with me in a one-on-one conversation for about 45 minutes. His very first words to me when we met for the first time were "OH, I heard about you!". That was not a very comforting feeling. In any event, I believe that Mr. Kupfer is being used as an avenue to fulfill the agenda of Mr. Gregory Rhymer and Ms. King-Leonce. Although, Mr. Kupfer stated that this document was confidential and that only he and Ms. King-Leonce was aware of its contents, this is impossible because some of the items laid out as deficiencies were not first-hand knowledge of either of the two presenting them to me.

On Thursday, September 3, 2019 Mr. Vernon Alexander met with me briefly after he had showed up for an interview that was rescheduled. In the conversation Mr. Alexander advised me that he was aware of a plan that two of my colleagues were working on to get me. He said that he did not like it and he was not in support of it. He further explained that it was one of their dirty games. I asked who he was talking about and he said that he could not tell me, but I must trust him, its coming. I told Mr. Alexander that I can assume that the was Ms. Sabrina King-Leonce the Human Resources Director and Mr. Gregory Rhymer, the Special Advisor to the Executive Director. Mr. Alexander laughed and again told me that he could not tell me and that he had already said too much. I then explained to Mr. Alexander that I raised a Conflict of Interest issue with the HR Director a few weeks earlier and that both Mr. Rhymer and Ms. King-Leonce had taken offence to the Conflict of Interest claim and that they were going to probably retaliate against me because of it. Mr. Alexander's last words to me were, mark this day and remember that I told you so.

Again on Friday, September 9, 2019 I had another brief conversation with Mr. Alexander after the scheduled interviews and Mr. Alexander confirmed to me that Mr. Gregory Rhymer was one of the individuals that were plotting against me. He still refused to say who the second individual was. Shortly after, Mr. Biggs, the Assistant Director of Human Resources returned from a Business trip that ended October 12, 2019. Mr. Biggs called me to his office and told me that he was concerned with a conversation that he heard Ms. King-Leonce was having about me on a phone call while they were away on a business trip. Mr. Biggs explained that he was not aware of whom Ms. King-Leonce was talking to but he stated that the conversation was not pleasant, he did not provide me with any specific details of what was said. As I did with Mr. Alexander, I explained to Mr. Biggs what had transpired with Ms. King-Leonce a few weeks earlier with the Conflict of

Interest issue raised with the purchase of the old Internal Revenue Bureau (IRB) building. Mr. Biggs explained that he had heard about it and could not understand why the HR Director was even involved with the acquisition of properties. Additionally, Mr. Biggs also expressed to me that he was glad that I had put a stop to the build-out of the of the former Customer Service location in Four Winds when I insisted that the Project Management Department provide me with its internal estimate. An estimate that tuned out to be three times lower than the bid I instructed to move forward with. I also assume that this was the reason why Mr. Kupfer removed it from the Governing Board Agenda.

It is very disheartening to see that individuals continue to be punished for not participating in the well-known corruption that is plaguing the Authority at the Managerial and Executive level. If you don't play along then you get hurt. I don't see this as anything more than retaliation for a "Whistle Blower" complaint. In any event I will attempt to address each of the allegations.

In the first sentence of the Performance Notice, it talks about my communication style, quality of work, and my partnership with others. Both the CEO and the HR Director lied to me about the purpose for which I was traveling to St. Thomas. Mr. Kupfer sent me an email message over the weekend of November 16, 2019 and asked me to travel to St. Thomas to discuss the Four Winds and Nisky Developments. I replied and told him my travel plans then the HR Director sent me an email on November 18, 2019 asking when I would be in St. Thomas because she had something to place on my calendar. After I advised her that I would be on St. Thomas on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of November and asked her what she wanted to place on my calendar she said never mind she was mistaken about my area of responsibility. Upon arrival to Mr. Kupfer's office as scheduled Mr. Kupfer and Ms. King-Leonce both entered the room and presented me with a Performance Notice dated November 19, 2019. So much for the CEO and HR Director for setting a good example of open communication.

