



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Oldfield
CC: David Gavlinski, Eric Granderson, and Theresa Becher
Date: May 2, 2019
RE: SWBNO Meeting 4.17.19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, April 17, 2019. The full packet for the meeting can be found [here](#). The Board received updates on the general standing of the SWBNO and introduced the new appointees to the Board. The new members of the Board are: Alejandra Guzman, Robin Barnes, Janet Howard, and Maurice Sholas. Glen Pilie, a retired civil engineer, was selected to represent District D; however, he resigned and the seat is vacant.

On May 8, 2019, SWBNO Governance Committee will meet to discuss committees and committee structures.

The Executive Director's Report

1. Pumps & Power

a. Drainage Pumps Stations (DPS)

116 of 120 pumps are available at the surrounding drainage pump stations. SWBNO expects the remaining pumps to return to service on or before May 31, 2019. During the rain event on April 4, 2019, there were pump and power issues at DPS 6 located at the 17th Street Canal. The issues have been repaired and the station is back in operation.

b. Potable Water Pumps

Pump A, one of the two larger and significant potable water pumps, remains unavailable. The Board approved the purchase of a temporary motor to enable SWBNO to utilize Pump A. Purchasing the motor is the first step in the transition from steam to electric-powered pumps. After the motor is installed, SWBNO intends to also perform similar maintenance procedures on Pump B. The goal is to transition Pumps A & B to electric power. Pump 4, a smaller pump, is down and is being repaired, the anticipated date for this pump to be back on line is to be determined.

c. Power

SWBNO is capable of generating a total of approximately 85 megawatts (MW) of 25 Hz power, however 50 MW is required at any given time. Meaning, SWBNO has an excess of 35 MW available.

Turbine 5 has a design capacity of 20 MW of 25 Hz power, but it is currently producing 12 MW. The discrepancy was discovered approximately 3 months ago when Turbine 5

was shut down for maintenance and upgrade to allow the turbine to be fueled by both diesel and natural gas. When the turbine was returned to service, additional elements of the machine had to be repaired; therefore, available power generation cannot be confirmed until further testing is done. Because testing the unit is an involved procedure that requires bringing down other units and employing the use of a load bank, SWBNO does not want to risk running into any problems at the onset of hurricane season. SWBNO will delay testing the turbine until after hurricane season to ensure availability of the existing capacity.

SWBNO continues work to convert from steam generated power to electric power. The plan will decommission Turbines 1 and 3. Turbine 5 will be the primary power generator, with Turbine 4 and another gas turbine used as a backup generators.

SWBNO is capable of generating a total of approximately 15 MW of 60 Hz power through Turbine 6.

2. Capital Projects –

- a. Southeast Louisiana Urban flood Control Project (SELA) in Algiers-** SWBNO has received approval for \$16 million in federal financing for 2019. SWBNO has submitted initial payments of approximately \$850,000 to begin work. The projects consist of improving the New Orleans Westbank canals, including those along General De Gaulle Drive, and enhancing pumping capacity of DPS 13 on Tullis Drive. Construction is expected to start before December 31, 2019.
- b. Oak Street Raw Water Intake Station** - This project is ongoing and is valued at \$27.5 million, funded through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The purpose of the project is to upgrade the raw water intake and replace the pumps that extract water from the Mississippi River which is treated for potable use.

The project began in 2017, the anticipated completion date is February 2020. Progress has been delayed due to the proximity to the river and high river levels. SWBNO cannot work within 1500 feet of the levee when the Mississippi River reaches 11 feet at the Carrollton Gauge.

- 3. Public Outreach-** SWBNO continues public outreach activities, speaking at multiple civic venues throughout the city. The venues include New Orleans Audubon Institute, League of Women Voters, Youth force NOLA Career Expo, Xavier University Earth Day Expo, Green Your Neighborhood Block Party, Central Carrollton Neighborhood Association, American Council of Engineering Companies, Tulane Engineering Forum, Sci High/ Delgado Students Tour the Carrollton Water Plant and City Park Earth Day.

Civil Service Legislation Senate Bill 135- State Senator Conrad Appel has introduced SB 135 to exclude the SWBNO from Civil Service. The bill may be found [here](#). This bill was considered at the Senate Local and Municipal Affairs Committee meeting on April 25, 2019. If approved, SB 135 would allow voters to consider an amendment of the State Constitution (Article X, Section 1) at the statewide election to be held on October 12, 2019.

The SWBNO leadership team has informed the employees of SB 135 and three listening sessions have been held for employees to voice their concerns.

4. **Policy for Extensions of Water, Sewer, and Drainage Facilities Feb 19, 1973-** SWBNO is implementing a change to the requirements for new service connections for water, sanitary sewer, and/or drainage connections. Currently SWBNO offers the property owner the following options: 1-) SWBNO crews or a designated contractor install these services for an estimated fee; or 2-) A contractor installs these services upon payment for engineering plan review, plumbing review, inspection and receiving a permit from the Department of Public Works (DPW). Neither SWBNO crews nor designated contractor will provide new installation services. The updated policy is forthcoming.

Councilmember Banks suggested that a complete policy review plan should be established to ensure that all policies that govern the activities of SWBNO are kept current. Director Duplessis informed the group that policy review for all of SWBNO are underway. These goals were supported by Mayor Cantrell and will be addressed at the May 8th Governance Committee meeting as an agenda item.

5. **Organizational Vision-** SWBNO presented a new organizational structure that is intended to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of the organization. SWBNO consulted with Water Environmental Federation (WEF) and Blue Drop. These are nonprofit organizations that provide technical education, best management practices and training for thousands of water quality professionals. Through Blue Drop, SWBNO consulted with four Chief Executive Officers of major water utility companies that have endured similar struggles. SWBNO met with Atlanta Water, Houston Water, D.C. Water, and Camden Pennsylvania Water. The organizational consulting services were utilized to develop the new model for the overall re-structuring strategy. The organization structure may be found as a supporting document.

SWBNO is implementing new positions including but not limited to: Chief of Staff, Strategic Planning; Chief of Customer Service, Chief Auditor, Customer Care Advocate; Chief Administrative Officer; Real Estate Administrator, Director of Continuous Improvement; Director of Human Resources (Utility Senior Service Manager).

The positions being abolished at SWBNO are: Deputy Director of Logistics, Deputy Director of Security and Deputy Director of Human Resources. The abolished positions are not filled at this time.