

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

December 18, 2024

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 18, 2024, at 9:05 AM in the Executive Boardroom. Special Counsel Mr. Darryl Harrison called the roll and confirmed the following members were present: Hon. Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Director Joseph Peychaud, Director Robin Barnes, Director Lynes Sloss, Councilmember Freddie King, Director H. Davis Cole, Director Janet Howard, Director Maurice Sholas, Director Tyler Antrup.

The following member(s) were absent: Director Chadrick Kennedy, Director Tamika Duplessis,

Staff present were: Ghassan Korban, Executive Director; Renee Lapeyrolerie, Chief of Staff; Grey Lewis, Chief Financial Officer; Stephen Nelson, General Superintendent; Yolanda Grinstead, Special Counsel; Irma Plummer, EDBP; Brionne Lindsey, Board Relations, Giselle Smothers, Board Relations.

Prior to beginning the meeting, the Hon. Mayor Cantrell gave her opening remarks. Mayor Cantrell acknowledged the customer service team on an extraordinary job relative to transparency, improving billing and on mass mailing going out. This team has done a wonderful job and other agencies are looking to improve their website based off what the utility is producing. Over 70,000 smart meters installed, and Mayor Cantrell is excited the CEA is coming forward and currently waiting on its final vote. This utility continues to do the work as adapting to the climate that has changed.

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### APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

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Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to accept the minutes of the November 20, 2024, Board Meeting as amended. Director Sloss moved for approval of the minutes. Director Barnes seconded. The motion carried.

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### 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 Report for the month of September/December was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Audit report as amended. Director Antrup moved to adopt Audit minutes as proposed. Director Cole 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 months of November and December were presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Pension report as amended. Director Howard moved to adopt Pension minutes as proposed for November. Director Anthrup seconded. The motion carried.

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

#### Strategy Committee Report

Director Robin Barnes reported on the summary and actions taken by the Strategy Committee. The Strategy Report for the month of November was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the strategy report. Director Sholas moved to adopt Strategy minutes as proposed. Director Sloss seconded. The motion carried.

#### Operations Committee Report

Director Janet Howard reported on the summary and actions taken by the Operations Committee. The Operations Report for the month of November was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the operations report. Director Sloss moved to adopt Operations minutes as proposed. Director Barnes seconded. The motion carried.

#### 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. Director Peychaud moved to adopt Finance minutes as proposed. Director 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:

### **The Power Complex**

- Anticipated to come online in summer 2025
- Installation will continue through November
- Utility Rack cabling installation is ongoing
- Coordinating with Entergy to connect to the Substations.
- DOE Grant secured through DNR

### **Lead Service Line Replacement Program**

#### **\$86M in State Revolving Funds**

- December 2024 Funds - Approved

#### **Bid Opening December 2024:**

- RFP for Program Manager for the LSL Replacement Program  
swbno.org/Projects/Lead Awareness – Completed  
6 proposals received – now in vetting process with selection committee

### **SWBNO Smart Metering Program**

#### **Installation Progress**

- 72,400 meters installed (as of 12/17/2024) - Ahead of projected plan
- Seeking 100% complete installation in 2025
- 44% of population
- Smart Meter Delinquency Rate
- \$12M of smart meter bills past due
- \$6M of smart meter bills are considered delinquent = 18%
- Delinquent: more than \$50 past 60 days due

### **New Online Customer Account**

- Now LIVE
- 46,000 Customers have migrated to the online customer portal
- Portal is available to all customers

## **Billing Laws Implementation**

### **Third party administrator (HGI) appointed by City Council Ordinance implemented 9/6/24**

- Ongoing exchange between HGI and SWBNO to input adjustments & ensure accuracy
- \$7M in total credits given
- Scheduling date to meet for presentation in January

### **Temporary fixed rate residential billing began**

- Fixed rate is based on usage and includes the “ready to serve” fee
- Hundreds of accounts are now on fixed rates

### **Arbiters**

- CEA has been executed with LLA who will administer the program
- Arbitration Requests: September: 15 accounts from SWBNO requested arbitration, December: Arbitration status pending
- No more estimated bills beginning January 2025

