

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers

From: CURO By: Jared Reese

CC: Paul Harang and Anita Curran

Date: January 23, 2024

RE: The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Meeting 01/23/2024

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. 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. Leadership**

New Board Members - Two new board members were joining the Board. The new board director, Chadwick Kennedy, represented the Board of Liquidations. Also, Renée Lapeyrolerie became the newly appointed chief of staff.

##### **B. Drainage Pumps**

93 of the 99 pumps were available for use.

##### **C. Pump and Power Dashboard**

Entergy launched a new service feature that provided live updates of the pumping stations' operational status. The dashboard was available on the One-stop page for NOLA Ready and Weather-Wise resources. S&WB planned to update the dashboard to include individual pumps' status by the end of February.

##### **D. Power Assets**

- Turbine 4 is unavailable.
- Turbine 5 is available for use.
- Turbine 6 is available for use.

- 3 of the 5 EMDs are in service. EMD #1 was offline due to a radiator leak, and #2 was due to electrical issues.
- 4 of the 5 Frequency Changers are available for use. Frequency Changer #4 at Station D was out of service. The Carrollton Water Plant frequency changer was out of use due to an electrical issue.

#### **E. Power Complex**

Entergy completed and fully energized the substation despite overlay challenges. S&WB planned to debut the substation at the February Board of Directors meeting. S&WB also announced its plans to add two modern turbines as backups by the summer of 2025.

#### **F. Water Main Projects**

Through FEMA's Joint Infrastructure Recovery Request (JIRR), the S&WB completed 1,262 water central repairs and 258 sewer main repairs.<sup>1</sup>

#### **G. Smart Meter Program**

SWBNO completed constructing 11 of the 12 communication relay stations and base stations. The company installed 1400 new smart meters starting in September of 2023. The estimated goal was 75,000 new meters by the end of 2024. The new meters were outfitted with lead detection and offered customers real-time usage readings through a customer portal available in the summer or fall of 2024.

#### **H. Customer Service**

The S&WB staffed 90% of the personnel needed for its call centers, decreasing wait time by 7 minutes. The customer service department eliminated the backlog of account transfers when starting or moving service. The company also reduced the “bill on hold” backlog by 75%.

#### **I. Pavement Progress**

S&WB completed 4647 pavement repairs in 2023, a 57% increase over 2022. The company stated it had 1400 more work orders remaining in its backlog.

#### **J. Water Quality**

The company stated it would install video cameras in its vehicles, perform GPS data audits, and hire an outside consultant to examine the data from water quality tests to ensure its employees performed their duties ethically. S&WB also created an in-house department to handle backflow cross-contamination of clean water lines. Consultants

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/culturalassets/fema106/readnotice.asp?NoticeID=212>

initially dealt with the task, but the new measures with specialized employees proved more cost-effective.

#### **K. Workforce Development**

The company instituted a couple of strategies to attract more hires. In June 2023, a job fair was held. The event attracted over 900 applicants, 80 of whom were hired. Another job fair was planned for later this year. Also, Juli Walker-Sholar accepted the position as the new director of human resources and tasked with attracting more recruits.

#### **L. Drainage Improvements**

The company outlined a five-year drainage capital improvement plan. S&WB stated that it needed an estimated 939 million dollars for these improvements, with only 7% of the necessary funding. The company said it only had 3.5 million for capital improvements after most of its revenue went to maintenance and operations and the remainder to SELA commitments.

#### **M. Water Treatment Plant Renovations.**

The last water treatment renovation was in 1959. S&WB planned an 18-month study of possible improvements in response to the updated lead and copper rules, saltwater intrusions, and emerging contaminants. The process began in the first quarter of 2024. The revised LDHH lead and copper rules can be found here.<sup>2</sup>

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