



# **TASK FORCE ON NEW ORLEANS SEWERAGE, WATER, AND DRAINAGE UTILITIES**

## **Final Report of Findings and Recommendations**

**January 31, 2019**

### **Members**

Ramsey Green for Mayor La'Toya Cantrell, Chair  
District B Councilmember Jay H. Banks, Vice Chair

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## Introduction

Functioning water, sewer, and drainage systems are a prerequisite to any thriving city. Though the City of New Orleans (the City) has survived many existential threats in its three-hundred-year history, the City currently stands at a crossroads with regard to the essential water-related infrastructure the Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) has stewarded for more than a century. We, as a community, now have an opportunity to address past shortcomings and establish the modern, well-functioning utility our citizens, businesses, institutions, and visitors require.

The Task Force on New Orleans Sewerage, Water, and Drainage Utilities (Task Force) was formed in accordance with 2018 Louisiana House Resolution 193 (the Resolution). The Task Force's primary objective was to develop findings and recommendations regarding the best management options for the sewerage, water, and drainage facilities and services in the City of New Orleans. In accordance with the Resolution, the Task Force submits this report to the Mayor of the City of New Orleans, the New Orleans City Council, and the members of the Orleans Parish Legislative Delegation<sup>1</sup>.

As residents of the City and customers of the SWBNO, the Task Force members are well-aware of the ongoing and very public operational challenges the SWBNO faces (e.g. billing and collections, customer service, water loss, pump and power issues). The Task Force also acknowledges the acute lack of public trust in the SWBNO, and the need to rebuild customer support by addressing serious management issues, reinvesting in the workforce, and instituting transparency and accountability.

The Task Force's work coincided with new Executive Director Ghassan Korban joining the SWBNO after a series of interim directors. Mr. Korban came from a highly successful public works operation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and has moved quickly to diagnose and address the many complex and inter-related issues the SWBNO has been grappling with for decades. Therefore, rather than diving into day-to-day management issues beyond our scope, the Task Force thought it best to focus on structural management, governance, and funding issues that could enable a successful transformation of the SWBNO in the short, medium, and long terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Task Force served in a volunteer capacity and were not compensated for their time.

## History and Context<sup>2</sup>

### *Governance*

In 1896, the New Orleans Drainage Commission was organized to carry out a master drainage plan that had been developed for the city. Three years later, SWBNO was authorized by the Louisiana Legislature to furnish, construct, operate, and maintain a water treatment and distribution system and a sanitary sewerage system for New Orleans. In 1903, the Drainage Commission was merged with SWBNO in order to consolidate drainage, water, and sewerage programs under one agency for more efficient operations. Today's SWBNO, as codified by La. R.S. 33:4071, is the local agency tasked with cleaning, distributing, and draining water.

Although SWBNO was created by state law, it is an independent city agency. In relation to city government, it is one of 10 “unattached” boards and commissions placed under the executive branch by New Orleans’ Home Rule Charter, meaning it is not attached to a specific department of city government. Thus, both the city and the state have some amount of control over the agency’s powers and governance.

SWBNO is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors (Board) comprised of the Mayor, two representatives of the Board of Liquidation, one member of the City Council, and seven citizen members, including representation for all five Council districts and two consumer advocates. The full Board convenes monthly in a public meeting.

Although SWBNO originally was tasked with oversight of the entire drainage system, today it is responsible only for pipes 36 inches or larger in diameter, drainage canals and pumping stations. The City, through its Department of Public Works, is responsible for the rest of the local drainage system, including more than 72,000 catch basins and the nearly 1,200 miles of smaller drainage pipes underneath streets, sidewalks and other rights of way. The transfer of responsibility for “Minor” drainage from SWBNO to the City occurred in 1991, after voters refused to renew a 2-mill tax that supported the drainage system. No funding source came to the City with its new responsibilities.

