

Monday, January 30, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Charlotte Warren, Bradley Sawyer, Pat Paradis, Ken Knight, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke, Cecil Munson

Absent: Kirsten Hebert

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton (remote)

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1801, Corey moved to approve the minutes from December 19, 2022. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1802 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. The committee met with Tarbuck and Payne on January 19 to review the draft budgets. The budgets were approved in December, 2022. The committee recommends a 10% increase to water; 30% increase to sewer and 0% to stormwater to fund the budgets.

Corey moved to increase drinking water and fire protection rates in an amount not to exceed 10% with a desired effective date of July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Corey moved to increase sewer rates in an amount not to exceed 30% with a desired effective date of July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:03 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. Pipe jacking beneath the rail trail is underway now with St Laurent & Son and Vortex. Contract 3 will begin soon. Contract 3 extends a drinking water pipe from the eastern shore of the river to Hospital street and then to the Hospital Street drinking water booster station. This project provides a redundant river crossing and a secondary supply to the Hospital Street station. Contract 4 is nearly design. Contract 4 will connect the west side of the river to State Street and complete the drinking water interconnection project. The Front Street pump station project is nearing the end of the design phase. The new submersible pump station will replace the existing 1963 pump station which is prone to flooding when the river rises. Highland Avenue is a joint project with the City of Augusta that will be constructed this summer by McGee Construction. A small segment of water main on Turtle Run in east Winthrop will be completed this summer. A short section of water pipe will be installed under Riverside Drive near the Vassalboro town line. We are working with St Laurent and Son to eliminate a CSO overflow pipe near the police station that is currently under construction at Willow Street.

At 1811 Tarbuck provided updates for the Board. Tarbuck noted that the recent census could create conditions that would make the District into a MS4 community. This would increase the amount of responsibility that we would have for stormwater in Augusta and result in increased costs and higher rates.

There is legislation to set the drinking water limit for PFAS in Maine at zero parts per trillion. The legislation is being actively tracked by the local water and wastewater associations.

At 1819 Payne noted that the financials for December are in draft form. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of December:

Budget Summary 2022		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
12	Sewer	3.9	4.4	112%	4.7	4.6	97%	0.5
12	Stormwater	4.1	4.0	99%	3.0	2.8	93%	1.2
12	Water	4.2	4.6	109%	3.9	3.7	96%	2.2

Total liens outstanding for the utility district is about \$1,200 or about 0.01% of the combined budgets of the utility. Liens in the past have been as high as \$15,000.

Payne noted that the City of Augusta foreclosed on the following properties which required us to write off the following lien amounts:

- 95 Eastern Avenue on January 13, 2023; \$1,078.58.
- 102 Northern Avenue in 2019; \$638.24.

At 1827 Corey moved that the General Manager be directed to secure \$1M in new borrowing from TD Bank to support capital expenses needed to support the sewer division. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous. This is a 10 year loan at an interest rate of 4.25%. Total interest will be \$233,750.

At 1829 Corey moved that the General Manager be directed to secure up to \$2M in new borrowing in Drinking Water State Revolving Loan funds from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to support capital expenses needed to support the water division. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1830 Tarbuck reminded Board members of the availability of retirement options for Board members. For the current Board members this is limited to 457b contributions.

At 1833 Alan Burton provided a human resources update.

At 1835 Tarbuck provided an update on the behalf of the communications consultants. Knight asked when the audit might be done this year. Payne thought the audit may be done by May this year.

At 1837 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, February 27, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Charlotte Warren, Bradley Sawyer, Pat Paradis, Ken Knight, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Cecil Munson

Absent: Kirsten Hebert, Keith Luke

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton (remote)

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1801, Corey moved to approve the minutes from January 30, 2023. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1801 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. The committee met with Tarbuck and Payne on January 19 to review the draft budgets. The budgets were approved in December, 2022. The committee recommends a 10% increase to water; 30% increase to sewer and 0% to stormwater to fund the budgets.

The committee is tracking the public notice requirements.

At 18:02 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The pipe jacking beneath the Rail Trail is done. Pipes are being pulled through the sleeve that was created by the pipe jacking project. This work will connect the sewer from the east side to the west side. Submissions to replace the Front Street pump station are ongoing. That project should be out to bid in 2023. Highland Avenue will start as soon as frost is out of the ground. Turtle Run water main is under design review now. The 450' Riverside Drive water main project is out to bid now. This main extends into Vassalboro. We will remove a CSO by consolidating two old pipes into a new, deep pipe near the police station which is currently under construction. This is a difficult project. 330' of pipe will be installed. The budget for sewer relining will be reduced to pay for this project.

At 1809 Tarbuck provided updates for the Board. Tarbuck noted that Jane Carroll will retire tomorrow after 42 years of service making her the longest serving employee for the former sanitary district. GAUD hired CES to help navigate the solar landscape. Tarbuck noted that GAUD has 13 CSOs, down from 32 at the start of the CSO mitigation program. Three CSOs were removed in 2022 thanks in large part to adding sensors to overflow sites that allow for refined control measures. Tarbuck noted that Casella, the company that accepts GAUD sludge, notified GAUD that our sludge disposal costs will be about \$200k higher than anticipated at the start of January. This works out to the need for about a 3% increase in sewer fees to pay for this increase. GAUD will look into other options to dry the sludge or bring it to a different site if possible.

There is legislation to set the drinking water limit for PFAS in Maine at zero parts per trillion. The legislation is being actively tracked by the local water and wastewater associations.

At 1819 Payne noted that the financials for January are in draft form. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of January:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			Ending cash
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	
1	Sewer	5.0	0.4	8%	5.0	0.4	8%	0.9
1	Stormwater	4.0	0.4	10%	3.1	0.3	9%	1.5
1	Water	5.0	0.4	8%	4.2	0.3	7%	2.1

At 1821 Alan Burton provided a human resources update. There are 4 open positions.

At 1822 Sawyer noted that the GAUD PFAS website section should be reviewed in the context of upcoming regulatory changes.

At 1823 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned in honor and thanks to Jane Carroll's years of service. The motion was seconded by Warren. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, March 20, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell

Absent: Charlotte Warren, Keith Luke

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton (remote)

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1801, Corey moved to approve the minutes from February 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1801 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. Corey noted that the rate committee will meet prior to the next GAUD board meeting. The dates for preparing documents for PUC review and public notice are being met.

The committee is tracking the public notice requirements.

