

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Agenda

Monday, March 18, 2024, 6:00 PM

Council Chambers, Augusta City Center, Augusta, Maine

1. Welcome - Knight
2. Introduce Board members
3. Introduce GAUD employees, consultants and guests
4. Agenda additions
5. Old Business
 - a. Approve meeting minutes - **Motion** - pages 6 - 7
 - b. Rate committee update
 - c. Project updates – pages 8 - 10
 - d. General Manager's report – page 11
 - e. PFAS “forever chemicals”
6. New business
 - a. Review financial statements
 - b. Review liens
 - c. Policy review - **Motion** - pages 12 - 15
 - d. Communications update
 - e. HR update
 - f. Public comment
7. Adjourn - **Motion**

Monday, March 18, 2024	Regular meeting	City Center
Monday, April 15, 2024	Patriots' Day	Holiday
Monday, April 22, 2024	Regular meeting (4th Monday due to holiday)	City Center
Monday, May 20, 2024	Regular meeting	City Center
Monday, May 27, 2024	Memorial Day	Holiday
Wednesday, June 19, 2024	Juneteenth	Holiday
Monday, June 24, 2024	Regular meeting (4th Monday due to holiday)	City Center

Attendees:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Knight – Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Colwell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Begin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paradis – Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hebert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Warren	<input type="checkbox"/>	Payne
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corey – Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Munson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tarbuck

A quorum consists of 4 voting Trustees.

Guests:

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Executive sessions are described in [MRS Title 1 Section 405](#). Executive sessions may only be called by a public recorded vote of 3/5 of the members, present and voting.

1. Welcome
2. Introduce Board members
3. Introduce GAUD employees, consultants and guests
4. Agenda additions
5. Old business
 - a. Approve meeting minutes - **Motion**

Motion: I move to accept the Board meeting minutes for February 26, 2024.

M	2nd	For	Against
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- b. Rate committee updates

The rate committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

At the last Board meeting the vote to advance a request to ratepayers for 30% increases to both the drinking water and the wastewater rates was unanimously approved.

This sets in motion the process to have public hearings to provide information to the Board as it deliberates the needs for increased revenue to fund utility operations.

The website has been updated to point ratepayers to the information available for the rate hearings which are both scheduled to be coincident with the Board's scheduled meeting on Monday, April 22, 2024.

Financial documents will be prepared next week and sent to the PUC and Public Advocate by March 22 as required by the rate setting schedule laid out by the so called 6104 process which is summarized below.

NO Board action is required at the March meeting relating to the rate process.

The April 22 meeting is the hearing.

The May 20 meeting is when the Board votes to set the final rates and send them to the MPUC and Public Advocate.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Regulatory summary</u>
Friday, March 15, 2024	Bill inserts to customers	<i>optional</i>	<i>no regulatory requirement to do this</i>
Monday, March 18, 2024	March Board meeting		
Friday, March 22, 2024	Publish supporting materials / file with PUC and PA	hearing date - 30 days	at least 30 days before public hearing
Monday, April 1, 2024	Mail notice of public hearing	<i>hearing date - 21 days</i>	must be in mailboxes 14 days before public hearing (see below)
Monday, April 8, 2024	Publish notice of public hearing	hearing date - 14 days	at least 14 days before public hearing: customer notice (<i>mail about one week before this date to ensure 14 day deadline is met</i>) send copy to MPUC and PA (email) website / Facebook etc (optional)
Monday, April 22, 2024	April Board meeting	This drives all other dates	Public hearing

Thursday, May 2, 2024	Soonest date to file rates w/ MPUC	hearing date + 10 days	at least 10 days after but no more than 30 days after public hearing
Monday, May 20, 2024	May Board meeting		<i>vote to approve final rates with MPUC</i>
Wednesday, May 22, 2024	30 day petition period ends / rates must be filed with PUC no later than today	hearing date + 30 days	at least 10 days after but no more than 30 days after public hearing
Saturday, June 1, 2024	Earliest effective date of rates	filing date + 30 days	at least one month after rates filed with PUC
Sunday, February 16, 2025	Latest effective date of rates	filing date + 270 days	not more than 9 mos after rates filed with PUC

The calendar below shows notable dates following the rate increases.

