

The Virgin Islands Consortium

W.A.P.A. Board Approves Contracts For Tank Cleaning; Rescinds Contract Awarded To VI Paving

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ST. CROIX -- The governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority met on St. Croix Thursday to take action on four items relating to the day to day operations of the territory's public utility.

The board authorized Interim Executive Director / CEO Julio Rhymer, Sr. to negotiate and enter into a contract with RG Engineering, Inc. for the cleaning of four fuel tanks at the power plants. The contract amount, which will not exceed \$445,669, also provides for tank inspection and waste disposal services. The board members also approved a contingency of \$66,831 to cover unanticipated costs in association with the disposal of waste generated from the cleaning of one of the four tanks. Tank #13 contained No. 6

fuel whose properties are more difficult to clean prior to the tank's inspection. The other three tanks, 10, 11, 15 contained No. 2 fuel oil.

The board also approved the purchase of two new bucket trucks for use by the line departments, one for each district as well as a hotline insulator wash down machine to be used for overhead line maintenance. The cost of the trucks and wash down machine total \$670,700.00.

Also on Thursday, the board approved a time extension on a contract for fire detection, protection and monitoring of three gas turbines which are awaiting conversion to burn propane. According to Mr. Rhymer, the contract extension, through the end of the year, is necessary to address work on two remaining units on St. Croix and one on St. Thomas that are awaiting fuel conversion.

"Additional time will also compensate for delays the contractor has experienced with other on-site contractors and entities coupled with the unavailability of the units to perform the upgrades. The work will coincide with the unit's conversion to burn liquefied petroleum gas in generating electricity," Mr. Rhymer said.

The board also voted to rescind an earlier contract award to V.I. Paving for the installation of a six-inch water line at Company Street on St. Croix. Mr. Rhymer explained that a bid protest was received from VIAPCO, an unsuccessful bidder, requesting that they be awarded the contract as the company was given a scope of work and provided a bid for a 10-inch waterline and did not receive the revised scope of work for a six-inch waterline project.

"A review of the files revealed that VIAPCO was inadvertently provided an incorrect scope of work and as a result of the error submitted an incorrect bid," Mr. Rhymer said.

With Thursday's vote to rescind the contract award, W.A.P.A. will re-issue a request for proposal inviting new bids on the project that will be done in conjunction with the Department of Public Works.

In his Executive Director's report, Rhymer opted to highlight two initiatives that W.A.P.A. is undertaking which have positive outlooks. He began with Vlenenergize, (pronounced "vy-energize") a business unit developed to help the W.A.P.A.'s customers fully understand the meaning of energy efficiency, and to ultimately become energy efficient. He said the semiautonomous entity has entered into partnerships with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority and the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, in an effort to assist the tenants of these communities with their energy efficiency. In this effort, Rhymer said, approximately 200 apartments (10 units per community) will be selected to have energy assessments completed by Vlenenergize personnel.

"The Authority will assist the residents by providing energy efficient lighting where needed. For a period of one year, these residents consumption will be tracked in the program," he said.

The other positive initiative Rhymer reported on is W.A.P.A.'s recently launched Smart Meter campaign. The recent commercial ad now running on local television, radio stations, at movie theaters and in print ads in the territorial newspapers, extols the benefits of the newly installed device, to the authority's customers.

Board members in attendance at today's meeting included: Chairman Gerald Groner, Esq., Vice Chair Juanita Young, Secretary Noel Loftus, Commissioners Devin Carrington and Gustav James, Director Marvin Pickering and Cheryl Boynes Jackson. Elizabeth Armstrong was excused.

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