#### Allegation 1

- *Overall Facilities Management - Throughout my time as Executive Director you have demonstrated a consistent lack of initiative and have failed to adopt a proactive approach to the management of the Authority's various facilities and associated operating equipment. A prime example of this has been your failure to ensure consistent maintenance of generators and maintain sufficient fuel levels. Your lack of planning and a proactive approach often forces other members of the management team to have to jump in and assist in order to solve a problem, or prevent a crisis that proper planning and oversight could have prevented. This puts unnecessary strain on other departments and hinders their ability to focus on their own areas of responsibility.*

*An example of this would be the multiple network outages that have occurred in the Sunny Isles office. Your failure to follow-through and ensure that the generators were operating as expected resulted in loss of power to the server room equipment during island-wide outages. On multiple occasions this summer the server was left to run on the small in-rack UPS units, which are not designed for extended periods of time. On at least 3 instances between May and August of this year, the UPS batteries died causing all equipment in the server room experience a hard shut down. When power was restored, the servers in the IBM Blade Chassis failed to restart. Due to this failure, file, print, email-relay, internet and other services were not available for lengthy periods of time impacting our ability to continue normal business operations.*

*When questioned about the generators during each instance, you attempted to absolve yourself of responsibility and placed blame on the project management team which was only meant to support you.*

First of all, I have never been responsible for the Authority's Facilities as a Facility Manager. The Department that I have oversight of is called Office and Property. The general responsibility for this department as outlined in the Property Supervisor Job Description is for the distribution of office supplies and furnishings, mail/parcel handling and distribution and Janitorial Services. All Facility Maintenance Activities are handled by the Building and Grounds Department which falls under the Operations Group. Additionally, we only manage the leased properties and if any type of maintenance issues arise at any of the leased properties then the Property Supervisors generates a work order and sends it to the Buildings and Grounds Department for action. Even if it is something as simple as changing a light bulb.

As for the example of the issue surrounding the IT network failure because of multiple power outages that is clearly the fault of a failed power generation system and not the fault of me or any members of the Office and Property Staff. The responsibility of the maintenance of the back-up generations has always been managed by the Mechanics in the Garage with assistance of the Plant Maintenance team when necessary. At times when servicing is required by the OEM, then the Property Supervisor makes contact with the appropriate service representatives. Even the maintenance of the adequate fuel levels are managed by the Garage. For the record the Garage is no longer a part of the Office of the CAO as a result of the changes that Mr. Kupfer personally made in shifting the Garage and the Warehouse to the Project Management Department.

#### Allegation II

- *Insurance Policy Oversight- In Jan 2018 the Authority's risk consultant at Risk Management and Insurance Consulting LLC notified you that he would be retiring. Included in this announcement our consultant asked that we plan to replace him and went so far as to provide a reference for the Authority to consider. Our Consultant continued to help until August of 2018. During that time and to date you have failed to follow through on the tasks necessary to secure services of a new risk consultant. The Authority's Property and General Liability Insurance policies are set to respectively expire March 31, 2020 and April 1, 2020. Your failure to follow-through in this regard puts the Authority at a significant disadvantage in preparing to extend these policies.*

The Authority's Property and General Liability Insurance Policies were successfully renewed in March and April of 2019 since the retirement of the Risk Consultant Mr. Paul Van Zuiden. What the Authority needs to be concerned about is the possible litigation of the lawsuit WAPA aided to be filed against its Insurance Carrier, Lloyds of London at a time when we are so close to the 2020 renewal. Additionally, as with any professional services that may be required from a Risk Consultant, the Authority is authorized to procure those services and be in compliance with its own internal policies and the Virgin Islands codes. It is no different than how the Legal Department would solicit the services of an outside Council.

#### Allegation III

- *Post Storm Damage Assessment and Insurance Claims- After Hurricanes Irma and Maria you were assigned the responsibility of overseeing the Authority's damage assessment and submission of insurance claims. As you know, recently public risk consultants have*

*communicated that the damages the Authority incurred are far in excess of our deductible. Your failure to secure expert services to assess damages post storms had a significant impact on our ability to recover losses. The estimated miscalculation of damages on your part is estimated to be upwards of \$32 million.*

Mr. Kupfer's accusations are very unprofessional and premature. His statement above is a classic case of being found guilty before the trial. At this time, the Phoenix Consulting Claim figure is fictional and unproven. Note that;

- 1) Phoenix Consulting is paid based on the amount of "insured damage found". Therefore, they are incentivized to create or enhance the initial findings in preparation for negotiations with underwriters.
- 2) Underwriters have not agreed to any increase in the claim at this time. Again the Phoenix Consulting is fictional today.

