

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Approves Standalone Emergency Generators And Battery Power System For St. John

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During a board meeting on St. Thomas Thursday, the governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority approved the negotiation of a contract with Wartsila LLC, for the installation of emergency generation and a battery energy storage system on St. John, WAPA has announced.

Thursday's board action is a move toward increasing St. John's ability to remain energized even after major service interruptions affect the St. Thomas - St. John district, according to the release.

Clinton Hedrington, Jr., chief operating officer of the authority's electric system, told board members that a procurement process began in March to identify two standby generating units that could be used on St. John to more quickly restore the island's electrical service. In addition to the generators, the procurement included a battery energy storage system.

"This hazard mitigation project allows us to move away from the days when St. John, without generation capacity, would be solely dependent on St. Thomas for electrical supply currently provided through underwater cables. When this project is completed, we can sooner restore service to our St. John customers," he said.

According to WAPA, after the 2017 hurricanes, St. John waited for electrical service restoration for some 51 days, while circuits from the east end of St. Thomas back to the power plant were reconstructed. The unanimous board action ratifies the recommendation of an evaluation committee which selected Wartsila, LLC as the engineering, procurement and construction group to provide and install the emergency generators and battery storage systems for St. John.

In other action, the board:

- Authorized the executive director to enter into a lease agreement for rental space at the old Choice Building in Havensight. WAPA will rent 5,500 square feet of space to relocate its Accounting, Purchasing and Procurement offices from the more costly Port of Sale Mall. The lease agreement bears a cost of \$226,220 for a five-year period, inclusive of all maintenance and utilities.
- Authorized the certification and submission of data requested by Rural Utility Services directly from a U.S. program database to facilitate reporting and other purposes. RUS has provided funding for capital projects in the past and is being considered as a funding source for other projects.
- Approved amendments to a previously approved resolution that facilitated \$16 million in additional FEMA Community Disaster Loans.

In his monthly report, Executive Director / CEO Lawrence J. Kupfer reported on the progress of 18 Line Department personnel who are presently participating in a training and certification program. The training is being provided by Electric Cities of Georgia, and is funded through a Department of the Interior grant. Classroom and hands-on training is being provided to the sixteen linemen and two supervisors. Kupfer also reported that in the month of August, the average electrical load was approximately 74.3 megawatts, a 14% decrease when compared the same period in 2017. Kupfer also told board members that the water production plants operated at 88% of capacity in August due to dry weather.

Board members present included: Chairwoman Elizabeth Armstrong, Vice-Chairman Hubert Turnbull, Secretary Juanita Young, Gerald T. Groner, Esq., Noel Loftus, Cheryl Boynes Jackson, Commissioners Devin Carrington and Nelson Petty, Jr. and Director Marvin Pickering.