

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

April 17, 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 April 17, 2024, at 9:06 AM in the Carrollton Plant Auditorium. Special Counsel Ms. Yolanda Grinstead called the roll and confirmed the following members were present: Hon. Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Director Joseph Peychaud, Director Janet Howard, Director Lynes Sloss, Director Maurice Sholas, Director Alejandra Guzman, Director Tyler Antrup, and Director Chadrick Kennedy.

The following member(s) were absent: Director Tamika Duplessis, Director Robin Barnes and Councilmember Freddie King.

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; Rene Gonzalez, Chief Customer Service Officer; Irma Plummer, EDBP; Tanyell Allen, Board Relations.

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### APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

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Prior to beginning the meeting, Hon. Mayor Cantrell gave her opening remarks. Mayor Cantrell thanked the Board for their leadership and encouraged the Board to stay focused during unforeseen circumstances. Mayor Cantrell also thanked the dedicated employees within the utility and across the city of New Orleans that show up every day despite the challenges to get the utility where it needs to be. The utility continues to stand strong. The city experienced a flooding event last week. The rain events are coming faster, and the city is getting more rain in shorter periods of time. Mayor Cantrell acknowledged the utility cannot pump its way out the issues, but ensured the utility is making strong investments for future generations of the city that drives the State of Louisiana.

Mayor Cantrell presented a motion to accept the minutes of the March 27, 2024, Board Meeting. Director Barnes moved for approval of the minutes. Director Peychaud seconded. The motion carried.

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### COMMITTEE REPORTS

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#### Operations Committee Report

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

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

#### Plumbing Committee Report

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

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Plumbing report as amended. Director Antrup moved to adopt Plumbing minutes as proposed. Director Kennedy 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 April was presented and recommended for approval.

Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to adopt the Finance report as amended. Director Sholas moved to adopt Finance minutes as proposed. Director Howard 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:

#### **Pumping and Power Reporting**

##### **Pumping and Power Dashboard: Real Time Data**

- 89 of 99 Drainage Pumps available for use
- 3 pumps are expected come online by the end of the week
- Goal: Enter Hurricane Season with 93 of 99 Pumps and Turbines 4, 5, and 6 in service with 70 megawatts of 25hz power available
- 40.5 MW Currently Available

##### **Moving Forward**

- Updated dashboard will include more detailed information regarding system performance and rain event details.

#### **April 10 Rain Event**

##### **Power Issues with EMDs and Frequency Changers**

- EMDs were unable to be used due to suspected vandalism and other power issues lead to higher canal levels at DPS 1, 3 and 6.

### **Rainfall Totals**

- Average rainfall for April is 5.22 inches
- Rainfall totals were between 5-7 inches with high intensities

### **SWBNO Power Complex Progress**

#### **SWBNO Connections and Backup Plant**

- Utility rack – 90% complete
- Foundations for SFCs, T7, transformers, and auxiliary equipment in progress
- Transformers arriving on site (1<sup>st</sup> pic next slide)
- Span 29 installed on March 21, 2024
- Entergy Substation Work Complete - Entergy Substation on January 12, 2024

### **Contract 1420**

#### **Installation of the Frequency Changers, Turbine 7 and Critical Equipment for Utilization of Power from the Substation**

#### **Funding Sources**

- \$10M – FEMA (HMGP)
- \$16M – HUD Earmark Grants
- \$6.4M – IMF (part of previous allotment)
- \$21M – City Allocation
- Two installments committed
- \$8M and \$13M in Late Summer
- Infrastructure Maintenance Fund will front \$10M to ensure timely award (approved at March 28, 2024 IAB meeting)

#### **Timeline**

- Award – April Board Meeting
- NTP – May/June 2024
- Pending contract execution timeline
- Completion – July 2025

### **Smart Metering Progress**

- To date we have replaced over 9,600 meters and billing will begin for these meters in the coming week
- Customer Portal set to be available in summer/fall 2024
- In 2024, anticipate installing approximately half of our meters
- Nearly all 1.5"+ meters (6,450)
- Roughly half of 5/8" and 1" meters (68,575)
- Informing customers of lead service lines identified during installation
- Potential Leak Alert letters are being sent to customers

### **Promise Pay | Customer Service Progress**

- Over 6,800 Promise Pay payment plans activated
- Over \$1.3 million in payments collected
- Over \$15 million promised

### **Billing Enhancement Initiative**

- As we prepare to transition to billing from Smart Meters, we have assembled a dedicated team to conduct a comprehensive review of our data management systems, identifying and addressing any weaknesses that may contribute to billing inaccuracies.
- Includes data entry processes, validation mechanisms, and system integrations with the goal of a seamless Smart Meter transition.

