

**Sewerage and Water Board Task Force
September 18, 2018 1:00 pm
SWBNO Board Room, 625 St. Joseph St.**

Roll Call:

Ramsey Green, Chair: Absent

Councilmember Banks, Vice Chair: Absent

Board of Liquidation, Poco Sloss: Present, Acting as Chair

La Engineering Society, David Gereighty: Absent

S&WB, Ghassan Korban: Present

New Orleans & Co, Cheryl Teamer: Present, Arrived after meeting convened

Business Council of New Orleans, Elisa Speranza: Present

Poco Sloss: We do not have a quorum, but seeing that those of us present are interested in the presentation we will move forward with that.

Presentation on ABS Group Root Cause Analysis

Presented by Darrel Barker, ABS Group

Root cause analysis focused on July 22 Aug 5, 9 - 2017

Ghassan Korban raises question: The performance standards – the two different standards between City and S&WB, did that change when ownership moved over?

Darrel Barker: There are some overarching ideas about functioning, but the two entities have different goals. It appeared that prior there was not really a standard for the City's system. The S&WB system was established in the 30's or prior - it's not really designed to take the output for the City's system.

Poco Sloss: When it was designed we didn't have near the amount of concrete we have now.

DB: This system was designed before we had the Rational Method.

Question raised: Isn't it generous to talk about performance standards when there really aren't any?

DB: The performance standard is really doing the best we can. Are we pumping water?

The City had a recommended performance goal from the 2011 plan - it has never reached that goal.

Poco Sloss raises question: This task force is here to assess management. If S&WB and DPW did their jobs as defined is there any reason to believe that structure wouldn't work?

DB: Funding is a big issue

Poco Sloss: But if they were both doing their job, would it work?

DB: An issue is that both organizations can point to the other rather than take responsibility. So that's a bad management structure.

Ghassan Korban: If you look around it's not unusual to have two entities dealing with drainage and water. People working together is what works.

Back to presentation:

DB: Leadership deficiencies for root causes for flooding events: insufficient oversight, lack of situational and risk awareness, failure to adequately fund.
Having people with technical expertise that are able to ask difficult questions among the oversight body is key.

If we defer this spending now on improvements, what happens? - Important question to ask.

Assessment of City controlled portion of NOLA drainage was reviewed.

Improvement recommendations for S&WB were reviewed.

Poco Sloss: There is a lot of analysis, but what is the bottom line solution here?

DB: The presenters don't have hyper-specific recommendations. Sustainable funding is hindered by where actual power over the S&WB is held. Multiple power structures are present.

It is raised that our system as it relates to a combined a drainage water and sewer department is rare.

Ghassan Korban: The underlying point I think was being made is that the S&WB is held responsible but has no ability to adjust funding.

Poco Sloss: S&WB has the responsibility without the corresponding authority.

What percentage of the staff is Civil Service?

Tyler Antrup: Nearly all, probably over 90%.

If S&WB like entities across the country don't set their own rates, is there best practices models for who does that?

DB: Utilities Boards do sometimes, but don't have best practices on hand.

Tyler Antrup: Maybe we should table further discussion until next week when the entire Task Force is here.

The floor is opened for Public Comment:

A citizen requests a copy of the presentation that was made.

Meeting is adjourned.