

## MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers

From: CURO By: Jared Reese

CC: Justyn Hawkins and Anita Curran

Date: September 18, 2024

RE: The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Meeting 09/18/2024

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met on Wednesday, September 18, 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

#### Introduction by Mayor Cantrell

She applauded SWBNO for its dedication during the storm and its foresight to complete the power project going into this hurricane season. SWBNO partnered with NOLAReady and Homeland Security to coordinate restoration and recovery efforts. The Power Complex was the key to SWBNO's effective response. SWBNO's next big priority was addressing flooding, and the board awaited the \$29 million from the Governor. However, SWBNO needed to focus on acquiring the Hero Grant where the funds were diverted, and an application was sent at the start of September. SWBNO had \$982,000 unfunded, but the company would secure the means to pay for these projects despite other major projects facing the city.

#### Executive Director Report

##### A. Saltwater Wedge Update

SWBNO stated the wedge presented not immediate threats to Orleans Parish, but state and federal agencies explored long-term solutions for the problem in the future.

##### B. Operational Status Pre-Francine

- ☐ 90 of 99 drainage pumps available
- ☐ 70 MW of 25-Hz power generation capacity – Pre-Francine
- ☐ Other Prepare (coordinating with other agencies, acquiring backup generator, pumping down canals in advance, and launched a storm center dashboard).

### C. Drainage Impacts

- ❑ 7-9 inches of rain throughout event
- ❑ Highest recorded: 4.4 inches/hour
- ❑ Power source failures led to temporarily decreased drainage capacity
- ❑ Frequency change #3 and EMDS (5) tripped offline
- ❑ Intermittent loss of 13 pumps (out of 90 available pumps)
- ❑ Extended time period from stormwater pumping
- ❑ Localized street flooding
- ❑ Back to pre-storm drainage pmps stations available.

### D. Wastewater Pumping Impacts

Electrical issues and power source failures at sewer pump stations. Sewer Pump Station D remains offline after an electrical malfunction caused the deployment of temporary pumps. The loss of Entergy's power impacted other stations, but Entergy restored power. SWBNO issued precautionary water conservation notice was issued on Wednesday evening and it was lifted on Friday morning.

### E. Francine Performance

SWBNO reported that over 7 inches of stormwater pumped out of the city. The Monticello Canal was the only canal overtopped. SWBNO remained fully staffed throughout the event. SWBNO said drinking water and wastewater treatment and suffered no impacts to the customers. SWBNO issued a temporary, precautionary water conservation notice.

### F. Current Pump and Power Status

- ❑ 90 of 99 drainage pumps; back to pre-storm levels
- ❑ 65 MW of in-house 25-Hz power generation capacity
- ❑ 3 out of 5 EMDs back in service

### G. Power Complex

The Power Complex would become the main source of power to all 25-Hz drainage pumps. It would replace 100-year-old turbines and SWBNO said it would decommission the older power equipment.

SWBNO said the Power Complex was still underway and it was anticipated to come online in the summer of 2025. SWBNO found eight sources of funding, the chief source was

DOE's HERO grant for \$35M. Cost were necessary and cost-effective. The company stated the foundation work was on-going and the first static frequency changer was delivered.

H. Drainage Consolidation

SWBNO stated it would take over "minor" drainage systems to transfer from DPW by January of 2025. SWBNO was using DPW data to prioritize improvements despite funding sources not fully identified.

I. Installation Progress

SWBNO stated 45,000 meters were installed, roughly 28% of the population. SWBNO said it was on track to install half the meters by the end of 2024.

J. Workforce Development

SWBNO partnered with Job 1 to hire entry level smart meter technicians and other entry level positions across operations. Age 18 was the minimal age to apply as long as they had six months of experience.

K. Communications

SWBNO participated in over 50 neighborhood association meetings. As well as issued leak detection letters to customers. 40% of the leaks were repaired with an average of \$104.04 per customer per bill.

L. Laws Implementation

- ☐ City Council Ordinance to appoint HGI as a third-party administrator.
- ☐ Temporary fixed rate residential was scheduled to begin in October
- ☐ Billing estimations end in January 2025.

M. Pavement Progress

SWBNO reduced the backlog to around 500 projects compared to over 3000 in 2023. The average restoration time was 50 days compared to more than double that in the previous year. SWBNO said its goal was to reduce that repair time to 2-4 weeks.

N. Lead Line

O. SWBNO received \$84 million from the state revolving funds, which closed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024. SWBNO planned to address LSL at schools and daycares. The company developed program management software to keep a database of all the replaced lead lines. The program would display both public and private LSL materials.

P. Funding

SWBNO needed \$5.5 million for critical water and sewer network repairs. The company wanted \$2 million for water O & M contracts, \$1.5 million for sewer O & M contracts, and \$2 million for a water capital contract. The funds would immediately decrease work orders and address the long-standing issue of the HOV lane ramp on LaSalle and Poydras.