

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Says The GVI Has Paid Off Its Street Light Debt; Board Approves Contract Extensions At Emergency Meeting

WAPA / **Published On November 02, 2018 10:02 PM /**

Staff **November 02, 2018**



WAPA Executive Director Lawrence Kupfer announced Friday that the central government is now current on payments to the Authority for street lighting across the territory. The debt rose as high as \$15.8 million in January 2015.

“Through a consistent effort, the Department of Finance has made regular payments to pay off this outstanding balance and WAPA is grateful to Governor Kenneth Mapp for his attention to this matter, and his commitment to addressing this long outstanding obligation. For many years, the streetlight debt had been among one of the four top

outstanding obligations to WAPA,” Mr. Kupfer said, according to a release issued Friday. “The streetlight account now has a zero balance and, additionally, going forward with the addition of our new efficient LED lighting program, street light billings should see a significant savings for the territory”, he added.

WAPA said there are more than 16,000 streetlights installed throughout the Virgin Islands. The authority maintains the streetlights and continues efforts with its contractor to replace light fixtures at each location where a light existed prior to the 2017 hurricanes. WAPA is also installing solar panels on selected utility poles across the Virgin Islands, according to the release. The panels will provide three megawatts of distributed electricity to the grid.

“So in all, the LED lights will have a longer life, reduced costs, and three megawatts of solar generated electricity will all also add to the cost savings. The installation of the solar panels in tandem with LED lighting at selected utility poles are another example of the commitment of the Governor and WAPA to introduce the use of more sources of renewable energy,” Mr. Kupfer said.

Separately, during an emergency board meeting Friday, WAPA's governing board approved contract extensions for the completion of a generating unit maintenance overhaul as well as a rental unit at the Randolph Harley Power Plant.

The contract extension with Sulzer Turbo Services will allow for the completion of commissioning and performance testing on generating Unit 23 following a major maintenance overhaul. The board action extends the contract completion date by a month, to December 31. By the end of the November, Unit 23, a 39-megawatt generator owned by WAPA, will be available for service.

The board also approved a one-month extension on an existing lease for an APR Energy rental, Unit 25. The extension is required to maintain adequate generation capacity at the Harley power plant until work on Unit 23 is completed, and while other units are being commissioned to burn LPG in the generation of electricity. The one month extension rate is \$335,000, WAPA said.

Board members in attendance included: Chairwoman Elizabeth Armstrong, Vice Chairman Hubert Turnbull, Secretary Juanita Young, Commissioner Nelson Petty, Jr., Director Marvin Pickering, Noel Loftus and Cheryl Boynes Jackson. Attorney Gerald Groner and Commissioner Devin Carrington were excused.