At 18:02 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. Pipes beneath the river are being connected to structures which will allow the sewer to be connected to the wastewater treatment plant. Water pipe is being installed on Kelton Road to connect the siphon to the Hospital Street drinking water pump station. The Front Street sewer pump station design is done; environmental review is starting now. Munson asked if the City of Augusta's proposed improvements to the Front Street area are going to interfere with the pump station design. Begin said the station wouldn't be particularly impacted by the proposed improvements by the City. The work to install a new sewer pipe next to the City of Augusta's police station construction is ongoing. This work will eliminate a combined sewer overflow and improve sewer operations.

At 18:07 Tarbuck noted that former employee, Paul Collins, passed away recently. Paul had been the wastewater treatment plant's chief operator for about 12 years before moving to South Portland.

At 18:10 Knight noted that the District is challenged by revised PFAS regulations for both the drinking water and sewer divisions. EPA released draft rules in the last month that create maximum contaminant levels for PFOA and PFOS at 4 parts per trillion (ppt). If approved, the rules will take effect in about 3 years by which time, public water systems must provide drinking water which is below 4 parts per trillion. Testing at the Riverside wells has indicated the presence of PFOA and PFOS at levels greater than 4 ppt which means continued future use of the wells will require treatment. Changes to the drinking water means it will need to be reevaluated to determine how corrosive the water is to lead and copper. Munson asked how long it would take to restart the filtration plant. Tarbuck said in an emergency, it might take a few days to get the plant working. It might take as long as a month to get it up and running and making drinking water.

At 18:31 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of February:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
2	Sewer	5.0	0.7	14%	5.0	0.8	16%	1.3
2	Stormwater	4.0	0.7	17%	3.1	0.5	16%	2.1
2	Water	5.0	0.8	15%	4.2	0.6	14%	2.7

At 18:33 Tarbuck reviewed the status of sludge disposal. New regulations aimed at keeping PFAS out of groundwater have stopped the practice of composting sludge and using it as fertilizer. Sludge that used to be composted now goes to landfills. Sludge can be a challenge for landfill operators who have to try to stabilize it with bulky solid waste. Landfill operators have resorted to hauling sludge as far away as Canada for disposal. As a result, the cost per ton to

dispose of sludge has increased from \$147 to \$209 in the span of two months this year alone. This has increased our anticipated cost from \$400k to \$577k. This equates to 4% of the District's revenues.

Sawyer asked if there was a way to tweak the sludge screw presses to squeeze more water out of them. Tarbuck explained that the presses could be optimized further.

At 18:42 Meredith Strang-Burgess provided a communications update. There will be an April bill stuffer relating to the upcoming rate hearing for drinking water and wastewater. Other information related to the rate hearings include a postcard that will be sent to all customers and a special page will be added to the website. The rest of the website has been optimized based on usage. Next to do will be a review of the crisis communication plan and a couple of additional videos to explain GAUD operations. A spring newsletter will be out soon.

At 18:46 Alan Burton provided a human resources update. There are 4 open positions.

At 18:47 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Corey. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, April 24, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Charlotte Warren, Kirsten Hebert, Bob Corey,

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton (remote), Meredith Strang-Burgess (remote)

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1802, Munson moved to approve the minutes from March 20, 2023. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1802 Knight discussed freedom of access laws relative to subcommittees. He noted that a meeting of two or more trustees is a meeting that needs to be noticed in advance and minutes have to be taken. We have not been doing this and will start doing it going forward to comply with the law.

At 1809 Knight asked for an update from the rate committee. Munson noted that the rate committee hasn't met since the last board meeting. Knight asked for confirmation of the rates that would be discussed on May 15. Tarbuck confirmed that the drinking water rate proposal is 10% and the sewer rate proposal is 30%. Knight noted that because of the recent increase in the cost of sludge disposal and the financial impact it is having on wastewater plant operations that the Board should consider an increase instead of 34% to sewer rates to pay for that unprecedented increase in sludge expense. Knight asked for the Board's thoughts on this concept. Paradis explained that public notice has been sent saying that the rate increase would be 30%. Paradis noted that no decisions have yet been made and won't be until May 15. Munson suggested that the rate committee should consider this and bring back a recommendation to the next board meeting.

At 18:12 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The sewer pipeline beneath the river is now operational and conveying flow. The east side project that will connect the drinking water pipe beneath the river to Hospital Street is ongoing now. Pipe has been installed from the east side of the river up to Hospital Street and heading north now. Begin noted that it took seven years from the time the failure was identified to the time when the pipe was repaired. \$5.5 to \$6M of that work came from grants for an \$8.3M project. The Front Street sewer pump station is nearly ready for submittal to the planning board. McGee has started the replacement of water, sewer and stormwater on Highland Avenue. This is a project that is being done in conjunction with the City of Augusta. It should be done by October. There is a short section of water main in Manchester on Turtle Run Road that needs to be replaced to support recent developments in that area. It should be done by this fall. Riverside Drive water main is about done. This section of pipe near the Vassalboro line has a high leak history. The project was completed by CH Stevenson and went very well. The Willow Street CSO abatement project is going well. The new police station on Willow Street required some adjustments to the pipeline in that area which proved beneficial to GAUD and allowed one of the old CSOs in that area to be eliminated. Begin noted that the City provided \$45k in funds to this project as that was the amount they'd have had to spend to relocate a sewer pipe anyway so the collaboration here proved to be very fruitful for both entities. A large diameter pipeline relining project is out to bid now. The primary focus area is on the west side of Augusta in the sewershed near the wastewater plant. Our CCTV inspections showed that much of this pipe is old, leaking, located off road and hard to maintain. Because of the larger diameter pipes involved the relining dollars won't yield as much in terms of linear feet of pipe.

At 18:20 Tarbuck noted employee anniversaries. Tarbuck noted that Phyllis Rand is retiring and will continue in a part time capacity to keep the wastewater plant operating at a high level. John Cummons was promoted to Assistant Chief Engineer. He'll spend most of his time at the wastewater plant with some work also on the distribution system. The sludge presses are getting much more attention now that sludge costs so much more to dispose of. It's important to squeeze out as much water as possible to reduce tipping fees at the landfill. Sludge from Augusta is now being sent to two locations in Canada, each about 270 miles away. This is not sustainable but it is the best option available for disposal at this time. Tarbuck noted that Cummons and Begin went to Nashua, NH to look at the BioScru sludge drying option. Tarbuck and Knight met with Winthrop Utilities District to discuss how the utilities can collaborate to help ease the

operational blow when the Winthrop manager retires in a few years. Rick Anair won the Maine Water Utilities Association’s President’s Award. GAUD worked with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to evaluate the risks GAUD has from both a cybersecurity and physical security perspective. Reports from CISA are forthcoming. We will be going to the Reservoir Trail in Hallowell to assess the condition of an old asbestos cement pipeline using CCTV to determine whether or not it can be relined and reused for the Caddyshack project.

