

SEWERAGE & WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 10:00 AM

[March 2021 Operations Link](#)
[+1 504-224-8698..550680188#](#) United States, New
Orleans Phone Conference ID: 550 680 188#

PUBLIC COMMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL TO
BOARDRELATIONS@SWBNO.ORG. ALL PUBLIC COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO
10:30 AM ON March 10, 2021. COMMENTS WILL BE READ VERBATIM INTO THE
RECORD.

Janet Howard • Tamika Duplessis
Joseph Peychaud • Jay H. Banks • Maurice Sholas

FINAL AGENDA

1. ROLL CALL

2. DISCUSSION ITEM

- Customer Service Overview and Update – Rene Gonzalez, Chief Customer Service Officer

3. PRESENTATION ITEM

- Presentation: Networks Administration – Fred Tharp, Chief of Networks

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments received until 30 minutes after the presentation of the Agenda will be read into the record.

5. ADJOURNMENT

This teleconference meeting is being held pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of Section 4 of Proclamation Number JBE 2020-30, extended by Proclamation 30 JBE 2021, pursuant to Section 3 of Act 302 of 2020.

Customer Experience Improvement Project

March 10, 2021

Rene Gonzalez, Chief Customer Service Officer



Customer Service – Current State



Over the last six months, we have:

- Opened two new customer service satellite offices
 - Sanchez Center and Rosa Keller Library
 - Temporary presence at Venetian Isles Firehouse – CM Nguyen
- Hired 25 additional meter readers to double internal capacity
 - Readers will be trained and on the street by March 15
- Revised the process for identifying and reviewing “flagged” bills
- Purchased software that will enable streamlined dispute tracking

Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



Strengths

What are we good at?



Opportunities

Where do we see big possibilities for our organization?



Weaknesses

What are we not good at?



Threats

What do we see on the horizon as being potentially harmful to our organization?

| Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State

- One-on-One interviews with internal and external stakeholders
- Quantitative and qualitative survey data on employee engagement and the quality and effectiveness of CS leadership
- Analysis of Key Performance Indicators
- Analysis of Performance Management Records within the CS Division
- Analysis of Customer Service organizational Structure
- Overview of existing processes that impact the customer journey

| Customer Service – Current State

Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Some People – Committed, Passionate,
- Knowledge of processes, products, services



Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Billing – too many errors and too slow to respond
- Meter reading quality
- Ineffective escalation process
- Some People – underperformers (Detractors)
- Employee engagement
- High turnover in some departments
- Customer facing communication skills

Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Internal Communication – especially across divisions
- Inconsistent practices and lack of SOP's
- Low to Moderate confidence in CS Leadership
- Lack of Accountability
- Lacking sense of urgency
- Unclear process and task ownership
- Some inadequate systems

| Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Interdependencies, and bureaucratic red tape.
- Unaligned priorities across divisions
- Unclear expectations or lack of vision
- Unfair treatment and/or preferential treatment of staff

| Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Improve organizational performance
 - Develop effective, well balanced leaders
 - Create a culture of accountability
 - Clear expectations who owns what
 - Overarching communication strategy
 - Simplify the way we conduct business (internally and externally)

Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Increase customer trust and confidence
 - Developing consistent business practices
 - Enhance customer billing experience
 - Reducing escalations
 - Improving customer escalation process

| Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Employee retention - Loosing good employees - Institutional Knowledge
- Turnover at the ET level
- Internal culture – Resistance to change
- Internal culture – Too much “on the fly” change
- Civil Service
- Complacency

Customer Service – Current State



Diagnosing SWBNO's CS Division Current State



- Increased involvement from external stakeholders who desire to help but lack the specific expertise to do so.
- Customer confidence and trust continues to erode
- Rate increases that further hamper customer's ability to pay, or become current in their bills
- Resiliency - Aging infrastructure continues to outpace organizational efforts to rebuild

