

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD
July 14, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) occurred on July 14, 2022 virtually via video and telephone conference and in-person on at Woodward Design+Build – 2nd Floor, 1000 South Norman C. Francis Parkway, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The following IAB members were present:

1. Paul Flower, Chair
2. Neil Abramson, Secretary
3. Karen Raymond
4. Elisa Speranza
5. Bill Hammack
6. Casey Tingle

REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Presentations

Eric Smith, city of New Orleans, provided an update on Fair Share Agreement (“Fair Share”) revenues. As of July 1, 2022, the City transferred \$35.6M in one-time funds to the Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO), which represents no change since the March 2022 IAB meeting. Smith explained tax collections, specifically the “Lost Penny”, have seen a dramatic rebound this year, surpassing collections at the same time in 2019. Similarly, the Short-Term Rental Equalization and Local Privilege tax (“STR”) has seen a great uptick in 2022. Notable Fair Share undertakings include: (1) hotel occupancy has increased and is keeping pace with 2019 numbers and city revenue has increased to meet or beat 2019 collections, representing a recovery from both COVID-19 and Hurricane Ida; and (2) the city of New Orleans Department of Public Works (DPW) continued expansion of its Maintenance Division for internal work with requisitions in process as of July 7, 2022 for a total of 82 positions across multiple divisions. Josh Hartley, acting director DPW, provided an update on the Downtown Development District’s installation of permeable pavement in seven City corridors, explaining the RFP has been advertised as of July 2022 and vendor proposals are due by August 1, 2022. DPW hopes to have a contract underway by September, placing the construction timeframe in the summer of 2023.

Ghassan Korban, executive director, SWBNO, reported a total revenue of \$24M collected through May 2022. Expenditures related to Meter Reading Initiatives, SELA Algiers Drainage Project, SWBNO Strategic Plan development, Turbine 7 design, and Smart Metering Program (AMI) total approximately \$6.5M, with increased spending on Turbine 7 design and AMI. Korban shared updates on priority projects: (1) SWBNO Board of Directors selected and approved a vendor for installation of AMI, and a Notice to Proceed is expected to issue in August; (2) SWBNO Board of Directors has selected the manufacturer for the Turbine 7 design project; (3) the Asset Management Program is moving forward and SWBNO anticipates RFP and vendor selections in Q3/Q4 of 2022; (4) contractors plan to begin work on the Sycamore Filter Gallery in Q3 of this year; and (5) implementation of the Strategic Plan is underway with public-facing dashboards being created to reflect performance metrics as well as progress toward strategic goals set to launch in Q3. Korban shared updated projections through 2024

Korban updated the IAB on the work of the Drainage Consolidation Working Group (“Working Group”), stating the group met twice to date far and reached a consensus SWBNO should have full ownership of the city’s entire drainage system. There are no legal impediments to consolidation. The Working Group also agreed the level of service is subpar and are developing a plan of how to improve the provision of this service. Finally, the Working Group discussed the importance of a stormwater management fee, acknowledging the city needs to take calculated measures to implement an equitable fee locally.

Proposed Resolution

The IAB requests the mayor and the New Orleans City Council utilize available funds to replenish the Infrastructure Maintenance Fund in the full amount it would have received from the Hotel Occupancy and Local Privilege tax had the monies not been redirected towards funding tourism promotion . Hammack moved to accept the resolution as written and Abramson seconded. The motion passed. Tingle abstained from the vote but expressed his support for the effort.

IAB Progress Report

Speranza explained as the IAB approaches its third year in existence, creating a report highlighting the progress made on critical projects felt relevant and important. She noted challenges still lie ahead and hopes the report serves as a document that is both optimistic and realistic as the community moves forward. Hammack added the projects being funded by the Fair Share Agreement often seem invisible to the public and hopes the progress report will provide a deeper understanding of what the SWNBO has accomplished, calling it a report card and a reminder credibility, responsibility, and transparency still rests with the leadership of SWBNO as they move forward with upcoming challenges. Speranza moved to have the report accepted and published to the community, Hammack seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 3:15 PM.