At 18:30 Tarbuck noted that the east side wells will likely need to be treated for PFAS due to the influence of the river on the wells. PFAS can be removed with filtration. Jeff Musich is researching pilot treatment options to make sure that we know how the water can be treated if and when the law requires treatment. Samples from March showed no PFAS on the westside wells. On the eastside, that testing showed the levels at about 4.7 parts per trillion which would exceed the proposed 4 parts per trillion level. Sawyer noted that every option for treatment will cost millions of dollars. Sawyer asked when the Board could consider options for treatment at Riverside, new wells further from the Kennebec or reactivating the GF Laurin drinking water filtration plant. Tarbuck noted that it would be a couple of years from now after the pilot testing at Riverside has been completed. Begin noted that the best sources are near Manchester near the Mount Vernon road area. Unfortunately, those sources are not near existing drinking water infrastructure.

At 18:40 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District’s financial position as of the end of April:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			Ending cash
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	
4	Sewer	5.0	2.0	40%	5.0	1.7	33%	0.7
4	Stormwater	4.0	1.5	38%	3.1	0.9	30%	2.3
4	Water	5.0	1.5	31%	4.2	1.2	29%	2.7

At 18:42 Meredith Strang-Burgess provided a communications update. The documents required for the rate hearing have been processed, posted and delivered as needed. The Consumer Confidence Report is nearly done and should be posted soon. The spring newsletter is nearly done. Social media resources have been updated and folks should check that out for feedback.

At 18:49 Alan Burton provided a human resources update. There are 4 open positions that will be addressed when Alan comes back on May 6th.

At 18:50 Sawyer thanked Phyllis for her efforts over the years and moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, May 15, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Charlotte Warren, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: none

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton, Meredith Strang-Burgess

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order. After staff introductions Knight called the rate hearing to begin. Knight noted that the Board would allow 3 minutes to speak and direct questions to the Board chair.

Knight proceeded through rate hearing slides to ensure participants understood the rate hearing requirements and the timeline followed. The drinking water rate hearing is pursuant to MPUC Chapter 6104. Sewer rate hearings are required but the MPUC has no involvement with sewer rates.

Knight noted that water customers could file a petition with the MPUC if 15% of the water customers were to file a petition. Knight noted that public notice has been provided in excess of minimum notice requirements. Documents related to the rate change have been made public and available on the website. Rates will be filed in accordance with 6104 proceedings with the MPUC no sooner than May 26 and no later than June 13, 2023. Knight noted that the effective date of the rate rate changes will be on or about July 1, 2023.

At 1806 Knight invited people to address the board. Margaret Terrell of Augusta addressed the board. Margaret asked if the petition was available at the office. Knight said that the petitions were available at the office. Hebert noted that it's typical for folks to come to the office to sign petitions if they'd like. Margaret noted that they could also make copies of the petition. Knight clarified that MPUC only regulates drinking water, not wastewater. Sawyer noted that the Board is considering rates tonight for both water and wastewater. Margaret asked about the fiber optics pipe under the river. Knight noted that the reuse of the pipe under the river for fiber optics was shared among the three divisions. Margaret asked if the people that used the fiber optics work is separate from the water and sewer work. Knight noted that it was separate but not really part of the rate discussion. Margaret wondered if there would be a bill for fiber optics from GAUD. Knight clarified that it wasn't a new service GAUD would provide. It was just a new way for GAUD to connect to its own resources.

At 1812 Knight closed the rate public hearing as there were no other people present or remote to comment.

At 1813 Knight resumed the regular board meeting.

At 1813, Warren moved to approve the minutes from April 24, 2023. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1813 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. Corey noted that the rate committee had reviewed a request from the board to the rate committee to consider increasing the sewer rate from 30% to 34% to reflect the higher cost of disposing of sewer sludge due to more stringent PFAS regulations. Corey noted that the committee is recommending that the board stay with the 30% sewer increase that has been discussed. The increase in costs will dip into the emergency fund. Corey noted that the rate committee continues to review economic trends and will make recommendations as needed going forward. Corey closed his comments by saying the rate committee recommends staying with the rate increases as proposed of 10% for drinking water and 30% for sewer.

At 1818 Tarbuck noted that the sudden increase in sludge disposal costs is under legislative review and may be reversed. He noted that it was too soon to be certain but asserted there was a chance that the costs could return to 2022 levels and mitigate the need for additional offsetting revenue now.

At 1818 Hebert asked what other projects could be deferred to offset the higher sludge disposal costs. Payne noted that management is moving projects and hiring as needed to help manage day to day costs.

At 1819 Knight asked if part of the cost cutting efforts involved deferring hiring positions the board has expressed concern with being critical to operations. Tarbuck noted that in the case of the wastewater plant's recent loss of two key

positions that the risk is low for failure due to retaining one of the people who retired on a part time basis and hiring another part time process engineer to update a 10 year old wastewater plant comprehensive performance evaluation. Coupled with upgrading existing employee John Cummons role to assistant chief engineer and relocating him to the plant this seems to be both cost and operationally effective.

At 18:24 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The pipes beneath the river are done. River contract 2 is done. River contract 3 entails connecting the drinking water pipe beneath the river to the Hospital Street pump station. It also includes updating drinking water service to the former AMHI state campus to make water and fire protection service more resilient. River contract 4 has not been designed yet.

Begin noted that the May 2, 2023 flood was actually the third highest on record after the 1987 and 1936 floods. The May 2 flood unfortunately damaged the Front Street sewer pump station as it was overtopped with water and the 'dry' side of the 'can' was filled with water from the river. A bypass pump system was installed and the pump motors were 'baked' to dry them out. The pump station was returned to service without further incident but this reinforces why work is under way to replace that pump station with a new submersible station with controls well above any current flood predictions.

The Highland Avenue project continues. Work is going well so far with a completion date in the fall.

The short section of Riverside Drive at the Vassalboro line was done this spring.

The sewer was relocated near the new police station on Willow Street. This allowed the abandonment of a CSO and installed reliable sewer service near the new station. This was done in conjunction with the City of Augusta and went very well.

Relining work this year will be in larger diameter pipes for about 3,700' at a cost of about \$380,000 to Insituform. This will be vastly cheaper than open cut excavation.

At 18:30 Tarbuck noted that the flood of 1936 happened while the water district was installing a water main under the river. Tarbuck noted that Mike Morey had 34 years of service to the District which is remarkable.

At 18:33, Munson asked about the Manchester trunkline project, aka "Caddyshack". There is a congressionally directed spending \$2.0M grant to help move this project forward. Tarbuck noted that there is some early progress on this project to assess an existing sewer pipeline installed in 1970 that was abandoned in 1980 for reuse as a sewer forcemain. Work to date has been to locate the old pipe, drain it and CCTV inspect it. The work that can be done without using a vacuum truck has been completed. The next step is to bring a vacuum truck to the site to facilitate additional investigatory work.

