

Attendees: Ramsey Green, Karen Raymond, Bill Hammack, Representative Neil Abramson, Paul Flower, Casey Tingle, Lewis Stirling, Elisa Speranza, Ghassan Korban, Robert (Bob) Turner, Yvette Downs, Christy Harowski, Rich Rainey, Ed Morris

- *Intro: Approval of minutes and agenda*
  - Paul Flower: Acknowledging the importance of the board and thanks to everyone for being part of it
  - Executive Order summary: Quarterly reports to the Mayor, recommendations and observations provided to the Mayor and to provoke meaningful and productive discussions on how to improve and build off recommendations, etc.
  - Personal Introductions
- *Nominations*
  - Bill Hammack nominates Representative Abramson as secretary; unanimous decision
- *Adoption of rules*
  - Paul Flower: Goal of the board is to reach a consensus; we all are coming from different areas and have different expertise so let's use them
  - Discussion of proposed rules
    - Not much discussed; Paul decides to give everyone some more time to go over the rules and presumably vote on them at the next meeting, wants everyone to think about them more
      - Representative Abramson: Quorum of five is necessary? Paul: Let's spend more time going over the rules before we discuss and vote next meeting.
- *Presentation on SWBNO by Ghassan Korban*
  - Main overview of SWBNO and processes;
  - Overview of membership and selection process; outline of board members and brief reference to vacant seat currently being filled. Outline of SWBNO organizational chart; overview of how organizational structure has changed under new leadership (creation of CAO, Chief of Customer Service, Chief of , Strategic Planning, elevation of Chief Auditor/Board relations); Ghassan: important to modify organizational structure in order to help the city as much as possible, etc.
  - Overview of operations SWBNO is responsible for (drinking water, sewerage, drainage/stormwater management)
  - *Power*: Ghassan "best state we've been in years," 25 & 60Hz electricity from power sources requiring boilers, turbines, generators, etc.; age of equipment requires extensive and expensive maintenance:
  - Outline of SWB self-generated power
  - *Water*: East Bank and West Bank plants purify river water; 55% of drinking water in 2017 did not generate revenue due to broken pipes, aging meters, other factors
  - Representative Abramson: Non-billed consumption – are people exempt, what does this mean?
    - Ghassan: Usually schools; public schools get some amount of free water
  - Elisa Speranza: Bulk of this is leakage
  - 15% less than most; lack of funding is what hamstring SWBNO in this arena
  - Lewis Stirling: Can we get a table that outlines this deeper?
  - Representative Abramson: Aging meters – what are these exactly and how can we fix?
    - Ghassan: Outdated meters that stop working, water coming through but not being counted; we basically need to update to meters that can read and report water usage accurately and in a timely manner; there's a way to see what's being lost
    - Representative Abramson: Seems like fixing the meter issue is the cheapest, easiest way to recoup some of this loss
    - Ghassan: Focus will be on the commercial meters more than household meters
    - We want them to be smart meters that are able to communicate with SWBNO accurately to bypass the issue of bad meter reads; new meters are a main focus of Fair Share recurring dollars
    - "New wave of tech"

- New efficiency and especially better customer service in order to ensure that meters are accurate, repaired quickly if need be, etc.
  - Will also be great for customers as they'd be able to see if they have any leaks, upticks in usage, etc
- Sewerage Pump Stations
- Water collected, taken to wastewater treatment plants operated by Veolia and cleaned, clean water then returned to river
  - Bill Hammack: Is this method efficient? I.e. using Veolia
  - Ghassan: I mean, it used to be, but we're still under contract and will move towards development in a few years; conversation is yet to be had; we own equipment and infrastructure but they handle operations
- Lewis: We have x amount of money and need to spend it well, but we have to still be able to sell water at a profitable amount; if people use less we make less money (not very environmental)
- Ghassan: Balancing act between promoting conservation and selling more; large percentage of costs that are fixed; look to the master plan to vary fixed costs
- Sewer consent decree 1997-present: Remedial repairs and construction, preventative maintenance measures, basin construction, etc.
- Ongoing basin construction in NO East, South shore, Mid-City, Carrollton; to be finished by 2025 (est)
- *Drainage*: Overview of large-scale drainage system; 98 of 99 pumps fully operational
  - Ghassan: Very very stable state for the most part; storm events are more powerful than usual but our ability is very strong at the moment
  - Bill: Main complaint that pumps aren't working; how do we fight this assumption/perception?
  - Ghassan: Takes 30 minutes to drain the first 6 inches of 2 feet of water, 5 minutes for last 6 inches; pumps ARE working as they should, it just takes a long time
  - One of main aims is to improve outreach and education so people understand how these pumps work and at what capacity they ARE working
  - Casey: Does DOTD manage any of the underpass drains, I.e. on state roads?
  - Robert Turner: Mostly ours.
  - Elisa: Will green infrastructure be significant in the future for us to include with this drainage infrastructure?
  - Ghassan: Hopefully; we're nowhere near where we need to be, needs to be improved hundredfold to where we are today to really be a factor. Ultimately we want infrastructure that can absorb and use groundwater and stormwater without it having to go to any facility, that's the ideal state, but we're not anywhere close to that.
  - Paul: What about the project where City Park golf course absorbs water – city project or SWBNO project?
  - Ghassan: City project.
  - Bill: If we fix all these pipes, won't we add to subsidence issues if we don't put water in the ground?
  - Ghassan: Yes – part of the issue is that we need to manage subsidence.
  - Representative Abramson: Confident that the City and SWBNO will be able to coordinate this, but the projects at City Park and Audubon Park needs to be coordinated between City and SWBNO because it's a major drainage project; needs to be inter-organizational coordination
  - Ramsey Green: We are doing something – City teams are absolutely working with SWBNO staff on construction and new projects and major drainage projects especially.
  - Elisa: Report from last year called for significantly more coordination between SWBNO and city
  - Representative Abramson: DPW also needs to be part of the conversation; I.e. when DPW works on a maintenance project in streets, patchwork can change drainage and coordination is needed to make sure everything is still running smoothly
  - Ghassan: We agree – when Ramsey and I walk off into the sunset, ideally the used model will be one of extensive coordination and cooperation to ensure everything is running efficiently and as it should

