625 St. Joseph Street
New Orleans, LA 70165
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October 15, 2026

The Governance Committee met on Thursday, October 15, 2026, in the Executive Board Room. The meeting convened at approximately 10:19 a.m.

Members Present:
Director Kimberly Thomas – Chair
Director Ariane Greenidge
Director Corinne Villavaso

Members Absent:
Director Julius Kimbrough Jr., Vice Chair
Councilmember Jason Hughes

ACTION ITEM:

A. Resolution (R-148-2026) to Adopt Rules for Public Participation and Comment at Meetings of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Tyler Russell, Director of Strategic Planning

Mr. Russell shared the utility's desire to adopt and formalize rules for public participation and comment at meetings of the Board and its committees. While the utility follows Open Meetings law and all other applicable laws governing public meetings, these are not available in a concise format for the public to review when attending or watching Board meetings. The goal is to make these rules available to the public to guide the submission and reading of public comments, submitted both in person and electronically, during Board meetings.

Director Villavaso recommended including language in the resolution that would provide accommodations to members of the public with limited English proficiency. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to defer the resolution and asked staff to amend the resolution to provide for language access accommodations.

- **Director Thomas made a motion to defer Resolution R-148-2026. Director Villavaso moved. Director Greenidge seconded. The motion carried.**

DISCUSSION ITEM:

B. Proposed New Board of Directors By-laws

The Committee reviewed and discussed new bylaws proposed by the City's Administration. The Board's bylaws are being reviewed and amended pursuant to City Council Motion M-26-311. Andrew Tuozzolo,

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Special Counsel to Mayor Moreno, was in attendance and shared the Administration's perspective on the proposed changes.

Key issues discussed by the Committee included proposed changes to the frequency and location of Board meetings (with some being held in City Council chambers); the process to nominate and elect Board officers; and the authority of the Board president and the president pro tempore. Mr. Tuozzolo noted that, per comments made by the Council president, there is a desire for the Board to hold some of its meetings in Council chambers. SWBNO staff noted that some of the proposed changes regarding the election and authority of Board officers is to align with recent changes in State law and the City's Code of Ordinances.

The committees of the Board were also discussed. The proposed new bylaws would retain the Audit, Finance & Administration, Operations, and Pension committees and eliminate the existing Governance and Strategic Planning committees. The proposed new bylaws would also add a new Employee Relations Committee and a new City Transition Committee. It was discussed that the existing Plumbing Conference Committee could continue to function as its own committee or a sub-committee under the Operations Committee.

Committee members raised concerns about eliminating the Governance Committee and Strategic Planning Committee, questioning how the functions assigned to those committees would be carried out. Mr. Tuozzolo advised that the City Council is contemplated to take a larger role in overseeing and deciding SWBNO governance issues. If needed, governance issues can still be discussed by the full Board. He also noted that the elimination of the Strategic Planning Committee is to ensure alignment between SWBNO and the City and that strategic planning can be included as part of the annual capital improvement planning process by the City's Administration and the Council. The Committee discussed and agreed that any functions currently assigned to the Governance or Strategic Planning committees should be reassigned to other committees or SWBNO departments, as appropriate, in the new bylaws. The Committee also discussed that many of the current functions of the Strategic Planning Committee should be moved to the City Transition Committee.

Regarding the newly proposed Employee Relations Committee, Mr. Tuozzolo noted that this committee would make the Board more accessible to employees for workforce-related issues. The jurisdiction of the committee would include personnel policies and procedures, compensation and classification studies, workforce development and training, among other things. The committee would enable the Board to engage more with employees and could make recommendations on how to improve workforce issues. In addition to Board members, the new bylaws proposed by the Administration would include non-voting, non-Board members who are SWBNO employees.

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The Committee also discussed the Administration's proposal to create a new City Transition Committee. This would be a permanent, standing committee that would oversee and implement the reforms required to expand City Council oversight of SWBNO and achieve full integration of City and SWBNO operations by 2028. Transition Officers, one from SWBNO and the other from the Administration, would report regularly to the committee.

Finally, the committee discussed the proposed changes to the executive director and general superintendent positions. As required by the City Council, the proposed new bylaws set forth the duties and responsibilities of the general Superintendent, which largely focus on operational functions relative to the water, sewerage, and drainage systems. The duties and responsibilities of the executive director are also included in the new bylaws, focusing on the administrative operations of the utility. To align with recent changes in the City's ordinances, the Board election of both the general superintendent and the executive director are subject to City Council confirmation.

Before adjourning, the Committee asked for additional opportunities to review and discuss the proposed new bylaws developed by the Administration.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Ms. Irma Plummer** expressed concerns about the proposed bylaws. She emphasized the importance of understanding the foundation of SWBNO before making significant changes to the bylaws.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Governance Committee, Director Thomas made a motion to adjourn. Director Villavaso moved. Director Greenidge seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:08 p.m.

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