



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Councilmembers  
**From:** CURO  
**By:** Shannon Blanks  
**CC:** Paul Harang and Anita Curran  
**Date:** June 10, 2022  
**RE:** SWBNO Meeting 04.20.2022

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, April 20, 2022. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

#### **Executive Director's Report**

##### **A. Customer Service**

- [1] Billing Disputes- Open billing disputes have decreased. In 2018, SWBNO had a backlog of approximately 10,000 open billing disputes, while currently, there are 2329 disputes.
- [2] Estimated Bills- On average, SWBNO estimates approximately 15,000 bills a month or less, equating to about 11% of the total bills.
- [3] Meter Reading-The meter reading department continues to experience staffing shortages having 39 of 60 positions filled. Despite the staffing shortage, the department achieved 89% actual meter readings since mid-April.
- [4] Courtesy Adjustments for Leaks on Property- SWBNO will provide courtesy waivers for customers who have found and corrected a plumbing leak on their property. Typically, SWBNO waives 100% of the sewer use and up to 50% of water use charges. The full policy may be found [here](#).
- [5] Incorrect Bills- SWBNO can correct 100% of erroneous bills.
- [6] Key Performance Indicators (KPI)- Several KPIs have been identified for customer service. The KPIs include nine categories and have associated benchmarks for measuring improvements. A public-facing dashboard with the information is forthcoming.

##### **B. Technology Modernization**

Smart Metering Program- SWBNO will select a vendor to procure, install, and implement the automated water meters. Installations are to begin in the fourth quarter of 2022.

##### **C. Financial Stability**

- [1] Federal Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) Funding- SWBNO met with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to discuss priority projects and the requirements to position the utility to receive maximum IIJA funding. A meeting with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to discuss the financing of water distribution and wastewater needs is upcoming.
- [2] Additional Revenue Sources- Three additional revenue sources are expected to be available in the next five years; funding sources include:
- a) Lead Service Line Replacement Program- This program will support the 2021 revisions to the [National Primary Drinking Water Regulations Lead and Copper Rule](#). SWBNO must have a complete inventory of all lead service lines and comply with the rules by October 2024.
  - b) State Revolving Fund (SRF)- SWBNO has been approved for an \$11.1 million loan from the Clean Water SRF for sewer consent decree work and has filed a pre-application to be considered for the next round of funding
  - c) Water Sector Commission- Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), The Water Sector Program will provide grant funding for the repairs, improvements, and consolidation of community water and sewer systems.
- [3] FEMA Grant Revenue- The Chief Financial Officer and the Project Delivery Unit have streamlined the FEMA reimbursement process to replenish system funds quicker. As a result, FEMA has reimbursed SWBNO \$40 million since January, with a \$12.2 million reimbursement secured within seven days of paying the contractor.

#### **D. Infrastructure Resilience and Reliability**

- [1] West Power Complex
- a) Turbine 7 (“T7”)- The Board approved the procurement for the new T7.
  - b) Static Frequency Changers (SFC)- The City of New Orleans and SWBNO have entered into a cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) that provides \$22 million for the purchase of two (2) SFCs, which will convert bulk power from one frequency to another.
  - c) Federal Earmarks- SWBNO received \$6 million to fill in underfunded areas of the West Power Complex. SWBNO requested an additional \$10 million for fiscal year 2023.
- [2] Infrastructure- Approximately 4000 feet of sewer force main rehabilitation in the Lakeview area is complete.
- [3] Joint Infrastructure Recovery Roads Program- A large water transmission main rehabilitation project began on April 19. The project is located near Eden and Grape streets and is on schedule to be complete by June 1. An additional eleven major water main projects are scheduled to begin within sixteen months.

#### **E. Drainage**

95 of 99 drainage pumps are available for use. Offline pumps include:

- [1] DPS 6 (Carrollton/Lakeview)- “I” pump is offline and undergoing repairs. The return to service date is December 2022.
- [2] DPS 11 (Algiers)- “E” pump is offline; assessments are underway. The return to service date is to be determined.
- [3] DPS 13 (NO East)- Number 4 pump is on standby for emergency use. The pump needs a gearbox and bearing repair.

[4] DPS 14 (NO East)- Number 4 pump is out of service due to an oil leak. The return to service date is to be determined.

**E. Power Assets**

[1] Turbine 1 "T1" - Offline until further notice. SWBNO is evaluating the repair and cost requirements.

[2] Turbine 4 "T4"- Online and available for use.

[3] Turbine 5 "T5"- Online and available for use.

[4] Turbine 6 "T6"- Online and available for use.

**F. Stakeholder Engagement**

SWBNO continues public outreach efforts and attends many community events.