

**Sewerage and Water Board Task Force**  
**January 16, 2019 1:30 pm**  
**Sewerage and Water Board Board Room, 625 St. Joseph St.**

Ramsey Green, Chair: Present  
Councilmember Banks, Vice Chair: Present  
Board of Liquidation, Poco Sloss: Present  
La Engineering Society, Dr. Emile Robichaux: Present  
SWBNO, Ghassan Korban: Present  
New Orleans & Co, Cheryl Teamer: Present  
Business Council of New Orleans, Elisa Speranza: Present

Ramsey Green opened the meeting.

Order of business: Finalize recommendations and next steps. Tyler Antrup will bring us through the presentation. Thanks to Rep Hilferty for being here.

Councilmember Banks motions to approve minutes, Cheryl Teamer seconds, approved.

Tyler Antrup begins presentation:

The next steps are to refine the recommendations, and looking at what legislative needs coming out of the recommendations.

Today is really to make sure I've gotten this right with the drafting of the recommendations.

Will distribute the draft on the 22nd, you will provide comments back by the 25th and we will meet here again on the 28th.

When the recommendations are complete, they need to go to the delegation, the Mayor, and the Council.

Reminder in terms of the timeline we are looking at three different tiers of recommendations (short, medium, long term)

Most changes from last week occurred in the short term strategy. - the items related to finance, and state control via a special study

Elisa Speranza: On the oversight, I think you could say something like re-examine membership so we can take a look at who should and shouldn't be in the group.

Request that Tyler Antrup quickly run through the recommendations on the left (recommendations previously present and stated): Management, customer service, and the establishment of a citizen advisory board.

It is clarified that the flexibility wouldn't come from management, so the recommendation focuses on giving management that flexibility.

Ghassan Korban: Would it be helpful to specify that? That the board needs to be given more flexibility.

Tyler Antrup: Part of what we want to do is also write up some of the progress that the board has made in the past few months so that is on the record.

Ramsey Green: Do we want to assign it to a committee in this recommendation under state control?

Rep Hilferty brings up point on public communication - looking at Entergy's model.

Tyler Antrup: Moving on the medium term.

Renegotiate the '92 CEA in order to consolidate the drainage system.

Cheryl Teamer: Instead of share should we say transfer?

Ramsey Green: Instead of renegotiate can we say visit? Renegotiation may not be the route that needs to be taken.

Elisa Speranza: When we do the write up, the medium term strategy almost can't be implemented unless the short term strategy is.

Ghassan Korban: I fully agree, however there has to be somewhat of an overlap.

Elisa Speranza: Yes, I don't think we should wait to get the wheels in motion

Dr. Robichaux: It is my understanding that no capital improvements can be undertaken until there is the storm water fee. And also in order for there to be a storm water fee there needs to be a master plan. So everything has to be developed simultaneously.

Elisa Speranza: I'm assuming the storm water fee will have a lot of input as well

Cheryl Teamer: Regarding the storm water fee, I think we should say that it should be considered, but not that we are directly recommending the fee. We should say to include any and all options.

Poco Sloss: I thought we went through the stormwater versus other options and we landed on this.

Elisa Speranza: We can't implement it, but we can recommend it and I thought that that is what we had landed on.

Rep Hilferty: Regaining trust in the short term is important. I think the recommendation of the fee is outside of the scope of the legislation.

Ramsey Green: The Mayor says we need to do what we need to be doing correctly before we go ask for more money, so this phase assumes that the short term goes well and is implemented. Every expert that came in said we needed to do this.

Elisa Speranza: We've been here since August and we've had dozens of conversations and we've stated that there is a need for a unified drainage system, but unless you fund it adequately it doesn't work.

Tyler Antrup: I'll write it up, keeping all these thoughts in mind and we will see what the comments come back as.

It is brought up to move develop master plan to the short term.

Tyler Antrup: Exploring the use of an external public advocate was brought up as a recommendation last week, that is an addition under rate setting.

Tyler Antrup: The thought process is if you have a public advocate, there's a more public process for setting the rates and it gives the councilmembers more cover.

Elisa Speranza: The public service commission only recommends privately owned utilities.

Councilmember Banks: I can say that my votes will be consistent and I would vote however I vote on cost increases consistently.

Poco Sloss: Over the history of the water board, flipping votes has been a problem.

Ramsey Green: Over the last 100 years there's been a continuous battle between the board and the council on rates.

Tyler Antrup: In the past the board just comes to the council and says they need more money, so if you have a third party to validate it that's valuable.

Elisa Speranza: I think we talk about it in the spirit of transparency.

Tyler Antrup: That can be conveyed in the write up.

Tyler Antrup: moving onto long term

Under governance review we have added exploring reorganization under the city charter rather than the state and returning things to more local control.

Cheryl Teamer addressing Hilferty: Given the fact that the legislature only meet once a year it's kind of handy to have more local control

Cheryl Teamer: Can we add in there the returns, some of the experts actually talked about giving back to local government.

Elisa Speranza: I think we are a long way from there, but that would be nice.

Discussion is brought up around this as an aspirational goal.

Elisa Speranza: In the medium term, we could have a sentence that acknowledges the problems of the past and is a nod to history so that people know we looked at that.

Adding AG opinion on a vote of the people versus council on their own on implementing a fee.

Tyler Antrup: Everyone will receive an email next Tuesday, then will email me back with comments

Public comment:

Rita:

I would love to see some damage control, could you just put something in the paper about how many bills you're looking at. Do we really need a citizens' board? When I want to say something I just come to SWB or use neighborhood engagement. We had a Lakeview meeting, no one voted to pay for the drainage fee. Councilmember Giarusso asked people to raise their hands and no one did.

Lloyd Lazard:

I'm concerned with things going on the internet because not everyone has access to internet, so there should be a place people can come and view the document. I've been to a few SWB related meetings lately. Everything seems to be in the spin of doing better.

Ramsey Green: On the 28th we will have a public meeting showing the document, so if there are people that want to come then, they can voice their concerns.

Rep Hilferty:

I look forward to seeing the report. I think we need to be aware of the climate we are delivering the report in. I'm looking at reports on nextdoor of people continuously getting high bills. We have recent news that has been coming out about employees sleeping on the job. I think we need to be cognizant when we release the report. Making sure that we are delivering drinking water and drainage to the city and doing that responsibly within the current scope. I think that was reflective in the short term strategy.

Poco Sloss moves to adjourn, Cheryl Teamer seconds, all in favor, adjourned.