



GAUD 2020 Board of Trustees Annual Goals, Objectives and Operational Priorities

Draft 2020 Goals, Objectives and Operational Priorities were developed at a planning meeting held on October 30, 2019, at the Augusta Civic Center in Augusta, Maine.

Attendees included:

1. GAUD Trustees: Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Kirsten Hebert, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Pat Paradis, Brad Sawyer, and Charlotte Warren.
2. GAUD Staff: Sherry Kenney, Andy Begin, Brian Tarbuck, Meredith Strang Burgess (communications consultant), Alan Burton (HR Consultant), and Tim Walton (facilitator).
3. Trunkline Members: Rod Cumber (Winthrop), Robert Gasper (Manchester), Dale Glidden (Manchester), and Dan Wells (Winthrop).
4. City of Augusta Councilors: Dave Rollins, Marci Alexander, Mark O'Brien, and Eric Lind
5. City of Augusta staff: Bill Bridgeo, Tyler Pease, and Nick Hartley
6. City of Hallowell: Nate Rudy
7. Public: Stan Koski

The meeting began with a review of the year-to-date operations of the Greater Augusta Utility District and "GAUD by the Numbers" to provide an update and context for the evening's conversations.

Following the dinner break, GAUD Board Chair, Ken Knight, reviewed the 2019 Goals and their completion status to date.

Then Moderator, Tim Walton, guided the conversation as each goal was reviewed in detail and mutual desires for accomplishments for 2020 were discussed.

These goals were subsequently reviewed on Wednesday, December 4, 2020 at the GAUD Wastewater Treatment Plant. Attendees included:

1. GAUD Trustees: Cary Colwell, Bob Corey, Kirsten Hebert, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Pat Paradis, Brad Sawyer and Charlotte Warren.
2. GAUD Staff: Sherry Kenney, Andy Begin, Brian Tarbuck, Meredith Strang Burgess (communications consultant/facilitator)
3. Public: Stan Koski

The following language and goals were lightly modified. The following will be reviewed and hopefully endorsed at the upcoming District Board of Trustee meeting set for December 16, 2019.

I. Augusta/Hallowell/Manchester MDOT and Local Road Work

Over the last year or so, thanks to excellent ongoing communications between the City of Augusta and other municipalities, GAUD has been able to better plan and coordinate various road projects. In addition, continued work with MDOT on major upcoming road work has also been improved. Moving forward, continued development of the geographic information system (GIS) and the databases it integrates with will improve regional planning efforts.

2020 GOALS: Continue to improve ongoing communications with all GAUD municipalities and MDOT to work cooperatively with upcoming road work, both planned and unplanned. Continue development of the GIS to improve regional planning efforts.

II. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

This year has been a challenge to complete projects on time due to the very tight labor market. Several projects begun in 2019 will carry over to 2020, including Murray Street and the Kennebec River siphon project. However the combined sewer overflow (CSO) tank project near the boat landing is on schedule.

2020 GOALS: Continue to implement, revise and plan CIP projects, monitor budgets, be proactive and keep an eye to the future. Work smarter, prioritize projects, utilize efficiencies in financing and labor. Continue to be proactive planning for long range water sources, CSO requirements and water and wastewater pipe replacement. Monitor headwinds such as “forever chemicals” and the Maine PFAS Task Force.

III. Rates and Forecasting

The rate subcommittee followed the advice of the Stormwater Workgroup and in early 2019 presented a suite of rate changes for consideration by the full board. After further review and feedback from a public hearing, the Board changed the following rates effective July 1, 2019: volumetric wastewater rates were reduced by 25%; ERU fees were increased by 20%; and catch basin fees were reduced by 20%. The Board will annually review the need for rate changes.

The Board plans to reduce catch basin fees over time and generate stormwater revenue from ERUs. Furthermore, the creation of a commercial ERU may be considered.