### **Payments of Judgements**

- Payments toward debts comprising the judgement/Settlement list begin in March 2023
- Currently, there are 296 Judgment Debtors on the judgment/Settlement list awaiting payment.
- Offers of payment have been extended through number 221 of the Judgment/Settlement list.
- Approximately \$973, 889.26 has been paid to Judgment Debtors through February 2024.
- \$900,000 anticipated to be paid to Judgment Debtors in 2024

### **Louisiana Legislative Update**

#### **House Bills**

##### **HB 525 Rep. Matthew Willard**

- This bill states that if we do not capture an actual read, we cannot bill for service.

##### **HB 965 Rep. Stephanie Hilferty**

- This bill is a substitute for Hilferty's HB 574 which provides for fixed billing and bill dispute arbiter for each Council District.

**HB 593 Rep. Hilferty**

- This bill states that if a position cannot be filled with New Orleans resident within 90 days of the position being advertised, the board may employ a person who is not a New Orleans resident.

**Senate Bills**

**SB 305 Sen. Jimmy Harris**

- Provides for the consolidation of the drainage system under SWBNO.

**SB 460 Sen. Royce Duplessis**

- We requested this legislation to provide for lead service line replacement right of entry and use of public funds.
- There were three bills dealing with Governance that the authors have told us they are not moving.
- We will be in Baton Rouge on Friday to speak during the Joint Committee on Capital Outlay. This is where our \$29 million request exists, for the Power Complex.

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**ACTION ITEMS**

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- Resolution (R-069-2024) Amendment of Section 14 of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Plumbing Code Relative to Cross Connection Control – Ann Wilson, Chief of Environmental Affairs, Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
  - **Director Sloss moved to accept (R-069-2024). Director Antrup seconded. The motion carried.**

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**CORRESPONDING RESOLUTIONS**

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**General Superintendent Recommendations**

**The following resolutions were discussed at the April 10, 2024, Finance & Administration Committee Meeting**

- Resolution (R-050-2024) Award of Contract 1420 – WPC Phase 1 Installation and Commissioning Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Frischhertz Barnes, a Joint Venture

- Resolution (R-057-2024) Third Renewal of Contract 8164 – Skilled and Unskilled Labor for Maintenance Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and JEI Solutions
- Resolution (R-059-2024) First Renewal of Contract 2164 – Water Main Line Replacements and Extensions at Scattered Locations Throughout Orleans Parish Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Wallace C. Drennan, Inc
- Resolution (R-067-2024) Second and Final Renewal of Contract 8166 –Repaving Open Cuts in Sidewalks and Driveways Resulting from the Repair of Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Underground Utilities Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Wallace C. Drennan, Inc
- Resolution (R-068-2024) First Renewal of Contract 30246 – Restoration of Gravity Flow Sanitary Sewer Mains by Point Repair at Various Sites Throughout Orleans Parish Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Wallace C. Drennan, Inc
- Resolution (R-056-2024) Ratification of Change Order No. 12 for Contract 3799 – Installation of Sludge Dryer at the East Bank Wastewater Treatment Plant Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Industrial and Mechanical Contractors, Inc
- Resolution (R-063-2024) Ratification of Change Order No. 4 for Contract 1415 – West Power Complex Foundations and Underground Package Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and M.R. Pittman Group, LLC
- Resolution (R-060-2024) Authorization of Contract Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Services Agreement for 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
- Resolution (R-062-2024) Authorization of Contract Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Services Agreement for Consulting Services for SWB-2021-07 On-Call Water Valve Operation Services Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Pure Technologies U.S. Inc. dba Wachs Water Services.
- Resolution (R-058-2024) Authorization of Final Acceptance of Contract 2158 – Water Main Point Repair, Water Service Connection, Water Valve and Fire Hydrant Replacement at Various Sites Throughout Orleans Parish Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Wallace C. Drennan, LLC
- Resolution (R-061-2024) Authorization of Final Acceptance of Contract 2021 – 60-Inch Sewer Force Main Repair on Florida Ave Between the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans and Boh Bros Construction, LLC

**Mayor Cantrell asked for a motion to approve Corresponding Resolutions in Globo. Director Sholas moved to accept Corresponding resolutions as proposed. Director Guzman 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
- FEMA Project Worksheet Status
- DBE Participation on Contracts Report

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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No Public Comments

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:10 AM.