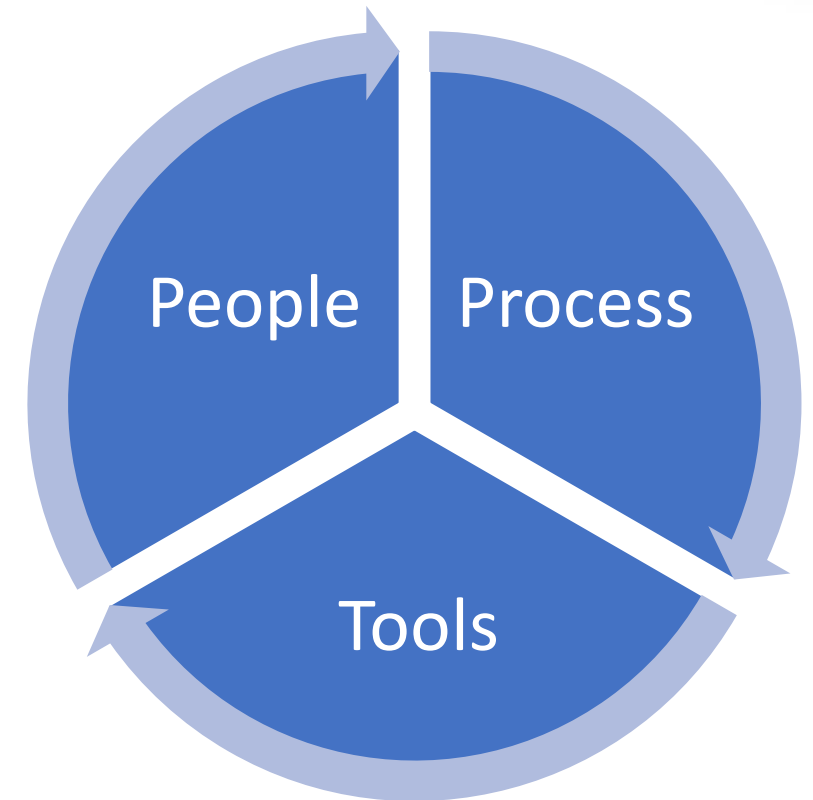
| CEI – How we'll get there



Customer Experience Improvement Project

A comprehensive and overarching, sustainable, cross-functional strategy

- 1) Enhance customer confidence and trust
- 2) Improve organizational performance
- 3) Enhance organizational culture



Customer Service – How we'll get there



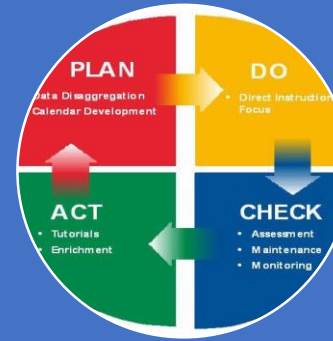
Leadership Trust and Confidence
(Stakeholder Feedback, Assessments)



Diagnostics
(SWOT, Ishikawa, 5 Why's)



Change Management
(ADKAR)



Continuous Improvement
(PDCA)



Training and Development
(All levels)



Customer Service – Future State



Internal Stakeholder
Feedback –
Leadership abilities
and confidence (Pe)



CS SWOT Analysis
Functional Group
Exercises (Pe,P,T)



Root Cause Analysis
of identified
performance gaps
(Pe,P,T)



Reassess
/Continuous
Improvement



Identify training
needs and establish
approach



Process
Improvement
Implementation

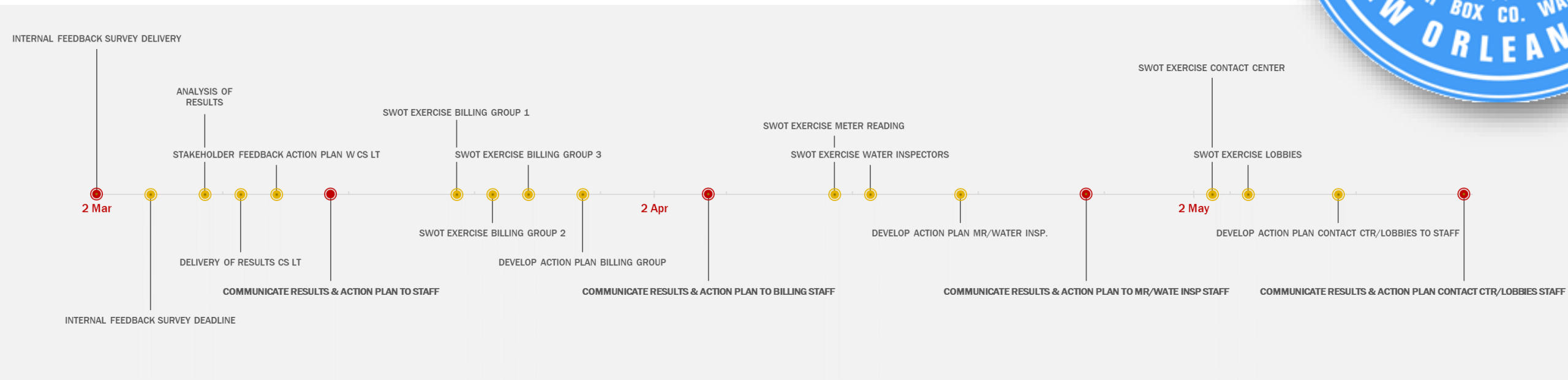
| Customer Service – What's next



The “Big Picture” objectives:

- **Strengths** must be effectively maintained, built upon, and maximized
- **Weaknesses** need to be effectively remedied or eliminated
- **Opportunities** need to be effectively prioritized and optimized
- **Threats** must be effectively countered or minimized.

