



Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

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Mayor, S&WB Members Tap Attorney Jade Brown-Russell as Acting Executive Director

Jade Brown-Russell has accepted the temporary position of Acting Executive Director of the Sewerage & Water Board, ensuring a continuity of leadership and expertise as the search for a permanent leader reaches its final stages.

A permanent Executive Director is expected to be selected by the Board of Directors in July, according to the national search firm's schedule.

Ms. Brown-Russell joined the S&WB in November as part of an Interim Management Team enlisted to stabilize the agency under emergency conditions and establish a path forward to improve its essential operations and infrastructure.

Ms. Brown-Russell is an experienced corporate attorney and leader who has been tapped before to stabilize and transition critical public assets. In 2016, Ms. Brown-Russell was appointed to temporarily lead the French Market Corporation through its transition in leadership. In that capacity, she employed strategy, operations and organizational models that helped drive the organizations continued growth, including the recent \$3.3 million renovation of the New Orleans riverfront.

As Special Counsel at Sewerage & Water Board, Ms. Brown-Russell has led the Legal Department while serving as a chief adviser to Interim Executive Director Marcie Edwards, the Board of Directors and the members of the S&WB Executive Team. Ms. Brown-Russell has reorganized the Legal Department, creating a new Contracts Division to provide

effective counsel to the Sewerage and Water Board on all contracts and transactions. In addition, she has implemented new processes for data management and retention.

In her new temporary role, Ms. Brown-Russell said her top priority will be to continue the initiatives started by Ms. Edwards, who ended her tenure on May 22. Ms. Brown-Russell said she will focus on working to resolve the challenges of the billing process, continued improvement to the drainage system, and to continue to fill numerous vacancies across the S&WB.

"I look forward to working with Mayor Cantrell, S&WB and City Council to ensure we continue to improve this critical agency alongside the hardworking employees," Ms. Brown-Russell said of her new role.

"Jade Brown-Russell has my faith and confidence, and I believe she will provide the leadership and the steadiness needed as Acting Executive Director," said Mayor Cantrell. "Jade has done an excellent job helping the City to get our arms around the problems we face at the S&WB, and I am grateful that she is going to step up and serve admirably."

"I worked with Jade when she was at French Market Corporation, and she was fantastic," said S&WB Board Member Lewis Stirling. "I feel really good about it because she brings legal skills, administrative skills, and people skills to the table."

An ad hoc selection committee established by the Board of Directors and Mayor LaToya Cantrell recommended Ms. Brown-Russell and Interim General Superintendent Bruce Adams as the best qualified S&WB employees to lead the S&WB through a final leadership transition. The committee also empowered the president, Mayor Cantrell, to make the final selection. She announced the selection of Ms. Brown-Russell on Thursday, May 24.

Her temporary tenure at the helm will end with the Board's approval of a permanent Executive Director. That process is expected to conclude in July.

The Executive Search Timeline is as follows:

March 27 - Interim Executive Director, Marcie Edwards, met with Robert Burg of Ralph Anderson, to set expectations and deliverables

March 28 - Board Meeting (brief discussion on Executive Director profile and minimum qualifications)

April 18 - Search firm opened search

May 28 - Search firm closes search

June 11 - Onsite visit with Search Firm and Selection Committee

June 18 - Background checks initiated for Top 5 finalists

July 9 - Interviews of Top 5 top 5 finalists

July 18 - Board Meeting and selection made by Board

August 1-15 - Start date (may vary based on selected candidate's availability to start)

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