As with all the other task and functions that I had gotten involved with, it was because of the task that were assumed as part of my responsibility without any prior notice to me. Without a job description or any internal policies, procedures or best practices to be used as a guide as it relates to filing an insurance claim, I was forced to use the Property Insurance Policy as my guide. In section "R. Requirements in Case of Loss" which I used as my guide. I provided written notice to the insurer as soon as it was practical, I inspected the insured properties before any repairs were undertaken and I provided the physical evidence to the insurer. Absence of any other instructions I have fulfilled the duties of my assumed responsibility.

#### Allegation IV

- *Federal Grants Reimbursements - After Hurricanes Irma and Maria you were assigned the responsibility of seeking funding for the temporary relocation of impacted departments. Since August of 2018 Project Worksheets have not yet been obligated for St. Thomas T&D Line Department at Bolongo, Project Management at STX Richmond Power Plant, St. Thomas T&D Engineering at Port of Sale mall. You also have failed to complete the Project Worksheets for the Authority's vehicles that were damaged in the hurricanes. Your failure to follow-through and complete this task has unnecessarily delayed the Authority's ability to collect an estimated \$1.8 million dollars for Buildings and Facilities on St. Thomas, \$1 million dollars for Buildings and Facilities on St. Croix, \$200,000 for Buildings and Facilities St. John, and an unknown amount for vehicles. As an officer of this company you play a role in ensuring our financial security. Your lack of action clearly demonstrates a failure to embrace your individual responsibility in impacting the bottom line.*

Mr. Kupfer should not come here, two years after the fact, and tell me about responsibilities the he assumes I was assigned. I was never assigned the responsibility to seek any type of funding for damaged facilities. As part of the Power Task Force team with the FEMA Partners, I assisted the FEMA team in identifying the damaged properties and this was in conjunction with the Witt OBryan assigned representatives. Yes, the overall objective was to seek reimbursement for damages. To this date I have never seen how a Project Worksheet is formulated or what it takes to accomplish the task of formulating one. The Grants Management Team and others in WAPA, have taken the various training in the formulation and submission of Project Worksheets. FEMA and/or Witt would ask for information relative to damages at the different locations and I would provide answers. Additionally, a copy of the project worksheet for the vehicles was completed and copied to Mr. Kupfer in an email in August of 2018.

#### Allegation V

- *Office & Facility Locations- Over the course of my time at the Authority it has become clear that you have failed to develop a comprehensive strategy for effective and suitable office space for our Employees. You often demonstrate a lack of urgency in securing office accommodation, and when accommodations are secured, taking prompt and effective action to have these sites ready for business operations, resulting in residual and unnecessary cost. As an example, in the St. Thomas district, despite knowing of the need to relocate the Water Distribution facilities and a portion of the Line Department, you have consistently failed to demonstrate engagement and become involved in a timely manner. On St. Croix, your unresponsiveness and hands-off approach significantly contributed to extending the displacement of the T&D group. Despite securing a location in June of 2019, T&D in St. Croix was unable to relocate until September of 2019. These avoidable delays result in increased employee dissatisfaction.*

This entire statement is not based on facts so I will weigh in on the examples provided. First I am not aware that any part of the Water Distribution Facilities on St. Thomas that resulted in the displacement of employees, I would need specifics on what portion of the Line Department is being talked about. As for the displacement of the Line Department on St. Croix, this was delayed because the Management of the T&D Operations opted to do their own thing and decided to move to a Hannas Rest location that needed to be prepared and built. They have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in a site that now remains in a more deplorable and un-useable condition than when they started.

