

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Port Authority Board Places Freeze On Hiring, Repeals Water Tour Operator Fee

VIC News / **Published On February 24, 2017 12:53 PM /**

Staff **February 24, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Port Authority has placed a freeze on hiring, which Attorney General Claude Walker, who sits on the VIPA board, said was implemented not because the port authority was facing financial woes, but to keep in line with Governor Kenneth Mapp's recent order that calls for cuts throughout the government.

The freeze directed V.I.P.A staff to:

- Prepare a list of all current vacancies;
- Implement a hiring freeze for all non-critical positions;

- All outstanding hiring offers to be reviewed by the executive director to determine if VIPA should proceed with the hiring; and
- The executive director was given authority to hire law enforcement, fire, and custodial staff, as well as any other critical position within his discretion.

The authority also repealed a tour operator fee through a motion by Mr. Walker that the board supported 8-0. The fee was [announced in December](#) following public hearings the month before held on St. Thomas and St. Croix, which covered the proposed changes to the V.I.P.A.'s general rate structure that were approved at its September 11 and November 16 board meetings.

The fee was \$1.50 for tour companies with cruise line agreements, and \$5 for tour companies without cruise line agreements. Ages 16 and under were free.

In other action, the board approved the following:

Approved Fortress Electrical Contracting, Corp.'s request to lease 17,000 s/f of land at 69 Estate Lindbergh Bay (Bournefield) to construct a 4,000 s/f bldg. to operate a warehouse and electrical contracting business for a term of 10 years.

- Rental rate of \$2 per s/f
- Required investment of \$200,000 to be completed in two years.

Approved Polaris Engineering, Inc.'s request to lease 53,040 s/f of land at the Gordon A. Finch Molasses Pier to construct a liquid petroleum gas storage facility for a term of 10 years.

- Rental rate will be \$.75 per s/f, with a CPI increase every 3 years, or 5% increase – whichever is greater.
- Thruput charge of \$.10 per barrel, with an \$.005 increase on 5th year or amendment to VIPA marine tariff – whichever is greater.
- Required investment of \$400,000 to be completed in two years.

Approved KSBW, LLC dba Blue Mountain Water request to lease 6 acres of land at Estate Betty's Hope & Coopers on St. Croix for a term of 20 years with a 15-year option to renew to build and operate a water bottling facility.

- Rental rate: \$10,540 per acre
- Required investment: \$10,000,000 to be completed in three years.

Approved supplemental agreement for URS Caribe LLP in the amount of \$313,938 to develop plans and specifications for the rehabilitation of CEKA Taxiway Alpha and relighting. URS will also provide support during the bidding process and assist with preparation of application for FAA AIP funds. Funded in FY 2018 budget via AIP Grant Funds (VIPA share: \$31,393.80).

Approved issuing an RFQ for car ferry service between St. Thomas and St. John to fill the time slot that had previously been designated to Boyson, Inc.

The board terminated a lease it had with [Tibbar Energy](#), "due to non-payment of rent for lease of 17 acres at Estate Bethlehem Works, St. Croix."

VIPA awarded two contracts to Marco St. Croix: The first in the amount of \$191,100 to rehabilitate the operational area pavement at the Containerport. The work is funded through bonds in fiscal year 2017 budget. The second in the amount of \$275,000 to install a generator at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport terminal, funding by the port's fiscal year 2017 budget.

Board members present were

© Viconsortium 2026