

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

December 20, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

**SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS**

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## **ROLL CALL**

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The Board of Directors for the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) met on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 9:09 AM in the Executive Boardroom. Special Counsel Ms. Yolanda Grinstead called the roll and confirmed the following members were present: Hon. Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Councilmember Freddie King, Director Tamika Duplessis, Director Janet Howard, Director Lynes Sloss, Director Robin Barnes, Director Maurice Sholas, Director Alejandra Guzman and Director Carol Markowitz.

The following member(s) were absent: Director Joseph Peychaud

Staff present were Mr. Ghassan Korban, Executive Director; Mr. Grey Lewis, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Ron Spooner, Interim General Superintendent; Ms. Yolanda Grinstead, Special Counsel; Mr. Rene Gonzalez, Chief Customer Service Officer; Ms. Irma Plummer, EDBP; Ms. Tanyell Allen, Board Relations.

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## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

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Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to accept the minutes of the November 17, 2023, Board Meeting. Director Lyness Sloss moved for approval of the minutes. Director Maurice Sholas seconded. The motion carried.

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Executive Director Ghassan Korban presented a slide overview that focused on the following topics:

### **New Pumping & Power Dashboard**

- In Beta form presently
- Launched to the public on Friday, Dec. 15
- Public providing feedback via [outreach@swbno.org](mailto:outreach@swbno.org)
- Easier way to digest pump and 25 Hz power status
- One-stop page for NOLA Ready and Weather-Wise resources
- Shows real-time status if pumping stations are operational, on standby or out of order
- Currently shows how many pumps are housed within the stations
- Next version will show individual pump status within each station
- Update within 4 weeks

## **Communication Protocols**

### **Existing Efforts**

- Pump and Power Status available online with more visual information
- Continue to share Pump and Power Status with traditional media and social media prior to severe weather event

### **Moving Forward**

- Continued coordination with the city to ensure flood risk is clearly communicated
- Updating internal rain event protocols with NOLA Ready and the National Weather Service
- Continue to update and improve dashboard

## **Short-Term Power Plan**

- Utilize Turbine 5 for weather events
- Turbine 4 still undergoing analysis, return to service date to be determined
- Continue to use frequency changers to convert 60hz power from Entergy (or T6 if required)
- EMDs may be utilized if needed
- There are no 25 Hz generators available on the market for purchase or rental (custom orders)
- Continue making progress on the Power Complex
- Progress on Turbine 4, Dec. 15

### **Long-Term Solution in Progress; Power Complex**

#### **The SWBNO Power Complex will provide modern, reliable power to our systems**

- Two modern turbines as backup power (T6 and T7)
- A power substation connected to Entergy's grid
- Frequency changers to convert 60Hz power to the 25Hz currents our older pumps use
- Coming Summer 2025

### **SWBNO Power Complex Progress Substation Work Remains on Schedule**

- Entergy work remains on schedule for 2024 completion
- Substation is energized and will be fully commissioned in January

### **SWBNO Equipment and Construction**

- Utility rack will be completed Q1 of 2024
- Contract for medium voltage cable to be awarded to today's meeting
- Installation and commissioning of major equipment contract is advertised, bids due in January

### **Smart Metering Update**

- Integration of smart metering technology and our IT systems
- Quality Assurance / Quality Control continues
- Finalized automation efforts underway
- Customer portal design beginning Q4 2023
- 2,200+ meters installed as part of O&M, including 55 large meters
- Detailed communications and messaging continues

#### **Meter installation has begun, at a designed slow pace**

- 600+ installations as of Dec. 4
- Includes 5/8 inch, 1.5 inch and 2 inch meters
- Gives us ability to streamline processes and procedures

### **SWBNO Smart Metering Key Messages:**

- SWBNO's Smart Metering Program will revolutionize our customer experience by modernizing our meter reading infrastructure and improving our billing practices.
- We want to inform customers well in advance that the new data collected by smart meters will be more accurate and may impact their bills.
- SWBNO is here to work with our customers through this transition toward modern water metering.

