



"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY"

Sewerage & Water Board of NEW ORLEANS

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SWB WILL CONDUCT THREE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON RATE INCREASES, FEES AND FUNDING OF MAJOR PROJECTS THIS WEEK

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans will hold three public hearings to present recommendations for future funding of the sewer, water, and drainage systems it operates in the City.

The Board of Directors approved the financial plan and rate study that recommended rate increases for sewer and water services and a fee for drainage at its December 21, 2011 meeting.

Details on the rate increases and need for funds to repair and upgrade the three systems will be presented at the citywide hearings.

The hearings are scheduled for:

Monday, January 23, 2012
Dryades Street YMCA
2220 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.
6 p.m.

Thursday, January 26, 2012
City Council Chambers
1300 Perdido Street
6 p.m. – Cablecast Live

Monday, January 30, 2012
Lindy Boggs Conference Center
(Near the UNO Campus)
2043 Lakeshore Drive
6 p.m.

SWB Executive Director Marcia St. Martin said, "Citizens are encouraged to attend one of the meetings to learn more about the operation, costs and the need for improvement and expansion of our three systems. "We have prepared an excellent presentation and public input is most welcome," she said.

The Board said it is facing serious financial challenges due to an aging infrastructure, significant new expenditures and an inability to borrow additional funds.

Additionally, the Board incurred extensive damage at almost every facility due to Katrina. And, even with a rush of Federal and State funds, it was not enough to repair or replace what was damaged or destroyed.

Mrs. St. Martin commented, “Water system revenues are drastically down, due to a number of factors, but mainly because no rate adjustments were implemented from 1990 through 2002.

The sewer system’s income is also well below recommended amounts, again, mainly because of no rate adjustments from 1987 to 1997 and 2007 to 2010.

The drainage system also is seriously under funded. Supported only by property taxes, a new proposed drainage service fee would generate additional revenue for citywide drainage improvements.

The Board said it has and is still pursuing every available opportunity for Federal and State funds for all three of its systems, especially from grants and FEMA reimbursements.

Mrs. St. Martin commented, “we have taken drastic steps to reduce expenses and will continue to do so. I can assure that any funds generated by increased rates will be spent with careful consideration and diligence.”

We realize that these proposed rate changes will result in additional expenses for our citizens and businesses. We seek your input and we ask that, after you hear how the funds will give you better water, sewerage and drainage systems, you will understand the necessity of these recommended rates and charges,” she said.

A schedule of water and sewerage rate increases will be made available on the Board’s website:
www.swbno.org

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