Customer Service – When we'll get there



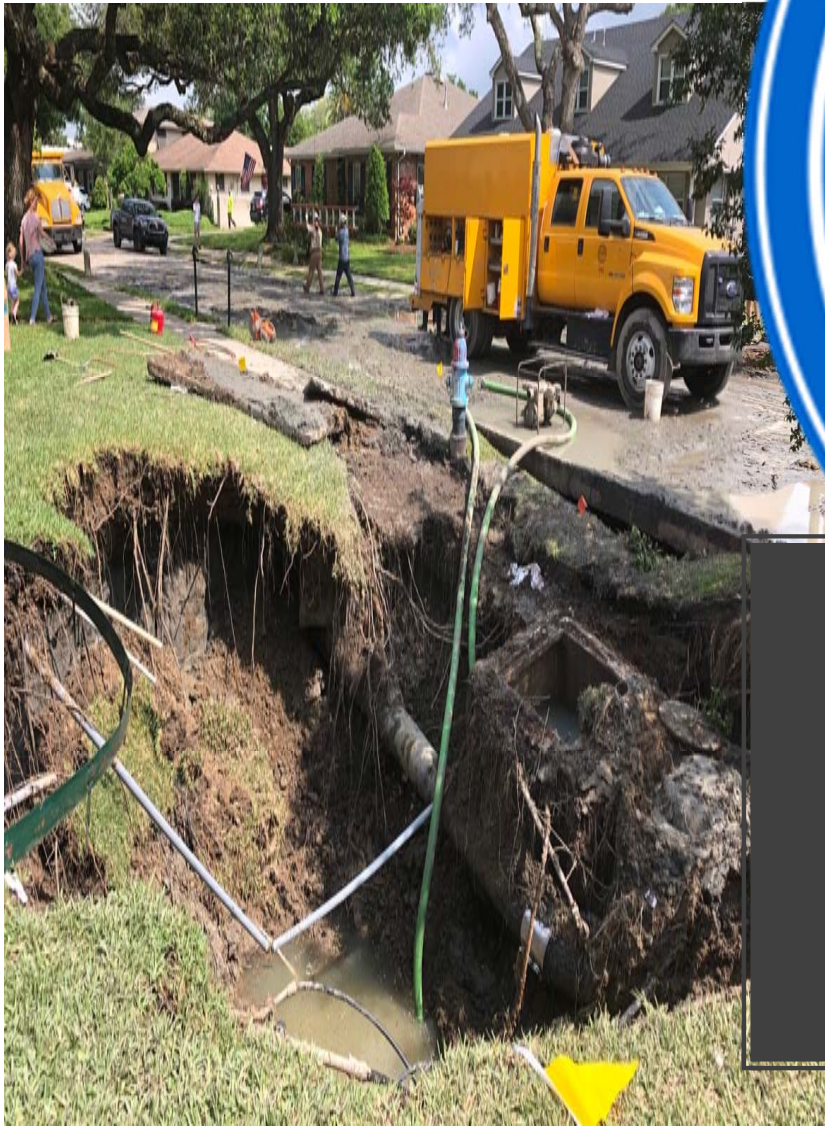
DATE	MILESTONE	DATE	MILESTONE
2-Mar	Internal Feedback Survey Delivery	5-Apr	Communicate Results & Action Plan to Billing Staff
5-Mar	Internal Feedback Survey Deadline	12-Apr	SWOT Exercise Meter Reading
8-Mar	Analysis of Results	14-Apr	SWOT Exercise Water Inspectors
10-Mar	Delivery of Results CS LT	19-Apr	Develop Action Plan MR/Water Insp.
12-Mar	Stakeholder Feedback Action Plan W CS LT	26-Apr	Communicate Results & Action Plan to MR/Wate Insp Staff
15-Mar	Communicate Results & Action Plan to Staff	3-May	SWOT Exercise Contact Center
22-Mar	SWOT Exercise Billing Group 1	5-May	SWOT Exercise Lobbies
24-Mar	SWOT Exercise Billing Group 2	10-May	Develop Action Plan Contact Ctr/Lobbies to Staff
26-Mar	SWOT Exercise Billing Group 3	17-May	Communicate Results & Action Plan Contact Ctr/Lobbies Staff
29-Mar	Develop Action Plan Billing Group		

Looking Ahead

- Continuous Process Improvement
- Workforce Training and Development

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Networks Administration –
Operations Committee Report:
March 10, 2021