#### Allegation VI

- *Incident Command - Under the Incident Command Structure it is your role to assume the responsibility of Chief of Coordination, however it has become evident that you have not been proactive in assuming this full role. You are often disengaged or ill prepared for meetings, and you have failed to take ownership of the RFP process resulting in the need for dissemination of your responsibilities in that regard. Further, you have consistently displayed a very laid back approach to warehouse ordering, inventory procedures, and management of inventory/quality control. Your lack of familiarity in this area indicates that you have failed to invest the time to research and understand how vendors like Haugland and BBC handle inventory. Lastly, you have yet to provide advice to improvement of processes and standards. Your lack of action increases our vulnerability and undermines our efforts for emergency preparedness.*

If I remember correctly it was in September of 2018 when Mr. G. Rhymer presented the formation of the Incident Command Structure that would be implemented at the Authority. I was assigned the role of Logistics Section Chief not Chief of Coordination. Activities of the ICS team remained dormant through the end of 2018. It was not until the spring of 2019 that the RFP for services after an event started to be discussed. During that time I was out of the office on approved Family Medical Leave from the end of November 2018 to the beginning of March 2019 so Mr. Rhymer assigned the responsibilities of the Logistics Section Chief to Don Gregoire. As a result Mr. Gregoire was the one that prepared the associated RFP's. How can I take ownership for work while I am officially out on leave? Additionally, Mr. Kupfer is suggesting that I research and understand how vendors like Haugland and BBC handle inventory, the two companies that would ultimately cause FEMA to de-obligate hundreds of millions of dollars because there is no documentation of where the materials purchased by FEMA were used. I don't think this is fair.

#### Allegation VII

- *Oversight of Security Department - Recently your lack of involvement and engagement in the management of the Security department has been evident. Your actions demonstrate a failure to familiarize yourself with the general operation of this department. In addition a lack of engagement in the RFP process on your part was evident in the most recent Committee Meetings. You did not provide support to your Security Manager during segments of the presentation that required additional leadership, nor did you participate during questioning.*

I am unclear as to what lack of involvement and engagement Mr. Kupfer is speaking of. I was the one that told all my managers that I will no longer present their project to the Governing Board on their behalf. I am the one that directs every action of the Safety Department. A department that is literally a team of two individuals. The reason I did not personally engage in the conversation at the committee meeting was because it was embarrassing to know that the Chief Legal Council, Attorney Farrington signed off on the evaluation report for legal sufficiency knowing that the bid was a IFB and that the selection of the lowest bidder was required.

As for the Statement in the memo that Mr. Kupfer is temporarily assigning Mr. Gregory Rhymer his Special Assistant the responsibility of providing me with direct guidance and support is just not acceptable. Mr. Rhymer's guidance would only lead to me being directly involved in the ring of corruption at this Authority. Allow me to elaborate. My first encounter with Mr. Gregory Rhymer was in December of 2011 when I was assigned the responsibility as lead investigator in a procurement impropriety complaint that the Civil Engineer Mr. Mustafa Abusaoud filed against Mr. Rhymer. Mr. Abusaoud complaint was about the fact that Mr. Rhymer allegedly circumvented the procurement process and gave a job to a contractor named Mr. Julio King to do work on the line department without having proper knowledge and understanding of the job at hand. Mr. Abusaoud left the Authority not too long after the complaint because he said he was being harassed and was tired of the process.

Again in 2014 Mr. Rhymer was part of an Internal Audit investigation that was turned over to the Office of the Attorney General for further prosecution. That is a case where Mr. Rhymer allegedly received kickbacks from contracts SC-12-13, SC-22-13 and SC-24-13 at which time he was the Chief Operating Officer. These contracts ranged from scopes of converting the tanks from accepting No. 6 to No. 2 oils, to emergency contracts and tank cleaning. All of these contracts were awarded to the same contractor, Cleve George of ABC Concepts who was not qualified to do the work and who had previously been imprisoned by the Federal Government for falsifying environmental records. The reason these 3 contracts were flagged for possible kickbacks was because of the cleaning of tank 12 which was awarded to Mr. George for \$1,111,000. That was \$811,000 for the cleaning and \$300,000 for the disposal of the waste. Tank 12 was previously cleaned for a cost of \$31,819 and as a comparison tanks no. 10 and 11 on STT and no. 3 on STX were also cleaned for \$11,500, \$11,500 and \$40,000 respectively. To this day, no one has been able to produce Mr. George's cradle to grave records for the disposal of the waste from the fuel tanks. Mr. Rhymer was also ultimately responsible for the \$92 million dollar fine that was levied against the Authority for the falsification of the air emission records. Due to the Authority's financial situation the fines were reduced to Consent Decrees which we are still under today.