At 18:38 Corey noted that there has been a statement about the board approved policy review that has been there for about a year. Corey asked for an update at the next meeting.

At 18:38 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of April:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			Ending cash
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	
4	Sewer	5.0	2.0	40%	5.0	1.7	33%	0.7
4	Storm	4.0	1.5	38%	3.1	0.9	30%	2.3
4	Water	5.0	1.5	31%	4.2	1.2	29%	2.7

Corey noted that the cash positions now will be drained quickly as the district pays for projects that are currently underway.

Payne noted that the sum of the liens outstanding is \$867. Corey noted that Randi Taylor and the ladies in the office have done a great job with minimizing the amount and number of liens outstanding. Payne noted that the Maine State Housing Utility assistance program has helped reimburse customers in need over \$18,000.

At 18:46 Tarbuck discussed the PFAS levels at the Riverside wells. The wells exceed an EPA proposed limit of 4 parts per trillion for PFAS. The challenge is that Riverside has high hardness. The best way forward is to install a 'pilot' treatment system to determine how to scale up a full size treatment system. Tarbuck noted that the last sample collected tested at 4.7 parts per trillion. The cost to install filtration will be between \$2.0 and \$5.0 in today's estimate.

At 18:47 Warren noted that the piloting made good sense to get the data needed to install a permanent system. Munson asked if this new filtration system would help with hardness. Tarbuck noted that the final design would both reduce the hardness to a lower level that was still protective of the pipes for lead and copper mitigation but less of a nuisance to customers in terms of calcium deposition.

Corey asked if other districts are doing this piloting work. Tarbuck and Sawyer both noted that many utilities across New England are looking into similar piloting efforts to get in front of this issue.

Sawyer asked if we couldn't use the east side wells whether or not the west side wells could support current needs. Tarbuck said we could.

At 18:55 Corey moved to fund the drinking water PFAS analysis in an amount not to exceed \$200,000. The motion was seconded by Munson. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:55 Corey moved to approve a 5 year lease / purchase agreement for a CAT 308 excavator. Warren seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:56 Meredith Strang-Burgess provided a communications update via Zoom. The focus has been on the rate hearing. The newsletter has been mailed / sent via Constant Contact. They are keeping up with inserts and considering additional video content. Meredith noted that there is a block on the home page about how people in need can get financial assistance for water and wastewater bills.

At 18:58 Alan Burton provided a human resources update. Alan is working with Jason Souzer to ensure his needs are being met on the road crew. There are several open budgeted positions and that's the big push to fill. Alan is helping to manage the safety program by distributing expertise within the district to subject matter experts instead of concentrating all of the responsibilities on one or two people. Internal and external communications remain a constant effort. Mike Payne will have a 360 review.

At 19:01 Hebert asked if there was a motion to sign the tariff sheet for the MPUC submittal. Hebert noted that this would reaffirm that the board is moving forward with the rates as advertised to the public.

Hebert moved that we certify and approve the revised schedule of rates for drinking water service, fire protection service, and sewer service, which has been presented to this meeting and recorded with the minutes, to go into effect on or about July 1, 2023, and continuing until such time as the schedule of rates is modified by vote of the Trustees. I further move that the Assistant Treasurer, in addition to the Treasurer, be authorized and directed to apply the schedule of rates, along with all fees and charges otherwise authorized by the District or by State statute, to all persons, entities and property receiving services from the District, and to thereafter collect the sums due from said persons and entities and to take all appropriate action related to the collection of said sums, including the preparation and filing of notices and liens and allowed by the District's Charter and State law. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 19:06 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Corey. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, June 26, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Charlotte Warren, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Kirsten Hebert

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton, Meredith Strang-Burgess

Guests: none

At 1800 Chairman Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1802, Corey moved to approve the minutes from May 15, 2023. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1802 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. Corey noted that the rates as approved will ensure that water used in June will not be billed at the higher rates approved for July.

Corey moved that we certify and approve the revised schedule of rates for drinking water service, fire protection service, sewer service and stormwater service, which has been presented to this meeting and recorded with the minutes, to go into effect on or about July 1, 2023, and continuing until such time as the schedule of rates is modified by vote of the Trustees. I further move that the Assistant Treasurer, in addition to the Treasurer, be authorized and directed to apply the schedule of rates, along with all fees and charges otherwise authorized by the District or by State statute, to all persons, entities and property receiving services from the District, and to thereafter collect the sums due from said persons and entities and to take all appropriate action related to the collection of said sums, including the preparation and filing of notices and liens and allowed by the District's Charter and State law.

The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:06 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The pipes beneath the river are done. River contract 2 is done. River contract 3 on Hospital Street is nearly complete. Contract 4 has not been designed yet. Contract 4 will connect drinking water from State Street to the new water pipe beneath the river.

The pipe lining work with Insituform is being increased from \$265k to \$380k to address critical areas.

At 18:14 Tarbuck provided updates to the board. Six people have June hiring anniversaries.

At 18:17 Tarbuck reported that Andy secured a \$200k grant for PFAS pilot testing at the Riverside Wells.

At 18:19 Tarbuck reported that the wastewater plant has improved sludge dewatering by batching wastewater from the sludge holding tanks.

At 18:17 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of May:

Budget Summary 2023			Revenue			Expenses			Ending cash
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash	
5	Sewer	5.0	2.2	45%	5.0	2.1	42%	0.7	
5	Stormwater	4.0	1.9	48%	3.1	1.2	38%	2.6	
5	Water	5.0	2.0	41%	4.2	1.5	37%	2.3	

At 18:26 Tarbuck explained the request by Augusta Fuel Company to release an easement on their Northern Avenue property. Sawyer moved to allow the General Manager to discharge a 10' wide easement over an abandoned sewer pipe located beneath a structure on Northern Avenue as described in a deed, Book 11127, page 56. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:28 Tarbuck discussed several policies for the Board's consideration that need to be updated. Each month the Board will review a few of the policies and consider approving them at the following meeting.

At 18:32 Tarbuck discussed lead service line replacement and how we could get funding to help determine whether or not there are lead service lines in the District's distribution system. Tarbuck noted that the District would borrow \$1M at 0% for 20 years and the Drinking Water Program would reduce the amount owed by \$550k.

At 18:38 Meredith Strang-Burgess discussed public awareness efforts.

At 18:43 Alan Burton discussed HR recruitment efforts. Burton noted that two people were interviewed for engineering and GIS work.

At 18:45 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Corey. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, July 17, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Kirsten Hebert, Ken Knight, Charlotte Warren

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton

Guests: none

At 18:00 Sawyer called the regular board meeting to order.

