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## WAPA Approves Nearly 8-Month Extension to Cruz Bay Undergrounding Project

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Kyle Murphy **October 05, 2021**

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**Employees of WAPA contractor, Haugland Energy Group, trench and install conduit for the undergrounding of electrical equipment in Frank Bay, St. John By. WAPA.**

The WAPA Governing Board on Monday approved a 240-day extension and \$448,910.49 cost increase to the Undergrounding Project in Cruz Bay during an emergency meeting. WAPA said the project was met with unforeseen circumstances that caused numerous delays. The current contract was also set to expire soon.

Veron Alexander, director of project management at WAPA, said that the change order “is critical [and] very important because it pertains to the time extension to the contract we have with Haugland to do the work we have on St. John.”

Cordell Jacobs, manager of design and construction, explained that WAPA had the initial notice to proceed in January and mentioned that “some items took longer than expected,” including obtaining CZM clearance and archeologist clearances from the National Park Service which led to the delays.

According to Mr. Jacobs, the project got underway in March, however, “it started and stopped a couple of times due to misunderstanding on some of the requirements.” It was then restarted in July, “however in July the project in the Gallows Point area we uncovered several human remains in several locations,” he said. WAPA since then has been working to “determine how we move forward.”

Mr. Jacobs said the cost increase was partly a result of work changes. “Based on the current schedule we are requesting to extend this contract by 240 days” which would result in a completion timeline of May 2022, he said.

Kyle Fleming, chairman of the WAPA board and director of the V.I. Energy Office, pointed out that the original contract was for 38 weeks, however WAPA is seeking an extension of 34 additional weeks. He asked whether the extension was reflecting that only a month's work had been done on the project, or whether the challenges faced have increased the timeline.

Mr. Jacobs said, “The extension reflects the new contract schedule and it does encompass the delays we have had up to this point.”

Mr. Fleming then sought to learn about the progress of the project, stating, “It seems like we are essentially restarting. The extension is essentially the same length of time as the original contract.”

Mr. Jacobs said, “Work has been completed at the Frank’s Bay area; there's some work that's happened at the Mongoose Junction area.”

He added, “A majority of the project has not been completed as of yet. The Gallows Point area is on hold at the moment... in the beginning there were a lot of things that were impeding us starting the project. Right now there is still a significant amount of the project to be done.”

Mr. Fleming followed up and asked whether there were any unresolved delay issues that needed to be addressed. Mr. Alexander, the director of project management at WAPA, mentioned the possibility of more delays based on “a number of unknowns. “We do anticipate the possibility of more delay claims again because there are a number of unknowns,” he said.

Mr. Fleming asked whether there was any work ongoing. Peter Bonnes, president of FXB Engineering contracted by WAPA for project management support, explained that since around July 7, “this project went back to construction” and it was about “15 percent complete to date.”