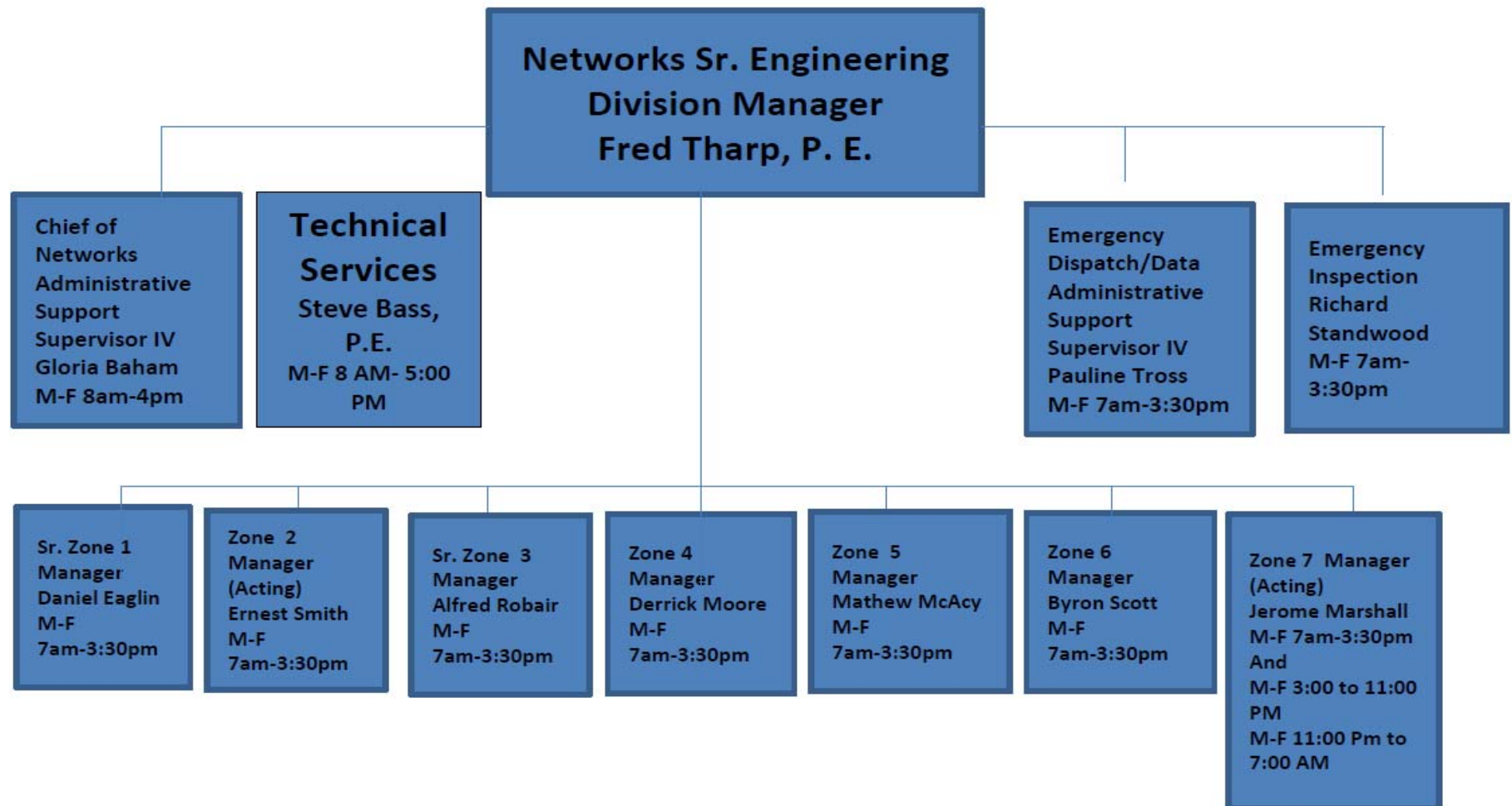
Networks Administration

Duties & Structure

- **Networks Administration is the licensed operator of the water distribution and sewer collection systems, serving over 3000 miles of water mains and an equal amount of sanitary sewers mains**
- **Consists of Maintenance Zones, Emergency Services and Engineering (Technical Services)**
- **Self performs water/sewer repairs with SWB Staff/Equipment**
- **Utilizes Contractor support for sewer/water repairs**
- **Provides direct support to the Power & Pumping, Sewer/Drainage Operations and Water Purification Divisions**
- **Provides citywide coverage 7 days a week.**

