

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

July 18, 2018

MEETING MINUTES

SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS

ROLL CALL

The Board of Directors of the Sewerage and Water Board (SWBNO) met on Wednesday, July 18, 2018 at 9:03AM in the Board Room at 625 St. Joseph Street. Deputy Special Counsel, Ms. Yolanda Grinstead, called the roll and confirmed the following members were present: Director Andrew Amacker, Director Ralph Johnson, Director Eileen Gleason, Director Joseph Peychaud, Director Stacy Horn Koch, Director Lewis Stirling, III, Director Lynes Sloss, Director Dr. Tamika Duplessis, Director Robin Barnes, and Hon. LaToya Cantrell.

The following member(s) were absent: None

Also present were: Ms. Geneva Coleman, The Hawthorne Agency; Mr. Randy Smith, Royal Engineers; Ms. Brenda Thorton, CommuniRep; Mr. Amer Tufail, GreenPoint Engineering; Mr. Gerald Preau, BCG Engineering & Consulting, Inc.; Mr. Joseph Sensebe, Mr. Robert Turner, PE, I-Team; Ms. Rita Lagrand, Lakeview; Mr. Lloyd Lazard.

Staff present were: Ms. Jade Brown-Russell, Acting Executive Director; Mr. Bruce Adams, Interim General Superintendent; Ms. Yvette Downs, CFO; Ms. Sharon Judkins, Deputy Director, Administration; Ms. Valerie Rivers, Deputy Director, Logistics; Mr. Richard Rainey, Deputy Director, Communications; Ms. Lauren Woulard, Communications; Mr. Ronald Doucette, Deputy Director, Security; Ms. Rosita Thomas, Finance Department; Ms. Jacqueline Winston, Ms. Candace Newell, Board Relations Staff; Ms. Yolanda Grinstead, Mary Beth Arceneaux, James Thompson, Darryl Harrison Legal Dept.; Mr. Dexter Joseph, Budget Dept.; Ms. Jacqueline Shine, Customer Service; Mr. Robert Jackson, Community & Intergovernmental Relations; Mr. Willie Mingo, Purchasing; Ms. Irma Plummer, EDBP; Mr. Eric Labat, CWP; D'Seante Parks, Communications.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Director Stacy Horn Koch moved for approval of the Minutes of June 20, 2018. Director Eileen Gleason seconded. The motion carried.

Pension Committee Report

Director Joseph Peychaud read the report of the Pension Committee. Director Koch moved to accept the Pension Committee report. Director Lewis Stirling seconded. The motion carried.

Finance and Administration Committee Report

Director Lynes Sloss, the new Chair, read the report of the Finance and Administration Committee. Dr. Tamika Duplessis moved to accept the Finance and Administration Committee report. Director Peychaud seconded. The motion carried.

CORRESPONDING RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were approved at the July 2018 Finance and Administration Committee Meeting:
R-086-2018 – Ratification of Change Order No. 16 and Final Acceptance and Closeout for Contract 1350 – Hurricane Katrina Related Repairs to Power Turbine #4

R-087-2018 – Ratification of Change Order No. 4 and Final Acceptance and Closeout for Contract 6250 – HMPG Generator Load Bank at the Carrollton Water Plant

R-088-2018 – Contract #3799 – Bio-Solids Incinerator System Improvements Sludge Drying System Equipment Installation at the East Bank Wastewater Treatment Plant

R-094-2018 – Bid Proposals for 2018 Structural and Rehabilitation of the Sycamore Filter Gallery, Filters 13, 15, 18, & 27

R-095-2018 – Final Acceptance and Close Out to Contract 3663 – 404 HMPG Replacement of Bullard Sewage Pumping Station

R-096-2018 – Final Acceptance and Close Out to Contract 3670 – 404 HMPG Replacement of Lawrence Sewage Pumping Station

R-097-2018 – Amendment 2 to Agreement with Stanley Consultants, Inc. for Design and Engineering Services for the Bulk Storage and Chemical Feed Facility Project

R-098-2018 – Ratification of Final Acceptance and Close Out of Contract 30206, New Orleans East Basin Sewer Rehabilitation, West Lake Forest Ave. and Read Blvd. West

R-100-2018 – Resolution of Amendment No. 4 to the Agreement between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and G. E. C., Inc. for Hurricane Katrina related Drainage Restoration – Broad Underpass Pump Station Design

R-101-2018 – Contract Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and BCG Engineering and Consulting Inc. to Provide Assessments, Design, Construction and Program Management Services for SELA and Drainage System