## **Drainage Consolidation (Act 763)**

- Pending Cooperative Endeavor Agreement being reviewed by City of New Orleans and SWBNO
- Funding includes special \$5 million annual allocation from the Infrastructure Maintenance Fund (IMF)
- Per Act 103, funding also includes revenue from traffic camera enforcement (\$TBD)
- Drainage assets to be received from CNO:
  - 1,840 miles of Drain Lines under 36" in diameter
  - 50,000 Drainage Manholes for pipes under 36"
  - 78,000 Catch Basins.
- Goal is to advertise 3 major contracts in January: cleaning RFP, engineering RFQ, and point repairs contract
- Planning for Day 1 allowing for outsourcing while we build our internal workforce

### **The People Plan**

- Promoting new alternative to Civil Service
- 5 Town Hall meetings are scheduled with employees virtually and in-person
- Will conduct surveys to determine the need of the employees
- Looking forward to a Legislative session in 2025

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### **ACTION ITEMS**

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- Resolution (R-159-2024) 2025 Operating Budget
  - **Director Sholas moved to accept R-159-2024. Director Howard seconded. The motion carried.**
- Resolution (R-160-2024) 2025 Capital Budget
  - **Director Cole moved to accept (R-160-2024) Director Sloss seconded. The motion carried.**
- Resolution (R-178-2024) 2025 Operating Budget and 2025 Capital Budget Blanket Appropriations
  - **Director Peychaud moved to accept (R-178-2024) Director Barnes seconded. The motion carried.**

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### **CORRESPONDING RESOLUTIONS**

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**The following resolutions were discussed at the December 11, 2024, Finance and Administration Meeting**

- Resolution (R-175-2024) Amendment No.1 of Armed Security Guards at Board Facilities to Increase Yearly Contract Amount.

### **General Superintendent Recommendations**

- Resolution (R-166-2024) Award of Service Agreement for Real Time Flood Data Tracking between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and I See Change.
- Resolution (R-153-2024) Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Durward Dunn Inc. for Old and New River Intake Stations

Protection Barges.

- Resolution (R-155-2024) Amendment No. 12 to the Agreement between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Arcadis U.S. Inc. For Design and Engineering Services for the Water Line Replacement Program.
- Resolution (R-157-2024) Amendment No. 6 to the Agreement between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and N-Y Associates Inc. for Design and Engineering Services for the Water Line Replacement Program.
- Resolution (R-163-2024) Amendment No. 7 to the Agreement between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Stantec Consulting Services Inc. for Sewer System Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program Management (SSERP).
- Resolution (R-156-2024) Amendment No. 2 to the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of New Orleans and The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans for Carrollton Power Plant Static Frequency Changers 2 and 3 Capital Bond Funds.
- Resolution (R-133-2024) Ratification of Change Order No. 4 for Contract 2155 – Transmission Main Replacement – S. Claiborne (Versailles – Upperline) - TM003 - Per FEMA JIRR Project Worksheet (PW) 21031 & PW 21032 BLD Services, LLC between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BLD Services, LLC.
- Resolution (R-164-2024) Ratification of Change Order No. 1 for Contract 8171 Repaving Open Cuts in Streets, Driveways, and Sidewalks Resulting from the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Underground Utility Repairs between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Fleming Construction Co., LLC.
- Resolution (R-165-2024) Ratification of Change Order No. 2 for Contract 30247- Restoration of Gravity Flow Sanitary Sewers by Excavation and Replacement from Manhole to Manhole, CIPP Lining from Manhole to Manhole, CIPP Lining of Service Laterals and Point Repairs at Various Sites Throughout the City of New Orleans between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and CMG Pipelines Inc.
- Resolution (R-132-2024) Authorization of Final Acceptance of Contract 2155 – Transmission Main Replacement – S. Claiborne (Versailles – Upperline) - TM003 - Per Fema JIRR Project Worksheet (PW) 21031 & PW 21032 between The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BLD Services, LLC.

**Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to approve Corresponding Resolutions in Globo. Director Sloss moved to accept Corresponding resolutions as proposed. Director Howard seconded. The motion carried.**

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

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to exit the executive session. Director Sloss moved. Director Peychaud seconded. The motion carried.**

**Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to adopt the Special Counsel recommendations. Director Barnes moved. Director Howard 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 Resource
- Report Legal
- Report Safety
- Report Procurement
- 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:

- Mr. Johnell Brown, representing self, expressed concerns about discriminatory practice within SWBNO organization and the human resources department.

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### **ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, Director Sholas moved to adjourn. Director Barnes seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:11 AM