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VI Housing Authority Approves Major Digital Transformation Contract

The V.I. Housing Authority has approved a contract to shift from paper files to a real-time digital system, with officials citing improved efficiency, disaster resilience, and cybersecurity as central goals of the modernization effort.

Community Center / **Published On November 28, 2025 06:43 AM /**

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Entrance of the Louis E. Brown housing community in Estate Paradise, one of the properties managed by the Virgin Islands Housing Authority. By. V.I. CONSORITUM.

The V.I. Housing Authority is preparing for a major operational shift, with officials approving a new agreement that will move the agency away from decades of paper-based processes and into what its leadership describes as a fully modernized digital environment. The initiative, presented

by Executive Director Dwayne Alexander, is intended to streamline operations, safeguard important records, and strengthen the agency's resilience during emergencies.

At a recent meeting, Mr. Alexander told commissioners that the new contract would "transition the housing authority from a paper-based system to a full digital, real-time operational environment." Six firms responded to the agency's request for proposals, but only one rose to the top. Patterson and Associates was the sole respondent deemed "fully competitive," he said, leading to the firm's selection for the project.

The contract totals \$275,000 for a one-year term and can be renewed for two additional one-year periods. Within the broader project are several sub-tasks, each with its own completion schedule. The most extensive component will be the digital conversion of VIHA's paper records. As Mr. Alexander explained, "The longest project... would be the transition from the paper files to the digital files, scheduling them and scanning each individual file into the system."

Commissioners expressed strong support for the move. "I'm very happy to see this," said Dr. Janis Valmond, while Ashley Archibald described the change as a welcome "step into the future."

Mr. Alexander also addressed VIHA's past experience with the selected vendor. In response to questions from Commissioner Dina Perry-Malone, he noted that Patterson and Associates has "worked with several different housing authorities throughout the country," including VIHA "17 or 18 years ago." At that time, the firm supported the agency's "transition from central maintenance into asset management" and played a role in developing VIHA's current logo.

The digital shift, Mr. Alexander added, will strengthen VIHA's disaster preparedness as well. "During the last several hurricanes, we lost some very important files," he told commissioners, explaining that cloud-based storage will help prevent the physical loss of records during future storms. After the transition, the agency's primary concern will be maintaining strong cybersecurity protocols. "We've been very aggressive in trying to protect against malware or any intrusions," he said, pointing to recent online actors "specifically holding housing authorities hostage for insurance purposes."

Despite these risks, Mr. Alexander said he was confident in the capabilities of VIHA's IT department to keep the agency's information secure.

With no objections, commissioners unanimously approved the staff recommendation to move forward with the contract.