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Andrew Smith Praises Frontline Workers in Final Report as WAPA Executive Director; Ashley Bryan Named Interim CEO

Board members commend Smith's leadership during difficult times and appoint Ashley Bryan as Interim CEO. Karl Knight is set to be announced as the new executive director on Monday following a successful vote during Thursday's board meeting.

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WAPA's departing CEO, Andrew Smith By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

“It’s with a heavy heart and mixed emotions that I move on to my next adventure, whatever that may be,” said Andrew Smith, as he gave his final report as executive director during Thursday’s meeting of the Water and Power Authority governing board.?

As he reflected on his tenure at the helm of the troubled utility, Mr. Smith turned his attention to the men and women with whom he served for two and a half years. “I’m beyond impressed with how much we do as an organization with so little,” he told board members.

He appealed for compassion from a frustrated populace. “Some of our team takes a lot of abuse in the public and in social media and elsewhere,” Mr. Smith observed. “I don’t think the public appreciates how bad it can actually be if there weren’t the men and women of WAPA standing hip deep in mud in the middle of the night in the rain, fixing stuff...that’s really a testament to our workforce,” he continued.



WAPA Chief Operating Officer for Electricity, Ashley Bryan (V.I. Legislature)

Members of the board offered congratulatory messages, praising Mr. Smith for his leadership during extremely challenging times. WAPA board member Maurice Muia noted that the departing CEO often spoke about WAPA’s frontline employees, highlighting their often-unseen efforts to go above and beyond the call of duty. “I really appreciate when someone in a leadership position that’s far away from that can acknowledge that.” Board member Juanita Young joked that whatever is Mr. Smith’s next assignment, “I probably can guarantee that it won’t be as difficult as it is being CEO of WAPA.”?

“I hope you’re right,” Mr. Smith quipped in response.?

Following Thursday’s meeting, which stretched over four hours, the WAPA board convened an emergency meeting on Friday. Ashley Bryan, the current interim chief operating officer for electricity, was appointed interim CEO, with a permanent successor to Mr. Smith expected to be officially announced on Monday.?

Sources with knowledge of the matter reported to the Consortium that Karl Knight, chief of staff to Governor Albert Bryan Jr., was [selected by the board](#) as Mr. Smith’s permanent replacement.