At 18:02 Corey moved to approve the minutes from June 26, 2023. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:02 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The pipes beneath the river are done. Information was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers for approval of riverbed restoration efforts. The 20" cast iron siphon has been relined with an ultraviolet cured in place liner and has no leaks. River contract 2 is done. River contract 3 on Hospital Street is nearly complete. The pipe has been installed. Paving will be complete in August. Contract 4 has not been designed yet. Contract 4 will connect drinking water from State Street to the new water pipe beneath the river.

Front Street pump station design is held up pending review by Central Maine Power Company.

Highland Avenue had a lot of ledge. The project should be completed by November.

The pipe lining work with Insituform is being increased from \$265k to \$380k to address critical areas.

A sodium hypochlorite storage containment area is being built at the Trunkline 3 sewer pump station.

At 18:08 Tarbuck provided updates to the board. Seven people have July hiring anniversaries. The safety program will be managed by a safety council made up of management personnel and continue to have monthly safety meetings with representatives from each of our divisions. CISA has completed assessments of our physical infrastructure and made recommendations to improve security. The existing 1970 asbestos cement pipe that once conveyed wastewater from the current location of Trunkline 4 through the woods and over Granite Hill to Augusta is being inspected with CCTV equipment to determine whether or not the pipe is a reasonable candidate for relining. The land that Trunkline 4 is located on does not appear to be owned by GAUD or Manchester Sanitary District. This is being investigated now so options for ownership can be considered with the current apparent owners at Augusta Country Club.

At 18:13 Tarbuck reported that there is nothing to report regarding PFAS mitigation at this time. The pilot testing equipment will arrive in August.

At 18:14 Tarbuck noted that the cost per ton to dispose of sludge was lower last month than the prior month as expected.

At 18:14 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of June:

Budget Summary 2023			Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash	
6	Sewer	5.0	2.7	54%	5.0	2.5	50%	1.0	
6	Stormwater	4.0	2.3	57%	3.1	1.4	46%	3.0	
6	Water	5.0	2.5	49%	4.2	1.8	44%	1.7	

At 18:21 Tarbuck noted that fees charged for inspection and permits have not changed since at least 2006. The list of fees was presented at the meeting for consideration.

At 18:23 Corey moved to approve the updated policies as presented at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:25 Alan Burton discussed HR recruitment efforts. An offer was made for a GIS / data librarian position. We are still looking for another engineer and a utility worker 1 on the road crew. The non union wage scales are being reviewed to ensure they remain competitive. The safety policy manual has been reviewed. The general manager annual review process will start in August.

At 18:28 Colwell moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, August 21, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Charlotte Warren

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton

Guests: none

At 18:00 Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 18:00 Corey requested a voting item regarding a loan. Knight requested a discussion item regarding ARPA funding.

At 18:02 Corey moved to approve the minutes from July 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:02 Knight and Paradis discussed the desire to have an event or ribbon cutting ceremony for the underwater sewer line.

At 18:05 Tarbuck discussed the rate committee. For water used after July 20, customers will pay higher rates. Customers will see the new rates in bills they receive in September. Tarbuck suggested that rates will increase in 2024 as well, likely across all three divisions, not just water and sewer. Tarbuck noted that moving the effective date to June 1 instead of July 1. Corey noted that it would be important to explain this to the City as they have a July / June budget cycle.

At 18:11 Knight noted that there was a meeting of the Central Maine Water Council. The council consists of Winthrop Utilities District and GAUD right now. More discussion about membership will be discussed going forward.

At 18:12 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects.

Three of the four under-river projects are nearly complete. The fourth project will be bid out in September. Paving on Hospital Street will be addressed as discussions with MDOT and the City proceed.

Environmental work on the Front Street sewer pump station replacement project has been approved.

McGee construction should be completing the work on Highland Avenue in September with final completion of the new street work for the City of Augusta to be completed in October.

Turtle Run in East Winthrop remains close to being ready for bid but has not gone to bid yet.

Pipe relining in the lower State Street area should be completed by early September.

Trunkline 3 will have a new sodium hypochlorite tank odor management system installed by September.

At 18:16 Tarbuck provided updates to the board. Nine people have August hiring anniversaries with Bill Wilkinson as the most senior employee at GAUD clocking in with 36 years of service. Raybern Consulting has reviewed some of our current billing practices to help identify inefficient work practices and document our existing workflow. The hardness removal systems are being tested now at Riverside wells as the first step in our PFAS removal process.

At 18:21 Tarbuck provided a sludge disposal cost update. Casella has reduced the cost to GAUD per a recent change in legislation.

At 18:25 Corey discussed recent Freedom of Access Act training.

At 18:28 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of July:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
7	Sewer	5.0	3.1	64%	5.0	2.9	58%	1.0
7	Stormwater	4.0	2.7	67%	3.1	1.7	53%	3.2
7	Water	5.0	3.1	62%	4.2	2.1	51%	1.8

Payne noted that he is still not in receipt of the audited financial statements by RKO for calendar year 2022. Payne expects to have this information by the September meeting.

Corey moved that the vote prepared by bond counsel regarding the District’s pending application for borrowing up to \$1,241,750 from the State Revolving Loan Fund at the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to fund the Front Street Pumping Station Replacement Project be approved in the form presented to this meeting. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Corey moved that the vote prepared by bond counsel regarding the District’s pending application to borrow up to \$200,000 from the State Revolving Loan Fund at the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to fund the Emerging Contaminants Riverside Drive Well PFAS Project be approved in the form presented to this meeting. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Corey moved to approve the Loan Agreement and the Note in this matter to provide that the Note shall be due and payable in full, together with interest accrued thereon, on or before the first business day after the day on which the Municipality executes permanent financing to repay the Note, or on September 9, 2024 whichever occurs sooner. The motion was seconded by Sawyer . The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Corey moved that the vote prepared by bond counsel regarding the District’s pending application to borrow up to \$1,000,000 from the State Revolving Loan Fund at the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to fund the Lead Service Line Program Inventory and Removal Project be approved in the form presented to this meeting. The motion was seconded by Sawyer . The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:42 Tarbuck noted that fees charged for inspection and permits have not changed since at least 2006. This will be moved to old business and reviewed at the annual planning session in October.

At 18:44 Tarbuck presented policies for approval at the September meeting. Knight asked to see a compared documents analysis between proposed and current language.

The existing personnel policy manual references domestic partners but didn’t include domestic partners on health insurance. Sawyer asked if there was an estimate of the cost. Tarbuck noted that it was unknown if anyone would ask for coverage. If they did, it would increase from the cost of a single individual to a spouse plan. Burton noted that there is a tax on an employee for the benefit because the IRS doesn’t recognize domestic partners.

