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## Ashley Bryan Resigns as WAPA's COO for Electricity; Noel Hodge Considered as Successor

**Bryan submits notice of intent to resign as WAPA faces ongoing financial and operational challenges; CEO Karl Knight confirms Hodge, director of water distribution, is a potential candidate for the role, though no final decision has been made**

Exclusive / **Published On November 18, 2024 02:52 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **November 18, 2024**

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Ashley Bryan, WAPA's outgoing Chief Operating Officer for Electricity, who has submitted her notice of resignation amid the authority's search for a successor.

The V.I. Water and Power Authority (WAPA) has confirmed to the Consortium that Ashley Bryan, its chief operating officer for electricity, has submitted her intention to resign. Bryan, who [previously served as interim CEO](#) following Andrew Smith's departure, informed current CEO

Karl Knight of her decision on Friday.

During a brief interview, Knight clarified to the Consortium that while Bryan has not officially resigned, she has submitted notice of her intent to vacate the position. The Consortium learned that she provided the authority with two weeks' notice.

While WAPA is considering Noel Hodge, the current director of water distribution, as a potential replacement for Bryan, Knight stressed that no final decision has been made. "He's put as a potential person as he's currently the chief operating officer of the water division. But that's not something that we've decided," Knight stated. Hodge's candidacy for the role has sparked discussions, with some within the authority expressing concern about his readiness for the position.

When asked about possible reasons for Bryan's decision, Knight denied rumors of significant disagreements between them, including speculation that directives from Bryan were being ignored. "In any management team, deliberation is healthy. I always encourage folks to speak their mind and give me their perspective. The buck, of course, always stops with me," Knight said. "I'm not aware of any particular or acute disagreement. I wouldn't put too much credence into that." He added that Bryan has not disclosed specific reasons for her departure but noted that their working relationship has remained professional.

Speaking on the broader state of WAPA, Knight expressed cautious optimism about the authority's future. "We are still in a difficult position, but I did expect that the first six months or so were going to be very difficult," he said, describing the authority's current financial constraints as dire. "We're triaging our cash on a week-to-week basis, trying to keep up with critical payments."

Knight pointed to tangible progress with long-discussed projects finally coming to fruition, including solar energy initiatives and battery installations. "The good news is, a lot of the plans that had been discussed previously, some for many years, are finally starting to come online. Projects are starting to happen," he said.

Additionally, Knight highlighted the influx of federal capital funding, amounting to billions of dollars, as a significant factor in rebuilding WAPA's infrastructure. He described the combination of prudent management, careful decision-making, and a sense of urgency as crucial elements in turning the organization around. "These initiatives will ease the burden a bit and make us more viable. It also buys us time to develop a more comprehensive financial strategy," he stated.

Bryan's resignation marks another significant leadership change at WAPA as the authority continues to grapple with financial and operational challenges. While Knight remains optimistic about WAPA's future despite its ongoing struggles, many ratepayers see lower electric bills as the true measure of the authority's progress. However, exactly when this will happen remains uncertain.