### *Funding*

Funding for SWBNO comes from three sources: user fees (sewer and water); millages (drainage); and bonds (all three). Dedicated funding for each division prevents financial intermingling, although a 2/3 Board vote can divert funds from one division to another in the case of a declared emergency. Water and sewer rates are set by SWBNO, with approval by the Board of Liquidation and City Council. Drainage millages are set by the City Council and approved by a vote of the people.

Of the three divisions, drainage is chronically underfunded. It has not gained a new revenue source since 1982, and in 1991 it lost a dedicated millage. Twice during the last 30 years, in 1985 and 1998, SWBNO unsuccessfully proposed supplementing its funding by implementing drainage fees. Existing millages generate approximately \$54 million annually – about \$50 million less than is necessary for adequate operations and maintenance. Without an additional revenue source, the drainage division likely will run out of cash in 2019.

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<sup>2</sup> Information contained in this section is largely courtesy of Janet Howard, former CEO of BGR and was provided to the Task Force at the August 22, 2018 meeting. Additional background can be found at <https://www.bgr.org/our-reports/?tag=sewerage-and-water-board&sort=>

## Challenges + Progress

The full extent of SWBNO’s operational and financial challenges was exposed in the aftermath of the August 2017 flood events. The majority of the agency’s infrastructure and equipment was built in the early 1900s and suffers from old age and deferred maintenance due to lack of funding. These issues were compounded by myriad institutional issues, including inadequate billing and customer service programs, lack of coordination with other critical agencies, personnel shortfalls, and operational inefficiencies.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the significant challenges that remain, the City and SWBNO have made significant progress in strengthening the drainage system, attracting strong leadership, and improving customer service since August 2017. Some highlights that should be noted (and continued) are:

- Completion of approximately \$85 million in repairs to the “Major” drainage and power systems to return system functionality;
- Completion of approximately \$25 million in repairs and cleaning on the “Minor” drainage system, improving stormwater draining in flood-prone areas;
- Hiring the first permanent Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer since the fall of 2017;
- Billing and customer service improvements, including a billing system audit and community engagement events, such as making staff available at the Rosa Keller Library once a week for the month of January;
- Increased social media presence and participation in “Community Listening Sessions” with the Executive Director.



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<sup>3</sup> For a full overview of the flood event and its root causes, see the ABS Group Root Cause Analysis.

## Summary of Meetings and Process

The Task Force held its first meeting on July 30, 2018 and began by drafting a workplan to identify critical issues, seek expert opinions, and discuss a range of management options. The first five meetings were focused on historic and existing challenges, with a specific focus on drainage. The remaining meetings were dedicated to identifying and vetting management options, with the help of national experts and staff from “best practice” utilities elsewhere. Below is a summary of each meeting date, expert speakers, and the general topic of discussion:

Date	Topic	Expert Speaker <sup>4</sup>
July 30, 2018	Introduction, Workplan	
August 22, 2018	Workplan Adoption/ SWBNO History	Janet Howard
September 12, 2018	Urban Water Plan / Range of Utility Management Structures	Rami Diaz, Waggoner and Ball
September 18, 2018	August 5 <sup>th</sup> Root Cause Analysis / Discussion of existing issues	Darrel Barker, ABS Group
October 3, 2018	SWBNO Finances and Management Overview	Keith Readling, Raftelis
October 17, 2018	Discussion of Vision and Desired Outcomes / Narrowing potential options	
October 31, 2018	Additional narrowing of options / outreach meetings	
November 14, 2018	Public Benefit Corporation Model	Dan Considine, Citizens Energy Group- Indianapolis, IN
November 30, 2018	Independent Rate Setting Board and Stormwater Utilities	Joanne Dahme, Philadelphia Water Department
December 12, 2018	Stormwater Utilities and Management Structures	Eric Rothstein, Galardi Rothstein Group and Andy Reese, Wood
January 9, 2019	Draft Recommendations	
January 16, 2019	Finalization of Recommendations	
January 28, 2019	Approval of Final Report	

The Task Force recognized the importance of community engagement and transparency in crafting its recommendations. As a result, it made all meeting agendas, materials, and presentations available via a dedicated web site<sup>5</sup>, and live-streamed every meeting.

