The Virgin Islands Consortium

W.A.P.A. Hires Recruiting Firm To Search For Hugo Hodge's Replacement

VIC News / **Published On March 09, 2016 08:42 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- The chairman of the governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, Attorney Gerald Groner, said on Wednesday that the services of Dowdy Recruiting, LLC have been retained as the board commences its search for the next executive director of the territory's public utility to replace Hugo Hodge, Jr., who was voted out of the company in January.

"During executive session at a special meeting of the board on January 26, Board Vice Chair Juanita Young, member Elizabeth Armstrong and I were authorized to retain a search firm that will identify qualified candidates as the next WAPA director," said Mr. Groner, adding that the job will be posted in the Virgin Islands and any Virgin Islander who expresses an interest will be directed to Dowdy Recruiting.

In a brief conversation with The Consortium, Mr. Groner said recruiting firms are usually paid a percentage of the successful candidate's first year's salary. He later revealed that Dowdy Recruiting would be paid 25 percent.

Asked if the new CEO would be compensated comparable to Mr. Hodge's past salary of $350,000 annually, Mr. Groner said the outcome is dependent on market climate and skillset of the successful individual. He also lauded Dowdy Recruiting as a leader in recruiting for the utilities industry. The firm's principal and owner, Stephen Dowdy, has over 28 years of experience in recruiting executive, middle management and technical candidates nationwide for clients that have included investor- owned, cooperatives, municipal utilities, energy consulting firms and energy industry vendors, according to Mr. Groner

“I am confident that Dowdy will assist the board tremendously in its quest to identify a new executive director for WAPA to continue the work of the utility towards greater efficiency and reliability while pursuing continued reductions in the cost of electrical power and potable water to the residents of the Virgin Islands. The board and I are hopeful we can complete this process in a three to four month period," Mr. Groner said.

Since January 29, 2016, WAPA Chief Financial Officer Julio Rhymer, Sr. has served as both interim executive director and chief financial officer.