Staffing

- **Zones are staffed by approximately 300+ individuals, mostly in the Maintenance Technician Series (MT)**
- **Emergency Services is staffed with experienced Maintenance Technicians and Administrative personnel (20+ individuals)**
- **Technical Services group are primarily Engineers, Technicians and administrative Personnel (20+ individuals).**
- **Technical Services manages construction contracts which account for up 50 additional personnel working on SWB projects**
- **Office of Chief of Networks manages the entire organization, including budgets, personnel, training. Staffed by one engineer and 4 administrative persons (5 individuals)**

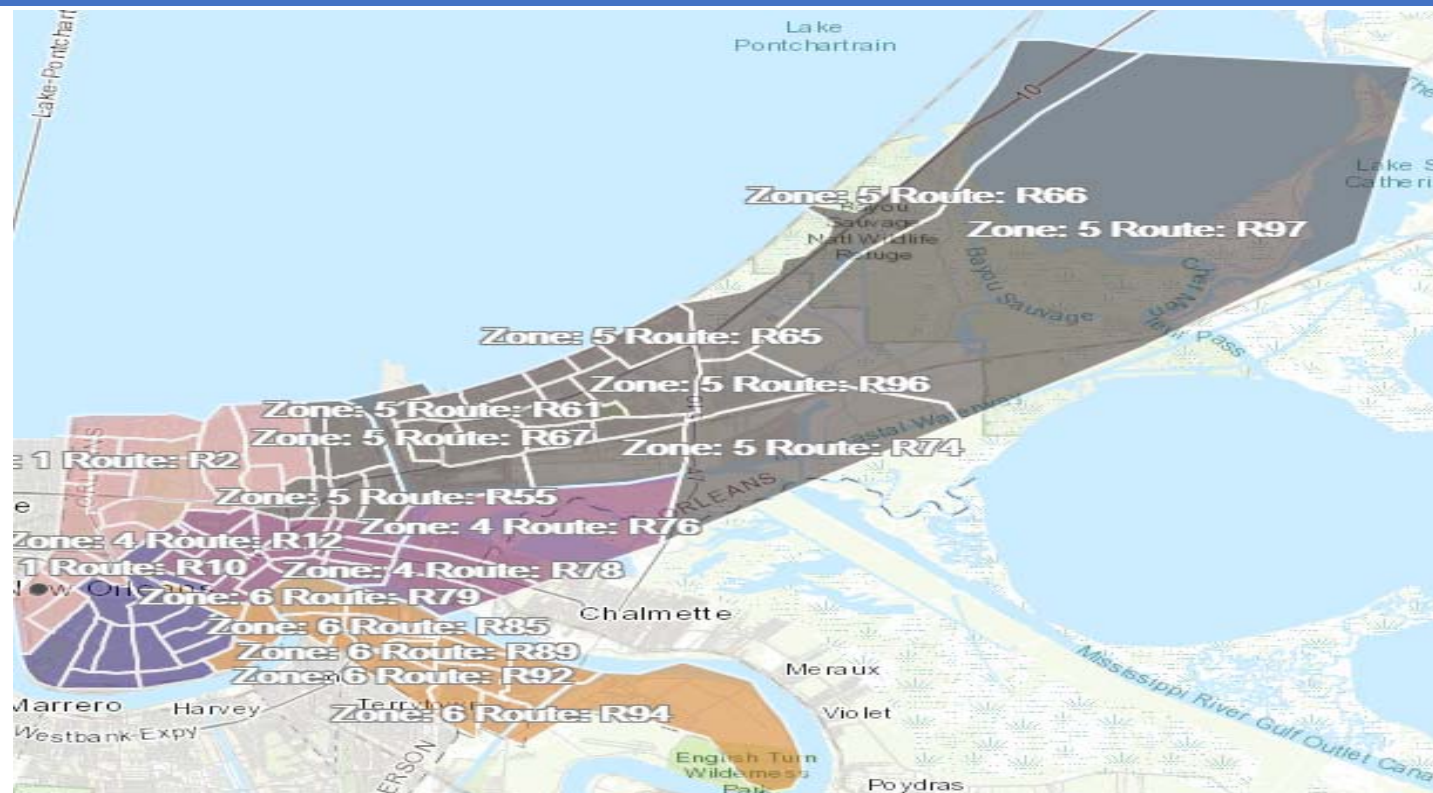


Geographic Zone Responsibilities

- **Zones 1,3,4,5 & 6 - Geographic Zone**
- **Responsible for Repair and Maintenance of Water and Sewers Monday- Friday**
- **Provides rotational coverage for repairs on Weekends and Declared Emergencies**

Geographic Zone Boundaries

Zones 1,3,4,5,6



Zone 2 Responsibilities

- **Zone 2 supports Zones 1,3,4,5 & 6 with repair of water and sewers - citywide**
- **Responsible for Traffic Control Devices**
- **Hydrant Testing in coordination with NOFD**
- **Specializes in installation of Inserta-Valves**
- **Provides rotational coverage for repairs on Weekends and Declared Emergencies**

