

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Port Authority Board Fires Carlton Dowe Without Cause

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Port Authority Board of Directors on Tuesday fired Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe, above, giving no reason for the termination, and stating that it was done "without cause."

The board's termination of Mr. Dowe's contract, which was two years away from expiring, comes as V.I.P.A. is undertaking major projects at the territory's various ports, including the recently announced [Gallows Bay Terminal Facility dredging](#).

Voting to terminate Mr. Dowe's contract today during a meeting (in executive session) held at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport were board members Beverly Nicholson-Doty, who's

also the commissioner of tourism, Attorney General Claude Walker, Dept. of Public Works Commissioner Gustav James, Laurel Hewitt-Sewer and Yvonne Thraen.

Just yesterday, Ms. Thraen, who was approved by the Senate [during a protracted Senate session](#), lauded Mr. Dowe's leadership at V.I.P.A. while giving [testimony](#).

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"Over the past three years, I have seen a significant increase in the planning, implementation and completion of board-approved projects under the aegis of Executive Director Carlton Dowe," she said. "V.I.P.A. is poised to complete a number of other projects already identified and new ones for which funding must be identified."

Today, however, she voted to terminate Mr. Dowe, with that action being the only board item she participated in.

Board Chairman Roberto C. Cintron voted against terminating Mr. Dowe, stressing that there was no cause behind the dismissal. José A. Penn also voted against the dismissal.

Mr. Dowe confirmed his departure to this publication just before 1:00 p.m. today in a telephone interview, telling The Consortium that the board's action -- which the board admitted to -- was without merit.

"The board indicated today that they had no cause," Mr. Dowe said. V.I.P.A. at about 4:35 this afternoon confirmed that its release of Mr. Dowe from his duties was without cause, pursuant to Section 8 (c) in the employment agreement between Mr. Dowe and the authority. That section of the contract sees the Port Authority compensating Mr. Dowe for the remaining two years of his contract, even if he's no longer employed with the authority. The board also announced that Assistant Executive Director, David Mapp, would serve as acting executive director in the interim.

Mr. Dowe wasted no time in his attempts to make sense of his termination, telling The Consortium that his firing was politically motivated. "All of this is political mischief and shenanigans coming down," Mr. Dowe said.

Asked if he believed that his termination was enabled by talk in the community that he will be joining the gubernatorial race in 2018, Mr. Dowe said he would not respond to speculation.

Mr. Dowe issued a company-wide [letter to employees](#), writing in a statement that it was his honor to have served them, while commending employees for their dedication to results during his tenure.

"My results-driven, can-do spirit has been evident during my time with V.I.P.A.," he wrote, adding, "However, as I always say, I Carlton Dowe could not have done this without your commitment and dedication to service."

The termination comes on the heels of major announcements that Mr. Dowe had been making relative to progress with port-enhancing construction projects at the territory's sea and airports in both districts. Mr. Dowe on Monday announced that the [Gallows Bay Terminal Renovation Project](#), which had been stalled for over a decade, had finally

received VI Coastal Zone Management Commission approval; V.I.P.A. received [over \\$10 million](#) for aviation projects in October; and recently the authority commenced construction work on the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport runway and taxiway. Also in October, Mr. Dowe announced major construction of a two-level parking garage project at the commuter parking lot at the Urman V. Fredericks Marine Terminal in Red Hook, St. Thomas.

Calls placed to Mr. Cintron and A.G. Walker today were not returned at time of writing.

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