#### **Outreach Plan Outline – Dec./Jan.**

- Educate about general smart metering benefits and potential impacts / nationwide case studies

#### **Outreach Plan Outline - February**

- Share SWBNO-specific impacts based on sample data / announce integrations for SM-based bills complete

### **Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting**

- Quarterly IAB meeting hosted at Carrollton Water Plant in December 2023
- Showcased investments in paving, Sycamore Filter Galleries, and tour of Power Complex
- Discussed 2024 State Capital Outlay strategies.
- Will continue to host meetings and tours at the Carrollton Water Plant

### **IMF Project Requests for Funding**

- FY24 - Water Treatment Plan Improvements: Sycamore Filter Gallery (Continuation) \$3.0M
- FY24 - Water Quality Master Plan and Strategic Plan \$1.5M
- FY24 - Replacement of New River Intake Fender System \$6.0M
- FY24 - Drainage Stormwater Fee Analysis (Continuation) \$0.2M
- FY24 – Pavement Restoration (Continuation) \$4.0M

### **Water Quality Master Planning in Progress**

- Contractor selected
- Planning process to start by end of the year
- 18 – 24-month process
- Outcomes will be recommendations for investment in the treatment system, considering new anticipated Federal regulations as well as, climate risks
- PFAS, PFOS, emerging contaminants
- Lead and Copper Rule Revisions
- Saltwater Intrusion

### **Sycamore Filter Gallery Upgrades Upgrades funded by the Infrastructure Maintenance Fund: 2023 Upgrades complete on Sycamore Filter Galleries, built in 1920s**

- The gallery has 28 filters.
- The phased approach to rehab the gallery included replacing the media and associated work with Filters 11-28.
- 5 filters will be part of a construction package advertised in early 2024 to be rehabilitated as well.
- While this will bring us to a much-needed redundant filtration capacity, our overall plan for this facility is not complete.
- The next Phase of work to be done at the SFG is being considered as part of the WRDA 2022 Funding Allocation through the USACE.

### **Pavement Restoration Backlog**

- Paving work orders have significantly decreased as a result of IAB input
- Instrumental in building momentum going into 2024
- Aim to reduce backlog so repairs can be completed within 2-4 weeks
- Rather than the average of 100 days early 2023

### **Continued Stakeholder Engagement**

- Continuing presentations to organizations and Neighborhood meetings
- Topics include Smart Metering, Power Complex, Paving Restorations, Water Quality Master Plans, Lead and Copper Rule Improvements
- Upcoming visit from EPA Administrator
- Planning for State of the Utility in January 2024 and review of 2023 accomplishments
- \$300,000 pledged for customer support by Mayor's Office of Housing Policy and Community Development.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

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### Audit Committee Report

Director Maurice Sholas reported on the summary and actions taken by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee Report for the month of December was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Audit report as amended. Director Lynes Sloss moved to adopt Audit minutes as proposed. Director Robin Barnes seconded. The motion carried.

### Pension Committee Report

Director Joseph Peychaud reported on the summary and actions taken by the Pension Committee. The Pension Committee Report for the month of December was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Pension report as amended. Director Maurice Sholas moved to adopt Pension minutes as proposed. Director Alejandra Guzman seconded. The motion carried.

### Special Finance & Administration Committee Report

Director Lynes Sloss reported on the summary and actions taken by the Finance and Administration Committee. The Finance Report for the month of December was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Finance report as amended. Director Janet Howard moved to adopt Finance minutes as proposed. Director Robin Barnes seconded. The motion carried.

Director Tyler Antrup express concerns on moving the SWBNO Board and Committee meetings location to city hall. Mayor Cantrell declined city hall's request to move meetings to city hall and deferred the matter to the governance committee.

