

MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers

From: CURO By: Jared Reese

CC: Justyn Hawkins and Anita Curran

Date: November 20, 2024

RE: The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Meeting 11/20/2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met on Wednesday, November 20, 2024. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

A. Power Complex

SWBNO provided an update on the status. The company reported that Turbine 7 had been delivered and SWBNO continued installation through November. Additionally, the company mentioned ongoing cabling installation of the Utility Rack. The company anticipated that the complex would come online by the summer of 2025.

SWBNO confirmed that it had secured the DOE grant through the DNR. SWBNO hosted the DNR, who reviewed the progress and the plan. DNR was pleased with SWBNO's progress and offered to assist the organization with the subrecipient agreement.

B. Lead Service Line Replacement Program

SWBNO secured funding from the state revolving fund and needed approval from the board to request additional funding. The company received an \$86M loan from the state revolving fund, which would close in December 2024. The company asked the board for approval of an additional \$66M.

C. Smart Meter Installation Progress

The company reported over 64,000 meters installed, roughly 44% of the population, and it remained on track to install an additional 6%, or 6,000 meters, by the end of the year.

SWBNO noted an issue with delinquent bills after the installation of smart meters. SWBNO stated that \$12M of the smart meter bills were past due and \$6M of smart meter bills were delinquent for more than 60 days past due. The problem was that some customers carried

delinquent accounts from their old meters or they were in dispute. The company said it would monitor and try to address the problem.

D. Communications

SWBNO launched its new customer account platform on November 15th, 2024. All customers had access to the platform. The organization required customers to activate online accounts. However, only 6,696 customers registered online.

E. Billing Laws Implementation

SWBNO gave an update on the City Council's third-party administrator ordinance implemented on 9/6/24. HGI, the third-party administrator, made 2,825 decisions between September and October and HGI credited \$7M to customers. The two entities maintained ongoing dialogue.

SWBNO reported progress with the billing. The company began temporary fixed rate residential billing. The fixed rate was based on usage and included the "ready to serve" fee. 371 accounts were now on fixed bills. The Louisiana Legislative Auditor executed the common endeavor agreement for the program. Finally, SWBNO agreed to no longer estimate bills starting in 2025.

F. Drainage

Pending a cooperative endeavor agreement between the City of New Orleans and SWBNO, SWBNO would receive a \$5 million annual allocation from the Infrastructure Maintenance Fund (IMF) and revenue from traffic camera enforcement per ACT 103.

SWBNO intended to advertise 3 major contracts in January for cleaning, engineering RFQ, and point repairs contracts because the company recognized that it needed to outsource its work until it built up its workforce.

G. Pavement Progress

SWBNO reported 360 remaining repair work orders, compared to over 3,000 the previous year. SWBNO also stated that it had reduced the timeline to 42 days. The companies expressed goal was to complete a project within 2-4 weeks.