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\$2 Million in Contract Penalties Add to Paul E. Joseph Stadium's Woes 10 Years After Groundbreaking

Delayed costs of \$2 million add to the decade-long challenges of completing Paul E. Joseph Stadium, but Governor Bryan remains optimistic, assuring that all funding is secured and plans to move forward are underway

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Work performed on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in May 2023. By. V.I. DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS

On Monday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. addressed the current state of the project to rebuild the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in Frederiksted. "We're trying to figure out the easiest and best way to finish this project," he said.

The project, which has been plagued with delays, false starts, budgetary constraints, and seeming scope creep, [originally began under former Governor John De Johng](#), but was halted by his successor, former Governor Kenneth Mapp. At the time, Mr. Mapp raised concerns about inflated project costs and questions over the design, which he said [did not exist](#) when his predecessor approved the project.

Work on the stadium was eventually restarted during Mr. Mapp's tenure, but the project continued to lag throughout his administration, running out of money as construction costs climbed. After Governor Bryan took office, the project suffered a new setback in August 2020 – the Department of Planning and Natural Resources found out that the stadium would need [floodplain approvals](#) from the Federal Emergency Management Administration, due to its location.

The approval from FEMA came in October 2021, and [reconstruction efforts began anew](#). In September 2022, officials announced that completion of the new Paul E. Joseph Stadium was only [six months away](#). Those six months have stretched into over two years, with the work on the stadium proceeding slowly. In February of last year both the Department of Public Works and Governor Bryan anticipated work to have been [completed in 2023](#). In November of that year, after the Legislature appropriated an additional \$5 million for the project, estimated completion was pushed to late 2024, with Department of Public Works Commissioner Derek Gabriel promising to [take action against contractor GEC](#) if that deadline is not met.

This week, Governor Bryan noted that additional funds had been approved by the Legislature, and now, a new contractor is figuring out how to move forward with the work. “We’re having some meetings this week on which way we want to move forward on that,” the governor said. “All the money is there. We’re just waiting for the contractor to get their stuff together and complete the work.”

Governor Bryan also noted that due to the work stoppage by former Governor Mapp, there would be a “delayed contract cost that they’re assessing on us for about \$2 million,” which the government would have to pay. “It’s standard in most contracts, and this contractor in particular has assessed those costs on us.”

“These projects continue to be delayed because of contract failure, bonding failure, contracts coming in way above what we have money to do,” Governor Bryan said. “So we have to send them out repeatedly – asbestos remediation, historic preservation, mediation – all kinds of things,” he continued. “It’s just part of doing business.”