

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Board Approves Purchase Of Smart Meters For St. Croix Water Distribution System

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The governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority on Wednesday advanced the utility's plan to tap federal grant money to introduce smart potable water meters throughout the territory, WAPA made known via press release Thursday afternoon. The board approved the purchase of 3,000 new ultrasonic Badger meters for the district of St. Croix.

The Authority will utilize an EPA Drinking Water Act grant to fund the purchase of the meters, estimated at just under \$380,000. The acquisition of the new water meters also signals [the deployment of Automated Metering Infrastructure](#) (AMI) across the potable water distribution system.

"This ongoing initiative will reduce maintenance costs and upgrade the existing manually read meters to the AMI system. These meters will eliminate manual meter reading and will be interfaced with the same components that provide for smart meter readings on WAPA's electrical system. Basically, the new water meters will be read by the existing AMI systems," said WAPA Executive Director Julio A. Rhymer, Sr.

The board also approved the purchase of communication modules to facilitate the introduction of the water system smart meters to AMI and ensure accurate usage readings.

In other action at the board's regularly scheduled monthly meeting, members unanimously voted to approve:

An additional extension in the schedule to complete the overhaul of Unit 23 on St. Thomas. The additional time was needed as the schedule to begin the overhaul of Unit 23 was extended until a newly acquired generating unit, Unit 26, is on line. Unit 26 is needed while Unit 23 is being overhauled and converted to LPG to maintain WAPA's ability to meet peak electrical demand in the St. Thomas-St. John district. The new completion date is January 2018. The work on Unit 23, to be completed by Sulzer Turbo Services, will return the unit to original manufacturer's specifications improving both its efficiency and reliability.

The authorization to negotiate new terms and conditions with APR Energy, per a fourth change order, for one (1) TM2500 and two (2) TM2500 plus rental power generators for the Randolph Harley Power Plant. This contract with APR Energy will reduce operational costs and provide sufficient time in execution of the long-term generation plan as per the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). These plans are necessary to stabilize the operations of the Randolph Harley Power Plant with more efficient and reliable generation during the interim allowing for the installation of the long term new generation units.

A fourth change order in WAPA's contract with Texas based IV-AGA for upgrades to the fire protection systems at power plants in both districts. The latest modification totals \$1.7 million bringing the overall contract total to \$7.6 million. The change order was required to cover increased costs resulting from field modifications needed in the design of a new pump and foam house and man hours to complete the project. This redundant system will allow for a back-up of existing fire and gas detection systems.

A contract with BDO for the completion of Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018 annual electric and water systems audits at a total cost of \$360,000. BDO is WAPA's external auditor.

An extension of WAPA's contract with Adiuvo Partners, LLC for financial advisory services including resources to approach the investment community for financing instruments. The company has provided services to WAPA over the last two years and its contract expired in January. The contract extension totals \$72,500.

In his Executive Director's Report, Mr. Rhymer indicated that the pilot period for streetlight conversion has been implemented across the three islands. He said lights have been installed for this initial phase, with full conversion to come within the next few months, all islands simultaneously. Rhymer also noted that April 18th was National Lineman Appreciation Day, and the Authority took the time to express appreciation to the

linemen, and women, on Tuesday on St. Croix, and continued on Wednesday with the St. Thomas-St. John Linemen.

Board members in attendance included: Chairperson Elizabeth Armstrong, Vice Chairman Noel Loftus, Secretary Juanita Young, Commissioner Devin Carrington and Hubert Turnbull. Commissioner Gustav James, Director Marvin Pickering, Gerald T. Groner, Esq., and Cheryl Boynes-Jackson were excused.

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