Importantly, the Task Force also hosted public meetings in each of the five Council districts to share its progress and receive citizen feedback on potential options:

- District A | November 26, 2018 - Mid City Library, 4140 Canal St
- District B | November 27, 2018 - Rosenwald Recreation Center, 1120 S Broad St
- District C | November 28, 2018 - Algiers Regional Library, 3014 Holiday Dr
- District D | December 6, 2018 - Milne Recreation Center, 5420 Franklin Ave
- District E | December 11, 2018 - Joe Brown Recreation Center, 5601 Read Blvd.

<sup>4</sup> Presentations by the various expert speakers are included as an appendix to this report and provide additional details on lessons learned by the Task Force for consideration of the various issues and options.

<sup>5</sup> <https://roadwork.nola.gov/swb-task-force/>

Citizen feedback at the community meetings was robust and informed the Task Force’s development of desired outcomes and ultimately recommendations. Feedback generally fell into three categories:

- **Issues with SWBNO management/customer service** - Many of the participants attended the meetings believing that it was an opportunity to air grievances about the Sewerage and Water Board in general or to issue complaints about billing issues or street repairs. Personal issues were referred to a SWBNO staff member on hand for resolution.
- **Need for Accountability and Strong Leadership** - regardless of the management structure.
- **Support for an Equitable Mechanism to Fund Stormwater Management** - Many attendees were particularly supportive of the idea of charging tax-exempt properties for their usage of the drainage system in conjunction with a well-funded stormwater program.



A more complete overview of the community meetings and feedback received from citizens can be found on the Task Force web site.

## Management Options Considered

Many water utilities around the country are struggling with many of the same problems as the Sewerage and Water Board, including aging infrastructure, historic deferment of critical maintenance and capital improvements, politically challenging rate-setting processes, and attraction and retention of qualified and dedicated talent. In some cases, other utilities have determined that the best way to address these issues is through a governance change. The Task Force heard from several experts who have undertaken transitions to new models of utility structure, or reforms to more traditional models. Below is a summary of the considered options, as laid out in the workplan.

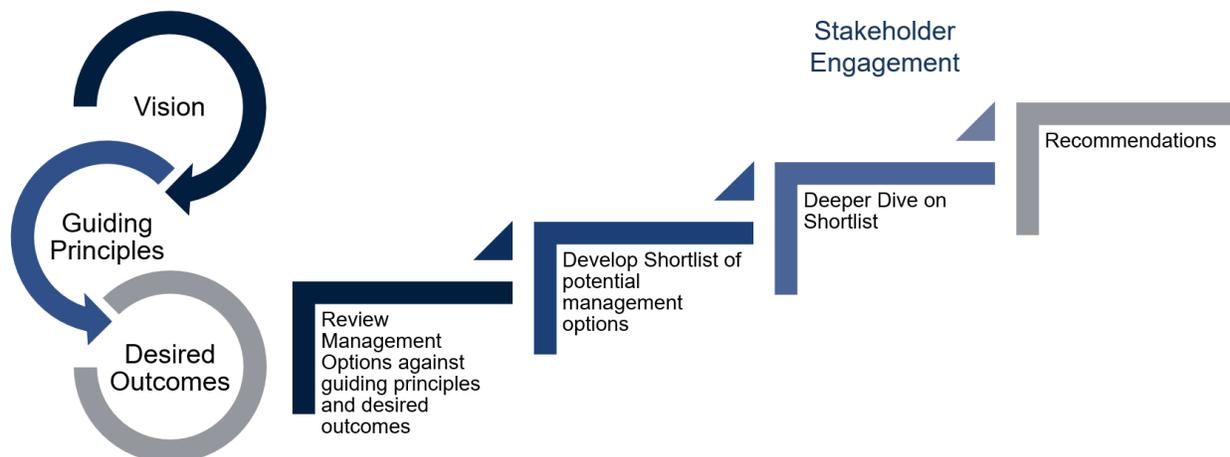
- **No Action** – The Task Force believed that there should always be a no action option, in the case that analysis of other options showed that a change would not dramatically improve the current situation. This option would preserve the existing governance and Board structure and maintain the existing split in the drainage system.
- **Combine Drainage under SWBNO** – Would allow for more consistent and coordinated service and was recommended by the Mayor’s Transition Team Report; would require some way to transfer existing revenue from the City to SWBNO.
- **Consolidation under City of New Orleans** – Creation of a “municipal utility” which would be managed like any other administrative function of the City under the direction of the Mayor and City Council.
- **Privatization** – Sell the assets of the Sewerage and Water Board to a private company and allow for private operation.