Zone 7 Responsibilities

- **Zone 7 Provides Pavement restorations from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM M-F**
- **Repairs of water and sewers - citywide 3:00 PM to 11:00PM M-F**
- **Provides Emergency Sewer Response from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM M-F**
- **Provides rotational coverage for repairs on Weekends and Declared Emergencies**

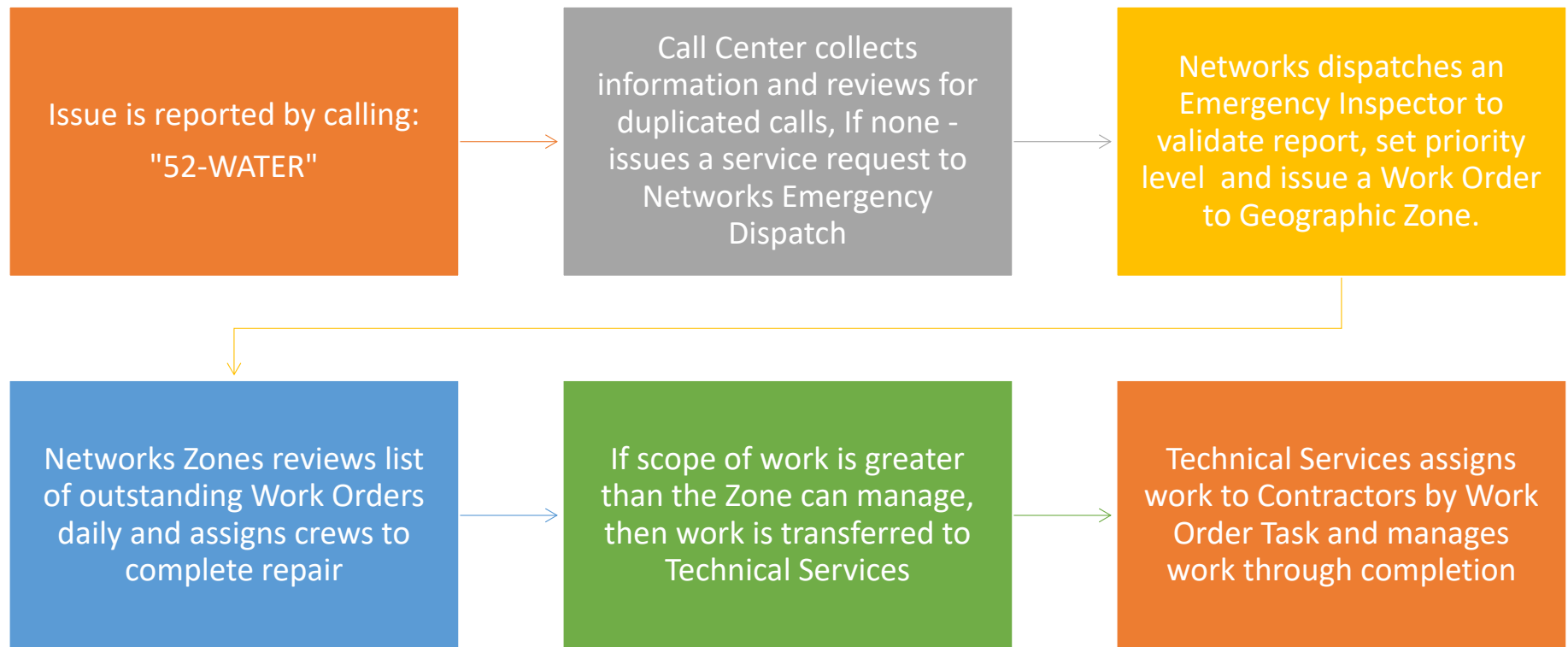
Emergency Services Responsibilities

- **Emergency Services (ES) acts upon Service Requests generated from the 52-WATER call center with two shifts 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM M-F and 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM M-F**
- **ES validates issues that are reported and issues Work Orders to the appropriate Zone noting required scope of work and priority**
- **ES data entry group support final processing and data entry for all workorders**
- **Provides rotational coverage for repairs on Weekends and Declared Emergencies**

