

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WICO Board Fires Clifford Graham For Entering Into Agreements With Cruise Ships After Being Told Not To Do So (Update)

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UPDATE: Mr. Graham told The Consortium this morning that his attorney would issue a statement on his behalf relative to his removal from the CEO/president position at WICO.

ORIGINAL STORY: ST. THOMAS -- The West Indian Company during a Friday emergency board meeting fired WICO CEO and President Clifford Graham, in what The Consortium learned late Friday was termination for cause.

Voting to remove Mr. Graham -- a former senator who was named head of WICO in April 2017 -- were board members Joseph Boschulte, the former WICO president and CEO who is now the board's chair and Department of Tourism commissioner designee; board Vice Chairman Jason Charles, board Secretary Roosevelt David, Rick Carrington, Enriquez Rodriguez, and Conrad Francois. Abstaining was board member April Moran Newland, and board members absent during the vote were Edward Thomas and Pash Daswani.

Serving as interim president and CEO of WICO is Anthony Ottley, the company's current director of property management, Mr. Boschulte revealed. "No decision has been made for a replacement," Mr. Boschulte said.

Mr. Boschulte told The Consortium late Friday during a brief interview that the removal of Mr. Graham as WICO CEO and president was the only item on the emergency meeting's agenda Friday. However, the board chairman did not reveal much else, stating that the action was taken during executive session and remains sensitive to WICO operations.

"It's a personnel matter, but he was let go for cause," was the only information Mr. Boschulte would reveal.

But The Consortium has learned from a source with direct knowledge of the removal of Mr. Graham, that he was fired after signing letters of intent for some agreements with cruise ships to participate in Long Bay Landing, the yet-to-be developed project in St. Thomas that was [halted during Governor Kenneth Mapp's tenure](#). The project is being revived under Governor Albert Bryan's leadership and promises to be another major area of development for tourism in the territory. Mr. Bryan in April told The Consortium that part of his reason for attending Seatrade in Florida this year was to seek partners in an effort to restart the Long Bay Landing project. "We want to make sure that the cruise industry knows that the project is alive," he said. "We're looking for partners to build it."

According to this person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, Mr. Graham signed the letters of intent with the cruise ships without board approval, and even after being told explicitly not to do so by this current board.

Following his appointment in April 2017 to lead WICO, Mr. Graham said, "I am honored and humbled to be selected as the president and chief executive director of The West Indian Company, Limited and I pledge to build on the successes of the company as we seek to maintain Charlotte Amalie as a premier destination in the Caribbean."

Before his tenure at WICO commenced, Mr. Graham was a senator serving in the Legislature, his most notable role being the chairman of the powerful Committee on Finance.