

## TRUSTEE MEETINGS

The monthly meetings of your Board of Trustees are open to the public. For a complete schedule, visit our website and click on **Trustee Meetings** under the **About Us** menu. You'll also find a link to archived videos of all meetings since November, 2014.

# Currents

## SPRING 2019

## PROPOSED STORMWATER + WASTEWATER RATE CHANGES

A proposed new rate structure marks the culmination of the Stormwater Workgroup (SWG), which looked closely at how stormwater and wastewater rates are currently allocated throughout our system. As a result of that review and subsequent recommendations, the GAUD Trustees proposed the following rate adjustments at their March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Wastewater (sewer) rates will be reduced by 25%.
- Stormwater ERU (Equivalent Residential Units) rates will rise by \$4.26, from \$8.30 to \$12.56 per month.
- Catch basin fees will go down by 20%, from \$50.89 to \$40.59 per month.

How these changes would affect customers depends on the mix of services used. Here are three examples:

1. A single-family household using 100 cubic feet of water per month would pay a total of \$3 more per month for wastewater and stormwater combined.
2. Hallowell customers (who use only our wastewater services), would see a rate reduction of about 25 per month.
3. A commercial property owner with 125 ERUs and 25 catch basins, and a billable flow of 155 cubic feet per month, would see a net rise of 3% or \$79.33 per month.

Customers would see the new rates in their August bills.

**The public is invited to a special hearing on this topic at 6 pm on Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, in Augusta City Center, in the Council Chamber room. We invite you to attend and learn more about this proposed rate change. Or call us at (207) 622-3701 with any questions about your rates or service. If you would like to understand how the proposed rate changes will affect you, we are happy to provide projected billing for your account(s).**

Stormwater rates are rising because of our continuing investments to protect the Kennebec River watershed. By reducing Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), we help to prevent untreated sewage from entering our streams and rivers. As we make these mandated investments in our infrastructure, we see a cleaner and safer watershed around us.

We've made significant progress protecting the Kennebec River in recent years, reducing sewer discharges by 90%, from 73 million gallons (MG) per year in 1989 to 7 MG in 2016. There is still work to be done, and these rate changes will help us to make those critical investments.



Construction is underway on the third million-gallon wastewater storage tanks GAUD has installed to prevent combined stormwater and wastewater flowing into the Kennebec River.

## Currents SPRING 2019

## GIVE US A LIKE!

If you haven't already, make sure to Like and Follow our Facebook page (just search for "Greater Augusta Utility District," naturally). And, of course, when individual posts pop up in your feed, give us a Like.

You never know what sort of interesting posts may show up on the GAUD page. In March, there have been posts about rain gardens, rain barrels, fire hydrants, wine flowing out of water faucets, Maine governors, Julius Caesar—and that was all in the first two weeks!





## IT ALL BEGAN WITH INSTALLING PIPE

Back in August of 1987, Bill Wilkinson was living in Dresden, Maine, when he joined a pipe installation crew for the Augusta Water District, working along Augusta's Eastern Avenue (Route 17). Soon, Bill learned from a friend that the District was hiring people—and Bill came aboard.

That was more than thirty years ago. Today, Bill is still with us, although now (after the merger with the Augusta Sanitary District), we're known as the Greater Augusta Utility District. Along the way, Bill has been installing pipe; installing, reading and fixing water meters; ordering and receiving parts as a stock clerk; and, since 2004, working on both water and wastewater pump stations. As Bill noted dryly—"We try not to mix the two together."

On the serious side, he noted that "We're responsible for drinking water quality, something you have to pay attention to all the time." Because you never know when there might be an issue with pipe or pumps, or when a large rain event could lead to overflowing sewers, the pump station crews are on call 24/7.

Congratulations, Bill, on your 30+ years working with us! It's men and women like you who keep the District up and running, and we appreciate your contributions.



## KIDS, DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Last year somebody stole two of our manhole covers from Green Street in Augusta. Luckily, a passerby called the police and the police called us. We were able to address the situation quickly with replacement covers. In case you're wondering, a manhole cover weighs between 250 and 300 pounds.

Who did it? Back in November, Betty Adams at the *Kennebec Journal* reported that a man had been arrested for various thefts—including our manhole covers. His case has yet to come to trial, but the important thing is that the manhole covers were immediately replaced and the originals were recovered soon after the theft.

As GAUD's General Manager Brian Tarbuck was quoted in the KJ story, "They weigh a lot, so you have to work hard to remove a manhole cover. We use industrial magnets with levers to lift them off." We think all would agree that this had to have been one of the more interesting cases for the Augusta Police Department.



## BETTER SLUDGE FOR LESS!

Biosolids (sludge) is a fact of life at wastewater treatment plants. It sits inside gigantic holding tanks. As you might imagine, pumping biosolids into and out of these tanks is a complicated process. That's why we're excited about our new pump system that helps to improve the quality and consistency of biosolids before it's processed and dried.

We're especially excited that the installation of this new pump system was partially paid for with a \$60,000 grant from Efficiency Maine. Grants like that don't just drop from the trees; in this case, it came about through the diligent efforts of Jane Carroll, chief operator at the plant. By obtaining this grant, Jane helped to put in place a system that gives us significant redundancy in a critical system, which will also save us operating costs.



## NOT YOUR FATHER'S KENNEBEC RIVER

Children growing up today along the Kennebec River would be astonished to learn that this relatively clean river was a noxious brew not so long ago. Up into the 1970s, the windows at the State House in Augusta were kept closed because of the fumes from the river nearby. And those same fumes were said to peel the paint off of adjacent buildings. The Kennebec—like many American rivers—was choked with poisons from tanneries, factories, and raw sewage.

The Clean Water Act in 1972 started to turn the tide on that long tradition of discharging untreated pollutants into our waters. The Act regulated what could be put into a waterway, established funding for sewage treatment plants, and gave the EPA authority to implement pollution control programs. Today, decades later, we have a Kennebec River that is much healthier, a river where we can swim, fish, and recreate.

Of course, there is still work to do, and we can't take credit for all of the improvements. But we can be proud of the many ways in which our ratepayers are contributing to a cleaner Kennebec. Our efforts to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) during major rain events are directly tied to the river's health.

Take a good look at the Kennebec this spring: it's not the same river it was in 1969. We should all feel good about that.

## WINTER INTERNS

This winter, GAUD was fortunate to have the services of three interns who provided vital services to our system: Claire Colvin (general engineering, Virginia Tech), Lauren Labbay (civil engineering, UMaine) and Anthony Pinette (civil engineering, UMaine).

Don't worry: we didn't throw them into the snow to dig out fire hydrants! The interns were inside, managing a host of scanned electronic records and verifying that the infrastructure represented on our Trunkline plans coincided with the infrastructure data shown on our GIS.

Claire, Lauren and Anthony were hugely valuable to us, and we hope that they'll come back in May to work on additional projects...even if they have to work outside!



### ASK RANDI

RANDI TAYLOR,  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
SUPERVISOR AT GAUD,  
ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS.

**Q:** When is my bill generated?

**A:** For all monthly accounts, your bill is generated the second Friday of the month. If you have a past-due balance you will receive a disconnection notice on the next Monday. Sign up at **GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org** to go paperless and autopay so you won't have to worry about your bill again!

Contact Randi at **(207) 622-3701** or  
**RTaylor@GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org**