

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Wants To Sit On WICO Board For At Least 90 Days To 'Deal With A Number Of Issues'

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Ernice Gilbert **November 07, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp wants to become a member of the West Indian Company (WICO) Board of Directors for 90-120 days, "to deal with a number of issues," the governor stated during a Public Finance Authority (P.F.A.) board meeting held on this island today. (A full story relative to the recent \$247 million debt financing bill that the Senate passed on Thursday, which was signed into law by Mr. Mapp today and acted upon by the P.F.A., is forthcoming on Tuesday morning.)

The move comes following Randolph Knight's resignation from the WICO board along with his [resignation as Mr. Mapp's chief of staff](#). The governor said his stay at the WICO board would not be long, but there were some issues that needed to be dealt with.

"At some point I intend to resign from the [WICO] board and at one of the P.F.A. meetings nominate someone to fill the position on a more permanent basis," the governor said. "My schedule really doesn't permit me to have full-time, long-term service on the WICO board, but I need to go over the West Indian Company and deal with a number of issues."

Department of Finance Commissioner and P.F.A. Executive Director Valdamier Collens made a motion to initiate the governor's request, which was an official item on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Office of Management and Budget Director Nellon Bowry, who is also a P.F.A. board member.

But P.F.A. counsel Yvette Ross-Edwards told Mr. Mapp that she was concerned that, as chairman of the P.F.A. board, he accepted the motion, and also that he was part of his own nomination process. "I don't believe you should share the meeting; definitely should not vote on your own nomination. But I'm also concerned that you're involved in this whole process for your nomination," she said.

The governor suggested stepping out of the room, but the board's quorum would be broken. The board's former counsel, Attorney James H. Hindels also present today, said the bylaws of WICO "provides for the filling of vacancies by its board of directors, so that may be a fallback. So if there is a vacancy, rather than having the P.F.A. vote for a member of the board, that could be deferred to the board of WICO."

Another P.F.A. meeting was not scheduled before year's end, and the governor wanted to be part of an upcoming WICO board meeting, giving hints that Mr. Mapp plans on taking some action at WICO before the new year.

Following a five-minute recess, the governor said he would accept counsel's recommendation to defer the nomination to WICO's board. He also concurred with current P.F.A. counsel that he should not be part of his own nominating process.

"I shouldn't sit in this chair, oversee the meeting, and have the appointment done, and there are provisions in the West Indian Company bylaws that do allow them to fill vacancies on the board," the governor said. "So then if I stepped out of the room, we don't have a P.F.A. quorum to continue the meeting, and so what I will do is defer this matter to the WICO board."

The governor then apologized for bringing up the matter to the board. However, it is expected that he will be nominated by the WICO board to be one of the entity's board members, although a timeline relative to when was not clear.

Feature Image: Governor Kenneth Mapp speaks during a P.F.A. board meeting, held at the authority's St. Croix office this morning. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)