R-103-2018 – Ratification of Change Order No. 5 for Contract 1378 – Hurricane Katrina Related Repairs to Boilers, Duct & Elevators at the Carrollton Water Purification Plant Power Complex

R-105-2018 – Furnishing Meter Boxes and Meter Box Parts YW18-0015

R-106-2018 – Furnishing Grass Cutting and Debris Pickup of Sewerage and Water Board Eastbank Canals GM18-0001

R-107-2018 – Contract 30217 – Cleaning and CCTV Inspection of Sanitary Sewer Mains at Scattered Sites within Orleans Parish

R-108-2018 – Contract 30218 – Restoration of Gravity Flow Sanitary Sewer Mains by Point Repair at Various Sites throughout Orleans Parish

Director Lynes Sloss moved to approve the corresponding resolutions. Director Stacy Horn Koch seconded. The motion carried.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Acting Executive Director Jade Brown-Russell gave the Executive Director's Report.

Drainage Pumping Status

116 of 120 pumps are fully operational
4 pumps out; repairs underway

DRAINAGE PUMPS UNDER REPAIR

Location	Pump	Capacity (CFS)	Scheduled Completion
DPS #15	#3	250	TBD
DPS #13	#4	1,000	Aug. 1
DPS #13	#5	1,000	TBD
DPS #4	C	1,000	TBD
	Total	3,250 CFS	

➤ 25 Hz Power Assets Schedule

Unit	Status/Expected Return to Service Date	Expected MW
▪ Turbine #6	Available	3.75 MW*
▪ Carrollton Freq. Changer (1&2)	Available	8.5 MW
▪ Station D Freq. Changer (3&4)	Available	12 MW
▪ EMDs #2, 3, 4, 5	Available	10 MW
▪ Turbine #5	Available	20 MW
▪ Turbine #3	Available	12 MW
▪ Turbine #4	Commissioning Underway	17 MW
▪ Turbine #1	Not available, under investigation	6 MW

*Turbine 6 is a 60 Hz generator that can produce 3.75 MW of 25 Hz power through a frequency changer. Turbine 4 is back where it needs to be, but Turbine 1 needs more work.

Ms. Brown-Russell presented the measurable objectives in the following areas: **Billing, Human Resources, Employee Relations, Communications and Public Relations, and Canals.**

Billing

Measurable Objective: Resolve backlog of approximately 7,814 disputed bills (as of May 15, 2018) and reduce rate of disputed to 1% or less of all accounts by August 31, 2018

Human Resources

Measurable Objective: Reduce vacancy rate from 27.7% (498 vacancies as of May 2018) to the national average of 10%, at a minimum (or 179 vacancies) by August 31, 2018

Employee Relations

Measurable Objective: Develop and distribute an employee satisfaction survey in collaboration with working group of stakeholders by August 31, 2018

Communications and Public Relations

Measurable Objective: Develop robust communications plan for SWB that will include goals, benchmarks and metrics to increase internal and external efficiencies in communications by August 31, 2018

Canals

Measurable Objective: Complete grass cuttings for the 20 canals and develop a cleaning/dredging schedule for all necessary canals by August 31, 2018

Ms. Brown-Russell also expounded on the deliverables in each area.

Billing

Deliverables: Strike team to review disputed claims, conduct training and process checks week of July 16, make adjustments based on historical consumption from November 2016, and contact customers in writing of recommended adjustment and payment plan, if requested; customer advanced to Administrative Hearing Officer if customer disagrees with adjustment; shutoffs as last resort beginning August 1. Customers will be granted an Administrative Hearing upon request. They may call 52WATER for disputes.

Human Resources

Deliverables: Host S&WB Hiring Day to fast track filling of long unfilled vacancies; make conditional offers of employment to minimum of 50 candidates; onboard all participants who completed 18-week training program through Delgado Community College; complete onboarding process for all candidates selected at Hiring Day; planning for next steps for approximately 1,200 new applications to fill remaining vacancies.

Employee Relations

Deliverables: Reinstating a series of employee engagement initiatives with diverse team of employees; reinstating monthly Level 1 and Level 2 meetings with Executive Director and Managers; finalize and implement parking plan for all employees; establish a SWB Alumni Network; develop and distribute an employee satisfaction survey.

Communications and Public Relations

Deliverables: Host a press conference and media tour for all major news outlets; re-launch all social media platforms to increase real-time awareness; meet with local officials to discuss strategies and constituent issues/concerns; improve process for receiving and fulfilling requests for information; build Communications Department.