- **Public-Private Partnership** – Expand contract operations beyond wastewater treatment and allow a private operator to take over daily management of the water and/or drainage system.
- **Public-Public Partnership** – Partner with some other public entity such as Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority to managed daily operations of the drainage system.
- **Stormwater Utility** – Consolidate all drainage management under a new utility and move from millage to drainage fee; could be under SWBNO, under the City, or a new entity.
- **City-Owned Corporation** – Form a publicly chartered company with the City as the sole shareholder.
- **Regional Water Utility** – Leveraging existing excess capacity across the Region by combining operations to serve all or some portion of the Metropolitan area.

## Desired Outcomes

In determining the best way to develop findings and recommendations, the Task Force worked through a deliberative process to weigh the issues and options against the needs of the system and citizens. Before analyzing each of these potential management options, the Task Force first reviewed the SWBNO’s vision, mission, and guiding principles. Any recommendations should contribute to a more reliable, functional, responsive, accountable, equitable, and sustainable utility. Then it developed a list of “desired outcomes,” and measured the universe of potential management options against those outcomes to determine which would be most effective and achievable. The Task Force also kept in mind industry best practices and attributes of a high-performing utility as aspirational goals for the SWBNO.

Figure 1: Overview of Process for Developing Recommendations



Below are the desired outcomes the Task Force identified and presented to the community for consideration.

- **Mitigation of Federal debt** – maximizing local revenue by looking for ways to avoid or reduce the amount of Federal repayment required going forward, specifically for the Southeast Louisiana Drainage Projects (SELA) and ongoing operations and maintenance of the Permanent Canal Closure Pumps (PCCP).
- **Consolidation of Drainage O&M** – providing a “one-call” system where all drainage responsibilities are handled by a single agency to ensure better and more efficient service and maintenance.

- **Groundwater Management** – active monitoring and management of shallow groundwater to reduce subsidence and improve drainage.
- **Sustainable and Equitable Funding Source for Drainage** – new revenue is needed to fund the substantial capital and operations needs for the drainage system, particularly if consolidated.
- **Comprehensive Implementation of Green Infrastructure (Urban Water Plan)** – any new structure should be well suited to lead the way in implementing innovative and sustainable strategies for flood and subsidence reduction.
- **Workforce and Small Business Training Programs** – the utility should be a catalyst for economic growth in the community, particularly serving traditionally disadvantaged populations.
- **Holistic Approach to Water: regional MOUs with neighboring parishes and other agencies** – looking for new ways to become more efficient through shared resources and processes with our peers.

Based on feedback received at the community meetings, the Task Force added two additional desired outcomes:

- **Improve Efficiency and Accountability of Management** – citizens were clear in their feedback that the governance model matters much less than leadership that is accountable and provides excellent service. Any future model should reflect a strong sense of leadership in the community that is accountable to ratepayers.
- **Direct Engagement with Ratepayers** – citizens need to have more direct ways to engage with a utility as vital as the Sewerage and Water Board. New opportunities need to be created to allow for direct engagement and to let ratepayers vet and guide policy.