Mr. Rhymer's involvement in corruption at the Authority is even more present today as Mr. Kupfer confides in him and gives him free rein to do what he wants. This level of corruption has even trickled to other management and executive level employees. For example, Mr. Rhymer and Mr. Clinton Hedrington orchestrated and transferred FEMA supplied materials for Hurricane restoration to the Tortola, British Virgin

Islands without the written permission from FEMA. Niel Vanterpool the Director of Transmission and Distribution has leased out one of the Vehicles purchased by FEMA to one of the Contractors doing work for the Authority without the written permission of FEMA. Mr. Vanetrpool has also created a company to do sub-contract work for the Authority under a federally funded program. A fact that was admitted to by Mr. Hedrington under oath at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature earlier this year. Yet no action has been taken against any of these individuals. Therefore, I do not need to be and prefer not to be mentored by an individual as corrupt as Mr. Rhymer.

In Conclusion I would iterate that this so call performance evaluation is nothing more than a retaliation tactic by Mr. Gregory Rhymer and Ms. Sabrina King-Leonce for blowing the whistle on their plans to defraud the people of the Virgin Islands for their own personal gains. I would once again ask, as I did in my 2017 appeal to the Governing Board, that I be provided with a Job Description for the position that I currently hold as Chief Administrative Officer as outlined in the 2015 Management Audit that the Authority is supposed to be complying with per the commitment to the Public Services Commission. Mr. Kupfer and Ms. King-Leonce continue to not support my request for appropriate staffing, basic resources like a vehicle and Office space for the Safety Department on St. Thomas to ensure they have a false reason to terminate me.



**Date:** November 19, 2019  
**To:** **Rupert Pelle**  
**From:** **Larry Kupfer**, Executive Director  
**Subject:** **Performance Notice Memo**

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Mr. Pelle,

Over the course of the last year of your serving as the Chief Administration Officer of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority several issues have come to light revealing challenges in your communication style, quality of work, follow-through, and partnership with others here at the Authority. In an effort to provide clarity, I would like to effectively communicate my concerns with the hope of helping you understand my expectations and allowing you the opportunity to improve in your role as Chief Administration Officer.

This document is to assist you in meeting those expectations, and thereby allowing you greater success within The Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority.

#### **Quality of Work & Follow- Through**

Providing thorough, timely, and efficient support is the cornerstone of your function within the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority. As an Officer of this company I rely on you to do the leg work and oversee the operations of your division while providing meaningful support to our various departments. Your ability to execute efficiently impacts the entire Authority.

Areas of responsibility where your quality of work has been less than desirable are as follows:

- Overall Facilities Management- Throughout my time as Executive Director you have demonstrated a consistent lack of initiative and have failed to adopt a proactive approach to the management of the Authority's various facilities and associated operating equipment. A prime example of this has been your failure to ensure consistent maintenance of generators and maintain sufficient fuel levels. Your lack of planning and a proactive approach often forces other members of the management team to have to jump in and assist in order to solve a problem, or prevent a crisis that proper planning and oversight could have prevented. This puts unnecessary strain on other departments, and hinders their ability to focus on their own areas of responsibility.

An example of this would be the multiple network outages that have occurred in the Sunny Isles office. Your failure to follow-through and ensure that the generators were operating as expected resulted in loss of power to the server room equipment during island-wide outages. On multiple occasions this summer the server was left to run on the small in-rack UPS units, which are not designed for extended periods of time. On at least 3 instances between May and August of this year, the UPS batteries died causing all equipment in the server room experience a hard shut down. When power was restored, the servers in the IBM Blade Chassis failed to restart. Due to this failure, file, print, email-relay, internet and other services were not available for lengthy periods of time impacting our ability to continue normal business operations.

When questioned about the generators during each instance, you attempted to absolve yourself of responsibility and placed blame on the project management team which was only meant to support you.