Rate change	June 1, 2024
Start of new rates	June 20, 2024
Customers receive bill for new rates	August 9, 2024
Payment due on new rates	September 4, 2024

c. Project updates

Andy will provide updates regarding the District's capital improvement projects.

d. General Manager's report

Brian will provide updates not otherwise covered in this report.

e. PFAS "forever chemicals" discussion

Brian was on a Chamber of Commerce panel to talk about PFAS in drinking water on April 6. The concern from the Chamber of Commerce related to a reporting requirement and proposed ban of all PFAS substances. Businesses would struggle to comply with the reporting requirement and a ban of PFAS related substances would effectively mean cars and medical devices could not be sold in Maine.

6. New business

a. Review financial statements

There are no financial statements to be presented at the meeting. The February and March financial statements will be presented in April.

b. Review liens

There are no liens to consider this month.

c. Policy review

There are three policies for Board review this month.

1. Policy 14 makes clear that GAUD will replace customer owned sewer services at no cost to the customer during road reconstruction.
2. Policy 15 provides a mechanism to provide relief to a customer with an abnormally large sewer bill.
3. Policy 26 is a new policy which describes how accounts are billed.

Policies 14 and 15 have been reviewed internally. No changes are recommended but the Board should be on record as having reviewed them and reauthorized them from time to time.

You may wish to review these policies for another month but if not the motion below would adopt new policy 26 and reauthorize policies 14 and 15.

Motion: I move to approve policies 14 and 15 with no changes and approve the addition of policy 26 as presented to the General Policy Manual.			
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M	2nd	For	Against
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d. Communications update

Meredith will provide the communications update.

e. HR update

Alan Burton will provide an HR update.

f. Public comment

7. Adjourn – **Motion**

Motion: I move that this body stand adjourned.			
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M Sawyer	2nd	For	Against
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Monday, February 26, 2024

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Sagadahoc Room, Civic Center, Augusta, ME

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

Absent: Cary Colwell, Charlotte Warren, Kirsten Hebert

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Remote: Alan Burton

Guests: none

At 18:00 Knight called the regular board meeting to order and noted the change in venue due to construction at both 33 Jackson Avenue and 12 Williams Street.

At 18:01

Motion: I move to accept the Board meeting minutes for January 24, 2024.			
M Munson	2nd Paradis	For Unanimous	Against None

At 18:02 Corey noted that the rate committee did not meet but no changes were recommended for Board consideration since the January meeting.

At 18:02 Corey moved to increase the drinking water and fire protection rates in an amount not to exceed 30% with a desired effective date of June 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:03 Corey moved to increase the sewer rates in an amount not to exceed 30% with a desired effective date of June 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Knight noted that the approved motions do not affirm the rates. They merely set the rate setting process in motion. A public hearing to review the rates will be held on April 22, 2024.

At 18:04 Begin updated the Board on current projects. 600' of water main has been installed since last month under Jackson Avenue. The sewer work has been completed. The contract documents for the Front Street sewer pump station have been sent to Maine DEP for review. The Riverside Drive PFAS water treatment pilot is ongoing and PFAS is not significantly penetrating the filter media which is good news. We applied for a \$4M forgiveness loan from the Drinking Water Program (which requires a 10% match) to help pay for the full scale Riverside Drive PFAS treatment. We ordered a new vacuum service truck using money from the Lead Service Line Inventory funding from the Drinking Water Program. We will use it to document the type of materials that GAUD and customer service pipes are made of for drinking water lead compliance. The Fairview stormwater project is in design. This project will take water from western Fairview to Stone Street. Hummingbird Lane is a water main replacement project that is still in design. It will likely be a pipe bursting project. Summer Street replaces a cross country sewer pipe that will move the public infrastructure into the road instead of under several privately owned structures. The budget for this project is \$520k. The structural repairs to the floor / ceiling of the shop at 12 Williams Street is ongoing. Significant repairs have been made. The ground floor and first floor will be coated with a rugged epoxy resin material. The project is over budget but there was no other better time to seal the floor. Personnel will be moved to the first floor (accessible from Arsenal Street).