- Pumping station drainage map online for customers; one of ways to help people understand how the system works
  - Funding
    - Drainage is tax-based rather than revenue based, which is unusual compared to most other cities; each division (water, sewer, drainage) is funded separately
    - Hope is at one point SWBNO will advocate for the tax based system to end and base drainage funding off some kind of drainage fee
    - 43-55% of customers pay for millages
    - How much is needed to run a well-run, well-maintained and well-managed drainage system?
      - Ghassan: Will know better once we have the master plan; we're not looking at wholesale improvements or overhaul, but could use \$50M a year on capital projects in order to have a modern drainage system in 20 years
      - Master plan – timeframe?
      - Ghassan: Now that we have some money coming in, we can be in development.
      - Representative Abramson: But what is the plan? When can we have it?
      - Ghassan: Monday is when our director of strategic planning starts, and that can be when we really start the process; end of the year for RFP, master plan will take a few years to implement (2-3 years? 5 years?)
      - Remember, we're starting the plan, not just updating it
      - Master Plan will be developed over 2-3 years
      - Paul: Any ideas in the interim?
      - Ghassan: We have base ideas; multiple steps to take in this effort. Need lots of public input and feedback on what they want us to implement; going to hold public events and discussions to utilize their ideas in our planning process
      - Bob: Not just sitting on our hands; getting a deliverable on some power plans within the first two quarters of 2020; keep everything running and move towards more renewable, cheaper forms of power
      - Representative Abramson: Master plan is critical; if it's 2-3 years away, people today want to know what's going to happen tomorrow. Lots of millages to expire next year that need votes, some ballot initiatives coming, but people need to know what is going to be done in order to actually support added revenue streams
      - Ramsey: Master plan is critical; there's a reason why SWBNO pulled a car out of a canal. SWBNO and DPW have started doing this work, we're not awaiting the master plan to actually get this work done; we don't have a full assessment of our entire subsurface infrastructure. Mayor agrees with attitude of don't wait to do.
      - Representative Abramson: But people don't know what you're doing – would be very helpful to detail what we're doing from now to when the master plan comes out. Need the public's support a lot this year for money, so we need to put something together that outlines what the work is actually going to be.
      - Ghassan: We're going to keep the trains running on time while also developing a 20+ year plan; we're going to need to have both.
      - Representative Abramson: Point is just that we need an interim plan.
      - Ghassan: Bob is developing a 5 year plan to be examining every pipe over 5 years; see something, fix something. IF our system is maintained, it works well – maintaining is the issue.
      - Paul: Neil's point is that we need actual outlines of what work you're doing in the short term in order to make customers understand that the work is actually being done, rather than just being fed long term master plans without seeing any improvement
      - Karen Raymond: Need an outline of how we're going to maintain what is being funded.
      - Ghassan: With this new money, we can actually move in the right direction.