- **Insurance Policy Oversight-** In Jan 2018 the Authority's risk consultant at Risk Management and Insurance Consulting LLC notified you that he would be retiring. Included in this announcement our consultant asked that we plan to replace him and went so far as to provide a reference for the Authority to consider. Our Consultant continued to help until August of 2018. During that time and to date you have failed to follow through on the tasks necessary to secure services of a new risk consultant. The Authority's Property and General Liability Insurance policies are set to respectively expire March 31, 2020 and April 1, 2020. Your failure to follow-through in this regard puts the Authority at a significant disadvantage in preparing to extend these policies.
- **Post Storm Damage Assessment and Insurance Claims-** After Hurricanes Irma and Maria you were assigned the responsibility of overseeing the Authority's damage assessment and submission of insurance claims. As you know, recently public risk consultants have communicated that the damages the Authority incurred are far in excess of our deductible. Your failure to secure expert services to assess damages post storms had a significant impact on our ability to recover losses. The estimated miscalculation of damages on your part is estimated to be upwards of \$32 million.
- **Federal Grants Reimbursements-** After Hurricanes Irma and Maria you were assigned the responsibility of seeking funding for the temporary relocation of impacted departments. Since August of 2018 Project Worksheets have not yet been obligated for St. Thomas T&D Line Department at Bolongo, Project Management at STX Richmond Power Plant, St. Thomas T&D Engineering at Port of Sale mall. You also have failed to complete the Project Worksheets for the Authority's vehicles that were damaged in the hurricanes. Your failure to follow-through and complete this task has unnecessarily delayed the Authority's ability to collect an estimated \$1.8 million dollars for Buildings and Facilities on St. Thomas, \$1 million dollars for Buildings and Facilities on St. Croix, \$200,000 for Buildings and Facilities St. John, and an unknown amount for vehicles. As an officer of this company you play a role in ensuring our financial security. Your lack of action clearly demonstrates a failure to embrace your individual responsibility in impacting the bottom line.
- **Office & Facility Locations-** Over the course of my time at the Authority it has become clear that you have failed to develop a comprehensive strategy for effective and suitable office space for our Employees. You often demonstrate a lack of urgency in securing office accommodation, and when accommodations are secured, taking prompt and effective action to have these sites ready for business operations, resulting in residual and unnecessary cost. As an example, in the St. Thomas district, despite knowing of the need to relocate the Water Distribution facilities and a portion of the Line Department, you have consistently failed to demonstrate engagement and become involved in a timely manner. On St. Croix, your unresponsiveness and hands-off approach significantly contributed to extending the displacement of the T&D group. Despite securing a location in June of 2019, T&D in St. Croix was unable to relocate until September of 2019. These avoidable delays result in increased employee dissatisfaction.
- **Incident Command-** Under the Incident Command Structure it is your role to assume the responsibility of Chief of Coordination, however it has become evident that you have not been proactive in assuming this full role. You are often disengaged or ill prepared for meetings, and you have failed to take ownership of the RFP process resulting in the need for dissemination of your responsibilities in that regard. Further, you have consistently displayed a very laid back approach to warehouse ordering, inventory procedures, and management of inventory/quality control. Your lack of familiarity in this area indicates that you have failed to invest the time to research and understand how vendors like Haughland and BBC handle inventory. Lastly, you have yet to provide advice to improvement of processes and standards. Your lack of action increases our vulnerability and undermines our efforts for emergency preparedness.

- Oversight of Security Department- Recently your lack of involvement and engagement in the management of the Security department has been evident. Your actions demonstrate a failure to familiarize yourself with the general operation of this department. In addition a lack of engagement in the RFP process on your part was evident in the most recent Committee Meetings. You did not provide support to your Security Manager during segments of the presentation that required additional leadership, nor did you participate during questioning.