Canals

Deliverables: Conduct assessment of all Eastbank and Westbank canals; execute scheduled cutting of canals; develop canal cleaning/dredging schedule to begin 4th Quarter of 2018. Ms. Ann E. Macdonald, Director of Parks and Parkways, and Ms. Valerie Rivers, Deputy Director of Logistics for the S&WB, are collaborating on cutting the grass in the canals.

Director Koch stated that we have people that are very dedicated at S&WB that work really hard. Mayor Cantrell added that we will have zero tolerance for disrespect. There is a way to address an issue, and there is no need to be disrespectful to our employees. The Mayor stated that as we brand the S&WB, it should be an agency uplifted with respect all around. That is why we're focusing on customer service, and how we interact with the public is exactly how we should expect the public to interact with the S&WB.

Acting Executive Director Brown-Russell also thanked Director Lynes Sloss for organizing and helping to facilitate a meeting with our team which included Ms. Judkins from the HR Department and Laitram where we talked about how to effectively culture change, strategies, and Best Practices. Ms. Brown-Russell stated that

one of the things that we were able to take away from that meeting was an Employee Satisfaction Survey. Mayor Cantrell stated that, hopefully, they also took away the culture of safety that has been cultivated here. The employees should know that safety does come first and that they are looked out for and that they matter.

Also present at that meeting were our friends from the Flood Protection Authority and others that contributed, i.e. The Business Council and Mr. Jay Lapeyre, President and CEO of The Laitram Corporation. Dr. Duplessis participated as well. The Acting Executive Director thought the meeting was two hours well spent.

R-110-2018 – Extension of Liberative Prescription for August 5, 2017 Rain Event Actions

This resolution is pertaining to damage claims after the August 5, 2017 flood. Director Ralph Johnson asked for clarification on the claims. Attorney Darryl Harrison explained that the resolution is asking for an extension to resolve claims, known as a **Prescriptive Period**. Director Gleason stated that claims are subject to prescription if claimants do not meet the deadline. The Mayor stated that we will be seeking other forms of communicating with the public besides our website. Director Barnes noted that we are coming upon the anniversary of the August 5, 2017 flood. Director Koch moved to approve R-110-2018. Director Stirling seconded. The motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Director Lewis Stirling moved to enter into Executive Session. Director Stacy Horn Koch seconded. The motion carried.

Director Lynes Sloss moved to leave Executive Session and enter into Regular Session. Director Stacy Horn Koch seconded. The motion carried.

There was no action taken in Executive Session.

After returning from the Executive Session, the Board took on the matter of the Executive Director of the Sewerage and Water Board. Mayor Cantrell acknowledged Acting Executive Director Ms. Jade Brown-Russell for coming in at the right time to provide leadership and to ensure that we can stay the course, including getting through the process of selecting a new executive director. An Ad Hoc Committee was created to facilitate this process, and a consultant was hired to help with sourcing and managing the overall process. Initially, there were 54 applicants. In the final round, there were two candidates from which to choose. The Mayor turned the meeting over to President Pro-Tem, Dr. Tamika Duplessis, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, to make the recommendation.

Upon the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee and the full Board of Directors, Dr. Tamika Duplessis moved to accept the approval of the appointment of Mr. Ghassan Korban as Executive Director for the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. Director Lynes Sloss seconded. The motion carried.

Director Joseph Peychaud moved to accept the approval of the appointment of Ms. Yolanda Grinstead as Acting Special Counsel for the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans with the proviso that the City Attorney will come before the Board and explain the process to the Board's approval of that appointment. Director Stacy Horn Koch seconded. The motion carried.

Mayor Cantrell congratulated Ms. Grinstead on becoming the Acting Special Counsel and stated that at the next Board meeting, the City Attorney, Ms. Sunni LeBeouf, will come before SWBNO in Executive Session to explain the process.

