



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Blanks
CC: Paul Harang and Theresa Becher
Date: June 2, 2021
RE: SWBNO Meeting 05.19.2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, May 19, 2021, via video and teleconference. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#). The Board received updates on the general standing of SWBNO.

The agenda was read aloud by SWBNO Counsel Yolanda Grinstead.

Executive Director Report

A. Boil Water Advisory- May 12, 2021

SWBNO began repairs on a leaking 48-inch water main at the Carrollton Water Plant (CWP), resulting in lower than normal pressure for parts of uptown New Orleans. An older valve that was not fully functional remained partially closed, resulting in lower than expected pressures. Although the low pressure did not dip below 20 pounds per square inch (psi), it adversely affected multi-story buildings, including hospitals in the surrounding area. SWBNO has stabilized the water pressure. However, the entire repair is not complete; the repair plan is under review.

Additionally, a tornado affected the area surrounding the CWP in the early morning hours and damaged overhead electric lines. The damage to the electric lines caused a power disturbance several hours later within the CWP. The low pressure from the water main repair coupled with an electrical trip caused the water pressure to drop below 20 psi, triggering a boil water notice for the affected area.

On Tuesday, May 18, the Council held a special joint committee meeting. The meeting may be accessed [here](#). Upon conclusion, SWBNO and Entergy New Orleans (ENO) agreed to refine communication protocols and contingency plans. Enhanced communication will inform both customers and utility partners about any expected low water pressure and electrical outages.

B. Customer Service

Customer Service Satellite Offices - SWBNO introduced a third satellite office located at New Orleans East Regional Library. Customers will be able to make appointments at that location June 3.

Meter Reading- SWBNO collected actual readings on 83 percent of meters in May 2021.

Credit Card Processing Fees – SWBNO reinstated processing fees for all online credit or debit card payments on May 17.

C. Power

Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) – all five EMDs are available for emergency use only. Additionally, a noise mitigation option for the EMDs has been selected and is currently in the design phase.

Frequency Changers – all four frequency changers are available for use.

Turbine 1 - in-service and available for use.

Turbine 3 - permanently out of service.

Turbine 4 ("T4") – in service, although not fully commissioned. SWBNO continues to make adjustments.

Turbine 5("T5") – final repairs are underway. The unit is behind schedule by two weeks due to a nationwide challenge in sourcing the steel needed to fabricate the stack. The completion date at this time is late June 2021.

Turbine 6 - in-service and available for use.

D. Funding Opportunities

State – SWBNO continues to have conversations with the State to secure additional capital outlay dollars as a supplemental funding mechanism for the power substation at the CWP.

Federal –President Biden toured the CWP on May 6. The visit allowed SWBNO to show the critical need and importance of infrastructure upgrades. The federal government is working on a plan which includes significant investments in infrastructure. The plan is expected to be released in July 2021.

Additional billing assistance through the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is expected to provide water bill relief for customers that experienced hardships during COVID 19. The funding will be administered through the nonprofit Total Community Action. Additional information may be found [here](#).

E. Human Resources

SWBNO has 85 vacancies in the organization. The vacancies are 6 percent of the organization's total positions. Vacancies will be filled according to need, as staff requirements and funding dictate.