



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Blanks
CC: Paul Harang and Anita Curran
Date: June 15, 2022
RE: SWBNO Meeting 06.15.2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, June 15, 2022. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

Mayor Cantrell's Opening Remarks

A. 2022 Legislative Session- Mayor Cantrell reports that the City of New Orleans secured \$130 million in capital outlay funds for critical infrastructure projects. The funding is in addition to \$71.1 million for constructing the SWBNO dedicated power substation.

B. JIRR- The St. Claude group E roadway and Milneberg group B roadway projects are complete.

C. Climate Change Adaptation and Flood Mitigation

[1] On Friday, May 27, 2022, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) completed the \$14.5 billion post-Katrina storm damage and risk reduction system project. The system reduces the flood risk for New Orleans and neighboring parishes from storm surge flooding during hurricanes and major storms. The ACOE handed it over to the State of Louisiana for operation and maintenance. Additional information may be found [here](#).

[2] The design for Lakeview-City Park Green Infrastructure Hazard Mitigation Project is 90 percent complete. The multi-million-dollar stormwater retention project includes adding capacity for 187 million gallons of stormwater to be deposited in City Park. Mayor Cantrell stated that the project is on hold due to residents' and elected legislators' opposition to the project. Details of the project may be found [here](#).

Executive Director's Report

A. Hurricane Preparedness

- [1] East and West bank wastewater treatment plants have fully operational backup generators
- [2] A significant repair to the fluidized bed incinerator at the East bank wastewater treatment plant is complete.
- [3] SWBNO and Entergy conducted hurricane exercises
- [4] Canal cleaning of large debris and vegetation along with grass cutting is ongoing
- [5] Testing of the backup generators at the drainage pump stations is complete
- [6] Purchase orders have been issued for backup rental generators, and portable diesel pumps to supplement SWBNOs supply. SWBNO is planning and budgeting for the agency to purchase additional generator sets for the next several years.
- [7] The standard operating procedures for SWBNO to pump stormwater into Lake Pontchartrain are under review by the South Louisiana Flood Protection Agency

B. June 10th,2022 Rain Event

Executive director Korban gave an after-action report regarding the June 10th storm event. He reports operational problems at Drainage Pumping Station (DPS) 4. DPS 4 manages stormwater from drainage basin 4, which corresponds to neighborhoods constituting the Gentilly Rd to Lake Area of the City. SWBNO found that three large pumps continued to fail and thus began troubleshooting. Troubleshooting commenced for over two hours before the issue was resolved. According to the legislative storm report, SWBNO found that manually operated flow control devices (sluice gates) were closed and prevented stormwater from discharging. The Legislative Storm Report may be found [here](#). SWBNO leadership acknowledges the deficiency and has begun developing SOPs and additional operator training. Additionally, SWBNO is assessing the costs for upgrading and automating the DPSs.

C. Drainage

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

- [1] DPS 6 (Carrollton/Lakeview)- (2) pumps are offline and undergoing repairs.
 - a. "I" pump is offline; the return to service date is to be determined.
 - b. "H" pump is undergoing bearing repairs and is scheduled to return to service by July 1st.
- [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 16 (NO East)- Number (2) pump has been out of service since June 14th due to a coupling issue.

D. Power Assets

Turbine 1 is offline indefinitely. The unit was initially installed in 1913 and has been refurbished twice in its lifecycle. The cost to restore the unit is approximately \$3.6 million. Therefore SWBNO has elected to decommission the unit and invest in modernized power generation per the power master plan. The status of the power generation assets are listed below.

- [1] Turbine 4 "T4"- Online and available for use.
- [2] Turbine 5 "T5"- Online and available for use.
- [3] Turbine 6 "T6"- Online and available for use.
- [4] EMDs- Four of five units are available for use
- [5] Frequency Changers- all frequency changers are available for use

E. Infrastructure Resilience and Reliability

- [1] West Power Complex - The west power complex program is underway. The program will cost upward of \$200 million, and SWBNO continues to work to secure funding.
 - a) Turbine 7 ("T7")- The Board approved the procurement for the new "T7" in May 2022.
 - b) Static Frequency Changers (SFC) - The first of three SFCs is being manufactured.
 - c) Turbines 8 and 9- SWBNO is seeking future funding to include two additional turbines, "T8" and "T9," to the suite of power generation units.
- [2] Joint Infrastructure Recovery Roads (JIRR) Program - SWBNO has over fifty JIRR projects underway. A large water transmission main project on Norman C. Francis is nearing completion. The main will undergo final testing and is scheduled to be in service by July 1.
- [3] Lead and Copper Rule - The [National Primary Drinking Water Regulations Lead and Copper Rule 2021](#) requires a complete Lead Service Lines (LSL) inventory with an online posting by October 2024. SWBNO is partnering with BlueConduit, a water analytics company, to identify LSL and with the Water Collaborative, a local non-profit, for outreach and education. The efforts are funded by a grant from Google.org and coincide with federal funding for LSL replacements. Additionally, SWBNO is creating a position to manage Lead and Copper Rule Compliance.

F. Customer Service

The meter reading department continues to experience staffing shortages and employee retention difficulties. Employee safety concerns and seasonal changes affect the number of actual readings. SWBNO is evaluating the meter reading process. Process improvement solutions are forthcoming and will be presented to the Board.

G. Organizational and Operational Improvements

SWBNO has restructured the General Superintendent of Operations (GSO) office in conjunction with Civil Service. The restructuring includes three functional divisions with an assigned Deputy GSO. The divisions are (1) Deputy GSO of Pumping and Power, (2) Deputy GSO of Operations, and (3) Deputy GSO of Engineering and Services. The improvements reflect "best practices" in similar utilities.

H. Workforce Development

SWBNO conducted a job fair with twenty agencies and businesses at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Over 500 job seekers attended the event. SWBNO made eighty-five job offers, twenty-one in the meter reading department and fifty-three for the GSOs office.

E. Stakeholder Engagement

- [1] House Bill 652 - In response to HB 652, a billing working group was formed. SWBNO's Chief Financial Officer, Gray Lewis, and Director of Customer Service, Rene Gonzalas, represent the SWBNO and will discuss issues and solutions in the billing process.
- [2] Representative Landry Governance Study Resolution- A resolution involving a legal study to determine the governance of the SWBNO and how to make changes to the governance is forthcoming. A Board member will represent SWBNO in the study.
- [3] Drainage Consolidation Task Force - Gilbert Montañó, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of New Orleans, is the task force team lead. Executive Director Korban reports that SWBNO will be responsible for the drainage system. Discussions on logistics, level of service, maintenance, improvements, and funding are ongoing.

SWBNO continues stakeholder engagement efforts and hosts tours of Carrollton Water Plant and the West Power Complex site. Additionally, SWBNO attends events such as the National Association of Clean Water Agencies Conference, Sankofa Wetland Park Site Kickoff, and Concordia Roundtable Courses, as well as develops partnerships to address litter in the Florida Avenue and Morrison Canals.