

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ava Penn Chosen to Lead VIPA After Carlton Dowe's Sudden Retirement

Ava Penn was selected to lead the V.I. Port Authority on an interim basis after Carlton Dowe's surprise retirement amid pending federal criminal charges, as the board also approved a multimillion-dollar contract extension and renewed property insurance.

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VIPA Finance Director Ava Penn, now interim executive director.

After the surprise announcement of Carlton Dowe's retirement as Executive Director of the V.I. Port Authority, amidst [pending criminal charges](#) in federal court, Ava Penn, the agency's director of finance, has been tapped to assume the leadership position until a

more permanent selection can be made.

VIPA's governing board made the choice during an emergency meeting on Friday morning. The motion to appoint Ms. Penn was brought forward by vice-chair Kevin Rodriguez and approved by all board members except Celestino White, who abstained from voting.

Board members then turned to two time-sensitive items: a contract amendment for Frasca & Associates, financial advisors for VIPA on two major projects, and the renewal of insurance coverage.

The amendment to the Frasca & Associates contract was to allow the firm to continue providing services to VIPA through to the close of the airport P3 project. Board members learned that last year's change of administration in Washington, as well as leadership in the organization that represents the airlines have introduced delays in the review and approval stage of the airport transition. The consulting firm, therefore, will be needed until the airport transition agreement is completed. The contract's first closing stage could occur by this summer, with the financial close slated for later in the year.

Board members approved the contract extension for Frasca & Associates, backdated from January 1, 2026 and run through September 30, with an anticipated cost of just over \$2.6 million.

The VIPA board also approved the renewal of the agency's property insurance. Coverage of \$60 million will be provided at a premium rate of approximately \$5.644 million, which includes catastrophic loss and terrorism insurance. The cost, members decided, will be financed to allow for payments to be made in installments.