Corey moved that effective January 1, 2024, Greater Augusta Utility District amends its personnel benefits policy to allow any employee who is eligible to enroll in the employer benefits the option of enrolling a domestic partner. Any employee who wishes to add a domestic partner will be advised of the requirements set forth in the Domestic Partner Affidavit to add said partner. Furthermore, said employee has been advised there could be tax implications for adding a domestic partner.

The Domestic Partner of an employee shall be:

- A “life partner of either the same sex or opposite sex of the employee;
- Not legally married or separated, to either the employee or anyone else;
- At least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract;
- Are each other’s Domestic Partners and intend to remain so indefinitely;
- Have been each other’s Domestic Partner for at least 12 months prior to the date of the signed Affidavit;
- Are not related by blood to a degree of closeness that would prohibit marriage in the State of Maine;

- Are jointly responsible for each other's common welfare; share financial obligations and share their primary residence.

The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:50 Tarbuck provided a communications update on behalf of Meredith Strang-Burgess . A photographer will visit the utility and take some photos of people at work for content for the website and social media. Discussions continue regarding the creation of a crisis communications plan, specifically messaging tailored to drinking water events like boil water orders or do not drink orders. Work is ongoing in the social media space, monthly billing inserts. The annual planning meeting will be happening in October and planning efforts are underway for that event.

At 18:53 Alan Burton discussed HR recruitment efforts. Four positions are currently open. It is very hard to find utility worker positions. There are four solid candidates for the GIS / data librarian position. The project engineer position is open and currently have no prospects. The wage ranges are tight for the local conditions. The union contract has one more year before wages are renegotiated. New supervisors continue to get coaching. The GM review process starts today.

At 18:55 Sawyer joyfully moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Hebert. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, September 18, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Charlotte Warren

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton

Guests: none

At 18:00 Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 18:00 Corey requested a voting item regarding a loan. Knight requested a discussion item regarding ARPA funding.

At 18:02 Corey moved to approve the minutes from August 21, 2023. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:02 Corey discussed the rate committee. Tables were included to show the Board different rate setting alternatives needed to fund Board goals. Corey asked Board members to review the tables and forward questions about them to either Payne or Tarbuck. Payne explained the tables and options that the rate committee considered. One set of projections showed year end cash with zero percent rate increases. The other set of projections showed increases in sewer of 30%, water of 30% and stormwater at 10%. The rates are nearing the point where minimum cash levels can be maintained while meeting Board goals for infrastructure replacement. Corey noted that the District is looking at future expenses like PFAS treatment and sludge disposal which looking for all grant opportunities. Knight asked whether this was something that should be considered at the planning meeting. Corey noted that the amounts needed for the utility were at least 30% water, 30% sewer and 10% stormwater.

At 18:07 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects.

Three of the four under-river projects are nearly complete. The fourth phase of this project (pipes under Jackson Avenue to connect drinking water and fiber optic out to State Street) is out to bid. Bids are due in October.

Environmental work on the Front Street sewer pump station replacement project has been approved. GAUD is looking at 2024 construction. This has a \$2M grant from DEP to fund it.

McGee construction completed the work on Highland Avenue in September with final completion of the new street work for the City of Augusta to be completed in October.

Turtle Run in East Winthrop remains close to being ready for bid but has not gone to bid yet. This will be constructed in 2024. There are concerns relating to ledge in this area.

Pipe relining in the lower State Street area should be completed in September. There were 24" and 36" sewer pipes relined as part of this project in the Hemple Street / Glenwood Street area.

Riverside Drive PFAS piloting has begun. This work will continue until spring, 2024. At that time the data will be reviewed and recommendations will be made for construction of a PFAS removal system.

Trunkline 3 will have a new sodium hypochlorite tank odor management system installed by September. The floor and walls of the containment area were epoxy coated by GAUD personnel.

Corey asked about unplanned maintenance at the wastewater treatment plant. Begin noted that the oxygen system at the plant is old and some parts are starting to fail. The system is being reviewed to determine what has to be replaced now before it fails. Each system is being reviewed now with more urgency due to scarcity of funds.

At 18:16 Tarbuck provided updates to the board. Raybern is continuing to compile information about billing practices. Tarbuck noted the inclusion of an update for the 2023 goals that shows current status. He noted this should be reviewed before the October 25 annual planning meeting to see if last year's goals remain relevant or should be changed. Tarbuck noted that board members have GAUD email addresses that are part of GAUD's enterprise email system. This makes it

easier to share information with Board members and ensures that Board members don't have to use a personal email for Board business.

At 18:20 Sawyer noted that the Board would have to determine whether or not to participate in PFAS related class action lawsuits.

At 18:24 Knight reiterated the need for Board feedback for how we're doing in 2023 goals and any thoughts Board members might have.

At 18:28 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of August:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
8	Sewer	5.0	3.5	71%	5.0	3.2	65%	1.2
8	Stormwater	4.0	3.0	75%	3.1	1.9	60%	3.5
8	Water	5.0	3.5	70%	4.2	2.4	58%	1.4

At 18:33 Tarbuck reviewed proposed changes to Board approved policies. Corey noted that Policy 10 references that the sum of the sewer and stormwater cash reserves are only \$750,000 combined.

At 18:40 Meredith Strang-Burgess provided an update. MSB's group is working on the planning meeting in October, and the 2023 annual report (waiting on audited financials).

At 18:42 Alan Burton discussed HR recruitment efforts. The GIS / data librarian position starts next Monday. A candidate is in the process of being hired for the engineering position. There are four Utility Worker 1 openings. The trouble with recruitment is that the Utility Worker 1 job requires a CDL class B with a CDL class A preferred. The annual General Manager performance evaluation is ongoing. Burton continues with new supervisor coaching.

At 18:46 Sawyer moved to accept policies 8 through 12 as presented. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:47 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Hebert. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, October 16, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Charlotte Warren, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: none

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton, Meredith Strang-Burgess (remote)

Guests: Tim Gill, RKO

At 1800 Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 1802 Tim Gill from auditing firm Runyon, Kersteen and Ouellette (RKO) presented their findings from an audit of the 2022 GAUD financial statements. There were no deficiencies noted.

At 1825 Corey noted that the minutes from the prior meeting were acceptable with the following change. Change "which" "**which** looking for grant opportunities..." to "while" Corey moved to approve the modified minutes. Munson seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1826 Corey provided an update from the rate committee. The committee is recommending to raise sewer by 30%, water by 30% and stormwater by 10% in 2024. Cash flows were provided to the Board at the September meeting. Warren asked how the minimum cash reserves were calculated. Payne replied that the minimum cash reserves of \$750k for water, \$375k for sewer and \$375k for stormwater were goals set by the Board in the past and were not clearly based on some financial guidance. The Board asked to see what the minimum cash reserves would be if they were based on 60 days of operating revenue as noted by RKO.