Monthly Human Resources Amended Activity Report for Period June 1 – June 30, 2018

Mayor Cantrell stated that the Job Fair was phenomenal and thanked Ms. Sharon Judkins, Deputy Director of Administration, for her service. Ms. Judkins proceeded to present the Monthly Human Resources Activity Report for June 1 – June 30, 2018. Ms. Judkins stated that this report started about two years ago when the Board deemed human resources a major priority. Human Resources began coming to the Board on a monthly basis to inform them of the challenges they were experiencing, the progress that had been made, and strategies for moving forward. In 2016, when Ms. Judkins started, we had an authorized strength of 1,346, which meant that in that budget year, we funded 1,346 positions. There were 350+ vacancies when she started in 2016. In 2018, the budget added 255 positions. Our authorized strength today is 1,794. There were 640 individuals hired from 2016-2018. However, while we were hiring individuals, people were leaving at the same time. Ms. Judkins referred to that situation as “The Perfect Storm”. Forty-one percent (41%) of the staff was eligible for retirement and forty-three percent (43%) of the staff had less than five years work experience. So, although 640 people were hired, 435 left at the same time for various reasons. Although we would select candidates, it was difficult to get them through the onboarding process – drug testing, background checks, and medical exams. Ms. Judkins took the Board through the data that was in the report. Human Resource staffing is very fluid. There were lots of positions in 2018; however, managers removed 15 positions because they were not required.

Ms. Judkins stated that there are four distinct hiring processes used to bring people on board: 1) City-wide positions, largely managed under Civil Service; 2) Positions common only to S&WB; 3) Entry-level positions - S&WB has direct authority to hire; and 4) Unclassified positions – S&WB has direct responsibility for hiring. Ms. Judkins stated that we have been successful in hiring operational and technical people. After analyzing resignations, it was determined that salary has been a major factor in people leaving the organization. There was further discussion on DROP and the residency issue. Ms. Judkins stated that there is need for reform on both the S&WB side and the Civil Service side. The Mayor stated that it is our intention to build a relationship between the S&WB and Civil Service.

Hiring Day was held on Friday, July 13, 2018 at Xavier University. The focus was to try to get folks in the pipeline for the difficult positions. Persons already on the Civil Service Registry were invited to the Hiring Fair. In the Facilities Maintenance area, General Electric (GE) gave a \$1.5 million grant and S&WB established a partnership with Delgado. On Friday, July 13th, seventeen (17) individuals received offer letters from the Mayor and were hired. They will be starting on Monday, July 23, 2018 as a result of Hiring Day.

Director Koch asked about the salary for meter readers. Acting Executive Director Brown-Russell responded that it was low. She also thanked Chief Doucette for going in the field to shadow meter readers in order to determine what is needed for them to do their job and to be able to supply them with the resources they need. The Board applauded Ms. Judkins for her efforts and her staff for assisting applicants with selecting the positions for which they should apply.

Director Barnes frequently calls Ms. Judkins to give her names of organizations that might be able to help us. Ms. Brown-Russell was appreciative of Xavier University for offering their entire building to S&WB for the Hiring Day. Oxfam America sponsored the hosting in that building. The Urban League was also there and signed up over 200 people for their training program. Ms. Brown-Russell said that approximately 80 people in one day was amazing. Mayor Cantrell stated that we will continue with those partnerships.

The Mayor acknowledged our new Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Yvette Downs, attending her first Board of Directors’ meeting. She stated that Ms. Downs represented S&WB very well at the FEMA meeting held in the Mayor’s office on Friday, July 13, 2018. All of our federal and state partners were present. The partnerships that we do have are all moving in the right direction. Ms. Downs was to follow up with our FEMA partners on Thursday, July 19, 2018 to make sure that we move forward on the second audit because we want that to come to a successful conclusion as well.

Director Gleason asked for an update on 419 Carondolet. Acting Director Brown-Russell stated that S&WB went out to assist them with flushing the line, and 419 Carondolet was able to pass the line test. Director Gleason also inquired about the Tuition Reimbursement Policy. Ms. Judkins stated that the policy is online and has been distributed to all employees.

INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items were submitted for informational purposes only:

- Financial Results through May 2018
- Executive Director's Approval of Contracts of \$1,000,000.00 or Less
- Report of the General Superintendent
- Report of the Special Counsel
- FEMA Report for June 2018
- DBE Participation Report

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sewerage and Water Board Customer, Mr. Lloyd Lizard, appeared before the Board to voice his concerns about the over-billing on his account. Mr. Lizard stated that his problem has not been resolved. He also needed clarification on the Sewerage & Water Board's pension system and how sewage is treated before it's returned back into the system to be used as drinking water. Mayor Cantrell thanked Mr. Lizard for coming before the Board to share his concerns.

Ms. Rita Lagrand from Lakeview appeared before the Board to say that she was very thrilled to see the Human Resources Activity Report as an agenda item at the meeting. Acting Director Jade Brown-Russell thanked Ms. Lagrand for volunteering at the Hiring Fair on Friday, July 13, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:37 AM.