After measuring all the potential management options against these desired outcomes, the Task Force eliminated several options from further consideration because they were not the right fit to achieve the desired outcomes, overly complex to meet the current need, or simply infeasible. In particular, the Task Force ruled out the privatization options, because of the need for a public vote on any proposal, mismatch with many of the desired outcomes, and infeasibility in the near-term.

Then the Task Force presented the four remaining management options at the community meetings:

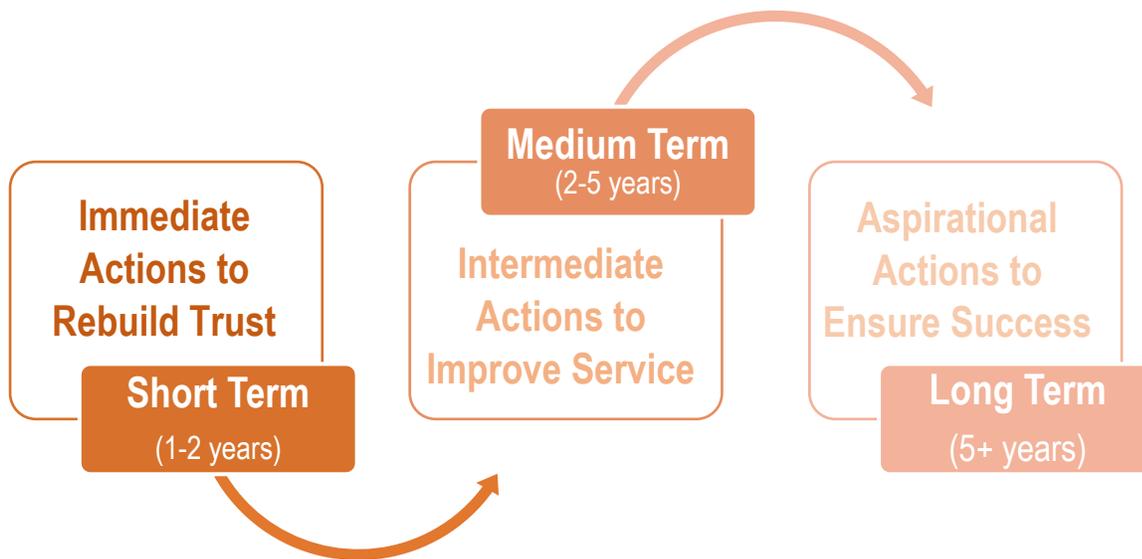
- No Action (with potential reform to the rate setting process)
- Consolidation of Drainage under a single entity
- Stormwater Utility (impervious area fee-based), and
- City-Owned Corporation.

## Findings & Recommendations

After the community meetings, internal analysis, and expert testimony, the Task Force determined that a wholesale change in the governance structure of the Sewerage and Water Board is not likely to produce substantially better results than the current structure—particularly when weighed against the complexity of adopting some considered options. The Task Force determined that it would be best to make a set of phased recommendations under the existing governance structure which could address three tiers of issues facing the Board.

The Short Term phase will focus on immediate actions that will assist the organization in righting itself and increasing public trust. The Medium Term phase can proceed once the management has rebuilt credibility and delivered substantial results to the community so that the agency can focus on structural changes that would solidify the utility’s ability to provide service for years to come. Finally, the Long Term phase is mainly about continuing to reevaluate the agency’s structure to ensure success for the next century.

Figure 2: Overview of Recommendation Phases



The Task Force finds the following key issues and proposes recommendations to address each:

**Finding #1. Customers are demanding improved efficiency and accountability.** Citizens who weighed in during the public comment portions of Task Force meetings, and at the five public meetings, were clear in their feedback that the management structure matters less to them than having a well-functioning utility that is responsive and accountable to its customers. In addition, the SWBNO’s longstanding workforce compensation, training, and demographic challenges have hampered progress.

