

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WICO Board Announces Decision Not To Renew Boschulte's Contract

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West Indian Company Limited CEO Joseph Boschulte

ST. THOMAS -- The Board of Directors of the West Indian Company on Tuesday morning formally announced that it would not renew WICO President and CEO Joseph Boschulte's contract, which expires on April 30 -- bringing to an end Mr. Boschulte's tenure, which began in 2012.

The announcement comes five days following [a Consortium report on the matter](#). A source with firsthand knowledge of the decision -- which was made while board members

were at the annual Seatrade Cruise Global Conference held in Florida -- told this publication that the news was personally delivered to Mr. Boschulte by Joyce Dore Griffin, WICO board's acting chair.

In a statement issued this morning, however, WICO said Mr. Boschulte will work as a consultant for three months with the company following the expiration of his five-year contract, which WICO said will help facilitate a seamless transition.

"The Board wishes to thank Joe for his leadership and professionalism. During his tenure, the company accomplished several major multi-million dollar capital improvement projects including upgrades to the dock, and has commenced a major renovation to the Havensight Mall. In his new role as WICO consultant, Joe will facilitate a smooth transition as the company maintains the continuity of its port operations and its longtime relationships with the cruise line industry," reads the statement.



role during last week's Seatrade event, with cruise industry executives that will its partners, as well as expanding cruise

Joseph B. Boschulte, WICO President and

CEO

"As WICO prepares for increasing competition from other Eastern Caribbean ports and Cuba, the board is reorganizing its management team as it plans to launch new development projects that will help sustain and increase the number of cruise ship calls and enhance the passenger experience," concluded the statement.

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 policy advisor.

And two weeks ago, 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 that she had heard of the dismissal, but referred this publication to WMA's new communications manager, Alice Krall.

A source deep within the Mapp administration told this publication two weeks ago 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. The source also said that Ms. Munchez would not be replaced, leaving Deputy Communications Director Samuel Topp to handle communication responsibilities. Yet, Mr. Boschulte's dismissal was expected by even Boschulte himself — he thought his dismissal would actually come sooner, according to the source who revealed the board's decision not to renew the contract.

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.

Feature Image: WICO President and CEO Joseph Boschulte [during a March 2015 interview](#) with The Consortium. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)