At 18:12 Sawyer asked about the age of the pipe in Hummingbird Lane. Begin said he would research this and get the information to him. Sawyer asked if we were going to have customers take photos of their plumbing in the basement to help identify lead service lines. The response was that in the cases where records were inconclusive it was our plan to hydroexcavate the private and public drinking water service pipe to visually document the types of pipes in the ground as it was the most certain means of identification for regulatory purposes.

At 18:15 Sawyer noted that he was impressed that there were only about 200 unknown pipes from roughly 5,700 drinking water customers. Sawyer noted that the redundant drinking water pipe to Manchester ranked very high on the Drinking Water Program's backup list for funding. We are hopeful for funding in the next year.

At 18:16 Knight noted that he met with the Winthrop town manager. Winthrop Utilities District's trustees had met with Knight and Tarbuck about a year ago to talk about what, if anything, GAUD could do to support WUD when Dan Wells (WUD manager) retires in a few years. Knight noted that there's no agenda here; just trying to be sure that there is good continuity of operations at WUD as that is a symbiotic relationship with GAUD.

At 18:23 Tarbuck reviewed the status of the floor coatings and how moving people and equipment out of those spaces has had some significant changes on operations. Tarbuck said that he was looking forward to the Board seeing the new space. He also noted that the guys who were impacted by the move never complained at all.

At 18:26 Tarbuck noted that he was on a plenary panel at the NEWEA conference at Copley Place in January. Tarbuck noted that Charlotte Warren has served on the board for 8 years. Tarbuck noted that he was proud that Rick Anair won the Jeff Nixon award at the Maine Water Utilities Association conference. Tarbuck noted that Nicki Pellenz is the new director of the Maine Water Utilities Association. Tarbuck noted that longtime inspector Jim Crowley retired from the Maine DEP and thanked him for his years of service and fair regulation of GAUD.

At 18:31 Corey noted that it was good to see photos of the guys on social media working in the field. Tarbuck said it was hard for the guys to take photos but he was committed to getting them to do more of it going forward to better show ratepayers where their money is being invested.

At 18:35 Payne provided an update of the finances as summarized in the table below:

Budget Summary 2024		Revenue			Expenses			
Month	Division	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Budget	Actual	Act / budg	Ending cash
1	Sewer	5.0	0.37	8%	5.0	0.4	8%	0.90
1	Stormwater	4.0	0.40	10%	3.1	0.3	9%	1.50
1	Water	5.0	0.40	8%	4.2	0.3	7%	2.10

18:40 Payne explained the need for the following motion:

Motion: I move to amend the \$1,600,000 Revenue Obligation Note dated March 22, 2023, and awarded to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, Augusta, Maine, by changing the maturity date to March 21, 2025, and further to authorize the Treasurer and Chair of the Board of Trustees to execute all documents necessary to complete said amendment. All other terms and conditions as stated in said Revenue Obligation Note will remain the same.

M Corey	2nd Sawyer	For Unanimous	Against
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18:40 Tarbuck provided the communications update on behalf of Meredith Strang-Burgess. While it is still difficult to recruit, there have been some additional applications for open positions thanks to a strong effort on social media and radio to recruit personnel. Tarbuck noted that GAUD has good benefits for the long run but often that doesn't carry a lot of weight with young people who are more interested in take home pay than long term benefits.

At 18:48 Sawyer moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Corey. The motion was approved unanimously.

Summary of Capital Improvement Projects

17001 - Eastside Sewer Siphon - \$4,693,826

Status: In construction.

Contracts 1 through 3 - 99% complete, working on project closeout. Pulled fiber duct bank beneath the river in early January 2024, done.

Contract 4 Water Mains West Side - The water main and sewer mains are complete. The duct bank will be installed over the next several weeks. The road reconstruction will begin in April. Still aiming for a June completion.

Scope: Replace the failed 8" cast iron siphon new 16" HDPE pipe & 16-inch water main.

Purpose: Replace failed infrastructure, then rehabilitate the existing 20" cast iron pipe.

Budget: \$5.1 Million (Update to **\$8.4 Million** additional \$3 Million in Grant Funding)

Schedule: Construction completion anticipated Q2 2024.

19047 - Redundant River Crossing, Hospital, Kelton & State Streets, Water Main - \$3,246,831

Status: See above.