### Recommendations:

- **Undertake an Internal Strategic Planning Process (Short Term)** – Determine the actual needs of the organization and strategies for improvement of policies and processes to allow for strong leadership and accountability at all levels.

- **Reorganized Management Structure for Efficiency and Performance (Short Term)** – Allow the Strategic Plan to determine how to organize Executive leadership in order to structure responsibilities and staff for success.
- **Flexibility in Optimized Staffing and Hiring (Short Term)** – Complete an analysis of agency-wide personnel needs; review job classifications and requirements to ensure consistency. Look for ways to streamline the Civil Service hiring process for new employees and provide cross-training and promotional opportunities.
- **Continue Improvements in Billing and Customer Service (Short Term)** – Finish fixes to the billing and collection system and report on that progress to the public. Increase the availability of staff to meet with ratepayers through community outreach days and extended hours. Investigate Smart Water Meter technology and proven, compatible, billing software to eliminate human error from water bills and provide ratepayers with accurate sewer and water bills.

**Finding #2. Inadequate opportunities for direct engagement between the SWBNO and its customers and other stakeholders.** The SWBNO has begun to address this demand by meeting with neighborhood groups and making staff available at convenient times and places for customers to voice their concerns. The Task Force heard from representatives of other high-performing utilities around the country that provided models for how this could be done.

**Recommendations:**

- **Establish enhanced communications protocols (Short Term)** – Adopt new ways of communicating with citizens in advance of construction activity, boil-water advisories, and emergency shut-offs similar to other utilities using strategies like text messaging, social media, and door hangers.
- **Establish a Citizen Advisory Committee (Short Term)** - The Sewerage and Water Board should establish a committee of interested citizens from a broad and diverse group of ratepayers to advise on and vet planning processes, policy, and protocols. This group could also serve as a stakeholder in the strategic and master planning processes, future rate cases, capital planning, and other initiatives taken on by the Board.

**Finding #3. Split responsibility for drainage is ineffective.** The management of the drainage system is split into the Major system (pipes over 36 inches in diameter, canals, and pump stations), operated and maintained by SWBNO, and the Minor system (pipes under 36 inches in diameter and catch basins), operated and maintained by the City of New Orleans Department of Public Works. Despite each portion of the system being highly dependent on the other for success, the two entities coordinate very little in the way of operations, routine maintenance, or capital planning. The City completed a Drainage Master Plan in 2010, with the goal of upgrading the Minor system to achieve a 10-year 24-hour storm level of service. SWBNO, on the other hand, has no such master plan, and the Major system’s level of service equates to a 1.5-year 24-hour storm level of service, which has proven an inadequate metric. This somewhat arbitrary division of responsibility means calls for service are often misdirected to the wrong agency and concerns are not addressed, further frustrating citizens and businesses. The Task Force’s recommendations reflect the better practice of a single agency managing all drainage responsibilities to ensure better and more efficient service and maintenance.

**Recommendation:**

- **Consolidate management of drainage system (Medium Term)** – Institute a “one-call” system for drainage where operations, management, and customer service are handled by a single entity. The drainage system management and existing funding should be consolidated under SWBNO.

**Finding #4. Chronically insufficient funding for drainage imperils the City.** The Task Force heard from a number of sources including financial consultant Raftelis, the root cause analysis consultant ABS Group, and SWBNO Executive Director Ghassan Korban about the challenges the utility faces with revenue and funding. We also heard evidence of the historic disconnect between the SWBNO’s obligation to provide service to ratepayers with limited authority over setting rates for service, which ultimately depends on the City Council. For drainage, funding is derived from two sources. For SWBNO, all funding for drainage comes from three dedicated millages that generate roughly \$54 million per year, which barely meets the operational needs of the extensive and unique drainage system. For the City and the Minor system, funding is allocated through the City’s general fund through the annual budgeting process. Both systems have historically been underfunded and funding can be unpredictable from year-to-year based on general fund revenue and administration priorities. This legacy of chronic underfunding and unpredictable revenue streams has crippled SWBNO’s and the City’s ability to invest in capital projects, forced deferment of regular infrastructure maintenance, and led to an almost wholly reactive, emergency-based maintenance protocol.

