



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Blanks
CC: Paul Harang and Theresa Becher
Date: January 1, 2021
RE: SWBNO Meeting 12.21.2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Monday, December 21, 2020, via video and teleconference. The full packet for the meeting may be found [here](#). The Board received updates on the general standing of the Sewerage and Water Board.

The agenda was read aloud by SWBNO Counsel Yolanda Grinstead.

Executive Director Report

A. Power

Turbine 3 ("T3") – Out of Service. T3, an emergency use turbine that was relied upon during Hurricane Zeta. After Zeta, issues with the condenser worsened. Repair costs are estimated at approximately \$10 million. SWBNO does not intend to invest in the full repair and is evaluating practical solutions that allow the unit to be available for emergencies only.

Turbine 4 ("T4") – Out of Service. Internal components require replacement before returning the unit to service. These parts were sent out of state for repair and remanufacturing. SWBNO is considering ways to expedite the repairs and anticipates the unit to be available by April 2021.

Turbine 5 ("T5") – Out of Service. T5 failed in December 2019, and repairs are underway. A new control system is scheduled for installation in May 2021. The unit is expected to be available by June 1, 2021.

Turbine 6 ("T6") – Operational. An anti-icing mechanism for this unit is underway and will allow the unit to be operational in temperatures below 40° F. The anti-icing project is scheduled for completion at the end of March 2021.

Turbine ("T7") – In development. The design and procurement phase for this unit is underway. The unit is expected to be available in mid-2022.

Static Frequency Changers – A contract went out for bid; however, all bids were rejected. SWBNO is assessing the scope and cost discrepancies and will re-bid the contract soon.

Sub-Station Site Prep – The site work is underway and progressing on schedule. The site prep is due to be complete in May 2021.

SWBNO and City of New Orleans partners understand the vulnerability associated with power supply and continue to work closely to solve these issues.

B. Meter Reading

SWBNO collected actual readings on 66 percent of meters in December 2020, down from 80 percent in November 2020. The decrease in number was expected and is a reflection of staff availability, route sequence, staff augmentation, and reading accuracy.

The staff augmentation contract with Olameter has been met with challenges. Challenges include accuracy of the readings and staff proficiency. Therefore, SWBNO may terminate or elect not to renew the contract.

SWBNO's collaboration with the Civil Service Commission to develop an incentive program for meter readers includes (1) a pay plan amendment/ position reclassification, and (2) a special incentive pay pilot program. The incentive program has shown to be successful. Therefore, SWBNO is onboarding 24 new meter readers to the meter reading department by January 1, 2021. The new staff will undergo 6 to 8 weeks of training, and the meter reading department will be available to collect a more significant number of actual readings by the end of February 2021.

SWBNO has expanded their meter reading goals to include accuracy; therefore, customers may have delayed bills, updated bills, and may see fluctuation in billing frequency. SWBNO is sending letters to their impacted customers, explaining the reason for any delays or updates to their bill.

Late fees and water shut offs are suspended until further notice.

C. 2021 Budget Overview

SWBNO presented the budget to the Board and intended to mirror the 2019 budget. The budget for 2021 includes a modest increase of 0.5 percent. The budget may be found in **Attachment 1**.

D. Communications Update

Social Media: SWBNO utilizes social media platforms to show fieldwork, potential impacts to residents, coordination efforts, and response plans.

E. Customer Service

SWBNO is preparing ways to have satellite services available for customers throughout the city. Two locations are available:

- 1) Sanchez Center, located at 1616 Caffin Avenue. Customer service representatives are available by appointment only on Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 2) Rosa Keller Library, located at 4300 S Broad Ave. Customer service representatives are available by appointment only on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.