Scope: Install 6,500 feet of new 12" and 16" water main.

Purpose: Provide a hydraulic loop between the east and west sides of the river and provide a redundant supply to Hospital Street pump station via a redundant drinking water pipe beneath the Kennebec River.

22015 - Front Street Pump Station 3 Replacement - \$54,845

Status: Pending City easements. Design review, prepping for bidding.

Scope: Replace an aging 1962 sewer pump station with a new flood proof submersible station.

Purpose: Station subject to flooding and failure and beyond its useful life.

Budget: \$2.1M (\$2M grant)

Schedule: Finish by Q4, 2024.

19012 - Highland Avenue Water, Sewer, Storm Upgrades and Road Reconstruction - \$1,379,637

Status: Construction, 100% complete with utility work. The road has the base layer of pavement. The contractor will winterize and finish in the spring 2024.

Scope: Replace 1,600 feet of 8" sewer, storm and 2,200 feet of 12" water main.

Purpose: Replace aging infrastructure with City of Augusta road rebuild.

Budget: \$747,500 water, \$555,360 sewer

Schedule: Planned for Q2&Q3 2023, substantial completion on October 15th, 2023

22024 - Turtle Run Water Main Replacement - \$13,162

Status: Bids received, pending award to CH Stevenson as the lowest responsive bidder. Base bid of \$161,700, Alternate 1 of \$49,525 and Alternate 2 of \$16,360, totalling \$227,858.

Scope: Replace 900 feet of 2" & 2.25" seasonal lines with new 8" water main.

Purpose: Replace aging infrastructure and increase reliability.

Budget: \$344,000, water

Schedule: Planned for Q2 & Q3 2024

23015 - Riverside Drive PFAS/PFOA pilot study - \$80,569

Status: A PFAS pilot unit has been running for approximately 16 weeks with no breakthrough, sampling at 30% bed depth. The pilot will run through the spring. We applied for a \$4M grant administered through the Drinking water program to mitigate emerging contaminants at our Riverside Drive Treatment building. We will be required to match this at 10%.

Scope: Run a pilot unit to reduce hardness and forever chemicals at our Riverside Drive well field.

Purpose: Apply the piloting results to develop a design for a full scale treatment system and cost projections.

Budget: \$200,000 (all forgiveness loan money through the drinking water program) study phase. Construction phase is projected to be > \$5M.

Schedule: Planned for Q3 2023 to Q2 2024

23023 - Manchester Redundant Water Main - \$27,973

Status: In design. Planning for a future project, pending funding.

Scope: 7,500 feet of 16-inch Ductile Iron water main to serve as redundancy of our 1903 vintage 24-inch cast iron transmission main.

Purpose: Increase reliability of existing infrastructure.

Budget: Pending Timeline

Schedule: Pending Timeline.

21015 - Green & Drew Street Water Main Upgrade - \$23,497

Status: Preliminary Design, on hold as this is not a priority 2024 CIP project.

Scope: 4,300 feet of 12-inch Ductile Iron water main to replace existing 6-inch cast iron. Sewer and storm is being evaluated for upgrades and CSO separation efforts.

Purpose: Replace leak prone mains, and on our water master plan for hydraulic improvement.

Budget: Pending Timeline

Schedule: Maybe 2025.

CIP# N/A - Work Order #1559 - Lead Service Line Inventory (Water) - \$24,661

Status: Initial lead service line inventory needs to be done by October 16, 2024, we are in good shape to meet our deadline. We are trying to confirm some unknowns prior to submitting results to DWP. We have accepted the low bid on a vac truck for \$420,000 (GAUD cash portion 55% = \$231,000). The truck will help explore/confirm water service pipe material with low impact excavations.

Scope: Inventory and replace lead and leadline water services within 10 years.

Purpose: Comply with lead service line replacement and sampling.

Budget: \$1,000,000 (45% reimbursement funding from the Drinking Water Program)

CIP# 24001 - Fairview Avenue Stormwater Upgrade - \$9,353

Status: 95% Design. Aim to bid in late March. Also, trying to replace a valve complex at East Crescent Street with an MDOT fill and pave project.

Scope: 1,200 feet of storm main and 4 structures.