Success in this initiative will require:

- Excellence in time management. Understand your deadlines and prioritize tasks in a manner that allows for submission of projects timely and of good quality.
- Adjust your work schedule when necessary to meet deliverables. Longer hours, or less days off may be required during peak times to ensure the success of the business. This is a requirement of all leaders and subject matter experts.
- Be prepared for our board and director meetings, have agenda of items you are working on and areas that you need assistance. Ask questions when you are unsure about deliverables. Communicate any concerns, and keep others informed as to your progress along the way. Our strengthened communication will minimize roadblocks or progress barriers.
- Understand your role as a support department. Operate and lead in a manner that reduces strain on the operations teams, and offers guidance and efficient support. Facilitate without hindering progress. Work expeditiously to meet operational needs. Minimize delays.
- Understand that all responsibilities within your department whether retained, delegated, or outsourced are ultimately your responsibility. Take ownership and ensure that projects and assignments are followed through effectively and on-time. Instead of a hands-off approach, be involved in ensuring that the support your team is expected to provide is consistent and reliable.
- Be Proactive. Ask questions, and do research in order to fully understand what is expected of you. Think ahead and create a plan for successful execution. Know your areas of vulnerability and take steps ensure that you are successful.
- Embrace the impact your Department has on the Authority's financials. Reevaluate spending and ensure that financial considerations and impact are always at the forefront in planning, execution, and prioritization.

### **Partnership with Colleagues & Communication**

A Senior Leader's ability to work well with others and collaborate can make or break their likelihood of success. As an Officer of the company I expect you to set the example and encourage and facilitate positive relationships. Over the course of my time as your Supervisor I have observed many instances where your interactions are less than desirable and often create tension and an unnecessary divide.

Areas that need immediate improvement are as follows:

- Responsiveness- Rather than communicating regular progress, your colleagues are often left to follow-up with you. On many instances I have been cc'd on communications where you have failed to respond to requests for feedback leading to undue frustration, and animosity.

- **Communication Style-** When questioned or challenged, your responses are often confrontational or combative. This seems to be particularly common via email. Again, I have been privy to communications where your responses are defensive, and sometimes accusatory rather than focused on solving the problem at hand. Such a response is unnecessary and unbecoming of a Senior Leader.

Success in this initiative will require:

- Be proactive and follow-up with others prior to the need for follow-up with you. Create channels of communications that allow the departments you support to feel comfortable that you and your team are engaged and reliable.
- Alter your approach to requests for follow-up. Understand the impact your work has on the overall operation. Recognize the part you play in each department's ability to succeed, and work collaboratively to support their success. Replace confrontational or defensive responses with helpful feedback and insight. Communicate plans and solutions. Take time to understand challenges, obstacles they are experiencing, and build their confidence level in your ability to reach objectives.
- Treat your colleagues like customers and be responsive to their needs. The departments your division supports are no different than the customers we provide service to. Demonstrate the level of service we expect from our employees when managing your division and set the tone for the rest of your department. Lead by example. By bridging the gap you can create and maintain relationships and build trust within the team.
- Be open to feedback and constructive criticism. Understand that feedback whether positive or negative clears the pathway to successful management of the Authority. Use feedback as a tool to shape and strengthen management of your area.

Mr. Pelle, I know that it goes without saying that as the Chief Administration Officer your role has a profound impact on the success of the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority. As such, the deficiencies and areas of improvement I have outlined for you above must be taken seriously. I am issuing you this Performance Notice Memo as a sign of my commitment to helping you progress and meet the expectations of your position. I look forward to a significant improvement.

In order to facilitate your success, I would like you to create an action plan detailing your strategies for addressing the deficiencies as outlined. Once you have formalized your own plan, I would like to review it with you so I can support you in this initiative. If you need assistance in formulating this action plan, please reach out to Ms. Léonce in Human Resources who will partner with you. Additionally, I will be temporarily assigning Greg Rhymer my Special Assistant the responsibility of providing you direct guidance and support. Please use Mr. Rhymer as a resource to assist you with achieving success as outlined. You may reach out to him at your earliest convenience to begin the path moving forward.

The items outlined above are fundamental expectations of your position as Chief Administration Officer within the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority. You have been provided the feedback and expectations to be successful in your role. The responsibility is yours to achieve. My expectation is that I will see marked and sustained improvement over the course of the next ninety (90) days. Lack of sustained improvement or further incidents of this nature may result in additional counseling up to and including disciplinary action or separation of employment.

If you have any questions or need further clarity, please speak with me immediately.

**Receipt Acknowledged:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rupert Pelle  
Chief Administration Officer

11/19/19  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sabrina King-Leonce  
DHR

11/19/19  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lawrence Kupfer  
Executive Director

11/19/19  
Date

Distribution:  
Personnel File