Warren asked if there are projects that can be deferred so the rates wouldn't have to go up by 30% year after year. Payne noted that capital projects are a large expense that drive most of the rate increases. The projects that are done are not projects that can be deferred. Knight noted that the sewer expense exceeded sewer revenue.

Knight asked if a sewer increase of 30% is too low to meet the goals. Corey said yes, looking at the goals, 30% is not enough. Warren asked if the minimum cash goals could be reduced going forward to reduce the magnitude of future rate increases. Payne noted that the drivers for the rate increases were inflation and a 29% sewer rate decrease in 2019. Hebert noted that tying rates to CPI now isn't going to meet the costs of replacing 1% of pipe per year. Munson noted that costs are also driven by the need to keep pace with road repaving.

The Board asked to have an assessment of the value of 60 day cash reserves in each division for the planning meeting.

Hebert asked about the adjustment Tim Gill referred to regarding depreciation. Payne noted that the adjustments have already been made. Payne noted that depreciation doesn't impact cash forecasting.

At 18:43 Begin provided updates relating to significant projects. The Jackson Avenue pipe project came in at \$1.252 M. CH Stevenson was the lowest of five bidders and is well qualified to perform the work.

Easements are being secured now for the Front Street sewer pump station which will be built in 2024. This has a \$2M grant from DEP to fund it. The project will be completed by the end of 2024.

McGee construction completed the work on Highland Avenue in September with final completion of the new street work for the City of Augusta to be completed in October.

Turtle Run in East Winthrop remains close to being ready for bid but has not gone to bid yet. This will be constructed in 2024. There are concerns relating to ledge in this area.

Pipe relining in the offroad lower State Street (near Glenwood and King streets) area is complete. There were 24" and 36" sewer pipes relined as part of this project in the Hemple Street / Glenwood Street area.

Riverside Drive PFAS piloting has begun. Piloting will continue until spring, 2024. A report that reviewed the hardness at this site was completed and submitted to us for review. At that time the data will be reviewed and recommendations will be made for construction of a PFAS removal system.

The Board discussed participation in a class action lawsuit to recover money from chemical manufacturers that made the PFAS that has been detected in the Riverside Drive wells. Sawyer has spent time considering the various options and recommended that the Board consider opting into the class action lawsuit instead of either going it alone and suing the companies or joining the State of Maine's lawsuit as that's likely to prioritize proceeds to the state, not the utilities.

Knight asked to have our legal counsel review our options and provide guidance at the upcoming planning session.

At 1858 Tarbuck provided updates to the Board. Tarbuck noted that we are short CDL drivers. Tarbuck noted that MDEP is reviewing data to see if GAUD should be subject to MS4 regulations.

At 1908 Knight reviewed the planning meeting and the need to update the goals for 2024.

At 1910 Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District's financial position as of the end of September:

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
9	Sewer	5.0	4.1	82%	5.0	3.6	72%	-0.5
9	Stormwater	4.0	3.3	82%	3.1	2.1	66%	3.0
9	Water	5.0	4.4	90%	4.2	2.7	66%	2.1

At 1915 Meredith Strang-Burgess provided an update. MSB noted that Andy was on Channel 5 relating to the Kennebec River utility crossing project. She noted that the planning meeting will be in Hallowell at Maple Hill Farm at 4:30 next Wednesday. The 2024 goals will be made at the planning meeting. The fall newsletter is coming along. Once the audited financial statements are done the 2022 annual report will be completed.

At 1919 Alan Burton discussed a proposed change to the personnel policy manual as a result of recent legislation that needs to be incorporated. The new law requires employers to update the policy in accordance with the law. Sawyer moved to accept the changes to the Personnel Policy Manual as presented to this meeting. The motion was seconded by Corey. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Burton added that the GM performance review is nearly done. Six positions are open. Four of them are utility worker 1 (CDL required). Wages for these open positions are not very competitive anymore. Burton noted that the 3% wages in place for the union employees for 2024 requires further discussion.

At 1922 Corey noted that Board members should review the financials ahead of the planning meeting and, if there are questions, let Brian or Mike know in advance so the questions can be publicly aired and also get an answer at that meeting instead of waiting for an answer until the next meeting.

At 1924 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, November 27, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Charlotte Warren, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: none

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne, Alan Burton (remote), Tyler Cadorette (remote)

Guests:

At 1800 Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

Knight asked Sawyer to inform the Board about the upcoming Maine Rural Water Association conference.

At 1802 Corey moved to approve the October 16th and October 25th meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 1802 Corey discussed the recent rate subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee laid out some discussion points including a proposed 30% increase in sewer, 30% increase in drinking water and a 10% increase in stormwater. The proposed increases fund significant capital improvements and increased operations and maintenance expenses.

1810 Finance Director Payne reviewed the proposed 2024 budget. Packets containing budget information had been delivered about 10 days prior to the meeting. The proposed budget is shown below:

Division	2023 Projections		2024 Proposed Budget		Change	
	Revenue	Expense	Revenue	Expense	Revenue	Expense
Water	\$ 5,714,915	\$ 3,666,121	\$ 5,208,836	\$ 4,276,158	-10%	14%
Sewer	\$ 5,352,302	\$ 4,803,855	\$ 5,804,967	\$ 5,369,262	8%	11%
Storm	\$ 4,372,158	\$ 2,739,905	\$ 4,128,015	\$ 3,023,006	-6%	9%
Total	\$ 15,439,375	\$ 11,209,880	\$ 15,141,818	\$ 12,668,425	-2%	12%

The revenue decreases are due to a drop in grants year to year.

The expenses have increased. 40.5% of the overall budget is attributable to labor; 28 percent to depreciation; 16% to supplies, 5.6 percent to power and 3.2 percent to debt interest.

The budget fully funds six positions that are currently vacant. The proposed budget reflects a 5% wage increase for all employees. Fuel oil is down from last year. Chemicals and electricity are more costly than last year. Health insurance increased 4.5 percent.

Payne provided a detailed review of the constituent revenues and expenses for each of the three divisions.

Payne explained that the budgets as presented did not show any increases in rates.

Payne explained the three different rate analyses. Each division was modeled to reflect current financial data and proposed expenses. The models include 5 percent wage increases.

There was lengthy discussion about how expenses were allocated among the three divisions to include a discussion about policy 18. There was concern that there was a disconnect between policy and practice relating to allocations.

