

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Board Approves Hurricane Season Preparatory Plans And 2019 Electric And Water Budgets

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The governing board of the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority granted approvals Thursday to facilitate the utility's continued preparations for the 2018 Atlantic Hurricane Season, which runs through November 30, WAPA has announced.

At its monthly meeting on St. Croix, the board authorized the executive director to negotiate and enter into formal agreements with off and on-island emergency contractors to assist WAPA with emergency restoration services in the aftermath of a hurricane, wind storm or other natural disaster. The off-island contractors include: Haugland Energy, Sumter Utilities, Service Electric and Jingoli Power. Local contractors include Bryan's Electric and Fortress Electric.

The board also approved a contract with CDR Maguire totaling \$387,500, for engineering and design services for the Cruz Bay, St. John Underground Project. "More than 90% of the overhead distribution system on St. John was damaged in the 2017 hurricanes, and to mitigate against damage to the same facilities, WAPA is planning the installation of an underground electric distribution system. The undergrounding would include Feeder 7E and the three-phase lines along Feeder 9E in the Cruz Bay area, up to the Myrah Keating Smith Health Clinic on Centerline Road," said WAPA Executive Director Lawrence Kupfer. He noted that the town of Cruz Bay, which is the main business district for St. John, provides most of the basic and emergency response services to the community.

"We see the installation of underground facilities as a means of providing reliable electrical service to Cruz Bay in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster," Mr. Kupfer said. Also approved was the purchase of various supplies from American Wire Group for the completion of permanent work on the distribution system in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. The total cost of \$2.2 million is a reimbursable expense through FEMA.

The board approved operating and capital budgets for the authority's electrical and water systems. The budgets cover Fiscal Year 2019, which runs from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. The approved budgets total:

- Electrical Operating: \$284,483,081.
- Electrical Capital: \$70,314,260.
- Water Operating: \$38,620,777.
- Water Capital: \$19,815,961.

Other approvals included:

- A contract increase to liquidate an outstanding balance with Fabien's Trucking for post-hurricane debris removal services. The increase of \$107,000 brings the overall contract total to \$607,000.
- Authorization to negotiate a two-month contract extension with APR Energy for Unit 25 at the Harley Power Plant. With the extension, the rental unit will remain a part of WAPA's generation fleet until September 1, 2018.
- An extension of a contract with Sulzer Turbo Services for the continued work on Unit 23, the largest generating unit on St. Thomas. The new contract end date is September 1, 2018. The overall contract for the major maintenance overhaul of the 39-megawatt unit is \$4.5 million.
- A time only, no-cost extension to a contract with V.I. Paving to make up for delays in the delivery of flow meters for water pump stations on St. Croix. The new contract end date is August 31, 2018. Once completed, the installation of the five booster stations will reduce line loss and maintenance costs.
- Extending a contract period for one year with Comprehensive Security for guard services at WAPA facilities and staging sites on St. Thomas & St. John. The extension increases the overall contract by \$720,000 to a final total of \$1.7 million.
- Extending a contract period for one year with Intelligent Security for guard services at WAPA facilities and staging sites on St. Croix. The extension increases the contract by \$360,000 to an overall total of \$1.8 million. Board members tabled consideration of a contract with Electric Cities of Georgia to provide monthly training and safety services for line department personnel. The one-month delay in the contract's consideration is to ensure that the training is aligned with existing

safety protocols at the Authority.

In his monthly report to the board, Mr. Kupfer said demand for electricity has leveled off in the last month to approximately 66 megawatts, this average is down 23 percent since the storms, 26 percent on St. Thomas – St. John, and 18 percent on St. Croix, according to the release. Additionally, he said, water storage levels are at capacity on St. Croix, and issues of low water pressure or no service along mid-island to the western end of the island have been resolved. He noted no recordable injuries had occurred during the month of May in either district affecting employees of the authority.

WAPA said all votes were unanimous and board members in attendance included Chairwoman Elizabeth Armstrong, Vice Chair Noel Loftus, Secretary Juanita Young, Commissioner Devin Carrington, Gerald T. Groner, Esq., Hubert Turnbull, and Cheryl Boynes-Jackson. Commissioner Nelson Petty, Jr. and Director Marvin Pickering were excused.