Technical Services Responsibilities

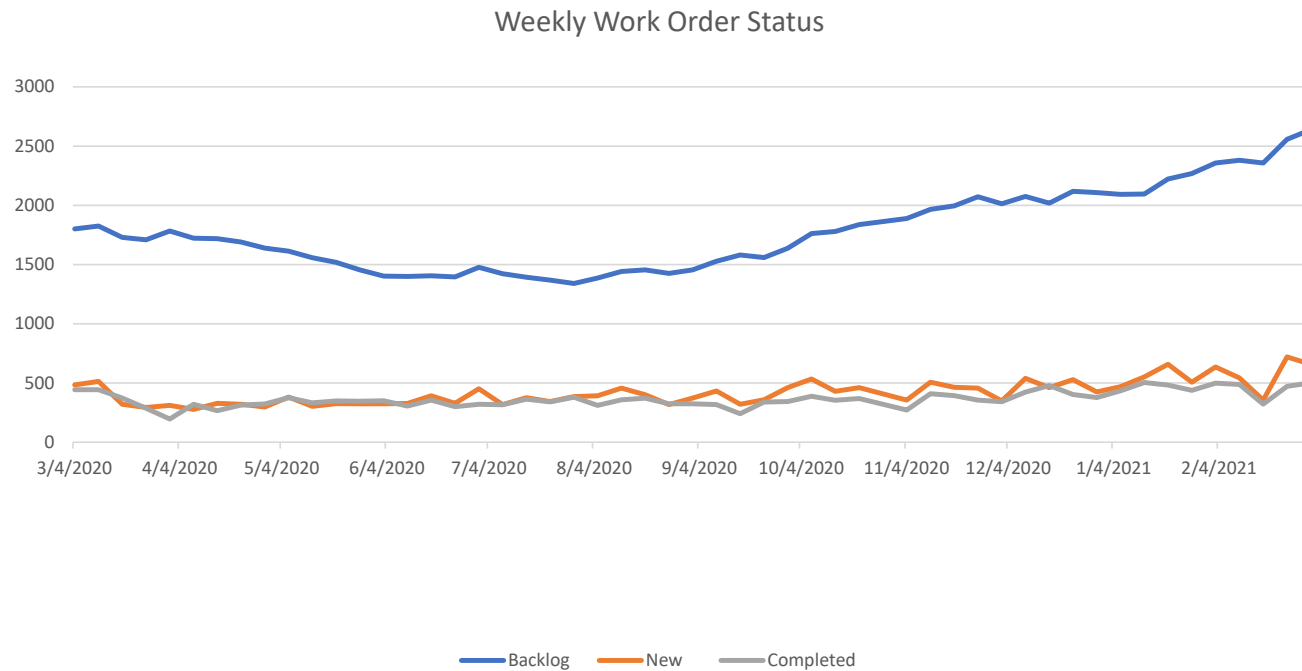
- Provides Technical support to Zones when extra ordinary conditions are encountered
- Manages Task-Based Contracts for the repair of water, sewer, drainage and pavement restorations as assigned
- Manages Professional Services contracts in support of Zone work such as leak detection, Arborist services and the support of the technical elements associated with fulfillment of EPA – Consent Decree requirements