Purpose: Resolve backyard flooding and surface water runoff to Stone Street and separate combined catch basins currently discharging to the sewer.

Budget: \$484,000

CIP# 24003 - Hummingbird Lane - \$0

Status: Preliminary design.

Scope: Pipe burst 1,700 feet of aging 6" cast iron water main with new 4-inch HDPE.

Purpose: Replacement of leak prone water mains.

Budget: \$467,500

General Manager's Report

One of the issues we find with [WARN](#) emergency response requests for assistance is that it is hard to go over state lines. This is an issue [NEIWPC](#) has taken up and I'm working with one of their employees to see if there are ways to make our emergency response that works well in Maine work just as well with other states. That work is ongoing.

I participated in a remote [WATERISAC](#) briefing that reviewed current cybersecurity and physical security threats. The largest threat to physical security is from domestic violent extremists. Power utilities in particular have been targeted. There is growing concern that these threats will extend to other infrastructure to include water and wastewater utilities. Ransomware remains a primary concern for cybersecurity as that's the easiest pathway for malicious actors to compromise and hold hostage critical systems.

We met with a consultant who specializes in odor control systems. I had met him at a conference in January and we will explore working with him to optimize our existing wastewater plant odor control systems and explore improvements in our odor management efforts on the Trunkline.

Maine State Police conducted training at the GF Laurin water filtration building in East Winthrop. That site is used about twice monthly by primarily law enforcement agencies for training for several different specialties.

We met with [Friends of Cobbossee Watershed](#) to see if they could take the reins on an erosion control project that needs to be done on Cobbossee Lake to protect GAUD owned Trunkline pipes that are paid for by the Trunkline. FOCW is much better positioned to manage this work than we are.



I am the utility representative to the [State Local Cybersecurity Grant Program](#) Committee which met on the 11th of March. The committee is tasked with developing a cybersecurity plan for Maine. I'm not entirely sure how I wound up on this but it has been very educational, particularly as cybersecurity relates to election security. The committee meets infrequently and is a very low lift so far. It has put me into the 'room' with some of the state's premier cybersecurity experts.

We have no dedicated safety coordinator right now so we have distributed tasks among several employees to make sure we remain current with training and documentation. We had a training on March 14th that went well as we had several different presenters which made it a little more relatable.



Ken and I met on the 15th with Dan Wells who is my counterpart at Winthrop Utilities District. Dan has announced his planned retirement that will happen in a few years so he and his Board are considering what, if any, role GAUD might play after he retires. To that end Ken and I will meet with Winthrop's city council so they know who GAUD is. To be clear, we have no motives or intentions beyond moral support for WUD right now.

GAUD Policy #: 13

Date: 2/22/2016

Policy 13: District Replacement of Sewer Services Beneath Traveled Way

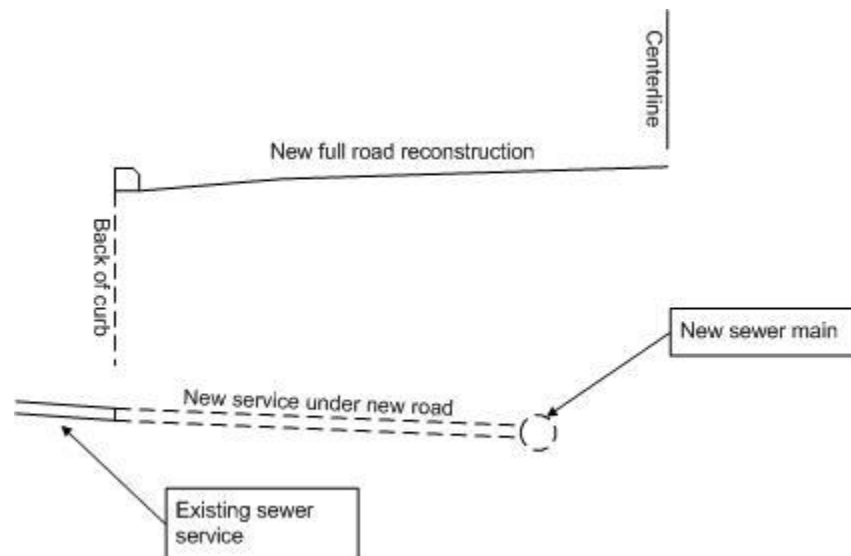
Original Date: 5/19/2008; Number revised: 2/22/2016,

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate connections of existing services to new sewer infrastructure and reduce the risk of failure of old pipe beneath a new roadway surface.

