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WAPA Board Approves More Projects for Undergrounding, Composite Pole Installation

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Workers installing composite poles on the East End of St. Croix in July 2019. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Power and Water Authority Board approved more contracts to continue its undergrounding efforts that will lead to the hardening of its infrastructure for resilience. The authority also took action relative to the procurement of materials and services for the installation of composite poles.

At the board's regular monthly meeting today, members approved a \$1.1 million contract with PECO International Electric for materials to support three electrical underground projects on St. Croix, WAPA said. These initial projects, which are federally funded by FEMA and HUD, are

located at the Wilfred “Bomba” Allick Port and Transshipment Center, Golden Grove, and along Midland Road. A similar project is also approved for Cruz Bay, St. John.

The board also authorized the executive director to commence negotiations and enter into contract with Barkley Technologies for project management and design services associated with the installation of composite poles. The installation of composite poles is one facet of mitigation projects aimed at hardening the electric grids. The poles will be installed where the undergrounding of electrical service is not feasible. The contract total is \$3.1 million. To date, approximately 2,800 composite poles have been installed territory wide.

Other board approvals included:

- A consignment contract with American Wire Group for the purchase of materials for the electrical system. The consignment contract totals \$29.9 million.
- A no cost, one-year extension to an existing contract with Haugland Energy for the removal of electrical waste. The contract end date is March 7, 2022.
- An authorization to enter into agreement with Virgin Islands Oil and Transport Company for the sale of two oil storage tanks that are no longer used by the Authority. The sale price is \$2.4 million. Additionally, the company will enter into a ground lease with WAPA over a forty-year period for the real property on which the tanks sit adjacent to the Randolph Harley Power Plant. The use of the tanks and operations of Virgin Islands Oil and Transport Company have been determined not to impede operations of the electric system.
- Three-month extensions of existing contracts with a pair of security guard companies. The companies provide guard services to WAPA facilities on all three islands.
- Additional funding to complete Fiscal Year 2018 financial and single audits.
- A collective bargaining agreement with the Professional & Technical Employees Union for a six-year term through June 30, 2024. The cost of the contract implementation through Fiscal Year 2024 totals \$925,924.07.
- Extension of the maturity date of the Authority’s Lines of Credit with Banco Popular from October 31, 2020 to January 31, 2021.

Board members present included: Vice Chairman Jed JohnHope, Secretary Juanita Young, Directors Joel Lee and Kyle Fleming, Hubert Turnbull, Cheryl Boynes Jackson, and Noel Loftus. Chairman Anthony D. Thomas and Elizabeth Armstrong were excused.