- Elisa: We've been so reactive for so long that even though a proactive system is normal for elsewhere, it would be revolutionary for New Orleans
  - Bill: Issues are very complex – you can't really tell people the complex issues of it. What we have to do is be very intentional and articulate about explaining to people how we're building towards new and improved system.
  - Representative Abramson: Have to make sure we get all of our Capital Outlay money for infrastructure projects.
  - Ghassan: Expect to have some \$20M of recurring dollars coming in
  - Paul: Need to understand how the city is trying to coordinate a complex situation when we have \$2B of FEMA money to spend on roads; coordination effort between FEMA, SWBNO, DPW, etc. Where are we on road program?
  - Ramsey: Smiling because we're varying presentation based on this conversation and just added JIRR stuff.
  - Ghassan: Overview of next four years of Fair Share money – roughly \$21M per year from 2020-2023, and roughly \$50M in one time frame
  - Going to get feedback on plans but presenting mostly as a way to prove that we're delivering on what we promised; first glance as a collective team; this list reflects the variety of our aims
  - Going to take a lot of coordination on the city's part, but the hope is to maximize this money in terms of actual impact. This chart is a glimpse of what the plan is, but it's subject to a lot of feedback and change
  - Bill: Need to effectively show DDD how money is being spent within district
  - Representative Abramson: This money is the lost penny, assuming Short Term Rental (STR) tax passes? Our charge is to oversee revenue deposited into the infrastructure maintenance fund
  - Paul: Don't think they have the Convention Center hotel taxes included in here.
  - Ramsey: Total \$27M isn't here because DPW money is not included.
  - Paul: That \$27M assumes STR tax passes and does not assume hotel property taxes; STR tax makes up some \$7.6M in here, if it doesn't pass the \$20M will be more like \$14M.
  - Ramsey: Yes.
  - We would posit that 25.5 millage rate going back to 2010 is what people would be voting for this fall, as the current 22 rate is a result of the last admin's handling of bonds. Charge of this committee is the Fair Share fund management, but 85% of drainage system is controlled by city; if it's not operable, we'll flood. \$500M will largely go to ensuring that the drainage system works as best it can.
  - Representative Abramson: I understand – just want to make sure everyone's working together to make sure that things are efficient and effective.
  - Ghassan: Going to make sure that this committee is proactively kept in the loop about any spending on money that comes in from earmarked state money and other funding sources.
  - Part of money will be used to pay back drainage efforts paid for by loans.
  - Paul: Hazard mitigation money – are the projects this will be used on in progress?
  - Ghassan: \$16M – newly allocated money from GOHSEP earmarked for 3 projects.
  - This added \$16M to an already existing pool for these projects – put in modifications for the rest of this money. Need to do due diligence on these projects and this money.
  - Combine this money w Capital Outlay money and it'll be pretty significant.
- Ramsey: Updates on Infrastructure Projects and Drainage Analysis
    - Big news – Bond upgrade. New Orleans GO to A2 via Moody's.
    - DPW infrastructure improvements coming along. This is a big part of what we're doing now i.e. before master plan. Used RTCC to look at where water is sitting for a long time, but we're trying to learn from each one. DPW is looking at why particular places are flooding.

- JIRR – Program stalled in May 2018 with less than 1% of funds spent, as of August 30th 2019 we’ve spent up to 5%, \$75M of city obligation reimbursed
    - Not where we should be but better. Bond funds at a 2.4 burn rate per month
    - Most of the projects done so far are near the lake, the less historic parts of the city, because there are a lot of steps for more historic issues.
  - Need to spend \$1.8B by 2023, and we need to spend it all. Can definitely be done. Average of roughly \$6M per project.
    - \$389M expected to be spent on construction in 2020
  - Paul: Hiccup that Ramsey is referencing is that the previous administration purchased a new system to purchase for construction and administration for projects, and it didn’t work when it came online. Projects backed up, temp solution was used. Workforce was at 2/3rds of what it usually is. Working through problems of getting the system up and running. City should have had it up and running years ago; one good thing to take away from that is that we’re addressing it.
  - Ramsey: It’s important that this money wasn’t being spent and the Mayor is saying that we need to spend the money we have before asking for new money. Just sold bonds to augment FEMA funds that we desperately need. We believe we’re in a good position to handle it – how do we make sure that the city is de-flooding at the rate that we need it to?
  - Fair Share Agreement Slides
    - \$26M of recurring funds for infrastructure, \$51M of one-time funds for infrastructure
    - Bill: Need to get STR passed, and talk with DDD before their vote.
    - Fair Share Accomplishments: Cognizant that SWBNO gets 75% and DPW gets 25%; city cleaned 15,000 out of 72,000 after August 5th; DPW is going to be hiring new employees and bringing a lot of functions in house; lots of maintenance and new equipment for DPW. 2-3 year cycle for catch basin cleaning; new ditching crew, funds for 1,500 service cuts per year; max pave is \$6M per year going to fixing cuts already made so we have to be more proactive about these cuts
    - By end of 2021 we’ll have 12 operating vac truck crews operating; 2 per council district plus 2 roving crews, which is unprecedented
    - Theoretical Changes: Aging and fragile infrastructure but also unprecedented rain events. Rain is not increasing year over year but increasing in smaller time periods. Even if we’re operating at 100% we’re going to flood.
    - Going to be embracing green infrastructure – in progress on \$21M on two projects, going to be putting \$87M in new projects through Gentilly Resilience District; big developments in investing in green infrastructure projects overall to better deal with the “new world order” of massive flood events.
    - Monday 9/30 we’re having an industry day to discuss infrastructure developments and future projects.
    - Paul: City Park project – when do we expect it done?
    - Ramsey: Early to mid design now – will get you a date later. Roadwork.nola.gov is going to have a Fair Share tab in order for everyone to see where this money is going and what this committee is doing.
    - NTP for construction early to mid-2021.
- Casey: FEMA funding is 100% federal; we won’t see a deal like that again. Really unique and the city is aligned to really utilize this money. In DC earlier this week, and even at the FEMA headquarters level they’re watching this projects carefully because they want to learn from them.
- Next meeting is December 5th, 2019. Schedule for next year is pretty set.
- Approval of schedule unanimous.
- Meeting adjourned.