**Finding #5. Current drainage funding formula is unfair.** A functioning drainage system is an economic, social, and public health imperative—a prerequisite for living and working in the City of New Orleans. However, because the drainage system is funded exclusively by property taxes, there is not a strong nexus between the value of a property and its demand for drainage service. According to a 2011 Bureau of Governmental Research analysis, about 43% of the taxable value of properties in New Orleans are exempt either because they are owned by government or some non-profit organization, or the property’s assessment is too low to pay the millages when accounting for the homestead exemption. As a result, many large generators of runoff, such as parking lots, churches, schools, and hospitals pay nothing for drainage service—inequitably placing a burden on the homeowners and businesses who pay for drainage through their real estate taxes. The Task Force heard from several other utilities and national experts about the many ways other cities have addressed similar challenges.

**Recommendation:**

- **Develop and Implement an Equitable and Sustainable Drainage Funding Mechanism (Medium Term)** – Any new funding mechanism, including a stormwater fee, should follow national best practices and be charged on impervious surface area, with no exemptions. The mechanism should incorporate offsets, credits, and other affordability measures to ensure that it promotes a strict nexus between use of the system and cost of service delivery. Additional clarification is needed through a new Attorney General’s opinion on the legal process for adopting any new stormwater funding mechanism.

**Finding #6. SWBNO and the City must find additional, short-term revenue streams.** Unless the SWBNO finds other sources of funds, or a way to avoid/reduce the debt soon coming due for the SELA and PCCP projects, funds for these obligations must be taken from the already woefully inadequate drainage fund, further restricting SWBNO’s ability to make investments in the aging system. Improved collections and billing for water and sewer charges will not close the gap between existing funds and what is needed for 2019 and beyond, nor are those revenue streams legally

available to fund the drainage system. SWBNO has drawn down its reserves, borrowed money that it cannot repay, is nearly \$40 million in arrears on contractor payments, and has imperiled its ability to issue further bonds. Additional funding is critical for continued operation.

**Recommendation:**

- **Support SWBNO through Stabilization Fund (Short Term)** – SWBNO missed the opportunity to issue a round of bonds for drainage capital improvements and has spent an unplanned \$80 million to return the system to reliable functionality after the August 17 flooding. The agency needs an immediate infusion of cash to replace the spent reserves and to allow for new bonding opportunities to finance improvements in the short term.

**Finding #7. No plan for how to repair and improve systems.** At present, the Sewerage and Water Board does not have a comprehensive master plan to guide decision making and project development. There is also no single entity responsible for implementation of the Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan and its green infrastructure and groundwater management strategies, which is sorely needed.

**Recommendation:**

- **Develop System Master Plans (Short Term)** – Begin work on project-based master plans for the sewerage, water, drainage, and power systems that will incorporate green infrastructure and the concepts noted in the Urban Water Plan. Pursue plans that will yield a 100-year vision for the agency, in the context of a robust, community-based engagement process to incorporate diverse interests and perspectives.

**Finding #8. The rate-setting process is opaque.** The historic underfunding of the Sewerage and Water Board appears to be the result of a reluctance on the part of past City Councils to grant requests for rate increases for water and sewer services. Under the existing process, there is no specified way for ratepayers to involve themselves in the process other than attending regular public hearings. Further, no part of the process is set up to provide City Councilmembers with the necessary information to make an accurate judgement call on whether a case is needed, nor are they allowed to alter a rate case—they can only approve or deny.

