

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

September 15, 2021

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 September 15, 2021 at 9:00 AM via Microsoft Teams. Hon. Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Director Dr. Tamika Duplessis Special Counsel, Ms. Yolanda Grinstead, called the roll and confirmed the following members were present: Director Joseph Peychaud, Director Lynes Sloss, Director Ralph Johnson, Director Alejandra Guzman, Director Robin Barnes, Director Janet Howard, Director Maurice Sholas and Councilmember Jay H. Banks.

The following member(s) were absent:

Staff present were: Mr. Ghassan Korban, Executive Director; Mr. Ron Spooner, Interim General Superintendent; Ms. Christy Harowski, Chief of Staff; Ms. Yolanda Grinstead, Special Counsel; Mr. Darryl Harrison, Deputy Special Counsel; Mr. Dexter Joseph, Budget Department; Mr. Robert Jackson, Customer Service; , Purchasing; Ms. Irma Plummer, EDBP; Mr. Jason Higginbotham, Emergency Management, SWBNO; Ms. Tanyell Allen, Board Relations.

Prior to beginning the meeting, Mayor Cantrell gave her opening remarks. Mayor Cantrell acknowledge the City of New Orleans sustained a Category 4 near Category 5 hurricane. Hurricane Ida sat over the city for 12 hours. The Sewerage and Water Board utility performed extremely well throughout this hurricane despite the challenges they continue to face. As the utility loss all Entergy power, our teams worked quickly and decisively to make up for what was lost with self-generated power sources including turbines 4,5, and 6, EMDs as well as backup generators located on drainage pumping stations. SWBNO came into it with some deficiencies as it relates to DPS 12, while DPS 6 pop offline but came back on. Our people in the utility held the line. No major flooding occurred although there was a backup in New Orleans East and around the Bel Air area that took on some water relative to DPS 6 jumping offline, as well as having DPS 12 offline.

Those areas as well as our utility across the board continue to be our priority as we focus on improving our overall infrastructure. Mayor Cantrell commend the utility and Board for they leadership in staying focus throughout and prior to hurricane Ida, even as we are still in the mist of the hurricane season. SWBNO were able to quickly assess how many of the 84 stations that were impacted and work to obtain the backup power for some of these stations. As of today, 83 out of 84 stations are energy powered. The Bel Air station on the Westbank still without energy powered but currently powered by a generator.

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## APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

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Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to accept the minutes of the July 14, 2021, Board Meeting. Director Lynes Sloss moved for approval of the minutes. Director Alejandra Guzman seconded. The motion carried.

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## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

- Executive Director Korban started his report thanking the Mayor for her continue leadership and engagement with the utility during Hurricane Ida. The Mayor leadership to Sewerage and Water Board does not go unnoticed. Hurricane Ida was a major event and tested this utility in more ways than one. The women and men prepared for hurricane Ida and fought through with dedication and confidence. The Sewerage and Water Board faced many challenges through this storm and had a remarkable performance.
- Preparation of the storm focused on self-generated power. The SWBNO team worked extensively to ensure T5, T6, EMDs, and Turbine 4 were working in time for the storm. They planned from various self-generation scenarios, with attention to creating redundancy where possible. This had direct impact on our ability to deliver drinking water and operate drainage.
- During hurricane Ida challenges were faced. No backup power at the 84 Sewer Pump Stations. There were unanticipated problems with our backup power. DPS 13, DPS 18, DPS 15, and Treatment Plant. There were also communications disruptions.
- During Hurricane Ida the emergency response team perform extremely well in taking care and focusing on the staff team for they safety. The operations team manage stations through the entire event, proactive staging of critical assets to maximize power and redundancy for drinking water. They strategically planned and use of major power sources to maximize reliability throughout the hurricane.
- Customer service team web-phone based 52 water went down, hard line was procured. A temporary number was disseminated via social media. Coordinating with Networks Department in real-time with fax machine and SMS texts as infrastructure issues also came in.
- Mr. Korban stated the meter reading is improving and they are continuing to work towards giving accurate 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 10:00 AM.