

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WICO Board Will Not Renew Joseph Boschulte's Contract, Which Expires On April 30

VIC News / **Published On March 16, 2017 10:21 AM /**

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ST. THOMAS -- Joseph Boschulte, president and CEO of the [West Indian Company](#) (W.I.C.O.) since 2012, will be out of a job come May 1, as the W.I.C.O. Board of Directors will not renew his contract which ends on April 30, a source with firsthand knowledge of the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter freely, told The Consortium Tuesday night.

According to this source, the decision to not renew the contract was personally delivered to Mr. Boschulte by Joyce Dore Griffin, WICO board's acting chair. The decision was made during a board gathering at Seatrade on Tuesday night, where all board members were gathered for the annual cruise line conference, the world's largest gathering of

who's who in the cruise industry -- bringing together cruise line executives, media, speakers, port representatives, ship builders and vendors to discuss most aspects of cruising. The decision came after the governor left Seatrade for St. Thomas on Tuesday.

Mr. Bosculte is the latest casualty during the first term of an administration that has seen multiple top executives relieved of their positions. The administration has changed three communications director -- Kimberly Jones, Nicole Bollentini and Cherie Munchez -- two of whom are no longer with the administration; Ms. Bollentini is now director of new media and strategic communication. The administration also [relieved former Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett of his duties](#), while Randolph Knight, the governor's former chief of staff, [left the administration](#) following strong disagreements between Mr. Knight and Frankie Johnson, the latter being Mr. Mapp's senior advisor.

And just last week, the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority board released Steve Aubin, who had been the authority's chief executive officer since 2007. Queried by The Consortium, Ms. Munchez, while still communications director, said last week that she had heard of the dismissal, but referred this publication to WMA's new communications manager, Alice Krall.

News of Mr. Boschulte's dismissal was first reported by the St. Thomas Source.

A source deep within the Mapp administration told this publication last week that there would soon be news regarding the dismissal of officials making top dollar throughout government. Mr. Boschulte, whose annual salary is over \$200,000, could possibly be the start of that action. Yet, Mr. Boschulte's dismissal was expected by even Boschulte himself -- he thought his dismissal would actually come sooner, according the source who revealed the board's decision not to renew the contract -- and will not come as a surprise to many.

In November, Mr. Mapp said at a Public Finance Authority Board meeting that he [wanted to sit on WICO's board](#) for 90 days to "deal with a number issues." The governor's intent was revealed not too long after Mr. Knight's resignation from the WICO board along with his resignation as Mr. Mapp's chief of staff. Mr. Mapp had said that his stay on the WICO board would not be long, but that 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 during the November meeting 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 at the meeting, 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,” he said.

Another P.F.A. meeting was not scheduled before the end of 2016, and the governor wanted to be part of a board meeting that was upcoming. However, following a five-minute recess, Mr. Mapp 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.

The changes at the top of WICO, deemed by many as the most important port of call in the territory, comes at a time when the USVI government is reeling from a financial crisis, and uncertainty in the tourism industry [following the passage of Mr. Mapp's sin tax and property tax measures](#) that were vehemently opposed by the business community.