The board discussed depreciation impacts and ensuring that the policy for minimum cash reserves is followed. The auditors recommended using 60 days of operating expenses as a minimum cash reserve. Payne explained that the policy for water minimum cash reserves is \$750k. The 60 day reserve for water is 608k. The current policy for minimum cash reserves for sewer is \$375k. The 60 day reserve for water is \$883k. The current policy for minimum cash reserves for sewer is \$375k. The 60 day reserve for storm water is \$446k.

The board discussed how to prioritize projects for pipe replacement versus replacing other plant and equipment.

Tarback explained that there are some larger drinking water pipe replacement projects to do in the future, particularly on Green Street.

The board discussed changing wages from 5% to 10% to recognize the need for higher wages to retain existing employees and attract new employees.

Tarback explained the planned capital improvement for the water, sewer and stormwater divisions.

The board reviewed proposed 2024 rates to other peer utilities. GAUD is in the same general position as peer utilities.

The board asked if, say, 30% was a hard cap, how would management move either projects or O&M to stay at the cap. Tarback said this could be done.

At 1930 Begin reviewed projects. The PFAS filtration “pilot” trailer will arrive in a week and will be up and running soon thereafter.

At 1935 Tarback provided updates to the Board. The organizational chart was reviewed. There are some missing positions that need to be filled to continue safe operation.

At Payne provided a summary of the financials. The table below summarizes the District’s financial position as of the end of October (83% of the year):

Budget Summary 2023		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
10	Sewer	5.0	4.59	93%	5.0	3.97	79%	-0.1
10	Stormwater	4.0	3.70	92%	3.1	2.29	73%	2.1
10	Water	5.0	4.9	98%	4.2	3.05	73%	2.1

The reason for having excess revenue is due to the receipt of grants. The inability to hire individuals has reduced expenses. Sewer cash will improve when end of the year due to / due from reconciliations are completed.

At 1944 the Board elected officers and accepted the audited financial statements from 2022.

On a motion by Corey seconded by Paradis the 2022 audited financial statements we unanimously accepted.

On a motion by Sawyer seconded by Warren, the 2023 slate of officers was unanimously reelected to continue service. Chair Ken Knight, Treasurer Bob Corey and Clerk Pat Paradis.

At 1946 the board considered policy 18 that had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The policy will be revisited at the December meeting.

At 1915 Tyler Cadorette provided an update relating to communications on behalf of Burgess Advertising and Marketing. Cadorette reviewed digital metrics relating to overall communications strategies.

At 2000 Alan Burton noted that attracting people has been a challenge. In short, wages in this market are really competitive and GAUD is not attractive right now. Corey asked if the 10% wage increase was necessary. Burton supported the 10% increase in wages.

At 2002 Paradis noted he happened to run into Patsy Crockett, county commissioner, who complimented Andy’s presentation about the Kennebec River Utility Crossing.

At 2002 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by Corey. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, December 19, 2023

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: 12 Williams Street shop (City of Augusta closed due to wind / Kennebec River flood event)

Trustees present: Ken Knight, Charlotte Warren, Bradley Sawyer, Bob Corey, Keith Luke, Kirsten Hebert, Cecil Munson, Pat Paradis

Absent: Cary Colwell,

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Remote: Alan Burton, Meredith Strang-Burgess

Guests: none

At 18:00 Knight called the regular board meeting to order.

At 18:01

Motion: I move to accept the Board meeting minutes for November 27, 2023.			
M Corey	2nd Warren	For Unanimous	Against None

At 18:01 Knight asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the financial statements provided to the Board. There were no questions or comments.

At 18:02

Motion: I move to waive automatic foreclosure at 131 Winthrop Street, Hallowell.			
M Corey	2nd Hebert	For Unanimous	Against

At 18:02 Sawyer arrived.

At 18:02

Motion: I move that we certify and approve the schedule of rates for water service, sewer and stormwater service and fire protection service, which has been presented to this meeting and recorded with the minutes, for the 2024 calendar year, and continuing until such time as the schedule of rates is modified by vote of the Trustees, and I further move that the Assistant Treasurer, in addition to the Treasurer, be authorized and directed to apply the schedule of rates, along with all fees and charges otherwise authorized by the District or by State statute, to all persons, entities and property receiving services from the District, and to thereafter collect the sums due from said persons and entities and to take all appropriate action related to the collection of said sums, including the preparation and filing of notices and liens and allowed by the District's Charter and State law.			
M Corey	2nd Hebert	For Unanimous	Against

At 18:03 Munson arrived.

At 18:04 the Board discussed the proposed budgets for 2024. Payne noted that the budget includes 10% wage increases for all employees.

At 18:05 Paradis arrived.

At 18:05 Warren asked if the budgets presented would require rate increases to fund. Tarbuck said they would require higher rates which are proposed at 30% sewer, 30% drinking water and 0% stormwater.

Warren noted that she was uncomfortable with voting on the budgets because the meeting wasn't as public as it would have been had we been able to use the Council Chambers that we normally meet in. Knight noted that though this was a budget vote, it wasn't a vote on the rates. Knight noted that this meeting was also being recorded and would be posted online along with the other recorded meetings.

Luke noted that he understood Warren's concerns that the actions on the budget today meant that the Board would need to raise rates later to fund it.

At 18:17

Motion: I move to approve the operations and maintenance budgets as presented to this meeting for drinking water, sewer and stormwater for 2024.			
M Corey	2nd Paradis	For Six	Against One

As part of the discussion of the motion relating to the O&M budget, Sawyer asked whether or not the 10% increase for employees was needed to retain upper level employees or to attract entry level employees? Tarbuck noted that the biggest issue was hiring entry level employees but increasing pay on the low end and not the higher end sets up a discrepancy that could make higher paid individuals look to another employer for higher wages.

At 18:21

Motion: I move to approve the capital improvements budgets as presented to this meeting for drinking water, sewer and stormwater for 2024.			
M Corey	2nd Paradis	For Six	Against One

As part of the discussion relating to the CIP budget, Munson asked whether or not there was any flexibility in the CIP budget. Tarbuck responded that the budget is flexible and management will work to keep within the budget.

At 18:21 Tarbuck discussed Policy 18 which lays out how sewer and stormwater allocations are made. Tarbuck stated that he brought an older policy for the Board at the last meeting. In fact, the Board had approved and management had been following since 2018 a policy which laid out percentages.

At 18:25 Tyler Cadorette from Burgess Advertising

At 18:32 Alan Burton discussed HR recruitment efforts. An offer was made to a GIS manager. The Board has addressed the concerns we had with wages which will help with recruitment.

At 18:33:

Motion: I move to enter Executive Session to discuss the General Manager's employment contract and performance pursuant to MRS Title 1 § 405 6 A.			
M Sawyer	2nd Corey	For Unanimous	Against

The meeting was adjourned at the conclusion of the executive session.