## ACTION ITEMS

- Resolution (R-148-2023) 2024 Operating Budget
  - **Director Lynes Sloss moved to accept R-148-2023. Director Janet Howard seconded. The motion carried.**
- Resolution (R-149-2023) 2024 Capital Budget
  - **Director Tamika Duplessis moved to accept R-149-2023. Director Robin Barnes seconded. The motion carried.**
- Resolution (R-163-2023) 2024 Operating Budget and 2024 Capital Budget Blanket Appropriations
  - **Director Maurice Sholas moved to defer R-163-2023. Director Lynes Sloss seconded. The motion carried.**

- Resolution (R-124-2023) Amendment of Article VI, Section 10 of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans By-Laws Relative to the Plumbing Conference Committee
  - o **Director Tyler Antrup moved to accept R-124-2023. Director Tamika Duplessis seconded. The motion carried.**

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### **GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The following resolutions were discussed at the December 20, 2023, Board of Directors' Meeting: General Superintendent Recommendations**

#### **CONTRACT AWARDS/RENEWALS**

- Resolution (R-135-2023) Award of Contract 1435 – West Power Complex Electrical and Control Cable Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Wesco
- Resolution (R-137-2023) Award of Contract 30230 – Carrollton Basin No. 2 Sewer Rehabilitation Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BLD Services, LLC.
- Resolution (R-140-2023) Renewal of Contract 2022-SWB-77 – Furnishing Lime to the Carrollton Water Plant Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Cheney Lime Co.
- Resolution (R-143-2023) Award of Contract 30257 – Carrollton Basin No. 16 Sewer Rehabilitation Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Beverly Construction Co, LLC.
- Resolution (R-142-2023) Award of Contract 30229 – Carrollton Basin No. 1 Sewer Rehabilitation Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BLD Services, LLC.
  - o **Director Lynes Sloss moved to accept Contract Awards/Renewals. Director Maurice Sholas seconded. The motion carried.**

#### **CONTRACT CHANGE ORDERS BY RATIFICATION**

- Resolution (R-141-2023) Ratification of Change Order No. 2 for Contract 2155 – Transmission Main Replacement – S. Claiborne (Versailles – Upperline) – TM003 – Per FEMA JIRR Project Worksheets 21031 & 21032 Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BLD Services, LLC.
- Resolution (R-150-2023) Ratification of Change Order No. 1 for Contract 30245 – Mid-City Basin No. 3 Sewer Rehabilitation Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Impetus, LLC.
  - o **Director Janet Howard moved to accept Contract Change Orders by Ratification. Director Lynes Sloss seconded. The motion carried.**

### **CONTRACT AMENDMENTS**

- Resolution (R-136-2023) Authorization of Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement for Old and New River Intake Stations Protection Barges Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Durward Dunn, Inc.
- Resolution (R-146-2023) Authorization of Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement for Professional Consulting Services for Managing the Preparation, Selection and Implementation of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure Solution Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.
  - **Director Maurice Sholas moved to accept Contract Amendments. Director Tyler Antrup seconded. The motion carried.**

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to enter executive session. Director Robin Barnes moved. Director Lyness Sloss seconded. The motion carried.**

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to exit executive session. Director Janet Howard moved. Director Tamika Duplessis seconded. The motion carried.**

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to defer Special Counsel recommendation pursuant to 7(A)(2). Director Maurice Sholas moved. Director Lynes Sloss seconded. The motion carried**

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to approve Special Counsel recommendation to appoint Stephen Nelson as General superintendent of the Sewerage and Water Board. Director Maurice Sholas moved. Director Lynes Sloss seconded. The motion carried.**

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### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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The following items were submitted for informational purposes only:

- Report Preliminary Financial Results
- Report General Superintendent
- Report Human Resources
- Report Legal
- Report Safety
- FEMA Project Worksheet Status
- DBE Participation on Contracts Report

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### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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The following person(s) appeared before the Board of Directors to make comments:

- Ms. Susan Falcon, representing self, expressed concerns about high water bills with no meter.
- Ms. Vanessa Burst, representing self, expressed concerns about incorrect information on account.

- Mr. K. Brad Ott, representing self, expressed concerns about water bills, billing dates and billing periods.
- Ms. Pearl Cantrelle, representing self, stressed concerns about the estimation water bills.

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### **ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:36 AM.