

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD
March 16, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) occurred on March 16, 2023 in-person at Woodward Design+Build – 2nd Floor, 1000 South Norman C. Francis Parkway, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The following IAB members were present:

1. Paul Flower, Chair
2. Bill Hammack
3. Chuck Morse
4. Karen Raymond
6. Elisa Speranza

The following IAB members were absent:

1. Casey Tingle, Vice Chair
2. Neil Abramson, Secretary

REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order. The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda. The agenda was presented and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the December 8, 2022 regular meeting were unanimously approved as written.

Approval of Quarterly Report. The Quarterly Report was unanimously approved.

Presentations. In order of appearance:

Courtney Story, Director of Administration and Planning for the Chief Administrative Office, City of New Orleans, presented a financial update consisting of a slide presentation that summarized the Revenue and Allocations through January 2023. She explained that the Sewerage and Water Board (SWBNO) has made \$1.4M from Short Term Rental (STR) and Lost Penny sources thus far, and that the SWBNO has been paid through December 2022. Ms. Story reported that collections are exceeding the 2022 comparative period, signaling economic recovery.

Ms. Story updated the Board on the status of outstanding \$5M in IMF Funding, noting that the CAO thought the additional IMF funding was included in the December 2022 appropriation. Because it was not, the CAO and Councilmember Giarrusso have committed to moving forward with the appropriation at the next council meeting. The Board requested that Ms. Story update

them on where those funds will come from going forward, and to assure them that they will be recurring, and she committed to doing so.

On ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) allocations and spending, Ms. Story explained that a basic dashboard containing information about key milestones, project status, and contract information was currently live online. She informed the board that a more detailed website is in development and is expected to launch in April. She explained that while previous ARPA allocations focused on traditional public safety and infrastructure updates, the final package will use the remaining \$53.6M towards violence reduction and human services.

Ms. Story ended her presentation with an update on the Drainage Consolidation Working Group, informing the Board that on January 31, 2023, the CAO had submitted a preliminary Working Group Update to the City Council, which discussed: (1) Actions taken by members thus far, (2) the history of drainage management in New Orleans, (3) Potential opportunities of a consolidation, (4) Challenges of a consolidation under SWBNO, and (5) Changes required to implement consolidation under SWBNO. The consensus among the working group is the need to identify a recurring funding source to make consolidation a reality. The Working Group has met once in 2023 thus far.

Sarah Porteous, Acting Director for the Department of Public Works, City of New Orleans, summarized that almost \$26M was appropriated to DPW from the IMF in the 2023 adopted budget with \$1.2M dedicated to personnel. Ms. Porteous explained that 41 positions had been funded with 18 hires and 23 current vacancies while the DPW is actively hiring for 18 positions. She noted the hire of a Principal Engineer as well as new employees in the Traffic Signal Shop and Maintenance. Ms. Porteous informed the Board of DPW operating expenses, totaling \$24.5M with \$18M in payments to the SWBNO, \$5M in Right of Way Repair Contracts, and \$1.4M in streetlight repairs.

On the Downtown Development District's installation of permeable pavement in seven City corridors, a green infrastructure project, the DDD has awarded the design contract to Wingate Consulting Engineers, LLC and the initial survey is complete. DPW will review the survey with Wingate on March 24 during one of their bi-weekly meetings.

Ms. Porteous added that DPW has notable new equipment coming online including five pothole patchers, which will allow DPW to provide more permanent patching around the City. A significant number of dump trucks are expected as well, which will eliminate the need for rentals to continue asphalt patching. Ms. Story added that the City Council had passed an emergency declaration loosening the requirements necessary to purchase equipment.

Ghassan Korban, Executive Director, SWBNO, reported \$35.6M total revenue received from Fair Share/IMF through January 2023, with total expenditures of \$8.8M on items including Turbine 7 design (\$1.5M), Smart Meter Program (\$1.6M) and SELA Drainage Projects (\$3.5M), and Sycamore Filter Gallery Rehabilitation (\$1.4M). He noted an additional request to increase funding to the Smart Meter implementation consultant contract from the previously approved \$1.5M to \$4M. This request comes because of new EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) rules and regulations taking affect surrounding Lead Service Line Disturbance. Under regulation definition, the SWBNO is obligated to protect the household on which it is working by providing

a pitcher with a six-month lead filter, should there be any interruption in service, i.e. a temporary water shut-off, meter replacement, or severing of a line. Bill Hammack moved to approve the request, Chuck Morse seconded, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request.

Mr. Korban shared updates on priority projects: (1) The West Power Complex is on track for an on-time delivery of the first quarter of 2024, with pile driving completed on the substation. A second payment of \$15M was transferred which fulfills the City's obligation of \$30M per City agreement. The SWBNO Backup plant is on track for an on-time delivery of the final quarter of 2024. (2) It has been necessary to adapt the Smart Metering timeline, but the project remains on track with the exploration of Lead and Copper Rule revisions strategies and the continuation of network infrastructure siting. Cogsdale integration has begun and the VX Smart Integration kick-off is the last week of March 2023.

IAB members examined the breakdown of the funding sources and asked a series of questions about it. Chuck Morse requested that SWBNO provide a slide like the one provided by DPW, outlining SWBNO staffing vacancies. Mr. Korban agreed to provide this to the Board.

Public Comment There was no public comment.

Other Business. There was no new or other business raised by the attendees.

Adjournment. The IAB adjourned the meeting at 3:45 PM.

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