



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Blanks
CC: Paul Harang and Anita Curran
Date: November 24, 2021
RE: SWBNO Meeting 11.17.2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, November 17, 2021, via video and teleconference. In addition, the Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO. The complete packet for the meeting may be found [here](#).

Executive Director's Report

A. Plumbing Department

On November 5, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) entered SWBNO to conduct "law enforcement activity" regarding utility employees. The employees were suspended before the FBI probe. According to Executive Director Korban, SWBNO itself is not under federal investigation; rather, the individuals are under investigation for work unrelated to their SWBNO duties. SWBNO does not provide gas inspections.

On October 19, SWBNO has made organizational improvements which placed the plumbing department under customer service's purview. Since plumbing is a public-facing department, the transition was made to better align the department with the mission and priorities of the utility. Additionally, SWBNO has updated the policies for outside work organization-wide.

B. Priority Project Updates

- [1] *The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Loan* - SWBNO closed on a \$275 million loan on November 10. The loan will fund city-wide sewer collection system upgrades to meet consent decree initiatives. A public announcement is forthcoming.
- [2] *Smart Metering Program* - SWBNO has renamed the automated metering infrastructure (AMI) program to the smart metering program. The water meter survey is complete, and a request for proposals (RFP) is being finalized.

- [3] Asset Management Program - An assessment of the utility's work order and asset management needs is underway. Upon completion, a scope of work will be developed to replace the current software application, which is obsolete.
- [4] Strategic Plan - The strategy committee met on November 15. The entire meeting may be viewed [here](#). The strategic plan is being finalized, and a presentation to the Board is forthcoming.
- [5] Financial Management System - A new software tool (SoftCo) has been implemented to manage accounts payable. The new automated system assists with invoice tracking and will be broadened in the future.

C. Power

- [1] Turbine 1 "T1"- Offline due to vacuum issues. The repair is underway.
- [2] Turbine 4 "T4"- Online and available for use.
- [3] Turbine 5 "T5"- Offline due to a valve issue, which is covered under warranty.
- [4] Turbine 6 "T6"- Online and available for use. The unit has been winterized and is available for use in temperatures below 45 degrees.
- [5] Turbine 7- The specifications are complete. An RFP will be issued in December 2021.
- [6] Substation- The site preparations for the substation are 90% complete. The power substation project has lost momentum due to Hurricane Ida recovery efforts. SWBNO believes that the substation can be delivered in 2023.

D. Drainage Pumps

Five drainage pumps are offline for repairs.

- [1] DPS 6 (Carrollton/Lakeview)-
 - "I" pump (1100 CFS) - is offline and will be out of service for several months.
 - "F" pump (1100 CFS)- repairs are underway; the unit is expected to return to service in December.
- [2] DPS 12 (Lakeview)- D pump (1000 CFS) is expected to be in service by December 1st.
- [3] DPS 13 (Westbank)- Number 5 diesel pump (1025 CFS) is out of service; the unit is expected to return to service by mid-December.
- [4] DPS 14 (NO East)- Number 4 pump (300 CFS) is under repair; the return to service date is not yet determined.

E. Billing and Meter Reading

The Billing Department has resumed normal operations and is reading 80-81% of the meters.

F. Communications

SWBNO is working on developing a uniform look and style guide for all outward-facing publications and presentations. Additionally, website updates are continuously improving, focusing on accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

SWBNO conducted a national search to fill the Communications Director position. The interview process will begin this month.

G. Green Infrastructure

Paul Habens Charter School recently completed a green infrastructure project. The project was funded through the SWBNO Green Infrastructure Grant Program. This project consists of a rainwater detention pond and native trees and plantings that hold over 90,000 gallons of stormwater and help mitigate flooding.