

Monday, November 24, 2025

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: 22 Arsenal Street

Trustees present: Ken Knight, Patrick Paradis, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Keith Luke, Keith Taylor, Tim Dennett, Kara Tudman Walker, Brad Sawyer

Trustees remote: Cecil Munson

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Guests: Alan Burton, ~~Meredith Strang-Burgess~~, Dan Wells (Winthrop Utilities District - WUD), Bruce Burns (WUD), Roger Hanson (WUD), Bob Webber (customer)

At 18:00 Knight called the meeting to order and introduced board members, employees and consultants.

At 18:02 The Board revisited the concern from Mr Webber regarding the loss of trees that had created a visual barrier between his home on Kelton Road.

The District will not replace trees over pipes to ensure the right-of-way remains clear. Management's position is to remove, not replant, trees and shrubs over pipes.

Andy Begin noted that the State, through Brian Keezer, Director of the Bureau of General Services, has committed to installing a stockade fence near Bob Webber's house to address visual relief concerns. Begin will share Bob Webber's contact information with Brian Keezer for direct communication regarding the fence installation, which will be coordinated by BGS.

At 18:08 the Board approved the meeting minutes:

Motion: I move to accept the Board meeting minutes for September 22, 2025 and October 21, 2025.			
M Taylor	2nd Paradis	For Unanimous	Against

18:08 Rate Committee Update and Budget:

The rate committee met on November 13th. Corey suggested that the Board review the detailed budget information included in the November board meeting packet prior to the December board meeting. Tarbuck confirmed a need for a rate increase, estimating at least 3% or more. The Board will review the detailed Rate Committee recommendations at its **December meeting**, where the Board will vote on the budget and the corresponding percentage increase.

The budget must be approved by January 1st, but any rate increase would go into effect in July as a concession to large state and city ratepayers that operate on a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year.

Project Updates from Andy Begin:

- Fiber Project: Fidium and Gonet Speed are preparing to pull cable under the river, with service expected by the end of December.
- Front Street: Project is concluding, having secured \$2 million in grant funding.
- Riverside Drive (PFAS mitigation): An addition is under construction for the installation of new PFAS filtration equipment, with building modifications scheduled for completion by March.
- New water source exploration (PFAS Mitigation): Approval was obtained for an 8-inch test well to explore a new high-yielding gravel source west of Leighton Road and Bond Brook Road.

- The Trunkline Caddyshack project to combine Trunkline stations 2 and 4 and install new forcemain over Granite Hill has a \$10 million shortfall. Funding sources are being pursued.
- Davenport Street: Project is out to bid.
- Amherst: Fully designed, with the bid package expected in December.
- Memorial Drive: A multi-million dollar project (\$3–\$4 million) to install 1,200' of stormwater pipe to separate approximately 60 catch basins from the sewer system near Memorial Circle. This continues the effort to comply with combined sewer overflow requirements.
- Eastern Avenue: This is a 6,300' long drinking water pipe replacement project. The pipe in this area has had repeated breaks and it needs to be replaced. Design is underway. The project may be constructed in several phases due to the approximately \$4M estimate
- Equipment: Two new utility trucks have arrived.

18:23 General Manager's update - Brian Tarbuck:

- Employee Anniversaries were recognized, including Ken Knight (22 years) and Lee Cumber (33 years), Troy Maheux (7), Joe Perkins-Macdonald (1) and Tucker Ladd (1).
- John Cummons, the Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, was praised for his work with NEBRA (New England Biosolids and Residuals Association) to address the ongoing biosolids disposal crisis following the ban on land application due to PFAS concerns.
- Updates included the replacement of a 50-year-old Westinghouse electrical panel and the final approval and signing of the union agreement.

18:34 New Business - PFAS Lawsuit:

- Brad Sawyer advocated for the District to pursue individual litigation against polluters in the Kennebec River, with no upfront cost, to secure settlement funds for ratepayers.
- The Board expressed concerns about the attorneys' fee percentage and the potential impact of suing local businesses, noting that more information is needed from the attorneys.

18:43 Discussion with Winthrop Utilities District:

- Two members from the WUD board and Dan Wells, WUD manager, discussed the impending leadership change with Dan Wells' planned January retirement. GAUD offered assistance and collaboration to WUD if it is necessary. GAUD was not interested in a takeover.

19:08 Financial review - Mike Payne

Mike Payne provided a review of the financial conditions at the utility for October, 2025.

Budget Summary 2025		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
10	Sewer	7.1	6.33	89%	5.4	4.2	77%	0.67
10	Stormwater	4.1	3.67	90%	3.3	2.4	73%	3.36
10	Water	6.8	6.30	93%	4.7	4.0	84%	4.88

19:13 Other Updates:

Meredith Strang Burgess gave a communications update and Alan Burton gave a Human Resources update.

19:19 Adjourn

Motion: I move that this body stand adjourned.			
M Sawyer	2nd Paradis	For Unanimous	Against