2020 GOALS: Annually evaluate water, wastewater and stormwater rates for any necessary changes and react as necessary. Develop a plan to eliminate catch basin fees over time by June 30, 2020. Develop a plan to equitably manage ERUs for all customer classes by June 30, 2020.

IV. Charter Review/Update

After several years of review and work on the current 2007 Charter, the Charter Committee made a number of recommendations to the Board for consideration. These items need to be refined and agreed upon by all municipalities of the District before the Charter is submitted to the Second Session of the 129th Legislature for approval.

2020 GOALS: Revise and present to the GAUD Board of Trustees on December 16, 2019 for Preliminary approval. Then Trustees and Staff will actively reach out to all GAUD municipalities and PUC for any feedback. The revised and final Charter revisions will be presented for Final approval by the GAUD Trustees at the January 27, 2020 regular GAUD meeting. The Charter revisions will then be submitted to Rep. Warren for approval during the Second Session of the 129th Legislature and begin the legislative process. Hopefully, the proposed changes to the Charter will be adopted by the Legislature by April, 2020. Thereafter, the GAUD Board Charter committee and Board will review the Charter every three years for any appropriate revisions.

V. Intercommunity Sewer Trunkline

Much work has been done over the past few years to improve relationships and communications with all the members of the Intercommunity Sewer Trunkline and to review the current Trunkline Agreement. The 2019 Goals anticipated ratification of a revised Agreement by March, 2019 but that work was delayed due to the unanticipated failure of the sewer force main in Winthrop. However, it is anticipated that the Agreement can be reviewed and updated in Q1, 2020.

The failure of the sewer force main highlighted the aging Trunkline infrastructure and the lack of capital to sustain significant repairs. The Trunkline group has shifted focus to long range planning to assess the condition of the remaining infrastructure and plan for its replacement in a structured manner.

2020 GOALS: Continue to improve communications and relationships with all municipalities in the Trunkline. Ratify changes to the Intercommunity Sewer Trunkline Agreement by April 1, 2020. Set an expectation for ongoing reviews. Conduct annual meetings with all members of the Trunkline. By November 30, 2020 complete 5 and 10 year plans to guide future planned expenses.

VI. Administrative

Human Resources

Great progress and efforts have been made to improve internal staff relations and training.

2020 GOALS: Continue to provide professional development opportunities for the entire GAUD staff. Continue to provide the GAUD Board guidance and information to become the best stewards of the communities served. Continue to develop and maintain strong working relationships with GAUD municipalities, regulators, contractors and community groups. Continue to improve communications with all GAUD stakeholders.

Communications

GAUD continues to provide ongoing communications outreach to its customers and municipalities through newsletters, billing inserts, updated and timely quality reports and its updated website.

2020 GOALS: Continue with regular web updates; social media; inserts; newsletter; CCR; and Annual Reports. Continue to measure web and social media effectiveness and make necessary adjustments as needed. Create two videos for the web site: a tour of the WWTP and the backstory of how GAUD tests and maintains its water quality. Create an email list and begin sharing newsletters and inserts digitally. Continue to work on customer education and outreach about the ongoing infrastructure issues and accomplishments of the District.

In addition to the 2020 Goals and discussion, there were a number of items/issues that were raised for all to monitor moving forward:

- A. Stormwater
 - a. Ongoing CSO requirements - update Long Term Control Plan by end of 2020 per MEPDES permit - hire outside contractor (Steve Freedman)
 - b. municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) - changes in regulations could require more efforts by GAUD to comply with increased stormwater regulation
- B. Drinking Water
 - a. Hard water
 - b. "Forever Chemicals" - poly- and per-fluoroalkyl substances
 - c. Lead and copper
 - d. Additional water sources
- C. Wastewater
 - a. Kennebec River pipe replacement project
 - b. Biosolids (sludge) disposal requirements
 - c. WWTP infrastructure
- D. Infrastructure
 - a. Continue building ongoing awareness of the complex infrastructure issues faced everyday in the District.