Policy:

The District will replace gravity sewer services from the sewer main to the back of the curb at its cost when a public road is fully reconstructed and a new sewer main is installed. “Fully reconstructed” applies to major roadway reconstruction projects that extend the full width of the traveled way and shoulders (curb to curb).



GAUD Policy #: 14

Date: 6/18/2018

Policy 14: Plumbing Failure Abatements for Sewer bills

Original Date: 3/8/2008: Revised: 7/20/2009; 5/23/2011; 2/22/2016; 6/18/2018

Note: Water bill abatement procedure is included in the District's PUC approved Water Terms & Conditions.

Leak Abatement Procedure - Sewer

From time to time unexpected water leaks happen that are undetected until the water meter is read.

Customers requesting sewer credit for undetected leaks that result in water consumption which is significantly higher than normal must complete an application provided by the Utility.

Customers must have previous water, sewer and storm bills paid in full to apply for credit.

Leak credit claims made more than 60 calendar days after the billing date will not be considered.

Credits apply only to leaks outside the Customer's control that result in excess usage and have been repaired and documented to the Utility with a signed statement from the Customer.

A Customer may receive a sewer leak credit only once in 3 years for leaks that enter the collection system.

The maximum credit for sewer customers for leaks that enter the sewer system are \$333.00 for customers billed monthly and \$999.00 for customers billed quarterly.

The credit amount is equal to the dollar value of one half of the difference between the abatement request and the average of the prior twelve months of sewer discharge.

Leaks that don't enter the sewer system will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Leaks that don't enter the sewer system may be credited up to 100% the amount greater than the usage calculated as the average of the prior twelve months of sewer discharge. In this case, the maximum abatement limit may be waived.

The Utility will review each application on a case by case basis and grant or deny plumbing failure abatements based on available information.

Sewer Abatement Request Form

Applicant's name: _____ Property Owner's name: _____

Property location: _____

Owner or tenant? _____ Date on bill showing amount: _____

Cause of purported excess usage: _____

When was this discovered (date) _____ Corrected/repaired? (date) _____

How was this corrected/repaired? _____

I certify that that this correction/repair has been made. I certify that this is my only request for abatement on this account in the last 3 years. I understand that not all requests for abatement will be approved.

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

District Use Only:

Customer account #: _____

Date of last water and/or sewer abatement request: _____

Current consumption: (A) _____ HCF (hundred cubic feet)

Average consumption for previous 4 Quarterly and/or 12 Monthly billing periods: (B) _____ HCF

Current consumption – previous (A-B) = Difference: _____ HCF

One-Half of Difference =: _____ HCF and \$ _____

Available sewer abatement credit: \$ _____

Total available abatement credit: \$ _____

Analysis by: _____

Date analyzed: _____

☐ Approved ☐ Denied

Date: _____

Reason: _____

Signature: _____

GAUD Policy #: 26
Date: 3/20/2024
Policy 26: Billing practices and timing - DRAFT
Date: 3/20/2024

GAUD customers are billed in arrears as follows:

Monthly accounts are generally read on the 3rd week of the month to allow customers to receive bills near the first day of the month.

Drinking water and fire:

Accounts are billed monthly, in arrears, for usage and fixed fees

Stormwater:

Catch basin and ERU accounts are billed monthly, in arrears.

Sewer:

Accounts are billed monthly, in arrears, for usage and fixed fees

Quarterly accounts are billed in arrears. Quarterly accounts follow quarter end dates which are not the same dates used for monthly water bills.

Rate setting:

Rates are set with an effective date which is on or about the first day of the month. Readings are typically done on the third week of each month

For example, a meter read on June 20 is next read on July 19. The bill date is about a month later on September 13. The bill is due on October 9. In this case, a rate set “on or about June 1” would ensure that customers wouldn’t pay the new rate until the billing period that starts on June 20 and ends on July 19.