

MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers

From: CURO By: Jared Reese

CC: Justyn Hawkins and Anita Curran

Date: February 19, 2025

RE: The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Meeting 02/19/2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met on Wednesday, February 19, 2025. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

A. Smart Metering

SWBNO installed 85,000 Smart Meters by January 24th, 2025 compared to 1,400 at the same time in 2024. SWBNO remained on track to complete all residential installations, with plans developing for more complex large meter installations at hotels and businesses.

B. Power Complex

SWBNO began construction in January of 2024 and needed \$29 million in Capital Outlay funding. With funding through the HERO grant, SWBNO estimated that it would complete the Power Complex by the summer of 2025.

C. Lead Service Line

SWBNO reported progress in several areas. The company secured \$86 million for the program and prioritized the removal of lines in the school zones and daycares. SWBNO shortlisted six candidates to manage the program for the next 10 years or more. SWBNO planned to finalize its selection by March of 2025.

D. Water Quality

SWBNO monitored federal government funding and support regulations while making progress with current plans. The organization implemented changes to reduce chemicals and modify treatment processes. The Hub Grade Center, unique in the United States, provided real-time water quality data, complementing ongoing testing of high salinity water impacts on the system, particularly on vulnerable lead lines.

E. Drainage Fee

After a proposal in 2016, SWBNO engaged a consultant to develop a sustainable stormwater fee model to support both minor and major drainage systems. This initiative gained urgency following consolidation efforts, with implementation targeted for 2025-2026 before the mills rolled off in 2027. The current drainage resources required \$13M annually while meeting federal commitment obligations required \$10M yearly, which created an unsustainable gap that required council approval and public vote.

F. People Plan

The People Plan represented a significant organizational initiative with five town hall meetings conducted to engage employees in honest conversations about potential changes. A survey assessed employee appetite for replacing the civil service model, with results expected imminently to determine whether to proceed with legislative action. The organization described this initiative as one of the most impactful and legacy-defining projects undertaken in recent years, despite challenges inherent in organizational change.

G. JIRR Project Completion

JIRR projects enabled the replacement of over 100 miles of water mains, but 800+ miles still needed replacement. The rate adjustments enabled bond financing for continued infrastructure renewal, maximized the value of current investments, and met federal requirements.