

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DPNR Says Only \$10,000 Was Spent On Frederiksted Library Repairs In 'Scopes Of Work' Approval Announcement

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Planning and Natural Resources revealed today that only \$10,000 was spent on the Athalie M. Petersen Library in Frederiksted to perform repairs, following a Consortium report that [brought to the fore](#) the poor conditions in which the public facility remains even after DPNR announced that it was [once more ready for use](#). In that announcement, issued in October, DPNR said it was able to perform some much-needed repairs and undertake a thorough cleaning of the facility during the closure.

The revelation comes as part of the agency's announcement today that on Thursday, December 3, it received formal notification from the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs, approving the scopes of work for the intended renovations of three public libraries in the territory. In essence, although in its press release announcing the reopening, DPNR made mention of the nearly \$1 million in grant funding that had been released under the Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) Capital Improvement Project Program to make infrastructure improvements at three public libraries, OIA needed to approve the "scopes of work," which was finally cleared on December 3, according to today's release.

In its report detailing the myriad of deficiencies at the facility, The Consortium suggested that DPNR conduct an investigation into why the library remained in such poor condition, "*if indeed* at least one third of the \$1 million dollars released by the Office of Insular Affairs — \$333,333 — was spent on repairing the public space."

"The public needs to be aware that the Department may not commence any work on these projects until the Office of Insular Affairs has ensured that all Federal environmental laws and regulations are complied with through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all other applicable environmental laws and regulations," said DPNR Commissioner Dawn Henry. "The renovation projects may only commence once OIA has issued an Authorization to Proceed (ATP)."

Of the \$1 million, \$250,000 will be used for renovations of the Athalie M. Petersen Library in Frederiksted; \$600,000 for the Florence Williams Library in Christiansted; and \$65,000 for the Elaine I. Sprauve Library in Cruz Bay, St. John, according to the release.

DPNR did not, however, give an explanation for the library's current state even after purported repairs. According to [the Consortium report](#), immediately upon entering the library, deteriorating lumber was glaringly visible behind a counter where a librarian sits. A quick look at the ceiling on the second floor exposed its poor, moldy condition, especially to the north side. The air felt heavy and congested after just a few minutes, and some of the walls were also deteriorating.

On the third floor, hot with no air conditioning, the windows were unwelcoming. And a room that contained a small microwave was the unhealthiest of all; with items scattered about the floor and on a table in the center.

The first floor, apparently for children, was hot and moldy, too, engulfed with a heavy, stale air and an odd, old smell. DPNR said it expended near \$10,000 for the "much-needed repairs," adding that the facility underwent a thorough cleaning." The latest press release, however, makes no mention of repairs; only that the main AC unit was replaced and "professional cleaning was performed in order to reopen for service."

DPNR says it anticipates that the bidding process for the projects will commence early next year.

See approval document below.

Feature Image: Athalie M. Petersen Library in Frederiksted.

Image Credit: VIC.

[Read the original document](#)

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