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PFA Announces Meeting to Select Turnaround Company for WAPA Amid CEO's Imminent Departure

As WAPA's CEO Andrew Smith steps down, the Public Finance Authority gears up to finalize the hiring of a turnaround management service in hopes of stabilizing the utility's operations

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The V.I. Water and Power Authority's Richmond power plant. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

On Wednesday, the board of the Public Finance Authority will meet to “approve the selection of a company...to provide Turnaround Management Services” for the V.I. Water and Power Authority, according to an announcement on Monday. The news comes following reports from the Consortium that WAPA CEO Andrew Smith is set to [end his tenure](#) at as head of the struggling utility on June 30th.?

The hiring of a company to stabilize WAPA's finances and operations was mandated by the V.I. Legislature [last April](#), as part of the move to establish a \$100 million line of credit for the territory, which was used in part to finance the first tranche of WAPA's [negotiated settlement with Vitrol](#) following a protracted and bitter contractual dispute.

At the time, lawmakers decreed that WAPA would not be able to make any new hires until the turnaround company was in place. With Mr. Smith's departure now imminent, it appears that the PFA must move swiftly to ensure that a new chief executive officer/executive director for WAPA can be appointed without undue delay.

The company has been roiled in recent weeks with instability in the territory's electricity grid, caused by a combination of inclement weather, equipment failures, and fuel shortages. WAPA's finances, already on shaky ground, have also been called into question after news that two [multi-million dollar judgements](#) were recently awarded to vendors suing WAPA for contractual breaches.