



MEMORANDUM

To: All Councilmembers
From: CURO
By: Shannon Oldfield-Blanks
CC: Paul Harang, Eric Granderson, and Theresa Becher
Date: August 27, 2020
RE: SWBNO Meeting 08.19.2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) Board of Directors (the Board) met Wednesday, August 19, 2020, using Microsoft Teams. 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. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)

The CAFR is complete and undergoing final review by auditors. The report will be submitted on to the state on August 21st. SWBNO expects to meet the August 31 public release deadline.

B. Infrastructure Challenges

SWBNO encounters challenging infrastructure failures regularly. Many of these challenges are due to aging infrastructure, Two recent and extensive repair projects include Marconi Dr. and South Carrollton Ave.

- *Marconi Dr.* - SWBNO successfully repaired a 30-inch water main with minimal impact to residents. SWBNO coordinated with the fire department and homeland security regarding potential impacts and held a press conference to ensure that customers and stakeholders understood the magnitude of the repair and the impacts.
- *South Carrollton Dr.* - SWBNO was able to repair a water main without a disruption of services to customers because of proactive valve repairs that were completed at the beginning of the year.

C. Billing Update

- [1] Staff Augmentation - SWBNO hired a third party (Olameter) to augment the meter reader staff for a three-month pilot period. The goal of this pilot program is to reduce backlog and decrease the number of estimated bills. In July 2020 approximately 42 percent of all meters were read. SWBNO's goal is to read 80 percent of the meters within 2 to 3 months. SWBNO intends to monitor the actual readings on a weekly basis and update the public on the progress.
- [2] Estimates – Estimates will be calculated using the last 2 actual reads in the previous 8 months.
- [3] Customer Service – Office space has been re-arranged to safely accommodate more customer service representatives. The new arrangement is expected to decrease wait times. SWBNO is working on creating remote workspaces to assist customers.

D. Power Master Plan

- [1] Power Master Plan – SWBNO presented the Power Master Plan at the Operations Committee Meeting on August 11th. The presentation may be found [here](#). Originally the power master plan involved decommissioning Turbines 1 and 3; however, the strategy was changed due to the loss of Turbine 5.
- [2] Turbine 5 (“T5”) – The T5 explosion assessment is nearing completion. The final report with recommendations is expected to be available at the end of August. SWBNO intends to decide on the possible repair of T5 September 2020. If SWBNO decides that repairing the unit is feasible, then the goal is to bring back functionality for safe operation before hurricane season 2021.
- [3] Turbine 7 (“T7”) – SWBNO is working on completing the criteria required to secure funding for the installation of T7.
- [4] Power Substation – SWBNO opened bids to begin site preparations for the west substation on August 10, 2020. The resolution to approve the contract for Cycle Construction Company, LLC is underway. SWBNO's goal is to have the dedicated substation online in 2025.

E. Communications Update

SWBNO utilizes news media, social media, and internal communications to relay information to the public and the organization.

SWBNO is reviewing four responses to an RFP to manage internal and external communications. A decision is forthcoming. The goal for the public relations firm is to bring expertise in communications and assist the utility with public education, transparent reporting of challenges and successes, and managing expectations.