**Recommendation:**

- **Explore Reforms to the Rate-Setting Process (Medium Term)** – Additional study is needed to determine what changes could provide for a more equitable and transparent process to set rates. The Task Force heard many good ideas from other cities, including hiring a public advocate to analyze and advocate for ratepayers in the process.

**Finding #9. New Orleans ultimately needs a more holistic approach to water management.** At present, the delivery of the Sewerage and Water Board’s core services is wrapped up in a complex web of State enabling legislation, City Charter requirements, and administrative rules. This complexity hampers the ability of groups like the Task Force to explore reforms that could significantly improve the utility’s ability to perform. Further, sometime in the future, a well-functioning SWBNO could serve as the nucleus of a regional approach to managing water, garnering greater efficiency and effectiveness through shared resources with neighboring parishes. Many other jurisdictions throughout the country have already moved to such a regional cooperation model.

**Recommendations:**

- **Undertake a study of the existing governance and regulatory structure (Long Term)** – In general, the Task Force struggled with untangling the web of state and local statutes and codes that apply to the Sewerage and Water Board, its governance and its ability to make decisions. The Task Force recommends that the State Legislature undertake a special study of the issue of State control of the Sewerage and Water Board so that decisions can be better made by understanding all roles and responsibilities related to the agency’s governance.
- **Once SWBNO has attained stable functionality, revisit governance structure (Long Term)** – Consider a broader range of options, including a regional utility and/or a public benefit corporation, which may best serve the long-term needs of the system. Undertake a study to determine the long-term effectiveness of state versus city control.

## Conclusion

The Task Force, as organized, cannot act unilaterally on any of these recommendations to Mayor Cantrell, the City Council, and the Orleans Parish Legislative Delegation. Adoption and implementation of these recommendations, however, will require a true partnership among our elected leaders, public agencies, and the community.

The Task Force believes that the above recommendations will set the utility on solid footing and provide efficient and effective service to the community.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations	Findings								
Recommendations	1. Customers are demanding improved efficiency and accountability.	2. Inadequate opportunities for direct engagement between the SWBNO and its customers and other stakeholders.	3. Split responsibility for drainage is ineffective	4. Chronically insufficient funding for drainage imperils the City.	5. Current drainage funding formula is unfair	6. SWBNO and the City must find additional, short-term revenue streams.	7. No plan for how to repair and improve systems.	8. The rate-setting process is opaque.	9. New Orleans ultimately needs a more holistic approach to water management.
<b>Short Term (1-2 years)</b>									
Undertake an Internal Strategic Planning Process	X								
Reorganized Management Structure for Efficiency and Performance	X								
Flexibility in optimized staffing and hiring	X								
Continue improvements in billing and customer service	X								
Establish enhanced communications protocols		X							
Establish a Citizen Advisory Committee		X							
Support SWBNO through stabilization fund						X			
Develop system master plans							X		
<b>Medium Term (2-5 years)</b>									
Consolidate management of drainage system			X						
Investigate development and implementation of an equitable and sustainable drainage funding mechanism				X	X				
Explore reforms to the rate-setting process								X	
<b>Long Term (5+ years)</b>									
Undertake a study of the existing governance and regulatory structure									X
Once SWBNO has attained stable functionality, revisit governance structure									X

## Appendix

The following documents include the House Resolution creating the Task Force, as well as all expert testimony provided to the Task Force. The documents are available by following the below links and on the Task Force Website.

- I. [LA House Resolution 193, 2018](#)
- II. [Janet Howard Testimony](#) – August 22, 2018
- III. [Rami Diaz, Urban Water Plan](#) - September 12, 2018
- IV. [Root Cause Analysis Presentation, ABS Group](#) – September 18, 2018
- V. [Raftelis Presentation](#) – October 3, 2018
- VI. [Citizens Energy Group, Dan Considine](#) – November 14, 2018
- VII. [Philadelphia Water, Joanne Dahme](#) – November 30, 2018
- VIII. [Stormwater Utilities, Eric Rothstein / Andy Reece](#) – December 12, 2018