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'JFL North' Comes Online Next Month; Hospital Seeking \$1 Million to Purchase 3.6 Acres of Land for State of the Art Facility

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Maxiene K. Cabo **October 30, 2020**

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JFL North, the modular facility funded through federal disaster recovery dollars, will be online by next month, according to JFL Interim CEO Dyma Williams. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

During the Juan F. Luis Hospital Governing Board of Directors monthly meeting Thursday, Interim CEO Dyma Williams highlighted several accomplishments the hospital made during the month of September, including the soon completion of JFL North, the modular facility that will host much of the hospital's operations as it prepares to rebuild what is expected to be a state of the art facility. Recently the Territorial Hospital Board [approved architectural plans](#) for the territory's hospitals and the St. John Clinic. The facilities were ravaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in

2017, and at least JFL was approved for a complete rebuild.

In Ms. Williams's report to the Governing Board, she stated that APTIM, a company specializing in engineering, construction services, program management, and many other services, is scheduled to complete construction of JFL North by next month. "So much work has gone into completing this project," Ms. Williams said. She added that JFL North has all the hallmarks of a state-of-the-art hospital. She also explained that the operating room equipment and equipment in JFL North units are brand new.

Since JFL will be expanding, the hospital continues to search for and solicit additional staff, Ms. Williams said. "Going from essentially 46 beds at our current JFL to 105 to date, that is going to require skilled staff from the clinical environment as well as the non-clinical environment," she said.

In addition to the near completion of JFL North, Ms. Williams brought to the board's attention the hospital's intention to procure 3.6 acres of land for the "JFL New State of the Art Hospital Build Project". According to Ms. Williams, the landowner is aware that JFL is interested in procuring the property located at #7 Ruby, which is the piece of land adjacent to the Viya building on the east.

The hospital is currently looking to solicit the funding required to purchase #7 Ruby, Ms. Williams revealed. Moreover, per Ms. Williams's report, a formal written request was submitted to the Legislature for the re-allocation of funds previously designated for the condemned behavioral health in-patient services unit at JFL. "As we now have the build-out for a behavioral health [unit] in the new JFL North, we no longer need that specific fund of \$1 million for behavioral health," Ms. Williams explained. "So we are really asking to reallocate the funds specific to that land procurement."

Ms. Williams also shared that on August 25 JFL received an oxygen generator sponsored by Tim Duncan. The generator was donated during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic response and will be installed with the completion of the Care Management Unit building, which will house all the hospital's medical gases, she said.

"This donation will allow JFL to generate oxygen and feed it directly into the central oxygen supply system and the secondary support manifold supplementary system," said Ms. Williams. The interim CEO further stated that there is now a tribute in JFL's front lobby by Mr. Duncan for his mother, who was a midwife at the hospital during the 1980s.

Ms. Williams revealed that as recently as this month, one of the vendors JFL relies on to supply the hospital with oxygen and other medical gasses, had challenges with the Coast Guard, which negatively impacted the hospital's supply of nitrous oxide and oxygen. "This generator will not only allow for critical supply stability but also allow for significant financial savings as the cost of purchasing oxygen is an average of \$25-\$30 per month," she said.

On hospital security, three police officers from the recently graduated cohort on St. Croix have now joined the JFL team, bringing the total JFL compliment to four. In addition to the three new officers, under the leadership of former St. Croix Police Chief Winsbut McFarland, three additional security officers recently graduated from the VI Post Program.

"We pull from our internal security team and support them while they go to the Post program so they can really return to JFL and provide us with security services," said Ms. Williams. "This unique program offers our JFL security team to be trained at Post under V.I.P.D. for long-term

career growth and employment."

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