Typical Work Order Process



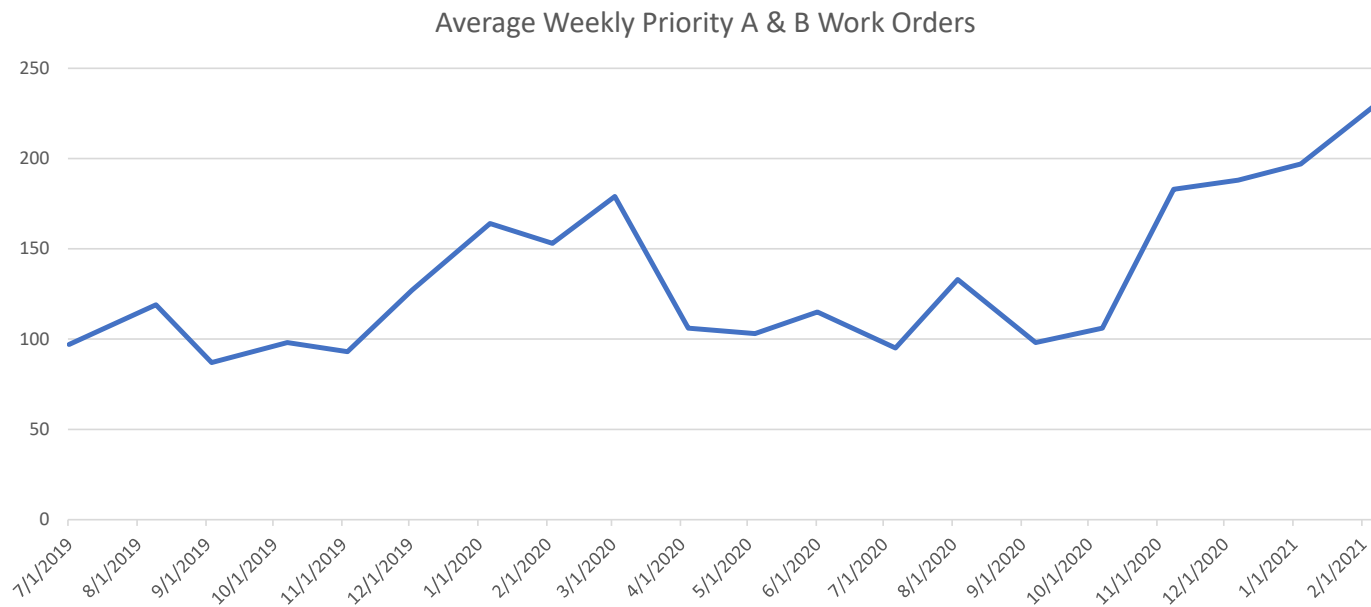
Weekly Work Order Status

March 2020 to March 2021



Average Weekly Priority A & B Work Orders

June 2019 to March 2021



Networks O&M Annual Budget by Groups 2019 vs. 2021

Group	Department	2019 Budget	2021 Budget
6000	Chief of Networks	620,625.00	538,233.00
6001	Zone 1	3,691,354.00	3,859,281.00
6002	Zone 2	2,751,866.00	2,986,790.00
6003	Zone 3	3,220,692.00	2,993,097.00
6004	Zone 4	2,914,692.00	2,747,231.00
6005	Zone 5	3,238,448.00	2,763,705.00
6006	Zone 6	2,405,431.00	2,653,715.00
6007	Zone 7	2,914,455.00	2,790,156.00
6008	Zone 8	0.00	236,500.00
6010	Emergency Services	1,407,026.00	1,424,985.00
6430	Leak Detection	759,657.00	350,000.00
6460	Valve & Hydrant	63,500.00	51,000.00
6470	House Connections	41,000.00	51,000.00
6500	Technical Services	1,584,261.00	1,578,404.00
6523	Underground Box Canals	2,210,000.00	1,077,400.00
6611	Rigid Paving (Concrete)	700,000.00	625,000.00
6612	Asphalt Paving	495,000.00	325,000.00
6620	Water Pt. Repair (Contractor)	11,269,536.00	8,875,000.00
6621	Sewer Pt. Repair (Contractor)	10,750,000.00	8,500,000.00
	Total	51,037,543.00	44,426,497.00

Networks Capital Budget

2021

Group	Work Description	2021 Budget
214-00	Replacement of Water Mains	3,000,000.00
214-01	Installation of water line/meter	125,000.00
214-04	Lead Service Line Replacement	50,000.00
216-04	Major Valve Replacement	2,500,000.00
318-02	Gravity Sewer Replacement	3,000,000.00
318-03	Sewer Main Lining	2,500,000.00
318-04	Sewer Line Connections	250,000.00
	Total	\$11,425,000.00

Networks - Current Challenges

- **Aged Infrastructure - greatest risk is with the transmission mains**
- **Request for Services is outpacing capacity to respond**
- **Severity of issues is increasing – More Priority A & B requests each week**
- **Reactive responses (Priority A & B) prevents planning and reduces overall capacity to respond**
- **Declining equipment and equipment condition**
- **Inability to hire 'original entry' for critical positions.**

Long Term Potential Solutions

- **Rehabilitation of the transmission mains and valves:**
Preserve the distribution of water to the localized areas of the city.
- **Complete the JIRR efforts and replace 20% of the water mains throughout the city:**
This will reduce the amount of Work Orders by roughly the same proportion
- **Invest in human capital and equipment to support ‘trenchless technologies:**
This will reduce costs of restorations and provide less visible impacts to hard surfaces and city trees
- **Restore Fleet Equipment numbers and types:**
This will remove the current restrictions to repair capacity
- **Update job descriptions and duties to allow ‘original entry’ for critical positions and credit for previous experiences:**
Improve the ability to put the right people doing the right job.

Short Term Potential Solutions

- Support the re-establishment of a 'Valve' dedicated group with focus on operation of valves for JIRR, coordination with valve operating contractors for JIRR demand, prioritizing replacement of valves citywide, and building a preventative maintenance program for valves and exercising them. (5-10 persons and about \$1.5 million/ year)
- Replace 22 of the most critical pieces of equipment and heavy-duty vehicles. – Submitted list back in August 2019 (Approximate cost \$3 million)
- Keep existing equipment in service during work hours, by utilizing mobile maintenance fleet to service trucks in place during evening hours (\$500K/year)
- Develop and implement SWB Policy that abandons sewer and water services that have not had an active account within the past 3 years (or 5 years). Currently Networks is tasked with digging up and restoring abandoned, and often nonfunctional water and sewer services for developers (savings \$2 million/year)

Questions