



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Blanks
CC: Paul Harang and Anita Curran
Date: April 25, 2023
RE: SWBNO Meeting 04.19.2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, April 19, 2023. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).¹

Executive Director Report

A. Drainage Pumps- 93 of 99 Drainage Pumps are available for use. Director Korban expects to have 95 of the drainage pumps available at the end of June.

- *DPS 6 at Metairie Road-* 1 Pump is out of service. 12 drainage pumps and two constant-duty pumps are available.
- *DPS 10 in New Orleans East-* No. 1 pump is out of service. Three pumps are available.
- *DPS 13 at Tall Timbers Algiers-* No. 4 Pump on standby for Emergency Use Only. Five drainage pumps and one constant-duty pump are available.
- *DPS 16 in New Orleans East-* No. 2 Pump is out of service. Three drainage pumps are available.
- *DPS 17 in Gentilly-* Pumps A & D are out of service. No additional drainage pumps are at this station.

B. Power Assets- The operations team is adjusting equipment in advance of storm season.

¹ <https://www.swbno.org/BoardMeetings/Past>

- Turbine 4 "T4"- Unavailable inspection and repairs are underway.
- Turbine 5 "T5"- Online and available for use.
- Turbine 6 "T6"- Online and available for use.
- EMDs- Four of five units are online and available for use. The EMDs have been equipped with sound attenuators to reduce noise pollution. However, the units continue to be disruptive when in use.
- Frequency Changers- 9 of 10 are available for use. One frequency changer is undergoing inspection, cleaning, and repair and is expected to return to service in May.

C. Turbine Five (T5) Oil Discharge- T5 intermittently discharges oily fluid onto neighboring properties. In March 2022 Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) performed inspections and issued a Notice of Deficiency (NOD). The compliance order required SWBNO to take immediate corrective action. SWBNO's August 2022 response to LDEQ may be found in the attachment. In response to the NOD, SWBNO hired General Electric (GE) to perform a diagnostic investigation and provide recommendations. According to the investigation, the likely cause of the oil release is "operator error in overfilling of the oil tank." Additionally, GE proposes installing additional equipment to capture any oil that may potentially be released through the exhaust. SWBNO expects a design proposal for the additional equipment by July 2023. SWBNO continues to inform neighbors when T5 is in operation and makes various efforts to assist neighbors with any affected property.

D. West Power Complex (WPC)- Entergy has completed approximately sixty percent of the foundation work and has started transmission line work. Meanwhile, SWBNO continues pile driving for the utility rack foundation. The substation portion of the WPC is on time to be completed in 2024. Neighborhood engagement is ongoing, and future meetings are planned to discuss progress.

E. Watermain Break- A 30" water main failed on April 10th. Isolating the line for repair was challenging due to the existing valves not working correctly. Therefore, SWBNO installed two new valves needed to make the repair. Temporary water service was connected for customers that were without water. Additionally, community outreach and communications were maintained throughout the event.

F. Green Infrastructure-SWBNO recently completed a green infrastructure project at Bayou St. John and Orleans Ave. The new installation holds 55,800 gallons of stormwater.

G. Smart Meter Program²

- Smart Meter Program³ Information technology integration is underway. Installation procedures and equipment have been designed and planned for seven of the twelve tower sites. Presently one location is located off the SWBNO property. Installation phasing and scheduling are ongoing and are subject to change to account for supply chain issues.
- Lead and Copper Regulations - SWBNO plans to use a local public relations firm to introduce lead and copper rule compliance initiatives to customers when installing smart meters. Since installing the smart meter is considered a significant disruption of the service line, SWBNO must provide six months of additional protection. SWBNO anticipates the extra protection will be certified water pitchers equipped with a cartridge that can filter lead for six months. Lead awareness information may be found [here](#).⁴

H. Collections- SWBNO collected \$16,387,136, \$20,318,166, and \$23,820,062 in January, February, and March, respectively. Additionally, interviews for a collections manager are complete, and the final selection is underway.

SWBNO and city partners are discussing effective and favorable options for collecting payments from delinquent multi-unit customers. Property liens are challenged by their efficacy and availability, while policymakers do not favor shutting off the water. Presently SWBNO is selectively filing lawsuits against delinquent owners while other means are explored.

I. State Legislative Session- The mayor invited all the New Orleans delegation to an event to discuss needs and priorities. SWBNO presented its priorities and requested \$39 million from Capital Outlay for WPC projects in 2024. Additionally, SWBNO hired a dedicated lobbyist to keep SWBNO leadership abreast of activities at the state level.

The fiscal legislative session began on April 10th. So far, the following bills directly or indirectly affect SWBNO:

- [HB 225 \(Hilferty\)](#)⁵- Expands forgiveness of customer debt
- [HB 409 \(Edmonds\)](#)⁶ Authorizes districts to levy fees, subject to voter approval, to aid in the planning, construction, acquisition, extension, improvement, operation, and maintenance of stormwater management utility systems
- [SB 122 \(Mills\)](#)⁷ Creates the "Community Sewerage System Infrastructure Sustainability Act" and provides for legislative intent to develop a community sewage system

² <https://www.swbno.org/Projects/SmartMetering>

³ <https://www.swbno.org/PressReleases/Details/4724>

⁴ <https://www.swbno.org/DrinkingWater/LeadAwareness>

⁵ <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=23RS&b=HB225&sbi=y>

⁶ <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=23RS&b=HB409&sbi=y>

⁷ <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=23RS&b=SB122&sbi=y>

accountability process that supports sewerage system infrastructure sustainability for the citizens of Louisiana.

- J. Stakeholder Engagement-** SWBNO recently presented at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week and Greater New Orleans Inc & Young Leadership Council events. Additionally, SWBNO interviewed with the Times-Picayune, WBOK radio, and WWL radio.

- K. Workforce Support-** SWBNO selected a consultant to assist in developing a plan to update policies and procedures regarding organizational performance, compensation, and recruitment. Several meetings with employees and the steering committee are forthcoming.